

‘India helped world discover true potential of democracy’

By 2047 we will realise dreams of freedom fighters, says Prez in maiden I-Day address

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Sunday asserted that by 2047 the country will realise all the “dreams” visualised by freedom fighters and reach its full potential. She also said that India has helped the world discover the “true potential of democracy”.

Delivering her maiden address to the nation on the eve of the country’s Independence Day, the President remembered the sacrifices of all the freedom fighters and pointed to the speedy growth of the country which, she said, is gaining new heights globally.

“We Indians proved skeptics wrong. Democracy not only grew roots in this soil but it was also enriched,” she also said that India helped the world discover the true potential of democracy.

“India can be credited to have helped the world discover the true potential of democracy,” she said in a nationwide televised address.

Murmu, 64, is India’s first President to be born after Independence.

The first tribal President of India, Murmu said, “On 15 August 1947, we cut the shackles of Colonial rule. While celebrating the anniversary of that auspicious day, we salute all the freedom fighters. They sacrificed everything so that we can all breathe in a free India.”

The President also touched on August 14 being observed as ‘Partition Horror Remembrance Day’ saying its purpose was to promote social harmony, human empowerment and unity.

Congratulating the countrymen on the occasion, Murmu said that “in celebrating Independence Day, we celebrate our ‘Bharatiyata’.”



President Droupadi Murmu addresses the nation on the eve of Independence Day, in New Delhi on Sunday.

PTI

“India is full of diversity. But, we all also have something in common. It is this common thread that binds us together and inspires us to walk together with the spirit of ‘Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat’,” she said in her speech which was first delivered in Hindi followed by English.

Asserting that India’s economy is growing, she said that the country’s “economic development is all-inclusive and regional disparities too are reducing.”

She also pointed out that when the world has been “battling the economic consequences of the great crisis, India got its act together and is now moving forward.”

The President praised the Government and the policy-makers for “beating global trends and helping the economy flourish.”

The President said that India launched the biggest vaccination drive in human history with vaccines manufactured in the country itself. “Last month we crossed the 200-crore mark in cumulative vaccine coverage. In combating pandemics, our achievements have been better than those of many developed countries,” she said.

Mentioning that farmers and labourers deserve credit for the country’s robust economy, Murmu said “The country’s economic growth has become more inclusive, with narrower disparities. The National Education Policy (NEP) and digital India initiative played a major role here.”

“Apart from the economy, we also focus on welfare measures too, such as housing and tap water schemes,” she said.

While detailing Government policies and their aim to reduce disparity and encourage equality, Murmu said “keyword for India today is compassion for the down-trodden, the needy and for those on margins,” the President further said.

Asserting that the source of the country’s new confidence is youngsters, farmers, and women, Murmu said, “Gender inequalities are reducing and women are breaking many glass ceilings. Women have made a mark in the Panchayati Raaj system too. Our daughters made us proud in the recent Common Wealth Games (CWG) as well. They are becoming fighter pilots and space scientists.”

The President said the country will realize all the


“dreams” seen by freedom fighters for an Independent India, by 2047 and the youth would help fulfill the country’s full potential.

“By the year 2047, we will have fully realized the dreams of our freedom fighters. We will have given a concrete shape to the vision of those who, led by Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, drafted the Constitution,” she said.

She also welcomed the Government’s decision to celebrate ‘Janjatiya Gaurav Divas’ on November 15 every year.

“Our tribal superheroes are not just local or regional icons but they are a source of inspiration for the entire nation,” she said. Touching on the need to protect nature and the environment, she said “We need to preserve our environment and water resources, for future generations. Looking after nature has been a part of our civilization and we should continue that,” Murmu said before concluding her address.


The Independence Day celebration comes at a time when India, like most countries, is seen to be coming out of the grim shadows of Covid-19, which crippled normal life and marred economic activities after its outbreak in 2020.




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76TH

INDEPENDENCE DAY







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Delhi has become city of Tricolours: CM L-G unfurls Tiranga

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said India has completed 7 decades of Independence but our country is still running behind several countries, including those that got freedom after India. He was addressing thousands of students at an event to celebrate the 76th anniversary of India's independence at Thyagaraj Stadium.

Kejriwal said, "Singapore got Independence 15 years after India. Japan and Germany, which were completely destroyed during World War-II, are among the list of top developed countries.

"Why is India not? India has an abundance of rivers, mineral ores, mountains, herbs, crops, oceans and seas, Indians are the smartest and most hardworking in the world, yet why do we lack behind? We should've been a world leader by now."

"On the occasion of 76 years of Independence, we all have to take a pledge to make India Number 1. All Indians fought together to kick the British out of India and got Independence. Similarly, we can take India to top if we all work together," he said.

The Chief Minister said with the initiative of installing 500 high-mast national flags across the national Capital, Delhi has become the "city of

tricolours".

"Delhi has become the city of Tricolours. We have installed 500 high-mast national flags across Delhi with the objective that people should see the national flag everywhere they go and do not forget the country," he said.

The Chief Minister said he spotted as many as nine high-mast tricolours on his way to the venue of the event. The Chief Minister also asked everyone to pledge to take India to greater heights. "Indians are the most intelligent and industrious people in the



world. We have to take a pledge to make the country number one in the world. So let's take a pledge that we will not throw garbage on streets and keep our roads and surroundings clean.

"If possible, pick any garbage you find on the streets and throw it in the trash bins, if you can't do this, just ensure there's no filth around in pub-



lic places," Kejriwal said.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and other officials. Kejriwal said the Delhi Government has distributed national flags to 25 lakh children to instil a sense of patriotism in them. He said freedom fighters made great sacrifices for the country and it was time to realise their dreams.

"Babasaheb not only fought for the country but also for the rights of Dalits and oppressed people. He gave us the best constitution in the world. Shaheed-E-Azam Bhagat Singh

laid down his life for the nation at the age of 23. His martyrdom teaches us about supreme sacrifice for the country," he added. The event began with the famous poem 'Aa Rahi Ravi Ki Sawaari' recorded in the voice of National Awardee Actor Shri Ashish Vidyarthi. After this, Oscar and Grammy Award winner Shri Sukhwinder Singh mesmerised the audience through his live performance of the song 'Pagdi Sambhal Jatta', remembering Shaheed-e-Azam Sardar Bhagat Singh, followed by 'Jai Ho' to mark the occasion.

At the same time, Geetika Ganjoo gave her voice to the

famous poet of freedom movement written by Late Pandit Sohanlal Dwivedi 'Himmat Karne Walon Ki Kabhi Haar Nahi Hoti' and inspired everyone to move forward by fighting the difficulties.

Renowned singer Asees Kaur remembered the struggle and sacrifice of the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi in the freedom struggle by singing the hymn 'Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram' in his voice. The poem 'Ruke Na Tu, Jhuke Na Tu,' by Hariwansh Rai Bachchan, recorded in the voice of Ms Geetika Ganjoo & Ashish Vidyarthi, was presented after this.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Three Union Ministers and Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Sunday participated in an early morning walk with 10,000 school students of New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) to celebrate the ongoing 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign.

The 'Prabhat Pheri' began from Janpath Radial and culminated at the National War Memorial at India Gate to celebrate the campaign under 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' to mark 75 years of India's independence. Delhi Lt Governor also unfurled the National Flag at Gandhi Smriti and paid respects to the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi at the Martyr's Column, as part of the "Har Ghar Tiranga" Abhiyan.

Union Ministers Piyush Goyal, Smriti Irani and Meenakshi Lekhi attended the event. Delhi LG Vinai Kumar Saxena, Chairman NDMC Ashwani Kumar, members of NDMC Kuljeet Singh Chahal and Vishakha Sailani also participated in the march.

"Joined Union Ministers @PiyushGoyal @smritirani & @M_Lekhi in a 'Prabhat Pheri' by over 10000 school children as part of #HarGharTiranga Abhiyan. Children's enthusiasm, energy and their love for Tiranga was simply infectious. The fervor indeed is INDIA! #AzadiKaAmritMahotsav," the



LG said in a tweet.

The LG also posted pictures of the 'pheri' where children along with Union Ministers and other officials were seen carrying the national flag. "Boundless Energy, Infectious Enthusiasm, Tricolour in Hand & India in Heart! As the children walked from CP to the War Memorial at India Gate," the LG said in another tweet.

Before the beginning of the event, the LG said children are the bright future of India who are witnessing the 'Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign'.

'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' is a festival of our culture, heritage and achievement earned during the 75 years of independent India, he said. Saxena said Har Ghar Tiranga is a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in

which citizens will celebrate it by hoisting it atop their house. "The tricolour is the symbol of our freedom of struggle and sacrifice of our freedom fighters who gave their supreme sacrifice for the future of our nation," Saxena was quoted saying.

He urged the children to carry the tricolour in the Prabhat Pheri and take it home to be hoisted as a part of the campaign, the statement added.

The LG also honored 97-year-old R Madhavan, a freedom fighter and the lone surviving member of the Azad Hind Fauz (INA) along with the family members of the late freedom fighters namely, Nandlal, Hazari Lal, BB Narula, and Kamakshi Ammal, who all were associated with the Azad Hind Fauz.



Cong workers take out Azadi Ki Gaurav Yatra

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress on Sunday Organised the Azadi Ki Gaurav Yatra from Khajoori Chowk to Loni Road, Gokulpuri in the Karawal Nagar District and from Ambedkar Park, Mangolpuri to Naharpur Village in the Rohini

District.

Hundreds of Congress workers, carrying the national flag in their hands, participated in the Yatra at both Karawal Nagar and Rohini Districts.

Addressing the event, Kumar said Congress workers and leaders martyr and went through untold suffering to secure freedom for the country, but now those forces who worked against the freedom movement, and who refused to acknowledge the tricolour, and indulged in unprecedented corruption after coming to power through lies and falsehood, were trying to hijack the country's 75th Anniversary of Independence.

However, Former Delhi Minister Dr Narendra Nath said that Congress party and Congress Governments always kept the interest of the people and their welfare in mind while carrying out all its development and social welfare works, but under the BJP Government, the country was heading towards disaster as the lives of the ordinary people have become unbearable due to stalled developments, unemployment and price rise.

Meanwhile, the former MLA, Jaikishan said that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who could not organize a pre-planned function to create a gigantic national flag by lining up school children at Burari as the ground got water-logged due to rains, was now appealing to people to hoist the national flag! Under the Kejriwal Government, corruption became all-pervading

10,000 cops man Red Fort ahead of PM I-Day address

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital has not only been decked in tricolour hues in the lead up to the 76th Independence Day celebrations, but also put under a heavy security blanket with more than 10,000 personnel manning the Red Fort from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the country.

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

With nearly 7,000 invitees expected to attend the event at the Red Fort, a five-kilometre area around the monument has been marked as "no kite flying zone" till the tricolour is hoisted. Dependra Pathak, Special Commissioner of Police (Law

and Order), had said provisions of Section 144 have already been instituted in Delhi.

Anyone seen flying kites, balloons or Chinese lanterns from August 13 to August 15 till the end of the programme at Red Fort will be punished.

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

Delhi Police apprehended two Bangladeshi nationals from the Palam area of the city and recovered several passports and 10 fake stamps belonging to Bangladesh ministries from their possession, according to an official on Sunday. The arrested Bangladeshi nationals have been identified as Md Mostafa and Md Husain Sheikh who was staying at Palam Extension, Near Ramphal Chowk. "On search, they were found to be in possession of 11 passports of different Bangladeshi citizens and also 10 fake stamps of various ministries and notary of Bangladesh.

MCD is making mockery of safai karamcharis: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP leader Durgesh Pathak on Sunday alleged that the BJP-ruled Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is making a mockery of Safai Karamcharis by regularising only 187 out of 27,098 eligible contractual employees.

Pathak said that crores were spent on a program to have Delhi LG handover appointment letters to 187 employees and rub salt on the wounds of Safai Karamcharis.

"It is shameful and shocking that BJP has put up hoardings all over Delhi to advertise regularisation of just 187 employees.

Be it their 2017, 2012, 2007 or 2002 manifesto, BJP has always cheated the Safai Karamcharis by making false promises of regularisation. Safai Karamcharis only face disappointment and deceit after every election when BJP refuses to regularise them.

AAP demands BJP to regularise all MCD Safai

Karamcharis or else be prepared for a crushing defeat," said Pathak, while addressing a press conference. "The Safai Karamcharis are the very backbone of the sanitation system of Delhi.

They are the ones protecting us. Yet, they face such injustice. Safai Karamcharis don't receive their pay for as long as 3-4 months.

There are 27,098 Safai Karamcharis waiting for regularisation. But till date, in these two decades, the BJP has only regularised 187 Safai Karamcharis in MCD. This is not just unfair to these people but a mockery of their hard work and penance," said Pathak.

"The Safai Karamcharis have protested all over Delhi at this point. Jantar Mantar, Parliament, MCD Headquarters, Adesh Gupta's House, you name the place, you'll find them agitating for their rights. After every protest, BJP leaders come to fool them, and say they'll be regularised next month," he alleged.

Memory park for pet lovers inaugurated

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Sunday inaugurated Memory Park for all pet lovers who can plant a sapling to pay respect to their pets following their death, at Dogs Sterilization Center, in the national capital.

The inauguration was also coupled with 'Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan'. Special Officer of the MCD Ashwani Kumar and Commissioner, Gyanesh Bharti also hoisted the national flag. The chief guest also distributed national flags to the citizens who came with their pets to be part of this campaign.

On the occasion, while praising the effort of Veterinary Department of civic body and Green Revolution Foundation, Special Officer Kumar said that the 75th Independence Day is being celebrated as "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" and organizing such a program on this occasion is wonderful in itself.

Delhi's first green crematorium is being built by the civic body for small animals, which is a remarkable initiative. In today's life, pets have become an important part of our lives and they also deserve the right to full respect after death.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner MCD, Gyanesh Bharti informed that an eco-friendly CNG based crematorium for small animals is being constructed by the Veterinary Services Department of MCD,

which will be completed soon. Informing about the details of the project, Bharti said that this crematorium is being built on PPP model in collaboration with Green Revolution Foundation.

"Two furnaces of 200 kg biomass are being installed in this crematorium, which will be used for the last rites of animals like dogs, cats etc. A Memory Park is also being developed along with the crematorium, where citizens can plant a sapling in the memory of their pets which will be a tribute to their pets' love and loyalty forever.

The MCD is trying to provide the best facilities to the citizens and development of small animal crematorium along with a salubrious Memory Park in and around the crematorium is a significant step in this direction," Bharti stated.

The concept of dog parks has been borrowed from similar facilities in Hyderabad and Bangalore. Last year in October, North Delhi Municipal Corporation inaugurated the city's first pet dog park in Karol Bagh.

On Occasion, Additional Commissioner of Corporation Randhir Sahay and Zonal Deputy Commissioner Pradeep Kumar, Director Veterinary Services, Dr. V.K. Singh, and other senior officers were also present along with nearly 100 pet parents along with their pets were also present to commend special event.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

POOJA W/o Sanjay Kumar R/o Kothi No 5, IGP House, Police Line, Sector-30 Faridabad, have changed my name from pooja to pooja Giri for all future purposes

PD(90150)C

IN THE COURT OF SH. NAROTTAM KAUSHAL LD. Principal District & Sessions Judge South, Saket Court Complex New Delhi.

CIS-GP-06/2022 CNR-DLST01-001877-2022 (1). Smt. Shalu Doshi, Wife of Late Sh. Alok Doshi, Resident of 3311, Sector-D, Pocket 3, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-70 (2). Master Aditya Doshi, Dio Late Sh. Alok Doshi Through Guardian Ms. Shalu Doshi, Resident of 3311, Sector-D, Pocket 3, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-70 (3). Ms. Kashvika Doshi, Dio Late Sh. Alok Doshi Through Guardian Ms. Shalu Doshi, Resident of 3311, Sector-D, Pocket 3, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-70

.....Petitioners

1. The State (Government of NCT of Delhi) Through the Chief Secretary Delhi Secretariat JP Extension New Delhi

.....Respondent

Petition Under Sub-Section (2) of Section 8 of the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956 Seeking Permission to sell 1/3 undivided share of the Minor Master Aditya Doshi in the Immovable property.

Whereas the petitioner namely Smt. Shalu Doshi being the mother and natural guardian of the minor, Master Aditya Doshi is seeking indulgence of this Hon'ble Court for grant of necessary permission under sub-section (2) of Section 8 of the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956, to transfer by way of sale his undivided 1/3rd share in the following immovable property,

(A). Property bearing No. A-172, Forming part of Kharsa No. 244, Situated in the Revenue Estate of Village Chhatrapur, Bow Colony Known as Chhatrapur Enclave, Tehsil Hauz Khas, Mehrauli, New Delhi-110074.

The 30th day of Sept. 2022 has been fixed for hearing of the application and notice is hereby given to General Public that if any other relative/ friends, Kinsman or well wisher of Minor Master Aditya Doshi desire to adopt, be appointed, declare as guardian of the person or desire to oppose the application of the Petitioner aforesaid, He/She should enter appearance in person in this court on the aforesaid date and be prepared to adduce on that day any documentary or oral evidence.

Which he/she may desire to adduce in support of petitioner's opposition to the application of the petitioner aforesaid.

Given under my hand and the seal of the court on this 06th August 2022.

(Narottam Kaushal)

Principal District & Sessions Judge South, Saket Court Complex New Delhi

19 Delhi Police officials bag medals for meritorious service

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police 19 officials have been awarded the medal for meritorious service by the Central Government on the occasion of 75th Independence Day. Two officials of the Delhi Fire Service have also been awarded medals for their services.

According to police officials, late Constable, Anand Singh has been awarded Police Medal for Gallantry (PMG)/(Posthumously) while Pancham Chand, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) and Shivaji Chauhan, ACP have been awarded President's Police Medal for Distinguished service. "Bhisham Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police

(DCP), Harish HP, DCP, Indu Bala, ACP, Raj Rani Sharma, ACP, SI (Now Inspector) Braham Prakash, Inspector (Steno) Shakti Suman Pandey, Inspector Renu Sharma, ASI Suresh Kumar and HC (Now ASI/Mounted) Subhash Chander are among those who have been awarded Police Medal for Meritorious Service.

In fire department, Assistant Divisional Officer Somvir Singh and Leading Fireman Nirmal Singh have been recognised for their bravery and extraordinary performance. India is commemorating 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' - a year-long celebration to mark 75 years of Independence.

19-yr-old college student dies after jumping into Yamuna

NEW DELHI: A 19-year-old college student died after he allegedly jumped from the Signature Bridge into the Yamuna river. The incident occurred in the Timarpur area on Saturday evening. No suicide note was recovered from him and police said they are not clear about the reason behind the youth taking such an extreme step.

The deceased has been identified as Rajat who lived with his family in Karawal Nagar. He had a part-time job in the Karol Bagh area, the police said. According to a senior police official, Rajat had left home in the morning and jumped from the Signature Bridge into the swollen Yamuna river while returning

in the evening. "Divers immediately jumped into the river to save him, but he drowned as the water level was high. His body was found after some time and taken out," said the senior police official.

The teenager is survived by his parents and two sisters, police said, adding the body would be handed over to his family after the post-mortem.

There have been a number of suicide attempts from the Signature Bridge, which was inaugurated in 2018.

The city police, along with a team of private divers, saved 30 people who tried to end their lives by jumping into the Yamuna river from the bridge in the last one-and-a-half years, officials said last month.

Revenue Khilli Ram Meena said the overflowing Yamuna affected low-lying areas near the river in northeast, east and southeast Delhi and around 7,000 people had been shifted to higher ground.

"Around 5,000 from east Delhi, 2,000 from northeast Delhi and 500 from southeast Delhi had been evacuated.

People in north, central and Shahdara districts did not face any major problem," he said. The senior official said the situation was under control and there was no need to evacuate more people.

Restaurants gear up to celebrate I-Day with hefty discounts

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Special brunches, heavy discounts or a unique extravagant buffet boasting of mind-boggling 75 choicest regional delicacies from across the country, restaurants — big and small — in the Capital have upped their gastronomy game to ring in the Independence Day.

While five-star restaurants are celebrating the diversity of India's regional culture and flavours by laying out specially curated menus, popular cafes and restaurants are big on discounts on this historical day — with some even offering a flat 50 per cent to defence personnel. Capital Kitchen at Taj Palace and Roseate House, for instance, are offering a vast array of delectable Indian culinary delights at a celebratory price of Rs 3,200 and Rs 3,500 per person, respectively.

The buffet at Roseate House will feature delicacies such as 'Tamatar wangu', 'Amritsari aloo wadiyan' from the North; 'Mutton kolhapuri', 'Gatta curry', 'Amrood ki subzi' from the west; 'Aloo posto',

'Machherjhol' from the east; and 'Chicken chettinad', 'Narang choru', 'Payasam' from the south. But then there is no one beating Hotel Crowne Plaza in Okhla, which has gone all out with their innovative cyclic menu boasting of "75 regional delicacies" at their ongoing 'Harmonies Of India' food festival to celebrate the Independence Day.

Some of the signature dishes from their menu includes 'Hyderabadi Lukhmi', 'Kerala Fish Curry', 'Maharastrian Aamti Dal', 'Manipuri Sana Thongba', 'Kerala style Avial', 'Meghalayan Jadoh', 'Tamil Nadu style Uralai Kothamalli Curry', 'Silbatte Ke Shami Kebab', 'Awadhi Biryani', 'Kashmiri Gushtaba', 'Assamese Bhendi Sorsori', 'Champaran Meat Kebab', and 'Gujarati Mohanthal'.

"This Independence Day, our team of 40 plus chefs who have grown up in different parts of the country shall represent the local flavours and heirloom recipes of their region at Edesia," Pradipt Sinha, director, food and beverages, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla said.

Water level recedes below danger mark in Yamuna

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The water level in the Yamuna receded below the danger mark of 205.33 metres in Delhi on Sunday and is likely to dip further even as Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal appealed to people to avoid going towards the river banks.

The flood control room said the water level dipped from 205.88 metres at 8 pm on Saturday to 204.83 metres at 8 am on Sunday, and further to 204.65 metres at 12 noon. "The water level of Yamuna has

increased in Delhi. I appeal to everyone to please avoid going near the river. We have made adequate arrangements for the people living near Yamuna. Cooperate with the Government and administration. We are monitoring the situation and are ready to deal with any situation," Kejriwal took to Twitter to inform people.

The river had breached the danger mark of 205.33 metres around 4 pm on Friday following heavy rain in the upper catchment areas, prompting authorities to evac-

uate around 7,000 people from low-lying areas. Delhi minister Kailash Gahlot said: "In view of the rising water level of Yamuna, all the agencies concerned have been put on high alert.

There is an appeal to the people to stay away from the river. We are monitoring the situation under the leadership of CM Arvind Kejriwal. Camps have been set up for the displaced, where necessary arrangements have been made for their accommodation and food." A flood alert is declared in Delhi when the discharge

rate from the Hathnikund Barrage in Haryana's Yamuna Nagar crosses the one lakh-cusecs mark. People living near the floodplains and in flood-prone areas are evacuated then. "Around 37,000 people who live in Yamuna floodplains and low-lying areas in Delhi are considered vulnerable to flooding.

"People evacuated from low-lying areas in the floodplains have been shifted to temporary structures like tents and permanent buildings like schools in safer areas," an official said. Principal Secretary

OPINION 6

SAVING INDIA FROM
UNRULY NEIGHBOURS

WORLD 9

FIRE AT COPTIC CHURCH IN CAIRO
KILLS 41, HURTS 14

MONEY 10

FINANCE MIN PLANS TO REVIEW
EXEMPTION-FREE TAX REGIME

NEW DELHI, MONDAY AUGUST 15, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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‘Partition Day reminds us
of suffering of Indians’I pay homage to
all those who
lost their lives
during the
Partition: ModiPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday remembered ‘Partition Horror Remembrance Day’, saying the day ‘reminds us of the suffering and sacrifices of Indians’.

In tune with the PM, the BJP held peace rallies and programmes across the country to mark the occasion and hit out at the Congress for allowing the Partition. The BJP carried out a silent march led by party

president JP Nadda at ‘Jantar Mantar’ in the national Capital to observe ‘Partition Vibhishika Diwas’. In a tweet, the PM said, ‘Today, on ‘Partition Horrors Remembrance Day’, I pay homage to all those who lost their lives during the Partition, and applaud the resilience as well as grit of all those who suffered during that tragic period of our history.’

Last year, Modi declared that August 14 would be remembered as ‘Partition Horrors Remembrance Day’ every year to remind the nation of the sufferings and sacrifices of Indians during the Partition in 1947. Union Home Minister Amit Shah also paid homage to lakhs of people who he said suffered the brunt of the Partition in 1947 on the occasion of ‘Partition Horrors Remembrance Day’.

Continued on Page 4

Tragedy of Partition
can’t be misused to
fuel hate: CongPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday alleged that the real intent of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to mark August 14 as ‘Partition Horrors Remembrance Day’ is to use the traumatic events as fodder for his current political battles.

Congress general secretary, communications, Jairam Ramesh said the tragedy of the Partition, cannot be misused to fuel hate and prejudice. He said the politics of hate will be defeated and the Congress will continue to unite India.

Continued on Page 4

Death cuts short the
Big Bull’s run at 62Jhunjhunwala
passes away days
after launch of
his Akasa Air

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Billionaire investor, the ‘Big Bull’ of the Indian market, and Akasa Air co-founder Rakesh Jhunjhunwala passed away on Sunday, following a cardiac arrest.

He was 62 and is survived by his wife Rekha Jhunjhunwala and daughter Nishtha and two twin sons Aryaman and Aryaveer.

Jhunjhunwala, who was the 36th richest person in the country as per the Forbes’ 2021 list and had a net worth of around \$5.8 billion, was brought dead to the Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai at



6:45 A.M on Sunday. His health had deteriorated over the past few weeks, and he was being treated for kidney-related ailments and ischemic heart disease. The hospital certified that cardiac arrest was the cause of his death.

Jhunjhunwala, who had lived his life king size, had several vices. He had gone on record way back in 2013, saying: ‘I don’t have good habits. I smoke like a chimney, drink like a fish, eat like a pig. I don’t exercise. Yes. My health worries me.’

Continued on Page 4

BJP gets crucial portfolios
in Maha Cabinet expansion

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The ruling BJP walked away with several crucial portfolios like Home, Finance, Housing, Revenue and Rural Development in the Ministry allocations made belatedly by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday in Maharashtra.

While Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis (BJP) has been vested with plum portfolios like Home, Finance & Planning, Law & Justice, Water Resources, Energy, Housing and Protocol, Chief Minister Shinde will handle the traditional portfolios of Urban Development, GAD, IT, PWD (Public Projects), Transport and other departments.

In the portfolio allocations made by the Chief Minister five days after he expanded his Cabinet on August 9 through the induction of 18 new Ministers, BJP Minister Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil was allocated Revenue, Dairy

Development and Animal Husbandry, while Sudhir Mungantiwar was given Forests, Cultural Affairs and Fisheries. Chandrakant Patil was handed Higher & Technical Education, Textiles and Parliamentary Affairs portfolio. Dr Vijaykumar Gavit was allocated Tribal Development, while Girish Mahajan was given Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Medical Education, Sports & Youth

Welfare. Mangal Prabhat Lodha was allocated Tourism, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Women & Child Development. Ravindra Chavan was given Public Works (excluding Public Enterprises), Food & Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection, while Atul Save got Cooperation, Other Backward & Bhojan Welfare. Suresh Khade was allocated the Labour department.

Continued on Page 4

JK Rowling gets death
threat over Rushdie tweet

PTI ■ LONDON

The police in Scotland on Sunday said they are investigating an online threat, believed to be from Pakistan, made to Harry Potter author JK Rowling in the wake of her support for Mumbai-born writer Salman Rushdie following his stabbing at a literary event in New York state. Rowling, 57, shared screenshots of a Twitter message stating: ‘Don’t worry, you are next.’

Continued on Page 4

Army Jawan’s body buried in Siachen
glacier found after thirty eight yearsPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Army has found the mortal remains of one of its soldiers after 38 years in the Siachen glacier. The soldier has been identified as Lance Naik Chandra Shekhar. He was reported missing after an avalanche

hit his team on the world’s highest battlefield.

A patrol team on Saturday found the remains of Shekhar in an old bunker at the Siachen glacier at a height of more than 16,000 feet. An identification disc around the neck of the skeleton helped the army ascertain his identity.

The soldier served in the 19 Kumaon Regiment and hailed from Haldwani, Uttarakhand. He is survived by his wife and two daughters.

Giving the details of the recovery, sources also said his elder daughter was eight and the younger one only four when the mishap took

place. Several retired soldiers of his unit and family members are likely to attend the ceremony when his mortal remains arrive in Haldwani.

The mishap took place in 1984 shortly after the Indian Army was deployed at the Siachen glacier.

Continued on Page 4

the pioneer

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J&K on high alert to ensure peaceful Independence Day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

The entire security grid in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has been kept in a state of high alert to ensure peaceful and incident free celebrations of 75 th Independence day on Monday. The entire region is already witnessing large-scale participation in the nationwide 'Har Ghar Tiranga campaign'.

In Srinagar Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Sunday joined thousands of citizens from all walks of life in a Walkathon from Lalit Ghat to Botanical Garden to celebrate the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' Utsav.

It's a new dawn of hopes and dreams, said the Lt Governor. Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav provided us with an opportunity to inspire future

generation by making them aware of the invaluable contribution of our heroes and martyrs, the Lt Governor said.

Addressing the veterans of 1971 war present during the walkathon, the Lt Governor said I salute all those who have laid the path of progress and prosperity of Jammu & Kashmir and are keeping the nation safe and secure.

Meanwhile, one police personnel succumbed to his fatal injuries in a grenade attack late last night in Qaimoh area of Kulgam. The police personnel has been identified as Tahir Khan R/O Mendhar, Poonch.

Soon after the attack took place he was shifted to GMC hospital, Anantnag for treatment where he succumbed & attained martyrdom, a police spokesman said.

In Jammu region, Army



Commander, Northern Command Lt-Gen Upendra Dwivedi Sunday visited forward areas in Rajouri & interacted with troops. Lt Gen Dwivedi also visited Pargal army post in Darhal where he was briefed by GOC Romeo Force about the operation resulting in neutralization of 2 heavily armed terrorists. Four Indian army jawans were killed in action in the fidayeen strike. Lt Gen Dwivedi also com-

mented the Army unit for their alertness & professionalism. Interacting with the media persons on the sidelines of the function Director General of Police, Dilbagh Singh said the graph of militancy is coming down but Pakistan's conspiracies have not stopped yet.

Small, young boys, who are not yet to mature, are being radicalised one way or the other and involved in the new form of hybrid terrorism.

Siddaramaiah slams Bommai for excluding Nehru from Govt ad on freedom fighters

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Taking strong exception to the non-inclusion of former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in the list of freedom fighters in the Government advertisement published in newspapers on Sunday, the Congress attacked BJP government in Karnataka, with its leader Siddaramaiah calling Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai a "RSS slave".

In a series of tweets, Siddaramaiah, who is the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, even attacked V D Savarkar, who is included in the advertisement, accusing him of pleading with British officials and acting as their "stooge" for his survival.

"When we thought slavery ended with the British gone, CM of Karnataka Bommai proved everyone wrong by



showing that he is still a slave to RSS. Not including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the list of freedom fighters in today's govt ad shows how low a CM can go to save his chair," he said.

Noting that Bommai should remember that Nehru wrote letters and books to inspire people to participate in the freedom movement while he was jailed by the British for 9 years, he said, "Looks like RSS is sad that Nehru did not write apology and mercy petitions to British like Savarkar."

"By omitting Nehru from the list of freedom fighters, Bommai has humiliated the entire nation in front of the world. Slow claps to Basavaraj Bommai for giving an opportunity to the rest of the world to mock India," he said, as he urged the Chief Minister to apologise to the entire nation.

The advertisement by the state government's as part of 75th Independence Day celebrations, highlights the contributions and sacrifices of some prominent freedom icons both at the national level and in the state.

Further alleging that RSS has hatred towards Nehru, because he had vociferously opposed it's communalism, its support to murder Mahatma Gandhi, and had banned it, Siddaramaiah asked "But, what is wrong with you? Mr Bommai?"

Another JeM militant arrested by ATS

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The sleuths of the Anti-Terrorists Squad claimed to have made further successes when they arrested a 19-year-old man for allegedly having links with terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed and being in touch with handlers in Pakistan and Afghanistan through social media.

The arrest of Habibul Islam alias Saifullah by the ATS comes close on the heels of the arrest of Mohammad Nadeem (25), an alleged terrorist linked to Jaish-e-Mohammed who was tasked with carrying out a 'fidayeen' attack on suspended Bharatiya Janata Party spokesperson Nurpur Sharma.

"Based on the interrogation of Mohammad Nadeem, who was arrested from Saharanpur on Friday, a field unit of Kanpur has arrested Habibul Islam alias Saifullah (19).



Habibul has admitted that he knows Nadeem and both are connected with terror link JeM," the ATS claimed here on Sunday.

"Following Nadeem's interrogation, Saifullah was brought from Fatehpur to Kanpur. He was later arrested. Saifullah admitted that he knew Nadeem and both of them were linked to JeM," the UP ATS said in a statement on Sunday.

Indian and international links of Saifullah are being probed and he has been booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Additional Director General of Police (ATS) Naveen Arora said here on Sunday.

Didi attacks Centre over using ED to target Opp

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA



In an apparent bid to rejuvenate a depressed rank and file after Enforcement Directorate and Central Bureau of Investigation arrested senior party leader Partha Chatterjee and strongman Anubrata Mondal, Bengal Chief Minister launched a scathing attack on the Centre for victimising the Opposition parties and vowed to depose the BJP in 2024 general elections.

Attacking the BJP Government for misusing the central agencies, Banerjee said "the people who once betrayed the nation during freedom struggle are today pestering you to hoist Jhanda (National Flag) ... But in reality they are using Danda (stick) against the opposition parties to subjugate them by sending ED, CBI ... my question is how many people you have arrested... after they fled with thousands of crores from the banks."

Saying that the economic and political freedom of the

country was in danger during BJP rule, the Chief Minister said, citing vindictive raids by agencies and rising fuel prices.

Standing firmly by the side of Mondal --- a party national executive member --- charged with cattle smuggling --- Banerjee asked, "what had he done ... You have arrested him because he has always defied BJP and CPI(M) during elections."

Banerjee was speaking in a public meeting at Behala in South Kolkata which is also the constituency of Partha Chatterjee.

With Mondal's arrest coming as a big organizational

blow to the TMC, the Chief Minister said, "if you arrest one Anubrata thousands like him will be born to throw Narendra Modi out of power in 2024."

Often called the uncrowned king of Birbhum district, Mondal, arrested for controlling the transborder cattle smuggling had also earned notoriety for openly threatening opposition leaders with physical assault and publicly asking party men to bomb police vehicles and torch opposition houses. In fact the mass burning at Bagtui village that took place early this year is in Birbhum.

Attacking the Centre for sending ED, CBI and Income Tax notices she said, "every day they send notices ... they conduct raids... give you bad name ... Destroy your image and finally nothing comes out."

TMC leaders threaten assault

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

In what the Opposition parties called a definite provocation by TMC leaders to ignite a mass confrontation after the arrest of Partha Chatterjee and Anubrata Mondal, senior Trinamool Congress leaders asked party men to go for "Badla" should the Opposition take out rallies.

Senior party NP Saugato

Roy said, "If the BJP and Left continues with mischievous campaigns then shoes will be made out of their peeled of skins"

Another senior parliamentarian Kalyan Banerjee publicly wanted Badla while his party MLA Asit Banerjee said, "the opposition will be beaten in public". Yet others prescribed "ganja case" (anti narcotic cases) against the opposition workers.

TN BJP chief seeks Central probe into Madurai fake passport case

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI



The fake passport case centred around Avaniyapuram Police Station in Madurai City took a new turn on Sunday with K Annamalai, the Tamil Nadu BJP chief, submitting a memorandum to R N Ravi, Governor, to order a probe into the issue either by the Central Bureau of Investigation or the National Investigation Agency as many top police officers in the State were involved in in.

Annamalai, himself a former officer of the Indian Police Service who left his uniform to join politics, writing to Governor Ravi, a former IPS officer and an expert in intelligence affairs, has shocked the political establishment in the State.

"We were given to understand that more than 200 fake

passports were issued from Madurai during the period in which Davidson Devaasirvatham was the city commissioner. Recently a Bangladeshi national was held carrying a fake passport in Chennai," Annamalai said in his memorandum to the Governor, a copy of which has been accessed by The Pioneer.

Annamalai pointed out that the first instance of fake passport issued from Madurai City Avaniyapuram Police Station came to light on June 28th, 2019, when a 41-year old Sri Lankan national was arrested for trying to board a flight to Sri Lanka using a passport obtained by producing fake documents. "A case was registered against him and it came to light that he had obtained the passport illegally and had been residing in Madurai," writes Annamalai.

Out of the fake passports seized during 2019 and 2020, a total of 53 passports were issued by a single police station (Avaniyapuram P S). "During such fake issuances Ilavarasu was the inspector of police, Dharmalingam was the inspector of police (intelligence), Siva Kumar was ACP, Intelligence and Davidson Devaasirvatham was the commissioner of police, Madurai City. It is important to note that the inspectors of police and the ACP have a role in the police verification process," Annamalai has written.

Militant attack in Manipur ahead of I-Day thwarted, 7 held

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Seven armed militants of the Banned People's Liberation Army (PLA) were arrested from different parts of Manipur ahead of Independence Day, police said on Sunday.

The Assam Rifles received inputs on Saturday morning about a plot to target government installations and security forces with explosives during the Independence Day celebrations, Superintendent of Police of Thoubal district H Jageshchandra said at a press conference.

"A joint team of Thoubal district police and 16 Assam Rifles rushed to Yairipok Bazaar, cordoned off the area and began a search operation," he said.

"Similar operations were also carried out at multiple

places in Imphal East, Imphal West, Kakching and Thoubal districts," he said.

The security forces arrested seven militants, and also held a minor with weapons and explosives, the officer said.

"Following investigations, it was revealed they have been targetting non-locals in the valley districts, and were involved in the killing of two non-locals in June and July at Kakching and Andro Huikap, respectively," he said.

A 9 mm pistol with magazine, a Berreta pistol with magazine, 35 live 9 mm rounds and two hand grenades were seized, Jageshchandra said.

The operation is continuing in different parts of the state ahead of the Independence Day celebrations, police said, adding that security has been beefed up.

Tragedy of Partition can't...

From Page 3

He further said that the Congress is determined to upholding the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Sardar Vallabhai Patel.

"The real intent of the PM to mark August 14 as 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day' is to use the most traumatic historical events as fodder for his current political battles. Lakhs upon lakhs were dislocated and lost their lives. Their sacrifices must not be forgotten or disrespected," Ramesh said in a series of tweets.

"The tragedy of the Partition cannot be misused to fuel hate and prejudice. The truth is Savarkar originated the two-nation theory and Jinnah perfected it. Sardar Patel wrote, 'I felt that if we did not accept the Partition, India would be split into many bits and would be completely ruined,'" he also said.

The Congress leader also

asked, "Will the PM also recall today Syama Prasad Mookerjee, the founder of the Jan Sangh, who championed the Partition of Bengal against the wishes of Sarat Chandra Bose, and who sat in free India's first Cabinet while the tragic consequences of the Partition were becoming evident?"

Alleging that the "modern-day Savarkars and Jinnahs" are continuing their efforts to divide the nation, Ramesh said the Indian National Congress will uphold the legacy of Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and many others who were untiring in their efforts to unite the nation.

"The politics of hate will be defeated," he asserted.

Pakistan was carved out as a separate country after the division of India by the British in 1947. Millions of people were displaced and many lakhs of them lost their lives in the communal violence that followed.

Death cuts short the Big Bull's run...

From Page 3

He had recently teamed up with ex-Jet Airways CEO Vinay Dube and former IndiGo head Aditya Ghosh to launch Akasa Air, a low-cost airline. The airline took to the skies last week. He was seen in a wheelchair at the launch of Akasa Air. The airline currently has two aircrafts with an additional order for 70 more planes and flies to three cities. In a statement, Akasa Air mourned Jhunjhunwala's death and said that he cared greatly for the well-being of its employees and customers. "Akasa Air will honour his legacy, values and belief in us by striving to run a great airline," a statement issued by Akasa Air said.

Dubbed as "India's Warren Buffett", Jhunjhunwala was always bullish about the country's stock market. He had made investments in more than three dozen companies. Among the companies where he had made huge investments were Titan, Star Health & Allied Insurance, Metro Brands, CRISIL Ltd, NCC Limited and Tata Motors.

He was also the Chairman of Hungama Digital Media Entertainment Pvt Ltd and Apteck Ltd. He was on the Board of Directors of several companies, including Provogue

India Limited, Nagarjuna Constructions, Tops Security Ltd and Mid-Day Multimedia Ltd.

His privately-owned stock trading firm Rare Enterprises derived its name from the first two letters of his name and that of his investor wife Rekha.

Born on July 5, 1960 Jhunjhunwala grew up in Mumbai, where his father was posted as an Income-Tax officer. After graduating from Sydenham College in 1985, he enrolled at the Institute of Chartered Accountant of India. Jhunjhunwala began investing with Rs 5,000 in 1985 when the Bombay Stock Exchange's benchmark index Sensex was at 150. At the time of death, his investment had grown to Rs 11,000 crore. As of 2021, his biggest investment was in Titan Company which was worth Rs 7,294.8 crore.

Known for his rich lifestyle, Jhunjhunwala -- in 2013 -- bought six of the 12 units of Ridgeway apartments at Malabar Hill from Standard Chartered bank for Rs 176 crore. Later in 2017 he bought the other six apartments in the building from HSBC bank for Rs 195 crore. In 2021 he commenced the construction of his new 70,000

square feet 13 storey home after the demolition of the old building. Jhunjhunwala was investigated for insider trading. Later on SEBI settled the issue after a total payment of Rs 35 crore from Jhunjhunwala and his associates. Jhunjhunwala paid Rs 18.5 crore, while his wife paid Rs 3.2 crore.

Mourning the death of Jhunjhunwala, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the legendary investor "leaves behind an indelible contribution to the financial world."

"Shri Rakesh Jhunjhunwala is no more. Investor, bold risk taker, masterly understanding of the stock market, clear in communication - a leader in his own right. Fondly remember several conversations we've had. Had strong belief in India's strength and capabilities. Condolences," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tweeted.

Union Minister for Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia said he will be remembered for giving India its new airline Akasa Air after more than a decade.

Paying a rich tribute to Jhunjhunwala, Industrialist Ratan Tata said that the billionaire investor would always be remembered for "his acute understanding of the stock exchanges of India."

"He will also be remembered for his jovial personality, his kindness, and his far-sightedness. My heartfelt condolences go out to his family which has to share the burden of this great loss," Ratan Tata added.

Kotak Mahindra Bank Managing Director Uday Kotak said he would miss his friend. "Rakesh Jhunjhunwala: my school and college mate. One year my junior. Believed stock India was undervalued. He is right. Amazingly sharp in understanding financial markets. We spoke regularly, more so during Covid. Will miss you Rakesh!" he tweeted. Industrialist Anand Mahindra tweeted: "Yes he was an ace investor; yes he made millions; yes he was always optimistic. But my strongest memory will always be his unshakable patriotism, his unwavering belief in India. I wish he had made it to the 75th anniversary of our Independence. Om Shanti" An excellent conversationalist, he had a wacky sense of humour. He would speak freely on issues like taxes, sex and even death. He would frequent waterholes in the evenings. He would often tell waiters, "Pehle jo free ka maal hai woh lao!" His logic was: "You should always demand what is due to you".

Partition Day reminds nation...

From Page 3

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

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

The BJP targeted the Congress without naming it on the day in a video clip and sought to know why the Partition could not be prevented by those who were in charge then.

The BJP's video featured Cyril John Radcliffe, whose partition map split Punjab and

Bengal almost in half, questioning how a person who had no knowledge of Indian cultural heritage was allowed to divide India in merely weeks.

Significantly, the video which narrated the Partition story had visuals of the first Prime Minister of the country Jawaharlal Nehru appearing frequently as the voice-over continued recounting the horrors of the partition.

"Those who had no knowledge of India's cultural heritage, civilisation, values, pilgrimages, in just three weeks, they drew the border between people living together for centuries", the video said. "Where were those people at that time who had the responsibility of fighting against these divisive forces?", the BJP tweeted along with the video.

The party has been organ-

ising exhibitions on the issue at various party offices and other places from August 12 to 14. A six-member committee was set up to ensure the implementation of the idea across the country, which consisted of national general secretary Dushyant Gautam, former Union Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan, Narendra Rana, Anirban Ganguly, Priti Gandhi and Shakti Singh. The party members also met the families of those who underwent the pain of the Partition in 1947, according to Gautam.

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

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

BJP gets crucial...

From Page 3

The portfolio allocation made in the case of the Shinde group is as follows: Gulabrao Patil—Water Supply & Sanitation, Dadaji Bhuse—Ports & Mines and Sanjay Rathod given Food & Drug Administration, Sandipan Bhumre—Employment Guarantee Scheme and Horticulture, Uday Samant -- Industry and Prof. Tanaji Sawant—Public Health & Family Welfare.

While Abdul Sattar from the Shinde camp has been given Agriculture, Deepak Kesarkar was given School Education & Marathi Language and Shambhuraj Desai got State Excise portfolio.

Besides, other Ministries that have not been allocated in the first round of Cabinet expansion will be handled by Shinde.

JK Rowling gets death...

From Page 3

The same Twitter account, believed to be based in Pakistan, also posted messages praising the man who attacked Rushdie, 75, on stage at the event in New York state.

"We have received a report of an online threat being made and officers are carrying out enquiries," Police Scotland said.

In her Twitter post, Rowling had said she felt "very sick" at the news about Rushdie's attack and hoped he would recover, to which she received the threatening reply.

She shared a screenshot of the threat, writing: "To all sending supportive messages. Thank you. Police are involved

(were already involved on other threats)." The Edinburgh-based author has previously faced threats over her stance on women's rights issues and police have investigated similar threats.

Warner Bros Discovery, the entertainment company behind the Harry Potter film series based on Rowling's books, said it strongly condemned the threats against her. "We stand with her and all the authors, storytellers and creators who bravely express their creativity and opinions. Our thoughts are with Sir Salman Rushdie and his family following the senseless act of violence in New York," it said in a statement.

Army Jawan's body buried in Siachen...

From Page 3

Shekhar was part of a team asked to capture Point 5965, an important feature that the Pakistanis were eyeing. The 19 Kumaon regiment unit was one of the first to take part in actions when the Indian army was deployed at the glacier.

Shekhar's unit had halted for the night when an avalanche hit it. Eighteen personnel, including an officer Second Lieutenant P S Pundir, were killed, sources said. While the mortal remains of 14 were found, five

were missing.

Shekhar's body was found by a patrol team, they said, adding in summer months the teams fan out at the glacier to locate the missing soldiers.

In the past too, the patrolling teams have found remains of missing soldiers there.

Harsh weather and avalanches have taken the lives of nearly 900 Indian soldiers since Operation Meghdoot, the name given to deployment at Siachen glacier began in 1984.

JeM affiliate PAFF takes responsibility for attack on Army camp

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA/NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Heartiest Greetings on the 75th Anniversary of Independence Day

Monday, 15th August, 2022

आज़ादी के अमृत महोत्सव का यही पैगाम गर्व से करो हर वीर शहीद को सलाम

"India is celebrating its 75th year of Independence. We all are witnessing this wonderful and historic moment as 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' which is also transforming into a mass movement."

- Narendra Modi

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana


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endu Adhikar

FIRST COLUMN

METHOD OF WORK IS KEY TO ORGANISATIONS

Internal leadership shapes judgement and processes



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Any institution needs a framework of reference to grow. Institutions have their own typologies, like anything else. Institutional typologies can be classified according to their size—large, medium, and small. They can be institutional types by their form of ownership. They can be proprietary, partnerships, or limited to certain types of people. They can be constituted by people who have invested money in them, and the list can go on.

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



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

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

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

Indian pharmaceutical industry poised to take off

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



NIKHIL K MASURKAR

(The author is CEO, Entod Pharmaceuticals.)

India@75: Unshackle political bondages

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Additionally, the Election Commission must breathe fresh air and admit that there is no rationality in the expenditure ceilings in the Lok Sabha and the Assembly elections, and also on the grounds of the geography, as well as the size of the constituencies. There must be rationalization of expenditure ceilings, for this again is a ground for massive electoral corruption, as dummy candidates are put up to cover additional expenses of candidates, besides also being the reasons for more vices in the election system in the country.

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

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

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

POINT COUNTERPOINT

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



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



Further heights.

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

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

The Patent Act, 1970

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

The Drug Policy, 1978

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

reducing imports of bulk drugs,

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

Hatch-Waxman Act 1984

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

The 1991 economic reforms

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

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

Recently, the Cabinet also approved two schemes, namely

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

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

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



AP ■ KYIV

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

The Mykolaiv region is just to the

north of the Russian-occupied city of Kherson, which Ukrainian forces have vowed to retake.

The Ukrainian emergency service said one person was killed in shelling early Sunday of the Mykolaiv region settlement of Berezhneuvate.

As fighting steps up in southern Ukraine as Russia's war closes in on six months, concern has grown sharply about the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power

plant, which is held by Russian forces and has been hit by sporadic shelling. Both Ukraine and Russia blame each other for the shelling, which officials say has damaged monitoring equipment and could lead to a nuclear catastrophe.

The Zaporizhzhia facility is Europe's largest nuclear power plant.

Russia's envoy to international organizations based in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, called on Ukraine to stop

attacking the plant in order to allow an inspection mission from the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"It is important that the Ukrainians stop their shelling of the station and provide security guarantees to members of the mission. An international team cannot be sent to work under continuous artillery shelling," he was quoted as saying Sunday by Russian state news agency Tass.

In Ukraine, rebuilding starts with neighbours' help

AP ■ NOVOSELIVKA (UKRAINE)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



but estimate that the reconstruction effort could cost more than seven times that amount.

Officials are appealing to Western countries to tap frozen Russian assets on top of what they are willing to donate to help pay for the bill.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Lankan Navy rejects reports of conducting war games with Pak

PTI ■ COLOMBO

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

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

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

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

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

are fallacious," the release said.

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

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

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

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

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

PNS Taimur took part in

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

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

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

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

River torrent kills 7 in China amid widespread heavy rain

AP ■ BEIJING

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

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

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

One man at the scene said several people were washed



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

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Elsewhere in China, heavy rain flooded streets in the

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

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

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



Official: Over 50 deaths from seasonal floods in Sudan

AP ■ CAIRO

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

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

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

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

country's state-run SUNA news agency.

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

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

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

More US lawmakers visiting Taiwan twelve days after Pelosi trip



AP ■ TAIPEI

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

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

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

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

AP ■ CAIRO

A fire ripped through a packed church during morning services in Egypt's capital on Sunday, killing at least 41 worshippers and injuring 14. The church quickly filled with thick black smoke, and witnesses said several trapped congregants jumped from upper floors to escape. "Suffocation, suffocation, all of them dead," said a distraught witness, who only gave a partial name, Abu Bishoy. The cause of the blaze in the Abu Sefein church in the working-class neighbourhood of Imbaba was not immediately known. An initial investigation pointed to an electrical short-circuit, according to a police statement. Footage from the scene circulated online showed burned furniture, including wooden tables and chairs. Firefighters were seen putting out the blaze while others carried victims to ambulances. Families waited for word on relatives who were inside the church. Witnesses said there were many children inside the building when the fire broke out. "There are children we didn't know how to get to them," said Abu Bishoy. "And we don't know whose son this is, or whose daughter that is. Is this possible?" The country's health minister blamed the smoke and a stampede as people attempted to flee the fire for causing the fatalities. It was one of the worst fire tragedies in Egypt in recent years. Witness Emad Hanna said the church includes two places used as a daycare for children, and that a church worker managed to get many children out. "We went upstairs and found people dead. And we started to see from outside that the smoke was getting bigger, and people want to jump from the upper floor. ... We found the children."

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



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



Despite public resentment, no progress in Iraq political deadlock

AP ■ BAGHDAD

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

Gunman wounds 8 in late-night Jerusalem shooting



AP ■ JERUSALEM

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

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

Rushdie off ventilator and able to talk

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Salman Rushdie has been taken off a ventilator and was able to talk, a day after the Mumbai-born author was stabbed, in what US authorities said was a "targeted, unprovoked, preplanned" attack. Rushdie, who faced Islamist death threats for years after writing "The Satanic Verses", was stabbed by a 24-year-old New Jersey resident identified as Hadi Matar, a US national of Lebanese origin, on stage on Friday while he was being introduced at a literary event of the Chautauqua Institution in Western New York. "@SalmanRushdie off ventilator and talking! Continued prayers from all @chq," Chautauqua Institution president Michael Hill said in a tweet on Saturday night. Rushdie's agent, Andrew Wylie, also confirmed the news to the US media. Rushdie, 75, was put on a ventilator after he was stabbed by Matar. Earlier on Saturday, Matar pleaded not guilty to charges of attempted murder and assault at a brief court appearance where he was denied bail. Matar was charged with attempted murder and assault in the stabbing of Rushdie and he pleaded not guilty. He made his appearance in court, wearing a black-and-white striped jumpsuit and handcuffed. Chautauqua County District Attorney Jason Schmidt provided the details of Rushdie's injuries in court during Matar's arraignment Saturday afternoon. The author's injuries include three stab wounds to the right side of the front of his neck, four stab wounds to his stomach, a puncture wound to his right eye and chest, and a laceration on his right thigh, according to the county prosecutor. "This was a targeted, unprovoked, preplanned attack on Mr Rushdie," Schmidt alleged. Matar faces up to 32 years if convicted of both charges, Schmidt said. The attack on Rushdie drew shock and condemnation from world leaders and literary stalwarts. US President Joe Biden said in a statement on Saturday that he and First Lady Jill Biden

where he was denied bail.

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were "shocked and saddened" to learn of the "vicious" attack on the author. "Salman Rushdie -- with his insight into humanity, with his unmatched sense for story, with his refusal to be intimidated or silenced -- stands for essential, universal ideals. Truth. Courage. Resilience. The ability to share ideas without fear. These are the building blocks of any free and open society. And today, we reaffirm our commitment to those deeply American values in solidarity with Rushdie and all those who stand for freedom of expression," Biden said. "We, together with all Americans and people around the world, are praying for his health and recovery. I am grateful to the first responders and the brave individuals who jumped into action to render aid to Rushdie and subdue the attacker," he added.

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

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

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

PTI ■ LONDON

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



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

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

Truss in commanding lead over Sunak in UK PM race

PTI ■ LONDON

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



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

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

Mexico President to bypass Congress to keep army in streets

AP ■ MEXICO CITY

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



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

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

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

Finance Min plans to review exemption-free tax regime

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

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

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

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



new tax regime as they have no exemptions to claim.

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

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

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

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

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

Commerce Min proposes host of incentives to revamp SEZs

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

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

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

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



used capital goods cleared to domestic tariff areas.

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

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

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

States should not give freebies beyond fiscal capabilities: Kumar

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Greaves Cotton exploring export opportunities for electric two-wheeler

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

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

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

As part of the deal, it has

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Recently, the new Irdai Chairman Debasish Panda had said it was time life insurers re-entered the health vertical as he had given a mandate to the industry to ensure that every citizen has a health insurance policy by 2030.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Shareholders approve Ashish Kumar Chauhan as NSE MD, CEO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The bank's gross advances



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

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

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

cent and 2.55 per cent, respectively.

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

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

"We are sure that during this year, about ₹3,000 crore will come through resolutions through NCLT, that's what our guidance is," he added. At end of June 2022, bank's gross Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) improved to 9.30 per cent of the gross advances, translating to ₹4,415 crore. **PTI**

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Stock markets were closed on Tuesday on account of Muharram.

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

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

The mcap of ICICI Bank went up by ₹25,467.37 crore to ₹6,70,920.64 crore. HUL lost ₹11,454.26 crore to ₹6,09,765.92 crore in its valuation and LIC saw an erosion of ₹3,289.00 crore to ₹4,31,459.72 crore. The mcap of SBI was unchanged at ₹4,73,584.52 crore. **PTI**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

crore each in the PPL.

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

The company will require a technical or strategic investor

partner for the 1920 MW Lanco Amarkantak Power project.

The source said that the company is likely to invite bids for a technical or strategic investor partner next year as the stressed project is undergoing insolvency proceedings which may conclude in 2023.

The company will choose an investor partner for each acquired project. The PFC is a non-banking finance company under the administrative control of the Ministry of Power for financing projects in the sector. The PFC Board on August 12, 2022 accorded approval for creation of Power Asset Management Company (PAMC) for taking over the stressed/NPA power assets. **PTI**

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

AP ■ PARIS

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

told Canal Plus.

"He needs a bit of time to be 100 percent fit. He will make even more difference when he will be 100 percent fit."

In his PSG debut, Portugal midfielder Renato Sanches rounded off the scoring with a first-time effort in the 88th.

Omlin pulled off some outstanding saves to frustrate

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

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

volley from Enzo Tchato in stoppage time.

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

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

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

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

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

"We are extremely disappointed," Laborde said.

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

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

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

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

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

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



Aditi gets past second cut, makes it to final round at ISPS Handa

PTI ■ GALGORM (N IRELAND)

Aditi Ashok was the lone Indian to get past the second cut at the ISPS Handa World Invitational here. The 24-year-old from Bengaluru closed birdie-birdie after starting from the 10th to card 71 which helped her get past another cut applied after 54 holes. She was Tied-34th.

There have been two cuts, the first after 36 holes, at which point Tyesa Malik exited, while after 54 holes Diksha Dagar (73-72-76) missed the second cut as only Top-35 and ties moved ahead for the final round.

Amanda Doherty carded a third round of 72 (-1) to maintain a one-shot lead. The LPGA Tour rookie got off to a slower start at

Galgorm with a bogey on the third followed by a birdie on the fourth, before a double bogey on the fifth.

However, the 24-year-old soon got into her groove rolling in three birdies around the turn on holes eight, 10 and 12.

Although Doherty dropped another shot on 14, a birdie on the last meant the American reached 12-under-par to keep her one-shot lead with one round remaining. England's Georgia Hall and Chinese Taipei's Peiyun Chien sit one shot behind the leader on 11-under-par after 54 holes.

Three players are in a share of fourth place on 10-under-par, including 2022 Race to Costa del Sol leader Maja Stark, who fired a round of 69 (-4).



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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

As per rule, an 'eminent player' must have played at least two matches for India and must have retired two years before the date of election.

The publication of the electoral college also ruled out a big politician running for the AIFF president's post. Former sports minister and current union minister Sarbananda Sonowal's name was doing the rounds as presidential candidate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AP ■ BARCELONA

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

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

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

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

The biggest applause Lewandowski heard from the

crowd was to show their appreciation for his hustle on defense late in the match with Barcelona stymied in attack. The closest the former Bayern Munich star went to scoring was a header flicked well over the bar in the first half.

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

Busquets' expulsion will rule him out of Barcelona's visit

to Real Sociedad. Falcao then had what looked to be a winner waived away for offside as Rayo went close to claiming a third straight win over Barcelona after it stunned the Catalan club twice last season.

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

European Swimming C'ships: Romanian teen Popovici shatters 13-yr-old 100m freestyle world record

IANIS ■ ROME

17-year-old Romanian world champion David Popovici became the youngest swimmer to break the men's 100m freestyle world record at the European Swimming Championships here on Saturday.

Popovici stormed home in a time of 46.86 seconds and shattered the 13-year-old world mark of 46.91 set by Brazil's Cesar Cielo at the 2009 FINA world championships, which also were held at the same pool at Rome's historic Foro Italico.

In the men's 100m freestyle final, Popovici was the second in the first 50m with 22.74 and turned to dominate the field with 24.12 in the second half, beating Hungarian butterfly world champion Kristof Milak 47.47 and Italian Alessandro Miressi 47.63, respectively.

Popovici also broke the world junior record, European record, European junior record and meet record at the same time.

The Romanian young sensation claimed two gold in the 100m and 200m free at the FINA worlds in Budapest, Hungary in June.

Popovici was convinced that this was his chance to erase the name of Brazil's Cesar Cielo's from the record books and replace it with his own; but only by swimming .05 faster than the 46.91 mark that was set in this very same pool at the 2009 FINA World Championships.

It took a step by step improvement to achieve a new world record of 46.86, one that brought a huge smile to the face of 17 year old David Popovici and brought the crowd at the Foro Italico pool to its feet. Popovici shaved 0.05 off a dusty world record that was set in a shiny suit.

Don't pay too much attention: Chhetri tells players on FIFA ban threat

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Seasoned striker Sunil Chhetri on Sunday advised fellow players to continue giving their best on the pitch and not worry about FIFA's threat of suspension on Indian football. Earlier this month, world football governing body FIFA had threatened to suspend the AIFF and strip off its right to host the women's U-17 World Cup in October due to a third party "influence", the warning coming just days after the Supreme Court's directive to hold elections of the national federation.

The SC-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA) has since,

though, started the electoral process. The elections are slated for August 28. "I've spoken to the boys and my advice is to not give it too much attention because it is out of your control," Chhetri said during a virtual media interaction organised by his club Bengaluru FC in the build-up to the new season.

"People who are involved are doing their best to make sure that we are going to come out with the best results possible. "Everyone is working hard towards it. As far as players are concerned we are going to make sure that we do our work properly.

"We have to make sure you better yourself as a player. Whenever you

get an opportunity to represent your club or your country, put your best foot forward. "All other verticals in the AIFF are trying to fix as much as possible to make sure that they come out with flying colours," he said.

India is to host the FIFA women's U-17 World Cup from October 11-30 and the Union Cabinet last month approved the Signing of Guarantees for hosting the women's age group showpiece in Bhubaneswar, Goa and Mumbai. The Durand Cup will kick off the season in Kolkata on August 16 and Bengaluru FC will take on Jamshedpur FC on the second day of the tournament.

2-time champ Simona Halep advances to Toronto final

AP ■ TORONTO

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I just try to breathe a little bit more. I try to calm down and think about what I need to do and not what I'm experiencing," Haddad Maia said.



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

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

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



Honda Racing India rider Senthil Kumar finishes 15th, scores a point in Race 2

PTI ■ TOKYO

Honda Racing India team earned a point with Senthil Kumar finishing 15th in round 3 of 2022 FIM Asia Road Racing Championship (ARRC) here on Sunday.

In his first stint at the Sportsland SUGO international circuit, Senthil managed to bounce back from a DNF in race 1 to claim a point for the team. However, teammate Rajiv Sethu, who had finished fifth on Saturday, could not recover from the mistake in the initial laps and finished the race in 17th Position.

The duo of Senthil and Rajiv battled their hardest with 17 best of Asian riders from six countries (Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam) in Asia Production 250cc (AP250) class. With four riders crashing out in the last lap, it proved to be a challenging race for everyone. Senthil however, took advantage and sped up to jump ahead on the leaderboard to come in contention for winning some coveted points.

Learning from my mistakes of yesterday I wanted to perform better today. I am happy to have bagged a point for the team and it is only with their support and guidance that this was possible," he said.

Lukaku swiftly opens Inter account in 2-1 win at Lecce

have to analyze why we were reduced to winning at the last second."

AC Milan also got off to a winning start as it opened its defense of the league title with a 4-2 triumph over Udinese - albeit with the help of a controversial penalty.

Inter brought back Lukaku on loan this offseason, a year after he left to join Chelsea shortly after firing the Nerazzurri to the Serie A



title.

Coincidentally, Lukaku kicked off his second stint at Inter at the same team he faced on his first debut when he scored in a 4-0 win three years ago.

And it took the Belgium forward less than two minutes to reopen his Inter account. Federico Dimarco floated in a cross from the left and Matteo Darmian nodded it back across goal for Lukaku to head in from close range.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

This provided all three are fit and available for all the games in the series. While there will be no Rahul Dravid heading the team of support staff for the short three-match series, starting August 18 in Harare, NCA head VVS Laxman is almost certain to follow the blue-print set by the head coach.

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

'One thing that stands out is how Rohit backs players who aren't performing'

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Former India wicketkeeper-batter Parthiv Patel pointed out that captain Rohit Sharma backing his players to the hilt even when they are not performing has been a standout for him. Parthiv cited the example of the Indian team sticking with pacer Avesh Khan in the 4-1 T20I series triumph over the West Indies despite not-so-impressive performances in first three matches.

"I have played under Rohit Sharma's captaincy at Mumbai Indians and the one thing that stands out is how he backs players who aren't performing. He is vocal about them even in public and in press conferences, as we saw with the case of Avesh Khan.

Rohit backed him even after four failures and he delivered with a Man-of-the-Match performance (in the fourth T20I)," said Parthiv on his YouTube channel.

Parthiv further delved into Rohit's leadership skills and was in awe of his ability to take instinctive decisions on the field, which he believes has been the reason behind achieving success in the IPL and for India as a leader.

"Rohit believes in taking instinctive decisions on the ground rather than pre-meditating them. When a crunch situation arises, he takes a call according to the situation and it is one of the main reasons why he has won five IPL trophies with Mumbai Indians.

India have also won multi-national tournaments like the



India-Zimbabwe ODIs

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

"I think Shubman is being groomed in the right way by the Indian team management. While he has done

exceedingly well in the Caribbean ODIs, what I can gauge from this team's philosophy is prepare players for multiple slots. Hence I feel for this particular series, Shubman might have to come in at No. 3," former national selector and Test opener Devang Gandhi

gave his viewpoint on the issue.

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

"I agree it is difficult after you have had such a good series. But currently, the aim would be to prepare Rahul

for the Asia Cup T20's opening slot. He needs to get a lot of batting time and that's a priority. I think it will be a short-term arrangement as Shubman I feel is being groomed as an opener for the ODI World Cup," Dasgupta, currently commentating in 'The Hundred', said.

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

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

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

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



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

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Burl, who had missed the 2016 series against India due to a tear in his ACL (Anterior Cruciate

Ligament) in the left knee, is excited about the prospect of playing against the KL Rahul-led side.

He spoke to IANS about the upcoming ODI series against India, influence of head coach Dave Houghton on Zimbabwe's turnaround and what qualifying for the T20 World Cup means for the side.

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

Speaking about his side, he said, "The team (Zimbabwe) is in an absolutely good space. It's probably the best environment in a changing room that I think I have ever been in a long time. The guys are just really, really happy that they are able to play with a lot of freedom, express themselves. Not to forget that there is inclusion of Lance Klusener as the batting coach."

A Rajasthan Royals owner slapped me three or four times, says Ross Taylor in his autobiography

IAN S ■ HAMILTON

Former New Zealand batter Ross Taylor has said in his autobiography that he was "slapped" by one of the owners of the Rajasthan Royals franchise three or four times during the 2011 IPL season.

In his new autobiography titled 'Ross Taylor: Black & White', Taylor revealed the incident took place following a 48-run defeat for Rajasthan Royals against Kings XI Punjab (now Punjab Kings) in Mohali.

"The chase was 195, I was lbw for a duck and we didn't get close. Afterwards, the team, support staff and management were in the bar on the top floor of the hotel. Liz Hurley was there with Warnie (Shane Warne). One of the Royals owners said



to me, 'Ross, we didn't pay you a million dollars to get a duck' and slapped me across the face three or four times. "He was laughing and they weren't hard slaps but I'm not sure that it was entirely play-acting. Under the circumstances I wasn't going to make an issue of it, but I couldn't imagine it happening in many professional sporting environments," wrote Taylor in his

book, of which an extract was published on stuff.co.nz.

There has been no comment yet from Rajasthan Royals on Taylor's revelations. After spending the first three seasons of the IPL at Royal Challengers Bangalore, Taylor was acquired by Rajasthan Royals for USD 1 million at the player auction ahead of the 2011 season.

In the book, Taylor wrote

that he wished he had stayed with Bangalore as he spent just one season with Rajasthan before moving to Delhi Daredevils (now Capitals) in 2012 season and subsequently, Pune Warriors India.

"While it was amazing to go for a million dollars, in the long run I would've been better off if RCB had got me for USD 950,000. If they had, it would have been my fourth year with them. While the IPL is pretty unsentimental, there is loyalty towards long-serving players and I probably would have had a longer IPL career as a one-franchise player. On the other hand, if I'd stayed at RCB, I wouldn't have played with greats such as Virender Sehwag, Shane Warne, Mahela Jayawardene and Yuvraj Singh."

Duanne Olivier ruled out of South Africa's Test series against England

IAN S ■ LONDON

South Africa's right-arm fast bowler Duanne Olivier on Sunday was ruled out of the upcoming three-match Test series against England due to a grade two right hip flexor muscle tear.

Olivier sustained the injury during South Africa's four-day tour match against England Lions at The Spitfire Ground St Lawrence in Canterbury, where he picked 2/59 in the first innings.

"Duanne presented with significant discomfort involving his right hip flexor muscle at the close of play on day three of the four-day tour match.



After clinical assessment, he was referred for an MRI scan which revealed a grade 2 tear

involving the right pectineus muscle."

"Due to the extent of the injury, he has been ruled out of the three-match Test series against England and will return home where he will commence his rehabilitation with the Gauteng Central Lions medical team," said Dr Hashendra Ramjee, Proteas team doctor in an official statement. South Africa have chosen to not announce a replacement for Olivier on their Test tour of England. Since his re-entry into the Test team from the series against India in 2021-22, Olivier has picked 11 wickets at an average of 33.63 in five matches.

South Africa now have to come up with a plan to play against England: Vaughan

IAN S ■ LONDON

Former England captain Michael Vaughan has urged South Africa to come up with ideas to counter the attacking style of play showed by the hosts' in their home summer till now.

South Africa were given a glimpse of it when they were thrashed by England Lions by an innings and 56 runs in the four-day tour match at Canterbury.

The ongoing international season in England has seen their Test team, led by Ben Stokes and coached by Brendon McCullum, play a new, ultra-aggressive style of play. It has worked well for England, who defeated New Zealand 3-0 and then chased down a record 378 against India in rescheduled fifth Test at Edgbaston in July.

"Having seen this England side play to that level for four Tests, and the Lions against South Africa, it is clear they have committed to this method. South Africa now have to come



up with a plan to play against it. They cannot go on the defensive with ball in hand, sit back and wait for England to implode," wrote Vaughan in his column for The Telegraph on Sunday.

Vaughan further called for South Africa captain Dean Elgar to be prepared accordingly for the enormous challenge coming from England.

"Dean Elgar's comments about England's new style of playing Tests mirrored those of many who have played a lot of international cricket."

"He warned aggression will

only go so far and could have left England with "egg on their faces" had New Zealand been a bit better earlier this summer. But he was speaking before his side were pasted at 5.74 an over by the England Lions and now he knows what lies in store."

Vaughan pointed out that South Africa have to get their fields right when playing against a side like England, who are on a high in Test cricket.

"If England bat for 80 overs they make more than 350. South Africa have to bowl them out within 60 overs. Simple as that.

Having boundary riders is okay but it creates massive gaps like it did at Edgbaston when India were in the field for the run chase."

"It allowed a partnership to develop, but if you are taking wickets don't worry about being hit for boundaries. Make sure you have fielders in the right position to create chances. You can always go back on the defensive later but against aggressive teams you have to be brave in setting fields correctly."

Vaughan signed off by suggesting South Africa have to get their off-spinner Simon Harmer in the eleven, someone who's got vast experience of playing in England due to his stint with Essex in the County Championship.

"England will score quickly so South Africa have to bring the spinner into play with clever field sets and dangle the carrot. If India had played Ravi Ashwin at Edgbaston they would have won. Simon Harmer could do a similar thing with his pace, flight and guile."

Vettori, Arnold, Philander among players committed to Legends League Cricket Season Two

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Daniel Vettori, Russel Arnold and Vernon Philander on Sunday were among the former international players who committed themselves to Legends Cricket League (LLC) Season Two. The tournament further announced that about 80 international and Indian players committed their availability for participation in the second season of league.

"They will be available for pick up by the franchisees for the drafting event to be held in Mumbai soon," stated an official release from the LLC. Others who have committed to LLC season two are Fidel Edwards, Ricardo Powell, Tino Best, Nick Compton, Ryan Sidebottom, Phil Mustard, Jade Dernbach, Richard Levi, Hamilton Masakadza, Dimitri Mascarenhas, Samit Patel, John Mooney, Nawroz Mangal, Manvinder Bisla, Amit Bhandari, Rajat Bhatia and Sudeep Tyagi.

"With so much enthusiasm around the league, it is going to be exhilarating experience for everyone, whether fans or players, all will have a life time experience," said Ravi Shastri, Commissioner of the Legends League Cricket.

Earlier, the league had announced that a special match between India Maharajas and World Giants will be played at Eden Gardens on September 16.



National Bank Open: Carreno Busta stuns Evans, sets final clash with Hurkacz

IAN S ■ MONTREAL (CANADA)

Pablo Carreno Busta reached his first ATP Masters 1000 and National Bank Open final after registering a 7-5, 6-7(7), 6-2 victory over Daniel Evans in the semifinal, here.

The 31-year-old had a match point in the second-set tie-break but saw his perfect set streak on the week snapped at nine before storming back in a dominant final set on Saturday night.

After so little separated the competitors for most of the two-hour, 58-minute marathon, Carreno Busta raced through the finish line by winning the final 12 points, including eight on return.

"It was fun for the crowd but for

me it was tough. I had a match point in the second set but he served pretty good so I couldn't do anything. When you have a match point and have to play another set, it's always hard to do it," said Carreno Busta about the gripping encounter.

"Mentally I think I was very good. Probably the beginning of the third set was the hardest part of the match. But after that I thought I had to be more aggressive, try to push a lot, try to go to the net, and it was good," he added.

The Spaniard will next face eighth seed Hubert Hurkacz as he bids to become the first unseeded champion at the National Bank Open since Argentina's Guillermo Canas in 2002.