

OPINION 6

THE LEGACY OF
JRD CONTINUES

WORLD 8

LANKAN PREZ BELIEVES 'NOT RIGHT
TIME' FOR GOTABAYA TO RETURN

MONEY 10

5.83 CR INCOME TAX
RETURNS FILED FOR FY22

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY AUGUST 2, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

the pioneer

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ENGLAND
WIN WOMEN'S
EURO 2022
12 SPORTIndian eco robust: FM;
Opp lists Govt 'failures'Opp walks out
during FM's
speech on price
rise debatePIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday asserted India is facing no risk of recession or stagflation as macroeconomic fundamentals of the economy are strong. Replying to a debate on the price rise in the Lok Sabha, she said the GST collection and the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) are indicating that the Indian economy is getting more robust.

The Opposition, on the other hand, accused the Modi Government of seriously damaging small-scale industries, increasing unemployment as well as blackmoney, besides holding the Centre's policies responsible for price rise due to which, it claimed, 25 crore households in the country are hit hard. The Opposition MPs led by the Congress staged a walkout during the FM's reply.

The FM pointed out that the GST collection rose 28 per cent to touch the second-highest level of ₹1.49 lakh crore in July. The GST, introduced in July 2017, touched a record high of ₹1.68 lakh crore in April 2022.

This is the sixth time that the monthly GST collection crossed the ₹1.40-lakh-crore



Youth Congress members raise slogans during a protest against increase in prices due to the imposition of Goods and Services Tax (GST) on essential commodities in New Delhi on Monday
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

mark since the inception of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the fifth month at a stretch since March 2022, she said, adding that many international agencies assessed the high growth potential of India in coming days. The FM blamed the Opposition parties for spreading lies on the GST charges imposed in the latest council meeting.

"Funerals, crematoriums exempted from the GST. There is no GST on funerals, crematoriums and mortuary services. No GST on loose edible items, said Sitharaman. She asserted that the Centre has not imposed the GST on any loose items so that poor people don't face any problems.

Continued on Page 2

Speaker withdraws
suspension of 4
Congress MPs

New Delhi: A week after suspending them for the rest of the Monsoon Session for carrying placards and raising slogans inside the House, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday revoked the suspension of four Congress members — Manickam Tagore, Ramya Haridas, T N Prathapan and S Jothimani — after assurance from the Opposition that they will not bring placards.

Birla also warned the members that he will take stringent action against those who violate the rules of the House procedure.

8 die in Jabalpur
hospital infernoElectrical short
circuit reason
for blaze; five
hurt, 2 criticalPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
JABALPUR

A major fire that broke out at a 30-bed private hospital near Damoh Naka under the Gohalpur police station area of Jabalpur around 2.30 pm on Monday claimed lives of eight people, including four patients. Besides all being charred to death, five others were injured, officials said.

Jabalpur Collector Dr Ilayaraja T said four patients, a caregiver and three staffers of New Life Multi-speciality Hospital, housed in a ground plus three-storey building, died in the fire which has been put out.

The Collector said there were 20 to 25 people in the hospital when the blaze started. Prima facie it appears an electrical short circuit caused the blaze, said Superintendent of Police (SP) Siddharth Bahuguna.

Jabalpur MP Rakesh Singh assured that action will be taken against those responsible for the short circuit. He said, "First priority is to take out all those who are stuck and then action will be taken against those who are responsible for it. I am visiting Jabalpur tomorrow and this is a big incident. I am myself in touch with those who are admitted and with authorities."

Of the five injured two

were in critical condition and admitted to the ICU of the Government medical college in Jabalpur. Evacuation of patients and other people from the hospital was over and no one was trapped in the building.

"Our teams immediately arrived at the site of the fire. We have completed the search operation and no one is trapped inside. The first floor has been damaged completely," said Sanjiv Kumar Gupta, an NDRF official.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan asked the Jabalpur Divisional Commissioner to enquire into the tragedy.

Chouhan expressed grief over the tragedy and announced a compensation of ₹5 lakh each to the family of the deceased and ₹50,000 per injured person. "A very unfortunate and sad incident has taken place in Jabalpur. I am in constant touch with the district administration there. I have issued an order to the Jabalpur Commissioner to conduct an inquiry," Chouhan tweeted.

The State Government formed a four-member panel under the chairmanship of Divisional Commissioner B Chandrashekhar to probe the hospital fire.

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Police and fire personnel inspect after a major fire broke out at Life Multispeciality Hospital at Damoh Naka in Jabalpur on Monday
Pioneer photo

Jio bags half of all 5G airwaves
at ₹88K cr; Adani about 0.55%PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio bagged nearly half of all the airwaves in India's biggest ever auction of 5G spectrum, which received a record ₹1.5 lakh crore of bids. Reliance Jio bagged spectrum worth ₹88,078 crore.

Airtel made a successful bid of ₹43,084 crore, while Vodafone Idea Ltd bought spectrum for ₹18,799 crore. Adani Group paid ₹212 crore for 400 MHz for their airport, sea port and power plants networks. Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said of the 72,098 MHz of spectrum offered across 10 bands, 51,236 MHz, or 71 per cent, was sold.

Adani Group's spectrum will not be used for public telephony service. In all, bids worth ₹1,50,173 crore were



received, he said, adding the Government will in the first year get ₹13,365 crore. Barring the 1800 MHz band, for which Jio and Airtel engaged in fierce bidding, spectrum in all bands was sold at reserve (base) price, he noted.

The mop-up from the 5G spectrum, capable of offering ultra-high speed mobile internet connectivity, is almost double of ₹77,815 crore worth 4G airwaves sold last year and triple of ₹50,968.37 crore garnered from a 3G auction in

2010. Reliance Jio was the top bidder, offering a cumulative bid of ₹88,078 crore for 24,740 MHz of airwaves across five bands capable of offering speeds about 10 times faster than 4G, lag-free connectivity, and can enable billions of connected devices to share data in real-time.

It acquired the coveted 700 MHz spectrum that can provide 6-10 km of signal range with one tower and forms a good base for offering fifth generation (5G) services, in all 22 circles or zones in the country.

Adani group bought spectrum in the 26 GHz band, which is suitable for setting up a private network for end-to-end communication in six States — Gujarat, Mumbai, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh.

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Raut sent to 4-day
ED custody in land
scam case

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Hours after it formally placed him under arrest in an alleged money laundering case linked to the ₹1,034 crore Patra Chawl redevelopment scam, the Special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Court on Monday remanded Shiv Sena Rajya Sabha member and chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut to the custody of Enforcement Directorate (ED) till August 4.

Declining the ED's plea for his eight-day custody, Judge MG Deshpande sent Raut to four-day custody.

"I am of the opinion that such a long custody of 8 days is not warranted. Besides I am of the opinion that the accused is remanded to ED custody up to August 4 that will suffice



Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut after being produced before a special PMLA court in Mumbai on Monday
PTI

investigation," the judge noted. Taking cognisance of the fact that 60-year-old Raut was a heart patient that he had undergone surgery, the special court ordered that he be given some rest instead of being subjected to interrogation till late in the night.

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NTR's daughter Uma
Maheswari found
hanging at home

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Kantamaneni Uma Maheswari, daughter of legendary Telugu actor and former Chief Minister N T Rama Rao (NTR), allegedly died of suicide at her residence here on Monday, police said. She was 57.

Citing preliminary findings, police said ill-health and depression were suspected to be the reasons for her allegedly taking the extreme step.

However, the observations were not conclusive, they said. A police official told PTI that Maheswari's younger daughter, son-in-law and a woman relative broke open the door of the bedroom which was bolted from inside after failing to get a response from her. They found her hanging from the ceiling fan around 12.30 pm, he said.

Continued on Page 2

Smriti, her daughter
not owners of Goa
bar, says Delhi HCNo licence ever
issued in their
favour, says court

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has held that Union Minister Smriti Irani and her daughter are neither owners of a restaurant-cum-bar in Goa at the centre of a controversy nor a license was ever issued in their favour, and said statements by three Congress leaders against them seem to be "bogus with malicious intent."

Further saying that even the show cause notice issued by the Government of Goa was not addressed to Irani or her

family members, the high court said the three Congress leaders Jairam Ramesh, Pawan Khera, Netta D'Souza along with others conspired to "launch a tirade of false, scathing and beligerent personal attacks" against them. The Congress has alleged that the senior BJP leader and her daughter had links with the upmarket restaurant — "Silly Souls Café and Bar".

The high court said the statements made by the three Congress leaders are in the "nature of slander and seem to be bogus with malicious intent" to intentionally subject Irani to a "great public ridicule" and "to injure the moral character and public image" of the minister and her daughter.

Continued on Page 2

2nd Monkeypox case in Delhi
as Nigerian with no foreign
travel history tests positivePIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Delhi on Monday reported a second case of Monkeypox — India's sixth case — after a 35-year-old Nigerian man, living in the national Capital and having no recent history of foreign travel, tested positive for the infection. One person has already died of Monkeypox in Kerala.

The Nigerian national is admitted to LNJP Hospital, the nodal hospital for treatment of the infection in Delhi.

The Nigerian has had blisters and fever for the last five days. His samples were sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune and

the report which arrived on Monday evening showed he was positive, an official source said. Two suspected patients of Monkeypox, who are of African origin, have been admitted to LNJP Hospital.

Delhi on July 24 reported the first case of Monkeypox. The patient was a 31-year-old man with no travel history. He was admitted to hospital with fever and skin lesions. The man had attended a stag party recently in Manali in Himachal Pradesh. A resident of West Delhi, the man was admitted to the Maulana Azad Medical College Hospital in the national Capital around three days ago after he showed symptoms of Monkeypox.

Few takers for short liquor licence dispirit
tipplers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Tipplers had a hard time on Monday as most of the liquor stores and bars were closed in Delhi as private vendors are reluctant to apply for the extension of licences for mere a month.

It was unofficially a "dry day" despite the Lieutenant Governor's approval to extend the new existing policy by a month till August 31. Many restaurants, bars and hotels in the city refused to serve liquor on Monday.

The Excise Department has sent an email to private liquor stores and vends saying the status of their licences has changed to expire from Sunday. Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi Excise in a circular issued on Monday said that in pursuance of order, "I am directed to convey the approval of the competent authority to revert to the pre-

vious regime of excise duty based policy (as was prevalent before November 17, 2021) with effect from September 1, 2022."

The excise licences will be issued by the Government on payment of a licence fee for the extended period.

The private retail liquor vends that apply for extension will operate till August 31. As the existing policy remained the same, so the number of dry days and discounts will remain till August end.

According to private liquor vendors, most of them are reluctant to carry on their business just for a month.

"We have conveyed this to the concerned authorities. Most private vends and stores were incurring losses," said one of the vendors.

Some restaurateurs also said although the process for extension of licences will be done online, it will take at least



a day or two to complete it, which would mean people will have to wait for their liquor.

A representative of the National Restaurants Association of India said due to natural low demand for liquor on Monday morning and afternoon, the closure of the stores and bars did not lead to a massive crisis. "The bars can

reopen after the order is out."

As the liquor stores remained closed on Monday, employees loitered around talking to customers waiting eagerly outside vends to reopen.

"We have no idea when the order will come. Even if it comes today, there is no stuff in the shop to sell," said a liquor vend employee near ITO.

A zonal licence holder said there is still uncertainty as the order by the excise department was delayed.

"Since the Government made the announcement of reverting to the old excise policy regime, we were in the process of wrapping up business.

"We are the worst sufferers as despite investing huge amounts, we are forced to quit retail sales of liquor within months.

"Even a one month extension is no compensation for our losses," he said.

A restaurateur said there seemed to be "administrative incompetence" of "highest level" on the part of the Government which has led to the situation.

"If they wanted to extend the license, they should have done it earlier. First, they took back the new excise policy and decided to run vends

through their agencies and now a one-month extension is being given thinking nothing about losses we will suffer with no business to do for days due to this interruption," he said.

Sources in the Raj Niwas said the LG has noted that there was "no other option" but to agree with the Delhi Cabinet decision taken on Sunday to extend the tenure of the existing retail and wholesale licenses for one month's time for stock clearance, and to avoid closure of retail and wholesale vends, as well as prevent any law and order situation due to non-availability of liquor in the city.

The policy was extended twice since April this year, as the Government was still working on a revised excise policy for 2022-23 for which necessary approvals were yet to be taken. Tenders for country liquor licences were floated twice in recent months.

NCR PULSE

IYC STAGES PROTEST OUTSIDE SHASTRI BHAWAN
New Delhi: The Indian Youth Congress on Monday staged a protest outside Shastri Bhawan against the Central government over the rising prices and unemployment in the country. Several IYC leaders and workers holding banners gathered in the national Capital and raised slogans against the Centre.

HC RESERVES ORDER ON PLEA BY CHAUTALA
New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Monday reserved order on a plea by former Haryana chief minister Om Prakash Chautala seeking suspension of the four-year sentence imposed on him in a disproportionate assets (DA) case. "We will pass appropriate order," said Justice Yogesh Khanna after the politician, represented by senior advocate N Hariharan, argued that he should be released during the pendency of his appeal challenging his conviction and sentence in the case.

GATHERING AT JANTAR MANTAR FOR ROJGAR ANDOLAN
New Delhi: Over 200 student and youth bodies, trade unions, teachers' associations and intellectuals will gather at national Capital's Jantar Mantar on August 16 as part of the week-long 'Rojgar Andolan' to demand for a national employment policy and legal guarantee on job opportunities for people. The Rojgar Andolan will be organised under the banner of Sanyukta Rojgar Andolan Samiti (SRAS) and continue till August 22.

22-YR-OLD STABBED TO DEATH BY GROUP OF MEN
New Delhi: A 22-year-old man was stabbed to death allegedly by a group of men in northeast Delhi's Khajuri Khas. The deceased has been identified as Anawarul Haq, a resident of Purniya in Bihar, police said. Haq worked in a Biharipur-based factory which made school bags, police said.

UMAR DELIVERED A VERY CALCULATED SPEECH: POLICE
New Delhi: Delhi Police told the Delhi High Court on Monday that the speeches delivered by various accused in a UAPA case related to the alleged conspiracy behind the communal riots here in February 2020 had a common factor-- "the essence was to create a sense of fear in the Muslim population". Opposing the bail plea of former JNU student Umar Khalid, one of the arrested accused in the case, the prosecution said the speech delivered by him in Amravati in February 2020 was a "very calculated speech" which brought various points including the Babri Masjid, instant triple talaq, Kashmir, suppression of Muslims and the CAA and NRC.

DCW WRITES TO HEALTH DEPT FOR TRANS SURGERIES
New Delhi: The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) has issued a notice to the city government's health department, seeking details of a committee formed by it to look into the absence of a facility for sex-reassignment surgeries in state-run hospitals. The panel said it regularly interacts with the transgender community and comes across various issues faced by the members of the community in the national capital.

INDIAN ROCK PYTHON RESCUED BY WILDLIFE SOS
New Delhi: An Indian rock python was rescued by Wildlife SOS, a NGO after it was found meandering its way on a footpath near Qutub Minar Metro station. The Delhi Police was alerted about the 5-foot-long python by a passerby and immediately contacted Wildlife SOS. The NGO's two rapid response unit members were rushed to the spot and the python was safely extricated, officials said.

Jio bags half of all 5G airwaves at...

PUBLIC NOTICE

VASTU HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION LIMITED

A Public Ltd. Company Incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956

Date of Incorporation: 04.02.2005

CIN: U65922MH2005PLC272501

Registered & Corporate Office:

Unit Nos. 203 & 204, 2nd Floor, A Wing, Navhargar Estates, Zakaria Bunder Road, Sewri (West), Mumbai - 400015

Tel No: 022-24139311 / Email: cs@vastuhfc.com

Website: https://www.vastuhfc.com

SHIFTING OF BRANCH OFFICE

The Branch office of Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Limited ("Company") at Office New Delhi -110037 shall be shifted to the new premises as mentioned below from 01-09-2022 (effective date):

Old Address: Office # 04, Westend Plaza, Old Delhi Gurugram Road, Kharsa No 377/375, Old Gurugam Delhi Road, Near DESU Office Kapashera, New Delhi 110037.

New Address: Plot No 32, S/F, Block A-1, Sewak Park, Uttam Nagar, Near Banqat Hall, New Delhi- 110059

The Old Premises will remain operational till 31-08-2022. From 01-09-2022 onwards, all transactions/customer service requests of the Company should be sent to the new address only.

Note: Publication Dated 10th June 2022 regarding shifting Office from 04, Westend Plaza, Kharsa No 377/375, Old Gurugam Delhi Road, Near DESU Office Old Delhi Gurugram Road, Kapashera, New Delhi 110037 stands Withdrawn.

In case of any queries, you may contact us at: customercare@vastuhfc.com

Address: Unit Nos. 203 & 204, 2nd Floor, A Wing, Navhargar Estates, Zakaria Bunder Road, Sewri (West), Mumbai - 400015

Date : 02.08.2022

Place : Delhi

From page 1

Airtel bought a total of 19,867.8 MHz of spectrum across five bands but none in 700 MHz. Vodafone Idea acquired 6228 MHz of airwaves. Vaisnnav said the 600 MHz band, offered for the first time, did not receive any interest. "Spectrum purchased

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to all concern that Mr. Harbhajan Singh Gabha S/o Sh. Ram Chander R/o W.J.-148, Basti Guzal, Jalandhar Punjab who is the original allottee of property No. Plot No. A-56, Sector-40, Noida, Noida (U.P.) who's expired on dated 30/07/2007. That Mr. Harbhajan Singh Gabha S/o Sh. Ram Chander R/o W.J.-148, Basti Guzal, Jalandhar Punjab executed a WILL in my favour i.e., Mr. Atul Bansal S/o Sh. R.K Bansal R/o A-56, Sector-40, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, (U.P.) which is registered in Sub Registrar Noida on dated 16-11-1995. So it is informed to all concern that the said Property No. Plot No. A-56, Sector-40, Noida, Noida (U.P.) is going to be transferred in favour of Mr. Atul Bansal S/o Sh. R.K Bansal R/o A-56, Sector-40, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, (U.P.) if any one has/have any objection he/she may file his/her objection alongwith the sufficient proof in the Residential Department of the Noida Authority within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice.

Atul Bansal

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHANIRMAN SOUDHA, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR

B-426

INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

E-mail ID:cebuildings_orissa@yahoo.co.in

cebuildings@rediffmail.com Tel.-(0674)- 2391523

File No-B-II-Rev.-SIDM-03/2017 Lr. No.- 29456 / Bhubaneswar, 30.07.2022

CANCELLATION

The bid invited vide Bid Identification No. OSD C.E. (B)-11 / 2022-23 is hereby by cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

Sd/- OSD Chief Engineer (Buildings), Odisha

OIPR : 34117/11/0040/2223

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

DIRECTORATE OF FLORICULTURE (G&P) DEPARTMENT SRINAGAR KASHMIR

Tel-0194-2474234 Fax - 2482032 - email :- kashflori@rediffmail.com

Subject:- Extension No.03.

In view of no response, the last date for submission of bids invited vide this office e-Tender Notice No.15 of 2022 dated.10.06.2022 for

Outsourcing of entry Ticketing system of Shaheed Park, Pulwama

is hereby extended as per the details given below: -

1. Period of downloading of bidding document	29.07.2022 from 03:00 PM to 12.08.2022 up to 02:00 PM
2. Bid submission Start Date	29.07.2022 from 04:00 PM
3. Bid submission End Date	12.08.2022 up to 02:00 PM
4. Date and time of Opening of Tenders (Online)	16.08.2022 at 02:00 PM

Other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the aforesaid Tender Notice.

Sd/-
Accounts Officer
(Member Secretary)

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Guv apologises for ‘unintentional’ comments against Maharashtrians

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Three days after he made “inappropriate” comments against Maharashtrians, Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari on Monday apologised for his “unintentional” mistake and said that he was sure that the people of Maharashtra would forgive him.

At a function held in the city on Friday, Koshiyari had raked up a controversy by lauding the contributions of the Gujarati and Rajasthani communities for the state’s progress and development and undermining Maharashtrians’ ability. “If you remove Gujaratis and Rajasthanis from the state, especially Mumbai and Thane, then

nothing will be left... Mumbai will lose its tag of the country’s commercial capital without them,” the Governor had said.

Following the Governor’s objectionable remarks, the Shiv Sena-led Opposition tore the Governor apart for “insulting” the people of the state, while the embarrassed ruling alliance chose not to defend Koshiyari for his comment.

In a statement posted on his official twitter handle, Koshiyari said: “I may have committed a mistake while speaking at a public function in Andheri on July 29, where I was talking about the contribution of a few communities in the development of Mumbai. All have contributed to the development of not only

Maharashtra but the entire country.

“Our country is on the path of development especially because of the concerned state’s inclusivity and traditions of taking everyone along.”

“But, I can’t even imagine that I committed an unintentional mistake in the speech and that mistake is considered a great insult to Maharashtra. I am sure that people of Maharashtra will forgive me as per the teachings of great saints of Maharashtra,” the Governor added.

It may be recalled that the Governor had found himself in the dock, as the video-clip of his comments made at a ceremony went viral. The Governor’s belated clarification over his

comments made at a function organised on Friday to inaugurate a junction held at Andheri in north Mumbai to rename after late Shantidevi Champalalji Kothari, that his comments had been “misconstrued” did not douse the political fire which raged all through Friday last.

Leading the Opposition’s charge, Maharashtra’s former chief minister and Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray slammed the Governor for yet trying to “divide” a peaceful state on casteist, religion and regional lines and said that time had come for the state to decide “to consider whether this parcel named Koshiyari should be packed off from here or put behind bars”.

Raut is true Sainik, I am proud of him: Uddhav

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Coming to the defence of his party colleague Sanjay Raut who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case, Shiv Sena president and former chief minister Uddhav Thackeray said here on Monday that he was proud of Raut who, he said, was a “true Shiv Sainik”.

Talking to media persons here after the ED placed him under a formal arrest in the Rs 1,034 crore Patra Chawl redevelopment scam case, Uddhav said: “I am proud of Sanjay Raut. He is a true Shiv Sainik. He is my old friend. He is a fearless journalist. I like his one sentence -- “even if I die it is okay with but I will not succumb to pressure and surrender”.

Uddhav, who visited the

Bhandup residence of Raut and spoke to the latter’s family members, said: “Raut’s family is alone in the whole thing. We, the Thackeray family and the entire Shiv Sena are with Raut’s family members”.

The Sena president slammed the ruling BJP for “practising “vendetta politics”. He charged that the BJP government was “misusing” the agencies like the CBI, the ED and Income Tax department against its political opponents.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra’s deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis defended the ED’s action against Sanjay Raut, saying that the central investigative agencies had taken action against individuals with documentary evidence, thus indicating that the action against Raut was backed by documentary evidence.

Globally, only half of children living with HIV get life-saving treatment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Globally, only half (52%) of children living with HIV are on life-saving treatment, far behind adults where three quarters (76%) are receiving antiretrovirals, as per data available by the recently released UNAIDS Global AIDS Update 2022.

Concerned by the stalling of progress for children, and the widening gap between children and adults, UNAIDS, UNICEF, WHO and partners have brought together a global alliance to ensure that no child living with HIV is denied treatment by the end of the decade and to prevent new infant HIV infections.

The alliance will run for

the next eight years until 2030, aiming to fix one of the most glaring disparities in the AIDS response. Alliance members are united in the assessment that the challenge is surmountable through partnership. “The wide gap in treatment coverage between children and adults is an outrage,” said UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima. “Through this alliance, we will channel that outrage into action.

By bringing together new improved medicines, new political commitment, and the determined activism of communities, we can be the generation who end AIDS in children. We can win this – but we can only win together.”

Smriti, her daughter not...

From page 1

The remarks were made by Justice Mini Pushkarna while perusing the documents placed before it in a civil defamation suit filed by Irani, the Minister for Women and Child Development, against the three Congress leaders.

The court order, in which it had on July 29 issued summonses to the three Congress leaders on the civil defamation suit, was uploaded on the court’s website on Monday.

The court had also asked them to take down tweets and other social media posts on allegations levelled against the union minister and her daughter. “I have perused the various documents on record, particularly, the show cause notice dated July 21, 2022, issued by the Government of Goa, office of Commissioner of Excise, which has been addressed to one Anthony Dgama, and not to the plaintiff (Irani) or her family members.

“Considering the documents on record it is clearly seen that there was no license which was ever issued in favour of the plaintiff or her daughter. The plaintiff or her daughter are not the owners of the restaurant. It has also been established by the plaintiff prima facie that the plaintiff or her daughter never applied for license.

“Neither the restaurant nor the land on which the restaurant exists is owned by the plaintiff or her daughter. Even the show cause notice issued by the Government of Goa is not in the name of the plaintiff or her daughter. All these facts have also been affirmed in the affidavit by the plaintiff,” Justice Pushkarna said in her 14-page order.

Irani has filed a defamation suit against the Congress leaders for allegedly making baseless and false accusations against her and her 18-year-old daughter.

NTR’s daughter Uma Maheswari found hanging...

From page 1

Her daughter then informed police.

A case of suspicious death under Section 174 (suicide) of CrPC was registered at the Jubilee Hills police station, police said.

A post-mortem was conducted at the state-run Osmania General Hospital (OGH) in the city and the body was handed over to family members, hospital sources said. She had

pledged her eyes. Uma Maheswari is the youngest of NTR’s daughters and younger among his 12 children, sources said. She lived with her husband, who was out of station at the time of the incident, in an apartment at posh Jubilee Hills in the city. Her husband returned by Monday afternoon, police said. Her younger daughter, who resides in the city, came to her home on Sunday along with her husband.

8 die in Jabalpur hospital...

From page 1

The members in the panel include Joint Director Health Sanjay Mishra and Joint Director of TNCP RK Singh. The committee would look into the reasons behind fire, permissions regarding electrical and fire safety, building permissions and other documents.

Power at the hospital that was among private health facilities that mushroomed during the coronavirus pandemic tripped around 2.30 pm. While the power system was switch-

ing to the backup, something went wrong -- possibly an electrical short circuit - and that ignited the inferno at the hospital.

Flames started from the ground floor, moved upwards and then engulfed the entire building. On noticing the flames, people outside the hospital immediately rang up authorities and informed them about the blaze. Inside the hospital, which had seven patients at the time of the tragedy, staffers and caregivers

screamed for help. Many could not escape in time as the hospital had only one exit, eye-witnesses said.

Chandan Singh, who lost his relative Durgesh Singh, told PTI that he admitted the latter just an hour before the fire broke out.

“Durgesh Singh had sustained injury to his leg and I got him admitted to the hospital. Just when I stepped out of the building to buy medicines I got to know about the blaze,” Chandan added.

Indian eco robust: FM;Opp lists Govt...

From page 1

“The GST is only on packaged food,” she claimed. “There is no GST on ICU, emergency services, and room rent below Rs. 5,000,” the FM added.

Sitharaman said that the entire world is reeling from the

rest of the world. So, I fully credit the people of India for this...even against adversity we are able to stand up and be recognised as the fastest growing economy,” the Finance Minister said.

She said India recovered admirably from all the challenges and the Reserve Bank of India and the Centre’s decisions helped in stabilising the economy. Citing Bloomberg’s report, she said India has zero chances of slipping into recession. “India remains the fastest growing economy in assessment of global agencies,” she added.

Highlighting some of the key economic factors of India such as the GDP, banks’ NPAs among others, Sitharaman praised the work of the Central Government.

“Gross NPAs of banks at six-year low of 5.9 per cent; India’s debt to GDP ratio at 56.21 per cent in FY22, much lower than many nations,” she said. Sitharaman claimed that there is no question of India getting into stagflation or recession. She further cited International Monetary Fund (IMF) data and

said that the country is in a far better position than its peers.

She also said that the banking sector in the country is also healthy compared to other countries.

The Gross NPAs of scheduled commercial banks have reached a six-year low of 5.9 per cent, she said, adding that Government debt to GDP ratio has come down to 56.29 per cent in FY22. Efforts are being made to bring down retail inflation below 7 per cent, the Minister said.

Prices of edible oils have corrected sharply following steps taken by the Government, she added.

In the middle of Sitharaman’s reply, the Congress members walked out of the House. After a few minutes, the DMK members also walked out as a mark of protest.

Later talking to reporters outside the Parliament House, Congress member Manish Tewari, who initiated the debate, said that as per the Government, “no inflation exists like no one killed Jessica. Everything is hunky-dory, that is your (Government) response to the

concerns raised by the Opposition”. He also said the Minister’s response was arrogant.

Earlier, initiating the debate ,Congress member Tewari said it is not only Covid-19 but demonetisation that had gravely impacted the economy of the country and rendered youth unemployed. He said petrol and diesel price rise is a result of “mismanagement of the last eight years”.

Tewari alleged that savings, investment, production, consumption and employment, the five pillars of the economy, have been blown away due to the wrong policies of the Union government. “During the UPA regime, 27 crore people were brought above the poverty line. Then it was learnt from a report, which was made public in 2021, that as many as 23 crore people are once again below the poverty line,” he said.

While the number of billionaires in India increased from 100 to 142 in these years, the income of those in the lower strata has been decreasing day by day, he said.

Raut sent to 4-day...

From page 1

Raut, who was detained by the ED on Sunday evening after a raid on his Bhandup residence and his questioning that lasted for more than nine hours, was formally placed under by the investigating agency at 12.05 am on Monday under sub-section (1) of section 19 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.

The ED’s action against Raut came nearly two months after the investigating agency attached provisionally properties worth Rs 11.15 crore belonging to three persons, including Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut’s wife Varsha Raut, under the PMLA in a case relating to the alleged irregularities in the Patra Chawl redevelopment project in Mumbai.

The ED is investigating the alleged irregularities in a money laundering case pertaining to the irregularities in the redevelopment of Patra Chawl by Guru Ashish Construction Pvt Ltd a subsidiary of Housing Development and

Infrastructure Ltd (HDIL). 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 the HDIL and “diverted” it to various accounts of “his close associates, family member, his business entities” including the family of Raut.

The ED’s allegation is that in 2010, a part of the proceeds of crime of Rs 83 lakh was transferred to Varsha Raut from Madhuri Raut, wife of Pravin Raut. “This amount was utilised 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 has said. The ED’s another allegation is that eight plots of land at Kihim beach at Alibaug were also purchased in the name of Varsha Raut and Swapna Patkar, wife of Sujit Patkar, a close associate of Raut.

Reverting to old Excise Policy means failure of current one: L-G



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Monday said that the Cabinet note of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government to discontinue the new Excise Policy and revert to the old policy points to the gross failure of the current Excise Policy. According to the Delhi Government's Cabinet note, the data shared

by the Excise Department showed that the sale of liquor in the first quarter of the current fiscal 2022-23 has increased by 59.46 per cent in case of whisky and to 87.25 per cent in the case of wine as compared to the corresponding year 2019-20 but the revenue declined to Rs 193.95 crore per month.

The Cabinet note stated several reasons for the withdrawal of the new liquor policy including, revenue shortfall, as during the first quarter of 2022-23, Rs 1,485 crore was realised which is 37.51 per cent below the budget estimates for the current fiscal, that is Rs 2,375 crore for quarter one.

This also includes Rs 980 crore of refundable security deposit. "The second reason that the note stated was windfall gains to licence holders. The revenue decline on account of surrendered zones by the retail and wholesale licence holders who opted to discontinue their licences, is estimated to be around Rs. 193.95 crore per month," it stated.

"The exchequer is losing significant revenue due to vacation of zones, there has been no decline in the sale of liquor and the slack has only been picked up by the remaining licence holders which amounts to windfall gains to them," it read. "Data from the

L-G nod to Govt's move to extend licences of private liquor vends, bars till Aug 31

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena approved the AAP Government's move to extend excise licences of private liquor vends as well as hotels and bars by a month strictly as a one-time measure, holding out hope that alcohol supply would be resumed in a city that had to observe an unofficial dry day.

Top sources said that the L-G has noted that there was 'no other option' but to agree with the Delhi Cabinet's decision to extend the tenure of the existing retail (L7Z/L7V) licences and wholesale (L1 licences) whose licence is expiring on 31/07/2022, for one month's

Excise Department shows that the sale of liquor in the first quarter of 2022-23 has increased by 59.46 per cent in case of whisky and to 87.25 per cent in case of wine as compared to the corresponding period of the financial year 2019-20, but the same could not be captured as an enhancement to the Government's rev-

time (i.e. till 31/08/2022) for stock clearance, as decided by the Council of Ministers vide Cabinet decision No 3,091 dated 31/07/2022, to avoid any a) disruption/closure of retail or wholesale vends of liquor; b) sale of unauthorised liquor and c) law and order situation due to non-availability of authorised liquor."

The L-G also approved a proposal that licences granted under L-38 category (which was not available under the previous excise regime) should be allowed to continue till their expiry. The excise licences will be issued by the Government on payment of licence fee for the extended period and private retail liquor vends that apply for extension will oper-

ene," the Cabinet note read. "The third reason for withdrawal is the reduced number of liquor shops. On account of the situation detailed above, the total number of shops that are operational at present has been reduced to 468 only, as against the targeted number of 849, which is leading to large number of unserved areas and

ate till August 31.

"Liquor licences given to hotels, clubs and restaurant (HCR) under the excise policy have been extended till September 1, 2022 who had registered prior to November 17, 2021, till their expiry with efflux of time," they said.

There were 468 operational private liquor vends in Delhi till their licences expired on Sunday. Under the Excise Policy 2021-22, the Delhi Government had divided the city into 32 zones, each having a maximum of 27 liquor vends, licences for which were issued to 14 private firms through open auction. Out of a total 849 liquor vends, only around 639 had managed to open since November 2021.

defeating one of the major objectives of the Excise Policy 2021-22," it read. "This naturally amounts to windfall gain for the existing licence holders and leading to loss of revenue to the exchequer..... There have also been instances of shortage of particular brands. In particular premium imported brands have not been avail-

Press Club of India closes its bar till further notice

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Press Club of India on Monday closed its bar till further notice in view of the new excise policy in the national Capital. The club, which is always filled with journalist and other members, witnessed a deserted look on Monday.

"As per the new excise policy of the Delhi Government and Governments orders, bar will remain closed on August 1 and till further notice. Therefore, liquor, beer, wine will not be available," stated the notice issued by the club on

Monday. "The bar licence of the club, like all clubs in the city, stands expired," the notice further added. "Despite approval for extension of the excise liquor policy by the Lieutenant- Governor and the Delhi Government, no notification has been received by the officials of the Press Club from the Excise Department," said a club official.

"We had come to the club today to have some liquor but it seems like Delhi's liquor vends are shut and so is the bar here," said Rajesh Singh, a member of the club, adding that no one is aware about the policy's extension.

able for some time now as the sole wholesalers for such brands have stopped supplies. In the Excise Policy 2021-22 a particular brand registration is limited to a particular brand by concerned wholesaler, which could lead to monopolistic tendencies. "..... It can be reasonably concluded that con-

tinuation of the Excise Policy 2021-22 any further can be expected to have adverse revenue implications apart from perpetuating windfall gains to certain licence holders and causing distortion and destabilisation in market practices which are not healthy for a stable revenue regime," it said.

Transport Min moves HC over clearance for trips abroad

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot on Monday approached the Delhi High Court challenging the provision which requires State Government Ministers, including the Chief Minister, to seek political clearance from the Centre for foreign visits.

The petition was filed in the backdrop of a recent case where Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was denied the permission for his visit to Singapore for the 8th World Cities' Summit from July 31 to August 7.

The petition said this was not the first instance of such "abuse of discretion" and noted the Chief Minister was previously denied permission to attend the C-40 World Mayors' Summit in Copenhagen in 2019. It claimed even Gahlot had requested clearance to visit



London at the invitation of Transport for London but there was no response from the authorities concerned in the Central Government till the time the request became infructuous.

Gahlot, an Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader, has sought issuance of guidelines to channel and guide the implementation of several Office Memoranda issued by the Cabinet Secretariat, empowering the Centre to grant or deny permission to State

Government Ministers for foreign visits in their official capacity. Justice Yashwant Varma asked the petitioner to file an additional affidavit to buttress one of the reliefs claimed in the petition relating to permission for personal foreign visits. Gahlot was represented by senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi.

The court listed the petition for further hearing on August 22. Gahlot, in his plea filed through advocate Bharat Gupta and Hrishika Jain, said all these visits were on invitation and were crucial fora for exchanging ideas on improving urban governance and showcasing Delhi's own progress in urban design.

The Delhi government minister said the draconian manner in which the central authorities have used their discretion on travel clearances is only exacerbated further by the

fact that even personal visits by state ministers must be cleared by them. The petition sought quashing of the office memorandum (OM) to the extent that they require state government ministers to seek political clearances from the respondents for personal visits abroad.

The petition has arrayed the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, Union of India through ministries of External Affairs, Finance, Home Affairs and Prime Minister's Office as parties.

It also sought quashing of the undated letter sent by the LG to the Delhi government on July 20, advising against the chief minister's proposed visit to Singapore.

It said, as per one of the OMs issued by the Cabinet Secretariat, clearances are required from the Department of Expenditure in the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of

Home Affairs, the Ministry of External Affairs and the relevant Central Administrative Ministry, and once these clearances are obtained, for visits involving a chief minister, a final clearance from the PMO is required.

"The whimsical and capricious manner in which travel clearances for Indian states-persons are treated is prejudicial not just to the interests of good urban governance in this case, but also national interests in global platforms generally.

"Not only has the respondent no. 1 (LG) acted beyond his jurisdiction in advising against the Singapore visit, but the actual exercise of the powers conferred by the Office Memoranda above noted has been manifestly arbitrary and reflects unchanneled and unbridled use of discretion on part of the respondents," the plea said.



Sanjay Arora, a Tamil Nadu-cadre IPS officer who headed the paramilitary force ITBP, takes charge as Delhi's Commissioner of Police on Monday

RANJAN DIMRI | PIONEER

CEO urges Delhiites to link Aadhaar number with voter IDs

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Dr Ranbir Singh on Monday called upon all the citizens of Delhi to link their Aadhaar Number with their Voter ID, aiming to establish the identity of electors and authentication of entries in electoral roll. He also said that the special camps will be organized at the booth levels in all assembly constituencies to facilitate the voter to link their Aadhaar numbers with voter ID.

Addressing the media, Singh said that the elector can submit his or her Aadhaar number through both online and offline methods. Every person whose name is listed in the electoral roll may intimate

his Aadhaar number to the electoral registration officer in Form 6B. Singh briefed all recognized political parties about the amendments in the law and the steps taken by the Office of CEO to disseminate information and spread awareness about the linking of Aadhaar with Voter ID card.

"New voters can also enroll along with their Aadhaar Card as well as existing voters who have already enrolled in the voting list can also add their Aadhaar Card with their Voter Identity Card voluntarily.

The programme shall be completed by 1st April, 2023. Efforts will be made to contact 100 per cent electors registered in the electoral roll to assist them in submitting Form 6B," Singh said.

While informing about the process of the online linking of Aadhaar, "An elector can submit Form 6B to link his or her Aadhaar number through online. For Online Submission, Elector may fill Form 6B on elector-facing apps or portal like NVSP and VHA either through self-authentication or submit Form 6B without self-authentication, with necessary attachments," Delhi CEO said.

"For Offline Submission, the EROs shall deploy BLOs for House-to-House visit for collection of Aadhaar numbers in the hard copy of Form 6B. All offline submission of Form 6B shall be digitized by BLOs using GARUDA or by ERO using ERONET, within seven days of the receipt of the Forms," he informed.

History-sheeter nabbed for theft in Vijay Vihar

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With a view to buy an electric scooter for his sister on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, a 21-year-old history-sheeter had allegedly intensified his criminal activities across the national Capital but his luck ran out and he was nabbed by police in Delhi's Vijay Vihar area.

The accused has been identified as Tarun alias Rohan, a resident of Rohini and he has been named in the 'bad character' list of Sultanpuri police station. He was previously involved in 10 cases of robbery, Arms Act and theft, police said. With his arrest, police claimed to have solved six criminal cases, and also recovered three stolen mobile phones and a bike



from him. According to Sameer Sharma, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Outer district, the matter came to light when the complainant Suresh reported about the theft at his house on July 7.

"A case was registered accordingly. During investigation, it came to know that accused mistakenly left his phone at Suresh's house after committing crime. Police teams analysed accused's mobile phone and call detail records," said DCP.

Will take up with Delhi Police chief crackdown on vendors, Puri tells RS

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri assured the Rajya Sabha on Monday that he would take up with the Delhi Police Commissioner the reported crackdown on street vendors by police and civic authorities in the national Capital.

The Housing and Urban Affairs Minister, while responding to a query during the Question Hour, also said the Central Government has written to the Chief Secretaries of all States to take steps to protect the dignity and respect of street vendors, who are now being encouraged to become micro-entrepreneurs through the Pradhan Mantri SVANidhi

scheme. SVANidhi, launched in 2020, is a special micro-credit facility scheme for providing affordable loan to street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely impacted due to the Covid-19-induced lockdown.

Aam Aadmi Party MP Narayana Das Gupta asked the minister if the Centre had given a directive to the Delhi Police commissioner on the removal of street vendors.

To which, Puri said his attention was drawn to this issue. The minister added a new Delhi Police commissioner has been appointed and he would speak to him on the issue of street vendors."It seems...Street vendors are at the receiving end from the urban local bodies and police author-

ities. We are going to change (this)....Insofar as the Delhi issue is concerned...We will certainly speak," he said. Senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Sanjay Arora took charge as the commissioner of Delhi Police on Monday.

Highlighting the successful implementation of SVANidhi, the minister said over Rs 3,683 crore has so far been extended to 32 lakh street vendors under this scheme which was introduced at the peak of the pandemic in 2020. Many of these people have in fact moved from first loan of Rs 10,000 to a second loan of Rs 20,000, he said. "A lot of women are also recipient of the loans. This is a scheme which is working exceptionally well in short term," he added.

Retired IAS officer seeks justice, answers

Writes to CM seeking reasons for being relieved from duties twice without any specific reason and no posting for 10 months

SAURAV GUPTA ■ NEW DELHI

A retired IAS officer is running from pillar to post to seek justice after being relieved from his duties twice without assigning any specific reason during his service tenure. Kuldeep Singh Gangar has sought a reason from Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal who had twice transferred him and also kept him waiting for a posting for almost 10 months.

The officer was given a posting only after a protracted legal tussle and when the matter reached Raj Nivas and the Lieutenant-Governor's (L-G) office appointed Gangar as a

Project Director, rural development. Just before Gangar was given a posting at the L-G's office, he had shot off a letter, a copy of which is with *The Pioneer*, asking the Chief Minister for the reason behind not giving him a posting anywhere.

"I was removed from my post on October, 21, 2015. At that time transfer postings were decided by the Chief Minister. After a few days I received a phone call from Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia during which the matter regarding my posting was discussed.

Accordingly, vide order No. 554 dated November, 3, 2015 of the Services Department, I was posted as Special I.G. Central Jail, Tihar. I reported for duty as Special I.G. Tihar," he wrote in his letter addressed to Kejriwal.

"However, after two days vide order No. 560 dated

November 05, 2015 of the Services Department, my transfer as Special I.G. Tihar was kept in abeyance. I again reported back to the Services Department," he further claimed in his letter.

"Till date I am not aware what my fault was. Officers are removed from the office due to corruption, inefficiency or lack of devotion to duty. None of these are applicable in my matter. After nearly 10 months I was given a posting in the Lieutenant-Governor's Secretariat at the end of August, 2016 by L-G, Delhi," he claimed.

"The period of 10 months was perceived as harassment and humiliation of my family, my team, my colleagues and myself. The Chief Minister will appreciate that in spite of the harassment and humiliation I did not resign from the service nor did I run away from the situation," he alleged.

"It is requested that I may kindly be informed of the reason for the harassment and humiliation for nearly 10 months and the above information may kindly be provided in the interest of transparency, fair and just governance for this Public Grievance Monitoring System (PGMS) representation and request," Gangar further wrote in his letter.

Gangar in his letter to Kejriwal also had requested that he can appreciate the hardship, if salary is not released on time. "It is requested that a system may kindly be created so that any employee of the Delhi Government receives the salary and other dues on time.

This will ensure that in future any other employee of Delhi Government and the family does not undergo such hardship, harassment and humiliation," the letter further added.

Govt to launch 2 schemes for construction workers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Monday announced to launch two schemes for construction workers and their children in the national Capital.

The decision to launch, 'Doctor on Wheels' scheme for routine medical check-up of construction workers at the work site itself and mobile creches with state-of-the-art facilities to provide day-care to the children of workers at the construction sites, was taken in the 39th board meeting of the Delhi Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board.

Giving details about the schemes, the Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister, Manish Sisodia said that the Kejriwal Government's 'Doctor on Wheels' scheme for construction workers will facilitate routine check-up of workers at construction sites. "The AAP

government will also launch unique 'mobile creches' for children of construction workers at sites with aim to provide them better day-care facilities with modern services," said Sisodia, who also hold the portfolio as Labour Minister.

Earlier, the Delhi Government had launched a training program 'Kushal Karmi' for construction workers for their upskilling.

"During the meeting, the progress of this skill program was reviewed also by Deputy CM. At present this program is being run in pilot phase with 200 construction workers at three construction sites and has shown good outcomes," said an official.

In the board meeting, it was also noted that during the first wave of COVID, a total of 1.18 lakh construction workers registered with the board were given an assistance amount of ₹10,000 each. "During this,

the government provided a total financial assistance of Rs 118 crore to the workers," said an official.

"However, during the second wave, the construction activities were stopped due to the lockdown but 3.17 lakh construction workers were given financial assistance of ₹158 crores.

Last year, construction work was also put on hold for some time due to rising pollution levels during winters. During this, an amount of

₹309 crore was distributed by the government in the account of ₹6.17 lakh construction workers," said the official.

Presently, Delhi Government is running 17 welfare schemes for construction workers and their families. Under these schemes, construction workers get ₹3 lakh to ₹5 lakh for house construction, ₹30000 as maternity benefit, ₹20000 loan and assistance, ₹5000 for buying tools, 1 lakh on natural death of workers and accidental death.



MONKEYPOX SCARE

Govt sets up task force to monitor virus

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Following the death of a youth due to Monkeypox in Kerala and suspected cases of the infections in some States under treatment, the Government has set up a task force to monitor virus situation and provide guidance on the expansion of diagnostic facilities and to explore vaccination for the infection in the country.

The decision was taken during a meeting attended by senior officials recently. The team will be headed by Dr VK Paul, member (Health), NITI Aayog. Until Monday, India confirmed four Monkeypox cases — three in Kerala and one in Delhi. A suspected case has also been recently report-



ed from Himachal Pradesh. Last week, a youth in Kerala presenting Monkeypox-like symptoms died, following which State Health Minister

Veena George had initiated a high-level enquiry. This is the fourth Monkeypox death reported outside of Africa. Dr Paul earlier reassured the gen-

eral public, saying there is no need for any panic about the monkeypox virus as the Government has taken significant measures to keep the disease in check. The Kerala Government has already set up a probe into the Monkeypox death of the youth in the State. Twenty close contacts of the man have been categorised as "high risk" and isolated.

These include his friends, family and nine people he recently played football with. The illness is caused by the monkeypox virus, a member of the same family of viruses as smallpox, although it is much less severe and experts say chances of infection are low.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the monkeypox outbreak a global health emergency last

month. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 18,000 cases have been reported from 78 countries. "The monkeypox outbreak can be stopped if countries, communities and individuals inform themselves, take the risks seriously, and take the steps needed to stop transmission and protect vulnerable groups," said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, WHO, on Thursday.

Monkeypox is a zoonotic disease caused by the monkeypox virus, which belongs to the same family of viruses that causes smallpox. The disease is endemic in regions like West and Central Africa but lately, cases have been reported from non-endemic countries too, according to the WHO.

Rajya Sabha passes two Bills amid Opp protest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Monday passed two bills including one for a ban on funding of weapons of mass destruction and the Indian Antarctic Bill amidst protests by the Opposition on various issues, including price rise and arrest of Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut. The Lok Sabha had already passed these two bills.

The Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022, piloted by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, was passed with a voice vote.

The bill was approved by the Lok Sabha in April. The Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, passed in 2005, only banned manufacture of weapons of mass destruction.

The Bill seeks to insert a new Section 12A in the existing law which states that "no person shall finance any activity which is prohibited under this Act, or under the United Nations (Security Council) Act, 1947 or any other relevant Act for the time being in force, or by an order issued under any such Act, in relation to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems."

Replying to a debate on the bill, Jaishankar said all members who spoke on the proposed legislation recognised that terrorism is a serious threat and so are weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

He said the current law only covers trading and does not cover financing of weapons of mass destruction. "This gap

needs to be filled because recommendation...Of the Financial Action Task Force requires all countries, including us, to ensure that assets financing for WMD-related activities is prohibited.

"So keeping in mind this lacunae of the current law we have brought this amendment. This is good for the security of the country. This is good for the reputation of the country," Jaishankar said.

The House also passed a bill which seeks to extend the application of domestic laws to research stations set up by India in the Antarctic region.

The Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022, piloted in the Upper House by Earth Sciences Minister Jitendra Singh, was passed with a voice vote after a brief discussion amid a protest by the Opposition.

The House rejected several amendments moved by Opposition parties, including for sending the bill to a select committee of the Rajya Sabha for scrutiny of the proposed legislation.

The Lok Sabha had given its approval to the bill on July 22. The Opposition had demanded division on sending the bill to the Select Committee. Bhupaneswar Kalita, who was chairing the session, had called for the division. With several members protesting in the Well of the House, Kalita said the division cannot take place unless MPs are on their allotted seats, and he called it off.

The Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022 seeks to extend the application of domestic laws to research stations set up by India in the Antarctic region. India has two active research stations in the Antarctic —

Maitri and Bharti — where scientists are involved in research. The bill proposes to prohibit Indian expedition to Antarctica

without a permit or written authorisation of another party to the Antarctic Treaty, provides for inspection by an offi-

cer appointed by the government and for penalty for contravention of certain provisions of the legislation.

LS debates price rise as normalcy returns to House after Opp-Govt truce

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Normalcy returned to Lok Sabha on Monday and discussion on price-rise commenced following Speaker Om Birla revoking the suspension of four Congress members and seeking assurance from the Opposition that they will not bring placards to the House.

Birla also warned the members that he will take stringent action against those who violated the rules of procedure, which bars members from bringing any "exhibits" to the House.

Lok Sabha proceedings were derailed for several days with opposition vociferously protesting over price rise and demanding immediate discussion on it suspending the question hour. The government maintained that the demand for suspending question hour should not be made.

The Monsoon Session of Parliament has seen little business since it began on July 18 with opposition members, particularly Congress MPs, forcing repeat adjournments and absenting from the house.

Four Congress members — Manickam Tagore, Ramya Haridas, T N Prathapan and S Jothimani were suspended last Monday from the house for the rest of the monsoon session for



carrying placards and raising slogans inside the House. With the revocation of suspension of these MPs, the House resumed normal business and debate on the price rise began with Congress MP Manish Tewari opening the discussion.

The ball for revocation of suspension was set rolling with the Speaker convening a meeting of floor leaders on Monday to end the stalemate in the House.

As the Lok Sabha resumed on Monday opposition started protests and forced adjournments demanding the revocation of suspension of four Congress members. The house was adjourned till 12 noon.

When house was resumed

BJP member Rajendra Agarwal, who was in the Chair, adjourned the proceedings till 2 pm after laying of parliamentary papers on the table of the House and the introduction of the Central Universities

(Amendment) Bill by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. The Congress members were in the as the House re-convened at 2:00 pm, Birla said he was hurt by the incidents that took place in the House over the past two weeks and urged members to work towards upholding the dignity of the Lok Sabha.

"There should be a consensus that we do not get placards in the House. I will urge all political parties not to bring placards to the House. I am giving a final warning, if anyone gets placards to the House I will neither listen to the government nor the opposition and will take action," the Speaker said.

Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said the Opposition had to raise some issues vociferously in the House, and at times resort to protests if the government does not give them a patient hearing.

Will work to build bridges between parties, says Opp V-P pick Alva

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the August 6 vice presidential election, the Opposition's candidate Margaret Alva has written to all MPs saying, if elected, she will work to build bridges between different political parties, forge consensus on national issues and help restore the glory of Parliament.

In a letter to all members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, who form the electoral college, Alva said the vice president's election must be seen as a referendum on the manner in which Parliament is being run and the breakdown in the fundamental democratic process of building consensus on important national issues.

"I elected Vice President, I commit myself to work tirelessly to uphold the Constitution and to strengthen our parliamentary democracy. As Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha, I will work to build bridges between different political parties, forge consensus on issues of national importance, and help restore the glory of Parliament," she told the MPs in her appeal.

Alva said the support for her nomination from a large number of political parties is an acknowledgement of the over fifty years she has spent in public life, as a member of both Houses of Parliament, a Union Minister, a Governor, and a proud representative of India at the United Nations and on other global platforms. The BJP-led ruling coalition has



fielded former governor Jagdeep Dhankhar for vice presidential election. In her appeal to MPs, Alva wrote, "Today, Parliament is virtually at a standstill, with communication between members broken.

There is distrust, anger, and inability to debate issues of critical national importance without personal attacks and abuse. This diminishes Parliament and its members in the eyes of the people."

"The time for change is now. The reason election to the Vice President's post is not subject to a party whip and is by secret ballot, is to give members an opportunity to vote without fear for a candidate they believe will do justice to this critical position. A candidate who will be impartial, fearless, and run upper house in a manner befitting its stature."

Alva, a veteran Congress leader, said over these years she has worked for country with integrity and commitment. "My only aim has been to defend without fear, the Constitution of India....I believe I am that candidate, and I'm writing to ask you for your support and your vote on August 6th," she said in her appeal to the parliamentarians.

Naidu expunges references made by Finance Min on Sonia Gandhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Monday expunged the references made by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to Congress president Sonia Gandhi in the House on July 28. Sitharaman had demanded an apology from the Congress president for the "rashtrapatni" remark by Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, whom she accused of insulting the President.

The references were made by Sitharaman on the morning of July 28 soon after the laying of papers in the House. "As the members of the Press Gallery are aware, the Chair was pleased to direct expunction of a certain portion of the proceedings of Rajya Sabha dated 28-07-2022 at about 11:05

am," said an official order from the Rajya Sabha Secretariat. The expunction follows a meeting between Opposition leaders and Naidu in his chamber.

Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge said since Sonia Gandhi is a member of the other House, no reference could be made to her in the Rajya Sabha. The Chairman is learnt to have agreed to the Opposition leaders.

Opposition party sources said that Naidu called Congress leaders Kharge and Jairam Ramesh and also Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi and Leader of the House Piyush Goyal to resolve the situation arising out of Sonia Gandhi's name being raised in Rajya Sabha. During the meeting, Kharge demanded that Gandhi's name

IN SHORTS

WOMEN ACADEMICS WANT ACTION AGAINST ADHIR

New Delhi: A group of women academicians and former officers Monday wrote to Home Minister Amit Shah, demanding action against Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury for his controversial 'rashtrapatni' reference to President Droupadi Murmu so that such 'sexist and outrageous' behaviour is not repeated.

LOOK AT HUMAN SIDE OF JUSTICE: SC TO CENTRE

New Delhi:

The Supreme Court on Monday said that it has to look



at the human side of justice and urged the Centre to carve out an exception to continue the grant of disability pension to an Army jawan, who was discharged from service due to his alcohol dependency.

CONG ATTACKS BJP OVER HOCH, OTHER ISSUES

New Delhi: The Congress on Monday targeted the BJP over multiple issues related to Gujarat such as the hooch tragedy, rape charge against a State Minister and the spread of lumpy disease, claiming it was not being allowed to raise such important matters in Parliament.

SC REFUSES TO STAY EUCALYPTUS FELLING

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday refused to stay felling of eucalyptus trees for proposed widening of Sahasradhara road in Dehradun but allowed petition to be mentioned before High Court for an urgent hearing on the issue.

PUBLIC NOTICE

ICICI Bank | Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd. 4/10, Mythree Tower, Bommanhalli Hosur Main Road Bangalore- 560068

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Johannil Alrani S & Gansekaran A House No. 2 Christian Street, Thirukattupalli, Thanjore- 613104/ LBTNUJ0000562228.	(As Described In The Loan Document/ Property Document Covering House No. 2 Christian Street, Thirukattupalli, Thanjore. 613104	15/10/2021 Rs. 3,13,093/-	11/06/2021

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

Date : August 02, 2022
Place: Delhi

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

MAHINDRA RURAL HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED **Possession Notice**

Corporate Office:- Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd., Sadhana House, 2nd Floor, 570, P.B.Marg Worli, Mumbai 400 018 India,Tel: +91 22 66523500 Fax: +91 22 24972741
Regional Office:- LDA Colony,B2/B70 Kanpur Road, Near Phoneix Mall, Lucknow.
Branch Office : F/F, Plot No-17, Sanajay Nagar, District Center, Near Vishal Megha Mart And Pnb Bank, Sanjay Nagar Ghaziabad UP 201001.

(For Immoveable Property) (Under Rule 8 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)

Whereas the undersigned being the authorized officer of M/S Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd., (hereinafter referred to as "MRHFL"), Having its registered office at **LUCKNOW** and Branch office at **GHAZIABAD** under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002), and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice under Section 13(2) of the said Act calling upon you being the borrowers (names and addresses mentioned below) to repay the amount mentioned in the said notice being within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower mentioned herein above having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers mentioned herein above and to the public in general that undersigned has taken **possession** of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on me under sub section (4) of section 13 of the Act read with the Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this the 7 day

The borrowers mentioned herein above in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the said property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the Charge of M/S Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd. for an amount and interest thereon.

The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

S.N.	Name of the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Description of Secured Asset (Immovable Property)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Date of Possession
1.	(LC No: 586251 MURADABAD Branch) OM HARI (Borrower) KAVITA DEVI (Co Borrower) PRADEEP KUMAR SHARMA (Guarantor)	Plot No 4A Khasra No-296MI 1ST Floor, Ganesh Vatika, Village Dasna, Dasna, Ghaziabad, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh -201001, EAST: ROAD 30 FEET, West: PLOT NO.3, South : PLOT OF SUNIL, North : PLOT NO.4	1/15/2021 Rs. 13,81,404/-	28-07-2022 Symbolic Possession

Place :- DELHI Date:-02.08.2022
Sd/- Authorised Officer Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Limited

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is inform to the public at large that My client Sh. Rakesh Kumar S/o Madan Singh R/o House No. H-2/512, Jahangir Puri, Delhi-110033 severe all relations and debarred her daughter Miss Khushi from entire moveable & immoveable properties and assets due to her hostile behavior.

Any body dealing with her on their risk, cost and consequences. My shall not be responsible in any manner.

KULDEEP SINGH (Advocate),
Chamber no. 1317, 13th Floor, Lawyers Chamber Block, Rohini Courts, Delhi-110085

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all that my clients Sh. Narinder Bhasin S/o Shri L.M. Bhasin and his wife Smt. Shashi Bhasin, both R/o 1/3, Sunder Vihar, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi-110087, have severed all their relations with their son Ishaan Bhasin and his wife Smt. Shraddha, and they are hereby debarred being disrespectful, quarrelsome and disobedient towards my clients. Moreover, they have married of their own accord and follow their own ways and are also living separately. Ho/she who deals with them in any manner, shall be doing so at his/her own risk and responsibility and my clients shall not be responsible for their any act of omission and commission

Navin Kumar Chaudhary Advocate
Chamber No. 3, Civil Wing Tis Hazari Courts Delhi-110054

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public on Behalf of HDBF Bank, that Mr. Shyam Sunder Chhabra is owner of Entire Ground & First Floor (said floor) built on Entire Property with Roof/terrace rights, bearing No. 1421, built on land measuring 160 sqyds, situated at Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi, the said property by virtue of Gift deed dated 18.01.2018, Registration No. 932, executed by Mr. Vikash Chhabra, has lost/misplaced SMC Certificate stating legal heirs of late Mrs. Rita Chhabra. All persons are hereby informed not to deal or carry out any transaction with anyone on the basis of the said missing document. If anyone has already carried out or being carried out kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)
200, 1st floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Mori Nagar, N. Delhi-15
Ph: 011-41112221-28, kumarassociatesadvocates@gmail.com

Public Notice

The Public at large is hereby informed that Late Mr. **Murli Manohar Mathur** S/o Late Sh. Bankay Bihari Mathur R/o **G-11/8, DLF Phase-1, Sikanderpur Ghosi (68), Gurugram, Haryana -122002** was having two commercial properties in Sole/Joint ownership in our project **Vatika INXT City Centre**, unit no. 126, Block C, 1st Floor admeasuring 500 sq.ft. & unit no. 132, Block C, 1st Floor admeasuring 500 sq.ft. also in **Vatika INXT City Centre** respectively which his legal heirs **Saurabh Mathur** (son), **Ms. Monica Mathur** (Daughter), **Ms. Vinita Mathur** (Daughter) requested the company to be transferred to Mr. **Saurabh Mathur** his son. Any person having any objection on this please may contact the company officer details as under within 15 days after which no claim would be accepted.

Vatika Limited: Vatika INXT City Centre, A-002, Ground Floor, Block A, Sector-83, Vatika India Next Gurugram, Haryana-122011 Ph: 095559303030

EASTERN COALFIELDS LIMITED
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

NOTICE

"All the tenders issued by CIL and its subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works & Services are available on i) Website of Coal India Limited: **www.coalindia.in**, ii) Website of ECL: **www.easterncoal.nic.in**, iii) CIL e-Procurement Portal: **https://coalindiatictenders.nic.in**, iv) Central Public Procurement Portal: **https://eprocure.gov.in**. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM Portal: **https://gem.gov.in**".

(By Order), ECL

VISIT US AT www.easterncoal.nic.in

Mother, son pass out from same OTA 27 years apart

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

It was indeed a proud moment for Major Smita Chaturvedi (retired) to see her son pass out from the Officers Training Academy (OTA) from where she had graduated 27 years ago. The heartwarming event took place at the OTA, Chennai last week where Chief of Maldives Armed Forces Major General Abdulla Shamaal reviewed the passing out parade. The proud mother later posed with her son who was in uniform. The passing out parade took place on Saturday.

The Defence Ministry in a tweet said "Major Smita Chaturvedi (Retd), commissioned from Officers Training Academy, Chennai, before 27 years in 1995, saw her son getting Commissioned in the same manner in the same Academy today."

In a follow-up tweet, a picture of Major Smita from her training days was posted on Twitter. "An old gem from the training days of Cadet Smita Chaturvedi," the post read. It also said "it was a rare euphoric moment for a Lady Officer."

She also recalled her old days in the Academy and said in a video message this generation is ahead of us and is ready to face the challenges. The text attached to tweet read, "Major Smita Chaturvedi(Retd) reminisces her old days of being a Cadet in the illustrious



Academy and ecstatic about her son re-enacting the glorious script of joining Army like herself." Feeling nostalgic to visit the academy from where she passed out to don the uniform, she said "For him it is huge and for me, it is extremely euphoric.

I'd like to congratulate all the cadets passing out today and congratulate OTA (Officers Training Academy) for grooming them so well. I'm absolutely nostalgic," she said.

When asked if there's any change in the landscape of the institution, the retired army officer replied, "Yes, it has. A lot of new buildings have come up which were not there in our time.

The messes and the place where the cadets live now, it's all changed, it is all new." She also complimented the institution for grooming the young cadets and said "Of course,

there are new challenges and the new generation is equipped to face them. They are all far ahead of us and OTA has done such a stunning job at making them such officers." In total, 125 Gentlemen and 41 Lady Cadets were commissioned into the Indian Army at Officers Training Academy, Chennai. Thirty cadets from foreign countries also completed their training.

The officers who graduate from OTA are inducted into Short Service Commission(SSC)stream and can now serve up to 15 years. Incidentally, recently a father-daughter duo created history as they became first such combine to fly IAF fighter jets together.

They are Air Commodore Sanjay Sharma and Flying Officer Ananya Sharma. The duo flew a Hawk fighter jet sortie in Bidar, Karnataka on May 30 in the same formation.

Cabinet rejig, 7 new districts in south Bengal: Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Apparently embarking on a two-pronged damage control exercise — little more than a week after the arrest of her senior-most Cabinet colleague Partha Chatterjee following a school-level recruitment scandal — Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday announced a Cabinet reshuffle and creation of seven new districts. These districts are all in south Bengal the main support base of the TMC.

The reshuffle is likely to take place on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said adding some six new faces will be inducted in the State Cabinet and at least three sitting ministers will be dropped.

“We have lost a number of

ministers like Subrata Mukherjee who used to handle three portfolios, Sadhan Pande and then Partha Chatterjee is presently in jail ... It is not possible for me to take charge of all the departments and so I have decided to bring in some new faces,” Banerjee said after emerging from a Cabinet meeting. “We want some ministers to take organisational responsibilities and so some of them will be relieved,” she said.

Opposition read the new decision as a “diversionary tactic” from the main issue.

In the meeting she is known to have warned the Ministers to remain watchful about their actions saying any act that would smear the face of the party and the government would not be tolerated.

According to sources close to the Chief Minister she is likely to bring in comparatively cleaner and less controversial faces that may include: former Union Minister Babul Supriyo --- who left the BJP to join the TMC after the last year’s Assembly elections, Tapas Roy, Partha Bhowmick, Snehashis Chakrabarty and Udayan Guha.

The minister who is likely to be dropped is junior Education Minister Paresh Adhikari --daughter Ankita had been sacked by the High Court for illegally usurping the job of another successful candidate Babita Sarkar who had secured more marks than her. Apart from Adhikari another minister Soumen Mahapatra may also be shown

the doors, sources said.

The decision is seen as an attempt to blunt the opposition attacks in the wake of the arrest of Partha Chatterjee from the apartments of whose close aide Ārpita Mukherjee the Enforcement Directorate has recovered more than Rs 50 crore and jewellery, and bank instruments worth another 15 crore. This is apart from the deeds of at least 35 properties that had been recovered from her apartments.

Apart from announcing a possible reshuffle the Chief Minister also declared the creation of seven more districts in Bengal.

The new districts will be Ichamati district after the name of Ichamati River in Bongaon region bordering Bangladesh,

Basirhat district. Both these districts will be culled out from North 24 Parganas that accounts for five parliamentary seats. Besides a new Sunderbans district will also be created by bifurcating South 24 Parganas which has four MP seats.

The existing Murshidabad district bordering Bangladesh too will be broken into three districts of Behrampore, Murshidabad and Kandi districts. A new district will also be created in the jangalmahals of Bankura where a new Bishnupur district will come up by bifurcating the Bankura district. Besides, Ranaghat district will be created by bifurcating the Nadia district. The creation of seven districts will now take the total number of

districts in the State to 30.

“The creation of these districts will facilitate development and fulfil the dreams of many people in the State,” the Chief Minister said adding “earlier we had 23 districts and now it will be 30... the State Cabinet has cleared the creation of these new districts ... we congratulate the people ... the decision was taken to ensure smooth administrative functioning.”

Reacting to the two new developments political analyst BN Chakrabarty said that a shrewd politician that the Chief Minister was she was trying to blunt the opposition attacks by taking the two decisions.

“While bringing in new faces will help her improve the image of the her government



and the creation of new districts will apart from providing administrative ease also make an emotional appeal to the people of the regions ... but time will only tell whether these steps will do enough to control the damage,” he said.

Police Commissioners of Lucknow, Kanpur removed, kept in waiting

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Taking major action, the Yogi Adityanath Government on Monday shunted out Lucknow and Kanpur Nagar Police Commissioners DK Thakur and Vijay Singh Meena respectively. Both Thakur and Meena have been kept in waiting.

SB Shirodkar has been made the new Commissioner of police of Lucknow, while BP Jogdand has been appointed as the Commissioner of police of Kanpur Nagar.

According to information, DK Thakur has been accused of negligence in traffic management and law and order, while action has been taken against Vijay Singh Meena in

connection with the June 3 incident when violence erupted in Kanpur Nagar and many allegations of corruption in the police force came to the fore.

Both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath were present in Kanpur on June 3, when violence broke out after namaz and it gave an opportunity to the opposition to attack the government on the law and order front.

The Yogi government has also given new postings to three more IPS officers. Vijay Kumar has been made DG CB CID in place of GL Meena who goes as DG, Cooperative Cell, replacing BK Maurya, who will be the new DG, Logistics

as well as DG Home Guards.

Meanwhile, with the month of Muharram and Shrawan falling together, the state government has further strengthened the law and order to maintain peace. Along with western UP, Muharram is also observed on a large-scale in Lucknow, Kanpur Nagar, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Jaunpur etc. For this, strict arrangements are being made by the police.

ADG (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar said here on Monday that an adequate number of police and Provincial Armed Constabulary forces were being provided for Muharram. He said instructions had been given to the officials in this regard.

As per the instructions, no one will be allowed to take out a new procession which is out of tradition. This time, as before, traditional processions will be taken out and tazias will be kept.

Instructions have been given to the police officers to ensure that there is no dispute. Instructions have also been issued to take every small matter and dispute seriously to get them resolved in time.

The ADG (Law and Order) said that the last Monday of Shrawan would fall on August 8 and the 10th Muharram on August 9. In such a situation, instructions have been given to the officials to avoid any dispute and to make necessary traffic diversions.

Former SP MLA close to Akhilesh faces Vigilance probe in DA case

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Vigilance Establishment has tightened its noose around former Samajwadi Party MLA Deep Narayan Singh Yadav by registering an FIR against him in a disproportionate asset (DA) case.

Deep Narayan Singh is said to be close to Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav and was party chief in Madhya Pradesh.

An FIR was registered against Deep Narayan Singh in the DA case. The two-time MLA from Jhansi's Garautha constituency is accused of amassing ill-gotten wealth as an MLA.

Inspector Shambhu Tiwari of UP Vigilance's Jhansi unit said that an investigation had

been going on in the disproportionate assets case against Deep Narayan Singh.

“During the probe, it was detected that Deep Narayan Singh, while being a public servant, had made an income of more than Rs 14.30 crore from his legitimate sources. But, he spent two and a half times more than the known sources of his income i.e., over Rs 37.32 crore,” Tiwari said.

“During questioning, SP leader Deep Narayan Singh failed to give a satisfactory reply to Vigilance officials. Hence, a case was registered against him under sections 13(1)B and 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018. Further investigation into the matter will be conducted by the

Kanpur unit of UP Vigilance,” the inspector added.

Deep Narayan Singh Yadav was accused of raising illegal assets through mining between 2006 and 2016. After its complaint, Vigilance started an investigation in April 2021 on the recommendation of the government. The Vigilance probed into the former MLA's K Future Tank Housing Pvt Ltd, BD Builder Associate, Mona Construction Granite, SR Residency Pvt Ltd, Moon City Scape Builder Pvt Ltd, Ramdevi Pvt Ltd, Ramadevi Educational Foundation Trust Jarha Khurd Moth, DSS Real Estate Pvt Ltd Jarha Khurd , Tikaram Yadav Memorial College, Moth, Tikaram Law College, Moth, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia ITI College

Jarha Khurd, Ramadevi Enterprises Private Limited, DNA Private Limited, M/s Maa Pitambara Private Limited and many other immovable properties were kept under investigation.

Deep Narayan Singh Yadav's political debut as a student leader started in 1986. He was Samajwadi Yuvjan Sabha's district president, from 1993 to 1998 and was the chairman of Jhansi District Co-operative Bank. In the year 1998, Deep Narayan, who contested from Niwari assembly seat of Madhya Pradesh, was elected MLA on SP ticket, and contested Garautha seat in the 2007 and 2012 Vidhan Sabha elections. He has also been the SP state president of Madhya Pradesh.

Property of another Mukhtar gang member attacked

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Continuing the crackdown on Mukhtar Ansari and his gang members, the district administration in Ghazipur attached property worth over Rs 4 crore of one of them on Monday.

Reports said that the assets of Bhim Singh, a member of the gang and close aide of Mukhtar Ansari, were attached.

According to the police, gangster Bhim Singh, a resident of Ramnathpur police station area, had illegally

acquired immovable property. After the order of the district magistrate, a plot and a flat and commercial land of the gangster have been attached. There are 35 cases registered against Bhim Singh in Varanasi, Chandauli and Ghazipur.

On Monday, the administration attached land worth crores of Bhim Singh located in Babedi in Sadar Kotwali area.

Superintendent of Police Rohan P Botre said that on the orders of the district magistrate, the property of Bhim

Singh located in Babadi in Ramnathpur village, was attached. This land is registered in the name of Aman Singh, son of Bhim Singh.

The district police chief said that Bhim Singh's total property worth four crore rupees was being attached. Apart from this action, two teams have been sent for attachment of a flat and land located in Lucknow.

Botre said that such action would be taken continuously against others associated with Mukhtar Ansari gang.

India, Maldives to review bilateral ties at Modi-Solih talks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Maldives will review the entire spectrum of their bilateral ties during the talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih here on Tuesday.

He arrived in the national Capital on Monday on a four-day visit. His visit will inject a new momentum to the close and expanding strategic partnership between the two countries.

Union Minister Sanjeev Balyan welcomed Solih on his arrival at the Delhi airport.

The Maldives is one of India's key maritime neigh-

bours in the Indian Ocean region and the overall bilateral ties, including in areas of defence and security, have been on an upward trajectory in the past few years.

Modi and Solih will hold wide-ranging talks on Tuesday following which the two sides are expected to ink a number of agreements.

Solih is also scheduled to meet President Droupadi Murmu. “A warm welcome to a close friend and maritime neighbour! President @ibusolih of Maldives arrives in New Delhi for an official visit,”

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said on Twitter.

“An opportunity to nurture the unwavering friendship between our two countries and lend further momentum to the multifaceted partnership,” he added.

Besides official engagements in New Delhi, President Solih will also visit Mumbai and participate in business events.

Last week, Chief of Maldivian defence forces Major General Abdulla Shamaal visited India.

In March, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, during a visit to Male, handed over a

coastal radar system to the country.

India and Maldives share common perspectives on maritime security issues in the Indian Ocean and have been working together to expand defence cooperation. Development cooperation has been a key pillar of the India-Maldives relationship with New Delhi providing Lines of Credit of over USD 1.2 billion for infrastructure and grants for community development projects to the island nation. In August last year, the island nation sealed a contract for the implementa-

tion of an India-funded connectivity project, billed as the largest infrastructure initiative being rolled out in the island nation.

Under the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP), a 6.74-km-long bridge and causeway link will be built to connect capital city Male with adjoining islands of Villingli, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi.

Funded under a grant of \$100 million and a Line of Credit of \$400 million from India, it will be reportedly the largest infrastructure project in the Maldives.

SC directs Bombay HC to decide plea of Lt-Col accused in 2008 blast

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Bombay High Court to decide expeditiously the plea of Lt Col Prasad Purohit, an accused in the 2008 Malegaon blast case.

Purohit had moved the High Court stating that the sanction granted by the government to prosecute him in the case, was wrong in law.

A bench of Justices Hemant Gupta and Justice Vikram Nath noted that as of now 246 witnesses have been examined.

“The petition filed by the petitioner is pending consideration before the high court where he has sought quashing of sanction. Keeping in view the facts and circumstances of the case, we deem it appropriate to request the high court to

take the petition and decide the same expeditiously in accordance with the law,” the bench said.

On December 18, 2017, the High Court refused to quash a Government sanction that permitted Purohit's prosecution in the blast case. Earlier, a special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court had dismissed his plea to discharge him from the case.

A prior sanction for Purohit's prosecution was required since he was a serving Army officer at the time.

Six people were killed and over 100 injured after an explosive device strapped to a motorcycle went off near a mosque at Malegaon in north Maharashtra, about 200 kilometres from Mumbai, on September 29, 2008.


All the seven accused in the case are currently out on bail.

CBI arrests 3 Railway officials for graft

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Monday said it has arrested a Chief Freight Transport Manager (IRTS of 1996 batch), posted at East Central Railway head-quarter in Hajipur (Bihar), Sanjay Kumar, and two other IRTS officers besides others in a bribery case of Rs 6 lakh. The agency recovered Rs 46.5 lakh cash during searches at the premises of the accused.

Besides Kumar, Rupesh Kumar (IRTS-2011 batch), Senior DOM, Samastipur, East Central Railway, Bihar and posted at Samastipur, Sachin Mishra (IRTS-2011 batch), Sr.DOM, Sonpur, Nawal Ladha and Manoj Ladha of Kolkata-based Abha Agro Industries Private Limited and private person Manoj Kumar Saha have also been arrested in the case, officials said.



NEW OKHLA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida G.B. Nagar, (U.P)
Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firm for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened / download as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & <https://etender.up.nic.in> Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/ amendments & corrigendum etc.

A. Fresh - Tender work

S. No.	Jobs No.	Name of the Work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
1	22/PGM/Sr.M(E&M) -III/2022-23	M/o Park Light (Strengthening /Providing of park light pole instead of damage & broken pole in different block park sector-15 & 15A, Noida.	77.65
2	23/PGM/ Sr.M(E&M) -III/2022-23	Providing LED light & Strengthening of street lighting in Jhuggi Jhopri Group Housing sector-122 Noida.	61.07
3	30/PG M/Sr.M(E&M) -I /I / 2022-23/ET	Providing and Installation of High Mast light in B & C Block Park of sector-23, Noida.	42.21

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated **16.08.2022 upto 5.00 PM**. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated **17.08.2022 at 11.00 AM**.


B. Re - Tender work

S. No.	Jobs No.	Name of the Work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
4	02/PGM/Sr.M(E&M) -IV/ 2022-23	Repair & Maintenance of Incinerator (Pet Animal Machine) of SPCA sector-94) Noida.	32.15
5	19/PGM/Sr.M(E&M) -II/ 2022-23/ET	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of EPABX System in stadium, Sector-21A, Noida.	38.66
6	20/PGM/Sr.M(E&M) -II/ 2022-23/ET	AMC and Servicing of 380 KVA, 500 KVA, 750 KVA DG set for Noida Stadium, Sector-21A, Noida.	30.47
7	01/PGM/Sr.M(E&M) -I/ET/2022-23	External Electrification of 5% Village abadi plot at village Yakubpur, sector-86, Noida.	33.39
8	09/PGM/Sr.M(E&M) -I/ET/2022-23	Renovation of Fountain in A-Block park sector-92, Noida.	34.36
9	13/PGM/ Sr.M(E&M) -III/2022-23	Shifting of street light pole near Amity School under Metro line sector-44, Noida.	43.26
10	16/PGM/Sr.M(E&M) -III/2022-23	Annual Maintenance of 63 KVA Transformer Installed for street light on road between sector-14 & 15, Sector-16, 17, DSC road, Sector-16A and MP-2 road Hajipur road sector-99 and 100) Noida.	32.45

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated **08.08.2022 upto 5.00 PM**. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated **09.08.2022 at 11.00 AM**.

Principal General Manager
Noida

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA



Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005

PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET

[See proviso to rule 8(6)]
Notice for sale of immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd. will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of E-Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Vijay Grover (Borrower), Reena Grover (Co-Borrower) LBDEL00002365295	Flat No B1 1301, JKG Palm Court, Plot No GH 1D, Sector 16C, Greater Noida West, Up. Super Builtup Area- 1765 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 85,73, 644.81 as on July 22, 2022	Rs. 44,00, 000/- Rs.4,40, 000/-	August 08, 2022 From 02 PM to 04:00 PM	August 23, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
2.	Vijay Grover (Borrower), Reena Grover (Co-Borrower) LBDEL00002371601	Flat No B1 1302, JKG Palm Court, Plot No GH 1D, Sector 16C, Greater Noida West, Up Super Builtup Area- 1765 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 85,10, 612.81 as on July 08, 2022	Rs. 44,00, 000/- Rs.4,40, 000/-	August 08, 2022 From 02 PM to 04:00 PM	August 23, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
3.	Vikrant Singh (Borrower), Ritu Singh (Co-Borrower) LBGUR00002386632	Flat No. B1-1802, 18th Floor, JKG Palm Court, GH-1D, Sector 16c, Greater Noida West, Up. Super Builtup Area- 1765 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 87,45, 639.77 as on July 08, 2022	Rs. 55,00, 000/- Rs.5,50, 000/-	August 08, 2022 From 02 PM to 04:00 PM	August 23, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
4.	Kanishka (Borrower), Santosh Kumari (Co-Borrower) LBGUR00002372750	B-2-1303, 13th Floor, JKG Palm Court, Plot No. GH/1-D, Sector 16C, Greater Noida West, Up. Super Builtup Area- 1395 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 74,91, 515.78 as on July 22, 2022	Rs. 35,00, 000/- Rs.3,50, 00/-	August 08, 2022 From 02 PM to 04:00 PM	August 23, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
5.	Aditya Prakash (Borrower), Prem Shashank (Co-Borrower) LBGHZ00002441728	Flat No 1408, 14th Floor Tower- A2, JKG Palm Court, Situated At Plot No GH-1D Sector-16C, Greater Noida, Noida. Super Builtup Area- 1185 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 54,50, 982.48 as on July 22, 2022	Rs. 32,00, 000/- Rs.3,20, 000/-	August 08, 2022 From 02 PM to 04:00 PM	August 23, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
6.	Himanshu Gupta (Borrower), Vandna Rani (Co-Borrower) LBGHZ00002313993	Flat No B1 1801, 18th Floor, JKG Palm Court, Plot No GH 1D, Sector 16c, Greater Noida West, UP. Super Builtup Area- 1765 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 88,23, 832.14 as on July 26, 2022	Rs. 48,00, 000/- Rs. 4,80, 000/-	Aug 08, 2022 From 02 PM to 04:00 PM	August 23, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link- <https://disposalhub.com>) of our auction agency **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited**. The Mortgagors/ noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till **August 22, 2022 before 05:00 P.M** else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol bagh, Delhi-110005** and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before **August 22, 2022 before 05:00 P.M.** along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, incase prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol bagh, Delhi-110005** on or before **August 22, 2022 before 05:00 P.M.** Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/ Scheduled Bank in favour of "**ICICI Bank Limited**" payable at **Delhi**.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the E-Auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact **ICICI Bank Limited on 9599281817/ 8584874809** or **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited on 9810029926/ 01244233933**

Please note that Marketing agencies **1. M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited. 2. Augoe Asset Management Pvt Ltd** have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.

The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s

Date: August 02, 2022
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

FIRST COLUMN

HELP FOR YOUR PETS FROM ONLINE VETS

Availability of online vets easing ways to groom pets



CHANDRAKANT YADAV

Pets need love, care, and attention more than you think. People often think that pets need little attention and are easy to manage. The furry creatures are seen as fun-loving companions to spend time with.

However, when you buy or adopt a pet, it is a lifetime commitment, and you are responsible for the health and well-being of your furry family member. Right from providing good quality food to regular vet visits and grooming, pets need constant attention.

During the pandemic, pets were ignored, as well as abandoned, due to the fear and rumours of them being possible carriers of the virus. This was followed by another phase that witnessed a spike in buying or adoption of pets as millions across the globe got an opportunity to work from home. Here are a few things people often tend to ignore while taking care of their pets.

Pets have a shorter lifespan than humans. They need regular checkups with vaccinations as and when required. As a pet owner, you should take care of your pets in the same way that you would take care of any other family member. While regular visits to veterinary clinics may be tiresome, these days online vet care is thriving to save pet parents from hassles. Also, during the pandemic, many people skipped going to pet salons or pet clinics for fear of getting the infection. This affected the health of a lot of pets as they suffered from poor skin and dental health. Nowadays, you can easily book online pet consultations and request a vet for a home visit through online pet care and grooming services.



Maintaining a proper diet and meeting adequate nutritional needs are essential for good pet health. Younger pets have different food requirements as compared to fully grown ones. The food that we eat may contain salt, garlic, onions, and other ingredients which may be harmful to some pets. You need to do careful research or get in touch with an expert to know the right food plan for your pet. Pets need the right amount of food too. Too much or too little can be harmful, just like the wrong food. Overeating can lead to heart issues, renal problems, and obesity among pets. Get in touch with your vet to know the right amount and the right food.

Engaging your pet in activities and games may not only promote physical and mental health but also entertain them. People who ignore their pets due to work pressure or other issues often find their shoes, clothes or wired appliances harmed as a bored pet may engage in such behaviour. It is boredom that leads them to play with the garbage and tear up the couch. Expand their horizons! Let them step outside and play with a ball in the park and socialize with your friends and neighbours. This will keep them active and get to know new people. Try to tire out your pet, especially dogs. This will keep them calm.

Matted fur is painful for dogs, which can happen when a pet's coat isn't properly groomed. The right brush or an online pet groomer may be useful. Dogs and cats are mostly not friendly with bathing, tick removal, brushing, or nail trims.

Pet parents must ensure 24X7 access to fresh drinking water for their pets, arrange for a safe and cozy shelter, and take care of their bathroom needs regularly.

(The author is Chief Marketing Officer, ThePetNest)

Legislate to safeguard kids from ‘dark web’

Studies point out to disturbing trends of growing exploitation of children amid legislative vacuum



Cyber/online" trafficking should primarily be understood as human trafficking, committed with the help of online networks using gadgets. This is a global malaise and since trafficking is a crime, this is covered under various international anti-trafficking instruments such as the 2000 'Palermo Protocol' and the 2005 'Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings'.

It also falls under the 2001 'Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime', the first international treaty on crimes committed through the internet. Cyber/online trafficking involving children assumes a much larger significance and widespread implication for our social fabric. The crisis of child trafficking worsened in the country during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. With schools and educational institutions shut down amid a spike in joblessness among households, traffickers became sophisticated with online/cyber tools, compounding the problems for law enforcement agencies.

India still doesn't have an appropriate law designed specifically to handle the challenge of cyber/online child trafficking. The easy access to the 'Dark Web' that gives anonymity to its users due to sophisticated online tools has made it easier for traffickers to lure gullible and jobless parents to allow their children into multiple forms of abuse. Preying on vulnerable families by luring them with false promises of a new job, increased income, and better living conditions, became easier for traffickers, who indulged in such illicit activities during the pandemic. Parents and children remain ignorant of the perils of such allurements.

No wonder the illegal trade of child labour continued to flourish across India despite strict lockdowns and little movement of people. The International Labour Organization (ILO) had revealed in June 2021 that around 160 million children were forced into labour, rising by about nine million in the last four years.

A study by the New Delhi-based independent think-tank, India Child Protection Fund (ICPF) in 2020 (<https://www.icpf.org.in/reports>) revealed disturbing facts related to cyber/online trafficking and the availability of 'child sexual abuse material' (CSAM). The ICPF examined data from Pornhub, world's largest pornography website that revealed traffic from India increased by 95 per cent in March 2020 right after the imposition of national lockdown, as compared to pre-pandemic average traffic on their website. This increase was fuelled by Pornhub after it made its premium content free-of-charge during the lockdown.

A significant segment of this spike was attributed to the demand for child pornography content. The ICPF found the demand for child pornography material only on the public domain was an average of five million per month in 100 cities. A vast majority of individuals were inter-



THE ICPF EXAMINED DATA FROM PORNHUB, WORLD'S LARGEST PORNOGRAPHY WEBSITE THAT REVEALED TRAFFIC FROM INDIA INCREASED BY 95 PER CENT IN MARCH 2020 RIGHT AFTER THE IMPOSITION OF NATIONAL LOCKDOWN, AS COMPARED TO PRE-PANDEMIC AVERAGE TRAFFIC ON THEIR WEBSITE

(The author is a policy analyst)



ested in generic CSAM content involving 'school girls' sex' and the demand for such content with specific age groups, sexual actions and locations was growing by as much as 200 per cent.

The study further found the demand for specific content, where the person was interested in specific actions, age groups, locations, etc., was the highest in cities like - Kolkata, Siliguri, Howrah, Chandigarh, Guwahati, Indore, Bhubaneswar and Chennai. Another report of the Childline India Helpline from the national lockdown period in 2020 reconfirmed this trend of increased vulnerability of children to sexual abuse. The helpline received more than 92,000 SOS calls asking for protection from abuse and violence.

The ICPF in course of its study made several recommendations that will enable the law enforcement agencies to tackle the scourge of cyber/online child trafficking cases. It had recommended creation of a 'CSAM Tracker' through nationwide scale up of artificial intelligence tools. The tracker will track the hosting, sharing viewership and download of CSAM and link it with existing cyber security systems of the Government of India. Aggressive online campaign and educating parents and children on the relevance and modus operandi of online child sexual abusers, and on how to report the crime also formed parts of the recommendations.

The ICPF urged for creation of a 'National CSAM Offenders Registry' for individuals found to be viewing such contents which will be made available to all internet service providers (ISPs). It urged individuals proven to be con-

suming, distributing or selling CSAM be denied personal internet services for a specified period of time. Mandatory pulling down of CSAM content and individuals by ISPs and social media platforms. The ICPF also advocated India to take the lead in establishing a legally binding international convention for international cooperation to eliminate the creation, hosting and viewership of CSAM.

The rise in the risk for the jobless households and their children is now multifold and requires institutionalization of special agencies armed with a law that is sufficiently equipped to handle such instances of online exploitation and trafficking of children. In this context, the Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation (KSCF) has proposed to create the 'Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (OCSAE)' to save children from exploitative situations.

The aim is to establish specialized policing units that are equipped and empowered to carry out effective investigations to prevent circulation of abusive materials online and stop cyber exploitation that leads into trafficking.

In the first two years 2021 and 2022, the KSCF partnered with Maharashtra and Kerala to identify and weed out cases of online exploitation and possible trafficking. The initiative yielded results in Kerala, where 472 FIRs were registered, which led to 67 arrests. Similarly, in Maharashtra, a 'Tactical Response Against Cyber Children Exploitation Unit (TRACE)' was set up as a pilot scheme. It was successful in retrieving a huge cache of online

exploitative material.

As part of its effort to root out the evil of CSAM, KSCF has identified "ICACCOPS software", which is a product of Internet Crime Against Children (ICAC), an international Taskforce involving various national governments to detect CSAM available online. Additionally, Kerala cyber police is developing the Grapnel tool with support from KSCF to monitor and crawl through the 'Dark Web'. It will collect data from websites, chat rooms and other sources to prevent and stop online exploitation and possible trafficking.

Apart from the two state governments, multiple workshops have been conducted in schools in Mumbai to train children regarding cyber safety nets. The plan is to expand a similar network in Telangana, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh or Assam over the next three years.

Here it is pertinent to note that law enforcement agencies are making efforts by carrying out operations to stop these illicit activities. For instance, in November 2021, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had carried out multiple raids across the country and seized child pornographic material and made arrests but much more remains to be done.

The Union government must view the rising epidemic of cyber/online child trafficking and legislate appropriate laws to handle the crisis. A law with multiple tentacles that can nab the suppliers and consumers of CSAM even in the 'Dark Web'. The key here is to prevent the online circulation of CSAM and nip it in its bud before it goes viral online.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

CONGRESS LEADERS KEEP IN TOUCH WITH ME AS OLD FRIENDS. I HAD BEEN IN THAT PARTY FOR OVER 20 YEARS. THEY MEET ME IF THEY COME HERE

—ASSAM CHIEF MINISTER HIMANTA BISWA SARMA



THEY WERE OFFERING RS 10 CRORE PER MLA. THEY WANTED TO TAKE ME TO GUWAHATI WHERE A MEETING WAS FIXED WITH ASSAM CM HIMANTA BISWA SARMA


—JHARKHAND CONGRESS LEGISLATOR KUMAR JAIMANGAL



Comparing and contrasting two women Presidents

They are both symbolic of women's empowerment, but this symbolism is needed to encourage the underprivileged

How should the newly elected President Droupadi Murmu be addressed? When Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury referred to her as 'Rashtrapatni' and claimed it was a slip of tongue later, Union Minister Smriti Irani said that the word was derogatory. Even when the first woman president Pratibha Patil (2007-2012) took over, Shiv Sena supremo, late Bal Thackeray, called her 'Rashtrapatni', but Patil laughed it off. In the end, Patil was addressed as Rashtrapati.



KALYANI SHANKAR

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

'Rashtrapati' irrespective of gender.

Patil belongs to an affluent Maratha family married to a Rajput. Murmu comes from a modest tribal family. She recalls growing up in a backward area with no roads and electricity. She walked to her school barefooted, and with one pair of dresses for the whole year. Her dream was to get a regular job to support her family. Destiny led her to first Raj Bhavan and now to Rashtrapathi Bhavan.

Both presidents had been surprise choices. Being an educated tribal and a woman were Murmu's advantages, while loyalty to the Gandhis was Pratibha's strong point.

Both the women had been governors, MLAs, and later ministers. While Patil is a lawyer, Droupadi is a former teacher.

Incidentally, both are spiritual and have immense faith in the Brahmakumaris, a movement founded in India in 1937. People were amazed to see Murmu sweeping the premises of the Purandeswari Shiva temple before offering prayers. Interestingly, Patil claimed the spirit of Baba Lekhraj, who died in 1969, spoke to her about a 'great responsibility coming her way.'

Patil believes in women's empowerment. She has set up Vidya Bharati Shikshan Prasarak Mandal, an institute that runs a chain of schools and colleges in Amravati, Jalgaon, and Mumbai. She has also set up Shram Sadhana Trust, which runs hostels for working women in New Delhi, Mumbai, and Pune.

Murmu said to an Odiya magazine, "There must be reser-

vation for women in politics dominated by men. The political parties can change this situation by choosing candidates and distributing tickets to contest elections."

Both are traditional, as you rarely see a picture of Pratibha without her pallu over her head. Murmu began her new job wearing a simple white traditional Santhal Jhal saree. PTI reported about a relative of the President who asked the relative to bring a dozen saris to New Delhi.

Both Patil and Murmu are self-confident because they struggle to reach the top. Both come from national political parties. Patil, who never lost an election, was an MLA for 30 years, a leader of the Opposition, and later the Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha (1986-88).

Droupadi, who had the surname of Tudu in school and college, became Murmu after she married Shyam Charan Tudu, a bank officer. Her school teacher had named her 'Droupadi.' She was elected as a BJP MLA in 2000 from Rairangpur and from Mayurbhanj in 2009. She was also the minister of commerce, transport, fisheries, and animal husbandry during the BJP-BJD coalition in Odisha.

President Patil's tenure in Rashtrapathi Bhavan was mired in controversies from the day she was nominated for the high post. She reflected an aristocratic demeanor during her presidency. Her foreign trips with her family cost the exchequer as much as Rs 205 crore. There were allegations that she had usurped defence

land to build her post-retirement bungalow in Pune.

Murmu has faced many family tragedies; she lost her husband and two sons in succession. "There was a time when I thought I might die anytime," she said in an interview. She joined Ishwariya Prapajati Brahmakumari and underwent yoga and meditation.

Murmu was the first woman/tribal governor to complete her five-year term in Jharkhand. As her record proves, she can handle her job well. For instance, she returned two Bills affecting tribal welfare.

Murmu has played a significant role in promoting Santhali, which was included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution in 2003. The Santhals, the third largest Scheduled Tribe (ST) in India, are spread over Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Odisha.

Murmu's elevation manifests a particular moment of social empowerment for the tribals. After taking oath as President, Murmu said, "Today, I assure all the countrymen, especially the youth of India and the women of India, that while working in this position, their interests will be paramount for me."

Nobody believes that just because Patil was the first woman president, the status of women had improved dramatically. Or now that Murmu has become the first tribal President, she could use a magic wand and change the tribal status. They are both symbolic of women's empowerment, but this symbolism is needed to encourage the underprivileged to dream of high positions.

Lankan Prez believes ‘not right time’ for Gotabaya to return

PTI ■ COLOMBO

It is not the right time for Gotabaya Rajapaksa to return to Sri Lanka as his presence here could inflame political tensions in the country which is grappling with the worst economic crisis in history, his successor Ranil Wickremesinghe has said.

Wickremesinghe was elected as the president through a parliamentary vote on July 20 after then-President Rajapaksa fled to the Maldives and then to Singapore when anti-government protesters stormed the President's House. The six-time former prime minister, who was appointed the acting President after Gotabaya fled the country following a popular uprising against the Rajapaksa family, said in an interview with the Wall Street Journal on Sunday that the former president's return in the current situation could inflame political tensions among tens of thousands of protesters who blame the erstwhile powerful family for the current economic crisis.

Sri Lanka's cabinet spokesman Bandula Gunawardena recently said that Rajapaksa, 73, was not in hiding and was expected to return soon. Wickremesinghe, who remained in contact with Rajapaksa to deal with administrative handover issues and other government business, said the former president had not indicated about his planned return to Sri Lanka soon. "I don't believe it's the time for him to return," 73-year-old Wickremesinghe said, adding that the leader, who escaped Sri Lanka in the midst of the economic turmoil, had not "indicated" of returning soon. The new president said Sri Lanka had experienced the worst of its economic crisis and that restoring political stability would allow it to begin turning a corner, starting with finalising negotiations for an International Monetary Fund bailout that had stalled due to recent turmoil.

"I think we've already hit the bottom," Wickremesinghe said. "I can see the light at the end of the tunnel; it's how fast we can get to it." The president acknowledged that it would take months for Sri Lankans, who have been facing acute shortage of foreign currency leading to runaway inflation and long queues for essential items such as food, fuel, cooking



gas and medicines, to see their economic circumstances improve markedly.

The new Sri Lankan government faces the task of leading the country out of its economic collapse and restoring order after months of mass protests that forced President Rajapaksa to flee the country and resign. The Indian government assistance to Sri Lanka has reached almost USD 4 billion since January this year. Sri Lanka needs about USD 5 billion in the next six months to cover basic necessities for its 22 million people, who have been struggling with long queues, worsening shortages and power cuts. The country is currently holding talks with the IMF and other foreign countries on financial aid to tide over the current economic crisis.

In another development on Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent a congratulatory letter to his newly-appointed Sri Lankan counterpart Dinesh Gunawardena and assured India's support to the people of the island nation, which is facing its worst economic crisis in decades, the High Commission of India here said on Monday. "PM @narendramodi sent a congratulatory letter to PM H.E @DCRGunawardena. PM assured that as a dependable friend and close neighbour, India shall continue to support the people of Sri Lanka," the Indian mission said in a tweet.

Prime Minister Modi also expressed hope that Sri Lanka will witness quick economic recovery, ensuring the prosperity and well-being of its people, it added.

Lanka's Tamil party supports Prez call to form national Govt

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's main Tamil Sminority party TNA on Monday announced that it will support President Ranil Wickremesinghe's efforts to form an all-party national government to help the bankrupt country to recover from the worst economic crisis.

R Sampanthan, a veteran Tamil political leader, told reporters that the move to form an all-party government is the best step to be taken right now and his party will support the move.

Another Tamil National Alliance (TNA) spokesman said that the party has decided that the formation of an all-party government would be suitable in order to tackle the economic and political crisis that Sri Lanka is faced with. However, the TNA has not made a decision yet to take up Cabinet positions in such a government.

President Wickremesinghe last week wrote to the members of Parliament calling on them to join him to form a national all-party government to tackle the island nation's economic crisis. "The government is currently engaged in great efforts to gradually restore normalcy to the political and social unrest created by the economic crisis that the country is facing today. Accordingly, initial plans required to implement a systematic economic programme are being formulated while preliminary measures are also being undertaken for the creation of economic sta-



bility," Wickremesinghe said in the letter on Friday.

The main Opposition party Samagi Jana Balavegaya (SJB), however, said that invitations to form the all-party government must be extended to parties and not individuals.

TNA had officially supported Wickremesinghe's rival Dullas Alahapperuma in the parliamentary vote on July 20 to elect the successor to the resigned president Gotabaya Rajapaksa. But at least a few of their 10 MPs were believed to have favoured Wickremesinghe in the secret vote against the party's stand.

President Wickremesinghe is to ceremonially address Parliament on Wednesday where he is expected to make his policy speech.

Sri Lankan MPs on July 20 elected Wickremesinghe as the country's new president, with the majority of the vote coming from lawmakers representing ousted President Rajapaksa's Sri Lanka Podujana

Peramuna (SLPP) party.

The 73-year-old President was appointed for the rest of the term of Rajapaksa who initially fled to the Maldives and then to Singapore.

Rajapaksa is accused of mishandling the economic crisis, the worst since 1948. Wickremesinghe was earlier appointed prime minister by Rajapaksa in mid-May. He was tasked with reviving the economy by giving early solutions to fuel, cooking gas and power shortage problems, which triggered mass agitations against Rajapaksa.

The government declared bankruptcy in mid-April by refusing to honour its international debt.

Wickremesinghe on Wednesday said his government's main priorities are to fix the country's ailing economy and end the severe fuel shortage that has exacerbated after the last shipment under the Indian credit line arrived in the country in June.

SC extends overseas travel ban on Rajapaksa brothers till Aug 4

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Supreme Court Son Monday extended until August 4 the overseas travel ban on former prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and his younger brother and former finance minister Basil Rajapaksa, who are widely blamed for the current economic crisis in the island nation.

A five judge bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya announced the Monday's decision in a petition filed against the brothers of former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa by a group including former Chairman of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce Chandra Jayaratne, former Sri Lanka swimming champion Julian Bolling, Jehan Kanagaratna and Transparency International Sri Lanka.

The direction was issued when a motion related to the petition requesting the court to issue an order for an investigation against the people responsible for the current economic crisis came up on Monday.

The petition claimed that three persons -- Basil, Mahinda and former Central Bank Governor Ajith Nivard Cabraal -- were directly responsible for the unsustainability of Sri Lanka's foreign debt, its debt default and the current economic crisis leading to an acute shortage of basic commodities such as food, fuel, and medicines.

On July 15, Sri Lanka's apex court had barred the trio from leaving the country till July 28, the report said.

The ban was later extend-



ed till August 2. Earlier this month, Basil was prevented from leaving Sri Lanka following protests from passengers and officials at the Bandaranaike International Airport here.

Mahinda and Basil's brother Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the former Sri Lankan President, arrived in Singapore on July 14 on a "private visit" from the Maldives after he fled his country to escape a popular uprising against his government's economic mismanagement.

Rajapaksa has been issued a new visa by Singapore, extending his stay in the country till August 11.

Sri Lanka has seen months of mass unrest over the worst economic crisis and many blame the former government led by Rajapaksa and his family for mishandling the island nation's economy.

The government declared bankruptcy in mid-April by refusing to honour its international debt.

The island nation of 22 million people, is under the grip of an unprecedented economic turmoil, the worst in seven decades, leaving millions struggling to buy food, medicine, fuel and other essentials. Sri Lanka's total foreign debt stands at USD 51 billion.

1st ship carrying Ukrainian grain leaves port of Odesa

AP ■ KYIV

The first ship carrying Ukrainian grain set out Monday from the port of Odesa under an internationally brokered deal to unblock the embattled country's agricultural exports and ease a growing global food crisis.

The Sierra Leone-flagged cargo ship Razoni sounded its horn as it slowly departed with over 26,000 tons of corn destined for Lebanon.

"The first grain ship since Russian aggression has left port," Ukrainian Minister of Infrastructure Oleksandr Kubrakov said on Twitter.

Russia and Ukraine signed agreements in Istanbul with Turkey and the UN on July 22, clearing the way for Ukraine to export 22 million tons of grain and other agricultural goods that have been stuck in Black Sea ports because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine over five months ago. The deals also allow Russia to export grain and fertilizer.

As part of the agreements, safe corridors through the mined waters outside Ukraine's ports were established. Ukraine and Russia are key global suppliers of wheat, barley, corn and sunflower oil, with the fertile Black Sea

region long known as the breadbasket of Europe. The holdup of food shipments because of the war has worsened rising food prices worldwide and threatened hunger and political instability in developing nations.

"Today Ukraine, together with partners, takes another step to prevent world hunger," Kubrakov said.

In Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov hailed the ship's departure as "very positive," saying it would help test the "efficiency of the mechanisms that were agreed during the talks in Istanbul."

The Razoni was expected to dock Tuesday afternoon in Istanbul at the entrance of the Bosphorus, where joint teams of Russian, Ukrainian, Turkish and U.N. Officials were set to board it for inspections.

In an interview with Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency, Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar warned that the global food crisis threatened to trigger "a serious wave of migration from Africa to Europe and to Turkey."

Lebanon, the corn's destination, is in the grip of a severe financial crisis. A 2020 explosion at its main port in Beirut shattered its capital city and destroyed grain silos. Lebanon mostly imports wheat



from Ukraine but also buys its corn to make cooking oil and produce animal feed.

Turkey said other ships

will also leave from Ukraine's ports through the safe corridors. In Odesa, 16 more vessels, all blocked since the beginning

of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, were waiting their turn, with others to follow, Ukrainian authorities said.

But some shipping companies are not yet rushing to export food across the Black Sea as they assess the danger of

Pope to visit Kazakhstan next month, may meet Russia patriarch

AP ■ ROME

The Vatican confirmed on Monday that Pope Francis will travel next month to Kazakhstan, where he could meet with Patriarch Kirill, the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, who has justified Moscow's war in Ukraine.

Francis, 85, will attend an interfaith conference in the Kazakh capital, Nur-Sultan, from September 13-15, the Vatican said.

Francis called off a planned encounter with Kirill in June in Jerusalem because of the diplomatic fallout it would have created.

Kirill has justified the invasion on spiritual and ideological grounds, calling it a "metaphysical" battle with the West. He has blessed soldiers going into battle and invoked the idea that Russians and Ukrainians



are one people.

Francis and Kirill, who had a first historic encounter in Havana in 2016, have spoken by video call at least once since the war began.

The Kazakh government is hosting a "Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions" from September 14-15. Kirill has been invited and

the Moscow Patriarchate has said he would attend.

Returning from his just-concluded trip to Canada, Francis told journalists on Saturday that in addition to Kazakhstan, he also hoped to visit Ukraine but that nothing had yet been confirmed. Vatican officials have said they hoped to organize a trip even

in the coming weeks.

On Sunday, Francis again prayed for Ukraine, saying he had never stopped praying for "the attacked, martyred Ukrainian people", during his Canadian pilgrimage.

"If you look at reality objectively, considering the damage that war brings every day to those people but also the entire world, the only reasonable thing to do is to stop and negotiate," he said. "May wisdom inspire concrete steps of peace."

Francis has criticised Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Kirill's support for the war, telling an Italian newspaper in May that the patriarch shouldn't become "Putin's altar boy".

The Russian Patriarchate shot back that it was regrettable that Francis "chose the wrong tone" to relay the contents of their March video call.

Serbia's parliament convenes some 4 months after election

AP ■ BELGRADE

Serbia's new parliament convened for its first session on Monday, some four months after an election that reaffirmed the domination of autocratic President Aleksandar Vucic and his right-wing populists.

Vucic's Serbian Progressive Party holds the majority in the 250-member assembly and is expected to run the next Serbian government. Several opposition groups also made it into the parliament in the April 3 vote after they had boycotted a previous election.

The parliament took four months to convene due to the holding of repeat elections in some districts following complaints of irregularities.

Serbia's beleaguered opposition parties have complained that Vucic's tight grip over mainstream media and state

institutions, along with a constant campaign against critics in pro-government media, have made any election in the country far from free and fair.

Vucic has denied the claims, saying the opposition is simply too weak to beat him.

A former anti-Western ultranationalist, Vucic has said he wants to lead Serbia into the European Union. But he has refused to join Western sanctions against Russia and maintains friendly ties with Moscow despite the war in Ukraine.

Some analysts have said Vucic wants to delay the formation of a new government as long as possible to avoid taking sides in the Russia-West dispute. Serbia has condemned Russia's invasion, but remains opposed to sanctions.

Vucic won another five-year mandate in the April vote, which was both a parliamentary and a presidential election.

Fuel tanker truck catches fire in Libya; 9 dead, 76 injured

AP ■ CAIRO

A fuel tanker truck caught fire and exploded on Monday in central Libya, killing at least nine people and injuring 76 others, health authorities said.

The incident took place in the central town of Bent Bayya when the tanker truck overturned before catching fire and exploding, the state-run Libya News agency reported.

The agency said residents in the area rushed to collect leaked gasoline despite warnings of possible fire and explosion, causing the high casualty tolls.

Such incidents occasionally happen in impoverished areas where safety measures are mostly neglected.

The state-run Emergency Services in the area gave the casualty tolls. The injured were taken to the medical center in the nearby city of Sabha, said Halima al-Mahri, a spokeswoman for the centre.

Al-Mahri said at least 16 critically injured were evacuated to hospitals in the capital of Tripoli and the eastern city of Benghazi.

The centre posted footage, including graphic images, of people at an emergency ward receiving treatment for their burns.

It was not immediately clear what caused the tanker to overturn and explode. Fathi Bashagha, one of Libya's rival prime ministers, said he ordered an investigation into the incident.

Pelosi starts Asian tour with speculation over Taiwan visit

AP ■ KUALA LUMPUR

US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi held talks with officials in Singapore on Monday at the start of her Asian tour, as questions swirled over a possible stop in Taiwan that has fueled tension with Beijing.

While there have been no official announcements, local media in Taiwan reported that Pelosi will arrive Tuesday night, becoming the highest-ranking elected US official to visit in more than 25 years. The United Daily News, Liberty Times and China Times — Taiwan's three largest national newspapers — cited unidentified sources as saying she would arrive in Taipei after visiting Malaysia and spend the night.

Such a visit will spark fury in Beijing, which regards Taiwan as its own territory and has repeatedly warned of "serious consequences" if the reported trip goes ahead. "If Pelosi insists on visiting Taiwan, China will take resolute and strong measures to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said in Beijing, without giving details.

"Those who play with fire will perish by it," Zhao said. "We would like to once again admonish the US that we are fully prepared for any eventuality and the PLA will never sit idly by." The People's Liberation Army is China's military.

Chinese President Xi Jinping also warned the U.S. Against meddling in Beijing's dealings with the island in a phone call last week with President Joe Biden. China has been steadily ratcheting up diplomatic and military pressure on Taiwan. Threats of retaliation for a visit by Pelosi have driven concerns of a new crisis in the



Taiwan Strait, which separates the two sides, that could roil global markets and supply chains. Beijing sees official American contact with Taiwan as encouragement to make the island's 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 has 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 U.S. Policy.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after the Communists won a civil war on the mainland. Both sides say they are one country but disagree over which government is entitled to national leadership. They have no official relations but are linked by billions of dollars of trade and investment.

The United States switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979, but maintains informal relations with the island. Washington is obligated by the Taiwan Relations Act, a federal law, to see that Taiwan has the means

to defend itself. Washington's "One China policy" says it takes no position on the status of the two sides but wants their dispute resolved peacefully. Beijing promotes an alternative "One China principle" that says they are one country and the Communist Party is its leader.

John Kirby, a White House national security spokesman, told CNN that the U.S. "shouldn't be intimidated" by China's rhetoric or threats to retaliate if Pelosi visits Taiwan.

"We want to make sure that when she travels overseas, she can do so safely and securely," Kirby told CNN on Monday. "There's no reason for the Chinese rhetoric. There's no reason for any actions to be taken. It is not uncommon for congressional leaders to travel to Taiwan, it is very much in keeping with our policy and is consistent with our support to Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act."

A visit to Taiwan would be a career capstone for Pelosi, who increasingly uses her position in Congress as a U.S. Emissary on the global stage. She has long challenged China on human rights and wanted to visit Taiwan earlier this year.

On Monday, Pelosi met

with Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, President Halimah Yacob and other Cabinet members.

Singapore's Foreign Ministry said Lee welcomed a U.S. Commitment to strong engagement with the region, and the two sides discussed ways to deepen US economic involvement through initiatives such as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework.

Lee and Pelosi also discussed the war in Ukraine, tensions surrounding Taiwan and mainland China, and climate change, it said in a statement. Lee "highlighted the importance of stable U.S.-China relations for regional peace and security," it added, in an apparent allusion to reports of Pelosi's visit to Taiwan.

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

She is scheduled to be in Malaysia on Tuesday. A Parliament official, who was not authorized to speak to the media and declined to be identified by name, said Pelosi will call on Malaysian lower house speaker Azhar Azizian Harun. No further details were immediately available.

On Thursday, Pelosi is to meet with South Korean National Assembly Speaker Kim Jin Pyo in Seoul for talks on security in the Indo-Pacific region, economic cooperation and the climate crisis, Kim's office said in a statement.

It declined to provide further details about her itinerary, including when she is arriving in South Korea and how long she'll stay. Pelosi's schedule for Wednesday remains unclear and there were no details on when she will head to Japan.

Chinese military celebrates 95th anniv; flexes muscles to deter US House Speaker's visit to Taiwan

PTI ■ BEIJING

China's People's Liberation Army (PLA), the world's largest military, on Monday celebrated the 95th anniversary, flexing its muscles to deter US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's purported plan to visit Taiwan that has fuelled tension with Beijing.

Pelosi confirmed on Sunday she will lead a congressional delegation to Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan but was conspicuously silent about a possible stopover at Taiwan, the self-governing island that China claims as part of its mainland.

The proposed visit drew a fiery warning from President Xi Jinping in his last Thursday's phone conversation with his US counterpart Joe Biden, asserting that "those who play with fire will perish by it."

Beijing sees official American contact with Taiwan as encouragement to make its decades-old de facto independence permanent.

Coinciding with its 95th Army Day celebrations on Monday, the two-million-strong PLA highlighted some of its latest achievements in weaponry and equipment development and realistic combat preparations to warn "Taiwan independence" secessionist and external interfering forces.

The PLA revealed new progress has been made in its advanced weaponry and equipment, including its hypersonic missile, amphibious assault ship, aerial tanker and large destroyers, all of which are described by military analysts as having important roles to play if a conflict breaks out in the Taiwan Straits, state-run Global Times reported on Monday.



State broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) on Saturday released a video titled "The capabilities of the Chinese troops shown in 81 seconds" showing the launch of a DF-17 hypersonic missile from a transporter erector launcher on a highway in a desert.

The missile can hit stationary and moving targets in the South China Sea, the Taiwan Straits and Northeast Asia, including aircraft carriers, Global Times report said.

While Pelosi's visit overshadowed PLA's anniversary, observers say the Chinese military is steadily gaining ascendancy in the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) especially under the leadership of Xi, who besides being the President and head of the CPC is also Chairman of the all-powerful Central Military Commission (CMC), the overall high-command of the PLA.

Xi, 68, who is widely expected to get an unprecedented third five-year term in power or perhaps for life at the key CPC Congress to be held in the next few months unlike his predecessors is the lone civilian in the CMC dominated by the top brass of the PLA.

While Xi, since he took over power in 2012, has been

insisting that the PLA should mandatorily function under the CPC, which he said holds the gun, the military which remained his power base is gaining its influence in the 92-million-member Communist Party.

Observers say that the military functioned as a bloc in various key party bodies. Studies showed that PLA has two members out of 25 politburo members while in the Central Committee, the other influential body, the PLA accounts for around 20 per cent of the 205 permanent and 171 alternate members.

Speaking at a study session last Thursday, Xi said the Chinese military should be led by "reliable people" loyal to the ruling Communist Party to ensure its "absolute leadership" over the world's largest armed forces.

"We must lay emphasis on political integrity when cultivating, evaluating and appointing personnel so that the party's absolute leadership over the military is implemented in the whole process of personnel work," Xi said.

Xi emphasised that the armed forces must always be led by reliable people who are loyal to the party.

US seeks to expand ties with NZ amid China worries

AP ■ WELLINGTON

The commander of the United States military in the Pacific said Monday he wants to expand and strengthen its ties with New Zealand.

The visit to Wellington by Adm. John Aquilino, head of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, comes as the U.S. Is looking to increase its presence in the region amid deep concerns over China's growing ambitions in the Pacific. They include most recently the Solomon Islands, where the U.S. And several Pacific nations expressed deep concern about a security pact the Solomonians signed with China in April, which many fear could result in a military buildup in the region. Aquilino was greeted with a traditional Maori welcome ceremony and laid a wreath at the Pukeahu National War Memorial Park.

He spoke briefly to media ahead of meetings with top New Zealand defense force and government officials.

"Our partnership runs very deep," Aquilino said. "We are doing many things together to continue to ensure peace and prosperity for both of our nations and for all the nations in the region." Aquilino said he wanted to identify new areas where the U.S. Could work with New Zealand. He said the leadership of Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific was "critically important." "The one thing you will never hear out of me is big or small. This is a partnership," Aquilino said. "All nations deliver those things that they can deliver." He said the U.S. Understood the security implications of climate change in Pacific island nations, including for food security and water security, and the importance for island nations to be able to fish in exclusive zones.

Myanmar leader announces extension of state of emergency



AP ■ BANGKOK

The leader of Myanmar's military-installed government on Monday announced the extension of its mandate to rule for another six months in preparation for an election it has said will be held next year.

The army seized power on February 1 last year from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. It cited alleged fraud in the November 2020 general election, which Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party had won in a landslide while the military-backed party did poorly.

Independent election observers said they found no evidence of substantive irregularities, and the army takeover was met with widespread non-violent protests around the country. Security forces used deadly force to disperse them, prompting armed resistance by the pro-democracy forces. The escalation of violence has since plunged Myanmar into what UN experts have described as a civil war.

Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, head of the ruling State Administration Council, said in a broadcast speech Monday that the state of emergency declared after last year's takeover was extended because time was needed "to continue working to return the country to the path of a peaceful and disciplined multiparty democratic system and to hold multiparty democratic general elections."

The military originally declared that new polls would be held a year after its takeover, but later said they

would take place in 2023.

There is considerable doubt they will be free and fair, because most of the leaders of Suu Kyi's party have been locked up, and there is a large chance the party itself will be dissolved by the pro-military courts.

Min Aung Hlaing said the military had tried its "utmost to discharge (its) responsibilities" since it seized power. "However, terrorists based inside and outside the country and the people and organizations supporting them are committed to the utter devastation of Myanmar, instead of trying to nurture democracy in Myanmar," he said. While some opponents of military rule have employed tactics including assassinations and bombings, the military dubs almost all those opposing it as "terrorists."

UN experts and rights groups are more critical of government repression, which is reliably reported to include arbitrary arrests and killings, torture, and military sweeps that include air attacks and the burning down of entire villages.

"To ensure that there is no unfairness, threats or coercion in the coming election, armed conflicts must cease," said Min Aung Hlaing, in what appeared to be a reference to the government's ongoing military operations, which are carried out against ethnic minority groups as well as pro-democracy forces and their supporters.

"To be able to hold the elections, we will accelerate the efforts by our public security system to stabilise the politics and security of the nation," he said.

British PM race: Sunak tables radical tax vision

PTI ■ LONDON

As the voting process for the new Conservative Party leader formally opened with postal ballots being mailed out to Tory members from Monday, Rishi Sunak vowed to cut the basic rate of income tax by 20 per cent in a few years if he is elected Britain's Prime Minister.

The 42-year-old former Chancellor, who is trailing his rival Liz Truss in the opinion polls and bookmaker's odds, said his "radical vision" would mean a 20 per cent tax reduction – the "largest cut to income tax in 30 years".

Tax cuts have become the dominant issue in the election campaign and while Truss has pledged cuts from day one, Sunak has sought to focus on a more measured approach in

order to curb soaring inflation.

"What I'm putting to people today is a vision to deliver the biggest income tax cut since (former Tory Prime Minister) Margaret Thatcher's government," said Sunak.

"It is a radical vision but it is also a realistic one and there are some core principles that I'm simply not prepared to compromise on, whatever the prize," he said.

Under the proposals, Sunak said he would build on his previously announced 1p cut to income tax in April 2024. A further 3p off by the end of the next Parliament, around 2029, will be paid for through economic growth.

Sounding a warning note and an indirect attack at his rival's tax pledges, the British Indian former minister added: "Firstly, I will never get taxes



down in a way that just puts inflation up. Secondly, I will never make promises I can't pay for. And thirdly, I will always be honest about the challenges we face.

"Because winning this leadership contest without levelling with people about what lies ahead would not only be dishonest – it would be an act of self-sabotage that condemns our party to defeat at the next general election and consigns

us to a long period in Opposition."

His campaign team said the number one priority for Sunak, if elected Tory leader and British Prime Minister on September 5, will be to tackle inflation and he has the "right plan" to do that by getting borrowing under control and implementing supply side reform in order to improve productivity. Once inflation has been beaten, Sunak's tax vision is set to prioritise putting money back in the pockets of hard-working families to reward work.

"There is no more serious choice than the one now facing Conservative members: to decide the person who leads our country at home and abroad during difficult times. As they turn to that decision I would urge them to treat with

caution any vision that doesn't involve any difficult trade-offs and remember that if something sounds good to be true – then it probably is," he said.

The 1p cut to income tax announced earlier this year is said to be fully costed and paid for and will be introduced in April 2024. Each subsequent penny off income tax will cost around GBP 6 billion a year, which is said to be "affordable" whilst still keeping the debt-GDP ratio falling.

The Sunak campaign team said his income tax vision sits alongside his plan to reform corporate taxation and he proposes to reform capital allowances, a special form of tax reduction that is only available to those companies actually making investments, to encourage much needed investment and boost growth.

His opponent's campaign accused the former Chancellor of a "U-turn" on the issue of taxes and said that people cannot wait that long for tax cuts. It came as another senior Cabinet minister and former candidate, Nadhim Zahawi – who replaced Sunak as Chancellor, endorsed Liz Truss in the leadership race.

"We are in a national economic emergency, and we need more than words. We need delivery, and Liz will be the delivery Prime Minister," he said.

Nine Tory members of the Scottish Parliament also endorsed Truss, highlighting her own childhood in Scotland.

Meanwhile, the second election hustings to convince Tory voters is scheduled for Exeter in south-west England later on Monday.

Spain fully backs Western Balkan integration into EU

AP ■ MADRID

The Western Balkans are an integral part of the European Union and Spain fully backs the region's integration into the 27-member bloc, Spain's prime minister said on Monday. Pedro Sanchez was in Albania's capital Tirana on Monday in the first-ever trip by a Spanish prime minister to the country.

The stop in Albania was the last leg of Sanchez's Western Balkan trip that earlier took him to Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia. "The EU cannot be conceived without the Balkans," Sanchez said at the news conference with Albanian counterpart Edi Rama. "Balkans' incorporation will strengthen and add EU members."

The 27-member bloc agreed to launch the accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia late last month, a long-delayed step in the Balkan nations' paths toward EU membership that gained momentum amid the war in Ukraine. Western Balkan countries are at different stages of EU integration. Serbia and Montenegro already have started the talks while Bosnia and Kosovo have only signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, the first step in the long process.

Lebanon, Israel closer to deal in maritime border dispute

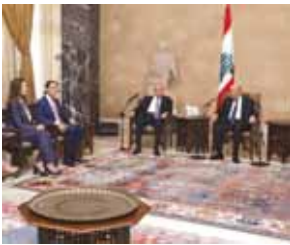
AP ■ BEIRUT

Lebanon and Israel are getting closer to reaching a deal in a more than a decade-old maritime border dispute between the two neighbors, a US Envoy and Lebanese officials said Monday.

Lebanon and Israel have been officially at war since Israel's creation in 1948 and both countries claim some 860 square kilometers (330 square miles) of the Mediterranean Sea. Amos Hochstein, a senior adviser for energy security at the U.S. State Department who has been mediating between the two neighbors, expressed optimism after his meetings Monday in Beirut with Lebanon's president, caretaker prime minister and parliament speaker.

The joint meeting between Hochstein and the top leaders may indicate that a breakthrough could be near and that Lebanon's political leadership backs such a deal. "The atmosphere is positive and the gap of disagreements in this field is narrowing," Deputy Parliament Speaker Elias Bou Saab told reporters after the meeting.

Hochstein arrived in Beirut on Sunday to inform Lebanon of Israel's response to Beirut's June proposal over the disput-



ed sea border area.

Following his last visit to Lebanon in June, Hochstein told the U.S.-funded Alhurra television that the Lebanese government took "a very strong step forward" by presenting a more united approach, and anticipated that there could be progress to reach a settlement. "I remain optimistic that we can make continuous progress as we have over the last several weeks," Hochstein said in brief comments after the 90-minute meeting at the presidential palace.

He added that he looks "forward to coming back to the region" and "being able to make the final arrangements."

Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri described the talks as "positive."

Lebanon's caretaker Foreign Minister Abdallah Bouhabib told the local Al-Jadeed TV that major progress has been made.

Hitler's watch sells at Maryland auction for USD 1.1 million



AP ■ CHESAPEAKE CITY

A Maryland auction house has sold a wristwatch that once belonged to Adolf Hitler for USD 1.1 million.

Alexander Historical Auctions in Chesapeake City had estimated the value between USD 2 and USD 4 million, describing the watch as a "World War II relic of historic proportions." Newsoutlets report that Jewish leaders and others objected to the sale this week, saying it had little to no historical value. The auction house's president, Bill Panagopoulos, defended the auction and said the buyer is a European Jew.

The watch features the initials AH and a swastika. The auction house said a French soldier who was in the first unit to close in on Hitler in May 1945 at his Berchtesgaden retreat seized it as spoils of war.

EU court limits national checks for migrant rescue ships

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union's top court ruled on Monday that national maritime authorities cannot impound ships involved in search-and-rescue work on suspicion that they might be overloaded due to the number of migrants they plucked from the sea.

The European Court of Justice ruling came in response to an appeal by German migrant aid group Sea-Watch. Two of the German group's ships were forced to undergo inspections in Sicily in 2020 after disembarking migrants for taking aboard more people than they were authorised to carry.

Italian harbour authorities also considered that the ships were not certified for search-and-rescue missions.

But the court said that rescued people "must not be taken into account when verifying whether the rules on safety at sea have been complied with. The number of persons on board, even if greater than that which is authorised, cannot therefore, in itself, constitute a ground for a control."

The Luxembourg-based ECJ also said national port

authorities have the right to inspect ships to assess whether rules on working conditions, health and safety, and the environment are being respected.

But it added that they do "not have the power to demand proof that those ships hold certificates other than those issued by the flag state", which in the case of the Sea-Watch vessels was Germany.

Sea-Watch described the court decision as a victory that means that port authorities can't arbitrarily detain ships and prevent them from doing their work.

"The ruling provides clear legal security for NGOs and is a victory for sea rescue. In the future, ships will thus continue to do what they do best: Rescue people instead of being arbitrarily stuck in port," the organisation said in a tweet.

Neither the EU nor any of its 27 nations are actively searching for people in danger in the Mediterranean Sea, where more than 1,000 people have died or are missing so far this year, many of whom tried to reach Europe from North Africa in unseaworthy smugglers' boats.

But ships are bound by international law to respond to any distress call near them.

5.83 cr income tax returns filed for FY22



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Department has received about 5.83 crore tax returns, largely from salaried and individual category taxpayers, by the end of the financial year 2021-22 filing season on July 31, officials said Monday.

The latest numbers are about the same as the last fiscal (2020-21).

The due date for filing of income tax returns (ITRs) by salaried class and individual category taxpayers, who do not have to get their accounts audited for the fiscal ending March 31, 2022, was July 31 (Sunday).

"We have received about 5.83 crore returns by the end of July 31. Data is being reconciled to state the actual figures," a senior officer said.

The officer said during the last fiscal, the due date for

which was extended till December 31, 2021, around the same number of returns — at 5.89 crore — were filed.

More than 72 lakh ITRs were filed on the last day (Sunday) this time, the officer said.

According to latest rules, a late fee of Rs 5,000 would be payable by those (with an annual income of over Rs 5 lakh) who file their ITR by December 31 of the assessment year 2022-23.

Individuals with an annual income of below Rs 5 lakh will be liable to pay a late fee of Rs 1,000 for delayed return filing.

Besides, those who have outstanding unpaid tax will have to shell out an additional 1 per cent interest per month for delayed filing.

The late fee will not apply to those taxpayers whose income is below the taxable limit.

Sensex advances for 4th day, reclaims 58,000-mark

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity indices darted up for the fourth straight session on Monday to close at over three-month highs, boosted by robust buying in market heavyweight Reliance Industries and auto stocks amid firm global trends.

Strong macroeconomic data and a sustained recovery in the rupee on the back of foreign fund inflows also buoyed sentiments, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 545.25 points or 0.95 per cent to finish at 58,115.50. The benchmark closed above the 58,000-level for the first time after April 13 this year.

Similarly, the broader NSE

Nifty advanced 181.80 points or 1.06 per cent to settle at 17,340.05.

Auto stocks hogged the limelight in Monday's session as companies reported strong sales data for July.

Mahindra & Mahindra topped the Sensex gainers' chart, soaring 6.15 per cent after the auto major posted a 33 per cent increase in domestic passenger vehicles sales in the previous month.

Reliance Industries and Bharti Airtel climbed as much as 2.64 per cent following the culmination of India's biggest ever auction of airwaves, with spectrum worth Rs 1,50,173 crore being sold.

Maruti Suzuki, Kotak



Mahindra Bank, NTPC, PowerGrid and UltraTech Cement were among the other prominent gainers.

However, Sun Pharma, Hindustan Unilever, IndusInd Bank, Nestle India, Asian Paints and TCS closed with losses of up to 2.65 per cent.

GST collection rises 28% to ₹1.49 lakh cr in July; 2nd highest ever

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid disquiet over imposition of the GST on several consumer products like milk, curd, panner, etc., there is some good news for the Government. The GST collection has risen by 28 per cent to touch the second-highest level of Rs 1.49 lakh crore in July on the back of economic recovery and steps taken to curb the tax evasion, the Government said on Monday.

The latest GST collection is in line with a trend of rising revenue for the Government in successive months. This is the sixth time that the monthly GST collection crossed the Rs 1.40-lakh-crore mark since the inception of the GST and fifth month at a stretch since March 2022, the Ministry said in a statement.

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection stood at Rs



1,16,393 crore in the same month a year ago. Introduced in July 2017, the GST touched a record high of Rs 1.68 lakh crore in April, 2022.

During July, revenues from import of goods were 48 per cent higher and the revenues from domestic transactions (including import of services) were 22 per cent higher than the revenues

from these sources during the same month last year.

Of the Rs 1,48,995 crore GST collected in July, the Central GST is Rs 25,751 crore, the State GST is Rs 32,807 crore, the Integrated GST is Rs 79,518 crore (including Rs 41,420 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is Rs 10,920 crore (including Rs 995 crore collect-

ed on import of goods).

The Government has settled Rs 32,365 crore to the CGST and Rs 26,774 crore to the SGST from the IGST. The total revenue of the Centre and the States in the month of July 2022 after regular settlement is Rs 58,116 crore for the CGST and Rs 59,581 crore for the SGST, it said.

During June 2022, 7.45 crore e-way bills were generated, which was marginally higher than 7.36 crore in May 2022. The growth in the GST revenue till July 2022, over the same period last year, is 35 per cent and displays a very high buoyancy, according to the statement.

"This is a clear impact of various measures taken by the GST Council in the past to ensure better compliance. Better reporting coupled with the economic recovery has been having a positive impact on the GST revenues on a consistent basis," it said.

India's manufacturing activity touches 8-month high in July on new orders, says survey



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's manufacturing sector activity hit the highest level in eight months in July, driven by a significant rise in business orders, a monthly survey said on Monday.

Despite the solid performance of the manufacturing industry, overall job creation remained subdued. A vast majority of firms (98 per cent) opted to leave workforce numbers unchanged amid a lack of pressure on operating capacity, it added.

Another factor that constrained hiring activity was future uncertainty.

According to the survey, despite improving from June's 27-month low, the overall level of business sentiment was muted in the context of historical data. In fact, 96 per cent of manufacturers forecast no change in output from present levels over the course of the coming 12 months.

It also noted that while companies stepped up input purchasing, job creation remained marginal amid an uncertain outlook and a general lack of pressure on operating capacities.

With incidence of shortages diminishing, the rate of input cost inflation eased to an 11-month low in July, subsequently dragging down the rate of increase in output prices to the weakest in four months," Lima said.

As per official data, the retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI), which the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) factors in while arriving at its monetary policy, has been above 6 per cent since January 2022. It was at 7.01 per cent in June.

Experts believe the RBI may go in for its third consecutive policy rate hike by at least 35 basis points to check high retail inflation. The RBI's rate-setting panel — the Monetary Policy Committee — will meet for three days from August 3 to deliberate on the prevailing economic situation and announce its bi-monthly review on Friday.

'Heatwave also pushed food inflation; expect CPI to come at 6.8% in FY23'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The heat wave in early 2022 was the key domestic factor responsible for pushing up food prices this year, a Crisil Ratings arm said on Monday.

Crisil Research pegged the headline consumer price inflation to come at 6.8 per cent in FY23 - marginally higher than the Reserve Bank's 6.7 per cent estimate - because of the pressures on the food front, where the increase in prices has been double that of FY22.

The RBI has been blaming the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the consequent surge in commodity prices for a bulk of the surge in inflation, which has consistently breached the upper end of the tolerance band set for it by the government. At present, food commands 39 per cent of the CPI basket.

"The recent rise in food inflation is mainly supply shortages-led, driven by both global (geopolitical conflicts) and domestic (impact of heat wave) factors," the Crisil Research note said.

"Our forecast of CPI inflation at 6.8 per cent is premised on food inflation at 7.0 per cent, which is double last fiscal's," it added.

Noting that the monetary policy has a "food inflation



nightmare", it said the heat wave which took the average temperatures in northwest and central India to the highest level in 122 years, spoilt the prospects for the wheat crop, groundnut, bajra and horticultural crops like mango.

"The heat wave was the key domestic factor responsible for pushing up food prices this year," it said, pointing to a 2020 RBI study which said macro-economic impact of climate change on food inflation has been statistically significant for India over the past two decades.

It cited studies which say the frequency of purchase of items — rather than their

expenditure share — is what shapes inflation expectations.

"So long as food inflation continues to rise or remains high, it will be that much more difficult for monetary policy to anchor inflation expectations," it said, adding that this underscores the importance of deliberating the impact of climate change on inflation and on monetary policy.

The RBI's rate-setting panel is meeting this week for the bi-monthly review of the monetary policy and its outcome is scheduled to come out on Friday, which will have the rate decision and also a review of the estimate on inflation trajectory from here on.

Passenger vehicle sales on upward terrain driving on better chip supply track

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Improvement in semiconductor shortage issue helped auto makers, including Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Tata Motors and Mahindra & Mahindra, report single to high double-digit growth on Monday in their domestic passenger vehicles sales in July.

Other manufacturers, Kia India, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM), Honda Cars India, Skoda Auto India, also reported robust growth in their domestic passenger vehicle sales with the auto industry estimated to have achieved the highest-ever passenger vehicle wholesales in July this year.

Maruti Suzuki India said its domestic passenger vehicle sales rose 6.82 per cent last month to 1,42,850 units compared to 1,33,732 units in July 2021. "The shortage of electronic components had a minor impact on the production of vehicles, mainly in domestic models," the company said in a statement.

The company's sales were driven mainly by compact cars, including Baleno, Celerio, Dzire, Ignis, Swift, Tour S, and WagonR, which rose to 84,818 units in July 2022 from 70,268 units in the year-ago month.

Sales of mini cars -- com-



prising Alto and S-Presso -- grew to 20,333 units last month, up from 19,685 units in July 2021. However, sales of utility vehicles -- including Brezza, Ertiga, S-Cross and XL6 -- were lower at 23,272 units compared to 32,272 units.

"The overall industry sales stood at over 3.42 lakh units last month as compared with 2.94 lakh units in July 2021. This is the highest wholesale figure we have ever seen in the industry," MSI India Senior Director (Marketing and Sales) Shashank Srivastava told PTI.

The previous best wholesales stood at 3.34 lakh units in October 2020, he said, adding, it has been possible due to better production as chip shortage eased a bit.

The industry is expected to cross 37 lakh unit sales mark this fiscal, which is going to be the highest ever, he noted.

Rupee rises by 22 paise to close at 79.02 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated by 22 paise to close at 79.02 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday on risk-on sentiments, decline in crude oil prices and weak American currency. At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened higher at 79.16 on gains in stocks and fall in crude oil.

The rupee touched a high of 79.00 and a low of 79.22 before settling at 79.02 (provisional). In the previous session, the rupee had closed at 79.24 against the US dollar.

The dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was down 0.52 per cent at 105.34.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, fell 1.21 per cent to USD 102.71 per barrel.

According to Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, Indian rupee appreciated on risk on sentiments, decline in crude oil prices and weak US Dollar.

Moreover, India's Manufacturing PMI rose to 56.4 in July compared to 53.9 in June, and this also supported the rupee.

India's power consumption grows 3.8% to 128.38 bn units in July

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's power consumption grew marginally by 3.8 per cent year-on-year to 128.38 billion units (BU) in July amid widespread rains in the country, according to power ministry data.

Power consumption in July last year was recorded at 123.72 BU, which was higher than 112.14 BU in the same month of 2020.

However, the peak power demand met, which is the highest supply in a day, during July dipped to 190.38 GW. The peak power supply stood at 200.53 GW in July 2021 and 170.40 GW in July 2020.

Power consumption and demand were affected in July 2020 due to the staggering impact of the imposition of lockdown restrictions for curbing the spread of the deadly coronavirus.

The consumption in July 2019 (pre-pandemic period)



was 116.48 billion units.

According to experts, power consumption and demand remained subdued due to widespread rains across the country in July with the onset of the Monsoon.

They said rains in July brought relief from the unbearable high temperature experienced in June this year, especially in the northern states.

Power consumption, as well as demand, would grow steadily in the coming months in view of almost normal economic activities in the country.

POWERGRID director awarded honorary doctorate

New Delhi: VK Singh, director (Personnel), Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has been conferred with an Honorary Doctorate by Sunrise University of Rajasthan for his exceptional contribution towards enhancement of Human Capital & Management.

He is also the National President of Power HR Forum and a member of the Board of Directors of PTC India and SCOPE.

POWERGRID under the leadership of Singh has received several prestigious awards in India and abroad including Great Place to Work, Global CSR Award, BML Munjal Award for Excellence in Learning & Development, Dun & Bradstreet Award, ET Best Place For Women to Work etc.

Petrol, diesel sales fall in July as monsoon sets in

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol and diesel sales in the country fell in July over the previous month as the onset of monsoon chipped away demand in some sectors and restricted mobility, preliminary industry data showed.

Diesel, the most widely used fuel in the country, saw consumption drop 13.1 per cent to 6.44 million tonnes from 7.39 million tonnes of demand in June.

The arrival and intensity of monsoon weigh heavily on diesel demand in the country and consumption traditionally is lower in July-September than in April-June. Rains restrict mobility and demand from the farm sector, which



uses diesel in irrigation pumps and trucking, also drops with the onset of rains.

Diesel demand in July was, however, 17.1 per cent higher year-on-year, supported by strong economic growth and a

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

Consumption of diesel was 32.4 per cent higher than the 4.84 million tonnes demand

during July 2020 and 5 per cent more than the pre-COVID sale of 6.11 million tonnes in July 2019, the data showed.

Petrol sales fell 5 per cent to 2.66 million tonnes in July when compared to 2.8 million tonnes of consumption in the previous month.

The consumption was, however, 12.2 per cent higher than in July 2021 and 31.2 per cent more than the same month in 2020. It was 16.3 per cent more than pre-COVID July 2019.

Auto fuel demand in June was supported by a surge in summer travel to colder areas of the country to escape from the heat and vacations during annual breaks at educational institutions.

Multimodal route to ship boiled corncobs to Russia

Mumbai: India's trade ties with its long-time ally Russia have deepened since the Ukraine war began. So have complications due to logistical disruptions. With Black Sea route being blocked, shipping lines carrying around 3,000 such containers worth billions of dollars bound for Russia had to make their way back.

Amidst all the chaos, Intercont+, a pioneer in Indian logistics, used the new multimodal route to transport a cargo from India to Russia in a short period of time. The shipment was navigated through a sea route from Nhava Sheva to Bandar Abbas and then via the road route to Moscow.

The shipment of Boiled Corn Cob was packed at zero degrees weighing 20 metric tonnes reached the Moscow, Russia within a stipulated period of 29 days.

ACHINTA SHEULI BAGS INDIA'S 3rd GOLD

PTI ■ BRIMINGHAM

Weightlifter Achinta Sheuli (73kg) lived up to his top billing as he clinched India's third gold in the Commonwealth Games here.

Favourite to win the event, debutant Sheuli heaved 313kg (143kg+170kg) to grab the gold at NEC Hall here on Sunday.

Malaysia's Erry Hidayat Muhammad, who gave Sheuli a tough competition, ended as the second best lifter in the event. He had a best effort of 303kg (138kg+165kg).

Canada's Shad Darsigny was third with a total lift of 298kg (135kg+163kg).

"I'm very happy about this, I've worked hard for this medal. A lot of sacrifices of my brother, mother, my coach and the Army have gone into this medal," Sheuli said after the win.

"This was the first major event in my life and I'm thankful for them to help me reach here. This medal will help me



PM Modi congratulates Indian contingent for topping medal tally in wrestling championship

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday congratulated the Indian contingent for its best ever show in the Cadet (U-17) World Wrestling Championship, in which it topped the medal tally.

Modi noted that girl athletes won five of the seven golds bagged by India in the tournament.

"With 14 medals including 7 Golds (of which 5 were won by women athletes) and a Gold in Greco Roman after 32 years, India's performance at the Cadet (U-17) World Wrestling Championship has been the best ever. India has also topped the medals tally. Congrats to our contingent," the prime minister said in a tweet.

in every aspect of life. There should not be looking back from now on."

Asked to whom he would dedicate his gold medal, Sheuli said, "I wish to dedicate this medal to my late dad (who died of heart attack), my brother and

my coach Vjay Sharma who slaps me if I do a mistake, keeps scolding me like I'm his own child."

Sheuli, a junior world championship silver medalist, executed three clean lifts -- 137kg, 140kg and 143kg -- in

the snatch section.

His 143kg effort helped him smash the Games record and improve his personal best.

Heading into clean an jerk with a five kilogram advantage, the Kolkata lifter started with a 166kg lift, which he hoisted easily. Sheuli then faltered his 170kg attempt only to heave the weight in the third attempt and create a new Games record in total lift (313kg).

The Indian lifter had to wait patiently towards the end to find out what medal he'd take home as the Malaysian attempted a 176kg lift in his last two attempts only to fail.

Asked what his coach Sharma told him before the final clean and jerk attempt, Sheuli said, "He told me this gold belongs to me just keep calm and go for it. I was a bit nervous but his performance was way below me and I went for it."

With the gold from Sheuli, the Indian weightlifting contingent has bagged its sixth medal of the Games.

LAWN BOWLS: INDIAN WOMEN ENSURE HISTORIC 1st MEDAL IN 'FOURS' FORMAT

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

India lawn bowls team assured itself a historic first ever Commonwealth Games medal after defeating New Zealand 16-13 in the semi-final of the women's fours event, here on Monday.

This will be India's maiden final appearance in the women's fours format of the competition.

The women's fours team comprising Lovely Choubey (lead), Pinki (second), Nayanmoni Saikia (third) and Rupa Rani Tirkey (skip) will face South Africa in the gold medal clash on Tuesday.

"We cannot express our feelings in mere words. We have fought as a team and now our journey doesn't end here," an emotional lawn bowler Tirkey said.

"We have to play in a similar fashion against South Africa and do what hasn't been done before," she added.

Against New Zealand, after conceding a 0-5 lead after the second-end, the Indian team made a strong back against the Kiwi team of Selina Goddard (lead), Nicole Toomey (second), Tayle Bruce (third) and Val Smith (skip).

After end-9, they were tied 7-7 and after end-10, India took 10-7 lead. But it was a close contest between the two sides, as New Zealand was marginally 13-12 ahead after end-14.

A brilliant shot from Tirkey helped India seal the game with a 16-13 score-line.

The Indian men's pair was knocked



out of the competition on Sunday after going down 8-26 to Northern Ireland in the quarter-final.

LAWN BOWLS FOR DUMMIES

Lawn Bowls is played in three formats essentially -- singles, doubles and fours, depending on the number of individuals pitted against each other.

The player/team which manages to place its bowls closer to the stationary target, called 'The Jack', are awarded the points.

The bowls needed to be rolled on the floor from a distance.

In the fours, or four-player, format, each team gets eight throws, or rolls, from one 'end'. One 'end' means completion of one round.

One teams has to throw the bowls from 18 ends to complete the match and it happens in a circular manner.

The team with more points after 18 ends of throws will take the contest.

HOW ARE POINTS AWARDED?

The number of points awarded is determined by the number of bowls a team has managed to place closer to the 'Jack' compared to its opponent.

For example: If team A places two bowls closer to 'the Jack' compared to team B's closest bowls, it will win two points for the end.

In case team A had managed to place three bowls closer to the target than team B's closest bowl, it would have been awarded three points.

Ronaldo finishes 12th in 1000m time trial final

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Indian cyclist Ronaldo Laitonjam came up with a timing of 1:02.500 to finish 12th in men's 1000m time trial final in the Commonwealth Games here on Monday.

The 20-year-old Indian, who had clinched a silver medal in the sprint event of the senior category at the Asian Track Championship in June, was 2.995 seconds behind gold medalist Matthew Glaetzer, who clocked 59.505.

Another Australian, Thomas Cornish (1:00.036), and Trinidad and Tobago's Nicholas Paul (1:00.089) claimed the silver and bronze medals respectively.

Ronaldo had lost to Australia's Matthew Glaetzer in the pre-quarterfinals of the men's sprint event on Sunday.

In women's Keirin first round, Triyasha Paul, Shushikala Agashe and Mayuri Lute couldn't qualify for the second round.

Triyasha and Shushikala finished in the third and fourth place in their respective heats of the first round repechages.

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Indian judokas L Shushila Devi and Vijay Kumar Yadav signed off with a silver and a bronze medal in women's 48kg and men's 60kg respectively at the Commonwealth Games here on Monday.

The 27-year-old Shushila fought hard before losing the final via 'Waza-Ari' in the 4.25-minute final against South Africa's Michaela Whitebooi, while Yadav dished out a dominating show to take down Petros Christodoulides of Cyprus with a 'Ippon' in the bronze medal match.

For Shushila, it was her second silver medal at the showpiece event. She had finished runners-up at the 2014 Glasgow games as well.

A sub-inspector with Manipur Police, Shushila had progressed to the final, beating Priscilla Morand of Mauritius. She had beaten Harriet Bonface of Malawi on way to her quarterfinals earlier in the day.

The 26-year-old Yadav, on the other hand, produced a superlative performance as he pounced on the mistake of his opponent and pinned him down for 10 seconds to end the contest in just 58 seconds.

Ippon is a move in which a



contestant throws his opponent to the mat with considerable force and speed so that the opponent lands on his back. An ippon is also awarded when a contestant immobilizes his opponent with a grappling hold-down for 20 seconds, or when an opponent gives up.

Yadav, who has won the CW Championships in 2018 and 2019, had lost to Joshua Katz of Australia in the quarterfinal, but he produced a superb performance in 60kg repechage to advance to the bronze medal match with a win by 'Waza Ari' over Dylon Munro of Scotland.

A 'waza-ari' is awarded after a player throws his opponent with control and accuracy, but not to the extent of an ippon. Jasleen Singh Saini will also

fight for a bronze medal after losing the men's 66kg semifinal to Scotland's Finlay Allan.

Saini, who sailed into the semifinals earlier in the day, lost after the Scot performed an 'Ippon' in a match that lasted a little less than two and half minutes. The 24-year-old Saini, however, has a chance to earn a podium finish as he will compete in the bronze medal play-off against Australian Nathan Katz later tonight.

Suchika Tariyal has already reached the bronze medal round after defeating Donne Breytenbach of South Africa in the women's 57kg repechage.

India had won two silver and two bronze at the Glasgow 2014, their best ever show in judo.

Boxers Panghal, Hussamudin cruise into quarters

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Indian boxer Amit Panghal began his campaign at the Commonwealth Games with a facile win as he stormed into the men's flyweight (51kg) quarterfinals here on Monday.

Panghal, a world championship silver medalist, out-punched Namri Berri of Vanuatu via a unanimous verdict.

Featherweight boxer Mohammad Hussamudin made it two out of two as he also advanced to the quarterfinals with a similar 5-0 win over Mohammad Salim

Hossain of Bangladesh in the round of 16.

Panghal, who is participating in his first big tournament after the disappointing show at the Tokyo Olympics, looked in control throughout the three rounds.

He used his combination of right and left punches effectively and fought from a distance, compelling Berri to come forward and attack.

Panghal was quick to land a flurry of punches in each of the three rounds as Berri was no match for the Indian.

With the opening two rounds



going in his favour, Panghal was content with defending in the final three minutes, saving his energy for the tougher challenges ahead.

He is now one win away from securing his second CWG medal. In the last edition in Gold Coast he had clinched a silver.

He will face 20-year-old Lennon Mulligan of Scotland.

"It was a good workout but it was easy. My opponent was good but never gave me any problems," Panghal said after his win.

"I could have stepped it up but there is a long way to go and I am here for gold. I won silver at Gold

Coast and I am here to go one better.

"I am only interested in the gold medal. That's why I took it on points, to get a good bit of work in the ring," he added.

Last edition's bronze medalist, Hussamudin also put up a dominant display in his fast-paced bout.

The 28-year-old Indian was at his counter-attacking best as he landed sharp punches while dancing across the ring.

He will fancy his chances of a second CWG medal as he faces Namibia's Tryagain Morning Ndevelo in the quarterfinals.

GHOSAL ENTERS SEMIFINALS, CHINAPPA LOSES IN QUARTERS

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

India's leading squash player Saurav Ghosal progressed to the men's singles semifinals, but it was curtains for Joshna Chinappa as she suffered a loss to Canada's Hollie Naughton in the women's singles quarterfinals at the Commonwealth Games here on Monday.

Ghosal, ranked world number 15, recovered from a defeat in the second set to see off Scotland's Greg Lobbon 11-5 8-11 11-7 11-3, and will square off against New Zealand's Paul Coll in the last four.

Chinappa, an 18-time national champion, however, couldn't produce her best, losing 9-11 5-11 13-15 to the 27-year-old Houghton.

Chinappa started on a positive note, taking a 6-3 lead but she let the advantage slip as Naughton drew parity at 6-6 and moved to 9-9 before grabbing the opening set with the required two points.

Naughton continued the momentum in the second to make it 2-0. Chinappa put up a good fight in the third, moving together till 13-13 when her rival once again stepped ahead to seal the contest.

Earlier, India's Sunayna Sana Kuruvilla defeated Sri Lanka's Chanithma Sinaly in the plate quarter-finals of the women's singles.

A 23-year-old from Kochi, Sunayna proved too strong for her opponent, winning 11-3 11-2 11-2 in just 12 minutes.

Sanayna will compete in the women's singles plate semifinals later tonight.

Indian women hockey team gear up for first real test against England



The Indians would take a lot of heart from the fact that they held England to a 1-1 draw in the recently-held World Cup, jointly

hosted by Spain and Netherlands.

"England are a good team and they have the home advantage as well in Birmingham. It will be a

challenging match for us, but we have also been in good form after our first two wins," skipper Savita said.

THE INDIANS HAVE REGISTERED BACK-TO-BACK VICTORIES -- 5-0 OVER GHANA AND 3-1 AGAINST WALES -- IN THEIR FIRST TWO POOL A MATCHES BUT THE SAVITA PUNIA-LED SIDE WAS FAR FROM CONVINCING IN THEIR DISPLAYS

"We have played England a few times in the recent past, so both teams know each other quite well. They have won a couple of big matches against us as well, so they're a strong team, but we have done our homework and it will be all about getting the basics right on the day.

"It is a crucial game in the competition and we are focused on our targets," she added.

Even though Gurjit scored from a few penalty corners in the competition, the conversion rate remains a big concern for India's chief coach Janneke Schopman.

The forward line too needs to put its best forward if India desire to upstage England. Vandana Katariya has been the star performer for India in the strike force, scoring two poaching goals against Wales but she needs more support from the likes of Lalremsiami and Sharmila Devi.

The team also needs to work on its link-up play between the midfield and forwardline to create more chances from open play.

A win on Tuesday will guarantee India a place in the semifinals of the competition. The Indians will round off their pool engagements against Canada on Wednesday.

INDIA A DRAWS WITH FRANCE

AP ■ MAMALLAPURAM

The top two seeds in the Open section of the Chess Olympiad - USA and India 'A' - were held to draws in the fourth round here on Monday.

However, the number one ranked team in the women's event - India 'A' - edged out Hungary 2.5-1.5 to maintain their winning streak.

While India 'A' drew 2-2 with France, ranked 15th, the Americans had to share honours with Uzbekistan in the Open event.

P Harikrishna, Vidit Santosh Gujrathi, Arjun Erigaisi and S L Narayanan drew their respective games against Jules Moussad, Laurent Fressinet, Matthieu Cornette and Maxime Lagarde.

In a major upset, former World Championship Challenger Fabiano Caruana of the USA was stunned by Nodirbek Abdusattarov of Uzbekistan, as the country held the top-seeds 2-2.

In other results, fifth seed Poland was held by Romania to a draw (2-2) and the powerful Norway team, the third-seed, had to endure a 2-2 result against 45th ranked Mongolia.

Even as India 'A' was held by France, there were mixed fortunes for the other two host teams with India 'B' notching up a fourth straight win while India 'C' went down 1.5-2.5 to fourth-seed Spain.

Among the women, the top-ranked India 'A' had to thank Tania Sachdev for providing the all-important point in a

2.5-1.5 victory over Hungary. Sachdev defeated talented teenager Zsoka Gaal after the three other games ended in stalemate.

Koneru Humpy, back after resting in round three, drew with Thanh Trang Hoang, D Harika and R Vaishali also settled for draws against Ticia Gara and Vajda Lazarne respectively.

The 11th seeded Indian Women 'B' team edged past Estonia 2.5-1.5 with Vantika Agrawal bringing the winning point for her team while the other three games ended in draws.

Vantika Agarwal has been in top form, scoring a superb 4/4.

The third-seeded Georgian team proved too strong for India 'C', winning 3-1. P V Nandhidhaa won her contest against Nino Batsiashvili, rated higher than her.

On the other tables, Esha Karavade lost to Nana Dzagnidze as did Sahithi Varshini to Lela Jaikishvili and Pratyusha to Salome Melia.

Among the men, the powerful India 'B' team continued their impressive run with Gukesh and Nihal Sarin scoring victories and R Praggnanandhaa and Raunak Sadhwani conceding draws to register a 3-1 win over Italy, who upset the US on Sunday.

For India 'C', S P Sethuraman ended on the losing side while Surya Shekhar Ganguly held fancied Alexei Shirov, a former World Championship Challenger to a draw as they lost 1.5-2.5 to a strong

Spain.

Gukesh played a fantastic game against Daniele Vocaturo, who had held Magnus Carlsen to a draw yesterday.

In a Queen's Gambit Declined game Gukesh went on a pawn grabbing spree with tactical strokes and pocketed the point after 34 moves when his Queen, rook and bishop surrounded his opponent's king. It was Gukesh's fourth straight win.

Results: India's matches: Open: India 'A' drew with France 2-2 (P Harikrishna drew with Jules Moussad, Vidit Gujrathi drew with Laurent Fressinet, Arjun Erigaisi drew with Matthieu Cornette, S L Narayanan drew with Maxime Lagarde).

India 'B' beat Italy 3-1 (D Gukesh beat Daniele Vocaturo, Nihal Sarin beat Luca J Moroni, R Praggnanandhaa drew with Lorenzo Lodici, Raunak Sadhwani drew with Francesco Sonis).

India 'C' lost to Spain 1.5-2.5 (Surya Shekhar Ganguly drew with Alexei Shirov, S P Sethuraman drew with Francisco Vallejo Pons, Abhijeet Gupta lost to David Anton Guijarro, Karthikeyan Murali drew with Latasa Santos).

Women: India 'A' beat Hungary 2.5-1.5 (Koneru Humpy drew with TT Hoang, D Harika drew with Ticia Gara, R Vaishali drew with Vajda Lazarne, Tania Sachdev beat Zsoka Gaal).

India 'B' beat Estonia 2.5-1.5 (Vantika Agrawal beat Mai Narva,



Padmini Rout drew with Margareth Olde, Soumya Swaminathan drew with Anastassia Sinitina, Divya Deshmukh drew with Sofia Bhokhin).

India 'C' lost to Georgia 1-3 (Easha

Karavade lost to Nana Dzagnidze, P V Nandhidhaa beat Nino Batsiashvili, Varshini M Sahiti lost to Lela Javakishvili, Pratyusha Bodda lost to Salome Melia).

India-WI 3rd T20I delayed by 3 hrs in absence of team kits

PTI ■ ST KITTS

In an unprecedented situation, the second T20 International between India and West Indies has been pushed back by three hours due to a delay in the arrival of team luggage, Cricket West Indies (CWI) said on Monday.

Initially, it was delayed by two hours but the CWI later confirmed that the game had to be pushed back further. There was, however, no explanation for the inordinate delay.

It has happened despite a two-day gap between the first and second game.

"Due to circumstances beyond CWI's control, there have been significant delays in crucial team luggage arriving into St Kitts from Trinidad. As a result, today's match 2nd Goldmedal T20 Cup match is due to start at 12.30 pm (10 PM India time)," the CWI said in a statement.

Normally, between the Caribbean nations small ATR flights operate, and hence, unlike normal commercial airlines, which also carries the heavy duty cricket coffins of the players, these aircrafts do not have the same capacity.

The delays in transporting kits from one nation (Trinidad & Tobago) to another (St Kitts & Nevis) is pretty normal in the Caribbean, but a match being delayed because of this is a first for the CWI.

"We do not know why the kits haven't arrived as we don't have an official reason for it," a CWI spokesperson told PTI.

The match is scheduled to be played at the Warner Park.

India lead the five-match series 1-0 following their 68-run win in the opener at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Trinidad.

It's finally home!

Chloe Kelly stars as England women beat Germany to end major tournament wait at Euro 2022

AP ■ LONDON

England won a major women's tournament for the first time as Chloe Kelly's extra-time goal secured a 2-1 victory over Germany at a sold out Wembley on Sunday.

In front of a record crowd of 87,192 for any match in the history of the European Championships, Kelly prodded home a loose ball from close range to end English football's 56-year wait for a World Cup or Euro victory.

England looked set for victory in the 90 minutes when substitute Ella Toone's sublime chip over Merle Frohms put the hosts in front.

Germany showed remarkable resilience to bounce back as Lina Magull levelled 11 minutes from time.

But for once, England were not to be denied a major tournament success.

Kelly fought back from an anterior cruciate ligament tear to be fit in time for the tournament and made herself a national hero by being in the right place to pounce when Germany failed to clear a corner in the 110th minute. The Manchester City winger tore her shirt off in celebration in scenes reminiscent of Mia Hamm's famous reaction to scoring the winning penalty for the USA at the 1999 World Cup.

GERMANY BOSS BAFFLED

Germany manager Martina Voss-Tackenberg said she was troubled by the decision not to award a penalty to her side in the first half of Euro 2022 final.

Lionesses captain Leah Williamson escaped after the ball hit her hand in a goalmouth scramble with the score still at 0-0. After a VAR check, Ukrainian referee Kateryna Monzul was not told to review



Fabregas joins Serie B side Como

AP ■ MILAN

Spanish midfielder Cesc Fabregas, who won the World Cup in 2010, will play for Como in the Italian second division next season, Serie B announced on its official website on Monday.

The deal which takes the 35-year-old from Ligue 1 side Monaco, where he was out of contract, has yet to be announced by the club but his

name appears in Serie B's section listing new certified contracts.

Fabregas, who previously played for Arsenal, Barcelona and Chelsea, had a frustrating season last year, not playing for Monaco's first team after September. According to the Italian press, Como, which is run by former Chelsea and England midfielder Dennis Wise, has offered Fabregas a two-year contract.

I would feel the same. It really bothers me."

England's only previous major tournament win in either the men's or women's game came in the 1966 World Cup with a 4-2 win over West Germany that is still remembered for the Three Lions' controversial third goal that may not have crossed the line.

SA seal T20 series win over England

AP ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Tabraiz Shamsi went one better than his wife's request by taking a maiden five-wicket haul as South Africa thrashed England by 90 runs on Sunday to complete a 2-1 T20 series win.

The 32-year-old left-arm wrist-spinner took 5-24 as England, set 192 for victory, collapsed to 101 all out with 20 balls to spare at Southampton after losing their last eight wickets for 49 runs.

Earlier, in-form South Africa opener Reeza Hendricks



hit 70 — his third fifty of the series — and Aiden Markram made an unbeaten 51 as the Proteas posted a competitive 191-5. Recalled left-arm quick David Willey took 3-25.

Shamsi's haul was all the more impressive given his expensive return of 0-49 in England's series-opening win in Bristol.

But South Africa have been much improved in the field since that 41-run defeat and this win gave them a first T20 series success in England, as well as their first white-ball bilateral

series victory in the country since 1998.

"Before I came to the game, my wife casually said she wants four wickets," Shamsi said at the presentation ceremony.

"And I looked at her to say 'as if you can just buy wickets at a supermarket?'. That's why I was a bit more animated in my celebrations today."

Defeat left England still searching for a first series win under new white-ball captain Jos Buttler following ODI and T20 reverses against India and a drawn ODI with the Proteas.

Neymar, Messi secure Champions Trophy for PSG



AP ■ TEL AVIV

Neymar scored twice with Lionel Messi also on target as Paris Saint-Germain defeated Nantes 4-0 in the Champions Trophy in Tel Aviv on Sunday in new coach Christophe Galtier's first match in charge.

After an underwhelming first season in French football, Messi struck 22 minutes into the traditional curtain-raiser, being played in Israel for the second year in a row.

Neymar, whose future at

the club has been the source of much speculation this summer, doubled the lead just before the break with a magnificent free-kick.

Sergio Ramos added a third and Neymar bagged his second late on from the penalty spot as PSG, the reigning Ligue 1 champions, eased to victory over last season's French Cup winners.

It is the ninth time in 10 seasons PSG have lifted the Champions Trophy. They lost 1-0 to Lille at the same venue a year ago.

Find ODIs exciting but format has got to deal with few challenges: McGrath

PTI ■ CHJENNAI

Australian fast bowling great Glenn McGrath is still in love with the 50-over format but has no hesitation in admitting that people who run the game have a challenge at hand in keeping its relevance.

A traditionalist by nature, the 'Director of Coaching' at the MRF Pace Foundation still believes that Test cricket remains the 'ultimate test' of a cricketer.

"I am very much a traditionalist. I liked Test, I liked my ODIs. Test cricket is till the ultimate to me. I I hope that it is protected and still held in high regard," McGrath told reporters during an interaction.

"As for the ODIs, it is still exciting as long as they are scoring runs. Interesting to see the future (of ODIs) and see where it goes. They have got to keep making it (ODIs) exciting. They have got a few challenges," he added.

McGrath won't be surprised if a lot of youngsters start opting for T20 Internationals, citing workload issues.

"I would like to think so.

See teams are now having separate T20 and ODI teams...They are nearly getting more specific. Yeah, the money is in T20 cricket isn't it? To be honest, a lot of players, a lot of youngsters coming up will look to play T20s."

McGrath, who will be completing a decade at the helm of MRF academy, said he has enjoyed the stint and is proud of the players like Prasidh Krishna and Avesh Khan who have represented India.

"It has been 10 years (laughs)...The last 2 have been a little dodgy. It has been great. I've enjoyed it. Our goal was to continue what Dennis (Lillee) had done."

"I knew I couldn't just come in and fill those shoes. He (Lillee) is the best pace bowling coach in my opinion. It is about teaching the young guys, the next generation, to become self-sufficient."

McGrath is happy that the Foundation has been able to keep its lofty standards and gift Indian cricket, a bunch of quality speed merchants.

"To see 29 of our boys and

ex-boys playing in the recent IPL was a proud moment. Prasidh and Avesh representing India in limited overs cricket, I am really proud of them...Proud of all the boys," McGrath, who took over from Lillee, added.

He said Indian captain Rohit Sharma finding some form after his recent struggles with bat was good news.

"It is good news. He is a class player. You want him doing well. You want to see the senior players do well. You saw Shubman Gill get a good score the other day in the West Indies. The batsmen are doing their job in the West Indies."

On Hardik Pandya's return from injury and impressing with all-round performances, McGrath said, "Cricket is very much a confidence sport. Hardik is very much a confidence player. If he is bowling well it has a positive impact on his batting."

"He is a two players in one. He is a luxury. He is a good, intelligent bowler and powerful hitter. He has got a good game plan."

Ronaldo returns in Man Utd's friendly

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Cristiano Ronaldo played for 45 minutes as he made his first Manchester United appearance in 12 weeks during a 1-1 pre-season draw with Rayo Vallecano at Old Trafford on Sunday.

The 37-year-old Portugal forward, who missed the club's pre-season tour to Thailand and Australia for personal reasons, reportedly wants to leave the club he rejoined last year.

Ronaldo applauded fans on both sides of the ground as he led the team out for their pre-match warm-up on Sunday.

The veteran forward had one clear chance during his 45-minute appearance against United's Spanish opponents but drove over the bar after running on to Donny van de Beek's lay-off.

New signings Christian Eriksen and Lisandro Martinez both featured for an hour in a game set up by new United manager Erik ten Hag for the players who did not have major roles in Saturday's 1-0 defeat by Atletico.

Amad Diallo, who was on loan at Scottish giants Rangers last season, gave United the lead early in the second half when the 20-year-old Ivory Coast winger fired in the rebound after a shot from Alex Telles had been saved.

Celtic launch title defence with Aberdeen win

AP ■ GLASGOW

Jota produced a moment of class as Celtic launched the defence of their Scottish Premiership title with a 2-0 win at home to Aberdeen on Sunday.

Celtic centre-back Stephen Welsh headed the Hoops in front in the third minute to the delight of the Glasgow giants' fans at Parkhead.

But although a side managed by former Australia boss Ange Postecoglou remained on top for most of the match thereafter, it wasn't until 15 minutes from time that Jota made the game safe for Celtic.

Sinner stuns Alcaraz again to take Umag title



AP ■ UMAG

Jannik Sinner defeated Spanish teenager Carlos Alcaraz for the second time in four weeks on Sunday to take the Spaniard's Umag clay-court title.

World number 10 Sinner came from a first set deficit to beat the fifth-ranked Alcaraz 6-7 (5/7), 6-1, 6-1 in the final.

Sinner, who now has six career titles but a first on clay, had also defeated the 19-year-old in the fourth round at Wimbledon earlier this month.

"I am obviously very happy," said Sinner who saved all nine break points he faced.

"I have had a tough year until now, I had some unfortunate moments, but we

DE MINAUR RECLAIMS ATP ATLANTA CROWN

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Australia's Alex de Minaur rolled to a 6-3, 6-3 victory over American Jensen Brooksby on Sunday to add a second ATP Atlanta title to the one he captured back in 2019.

The 23-year-old Aussie claimed his sixth career title -- and his first since a victory in Eastbourne in June of last year.

"I'd like to thank the crowd," De Minaur said. "I'm



not a local, but you guys sure made me feel like one, so really appreciate the support."

It's all about the process."

Alcaraz had been seeking his fifth title of 2022 but instead was defeated in a final for the second successive week after losing to another Italian, Lorenzo Musetti in Hamburg.

Alonso to replace Vettel at Aston Martin

AP ■ LONDON

Veteran Spanish Formula One driver Fernando Alonso said he "intends to win again" after Aston Martin announced on Monday that he would be joining the team on a multi-year contract from 2023.

The double world champion, who turned 41 on Friday and was coming to the end of his contract with French team Alpine, will replace German driver Sebastian Vettel, a four-time champion, who last week announced his retirement from F1 at the end of the current season.

Alonsosaid the Aston Martin team "is clearly applying the energy and commitment to win" and is "one of the most exciting teams in Formula One today".