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SURVIVING IN THE
TIMES OF ZEALOTRY**WORLD 9**
CHINA, JAPAN OFFICIALS MEET
AMID TAIWAN TENSIONS**MONEY 10**
TELECOM MIN ASKS TELCOS TO
GEAR UP FOR 5G LAUNCH

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY AUGUST 19, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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Dolo gave docs ₹1K cr to push tablet, SC told

I was also asked to have same (medicine) when I had Covid, this is a serious matter, says Justice Chandrachud; Medical sales representatives' body seeks statutory backing to marketing practices

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

In a sensational revelation, the Federation of Medical & Sales Representatives Association of India on Thursday told the Supreme Court that the Central Board for Direct Taxes has accused makers of the Dolo-650 tablets of distributing freebies worth ₹1,000 crore to doctors as consideration for prescribing the tablet for Covid related treatments.

Justice DY Chandrachud, who was heading the bench also comprising Justice AS Bopanna, said it is a serious issue and even he was prescribed the same during Covid. "This is not music to my ears. I was also asked to have the same when I had Covid. This is a serious issue," Justice Chandrachud remarked on the usage of Dolo-650 tablet, an anti-fever drug prescribed to patients.

The Central Government represented by Additional Solicitor General KM Natraj was directed to file a reply within 10 days. The Supreme Court was hearing a PIL seeking directions to make pharmaceutical companies liable for giving freebies to doctors as an incentive to prescribe their drugs.

Senior advocate Sanjay Parikh, appearing for the asso-

ciation of medical representatives, pointed out the example of the excessive sale and prescription of the drug Remdisivir during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The plea by the Federation of Medical & Sales Representatives Association of India sought direction to give statutory backing to the Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP). There is currently no law or regulation that prohibits such practices in the absence of any statutory basis for the UCPMP, a voluntary set of rules for the sector, the petition said.

Pharmaceutical marketing practices is unregulated in India despite the country being a signatory to the UN Convention against corruption, said the petition.

This leads to a situation where the consumer pays a lot for branded medicines that is over-prescribed or irrationally prescribed by doctors in exchange for gifts, entertainment, hospitality and other advantages, it was contended.

The potency of such drugs and poisons pose a danger to the life and health of people even as doctors can be penalised for misconduct facilitated by the pharmaceutical companies that walk away scot-free, said the plea.



Alarming rise in Covid deaths in Delhi, Maha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid warning from the World Health Organization (WHO) that the Covid virus is here to stay, populous States like Maharashtra and Delhi have witnessed an alarming rise in coronavirus deaths.

Overall fatality surged to touch 72 on Thursday, the highest so far in the last one month even as countrywide infection tally remained within a daily range of 8,000 to 20,000 cases. While the country saw 72 deaths on Thursday, the previous day death was just 29 on a caseload of 8,000 plus.

Delhi on Thursday reported 1,964 cases and eight Covid deaths in the past 24 hours. India saw a single-day rise of 12,608 new coronavirus infections on Wednesday taking the total tally of Covid-19 cases to 4,42,98,864, while the active cases declined to

1,01,343, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday. The national death toll climbed to 5,27,206 with 72 fatalities, including 29 fatalities in Kerala. Speaking on whether the reason for the spike in Delhi is a new Omicron subvariant, Dr Soumya Swaminathan, chief scientist of the WHO, said, "All these numbers basically indicate a combination of different mutations."

"In India and about 15 to 20 other countries, BA.2 (Omicron sub-variant) has further evolved and we have BA 2.75 and also BA 2.74, BA 2.76 and by studying the mutations, scientists have a very good idea of what each variant is doing. BA 2.75 has certainly become more efficient at transmitting itself, and is able to evade the immune response," said Dr Swaminathan was quoted by NDTV.

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Boat with weapons seized off Raigad coast, probe ordered

Fadnavis rules out terror angle**TN RAGHUNATHA ■** MUMBAI

In a development that revived the shocking memories of the manner in which a huge cache of arms, ammunition, and explosives were off-loaded along the Konkan coast ahead of the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts, a crew-less foreign-origin speed-boat with three AK-47 rifles and ammunition on board was seized off the Raigad coast in coastal Maharashtra.

The 16-metre-long boat "Lady Haan", owned by an Australian couple had been adrift for 52 days during which it came floating from the Oman coast to Harihareshwar-Shrivardhan coast in Raigad district in the Konkan region.

The suspicious speedboat was first sighted by some local fishermen in the choppy Arabian Sea on Thursday morning, resulting in a sensation in the sleepy. Before long, the villagers alerted the local police. The local police in turn sounded an alert to the Indian Coast Guard and the Maharashtra Police, who seized the vessel.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who holds the Home portfolio, ruled out any terror angle, notwithstanding the fact that the incident has given rise to questions of maritime and coastal security.

Giving details of the circumstances leading to the sighting of the boat, Fadnavis told the Maharashtra legislature that the boat was on a voyage from Muscat to Europe. "On June 26, around 1,000 hrs, the engines of the boat failed after



A suspicious boat with three AK-47 rifles and bullets found off the Raigad coast in Maharashtra on Thursday

which the crew sounded a distress call. Around 1300 hrs, a Korean warship, which was in the vicinity, rescued the crew and handed them over to Oman authorities".

Owing to the rough seas, the Australian couple reportedly could not arrange to tow the vessel and after remaining adrift for over seven weeks in the choppy Arabian Sea waters, it finally landed up Harihareshwar Beach on Thursday.

Fadnavis said that because of tidal waves at that point of time, the boat could not be towed. "The Raigad Police have recovered 3 AK-47 guns and some quantities of ammunition from the speedboat," Fadnavis said.

On his part, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde ordered a probe into the incident.

The senior officials of the Indian Coast Guard, Raigad police, and Anti-Terrorism

Squad are carrying out investigations into the incident.

Not wanting to take any chances, the Maharashtra Government has sounded a high alert in Mumbai, Raigad, Ratnagiri, Pune and other places as a precaution in view of the festivities tomorrow.

The seized speedboat, named "Lady haan" is owned by an Australian woman Hannah Laudergeron and her husband Captain James Horbert. Horbert was navigating the boat.

The questions that have cropped up include: as to whether the sophisticated arms and ammunition belonged to the Australian couple and why they were carrying the arms and ammunition.

The place where the boat was sighted is the vicinity of vital Indian offshore installations like the Mumbai High Fields.

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CAPSULE

MIN: INDO-CHINA TIES IN VERY DIFFICULT PHASE

Bangkok: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Thursday that the relationship between India and China is going through an "extremely difficult phase" after what Beijing has done at the border and emphasised that the Asian Century will not happen if the two neighbours could not join hands.

SC TO UP GOVT: REPLY ON LALITPUR GANG-RAPE PIL

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Thursday directed the Uttar Pradesh Government to file its reply on a PIL filed by NGO Bachpan Bachao Andolan in connection with the sexual assault of a minor girl at a police station after she was dumped by four youths who gang-raped her in Lalitpur district.

TWIN TOWER DEMOLITION: EVACUATION BY AUG 28

Noida: Residents of Emerald Court and ATS Village societies will have to vacate homes by 7 am on August 28, according to the evacuation plan that was finalised on Thursday for the demolition of twin towers in Noida.

300 RETAIL LIQUOR VENDS GIVEN LICENCES IN DELHI

New Delhi: The Excise Department of the Delhi Government has so far issued 300 retail liquor licences and started registration of various alcohol brands, as the four Government corporations are scheduled to run 500 vendors across the city from September 1, officials said on Thursday.

ED RAIDS MP BROTHER IN CASE AGAINST MUKHTAR

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday raided the official residence of BSP MP Afzal Ansari in Delhi as part of investigation against his jailed brother Mukhtar Ansari.

Book Shahnawaz on rape plaint, HC slams Delhi Police for delay

BJP leader moves SC after HC order

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has ordered that an FIR be registered against BJP leader Shahnawaz Hussain on a woman's rape complaint in 2018.

Hussain moved the Supreme Court after the Delhi HC order. The SC will hear the case next week, but it has not restrained the police from filing the FIR.

The Delhi HC noted that there was a complete reluctance on the part of the police even to register an FIR. Justice Asha Menon said there was no perversity in the 2018 trial order directing the registration



of the FIR and vacated the interim orders of the court staying its operation.

"There is no merit in the present petition. The petition is dismissed. The interim orders stand vacated. The FIR be registered forthwith. The investigations be completed and a detailed report under Section 173 CrPC be submitted before the learned MM (metropolitan magistrate) within three months," said the court in its order on Wednesday.

A Delhi-based woman had moved the lower court seeking registration of an FIR against Hussain on her allegation of rape.

In its order, the HC said while reference is made in the police status report to the recording of the statement of the prosecutrix on four occasions, there was no explanation as to why the FIR was not lodged.

"The FIR only puts the machinery into operation. It is a foundation for investigation of the offence complained of. It is only after investigations that the police can come to the conclusion whether or not an offence had been committed and if so by whom. In the present case, there seems to be a complete reluctance on the part of the police even to register an FIR," said the court.

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Laxmi Narayan Mandir (Birla Mandir) illuminated on the occasion of Janamashtami in New Delhi on Thursday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

₹11 cr coins missing from Raj SBI branch, CBI raids 25 places

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Thursday conducted searches at 25 locations across the country in connection with the disappearance of coins worth ₹11 crore from the vaults of an SBI branch in Karauli in Rajasthan.

The searches were conducted in Delhi, Jaipur, Dausa, Karauli, Sawai Madhopur, Alwar, Udaipur, and Bhilwara on the premises of around 15 former bank officials, branch manager/joint custodian and cash officers among others in the ongoing investigation in the case.

The matter came to light after the State Bank of India (SBI) branch decided to carry out the counting of money after a preliminary enquiry indicat-

ed discrepancies in its cash reserve at the Mehandipur branch in the Karauli district in August 2021.

Alarmed bank officials had roped in a Jaipur-based private vendor to do counting of coins supposed to be ₹13 crore according to account books.

To their shock, the vendor found only 3,000 bags carrying coins worth about ₹2 crore, while coins of ₹11 crore were missing from the branch.

It is also alleged that the employees of the private vendor who were doing the counting were threatened in the night of August 10, 2021, at the guesthouse where they were staying and were asked to refrain from the counting, the FIR has alleged

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205 deaths, ₹1K cr loss in one month of monsoon in HP

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Due to severe weather conditions this monsoon, at least 205 people lost their lives and seven were missing in Himachal Pradesh in the last over one-and-a-half-months, State disaster management director Sudesh Kumar Mokhta said here on Thursday.

Since June 29, the State has suffered a loss of ₹1,014.08 crore due to damaged roads, water lines, and power transmission, he said.

At least 103 people lost their lives in 35 accidents from June 29 to August 16 during the ongoing monsoon season, and 33 people were killed in freak incidents. Twenty-five people drowned in six incidents, seven died in 48 landslides, and three in 51 flash floods that occurred during the period, he said.

Besides, 120 animals lost their lives, 95 houses were fully damaged and 335 houses partially damaged in monsoon-related incidents in various parts of the State, Mokhta added.

Fugitive rape-murder accused lynched

PTI ■ NORTH LAKHIMPUR

A 45-year-old man, who escaped from court two days back and was accused of rape and murder, was lynched by a mob on Thursday in Assam's Lakhimpur district, police said.

Gerjai Barua, alias Raju Barua, who the police identified as a dreaded criminal, was hiding near a stream in Kilakili village in Ghilamar police station area when some locals nabbed him during the early hours, a police officer said.

They informed the police, which took some time to reach the area due to inaccessibility. By that time, more villagers gathered and they started thrashing Barua. When police reached, the man was found to be severely injured, and two police personnel also received injuries while trying to rescue him from the irate mob, the officer said.

"We took him to Dhakuakhana Civil Hospital, where doctors pronounced him brought dead. The two policemen have been sent to North Lakhimpur town for better treatment," he added.

Dozens of cases related to theft, dacoity, murder, rape and other crimes were registered against him in different police stations during the last 15 years, police said.

Continued on Page 2

Relish aloo-puri at rly stations again

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■
NEW DELHI

Freshly cooked aloo-puri at Deendayal Railway Station (Mughalsarai), or idli sambhar, aloo bonda or egg chops at Purulia Station, and many more food items are likely to be back on the railway platforms across the country — right in front of your train coaches.

The Indian Railways has taken this step to give a fillip to the regional cuisines and discourage the rising demands of unhealthy fast food on the railway premises and trains.

However, the good old stainless-steel carts of yore will be replaced by a sleek trolley modified by the National Institute of Design (NID) to facilitate the promotion of the "One Station One Product" policy as announced in the annual Budget earlier this year. The policy aims to pro-

mote one local product at each railway station like glass bangles at Firozabad, sandals, and blankets at Ludhiana, oranges, grapes or Kolhapuri chappals at Nashik, coffee at Hosur railway station, and handmade Banaras Silk sarees at Varanasi Junction.

The freshly cooked meal like aloo-puri for which the passengers used to hold their hunger even if the trains used to be late for a particular destination, lost its flavour after the railway banned their cooking on platforms and introduced a revamped catering system to serve packed items.

Ahmedabad-based NID has designed carts having various compartments to give better display to the products. Under the new provisions, vendors with local cuisines and handicrafts will be legally allowed to board trains up to the next stoppage to sell their products on board.



A fee of ₹1,500 for 15 days of business has been levied for such vendor activities on rail premises. As a prototype, the railways has introduced this policy at some stations during the last couple of months. Looking at the excellent busi-

ness, the authorities want to replicate it across the 7,000 railway stations in the country.

"Most of the vendors have reported earning Rs 5,000 a day and so far none has reported dissatisfaction over earnings. A circular will be issued that no

railways authorities or personnel harass such legal vendors.

A special kind of badge will be given to them for better identification and to sell their products in a dignified way," said a railway official.

NCR-PULSE

NDMC SHIFTS VENUE OF FOOD FEST TO CHARKHA PARK

New Delhi: The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has shifted its venue of a three-day food festival to Charkha Park on the top of Palika Parking at Connaught Place following an opposition by traders in the upscale market. Earlier, the NDMC's food festival was to be organised at the A-block parking in Connaught Place but the traders of the popular market opposed the move arguing that no space for vehicles would lead to business losses.

MCD ATTACHES 3 PROPERTIES OVER NON-PAYMENT OF TAX

New Delhi: The MCD attached the 3 commercial properties in the national capital, over the non-payment of property tax since 2004. MCD took stern action against property tax defaulters. The corporation attaches three Commercial properties in the West zone. The defaulters are Anand Vatika and Sonam Vatika, situated on the Main road in Bapraula has not paid property tax since 2004 and has total accumulated dues of Rs. 12,69,059 and Rs. 6,59,139, excluding interest and penalty respectively. "Another defaulter of property tax is A-2/21A at Chanakya Place Part-1, Uttam Nagar has total accumulated dues of Rs. 16,93,440, excluding interest and penalty," he stated.

31-YR-OLD MAN ARRESTED FOR CHEATING PEOPLE

New Delhi: A 31-year-old man was arrested for allegedly cheating people on the pretext of offering them expensive mobile phones for sale at discounted rates through online advertisements, police said on Thursday. The accused, Anurag Katiyar, hails from Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh, they said. Katiyar used to introduce himself as a government official in order to win the trust of his prospective targets, police said.

6TH SESSION OF GOVT'S MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER SERIES HELD

New Delhi: The sixth session of Delhi Government's Motivational Speaker Series for students of Delhi Government Schools was held on Thursday at Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya No. 2 Janakpuri. In the sixth session of this series, UPSC 2021 toppers Ayushi Dabas and Pooja Jha shared their preparation experiences with the students.

CM WELCOMES BIHAR MIN'S INTEREST IN EDUCATION MODEL

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday welcomed Bihar Education Minister Chandrashekhar's interest in studying the 'successful' school education system of his government in the city and said the country will progress if the governments learn from each other. The Delhi government will be happy to show its schools to the Bihar education minister and his team when they visit the national capital, he said.

27-YR-OLD HELD FOR STEALING CAR

New Delhi: Delhi Police has arrested a 27-year-old man for allegedly stealing a car from west Delhi's Rajouri Garden area and cheating shopkeepers in the city and NCR areas. The accused has been identified as Mohit Chawla, a resident of Bijnor district in Uttar Pradesh.

"FREEDOM FROM LIFESTYLE DISEASES" MISSION

New Delhi: As India is celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Madhavbaug, a leading chain of ayurvedic cardiac healthcare clinics, is celebrating "Freedom from lifestyle diseases" mission. "There is a widely prevalent belief that lifelong medication is the only option to manage certain lifestyle related diseases like hypertension, diabetes. We want to break that myth through our scientific evidence based Ayurveda treatment," said Dr Rohit Sane, founder and CEO, Madhavbaug.

Court fines prosecution for producing irrelevant witness in 2020 riot case

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has imposed a fine of Rs 5,000 on the prosecution for producing an irrelevant witness in a case related to the 2020 northeast riots, saying that it is showing "no respect" for the time of witnesses, court, or the money of public exchequer, "despite repeated directions."

Additional Sessions Judge Pulastya Pramachala imposed the fine after observing that a prosecution witness was discharged without being examined because of a mix-up by the prosecution regarding the time and date of a rioting incident.

"No respect for the time of

the witness, time of this court, and money of public exchequer is being shown by prosecution despite repeated directions. Hence, I am compelled to impose a cost of Rs 5,000 upon the prosecution," the judge said in an order passed on August 17.

The court noted that in the morning, one witness Himanshu was present, but he was discharged unexamined because on perusal of his statement, it was found that he had narrated the incident at 6 pm on February 25, 2020, though the present trial was being conducted in respect of an incident allegedly taken place between 12 am and 1 am in the intervening night of February 24 and February 25.

The witness was not relevant "at all for this case and hence, he was discharged and his name is being dropped", the court noted.

"Unfortunately, despite giving directions to the prosecution in a number of cases for dropping irrelevant and unnecessary witnesses, no such step has been taken in this case by the representative of prosecution i.e. Special public prosecutors as well as investigating officers," the judge said.

He also observed that such directions were also communicated to the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), North East, but still same did not have any positive effect in this case.

Since the witness had

already come to the court, therefore, he was paid diet money, the court noted.

The judge directed that the DCP concerned would fix the accountability to recover the fine from the responsible person.

"At the same time, a request is again repeated for the DCP northeast to sensitize all Special Public Prosecutors and Investigating Officers of all the riot cases to go through their cases to check, if any irrelevant witness has been cited, and to take immediate steps to drop them, rather than obtaining summons for such witnesses," the judge said.

The court was hearing a case registered at Gokalpuri police station.

Fugitive rape-murder...

From Page 1
Barua along with two other accused had fled from the toilet of the Dhakuakhana Judicial Magistrate's Court on Tuesday and police were on lookout to apprehend him again.

Out of the two other criminals, one was arrested on the same day, while the police had launched a manhunt to nab the other.

As soon as the news of Barua's death spread, a large

crowd gathered at Dhakuakhana Civil Hospital to witness his body. A huge contingent of police has been deployed to control the crowd and prevent any untoward situation, an official said.

On January 22, he had escaped with handcuffs from the Covid-19 ward of a hospital in North Lakhimpur, but was rearrested after two days. He was also injured in an encounter in September last year.

From Page 1
The BA.2.75 subvariant was first detected in Delhi in June, and experts think it might have something to do with the rise in cases in the city since then. A study published in JAMA Network Open too said the majority of people who were likely infected with the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, didn't know they had the virus. Thus, raising fears that undiagnosed infections can increase transmission of the virus. This also might be the reason for the increase in cases, whoever is going for the test. Delhi, which has many wearing the mask mandatory in

public recently, reported 1,652 cases of coronavirus infection and eight deaths in the last 24 hours. Barring Tuesday, more than 2,000 new cases have been reported in the last two weeks in the national Capital. Positivity rate has also climbed at 20 per cent. The death toll, on an average, is around 8-10. Maharashtra also saw a jump in cases as it reported 1,800 fresh coronavirus cases and six deaths.

Mumbai, the financial capital of the country, reported 1,201 new cases of coronavirus on Thursday and two deaths, highest since June 30. The city's caseload rose to 11,35,680 on Thursday while the death toll reached 19,670.

The case was initially registered at Rajbagh police station in Kathua on May 29 and was re-registered by NIA on July 30.

Officials in Kathua said the NIA conducted raids on four houses in Marheen area.

Similarly, raids were carried out at a house in Kharoa-Bhalla of Doda district and at Talab Khatikan in Jammu.

Last month, police busted a module of LeT with the arrest of seven of its members, including their leader Faisal Muneer of Khatikan Talab.

According to police, the module was in operation for over two years and was involved in collection and ferrying of weapons and explosives dropped via drones from the Pakistani side along the International Border.

Maha Govt declares Dahi-Handi as sports event

T N RAGHUNATHA ■
MUMBAI

A day ahead of the Gokulashtami celebrations, the Maharashtra government on Thursday declared the popular "dahi handi" as a sports event and announced it would give away prizes for "professional Govinda" competition for revellers in the state from this year onwards.

"In countries like Spain and China, human pyramids are treated as sport eventS. We in Maharashtra would also henceforth dahi handi as sport events like Kabbadi, Kho Kho etc," Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde said in the State Assembly

Making a statement on the issue of propriety raised by Shiv Sena member Pratap Sarnaik,

chief minister Eknath Shinde said that the state government had received representations from several Govinda Mandals making a case for declaring "dahi handi" and make hold a completion as part of it.

Shinde said that the state government would give money towards the prizes for the winners in the "dahi handi" competition held during the Gokulashtami celebrations, scheduled for Friday.

It may be recalled that in 2016, the Maharashtra government had declared "Dahi handi" as an "adventurous sport". However, following a submission made by the State government in response to a public interest litigation before it, a HC division bench had accepted the state government's submission that it would not

permit the children below the age of 14 years to take part in the dahi handi celebrations

Later on August 7,2017, the Bombay High Court – while refusing to pass orders on imposing age and height restrictions on human pyramid formations during the "dahi handi" celebrations – had accepted the state government's stand banning the children below the age of 14 years from participating in the event.

Though the festival is celebrated across Maharashtra, "Dahi-handis" are popular in major cities like Mumbai, Thane, Pune and Nashik. There are at least 700 teams of Govindas. They go from venue to venue, seeking to break the "dahi-handis". The ever-increasing prize money for the winners has made the sport

Video of two women fighting over Metro seat goes viral

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

A video has gone viral on social media wherein two women travelling in Delhi Metro can be seen fighting over a seat. The video was captured by one of the commuters on her phone camera. The purported video posted on Instagram by Pratibha Sharma, the women can be seen arguing over keeping bag on the seat.

In the video a woman dressed in a saree could be seen refusing to move her bag from an empty seat. When another woman objected to it and urged her to move her bag so that she could sit there, the woman in the saree blatantly refused and kept arguing with her.



The seated woman is seen to claim that she has reserved the seat for someone and the other women protests that. However, the other woman did not budge. She squeezed herself into whatever space was available. "In madam ji ko metro me bag rakhne ke liye bhi seat chahiye (This woman needs a seat in the metro to keep her bag," the woman can

be heard in the video saying. While all this is going on another woman is seen sitting calmly and enjoying her burger and listening to the argument.

Amused by the video and the woman enjoying her burger, netizens took to social media and tweeted "I want this calmness in life like that Burger girl,"

"Also this lady is littering in Delhi metro and eating too. @OfficialDMRC must take action against this lady," a user commented. However, a user replied to the commenters asking DMRC to take action against the burger woman by saying not to do as the woman is 'cute'. "@OfficialDMRC don't take any action against her. She's cute," a user commented.

Arrested TMC leader claims his daughter cleared school recruitment exam

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Arrested Trinamool Congress leader Anubrata Mondal on Thursday denied allegations that his daughter was appointed to a primary school without having cleared the Teachers' Eligibility Test (TET) and said she has documents to prove that she passed it.

His comment came after the Calcutta High Court on August 17 directed his daughter Sukanya Mondal to appear before it on Thursday in connection with the allegation that she and five others were given jobs in primary schools without having passed the TET.

However, the high court during the day recalled that

order.

"She has passed the test and has a certificate to prove it. I am not well," the TMC leader told reporters while he was taken to a hospital for a medical check-up.Mondal, the party's Birbhumi district president, was arrested by the CBI last week in a cattle smuggling case.When told that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had come out in support of him, he said, "Didi (Banerjee) did the right thing. What more can I say?" The TMC supremo on Sunday lashed out at the BJP-led central government, questioning the reason behind the arrest of Mondal, who is known to enjoy her trust.

Reacting to Mondal's comment, BJP state president



Sukanta Majumdar claimed that the day is not far when the entire TMC top brass would be behind the bars.

"So, Anubrata Mondal is happy that his party's top brass has come out in his support, unlike Partha Chatterjee who was abandoned by the party," he said.

Chatterjee, who was a

senior minister, was arrested on July 23 by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with the school recruitment scam.

Chatterjee has been relieved of his ministerial duties by the Mamata Banerjee government, while the Trinamool Congress has also removed him from all posts he held in the party following his arrest.

Book Shahnawaz on rape plaint...

From Page 1
A magisterial court had on July 7, 2018, ordered the registration of an FIR against Hussain, saying a cognizable offence was made out in the complaint of the woman. This was challenged by the BJP leader before a sessions court which dismissed his plea. On July 13, 2018, the HC passed an interim order staying the trial court order which directed the Delhi Police to register the FIR. It had then issued

notice on the politician's plea and sought the response of the woman and the police.

Hussain's counsel mentioned the matter in the Supreme Court, seeking an urgent hearing before a bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana. The counsel submitted that his client has a nearly three-decade-long career in politics and registration of the FIR will destroy his reputation. The top court agreed to list the matter next week.

From Page 1
Barua along with two other accused had fled from the toilet of the Dhakuakhana Judicial Magistrate's Court on Tuesday and police were on lookout to apprehend him again.

crowd gathered at Dhakuakhana Civil Hospital to witness his body. A huge contingent of police has been deployed to control the crowd and prevent any untoward situation, an official said.

On January 22, he had escaped with handcuffs from the Covid-19 ward of a hospital in North Lakhimpur, but was rearrested after two days. He was also injured in an encounter in September last year.

Boat with weapons...

From Page 1
In a related development, the UAE-based Neptune P2P Group issued a statement on Thursday evening saying that it had provided private security to the vessel MY Lady Haan in June this year when it got damaged during monsoon in the Arabian Sea and Captain Horbert declared an emergency.

The Neptune P2P Group said while the crew was rescued,

the yacht could not be salvaged due to the extreme weather conditions, and the vessel was presumed sunk till this morning the company learned that it had washed ashore in India (Raigad).

"Neptune P2P Group is working with the owner of the vessel and the Indian and UK authorities to determine the official recovery procedures of the vessel and controlled items," the Neptune P2P Group said.

₹11 cr coins missing from Raj SBI branch, CBI raids...

From Page 1
SBI had approached the Rajasthan High Court seeking a CBI probe into the matter as the missing amount was higher than ₹3 crore, the threshold for seeking a probe by the agency.

On the high court's directions, the CBI has taken over the FIR earlier registered by the Rajasthan Police. Incriminating documents recovered during searches are being scrutinised and the investigation is continuing, it added.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION
Senior Divisional Commercial Manager/Freight, Delhi Division, Northern Railway, in terms of Railway Board letter no. 2022/TC(FM)/ 10/04 dated 13.06.2022, invites bids through e-Auction (www.ireps.gov.in) for leasing of parcel space of SLR compartments in following **trains originating from Delhi division** for a period of **two years** as per schedule given below:-

- 12488 (F1), 12916 (F1), 15484 (F1), 20806 (F1) - 08.09.2022 at 11:30 am.
- 12302 (F1), 12497 (F1) 20840 (F1), 22210 (F1) - 14.10.2022 at 11:30 am.
- 12015 (F1), 12958 (F1), 14212 (F1) 20506 (F1) - 17.10.2022 at 11:30 am.
- 12013 (F1), 12031 (F1), 12459 (F1), 14681 (F1) - 18.10.2022 at 11:30 am.

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BJP-AAP spat over Rohingyas intensifies

Kejriwal ready to compromise on national security for vote bank politics, says Anurag Thakur

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday stepped up its attack on the AAP Government in Delhi over the issue of Rohingya refugees and alleged Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was distributing "revdi" to the illegal immigrants and was ready to compromise on national security for vote bank politics. The BJP and the AAP have been engaged in a war of words ever since Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri tweeted on Wednesday that all Rohingya refugees in Delhi would be shifted to Economically Weaker Section (EWS) flats in Bakkarwala and given round-the-clock police security, and the Central Government denied his claim within hours. Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur on Thursday alleged that the Arvind Kejriwal Government was ready to compromise on national security for vote bank politics. "Rohingyas who live in the national Capital are illegal migrants, who receive free water, electricity and ration. Now even flats were to be given to them by the Delhi Government... Distributed 'Revdis'... why could he (Kejriwal) not get detention



centres ready," Thakur said. Dubbing Kejriwal a 'lie minister and not Chief Minister', Thakur said, "He is speaking blatant lies.... Kejriwal and AAP are ready to compromise on national security for vote bank politics.

National security is of utmost importance to the BJP," he said, while asserting that the Central Government has made it clear several times that illegal immigrants will not be given shelter here and the Government is in talks to send them back to their countries. Addressing a press conference, the Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said that Rohingya families living illegally in Delhi are getting full protection from the city Government. Bidhuri said that the AAP was telling a white lie that they do not want Rohingyas to settle in Delhi. "The truth is that last year when these people were living on the land of the Irrigation Department of the UP Government and it had removed them from there, the Delhi Government had settled them on Public Works Department (PWD) land," he claimed. "Along with free electricity, water and ration to these families, free travel for women in DTC buses and free



education for children in public and Government schools is being provided by the Delhi Government for them. Not only this, but cash assistance has also been given to them by the Waqf Board," he said. The LoP further said that Rohingya and Bangladeshi immigrants have become a challenge to the law and order in the Capital city. Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta claimed that there were numerous communications from the Home Department of the Delhi Government and its District Magistrate (south east) to FRRO, NDMC, and the DCP concerned for providing EWS flats to Rohingyas. Meanwhile, the former Delhi BJP president and MLA Vijender Gupta has demanded convening of a special session of the State Assembly to discuss the issue of deportation of five lakh Bangladeshis and Rohingyas settled in Delhi.

'AAP Govt against settling refugees in Capital'

Find out who was orchestrating issue about Rohingyas moving to EWS flats, Sisodia tells Shah

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday shot off a letter to Home Minister Amit Shah asking him to clear the air over the Rohingya issue and find out who was "orchestrating the whole thing" about Rohingyas refugees moving to EWS flats in Delhi, if both the Delhi Government and the Centre were not aware of it. This comes after a day when Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri tweeted "the Centre's decision" to shift the Rohingyas refugees to EWS flats in Delhi and the Home Ministry later denied it. In the letter, Sisodia said, "I have written to the Union Home Minister. I have requested him to make the Centre's stand on the issue clear and probe who these decisions were being taken at the behest of. If the Centre as well as the Delhi Government were kept out of the loop, who was taking these calls?" "The matter of allotment of NDMC flats to Rohingyas in Delhi was being discussed a lot and this decision was highly praised by Union



Urban Development and Housing Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on social media on August 17, 2022. He even called it a 'landmark decision' of the Central Government, until the matter received major backlash by the elected Delhi Government," he stated. "In such a situation, instead of this two-faced attitude, the Central Government should clarify its stand on this matter. He said that the Delhi Government is against any move to provide any temporary or permanent accommodation to Rohingyas in Delhi and the Central Government should also clarify its stand on this," Sisodia said. "When the relevant documents of this decision of providing permanent residence to Rohingyas were sought, shockingly, it was highlighted that a meeting regarding the issue was held on July 29, 2022 under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. Officials of the Central Government and Delhi Police were also present in this meeting. Not only this, the particular file was also sent to the L-

G for approval of the Central Government, via the Chief Secretary. This was done without keeping the elected Government in the loop, especially the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister of the State," Sisodia asserted. Sisodia further said that all this was being done in the Capital by Central Government without bringing it to the notice of elected Government of Delhi. Both the tweets made by Puri on the morning of August 17 also confirm this. "This is also confirmed by their move of sending the concerned file to the Lieutenant-Governor without consulting with the elected Government. When the matter was picked up by the media and the Central Government started receiving the backlash on the issue, the Central Government posted a few statements on Twitter stating that this matter does not have approval from the Government. However, the reality is something else," he informed. "The Delhi Government is against any move to provide any temporary or permanent accommodation to Rohingyas in Delhi. The stand of Delhi Government in this regard is very clear. Appealing to Central Government," said Sisodia adding that if these steps have been taken without consent of Centre, then they should be probed immediately.

Pending nod for tree removal delays projects Address issue, fix responsibility, L-G tells Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Citing delay in the completion of various important projects like the Central Vista, Metro Phase IV, the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS), the Dwarka Expressway, due to pending tree removal permission, Delhi Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) Vinai Kumar Saxena has written to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to address the issue and fix responsibility for it.

According to the norms, the Delhi Government's Forest Department has to decide on tree-cutting/ translocation applications within 60 days, but in several cases the pendency has exceeded more than one year, said officials in the L-G's office.

"Several major projects have been held up for an unreasonable period of time for want of felling or translocation of trees under the Delhi Preservation of Trees permission Act, 1994 by the Department of Forest and Wildlife, GNCTD," Saxena wrote to Kejriwal.

He cited that projects delayed due to the pending permission of Forest department include EMU at Hazrat Nizamuddin railway station, redevelopment of general pool accommodation at Sarojini Nagar, construction of executive enclave of the Central Vista project, construction of residential quarters for the CISF among others.

Section 9(3) of the Delhi Preservation of Trees Act, 1994 mandates that the Tree Officer will give his decision within 60 days from the date of receipt of the application seeking permission to fell, cut, remove or dispose of a tree, said the letter.

"It has been brought to my notice that a significant number of applications seeking permission for tree felling under the Delhi Preservation of



Trees Act, 1994 are pending with the Forest department for varying periods of time beyond 60 days. "In some cases the pendency is exceeding more than a year. Invariably in all such cases no reason has been communicated by the department for withholding the permission indefinitely in violation of the time period laid down for disposal of such applications under the Act," the letter read.

The L-G has said accountability needs to be fixed for delay in permission for tree cutting/transplantation, which is resulting in waste of public funds due to time and cost overrun of the projects, the officials said.

Saxena said he had raised the issue several times during his meetings with the Chief Minister yet the pendency continued to persist.

"While appreciating the need to balance development environmental concerns, I would once again in larger public interest request you to look into these pending applications and ensure their disposal in accordance with the statutory provisions," he said in the letter to Kejriwal.

"Pendency in completion of the projects is also delaying services of public utilities for the people. Also, due to delay in decision making by Forest department, departments and agencies concerned with various affected projects are burdening courts with pleas of relief," the L-G said.

Areas in 9 upscale G'gram societies, sectors declared Covid 'containment zones'

Gurugram: The district administration of Gurugram has identified nine areas of upscale societies and sectors falling in the six urban primary health care (UPHC) and declared them as 'containment zones' in the wake of the spreading coronavirus pandemic, said the government order.

Tower 8 floor 8th to 10th of Sushant Estate Sector-52, DLF Phase-4, 4th to 6th floor Tarika Apartment Sector-43, H-No 13 to 18 H Block, South City-2, Sector-49, H-No 87 to 90 N Block, Mayfield Garden, Sector-51, 8th floor, D tower, JMD Garden Sector-33, C-80 to C-90, Near Vyapar Kendra, H-No 1015 to 1033 packet-3, Sector-21 and Floor 6, tower TG-2 Suncity and Sector-54 Gurugram are among the urban clusters that figure in the list, are among the urban clusters that figure in the list.

The administration said that a team health department will go from door-to-door in these areas for screening or thermal scanning of each resident. The civic body staff will ensure complete sensitization of the areas. "Gates/door every household will be properly

sanitised," said the order. Officials said none can either leave the areas till they remain designated as containment zones nor can anyone enter there. The administration has asked the Gurugram Police to put up barricades and ensure police deployment as well.

For essential services like ration, dairy products and vegetables, a list of shops has been asked to be prepared and arranged for home delivery of essential items. "Once again we noticed a covid infection in upscale areas. People still need to take strict precautions. Do not hesitate in getting the vaccine and booster dose. A team of health department will keep an eye on the areas from where more cases are coming in the Containment Zone," Virender Yadav, chief medical officer, Gurugram said.

Meanwhile, With 557 new cases emerging in Gurugram on Thursday, the district now has 1,588 active COVID cases. Of the 1,558 people currently infected, 68 are hospitalised while 1,520 are in home isolation. The Covid-19 tally in Gurugram has now risen to 2,95,529 according to the official daily health bulletin.

MCD failed to give books, uniforms to students in its schools: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday lashed out at the BJP-led Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) claiming that the civic body has failed to provide books, uniforms and supplies to students studying in the corporation's school for the past two years. Addressing the media, AAP MLA and MCD In-charge Durgesh Pathak said, "Despite getting funds from both the Central Government and Delhi Government, the

civic body is not providing basic supplies to the children. Even during the time of the Corona, the corporation was not providing books and uniforms to the students. This was questioned by the AAP. "After the AAP raised questions, the MCD had promised to send money directly to the accounts of the students so that the children could buy books and stationery themselves, but their promise also turned out to be a flat lie. It is necessary to investigate the trail of this scam; need to find out which

saffron party leader or officer is eating this money," he claimed. "Almost 10 lakh children studying in MCD schools are in a dire need of uniforms which should have been provided in a timely manner. They are also being deprived of books and stationery. The BJP's MCD has failed to meet the basic necessities of students which are required for studying. We are in the month of August and the corporation is yet to provide these basic necessities," Pathak stated.

Rigging of explosives done in one Supertech tower: Official

New Delhi: One of the Supertech's illegal twin towers in Noida has been fully rigged with explosives, as the charging process continued in full swing on Thursday. The nearly 100-metre tall structures are scheduled for demolition at 2.30 pm on August 28 in pursuance of a Supreme Court order that found the twin towers in Sector 93A were built in violation of norms.

"The charging—rigging of skeletal structures with explosives — was started on August 13 and completed in the Ceyane tower on Wednesday.

The work on Apex tower is underway. The charging process is expected to be completed next week," an official said. Ceyane is the smaller of the two towers and had 29 floors constructed when work was stopped on it. Apex is the taller tower with 32 floors constructed. Both the residential towers were supposed to have 40 storeys.

Meanwhile, a meeting was underway among stakeholders, including Noida Authority, Emerald Court and ATS Village residents' groups, demolition firm Edifice

Engineering, to discuss the evacuation plan for August 28 when twin towers will be razed to ground. According to officials, discussion on road traffic management in area on the demolition day is also part of the agenda of meeting, which also included local police.

On post-demolition debris management, a Noida Authority official said "35,000 cubic metre rubble" is expected to be left in the aftermath of the demolition. "Of this, 6,000 to 7,000 cubic metre would gather in basement of twin towers," the official added.

Hindu refugees continue to live in deplorable conditions: DCW

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) has initiated a study on the condition of Hindu women refugees from Pakistan residing in Majnu Ka Tila area. The DCW will submit recommendations from the study to the Centre and the Delhi Government for the rehabilitation of these refugee women. "The Hindu refugees continue to live in deplorable conditions and access to basic amenities like housing, water connection, electricity, toilets and proper means of livelihood are denied to them," the DCW said. Many of the refugees have escaped persecution in Pakistan which range from forced conversions, abductions, religious attacks, sexual assault amongst others, it said. "Each refugee family has a horror story to share and have suffered tremendously over the years. Presently, they are living secluded on the banks of the Yamuna River and are plagued

with several issues, especially during monsoons," the panel said. The commission said these refugees are forced to live in 'kutcha' houses and tents and with no access to proper toilets. "As a result, women and children are often forced to defecate in open." "Lack of electricity further renders area unsafe. They have also not been granted citizenship despitmany requests," it said. Apart from carrying out a study, the DCW will also be issuing notices to various government departments to ascertain the steps taken by them to resolve the issues faced by the Hindu refugees. Further, the commission will give recommendations to these government bodies seeking rehabilitation of the Hindu refugees living in Majnu ka Tila, it said. DCW chief Swati Malhi said, "I have met these Hindu refugees at Majnu ka Tila. They are living in the most pathetic conditions. SR



Members of various women organisations in Delhi raise slogans during a protest against the remission of sentence given to the convicts in the Bilkis Bano rape case by the BJP-led Gujarat Government, at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Thursday

Teen commits 7 robberies in less than 36 hours

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In less than 36 hours, a 16-year-old boy allegedly committed seven robberies in residential areas in South Delhi from 14 to 16 to August. On Independence Day the accused had robbed three people, two in Saket area while one in Hauz Khas area. The first incident on August 15 took place around 8 am in Hauz Khas. The accused allegedly snatched a woman's mobile phone and fled on his scooter. Around 5.30 pm on the same day, he allegedly targeted another woman and snatched her purse in Saket. After that the boy went to the Lado Sarai market area and then snatched

a mobile phone from a man at around 5.40-5.50 pm. The fourth incident was recorded in Malviya Nagar around 2.15 am, the police said. A man was walking towards a hospital when the accused snatched his phone and fled on his blue scooter, they said. In the next one hour, the accused targeted a food delivery executive and a woman in Saket and Greater Kailash, the police added. According to Benita Mary Jaiker, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South district, for the last few days the incidents of robbery/snatching by Scooty rider were reported in the area of South District. "Keeping in view gravity of incidents, the task was assigned to team

Special Staff of South District to keep vigil on the activities of criminals involved in robbery and snatching. After receiving specific inputs, a trap was laid near BRT Road on Maharishi Valmiki Marg and a juvenile was nabbed," said DCP adding that two mobile phones were recovered from his possession. "On questioning, he told police that he had robbed and snatched the mobile phones during the intervening night of August 15 and 16. On verification, both recovered mobile phones were found to be snatched from Malviya Nagar and Saket areas. The scooty he was riding was also found to be stolen from Kalkaji," said DCP. "Further upon his instance, cash ₹8,270,

Jewellery articles including one gold chain, one gold pendant, two gold rings and one nose pin, have been recovered," said DCP. "The juvenile had also disclosed that he became a drug addict and to full fill his desires of drugs, he started committing robbery and snatchings. He also stated that he alongwith associate used to find soft targets especially ladies moving alone in evening or late night hours," said DCP. Police said that he was previously found to be involved in 13 incidents of robbery, snatching and MV thefts. He was initially apprehended during month of March 2021 in a robbery case by Ambedkar Nagar police station.

JNU V-C urges Centre to change CUET format for PG admission

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Common University Entrance Test (CUET) based on multiple choice questions over the decades old subjective entrance test pattern -- academicians are raising doubts over the new examination pattern for post graduate admissions in Jawaharlal Nehru University. The JNU, which sees cut-throat competition in admissions to its masters programmes, fears that the multiple choice questions (MCQ) based test pattern will dilute the quality of students attracted by the varsity. According to JNU Vice Chancellor Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit, the university has been appealing to the Centre to change the CUET

format for postgraduate admissions. "For masters programmes, we need to test the overall understanding of the subject, opinions and critical thinking besides knowledge. The MCQs have a different testing pattern and aptitude," she said. The JNU Teachers Association (JNUTA) had recently moved a resolution demanding that the university suspends its agreement with the National Testing Agency (NTA) and immediately restore JNU's own time-tested admission procedures. Previously, the varsity used to admit students to undergraduate courses through subjective exams conducted by it. From 2019 however, it started admitting students through

the JNU Entrance Examination conducted by the NTA. The university announced earlier this year that it would conduct admissions to all undergraduate and postgraduate courses through the CUET. "We also need to take into account the unique nature of the university and peculiarity of different centres and the courses offered by them. There is a reason why the university attracts the best talent from across the country and its the selection process," JNU Professor Bishnupriya Dutt said. "If we have to provide a level playing field to everyone, CUET-PG can be a subjective exam but to test aspirants of Masters Programmes on basis of a MCQ based exam is not

the right metric," she said. JNU professor Ayesha Kidwai said that the university had its own entrance test system, which used to analyse students on the basis of their writing skills and their opinion-making capacity. "JNU has been in existence for over 50 years and the university was holding its entrance for nearly 48 years before the former VC M Jagadesh Kumar, who is now UGC chairman, brought in the JNU Entrance Exam (JNUEE) by tying up with the NTA. The move not only meant that we lost out on good students but NTA also charged three times the money the university would spend on holding the exam.

Sure of bagging contract for Tejas, HAL to set up office in Malaysia



The indigenously-built light combat aircraft (LCA) Tejas



Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) like Su-30 MKM and Hawk upgrades. It will reinforce commitment of India in supporting the Malaysian Defence Forces and industry for sustainable aerospace and defence landscape in Malaysia. Further, being one of the largest producers of Russian origin Su-30 aircraft, the HAL has capabilities to extend the required support to RMAF for Su-30 MKM fleet which is facing low serviceability issues due to ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis. The

HAL can support RMAF for upgrading their Hawk fleet as well. Other HAL platforms like HTT-40, Do-228, Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) and Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) have the potential to be inducted by RMAF in future. Considering the above factors, HAL's office in Kuala Lumpur will take up market promotion of HAL's range of products and services not only in Malaysia but in the entire South East Asia. The office will also contribute in

increasing serviceability of existing platforms being operated by RMAF and for neighbouring Air Forces in the region. It will reinforce commitment of India in supporting

the Malaysian Defence Forces and industry for sustainable aerospace and defence landscape in Malaysia, the HAL said. The HAL is now manufacturing 83 Tejas jets for the

IAF after it was awarded the contract by the Indian government last year. The order is worth over ₹47,000 crores. The delivery will start from next year.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Confident of bagging the contract to export 18 indigenously designed and manufactured Tejas light combat aircraft (LCA) to Malaysia, the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) will now set up an office in Kuala Lumpur. The public sector HAL is manufacturing Tejas.

Argentina, Australia, Egypt, USA, Indonesia, and Philippines have also shown interest in procuring the Tejas. If the contract goes through with Malaysia, it will be the first big export order of the Tejas LCA thereby showcasing India's capability in manufacturing state of the art fighter jets and related equipment.

The HAL had submitted a proposal to Ministry of Defence (MINDEF), Malaysia during October 2021 for supply of 18 FLIT LCAs (Tejas) against a global tender issued by the Malaysian Air Force. The final winner of the tender is expected to be declared soon by Malaysian authorities. LCA Tejas stands a fair chance of

selection in the bid as it meets all the parameters sought by RMAF. Giving details of setting up office in the Kuala Lumpur, the HAL said on Thursday it inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in this

regard in Bengaluru on Thursday. The office in Malaysia will help HAL in tapping the new business opportunities for Fighter Lead-in Trainer (FLIT) LCA (Tejas) and other requirements of Royal

Rajnath felicitates 'Veer Naris' of armed forces

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday felicitated the 'Veer Naris', kin of the Armed Forces personnel, who lost their lives in a recent landslide at Tupul in Manipur and assured them of full support from his ministry.

He also presented cheques of Rs 7 lakh to each 'Veer Nari'. Thirteen soldiers, who got injured in the tragedy, were also felicitated during the event.

The felicitation ceremony was organised at Bengdubi Military Station in Darjeeling district of West Bengal by Trishakti Corps. Thirty personnel - one officer, three Junior Commissioned Officers

and 26 Other Ranks - of 107 Infantry Battalion (Territorial Army) 11 Gorkha Rifles were among the 61 people killed during the tragedy in June. During the interaction with the Veer Naris and soldiers, Rajnath paid tributes to the deceased personnel, commending their bravery and dedication.

He said the nation will always remain indebted to the sacrifices made by the soldiers. The minister also said the Government is making sure that financial stability is provided to the families and dependents of the brave soldiers, assuring full support of the defence ministry. Rajnath lauded the Armed Forces for playing an important role in

completing the Jiribam-Tupul Imphal Rail Line Project in a challenging situation. He said the project is important for meeting the strategic and socio-economic needs of the country. Member of Parliament,

Darjeeling Raju Bista, Chief of the Army Staff General Manoj Pande, GOC, 111 Sub Area Lt General Tarun Kumar Aich and other senior officials of the Indian Army were present on the occasion.



Era of coalitions is over, country now wants a strong Govt at Centre, says BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of the Opposition's claim to take on the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP on Thursday responded that the era of "short-lived" coalition Governments was over and the country now wanted a strong and stable Government at the Centre.

The party also hit-out at the recent cases of crimes in Bihar and alleged involvement of some of the state ministers in criminal cases to claim that criminals have become "fearless" after the grand alliance headed by Nitish Kumar came to power in the state following the JD(U)'s split with the BJP.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is being projected by JDU and RJD as the PM candidate vis-à-vis Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the next Lok Sabha polls which are only about 18 months away.

Reacting to Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's comments that the change of government in Bihar was a "positive sign" to provide a strong alternative at the Centre, former Union minister and BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad said the era of the likes of V P Singh and H D Deve Gowda, who headed short-lived coalition governments, was gone

and the country now wanted stability, development and effective leadership. In an interview, Yadav had also claimed that the BJP's allies in Uttar Pradesh are not happy with the saffron party and will also break free in the future.

"People of India know that the era of Deve Gowda, I K Gujral and V P Singh is gone. The country now wants stability, development, honesty and effective leadership.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided it and enhanced India's prestige," Prasad said in a retort to the SP leader. He said 2024 is far away and it remains to be seen how much understanding develops among opposition parties.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Telangana Chief Minister Chandrashekar Rao are other two leaders being seen as Prime Ministerial candidates, besides Nitish Kumar. It is also speculated in the political circles that opposition may try to settle for a single opposition nominee for Prime Minister in the run-up to 2024.

Taking on to the Nitish-led 'Mahagathabandhan', Prasad pointed out that two persons, a class 12 girl student and a soldier, were shot dead in Patna, his Lok Sabha constituency, in the last 24 hours.

"The state is returning to jungle raj," he alleged.

Prasad also lashed-out at the newly constituted Bihar government over the row involving Bihar minister Kartikeya Singh's who is reported to have kidnapping case with an outstanding warrant against him and alleged the state's agriculture minister was earlier linked to a rice scam.

Singh has been inducted in the Nitish cabinet as law minister. Singh's lawyer has maintained that the police investigation had found no evidence against him.

Prasad, a former Union law minister, however, rejected the claim saying the Patna High Court had in 2017 dismissed the RJD leader's plea for anticipatory bail by noting that the complaint's statement highlights his role in the abduction.

The BJP leader said the court had asked him to surrender and to apply for regular bail and accused the police of trying to save him after the JD(U)-RJD-Congress formed the government.

In a swipe at the Bihar CM after one of his party MLAs, Bima Bharti, questioned him for the induction of Leshi Singh as a minister, he said infighting has begun within the party.

8 rare disease hospitals to set up panel to vet patients' pleas for aid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry has asked each of the eight designated hospitals that treat rare diseases to set up an expert committee to decide on providing a cash aid of Rs 50 lakh within a month of receiving an application for financial assistance from a patient.

The eight Centres of Excellence (CoEs) will also be given one-time financial support up to Rs 5 crore for procurement of equipment for strengthening patients care services for screening, diagnosis and prevention (prenatal diagnosis) for rare diseases based on a gap analysis, according to the new guidelines issued by the health ministry.

Also, more CoEs will be added for regional outreach if they are found to be suitable in terms of infrastructure and human resources based on recommendations of the Technical Committee of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the guidelines said.

The Ministry on August 11 issued the guidelines and procedures for granting financial assistance to patients suffering from rare diseases as thalassemia, haemophilia, and sickle cell anaemia under the National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD), 2021. The ministry on May 19 increased

the financial support from Rs 20 lakh to Rs 50 lakh for patients belonging to all categories of rare diseases. According to the guidelines, a 'Rare Disease Committee' is to be constituted in each CoE. The nodal officer for rare disease of the hospital will be the member secretary of the committee and the CoE may also opt for an outside expert on the panel, if required.

The applications received from the patients or guardians will first be scrutinized by the nodal officer, and thereafter placed before the committee for consideration and approval.

There will be no reimbursement of expenditure already incurred. Families covered under Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (AB-PMJAY) will also be eligible for financial assistance as per NPRD, 2021, if the disease is not covered under AB-PMJAY packages.

Keeping in view the resource constraint and compelling health priorities, it will be difficult for government to fully finance treatment of high cost rare diseases. The gap will be filled up by providing financial assistance through crowdfunding, the guidelines said, adding a crowdfunding portal "http://rarediseases.Nhp.Gov.In/" "http://rarediseases.Nhp.Gov.In" has already been created for receiving such fund, the guidelines read.

HC-appointed panel will not take over affairs of IOA: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday ordered a status quo and said the Delhi High Court-appointed three-member Committee of Administrators (COA) will not take over the affairs of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

A bench comprising Chief Justice NV Ramana and CT Ravikumar took note of the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and the IOA, that the world sports body does not recognise any un-elected bodies like the CoA and consequently, India may be barred from taking part in international sports events.

"The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) is a unit of the International Olympic Association and they have their own rules and according to them, if any national-level body like petitioner IOA here is represented by a non-elected body then it is treated as a third party interference," the law officer said.

Every country is bound by the rules of the international body, Mehta said, adding that the high court's intervention may or may not be for valid reasons which can be gone into by the bench at a later stage.



"But the moment they (CoA) takes over, India stands almost 99 per cent chance of being suspended from participating in any Olympic and international event," the Solicitor General said.

The CJI said that Justice Hima Kohli, the third judge of the bench, did not want to hear this case which originally arose from the Delhi High Court's order. The law officer said that the interim relief can be awarded by the two judges on the bench.

"The counsel for the petitioner (IOA) and as well as the Solicitor General submitted that by virtue of the present order (of the high court), there is a possibility of India losing the chance of participation in the Olympic and all international events...

"We direct the parties to maintain the status quo. It is made clear that the charge is not handed over to the CoA. We direct the matter to be listed before an appropriate bench

on Monday (August 22)," the bench said in its order. Consequently, the Delhi High Court-appointed COA, comprising former Supreme Court judge Justice Anil R Dave, former Chief Election Commissioner S Y Quraishi, and former Secretary of Ministry of External Affairs Vikas Swarup, will not be able to take IOA over.

The Delhi High Court on August 16 ordered the setting up of a three-member CoA to manage the affairs of the IOA. The high court had said the "persistent recalcitrance" of the IOA to comply with the Sports Code made it imperative that its affairs be put in the hands of the CoA.

HC had directed the executive committee of IOA to forthwith hand over the charge to the newly appointed committee and said that the members of the CoA will be assisted by three eminent sports persons, namely, Shooter Olympian Abhinav Bindra, Long Jump Olympian Anju Bobby George, and Archer Olympian Bombayla Devi Laishram.

The High Court's order was passed on a petition by senior advocate Rahul Mehra seeking strict compliance by the IOA and National Sports Federations with the Sports Code and judicial dicta.

CZA setting up zoo network for preserving genetic material

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Zoo Authority (CZA) is setting up a consortium of network of zoos, beginning with five zoos, as a pilot project to serve as biological repositories for preserving genetic material of wildlife species in the form of cryo-banking of genetic material, semen, oocytes, tissues, and cells for future applications in case the animal gets extinct.

The five zoos are Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, West Bengal, Nehru Zoological Park, Telangana, Sakkarbaug Zoological Park, Gujarat, Bannerghatta Biological Park, Bengaluru, Karnataka and Sepahijala Zoological Park, Agartala in Tripura. These zoos will serve as genetic resource banks (GRB) for Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology's Laboratory for the

Conservation of Endangered Species (CCMB-LaCONES), which is the country's only facility for conservation of endangered species.

A dedicated facility of CSIR's Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) in Hyderabad, the Laboratory for the Conservation of Endangered Species (LaCONES), since 2018 has been using modern biotechnologies for conservation of endangered wildlife.

Till now, the CCMB-LaCONES has been collecting tissues of various wild animals which have died naturally or due to medical reasons to preserve cells, gametes and gonads with the cooperation of National Zoological Park at Hyderabad. But the need for setting up the consortium was felt as collection at the LaCONES has been very dismal due to various reasons

when compared to the wide species found in the country. "Despite being one of the most biodiverse countries in the world, nearly 14% of all species in India face serious threat of extinction.

These identified zoos will have highly-sophisticated labs with best of equipments to serve as biological repositories for Hyderabad Centre which will then preserves species in the form of cryo-banking of genetic material, semen, oocytes, embryos, tissues, and cells for future applications," said an official from the Union Environment Ministry.

CZA is the autonomous body under the Ministry, engaged in supervising the functioning of the zoos in the country. "The large amounts of various biological samples have to be systematically collected from different regions of the country and preserved in

optimal conditions and then easily accessible to scientists for future studies or applications.

In view of the potential benefit of bio-banking of wild animals, zoos are being asked to donate biological samples of valuable wild animals to these identified five genetic resource banks," said the official about the ambitious pilot project. Soon more zoos will be brought under the ambit of the Consortium.

Genetic resource bank [GRB] involves the systematic collection of genetic material, tissues, gonads, gametes and cells, and preserved at subzero temperatures without altering their integrity and viability, he added.

GRBs could be one of the promising options for future species management or research by preserving spermatozoa, eggs and embryos of threatened populations, he said.

Prez prorogues both Houses of Parliament

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu has prorogued both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha after the two Houses of Parliament were adjourned sine die on August 8. "The Lok Sabha which commenced its ninth session on July 18 has been prorogued by the president on August 17," according to an official communication from the Lok Sabha secretariat.

The Rajya Sabha, which was adjourned sine die on August 8, has been prorogued by the president on August 17, according to a note from the Rajya Sabha Secretariat. The Monsoon Session of Parliament started on July 18 and ended on August 8, four days ahead of schedule.

Covid forces Cong to postpone mega rally against price rise, joblessness

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Thursday said it has postponed its mega rally at the Ramlila Maidan against price rise and unemployment to September 4 in view of the Covid situation in the national capital.

Congress general secretary of communications Jairam Ramesh said the rally has been postponed in view of rising cases of COVID-19 in Delhi. The rally was earlier scheduled for August 28. The party also announced to launch a "Bharat Jodo Yatra" from September 7 from Kanyakumari where former party chief Rahul Gandhi will participate and the 3500 kilometre yatra, aimed at uniting the country, will culminate in February in Jammu and



Kashmir. "Due to the prevailing COVID-19 situation, the Congress party's Mehngai Par Halla Bol Rally at Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi, is being rescheduled from August 28 to September 4th.

The rally will send a powerful message to the insensitive Modi sarkar," Ramesh said at a media briefing after the decision was taken in a meeting of senior party leaders and all the State Unit Chiefs besides the Chiefs Ministers of Congress

ruled states. While continue its fight against price rise, the Congress has also decided to organise a series of "Mehngai Chaupal" meetings in all assembly constituencies from August 17 to 23 that will culminate in a mega rally in Delhi's Ramlila maidan. Congress will continue to spread awareness about the anti-people policies of the BJP government and increase pressure on it to change course, the party has said.

Ramesh said the Bharat Jodo Yatra will not to make speeches and address rallies but to listen to the concern of the masses by engaging them with talk shows related to issues like price rise, unemployment and restlessness within the various sections and religions of the country.

Political slugfest over inclusion of non-locals in J&K electoral rolls

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A political slugfest broke out between the Kashmir based mainstream political parties and the ruling party over inclusion of non-local voters in Jammu and Kashmir electoral rolls on Thursday.

The National Conference termed the inclusion of outside voters in Jammu and Kashmir electoral rolls as “clear-cut de-franchising” of people of the erstwhile state while Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chief Mehbooba Mufti described the latest decision of the election commission to allow outsiders to vote in the assembly polls as “pre-poll rigging”.

Hitting back Bharatiya Janata Party’s Chief Spokesman in Jammu Sunil Sethi thundered that the decision of the Chief Electoral Officer to give voting rights to

all persons who ordinarily reside in Jammu Kashmir is ‘legally and constitutionally’ correct. Sethi said Opposition parties are trying to project the wrong picture and are still living in the pre 5th Aug 2019 era.

On the other hand terror outfit The Resistance Front (TRF) has issued a threat saying that ‘every non-local will be targeted’. The threat came after Jammu and Kashmir’s Chief Electoral Officer Hirdesh Kumar Wednesday said that non-locals will be allowed to cast votes in the Assembly elections in J&K. In a threat, the TRF said that it will ‘not even spare beggars’.

Meanwhile, National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah has convened an all-party meeting here on August 22 to discuss the issue of inclusion of outside voters in Jammu and

Kashmir electoral rolls.

The meeting will discuss the future course of action with regard to the Election Commission allowing outsiders to register as voters in the Union Territory.

“With regard to the CEO’s announcement stating that non-locals will be added as voters in J&K, Dr Farooq Abdullah has convened an APM (all-party meeting) on August 22 (Monday) at his residence,” NC state spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar said.

Dar said Abdullah has spoken to the mainstream political parties in the Union Territory and invited them to join the meeting.

“The party president spoke to all mainstream parties, except the BJP,” the spokesman added.

Apparently, some of the Kashmir based political par-

ties have sensed an opportunity to corner the government over the issue of enrolling non-locals as voters in J&K.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar, the National Conference Chief spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq told reporters, “Firstly, there is no clarity on what the chief electoral officer (CEO) has said. What is the criterion of an ordinarily living citizen? Can anyone, including tourists, register their vote here?”

He said there are apprehensions among the people, and the government should clarify.

Referring to the issue of security forces personnel registering themselves as voters, Sadiq said according to the rules, security forces can register as voters only in peace stations.

“There is Armed Forces

Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in Jammu and Kashmir, that means J-K is declared as a disturbed state... so there are no peace stations and then how can security forces register as local voters?” he asked.

Addressing a separate press conference at her residence Mehbooba Mufti told reporters, “I appeal to those parties that have fought for secular and democratic India, and not those that sided with Britishers should speak up. All measures and policy decisions taken in J&K are not for the national interest but only for BJP’s interest. The BJP has made Kashmir a laboratory. They experiment here first and apply such tricks outside later,” Mufti said.

She said the election commission is allowing 25 lakh outsiders to vote in J&K’s next assembly election. “This will make voters from

Kashmir as well as Jammu irrelevant. This is a step to disenfranchise locals.”

CPI(M) leader M.Y. Tarigami also described the announcement made by the Chief Electoral Officer on allowing outsiders to vote in J&K as “disenfranchising the people of J&K”.

Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari on Thursday sought clarification from the Centre on the inclusion of non-local voters in the electoral rolls of Jammu and Kashmir and said his party will not allow anyone to change the Union territory’s demography.

Bukhari said the chief electoral officer’s remarks have created confusion and uneasiness among the people.

“Two things come to our mind by such statements. One is whether it is an attempt to change our demography, and the other is how anyone can



vote at two places. If someone lives outside, how can he vote here?” Bukhari told reporters.

In Jammu, BJP’s Chief spokesman Sunil Sethi clarified the opposition parties are somehow trying to create exceptions in Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory which is not permissible. People of Jammu and Kashmir have welcomed the decision of complete jelling of Jammu



Kashmir to the Indian Union without exception or reservation and political parties have to realize it and live with it.

Sunil Sethi further asserted that if person from Jammu and Kashmir who is ordinarily residing in any part of country can get himself registered there as voters then how can be there reservation for same thing happening in Jammu and Kashmir

Release of Bilkis’ rapists shows BJP’s mindset on women: Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



On a day when Bilkis Bano, a survivor of the 2002 post-Godhra riots in Gujarat, said the premature release of all the 11 convicts serving life sentence in a case related to her and seven family members, has shaken her faith in justice and left her numb, the Congress stepped up its attack with former party chief Rahul Gandhi alleging that BJP’s support to criminals displays the ruling party’s mindset towards women.

Stating that he was ashamed of “such politics”, Rahul cited the examples of rape cases in Unnao and Hathras in Uttar Pradesh, Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir and now Gujarat where the government this week released those convicted of rape and murder in the 2002 Bilkis Bano case.

“Unnao - worked to save BJP MLA. Kathua - rally in favour of rapists. Hathras - the government in favour of rapists. Gujarat - the release and honour of rapists. The support to criminals displays the petty mindset of the BJP towards women,” Rahul Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi. “Are you not ashamed of such politics, Prime Minister ji,” Rahul asked.

Through a statement, Bano has appealed to the Gujarat government to “undo this harm” and give back her right to “live without fear and in peace.” The 11 convicts, sentenced to life imprisonment in the 2002 case of Bilkis Bano’s

gang rape and murder of her seven family members during the riots, walked out of the Godhra sub-jail on Monday after the BJP government in Gujarat allowed their release under its remission policy.

Discussing the release of the Bilkis Bano case convicts, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram added that two BJP MLAs were part of the review panel that granted them remission. “There is an interesting side story to the grant of remission to 11 persons convicted for gang rape in Gujarat. Among the Review Panel were two BJP MLAs C. K. Raoji and Suman Chauhan. Another member was Murlu Mulchandani who was a key witness for the prosecution in the Godhra Train burning case,” Chidambaram alleged on Twitter.

He asked whether this was a neutral, non-partisan panel of experts in criminology and

penology and said the district collector was the chairperson. Rahul and his party have been attacking the BJP and the prime minister for releasing the rapists in the Bilkis Bano case by granting them remission.

TRS MLC Kavitha said the welcome to the rapists and murderers after they were released from jail by some people who follow a certain ideology is a slap on the face of a just society. In a series of tweets in Hindi, Kavitha said it is imperative to stop this extremely dangerous tradition before it takes the form of a legacy.

“The welcome shown to the rapists and murderers after getting released from jail by some people who follow a certain ideology is a slap on the face of a just society. It is imperative to stop this extremely dangerous tradition before it takes the form of a legacy,” she tweeted.

ED conducts searches in UP, Delhi in PMLA case against Mukhtar, Afzal Ansari

Mukhtar Ansari’s Government accommodation at Janpath was also searched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday conducted searches at multiple locations in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi as part of a money laundering investigation against mafia-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari and his Parliamentary brother Afzal Ansari.

The agency searched the official residence of BSP MP Afzal Ansari in Delhi as part of multi-city raids being conducted in the money laundering investigation against his jailed brother Mukhtar

Ansari, officials said.

Ghazipur legislator Mukhtar Ansari’s government accommodation at Janpath in central Delhi was also searched. The searches were carried out along with a CRPF security escort.

The searches are being conducted at premises located in Ghazipur, Mohammadabad (in Ghazipur district), Mau and state capital Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh apart from Delhi which are linked to Mukhtar Ansari and his alleged associates, they said.

The action is aimed at gathering evidence with regard to an ongoing investigation against Mukhtar Ansari and his associates under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the sources said.

Mukhtar Ansari, a five-time former MLA, is currently



lodged in jail at Banda in Uttar Pradesh.

He is being probed by the ED in connection with at least 49 criminal cases booked against him including those on charges of land grabbing, murder and extortion.

He faces trial in Uttar Pradesh in several cases, including attempt to murder and murder.



Last week, the Ghazipur district administration seized two plots of land, measuring 1.901 hectares and valued at over Rs 6 crore, that were purchased using alleged illegal earnings of Mukhtar Ansari, according to police.

In July, the Uttar Pradesh Police attached Afzal Ansari’s assets worth Rs 14.90 crore under the Gangster Act.

Didi begins house cleaning, issues code of conduct for Mins

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In an apparent effort to rebuild her party’s sagging image --- post arrest of senior minister Partha Chatterjee and Trinamool Congress national executive member Anubrata Mondal --- Bengal Chief Minister on Thursday issued a code of conduct for her ministers asking them not to sign certain specific files without thoroughly scrutinising them.

The Chief Minister’s advice to her ministers, particularly the new ones who were inducted very recently after a Cabinet reshuffle came after the arrest of Chatterjee charged with in the cash-for-job scam and Mondal accused of cattle smuggling.

“The BJP has been trying

to trap us ... they have already trapped us ... so I ask all the minister, particularly those who joined recently to exercise utmost vigil while signing some specific files ... those files must not be signed without thorough scrutiny,” the Chief Minister said prompting the opposition to wonder whether she had lost faith in her bureaucrats and the office staff who act as filters before the files reach the ministers.

The Chief Minister also asked the ministers not to use pilot vehicles and hooters or red lights while travelling. No minister even if they were travelling from the districts to Kolkata must use pilot vehicles, hooters or red beacons in order not to pick up people’s annoyance, the Chief Minister said,

asking the ministers and peoples representatives to maintain a humble image.

Banerjee has recently dropped a number of senior leaders including jailed leader and former number two in her cabinet Partha Chatterjee, Paresw Adhikari and slashed responsibilities of many other senior ministers like Firhad Hakim and Jyotipriya Mullick. She inducted some new less controversial faces like Partha Bhownick, Babul Supriya, Birbaha Soren and others.

The Chief Minister also asked the Cabinet ministers to divide responsibilities among their deputies and ensure their performance. Asking her senior minister and North 24 Parganas district president JP Mullick to “travel less and per-

form more” Banerjee said the ministers should strictly concentrate on their work.

Banerjee’s advice to her ministers came in tandem with a parallel development where Partha Chatterjee while appearing before a designated court said “no one will be spared,” adding “truth will come out and everything will be proved in time.” His comment when no question was hurled at him by the media.

His comment is also being taken as a continuation of an earlier comment made more than a fortnight ago when he told the media that he was being made a victim of conspiracy. “I am a victim of conspiracy... things will come out in time,” he had told then.

Incidentally according to

the Enforcement Directorate officials Chatterjee had denied the ownership of Rs 50 crore and many more crores worth of jewellery recovered from his close aide Arpita Mukherjee’s apartments. Mukherjee too had disowned the cash saying some unknown people would regularly visit her apartment and put the bags in particular rooms.

Chatterjee who was on Thursday produced before the court at the end of his 10-days remand was again remanded to another ten-days custody by the court.

While at the court the former Education, Industries and Parliamentary Affairs Minister prayed before the judge with folded hands to grant him bail, advocates said adding while

making his submission his voice trembled suddenly he made the comments apparently to the media.

The former minister considered closest to the Chief Minister apart from Mukul Roy had also served as the Opposition Leader of the State during the Left Front.

According to sources Chatterjee was upset with the Chief Minister for not standing by him and sparing a word of support for him during a public meeting at Behala, the jailed minister’s constituency.

The Chief Minister had not spent a word for him but had firmly stood by Mondal saying he was being victimised by the BJP government as he was an able party man who had banished the saffron outfit from



Birbhum and other parts of the State.

Mondal who is charged with cattle smuggling had also been named in sand and stone and coal smuggling cases. In the same case the ED has earlier questioned Chief Ministers

nephew and party national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee too. Critics feel that Banerjee had no way but to side with Mondal because he too is named in the coal scam and must be kept from opening his mouth.

Kerala Governor-CPM spat over varsity appointment intensifies

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCCHI

For the first time in the political history of Kerala, an open war has erupted between Arif Mohammed Khan, the Governor and the State administration. In an unprecedented action, Governor Arif Mohammed Khan froze the decision of the CPI(M) controlled Kannur University appointing the wife of a party bigwig as associate professor violating all norms and qualifications prescribed by the University itself.

Prof Gopinath Raveendran, a CPI(M) fellow traveller, who is the vice chancellor of the Kannur University was issued a show cause notice by the Governor on Wednesday evening asking why action should not be taken against the former for the blatant violation of all norms. “So long as I remain the Chancellor of the University, I will not allow close relations of the powerful and mighty to be appointed anywhere in the government services that come under the jurisdiction of the Governor,” said Governor Khan late Wednesday evening before boarding the aircraft for New Delhi.

Priya Varghese, who has been appointed as the associate professor of the department of Malayalam, Kannur University, is the wife of K K Ragesh, private secretary to chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan. According to the memorandum submitted by the Save University Forum, an independent body of academicians and researchers, Varghese does not have either the University mandated teaching or research experience. “We were shocked to learn from the vice-chancellor that she was awarded the first rank in the interview despite her not qualifying in the other modes of selection. This is an open violation of the rules prescribed by the University Grants Commission,” a representative of Save University Forum told The Pioneer.

Sources close to the Governor told this newspaper that he was thoroughly disappointed and dejected with the politicisation and favouritism employed in the appointment to University posts. Rajbhavan sources made it clear that the Vice Chancellor was engaged in a losing battle as the show cause notice was issued under Article 7 of the Kannur University Act.

Kerala’s cultural landscape got a jolt on Thursday morn-

ing as Dr M Rajeev Kumar, eminent literary critic and well known writer, who has exposed many underhand dealings in the educational department came out in the open appreciating the Governor for his bold decision and lambasting the State administration for the faux pas. “The intervention of party leaders ensured that the teaching experience of less than 18 months was portrayed as eight years. She was engaged in clerical works in State Language Institute and whatever she had published were carried by the Vignana Kairali, a journal which is not even read by its editor,” said Dr Rajeev Kumar, himself a left ideologue.

Dr Rajeev Kumar said even if the Courts uphold the decision of the vice-chancellor citing technicalities, it is a great development that the State got a Governor which it deserved. “We have instances of Governors in the past who misused their position to get their wards admitted for MBBS courses in the State’s Medical Colleges. Governor Khan has brought a refreshing experience to the rotten State administration by his no-nonsense approach,” said Dr Rajeev Kumar.

Station Superintendent of Aligarh railway station accused of molestation

PNS ■ ALIGARH

An FIR lodged against station superintendent by a woman employee posted at Aligarh railway junction. She has accused station superintendent DK Gautam of making obscene talk and molestation by calling her to his office. In this case, a complaint was made on behalf of the victim on the railway officials and CM portal. After that, a case has been registered in the police station GRP.

According to the victim, her husband was posted in the railways and died in the line of duty. She got a job as a dependent of the deceased. It is alleged that the station superintendent talks obscenely to her. The incident happened on the evening of July 28. She was going home after finishing her duty. Then the superintendent called her to his office and started talking obscenely. When she resisted, he held her hand and ran from there making noise.

It is alleged that pressure was being made to not register the case. In this case, a com-



plaint was lodged on behalf of the victim in the police station, but the case was not registered. On this, she complained to the Railway Officer and the CM Portal. After which a case was registered in the police station.

Inspector Subodh Kumar Yadav, in-charge of GRP, said that on the complaint of the lady employee, a case of molestation is being registered against Station Superintendent DK Gautam and investigation is being done in the matter. On the other hand, station superintendent DK Gautam has termed the allegations made by the female employee as baseless. They have said that they have already complained to the higher authorities about the women workers. The woman employee has made fabricated allegations regarding this.



Devotees wait to offer prayers at Krishna Janambhoomi temple on Janmashtami festival in Mathura on Thursday. PTI

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Correct decision

The government blocks eight YouTube news channels, one Facebook account, and two Facebook posts

The Narendra Modi government has done well by blocking eight YouTube-based news channels, one Facebook account, and two Facebook posts. While seven blocked YouTube channels are Indian, one is run from Pakistan. The government has said it has proscribed the platforms spreading disinformation related to India's national security, foreign relations, and public order. A quick look at some of the posts, screenshots of which are in the official press release, suggests that they were indulging in something worse than fake news. Fake news can also be the result of a lazy reporter's credulity, but some of the stories these folks have been posting were, to put it mildly, preposterous. Loktantra Tv, for instance, gave the 'news' that Modi has banned Bakr-eid celebrations. Also, a holy war has started in India and Shankaracharya Nishchalananda Saraswati will lead the attack on Mecca and Medina. Another YouTube channel U&V TV posted that Modi is facing treason charges. AM Razvi's YouTube channel reported about



not just disturbances in Ajmer Dargah but also that the Army had to be deployed. Gouravshali Pawan Mithilanchal, another YouTube channel, reported even more sensational and incredible: that India and Egypt have attacked Turkey. Pakistan's News ki Dunya posted that 100 crore Hindus will kill 40 crore Muslims, and that Muslims should go to Pakistan or Bangladesh. Another post showed that India's Qutub Minar mosque has been demolished. No journalist, however incompetent, would run such outlandish 'news' stories without checking several times the source and the authenticity of such 'news.'

The government has correctly pointed out that the purpose of the content published by some of these YouTube channels was to spread hatred among religious communities in India. Free speech is a right that needs to be protected everywhere, but it is also constrained by the harm principle: that is, you cannot use freedom of expression to hurt others. The content mentioned in the press release is capable of causing a great deal of harm to people by creating disharmony in society, even triggering communal riots. The YouTubers should also learn a lesson from the government action. Social media platforms offer a lot of opportunities to non-journalists to present news and views; many of them have also gained in the process. However, they must remember that while Article 19 of the Constitution grants the freedom of speech and expression, it also imposes reasonable restrictions "in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence." There is another problem: if the users of social media platforms don't behave themselves, it gives the authorities a pretext to come up with restrictive rules and regulations. It is time that irresponsible YouTube-based news channels, and even some mainstream media channels, didn't abuse free speech.



Children dressed as Lord Krishna and Radha during a fancy dress competition on Janmashtami at ISKCON temple

Confusion at highest level

Government's stand on refugees remains ambiguous, especially on the Rohingyas

India's refugee policy remains confused and rudderless, to say the least. Often the ministry and the minister are at a cross purpose giving a red face to the government. An unnecessary controversy erupted over providing residential flats to the Rohingya refugees living in Delhi in the Bakkarwala area of Delhi. In fact, Hardeep Puri, minister for Housing and urban affairs tweeted several times on Wednesday morning flaunting the government's decision to provide the flats to the Rohingyas. However, the Ministry of Home Affairs in a press release reverted Minister's decision saying that all the Rohingya were illegal immigrants who were to be returned to their home country and that the refugees would continue to stay at their present location. The Home Ministry communique said that the Delhi government has been asked not to move the refugees who would remain in their present location. The MHA



calls the present location of Rohingyas a 'detention center' and Rohingyas 'illegal foreigners'. In fact, it went on to direct the government of Delhi to declare officially the present address of Rohingyas as a detention center. The MHA decision left him no choice but to chew his words. Puri had gone on to say that it was a landmark decision and that the refugees would be provided with the basic amenities, identity cards (issued by the UNHCR), and security. So the government raised the hopes of Rohingya refugees in the morning and dashed them by the evening.

Rohingyas made their way to India to escape the Myanmar Army's pogrom that has been termed by the UN as one of the worst genocide in history. In

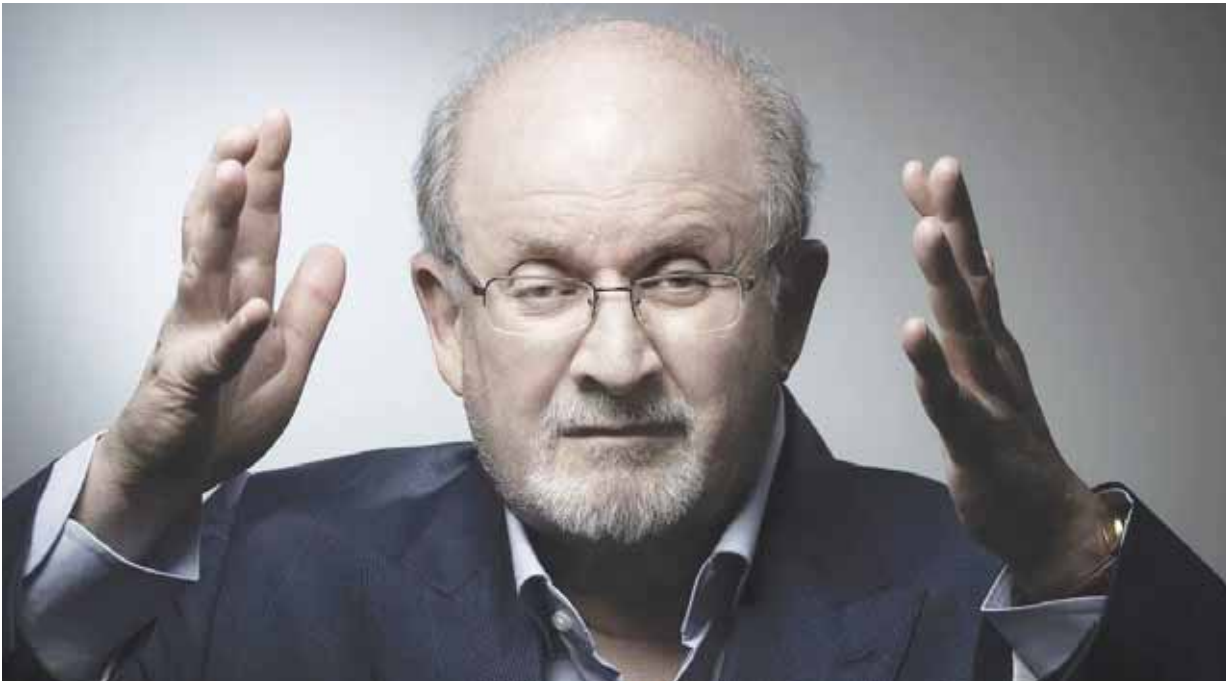
Delhi, After a mysterious fire broke out in the Okhla settlement of the Rohingyas, KalindiKunj area in New Delhi they were shifted to their present location. Curiously Rohingya refugee camps in India have witnessed four fires in 2021 alone. Between 2016 and 2021, 12 mysterious fires broke out in Rohingya camps. Most of these fires show a trend, they broke at night and were preceded by threats of eviction or bigotry but are blamed on the short circuit. Whether we should allow these refugees to live in our country is subject to debate and a policy decision of the government but till they are deported it is the duty of the government to provide them basic amenities and safety and security which are enshrined in the UN. Each individual even an illegal immigrant has the right to life and it is our duty to safeguard it, regardless.

Surviving in the times of zealotry

The attack on Salman Rushdie raises many questions. Love is perhaps the only way to deal with hatemongers, hate begets hate



INDRA SHEKHAR SINGH



Salman Rushdie lives! Stitched up and sedated, he does talk and hasn't lost his sense of humour. But there is some question India@75 must answer. How do we react when one of the most famous Indian-origin people alive is brutally stabbed in a public event in the US? We must begin to question.

After watching the video a few times and reading a dozen articles with eye-witness accounts the picture got murkier. But let's do a quick recap, to get the fact clear. Rushdie is no ordinary writer, he has been under threat for decades due to a death fatwa issued against him by a religious leader in Iran. He was living in Britain then, and for years under the protectorate of the British secret service. The British government no doubt used him as a pawn in the geo-political cat and mouse with Iran and the EU, but nevertheless protected his life from assailants in Britain and the world at large. Even Rushdie salutes the heroic efforts of security personnel that protected him over the years. Meanwhile, the British foreign office along with concerned citizens and nations successfully pressured Iran to not enforce the Fatwa.

Post the non-enforcement stance taken by Iran, Salman Rushdie began returning to his normal life and eventually moved across the pond to the US. He was even been allowed into India.

But let's go back to the attack now. First question if the attacker wanted to kill Rushdie, why didn't he use a gun? Thank god he didn't use it, but why didn't he? Buying a small caliber weapon is as easy as buying candy in many parts of America, so why didn't the attacker use one? If the attacker was not a 'lone wolf' his handlers would have no trouble getting the attacker a gun. One can easily wonder was the attacker just trying to injure Rushdie.

The Attacker wouldn't have gotten the bounty if Mr Rushdie was merely injured. So the use of the knife was quite ill-thought, especially as there were almost no

security checks at the institute. He could very easily carry a gun inside.

The second question stems from the first, why didn't the policeman on Rushdie's security detail, take preventive disarming actions? Especially when the attacker ran across the hall and climbed the stage to attack Rushdie. The US police system has gained much notoriety for being a trigger-happy force. So why didn't the policeman on duty shoot the assailant? If not on the body, at least on the leg? What happened in Chautauqua Institution in western New York, is a flagrant violation of every security protocol, especially by American standards. Rushdie is a high-profile target who addressed the Uber-liberal democrats, it was only SOP to have some security there.

So now the question is - was this an intentional lapse? Let's move away from Rushdie for a minute now and focus on the US foreign policy agenda. Despite even Henry Kissinger calling Anthony Blinken's foreign policy driving the "US to the brink of war" with "Russia and China", the Biden admin-



BUT WHAT SHOULD WE DO? JOIN THE HATERS AND CELEBRATE THIS ATTACK. DO WE BLAME RUSHDIE FOR WRITING HIS HEART OUT OR EMBRACE RUSHDIE AND SUPPORT HIM AND ADD TO THE IRAN BASHING?

istration has been making all the right moves to antagonise them further and also strengthen their ranks.

This attack on Rushdie may be a coincidence or a mad-hatter conspiracy, but this public stabbing brings Iran back into the news cycle and reinforces the negative public opinion against Iran suddenly. Iran has been US's favourite punch bag for some time now, and with the Salman Rushdie attack, the US foreign policy policymakers can add Iran to the "new axis of evil" — Iran, Russia, and China. The debate is slowly shifting away from Rushdie and more towards Iran bashing. It is regretful that yet again Rushdie has become a pawn in the great power politics.

But what should we do? Join the haters and celebrate this attack. Do we blame Rushdie for writing his heart out or embrace Rushdie and support him and add to the Iran bashing? The answer is not a straight one. A Muslim didn't attack Salman or an Iranian. It was an individual. Let's keep the blame where it belongs and not allow the

machinations of warmongers to piggyback on it.

India and her people, our civilization is a major theme of Rushdie's books. And any readers of Joseph Anton, Rushdie's memoirs will verify his love for this land. Yet we banned his books, canceled his visas, and made him a pariah, at a time he needed his people the most. The armed assailant didn't only attack Rushdie, he attempted to destroy the stories and ethos of the subcontinent that Rushdie writes, about and will fictionalize in the future. And the only way to beat the attacker is to love Rushdie. We need to unban all his books, so the people of our country can make a decision for themselves. We need to battle hate and violence with love, for without it neither Rushdie nor us have any chance. That's why perhaps Allah made the good Muslims live and sent the bad ones to prison.

(The author writes on agriculture and environment, and is a former Director — Policy & Outreach, National Seed Association of India. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

JANMASHTAMI CELEBRATIONS

Sir — Janmashtami 2022 will be marked on the eighth day of the dark fortnight in the month of Bhadrapada (July - August) in India. This year, there has been a lot of confusion about whether Krishna Janmashtami will be celebrated on August 18 or August 19. The Hindu festival of Janmashtami, which is also known as Krishna Janmashtami, Krishnasthami, or Gokulashtami, marks the birth of Lord Krishna.

As per the Vedic Panchang, Ashtami Tithi will begin at 9.21 PM on August 18 and will end at 10.59 PM on August 19, 2022. So, Janmashtami 2022 will be celebrated on both days while the Nishith Puja time will begin at 12.02 am on August 18 and ends at 12.48 PM on the same day. As per Hindu Mythology, Lord Krishna loved curd, white butter, and milk during his childhood days.

Krishna along with his friends used to steal it from the neighbours. The villagers went to his mother to complain about this. She advised villagers to hide the freshly churned Makhan in an earthen pot at some height. However, the idea did not work as Krishna and his friends started making human pyramids to reach the handi. To celebrate Krishna's mischievous tricks, every year on Janmashtami, people organize Dahi Handi and make a human pyramid to break the earthen pot kept at height. The charm of Krishna is forever!

Divyansha Sharma | ujain

AN EGREGIOUS REMISSION

Sir — The remission leading to the premature release of 11 Bilkis Bano case convicts from prison has come in for a lot of flak from people and rightly so. It was apparent that the Gujarat government facilitated remission for political reasons without sparing a thought to what Bilkis Bano underwent and without empathizing with her. The grant of remission sends the wrong message that even gang' rape and mass murder convicts become eligible for

The Prisoners of War



Once again the barbaric brute forces in Kashmir have gunned down a Kashmiri Pandit Sunil Kumar in an apple orchard in the chotigam area, Shopian district of South Kashmir. This dastardly and gruesome killing of an innocent Kashmiri Pandit has shattered the whole KP community. The government has miserably failed to protect the precious lives of Kashmiri Pandits and other non-locals in Kashmir. Since the abrogation of article-370 and 35-A, the situation in Kashmir has turned volatile as the attacks on Hindu minorities are happening day in and day out without any respite. Selective and targeted killings of Hindu minorities and other nonlocals have created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among all Hindu minorities. Thus rightly the PM package migrant employees are protesting for the last 100 days in favor of their one-point demand of relocation outside the valley as they feel very apprehensive about their safety and security in Kashmir. Since the martyrdom of Rahul Bhat, these hapless and unfortunate Kashmiri Pandit package employees are on the roads and are agitating for their survival and existence. It is high time now that the central government must immediately relocate/deploy all PM Package employees to Jammu province to stop any further bloodshed. Is anybody listening is the million-dollar question?

Vivek Koul | New Delhi

leniency at the hands of the state if they belong to the 'right' religion and committed the felonies in 'a certain context'. The gravity of the felonies of rape and murder during the 2002 Gujarat pogrom for which the convicts were sentenced to life imprisonment is incontestable. The horrible nature of the crimes - gang rape of a five-month pregnant woman and killing of her three-year-old daughter were among them - does not bear thinking about. 'The convicts were not certified to have expressed remorse for their heinous crimes.

The way the released lifers were feted was a telling comment on the present sorry state of affairs in India. It rendered Prime Minister Modi's pledge to uphold women's rights and dignity and free the country of misogyny in his Independence Day address to the nation hollow. It made a mockery of the profession of Nari Shakti and Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

G.David Milton | Maruthancode

BAD NEWS FOR INDIAN FOOTBALL

Sir — The suspension of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) by the world governing body FIFA will likely have serious implications on Indian football. The national teams become ineligible to participate in continental tournaments.

The AIFF is in a state of topsy-turvydom due to the mismanagement of its administration after long-serving former chief Praful Patel stayed in office beyond the maximum term of 12 years, without holding fresh elections. This needs to be addressed ed quickly for the AIFF, so that elections can be held immediately and play This is the first time that the AIFF has received suspension by FIFA in its 85-year history. It is unfortunate that soccer turns sombre for Indian football, and let us hope it resurrects itself

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chemai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Every country will try to ensure the best deal possible to cushion high energy prices and India is doing exactly the same.



Foreign Minister —S Jaishankars



Wow. In the raid by the FBI on Mar-a-Lago, they stole my three Passports (one expired), along with everything else. This is an assault on a political opponent at a level never before seen in our country.

Ex US President —Donald Trump

It was my childhood dream to be part of Hindi films.



Actor —Gulshan Devaiah



I am a retired cricketer, who is completely dependent on the pension from the BCCI. My only source of income is from the Board, for which I am really thankful and grateful.

Cricketer —Vinod Kambl

It has been 75 years of independence. We achieved a lot, But there's anger, a question among people that several small nations who attained independence after us, surpassed us...Why did India lag behind?



Delhi CM —Arvind Kejriwal

FIRST COLUMN

EXTERNAL CHALLENGES GROW IN AMRIT KAAL

Foreign policy must evolve to meet economic clouts



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Imran Khan, the ousted Prime Minister of Pakistan, recently praised India's autonomous foreign policy in a political meeting. He complimented India for choosing a path of calibrated diplomacy in the aftermath of the ongoing war in Ukraine. While Khan's praise may not be the most sought after accolade for India's foreign policy strategy, it does reflect the directional shift in our external relations, in the nearly 75 years of being an independent democratic republic.

India's foreign policy stance in the last 75 years has been a matter of careful choices made as result of its colonial past and a cold war era world order cleaved in the middle. India in 1947 was an infant republic, which had almost overnight chosen the path of democracy to govern one of the largest, diverse crowds of citizens around the globe. It meant, laying the foundations of democracy first, thereby bringing in political empowerment, before economic prosperity.

The founding architects of the Indian republic also had socialist bent of mind and believed in the idea of a welfare state. That meant the state would be the biggest job creator and would be present in every domain of public life. This inward focus of the state meant India's foreign policy remained an ambiguous bunch of principles, better left for the most seasoned bureaucrats and statesmen to tackle.



Jawahar Lal Nehru was the longest serving external affairs minister of India, besides being a Prime Minister. All his successors in the next 50 years were in the hot seat of managing external relations for less than four years.

However, this changed in 2014 when the Narendra Modi-led BJP government came to power and an articulate Sushma Swaraj occupied the seat for five years. The change and the willingness to showcase India's diplomatic prowess had started somewhere in the early 2000, when India realised it must have an independent foreign policy.

The 1960s hangover of the nonaligned era, which was the underlying template for India's foreign policy, was slowly beginning to wane. India had chosen nonalignment along with a few other like minded countries as the stated strategy to engage with the external world, which had been split between the US and the USSR blocs.

The neutral stance underscored India's bilateral, and plurilateral engagements on the global stage. It also meant India never tried to engage with its global counterparts beyond a couple of issues (such as Kashmir and relations with its neighbour Pakistan).

India and China had a bitter military faceoff in the 1960s, but it didn't leave a lasting dent in the bilateral relations beyond the decade. In fact, many subsequent leaders since the first faceoff, tried to bunch India China as two Asian powers which could be a formidable force for the rest of the world. An aggressive

China gobbling up islands in the Indian Ocean Region, coercing smaller nations into binding aid for development of infrastructure (Belt and Road Initiative), the growing distance between China and the US and finally the military faceoff between China and India in 2020 in Galwan ensured India's foreign policy architecture has a permanent China docket.

India in 2022 is a nearly \$3 trillion economy and making steady progress towards being the third largest economy in the world by 2030. This economic power means a vociferous say in global affairs and an assured seat on multilateral high tables. India in the 75th year of its Independence has to keep realigning its foreign policy to match the changed status.

(The author is a foreign affairs commentator.)

Wrong to call welfare schemes 'freebies'

State governments must work for the welfare of the poor, for their empowerment and providing them with basic amenities

VANAM JWALA NARASIMHA RAO

Delivering the Independence Day address at the Historical Golkonda Fort in Hyderabad, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR) criticized the Center for insulting States' welfare schemes by labelling them as 'freebies'. He added that public welfare is the foremost responsibility of the government and hence Center's remarks are highly objectionable.

Disagreeing vehemently with the Center's concept of freebies, KCR said that it also amounts to weakening the nation's cooperative federal spirit and running down welfare schemes of States. Centre, which is supposed to fulfill that social responsibility, has done miserably over a period, observed KCR.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent remark on 'revdi culture' perhaps is at the center of CM KCR's observations similar to some of his counterparts in the country. According to Modi, attempts are being made in the country to bring a culture of garnering votes by distributing revdis, a sweet popular in North India, distributed during festivals, which is very dangerous for the development of the country.

Criticizing some opposition parties for engaging in the politics of freebies, the PM said that they are obstacles to India's efforts to become self-reliant while also being a burden on taxpayers. Notwithstanding this, the Independence Day was celebrated across the country with several chief ministers making a slew of welfare scheme announcements and countering Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'revdi culture' remark.

Unfortunately, PM Modi seems to have failed to take into account that social welfare schemes that subsidize the populace are a universal phenomenon now and, in a democracy, these are but natural. For instance, in the USA, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, is the largest federal nutrition assistance program that provides food-purchasing assistance for low and no income people.

Similarly, the Singapore Government provides financial aid to any family making less than \$1,900 a month, besides providing aid in other forms such as making education more affordable, tax exemptions for impoverished families and more affordable housing. Its system of social security is based on enabling self-reliance, supported by strong family and social networks. These are a few examples only. Would these fit into the concept of freebies?

We defined our country as a welfare state, which is a form of government in which the state protects and promotes the economic and social well-being of the citizens, based on the principles of equal opportunity and equitable distribution of wealth. The welfare state is a way of governing in which the state or an established group of social institutions provides basic economic



THE SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PROVIDES FINANCIAL AID TO ANY FAMILY MAKING LESS THAN \$1,900 A MONTH, BESIDES PROVIDING AID IN OTHER FORMS SUCH AS MAKING EDUCATION MORE AFFORDABLE, TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR IMPOVERISHED FAMILIES AND MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

(The author is Chief Public Relations Officer to Chief Minister, Telangana.)



security to its citizens.

By definition, in a welfare state, the government is responsible for the individual and social welfare of its citizens. A fundamental feature of the welfare state is social insurance and social security. This is exactly or perhaps even more as envisaged in the definition of a welfare state. Welfare encompasses those government programs that provide benefits and economic assistance to no or low-income people living in Telangana.

Welfare programs of Government of Telangana aims to improve the quality of life and living standards of the poor and underprivileged. People are able to stand on their own feet with an assured monthly or annual income making them prosperous. KCR's preference is social insurance. It may sound a bit philosophical, but the schemes conceived and being implemented by the KCR Government takes care of every stage of a human being's life true to the saying caring from 'cradle to grave'.

In the letter and spirit of the welfare state, the Telangana Government implements a number of welfare programs. To name a few identified priority areas of welfare of Telangana Government, there is Kalyan Laxmi, Shaadi Mubarak, Aasara pensions, Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bhima, Sheep distribution, Fish breeding, Free Double bedroom houses, Residential school education, Dalit Bandhu, etc.

Despite spending huge amounts on these schemes, Telangana has emerged financially strong in the country. The Government's top priority has been to extend a real helping hand to the needy, helpless and poorest of the poor strata and

accordingly, welfare programs were conceived and implemented. The Aasara Pensions, aimed at providing security to life, are being given to every poverty-stricken individual, identifying them either as old or widow or single woman or a beedi worker or a handloom worker or an old age artist or a filarial affected person or AIDS patient or for that matter any one below the poverty line.

This social security pension scheme is now extended to 10 lakh new beneficiaries from August 15 for a total of 46 lakh beneficiaries. Should this be called a freebie or a social security measure?

The large-scale distribution of sheep substantially enhanced the livestock wealth of Golla and Kurumas communities. The investment support scheme for agriculture, the Rythu Bandhu meant for providing financial assistance to farmer towards crop investment enthused the hearts of farmers. These are not freebies but welfare aimed at social security for the poor farmer.

The Dalit Bandhu Scheme, yet another welfare measure, is bound to change the life and financial status of Dalits in Telangana forever. In the long run, it will become a model policy for other states to emulate. It will herald a sea change in the lives of Dalits and will become torchbearer for Dalits elsewhere in the country.

The Telangana Dalit Bandhu Scheme would help Dalits to define their own development and become partners in the development. This is certainly not a freebie but by all means a social security measure.

Empowerment is the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities, enabling them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their own authority. It is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights.

CM KCR is laying a strong foundation for future generations prosperity and making all sections of the society become economically self-reliant. Why call them freebies?

In a democratic society like India, people have several hopes, purposes, aspirations, ambitions, desires, requirements, passions, problems, needs and so on. People from time to time elect the party, which in their view will fulfill their needs. The contesting parties make promises in the form of election manifestos keeping in view the people's welfare in focus.

Voters consider them and choose a particular party and elect it to power. The Government thus elected by them to keep their promises has to initiate and implement a number of welfare programs and they cannot be dubbed as freebies. Unfortunately, most of the parties after coming to power fail to keep up their promises. In the case of KCR, he has not only fulfilled all the promises and even gone beyond though not mentioned in the election manifesto.

CM KCR firmly believes that mere growth has no meaning and even legitimacy, if the deprived sections of the society are left behind. Inclusive growth should not only ensure a broad flow of benefits and economic opportunities, but also encompass empowerment and participation. And hence it's all public welfare, please don't call them freebies, Modiji.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

TODAY DELHI'S SHAMELESS CM IS COMPLETELY EXPOSED. HE SENT A LETTER ASKING FOR FLATS IN BAKKARWAL FOR ROHINGYAS & IS NOW DOING GUTTER LEVEL POLITICS. —BJP MP GAUTAM GAMBHIR



THE CENTRE WAS TELLING THIS NEWS AS ITS ACHIEVEMENT IN THE MORNING IT IS NOW TRYING TO LAY THE BLAME ON THE DELHI GOVERNMENT. —DY CM DELHI MANISH SISODIA

How to promote information processing by students

The 5 strategies for better student engagement are - visuals, simple language, procedures, analogies, and organised content

Effective student engagement and classroom management are two important pedagogical strategies that teachers learn about in teacher education programmes. With technological advances, there are innumerable new ways of keeping students engaged.

By sticking to basics, five fundamental strategies are seen that reduce the sensory and cognitive loads on students to promote better processing of instructions and information. Any teacher can use these strategies to retain the attention of students.

According to the Information Processing Theory, during the learning experience in the classroom, first, students receive information through their senses by listening, seeing



RADHIKA ZAHEDI

(The author is school Director, The Green Acres Academy.)

information visually on the screen or board or through the teachers' gestures and demonstrations and when hands-on experiences are used through other senses.

Secondly, all this information is being processed mentally by students: What does this word mean? What should I do next? What should I remember? How do these items connect? Finally, when students have processed and made sense of the information, with repeated recall and practice, some of it may get stored in the long-term memory.

Thus, three aspects are key to student attention; students first receive information through their senses; if there is too much sensory information coming in at the same time, some of it may be lost because it is too much for

the brain to attend to at the same time; students then process this information taken in through the senses using the short-term memory or working memory in their brains.

Students make sense of the information by decode it, make connections, decide what is important, etc. Here too, there is a limit to how much information can be processed at one time, which is called cognitive load. Both sensory and cognitive overload can have negative effects on students' attention and engagement.

Therefore, teachers should recognise that sensory and cognitive overload is undesirable and should incorporate strategies that reduce the load on students.

Broadly, there could be five strategies that can reduce sensory and cognitive overload for students.

Visuals: Never underestimate the power of a good visual to anchor classroom instruction such as a digital presentation, a chart or well-structured board work. Visuals that organise the most important instructions or information can reduce cognitive load on the brain by making it available for students instead of requiring them to hold all of it in their minds, i.e., use their working memory. Reading about design principles beyond just the educational field - for example gestalt principles, colour, and sizing - can be very helpful in creating visual aids that promote student engagement.

Simple and Concise Language: Planning instructions and the specific language can reduce

cognitive load for students. This ensures that student attention is focused on the learning instead of all of it being exhausted on trying to understand complicated instructions. Teachers should keep their sentences simple and concise when giving out instructions and avoid sharing too many instructions in one go. Thinking about which specific terms you will use beforehand and using the same terms consistently help reduce cognitive load.

Routines and procedures: Having regularly used routines or 'classroom protocols' in place of things like getting into groups, taking resources out, doing classwork, etc., is another teacher strategy for reducing cognitive load. Teachers can get students to understand what needs to be done just by using a single sentence or routine name. This means that students are listening to fewer instructions and using less cognitive load to understand the instructions leaving more for attending to the learning that is happening.

Analogies: Using analogies to explain new content aids information processing because students can attach the explanation to a model that they are familiar with instead of trying to make a sense of something that is completely new. Using analogies or even prior knowledge to make connections to something that students already know leads to greater storage of information in the brain with less cognitive load.

Organising content: The way we organise information can impact cognitive load and therefore engagement. Chunking content into logically arranged sections when presenting with clear titles is much better for cognitive processing than presenting it as one giant paragraph. This can be further extended by providing students with graphic organisers to help organise and process the content.

The strategies listed above are all focused on reducing sensory and cognitive load to aid attention and engagement. There are many other great teacher strategies that increase student attention by using emotional engagement strategies like using stories as a hook, asking questions to keep students actively engaged, providing opportunities for students to work with peers and aligning content to areas of interest for students.

Zelenskyy to host Lviv talks with UN chief, Erdogan

AP ■ LVIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is due to host the UN chief and Turkey's leader Thursday for talks on the recent deal to resume Ukraine's grain exports, the volatile situation at a Russian-occupied nuclear power plant and efforts to help end the nearly six-month-old war.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres arrived Wednesday in Lviv, near Ukraine's border with Poland, where he will meet Zelenskyy and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

UN deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said that among other issues, Guterres will discuss "his overall efforts to do what he can to essentially lower the temperature as much as possible with the various authorities."

Last month, Turkey and the UN helped broker an agreement clearing the way for Ukraine to export 22 million tons of corn and other grain stuck in its Black Sea ports since Russia invaded February 24.

A separate memorandum between Russia and the UN aimed to clear roadblocks to shipments of Russian food and fertilizer to world markets.

The war and the blocked exports significantly exacerbated the global food crisis because Ukraine and Russia are major suppliers.

Grain prices peaked after Russia's invasion, and while some have since returned to prewar levels, they remain significantly higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Developing countries have been hit particularly hard by supply shortages and high prices. Even though ships are now leaving Russia and Ukraine, the food crisis hasn't ended.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters this week that Guterres' trip to Ukraine will allow him "to see first-hand the results of an initiative ... that is so critically important to hundreds of millions of people."

Dujarric added that he expects "the need for a political solution" to the war to be raised in Thursday's talks.

He said the three leaders



will also discuss the situation at the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine, Europe's largest, which Moscow and Kyiv have accused each other of shelling.

In his nightly video address Wednesday, Zelenskyy reaffirmed his demand for the Russian military to leave the plant, emphasizing that "only absolute transparency and control of the situation at and around the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant for the Ukrainian state, for the international community, and for the IAEA can guarantee a gradual return to normal nuclear safety." The International Atomic Energy Agency is a UN agency.

Russia has rejected the demand.

Erdogan's office has confirmed that he would discuss the grain deal during the talks as well as ways to end the war through diplomatic means.

Earlier this month, the Turkish leader met on the same issues with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In March, Turkey hosted a round of talks between Russian

and Ukrainian negotiators, who discussed a possible deal to end the hostilities. The talks fell apart after the meeting in Istanbul, with both sides blaming each other.

Erdogan has engaged in a delicate balancing act, maintaining good relations with both Russia and Ukraine. Turkey has provided Ukraine with drones, which played a significant role in deterring a Russian advance early in the conflict, but it has refrained from joining Western sanctions against Russia over the war.

Facing a major economic crisis with official inflation near 80 per cent, Turkey increasingly relies on Russia for trade and tourism. Russian gas covers 45 per cent of Turkish energy needs, and Russia's atomic agency is building Turkey's first nuclear power plant.

During their meeting in Sochi this month, Putin and Erdogan agreed to bolster energy, financial and other ties between their countries, raising concerns in the West that Ankara could help Moscow bypass the US and European Union sanctions.

Ship that Ukraine alleges has stolen grain likely off Syria

AP ■ DUBAI

A Russian cargo ship that Ukraine alleges holds stolen grain from territory seized by Moscow appears to have reached the Syrian port of Tartus, according to satellite images analysed Thursday by The Associated Press. The arrival of the SV Konstantin marks just the latest shipment of Ukrainian grain — whether legally purchased or allegedly looted — to reach Syria.

Another, the Razoni, recently docked full of legally purchased Ukrainian corn as part of a United Nations-led effort to get the country's food out of the war zone to a hungry world.

The Konstantin's arrival also shows the level Damascus has relied on Russia to keep its embattled President Bashar Assad in power amid his own nation's yearslong war, particularly at this Mediterranean Sea port that hosts Russian warships and has crucial Russian-run grain silos.

The Konstantin travelled from the Russian-occupied Crimean Peninsula in the Black Sea from around July 6, accord-



ing to ship-tracking data from MarineTraffic.Com analyzed by the AP.

The ship had loaded Ukrainian grain at Sevastopol, said Ihor Ostash, Ukraine's ambassador to Lebanon, during an interview with Espresso TV.

That port city in Crimea has seen Russian forces previously bring grain by truck from occupied territories, Ukrainian officials say.

The Konstantin travelled through the Bosphorus and reached the Turkish city of Izmir on the Aegean Sea.

The ship then headed into the Mediterranean along the coast of Cyprus before switching off its Automatic Identification

System tracker on Sunday.

Ships are supposed to keep their AIS trackers on, but vessels wanting to hide their movements often turn theirs off.

Those heading to Syrian ports routinely do so.

Satellite images from Planet Labs PBC analysed by the AP show the Konstantin off the coast of Tartus on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The vessel's length, width and appearance resembles previous Planet Labs images of the ship taken at a time corresponding to when its AIS tracker was still on north of Cyprus.

Yoruk Isik, a non-resident scholar at the Washington-based Middle East Institute who mon-

itors shipping through the Bosphorus, has been tracking the Konstantin. He and other open-source intelligence analysts first said they believed the vessel to be off Tartus as well, based on the satellite photos.

Officials at Tartus port could not be reached for comment. Syria's mission to the United Nations did not respond to a request for comment.

Syria remains sanctioned by the West over killing and abuses of civilians during the civil war, though food supplies have been exempted by the West. Already in May, satellite images showed the Russian-flagged Matros Poznyach at docksides in Latakia, Syria.

Ukraine said the ship had 27,000 tonnes of grain Russia stolen from it and initially tried to sell to Egypt, which refused to take the cargo.

Tartus, on the Mediterranean Sea, lies about 320 kilometers northwest of Syria's capital, Damascus. Russia has a Soviet-era naval base there, the only such facility outside the former Soviet Union.

In 2017, Moscow struck a deal with Assad's government to extend its lease on Tartus for 49 years. The agreement allows Russia to keep up to 11 warships there, including nuclear-powered ones. Satellite photos this week showed at least two Russian submarines and other warships at the port.

Russian firm Stroytransgaz, owned by billionaire oligarch Gennady Timchenko through his investment firm Volga Group, runs the port.

Timchenko is a billionaire close to Russian President Vladimir Putin sanctioned by the European Union and the U.S. Stroytransgaz did not respond to a request for comment.



Russia deploys hypersonic missiles to its Baltic exclave

AP ■ MOSCOW

The Russian military said Thursday that it has deployed warplanes armed with state-of-the-art hypersonic missiles to the country's Kaliningrad region, a move that comes amid soaring tensions with the West over Moscow's action in Ukraine.

Russia's Defense Ministry said three MiG-31 fighters with Kinzhal hypersonic missiles arrived at the Chkalovsk airbase in the Baltic Sea enclave as part of "additional measures of strategic deterrence."

The ministry said the warplanes will be put on round-the-clock alert.

A video released by the Defense Ministry showed the fighters arriving at the base but not carrying the missiles, which were apparently delivered separately.

The deployment of Kinzhal missiles to Kaliningrad as Russia's campaign in Ukraine nears

the sixth-month mark appeared intended to showcase the Russian military's capability to threaten NATO assets.

The region borders NATO members Poland and Lithuania.

Moscow has strongly criticised the deliveries of Western weapons to Ukraine, accusing the U.S. And its allies of fuelling the conflict.

The Russian military says the Kinzhal has a range of up to 2,000 kilometers and flies at 10 times the speed of sound, making it hard to intercept.

Russia has used the weapon to strike several targets in Ukraine.

Kaliningrad's location has put it in the forefront of Moscow's efforts to counter what it described as NATO's hostile policies.

The Kremlin has methodically bolstered its military forces there, arming them with state-of-the-art weapons, including precision-guided Iskander missiles and an array of air defense systems.

Russian spacewalk cut short by bad battery



AP ■ CAPE CANAVERAL (US)

A Russian spacewalker had to rush back inside the International Space Station on Wednesday when the battery voltage in his spacesuit suddenly dropped.

Russian Mission Control ordered Oleg Artemyev, the station commander, to quickly return to the airlock so he could hook his suit to station power. The hatch remained open as his spacewalking partner, Denis Matveev, tidied up outside.

NASA said neither man was ever in any danger. Matveev, in fact, remained outside for another hour or so, before he, too, was ordered to wrap it up. Although Matveev's suit was fine, Russian Mission Control cut the spacewalk short since flight rules insist on the buddy system.

The cosmonauts managed to install cameras on the European Space Agency's new robot arm before the trouble cropped up, barely two hours into a planned 6 1/2-hour spacewalk.

"You know, the start was so excellent," Matveev said as he made his way back inside, with some of the robot arm installation work left undone.

The 36-foot (11-meter) robot arm arrived at the space station last summer aboard a Russian lab.



UJVN Limited
H.O.: "UJVNAL", Mahatma Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephone: 0135-2763809 & Fax: 0135-2763598
CIN No U40101UR2001SGC025866
Website: www.ujvn.com

फॉन: 536

Tender Notice

दिनांक: 18.08.2022

Office of the (Executive Engineer, Generation, Dharasu Power House, Chinyalisaur), invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below :

Tender No.09/EE (GEN)/MB-II/2022-23

Name of work/supply/services: Maintenance of Garden and operation of canteen at Dharasu power house for the year 2022-23.

Estimated cost : Rs. 929644/-

Date of availability of bid document on website : 21.08.2022

Last date for submission of tender : 16.09.2022 upto 15:30 Hrs

For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website "www.ujvn.com"

Executive Engineer (Generation)

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual General Body Meeting of Manav Kalyan Credit Co-Operative Society Limited will be held on 11th September, 2022 on 2.30 P.M. at Daara Regency, A-47, Guru Nanak Pura, Vikas Marg, Near Nirman Vihar Metro Station, Delhi-110092 to transact the following business: -

1. For consideration of the audited statement of accounts for financial year 2021-22.
2. For consideration of the audit report and annual report for financial year 2021-22.
3. For consideration of audit compliance report for financial year 2021-22.
4. For approval of the annual budget.
5. For approval of the long-term perspective plan and the annual operational plan
6. Any other matter with the permission of the chair.

For Manav Kalyan Credit Co-Operative Society Ltd. Place: Delhi, (President/ Chairman)
Date: 16th August, 2022



BOMBAY MERCANTILE CO-OPERATIVE BANK LIMITED
(Estd:1939) (Multi State Scheduled Bank)
Regd Head Office : Zain G. Rangoonwala Building, 78, Mohammed Ali Road, Mumbai - 400 003.
Tel : 022-23425961/62/63/64, 23449586,62552800 For Account Balance Enquiry Missed Call : 9512004406

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Notice is hereby given that the 85th Annual General Meeting of the Members [Shareholders] of **BOMBAY MERCANTILE CO-OPERATIVE BANK LIMITED** will be held on **Friday, September 02, 2022 at 10.30 a.m. at HAJ COMMITTEE OF INDIA, Baitul Hujjaj [Haj House], 2nd Floor, 7 - A, M.R.A. Marg [Palton Road], Mumbai – 400 001** to transact the following business :

1. To confirm the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 24th September, 2021.
2. To consider and adopt the Report of the Board of Directors and the Audited Balance Sheet, Profit & Loss Account and Statutory Auditor's Report for the year ended as on 31st March, 2022.
3. To appropriate Net Profit as recommended by the Board of Directors for the year ended 31st March, 2022.
4. To approve the appointment of Auditors for the Bank for the year 2022-2023 and fix their remuneration.
5. To consider the Annual Budget of the Bank for the year 2022-2023.
6. To approve Bye-Law Nos.3[5](a), 3[5](b), 44[4] & delete Bye-Law 3[8](1) as per Annexure attached.
7. To grant Leave of Absence to the Members of the Bank who have not attended this 85th Annual General Meeting.
8. Any other issue / business with the permission of the Chair.

By Order of the Board of Directors

Sd/-

DR. M. SHAH ALAM KHAN

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Date : August 18, 2022

Place: Mumbai.

Note:

- If there is no quorum within half an hour after the appointed time, the Meeting shall stand adjourned to 11.00 a.m. on the same day and the Agenda of the Original Meeting shall be transacted at the said venue, irrespective of the rule of quorum, in terms of Bye-Law No.39.
- Any Member desiring information pertaining to Accounts, is requested to write to the Bank, at-least six days in advance of the date of the Annual General Meeting.
- Copies of the Annual Report are available at the Head Office and the Branches of the Bank.

UN investigator: Contemporary slavery extensive around globe

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

A UN investigator says contemporary forms of slavery are widely practiced around the world, including forced labor for China's Uyghur minority, bonded labour for the lowest caste Dalits in South Asia, and domestic servitude in Gulf countries, Brazil and Colombia.

Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur Tomoya Obokata adds that traditional enslavement, especially of minorities, is found in Mauritania, Mali and Niger in Africa's Sahel region.

He said in a report to the UN General Assembly circulated Wednesday that child labour — another contemporary form of slavery — exists in all regions of the world, including its worst forms. "In Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East, the Americas and Europe, between 4 and 6 percent of children are said to be in child labour, and the percentage is much higher in Africa (21.6 per cent), with the highest rate in sub-Saharan Africa (23.9 per cent)," he said.



His conclusion about Uyghurs in China's northwestern province of Xinjiang follows a US ban imposed last December on imports from the region unless businesses can prove items are made without forced labour. There have been many claims China engages in systemic and widespread abuse of ethnic and religious minorities in its western region.

China's Foreign Ministry sharply criticized that finding by Obokata, who is a Japanese scholar and professor of international law and human rights at Keele University in England.

In the report, Obokata said

that based on an independent assessment of available information from many sources, including victims and government accounts, he "regards it as reasonable to conclude that forced labor among Uyghur, Kazakh and other ethnic minorities in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing has been occurring in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China."

He cited two systems used by China — the detention of minorities for vocational skills education and training followed by work placement, and a poverty alleviation through labour

program in which surplus rural labourers are transferred to other work. He said labour transfer is also practiced in Tibet where farmers, herders and other rural workers are transferred into low-skilled and low-paid employment.

While these programs may create jobs and income as the government claims, Obokata said in many cases the work is involuntary and workers are subject to excessive surveillance, abusive living and working conditions, restricted movements, threats, physical or sexual violence, and other inhuman or degrading treatment.

"Some instances may amount to enslavement as a crime against humanity, meriting a further independent analysis," he said. China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin accused Obokata of choosing "to believe in lies and disinformation about Xinjiang spread by the US and some other Western countries and anti-China forces."

He also accused Obokata of

China, Japan officials meet amid Taiwan tensions

AP ■ BEIJING

Chinese and Japanese officials have met in northern China amid renewed tensions over Beijing's military threats against Taiwan and after Tokyo protested China's firing of missiles into Japan's exclusive economic zone during recent military drills.

The meeting Wednesday between senior foreign affairs advisor Yang Jiechi and the head of Japan's National Security Secretariat, Akiba Takeo, followed China's cancellation of a meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries after Japan signed on to a statement from the Group of Seven industrialized countries criticizing China's threatening war games surrounding Taiwan earlier this month.

Japan issued diplomatic protests over China's firing of missiles into its exclusive economic zone during the drills, which saw Chinese warplanes and navy ships cross the middle zone of the Taiwan Strait that has long been a buffer between the sides.

China claims Taiwan as its own territory, to be annexed by force if necessary. The former Japanese colony has been under Chinese military threat since Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government fled to the island in 1949 as Mao Zedong's Communist Party seized control of the Chinese mainland.

In his comments to Takeo, Yang said "the Taiwan question bears on the political foundation of China-Japan relations and the basic trust and good faith between the two countries," China's official Xinhua News Agency reported Thursday.

"Japan should ... Shape up a right perception of China, pursue a positive, pragmatic and rational China policy, and uphold the right direction of peaceful development," Xinhua quoted Yang as saying.

China's nearly two weeks of military exercises surrounding Taiwan followed US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to



the island in defiance of Beijing's threats.

China announced further drills in response to the visit by another Congressional delegation this week, but has not said when or where they will take place.

The exercises appear to have had little impact among Taiwan's more than 23 million people, who overwhelmingly favor the status quo of de facto independence while maintaining robust economic ties with China.

Takeo met earlier this month with US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan in Washington, during which they "reiterated the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and reinforced their resolve to stand united against Russia's unjust and unprovoked war on Ukraine and united in support of the Ukrainian people," the State Department said in a news release.

China's threats against Taiwan have been likened to Russia's invasion of its neighbor. Shortly before Moscow dispatched troops in February, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping met in Beijing, where they declared their relationship had "no limits" and Russia supported China's claim to Taiwan.

Many Chinese also resent Japan over its brutal invasion and occupation of parts of the country during the 1930s and 1940s, sentiments kept alive by Communist Party propaganda.

In an incident reported widely on social media, a Chinese woman wearing a traditional Japanese kimono dress was recently detained by police in the eastern city of Hangzhou for allegedly creating a disturbance. She was reportedly released without charge after writing an apology.

US to hold trade talks with Taiwan in new show of support

AP ■ BEIJING

The US government plans talks with Taiwan on a wide-ranging trade treaty in a sign of support for the self-ruled island democracy claimed by China's ruling Communist Party as part of its territory.

The announcement on Thursday comes after Beijing held military drills that included firing missiles into the sea to intimidate Taiwan following this month's visit by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The US Trade Representative's office made no mention of tension with Beijing but said the "formal negotiations" were meant to enhance trade and regulatory cooperation, which would entail closer official interaction.

President Joe Biden's coordinator for the Indo-Pacific region, Kurt Campbell, told reporters last week that trade talks would be part of efforts to "deepen our ties with Taiwan," though he said US policy wasn't changing.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war. The island never has been part of the People's Republic of China, but the Communist Party says it is obliged to united politically with the mainland, by force if necessary.

The United States has no official relations with Taiwan but maintains extensive ties through its unofficial embassy, the American Institute in Taiwan.

Chinese President Xi Jinping's government says official contact with Taiwan such as Pelosi's August 2 one-day



visit might embolden the island to try to make its decade-old de facto independence permanent, a step Beijing says would lead to war.

Washington says it takes no position on the status of China and Taiwan but wants their dispute settled peacefully. The US government is obligated by federal law to see that the island has the means to defend itself.

"We will continue to take calm and resolute steps to uphold peace and stability in the face of Beijing's ongoing efforts to undermine it, and to support Taiwan," Campbell said during a conference call last Friday.

A second group of US lawmakers led by Sen. Ed Markey, a Democrat from Massachusetts, arrived on Taiwan on Sunday and met with President Tsai Ing-wen. Beijing announced a second round of military drills following their arrival.

Beijing had no immediate reaction to the trade talks announcement.

The talks also will cover agriculture, labor, the environment, digital technology, the status of state-owned enterprises and "non-market policies," the USTR said.

It gave no indication which officials would be involved but said talks would be held under the auspices of the American Institute and Taiwan's informal embassy, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States.

US-Chinese relations are their lowest level in decades amid disputes about security, technology, Beijing's treatment of Muslim minorities and its crackdown in Hong Kong.

They are locked in a 3-year-old tariff war over disputes in many of the areas mentioned in Thursday's announcement. They include China's support for government companies that dominate many of its industries and complaints Beijing steals foreign technology and hampers foreign competitors in an array of fields in violation of its market-opening commitments.

Then-President Donald Trump raised tariffs on Chinese goods in 2019 in response to complaints its technology development tactics violate its free-trade commitments and threaten US industrial leadership. President Joe Biden has left most of those tariff hikes in place.

Taiwan, with 24 million people, is the ninth-largest US trading partner and the 10th-largest US export market, according to the USTR. The State Department describes it as a "key US partner in the Indo-Pacific."

Taiwan is the main global source of processor chips for smartphones, medical devices, autos and home appliances, as well as industrial components used by factories in China and other Asian countries.



Hong Kong political activists plead guilty amid crackdown

AP ■ HONG KONG

Authorities in Hong Kong say 29 out of 47 pro-democracy activists charged with "conspiracy to commit subversion" under a tough National Security Law entered guilty pleas on Thursday, as the Beijing government seeks to further silence opposition voices in the regional financial hub.

Thursday's court proceedings came amid a sweeping campaign against those speaking out against demands for absolute loyalty to China's ruling Communist Party.

The 47 democracy activists, aged 23 to 64, were charged with conspiracy to commit subversion under the Beijing-imposed National Security Law and detained last year over their involvement in an unofficial primary election in 2020 that authorities said was a plot to paralyse Hong Kong's government. The primary showed strong support for candidates willing to challenge the Beijing-backed local government.

Among those making guilty pleas were well-known political activists including Joshua Wong and Benny Tai, Hong Kong media said.

Media reporting restrictions were lifted for the cases, which will start next month at Hong Kong's high court.

Hong Kong was handed over from British to Chinese rule in 1997 with a pledge that it would retain its own legal, economic and social systems for 50 years.

Despite the steady deterioration of those special rights promised to the territory under a "one country, two systems" framework, it retains the system of British common law, independent from Communist Party dictates that determine legal outcomes on the mainland.

During Thursday's hearing, Wong, who remains in detention, said the primary election allowed Hong Kongers to express their political will.

"Our vote is our voice, being heard in the global community," Wong said.

Media to ask judge to release Trump search warrant affidavit

AP ■ WEST PALM BEACH (US)

Attorneys for many of the nation's largest media companies will try to persuade a federal magistrate judge on Thursday afternoon to make public the affidavit supporting the warrant that allowed FBI agents to search former President Donald Trump's Florida estate last week.

The Associated Press, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, the broadcast TV networks, CNN and others want US Magistrate Judge Bruce E. Reinhart to release the affidavit over the objection of the US Justice Department, which says its investigation of Trump's handling of "highly classified material" would be compromised.

The media companies argue the affidavit's release would help the public determine if the Justice Department had legitimate reasons for the search or if it was part of a Biden administration vendetta against Trump, as the former president and his backers contend.

Trump, in a Truth Social post last week, called for the release of the unredacted affidavit in the interest of transparency.

"The matter is one of utmost public interest, involving the actions of current and former government officials," wrote attorney Carol Jean LoCiero, who is representing the Times and others.

"President Trump decried the search as an assault that could only take place in Third World Countries," asserted agents even broke into my safe, and otherwise challenged the validity of the search."

Justice Department attorneys argued in a court filing that its investigation into Trump's handling of "highly classified material" is ongoing and that the document contains sensitive information about witnesses.

The filing by Juan Antonio Gonzalez, the U.S. Attorney in Miami, and Jay Bratt, a top Justice Department national security official, says making the affidavit public would "cause significant and irreparable damage to this



ongoing criminal investigation."

"If disclosed, the affidavit would serve as a roadmap to the government's ongoing investigation, providing specific details about its direction and likely course, in a manner that is highly likely to compromise future investigative steps," they wrote.

As of Wednesday afternoon, Trump's attorneys had not indicated on the court's docket that they plan to take part in the hearing.

FBI agents searched Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate on August 8, removing 11 sets of classified documents, with some not only marked top secret but also "sensitive compartmented information," according to a receipt of what was taken that was released on Friday.

That is a special category meant to protect the nation's most important secrets that if revealed publicly could cause "exceptionally grave" damage to US interests.

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

Mali accuses France of colluding with Islamic extremists

AP ■ BAMAKO (MALI)

Mali's foreign minister is accusing France of having colluded with the same Islamic extremists that it spent nearly a decade fighting until its troops departed earlier this week, an allegation sharply denied by the French government.

The inflammatory letter sent to the president of the UN Security Council is the latest effort to undermine support for France, Mali's former coloniser, at a time when some fear the French military departure could pave the way for militants to intensify their attacks.

The last French troops from Operation Barkhane left a Mali on Monday after relations sharply deteriorated with the Malian junta leader who seized power two years ago.

"The government of Mali has several pieces of evidence that these flagrant violations of Malian airspace have been used by France to gather intelligence for terrorist groups operating in the Sahel and to drop arms and ammunition to them," Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop wrote in his letter to the UN.

Mali's government asked the UN to "work to ensure that the French Republic immediately ceases its acts of aggression against Mali."

The French Embassy in Mali vigorously denied the alle-

gations in a tweet posted on Wednesday.

"France has obviously never supported, directly or indirectly, these terrorist groups, which remain its designated enemies around the planet," the embassy tweeted.

The French military declined to comment on the Malian foreign minister's letter, calling it "a diplomatic and political issue."

In 2013, France led a military operation to oust Islamic extremists from the major towns across northern Mali where the militants had seized power and begun imposing harsh penalties on civilians who violated their strict interpretation of Islamic law known as Shariah.

When French troops liberated the northern towns, they were welcomed by many Malians waving hand-sewn French flags.

The extremists, though, regrouped in surrounding desert areas and continued carrying out attacks against the Malian military and UN peacekeepers trying to stabilise the country.

The extremists' violence has increased and spread further south near the capital city. Frustration at the attacks helped fuel support for the coup leader who overthrew Mali's democratically elected president two years ago.

Rushdie attacker 'surprised' the author survived

AP ■ MAYVILLE (US)

The man charged with stabbing Salman Rushdie on a lecture stage in western New York said in an interview that he was surprised to learn the accomplished author had survived the attack.

Speaking to the New York Post from jail, Hadi Matar said he decided to see Rushdie at the Chautauqua Institution after he saw a tweet last winter about the writer's planned appearance.

"I don't like the person. I don't

think he's a very good person," Matar told the newspaper. "He's someone who attacked Islam. He attacked their beliefs, the belief systems."

Matar, 24, said he considered late Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini "a great person" but wouldn't say whether he was following a fatwa, or edict, issued by Khomeini in Iran in 1989 that called for Rushdie's death after the author published "The Satanic Verses."

Iran has denied involvement in the attack. Matar, who lives in Fairview, New Jersey, said he hadn't



had any contact with Iran's Revolutionary Guard. He told the Post he had only read "a couple pages" of "The Satanic Verses."

Rushdie, 75, suffered a damaged liver and severed nerves in an arm and an eye, according to his agent, in the attack Friday. His agent, Andrew Wylie, said his condition has improved and he is on the road to recovery.

Matar, who is charged with attempted murder and assault, told the Post he took a bus to Buffalo the day before the attack and then took a Lyft

UK PM race: Truss holds lead but voters still prefer Boris

PTI ■ LONDON

A new survey on Thursday confirmed a 32-point lead of Foreign Secretary Liz Truss over former Chancellor Rishi Sunak in the Conservative Party leadership race, but also showed a strong preference among Tory members for outgoing Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The YouGov survey for 'Sky News' suggests 66 per cent of members are in favour of voting for Truss and 34 per cent back the British Indian ex-minister, once those Tory members who do not know or will not vote are excluded.

The survey also shows a majority in favour of ousted leader Boris Johnson, with 55 per cent saying that Tory MPs were wrong to effectively force him to resign and 40 per cent saying they were right.

"The poll makes clear that the incumbent Prime Minister



is still held in high affection among Tory members and any successor could be unfavourably compared to him by Tory members," Sky News said in its poll analysis.

If Johnson was still in the contest alongside Sunak and Truss, 46 per cent say they would vote for the incumbent and only 24 per cent for Truss and 23 per cent for Sunak.

Similarly, 44 per cent say

that Johnson would make the best Prime Minister, 24 per cent favouring Truss and 23 per cent for Sunak.

Almost double the number of Tory members feel Johnson is the one who could beat Opposition Labour Leader Keir Starmer in a general election.

The latest survey, covering 1,089 Conservative Party members who hold a vote in the leadership election, was conducted between August 12 and 17.

It comes on the back of a separate Conservative Home survey on Wednesday, which also gave Truss a 32-point lead in the race.

The YouGov survey shows the contest has tightened only very slightly since its last similar poll of members over two weeks ago, when Truss had a 38-point lead, indicating that the debates and hustings are not injecting much-needed momentum for the Sunak camp.

'Death toll in Afghan capital mosque bombing now 21'

AP ■ KABUL

A bombing at a mosque in the Afghan capital of Kabul during evening prayers killed at least 21 people, including a prominent cleric, and wounded at least 33, eyewitnesses and police said Thursday.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack Wednesday night, the latest to strike the country in the year since the Taliban seized power. Several children were reported to be among the wounded.

The Islamic State group's local affiliate has stepped up attacks targeting the Taliban and civilians since the former insurgents' takeover last August as US and NATO troops were in the final stages of their withdrawal from the country. Last week, the IS claimed responsibility for killing a prominent Taliban cleric at his religious center in Kabul.

Khalid Zadran, the spokesman for Kabul's police chief, gave the figures to The Associated Press for the bombing at the Sunni mosque.

According to the eyewitness, a resident of the city's Kher Khanna neighborhood where the Siddiquiya Mosque was targeted, the explosion



was carried out by a suicide bomber. The slain cleric was Mullah Amir Mohammad Kabuli, the eyewitness said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid also condemned the explosion and vowed that the "perpetrators of such crimes will soon be brought to justice and will be punished."

There were fears the casualty numbers could rise further. On Thursday morning, one witness to the blast who gave his name as Qyaamuddin told the AP he believed as many as 25 people may have been killed in the blast.

Telecom Min asks telcos to gear up for 5G launch

New Delhi: Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday asked telecom service providers to gear up for 5G launch, post the issuance of spectrum allocation letters.

In a first, the Department of Telecom (DoT) has issued spectrum assignment letters on the same day the successful bidders of radio waves made upfront payments.

"5G Update:Spectrum assignment letter issued. Requesting TSPs to prepare for 5G launch," Vaishnaw wrote on a social media platform.

The DoT has received payment of around ₹17,876 crore from service providers— Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio, Adani Data Networks and Vodafone Idea for spectrum they won in a recent auction.

The country's biggest ever auction of telecom spectrum received a record ₹1.5 lakh crore worth of bids, with Mukesh Ambani's Jio cornering nearly half of all the airwaves sold with a ₹87,946.93 crore bid. Bharti Enterprises founder and chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal said that his company Bharti Airtel received a spectrum allocation letter within a few hours of making upfront payment to the DoT.

"In my over 30 years of first-hand experience with DoT, this is a first! Business as it should be. Leadership at work-Right at the top and at the helm of telecom. What a



Change ! Change that can transform this nation – power its dreams to be a developed nation," Mittal said.

Airtel acquired 19,867.8 MHz spectrum by securing a pan-India footprint of 3.5 GHz and 26 GHz bands and selected purchase of radio waves in low and mid-band spectrum for ₹43,039.63 crore.

"Airtel paid ₹8,312.4 crore towards spectrum dues and was provided the allocation letter for the designated frequency bands within hours. E band allocation was given along with spectrum as promised. No Fuss, No Follow Up, No running around the corridors and No tall claims. This is ease of doing business at work in its full glory," Mittal said.

Airtel has said that it will launch 5G service this month. While all telecom operators have opted to make payments in 20 annual installments, Bharti Airtel paid ₹8,312.4 crore equivalent to four annual installments.

Reliance Jio has made payments of ₹7,864.78 crore, Vodafone Idea ₹1,679.98 crore and Adani Data Networks ₹18.94 crore.

Richest Indian Gautam Adani's group has placed bids worth ₹211.86 crore for 400 MHz in a band that is not used for offering public telephony services. **PTI**

Airtel gets spectrum allocation letter, Mittal hails ease of doing business

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel received spectrum allocation letter within few hours of making upfront payment to the Department of Telecom, Bharti Enterprises founder and chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal said on Thursday.

This is the first time ever that the Department of Telecom (DoT) has handed out a spectrum allocation letter on the day of making upfront payment.

"Airtel paid ₹8,312.4 crore towards spectrum dues and was provided the allocation letter for the designated frequency bands within hours.

E band allocation was given along with spectrum as promised. **PTI**

Sensex maintains momentum for fifth day; Nifty nears 18k



Mumbai: Equity benchmark Sensex ticked higher for the fifth straight session on Thursday, helped by fag-end buying in select blue-chip stocks amid a largely negative trend in global markets.

A depreciating rupee and rising crude prices in the international market capped the gains in domestic equities, traders said.

In a largely choppy session, the 30-share BSE index ended 37.87 points or 0.06 per cent higher at 60,298 after starting the trade on a weak note. During the day, it hit a high of 60,341.41 and a low of 59,946.44.

Logging its eighth consecutive gain, the broader NSE Nifty climbed 12.25 points or 0.07 per cent to settle at 17,956.50. "Nifty on August 18 extended its winning streak for the eighth day, the longest in 20 months. Nifty opened lower

and swung between gains and losses for the bulk of the session before closing near day's high," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

Kotak Mahindra Bank was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, rising 3.45 per cent, followed by Larsen & Toubro, Bharti Airtel, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, IndusInd Bank, State Bank of India and ITC.

On the other hand, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Wipro, Infosys, Mahindra & Mahindra, Axis Bank and Nestle were among the laggards.

"After opening on a negative note, the market showed high volatility in the early to mid part of the session. Intraday weakness of mid-part was reversed, and the market shifted into an upside bounce in the second half of the day. **PTI**

Sebi comes out with guidelines for overseas investment by AIFs, VCFs

New Delhi: Sebi on Thursday came out with new guidelines for Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) and Venture Capital Funds (VCFs) for making investment abroad, under which overseas investee firms won't need to have an Indian connection.

Under the rules, AIFs can invest in securities of companies incorporated outside India. Besides, VCFs are allowed to make investments in off-shore venture capital undertaking, subject to certain conditions.

One of the conditions was that such overseas investments were allowed only in those companies which had an Indian connection. Like, a company has a front office overseas, while having its back office operations in India.

"The requirement of the overseas investee company to have an Indian connection... Has been done away with," the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a circular.

As per the fresh guidelines, AIFs or VCFs will be allowed to invest in an overseas investee company, which is incorporated in a country whose securities market regulator is a signatory to the International Organization of Securities Commission's (IOSCO) Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding or a signatory to the bilateral Memorandum of Understanding with Sebi.

Besides, AIFs or VCFs will not invest in an overseas



investee company, which is incorporated in a country identified by Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as a jurisdiction having a strategic anti-money laundering or combating the financing of terrorism deficiencies to which counter measures apply.

Also, such entities have been prohibited from making an investment in a country that has not made sufficient progress in addressing the deficiencies or has not committed to an action plan developed with FATF to address such deficiencies.

AIFs or VCFs will have to file an application before Sebi for allocation of overseas investment limit in the format.

"If an AIF/VCF liquidates investment made in an overseas investee company previously,

the sale proceeds received from such liquidation, to the extent of investment made in the said overseas investee company, shall be available to all AIFs/VCFs for reinvestment," the regulator said.

Further, AIFs or VCFs will sell the investment in overseas investee companies only to the entities eligible to make overseas investments.

AIFs or VCFs will have to furnish the divestment details of the overseas investments to the capital markets regulator in a specified format within three working days for updating the overall limit available for overseas investment by these entities. Also, all the overseas investments sold/divested by them till date, will also be reported to Sebi within 30 days. **PTI**

Gold falls ₹32; silver declines ₹348



New Delhi: Gold in the national capital on Thursday fell ₹32 to ₹52,224 per 10 grams, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal had finished at ₹52,256 per 10 grams.

Silver also declined ₹348 to ₹57,298 per kg from ₹57,646 per kg in the previous trade.

In the international market, gold was trading higher at USD 1,763 per ounce while silver was trading flat at USD 19.67 per ounce.

"Gold prices have kept range bound trading in the past few days on mixed global cues over the pace of US Federal Reserve's rate hike and inflation worries," said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities) at HDFC Securities. **PTI**

Rupee falls 19 paise to close at 79.64 against US dollar

Mumbai: The rupee depreciated 19 paise to close at 79.64 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, following the strength of the American currency in the overseas market.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 79.60 and moved in a range of 79.60 to 79.71 during the day. It finally ended at 79.64 against the greenback, down 19 paise over its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee gained 29 paise to settle at 79.45 against the dollar.

Forex traders said the US dollar index witnessed an upturn after the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting minutes showed that though things are slowing in the US, the Fed is not done with the rate hikes.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.10 per cent to

106.68. The US central bank policymakers committed to raising rates as high as necessary to tame inflation, said Gaurang Somaiya, Forex & Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

Somaiya further added that "we expect the USD/INR (Spot) to trade sideways and quote in the range of 79.20 and 79.80".

Meanwhile, Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 1.58 per cent to USD 95.13 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 37.87 points or 0.06 per cent higher at 60,298.00, while the broader NSE Nifty advanced 12.25 points or 0.07 per cent to 17,956.50.

Foreign institutional investors remained net buyers in the capital market on Wednesday as they purchased shares worth ₹2,347.22 crore, as per exchange data. **PTI**

Crude oil futures gain on spot demand



New Delhi: Crude oil prices on Thursday rose by Rs 96 to Rs 7,090 per barrel in futures trade as participants widened positions on a firm spot demand.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude oil for August delivery traded higher by Rs 96 or 1.37 per cent at Rs 7,090 per barrel in 5,070 lots.

Analysts said raising of bets by participants kept crude oil prices higher in futures trade.

Globally, West Texas Intermediate crude oil was up by 1.43 per cent at USD 89.37 per barrel, and Brent crude traded 1.71 per cent higher at USD 95.25 per barrel in New York. **PTI**

GST investigation wing asks officers to refrain from summoning CMD/CEOs

New Delhi: The GST investigation authority has asked field offices not to exercise the power to arrest in a mechanical manner and also refrain from summoning senior management officials like CMDs and CEOs.

The investigation authority under the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has issued guidelines to field officers on issuing summons and provision of arrest and bail under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) law.

It said that as arrest impinges on the personal liberty of an individual, such a measure should be based on credible material.

"The arrest should not be made in routine and mechanical manner," it said.

The guidelines also provided a checklist for the officers wanting to arrest an alleged GST offender. The list includes questions like whether the alleged offender is likely to tamper with evidence or intimidate witnesses, and if the per-



son is mastermind of the offence committed.

The guidelines on arrest take in account the Supreme Court judgement wherein it was observed that "merely because an arrest can be made because it is lawful does not mandate that arrest must be made".

The apex court had further said that a distinction must be made between the existence of the power to arrest and the justification for exercising it.

The guidelines said that the relevant factors before deciding to arrest a person, apart from fulfilment of the legal requirements, must be that the need to ensure proper investigation and prevent the

possibility of tampering with evidence or intimidating or influencing witnesses exists.

About the instructions with regard to summons, the guidelines said that senior management officials such as CMD/MD/CEO/CFO/similar officers of any company or a PSU (Public Sector Unit) should not generally be issued summons in the first instance.

"They should be summoned when there are clear indications in the investigation of their involvement in the decision making process which led to loss of revenue," it said.

Issuing the guidelines, the GST investigation authority said it has been brought to the notice of the CBIC that field formations are issuing summons to top officials of companies in a routine manner to call for material evidence/documents.

Besides, summons have also been issued to call for statutory records like GSTR-3B, GSTR-1, which are available online on the GST portal. **PTI**

Silver futures rise on spot demand



New Delhi: Silver prices on Thursday increased by ₹13 to ₹56,928 per kilogram in futures trade as participants widened their bets on a firm spot demand.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, silver contracts for September delivery gained ₹13 or 0.02 per cent to ₹56,928 per kg in 16,710 lots.

Analysts said the rise in silver prices was mainly due to fresh positions built up by participants on a positive domestic trend.

Globally, silver was trading 0.18 per cent lower at USD 19.82 per ounce in New York. **PTI**

Tata Power Renewable raises ₹2K cr by issuing 8.36 cr shares to BlackRock-backed firm

New Delhi: Tata Power arm Tata Power Renewable Energy on Thursday said it raised around Rs 2,000 crore by issuing 8.36 crore equity shares to BlackRock-backed GreenForest New Energies Bidco, according to a regulatory filing.

Earlier in April this year, BlackRock Real Assets-led consortium, including Mubadala Investment Company, had inked a binding agreement with Tata Power to invest Rs 4,000 crore by way of equity/compulsorily convertible instruments for a 10.53 per cent stake in Tata Power Renewables Energy Ltd, translating to a base equity valuation of Rs 34,000 crore.

The final shareholding will range from 9.76 per cent to 11.43 per cent on final con-



version, it had said in April this year.

"The board of directors of Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the company, today approved the allotment of 8,36,05,049 equity shares of Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd of the face value of Rs 10 each at a price of Rs 239.22 per equity share (including premium of Rs 229.22) aggregating to Rs 1999,99,99,822 on a pref-

erential basis to GreenForest New Energies Bidco Ltd, a company incorporated under the laws of England and Wales," a BSE filing stated.

This (issuance of shares) completes Tranche 1 of the transaction. Tranche 2 infusion of Rs 2,000 crore will be concluded in accordance with the terms of the agreements, it informed.

The proposed investment is expected to fund Tata Power Renewables' aggressive growth plans. Over the next five years, Tata Power Renewables aims to achieve a portfolio of over 20 GW of renewables assets and a market leading position in the rooftop and electric vehicle charging space across India, Tata Power had said in April. **PTI**

Govt extends deadline for PLI applications for specialty steel for 5th time

New Delhi: The Government has for the fifth time extended the deadline to submit applications under the production-linked incentive scheme for specialty steel till September 15.

The previous deadline to submit applications under the production-linked incentive scheme was July 31.

Initially, March 29 was the last date for manufacturers to apply for the benefits under the PLI (Production-Linked Incentive) scheme for specialty steel.

It was later extended till April 30, and again to May 31, 2022. It was further extended till June 30 and July 31.

The Government had last

year approved a ₹6,322-crore PLI scheme to boost the production of specialty steel in the country.

In a statement, the steel ministry said that the last date for receipt of applications under the PLI Scheme for Specialty Steel through the online application window has been extended up to September 15.

"Criteria for participation, eligibility and other parameters have been notified on July 29, and the same are available on the portal. Interested companies are requested to first register and then apply on the portal well before the deadline," the statement said. **PTI**

Oil at six-month low: Petrol at breakeven, losses continue on diesel

New Delhi: International oil prices have hit a six-month low, helping Indian fuel retailers breakeven on petrol but they continue to lose money on diesel - the most used fuel in the country, officials said.

The world's best-known crude benchmark, Brent was trading at USD 94.91 per barrel on Thursday after concerns of a global recession led to it slipping to a six-month low of USD 91.51 on the previous day.

The current rates are a relief to India, which is 85 per cent dependent on imports for meeting its oil needs.

The fall in prices has meant that fuel retailers such as Indian Oil Corporation are now breaking even on petrol

but there are some losses on diesel, officials with knowledge of the matter said.

State-owned fuel retailers IOC, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) have not exercised their right to adjust the retail selling price of petrol and diesel in line with the international costs for four and half months now to help the government manage runaway inflation.

At one point, they were losing Rs 20-25 per litre on diesel and Rs 14-18 a litre on petrol as international oil prices soared. These losses have been trimmed with the fall in oil prices.

"There are no under-

recovery (losses) on petrol now. For diesel, it will take some time to reach that level," an official said.

But this is unlikely to translate into an immediate reduction in rates as oil companies will be allowed to recoup losses they had accumulated on selling fuel at below cost in the last five months, another official said.

Under-recovery on diesel is now down to Rs 4-5 a litre.

IOC, BPCL and HPCL are supposed to revise the retail price of petrol and diesel daily in line with cost. But they froze rates for a record 137 days beginning November 4, 2021, just as states like Uttar Pradesh went to polls. **PTI**

Over 30 pc of Indian employees want to change jobs: PwC survey

New Delhi: Over 30 per cent of Indian employees want to change jobs while 71 per cent feel they are being overlooked for career advancement, said a PwC India report.

Workplaces in India have changed significantly over the past couple of years, with considerable mindset shifts for both employers and employees.

While employers have been more focused on building a resilient workforce strategy, employees on their part are driven by opportunities for fulfilment, creativity, innovation and authenticity, apart from

financial rewards, said PwC's India Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey 2022.

The report is based on the findings of PwC's Global Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey 2022. The survey included 2,608 participants from India and 93 per cent of them were full-time employees.

As per the survey, 34 per cent of respondents in India believe they are extremely/very likely to switch to a new employer as compared to 19 per cent globally.

Further, 32 per cent said that they plan to leave the

workforce. Millennials are the most likely to seek new employment, with 37 per cent indicating that they are likely to switch employers in the next 12 months. While Gen Z employees are less likely to quit, about a third of them are extremely or very likely to ask for a reduction in work hours.

Chaitali Mukherjee, Partner and Leader, People and Organisation, PwC India, said that the disruptive landscape of social, environmental, economic and geopolitical changes has had profound consequences on organisations

and their workforce strategies.

Leaders need to consider these disruptions while drawing up their short- and long-term plans for the organisation as well as their people, Mukherjee said.

"For an organisation to be fit for future, it is imperative that employee perspective dovetails with the employer's perspective to accelerate transformation keeping in mind the workforce dynamics, with well-defined tangible measures to bring about greater alignment between both these aspects," Mukherjee said. **PTI**

Baroda BNP Paribas Mutual Fund mobilises ₹1,400 crore from flexi-cap scheme NFO

New Delhi: Baroda BNP Paribas Mutual Fund on Thursday said it has collected over ₹1,400 crore from its flexi-cap scheme during the New Fund Offering (NFO) period.

The scheme — Baroda BNP Paribas Flexi Cap Fund — is an open-ended dynamic equity scheme investing across large cap, mid cap, small cap companies.

NFO was opened from July 25 to August 8, the fund house said in a statement.

THE SCHEME IS AN OPEN-ENDED DYNAMIC EQUITY SCHEME INVESTING ACROSS LARGE CAP, MID CAP, SMALL CAP COMPANIES

This is the first new fund offered by Baroda BNP Paribas Asset Management India after the merger of Baroda Asset Management India into BNP Paribas Asset Management India.

"Over 42,000 investors from

more than 120 cities across India have posed their faith in our very first NFO after the merger..."

"It is a reflection of not just the synergy and the immense potential offered by this combined entity, but also the trust and confidence shown by our investors and partners in our offerings," Suresh Soni, CEO of Baroda BNP Paribas Asset Management India, said.

The fund will re-open for subscriptions by August 24. **PTI**

Beery Moments in Delhi-NCR

New Delhi: Beer lovers are all set to have a field day as Beer Cafe, one of India's largest beer chains is playing a host to all beer lovers and raise toast to all breweries and bartenders to rejoice in the deliciousness of this popular beverage. To this end, a 21-day long campaign, till August 25, is going on in all 15 Beer Cafe outlets located in Delhi and NCR, said Rahul Singh, Beer Café CEO

Coric crashes Nadal's Cincinnati party

AP ■ CINCINNATI

Borna Coric spoiled the return of Rafael Nadal after a five-year absence from the ATP and WTA Cincinnati Masters on Wednesday with a 7-6 (11/9), 4-6, 6-3 upset victory in the second round.

The 36-year-old Spaniard, who won the Cincinnati title in 2013, was playing his first match in well over a month after withdrawing with an abdominal injury from his Wimbledon semi-final against Nick Kyrgios.

Nadal began the season with three titles and 20 consecutive wins but will head into the US Open after only one summer hardcourt match.

The night appearance by the 22-time Grand Slam champion was interrupted for an hour and a quarter by rain in the opening set.

Once back, the pair struggled into a first-set tie-breaker which lasted for well over a quarter of an hour.

Nadal missed on two set points of his own and had to save two set points for Coric.

But on the Croat's third opportunity, Nadal handed over the set after an hour and a quarter on court with a costly double-fault.

Nadal then took another 75 minutes to square the match thanks to a break in the seventh game of the second set.

The Spaniard got into trouble as he was broken to trail 2-4 on a forehand wide, opening the door for Coric, who underwent right shoulder surgery last year, to finish off the victory in just under three hours.

"It was very very special," Coric said. "I've been out the



last two years injured. I didn't play on the big stage.

"I was looking forward to playing this match. It was all

kind of crazy I would say."

Kyrgios, meanwhile, lost his way amid objections to on-court advertising lights, with

the Wimbledon runner-up falling 6-3, 6-2 to American Taylor Fritz.

The Australian was in

complaint mode from the start, lamenting the distraction of flickering LED lights on an advertising board and demanding a fix.

World number 28 Kyrgios, after a standout summer which included the Washington title this month, could not find his best game in crashing out to 11th seed Fritz after only 50 minutes.

The Aussie had beaten his last five American opponents and stood 15-2 since his surprise Wimbledon final against Novak Djokovic.

Fritz fired a 16th ace to set up match point and won as Kyrgios hit the top of the net with a weak forehand.

"It feels great the way my game is coming together," Fritz said. "This is the kind of match I need to build confidence."

RADUCANU ROLLS ON

Women's 10th seed Emma Raducanu dispatched her second Grand Slam champion in less than 24 hours, crushing Victoria Azarenka 6-0, 6-2.

The teenaged US Open champion claimed the first 10 games before Azarenka, a two-time Australian Open champion, finally captured a game.

But the young Briton, who ousted Serena Williams the night before with another love set, denied Azarenka on two break points in the final game to win in 63 minutes.

"It was another really dif-

ficult match and a tough matchup to play Vika," Raducanu said. "I knew I had to be really on my game. I didn't have much time to turn around."

"I'm obviously pleased with how I played today and how I stayed really focused."

Andy Murray needed a post-match on-court visit from the trainer after losing 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 to Cameron Norrie in the second round.

Three-time Grand Slam champion Murray, twice a Cincinnati champion, needed massage on his right thigh before leaving the court after battling for nearly two and three-quarter hours.

"My consistency maybe was not where I'd want it," Murray said. "But

there was some positive tennis in there at times. I definitely had enough opportunities to win."

After cramping at other events in recent weeks, the 35-year-old Scotsman is worried about his physical situation.

"It's a big concern for me. It's something I need to address and find a solution for," Murray said. "You need to try and understand what's going on there."

American Ben Shelton stunned fifth seed Casper Ruud, defeating the Norwegian 6-3, 6-3, while women's world number one Iga Swiatek beat Sloane Stephens 6-4, 7-5.

THE 36-YEAR-OLD NADAL, WHO WON THE CINCINNATI TITLE IN 2013, WAS PLAYING HIS FIRST MATCH IN WELL OVER A MONTH AFTER WITHDRAWING WITH AN ABDOMINAL INJURY FROM HIS WIMBLEDON SEMI-FINAL

Venus, Thiem handed US Open wildcards

AP ■ NEW YORK

Former US Open champions Venus Williams and Dominic Thiem were handed wildcard entries into this year's final Grand Slam tournament, the United States Tennis Association (USTA) said on Wednesday.

Other Americans, along with Williams, getting Flushing Meadows wildcards were former Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin, CoCo Vandeweghe, Elizabeth Mandlik, Peyton Stearns and 17-year-old Eleana Yu.

American men gaining direct entry into the main draw via wildcards include Sam Querrey, Emilio Nava, JJ Wolf, Ben Shelton and Learner Tien.

This year's tournament will run from August 29 to September 11.

The 42-year-old Williams, twice champion at Flushing Meadows, returns to the US Open for the first time since 2020. Her sister Serena, the winner of 23 Grand Slam singles titles, could bring the curtain down on her remarkable career in New York.

Austrian Thiem, who rallied from two sets down against Alexander Zverev to win the 2020 US Open, is also returning from a long injury lay-off that has seen his world ranking drop to 228.

Gael Monfils has been ruled out of the US Open due to a foot injury the Frenchman suffered last week in Montreal, the world number 22 said on Wednesday.

The 35-year-old, who reached a career-high ranking of sixth in 2016, returned to the Tour last week for the first time since May after undergoing a small operation for a right foot injury.



World Cup ticket sales approach 2.5 million

AP ■ DOHA

A total of 2.45 million tickets have been sold for this year's World Cup in Qatar after over half a million were snapped up in the latest sales period, organisers announced on Thursday.

World football's governing body FIFA said that 520,532 were sold in the period between July 5 and August 16, with Qatar, the United States, England, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, the United Arab Emirates, France, Argentina, Brazil and Germany the leading countries of residence for those purchasing match tickets.

FIFA stated that the most popular games for ticket sales include Brazil's group-phase encounters against Cameroon and Serbia, Portugal's meeting with Uruguay, Costa Rica's clash with Germany, and Australia against Denmark.

In June organisers said there had been "record-breaking" demand for tickets at a time when 1.2 million had been sold.

That figure has now more than doubled, with total ticket sales including those going to partners of FIFA, federations and for hospitality, as well as to the general public.

There are 3,010,679 tickets available altogether, with FIFA saying a "last-minute" sales period will open in the run-up to the start of the tournament at a date still to be confirmed.

More than a million visitors are expected in Qatar — the tiny Gulf state with 2.8 million inhabitants — for the first World Cup in the Middle East.

Vijender Singh knocks out Eliasu Sulley to return to winning ways

PTI ■ RAIPUR

Star Indian boxer Vijender Singh returned to winning ways in style as he notched a knockout win over Ghana's Eliasu Sulley here on Wednesday.

Vijender, who delivered India's first Olympic and men's world championship medals in boxing, showed his class as he dominated Sulley.

Vijender landed the winning blow in the second round of what was to be a six-round contest to leave the reigning national West Africa Boxing Union Champion dazed.

The 36-year-old Beijing Olympics bronze medallist needed only five minutes and seven seconds to dispatch the Ghanaian, who till now had a 100 per cent knockout record.

It is Vijender's 13th pro-boxing win. His only loss on the professional circuit had come last year in March when he went down to Russia's Artysh Lopsan.

"It's good to be back. We start our season with a victory. It wasn't easy to fight against (Sulley). Will return to the gym in a week and will fight again in December or January," Vijender said after the win.

Walking out to the "So high" song by the late Sidhu Moose Wala, Vijender oozed confidence from the beginning. He used his long reach and straight jabs to good effect, putting his opponent under pressure, to the delight of the partisan crowd.

He relied on a combination of punches to get the job done and was technically far more superior to Sulley.

In the second round, he gave his opponent a chance to attack as he



switched to counter attacking.

However, Sulley had no answer to Vijender's onslaught as he fell to the canvas and got the his first count of the night.

The Bhiwani boxer then landed a series of straight jabs, hooks and upper cuts which took the wind out of Sulley as he clinched the rope. Another hook from behind spelt the end of the contest.

In the other fights of the evening,

Asad Asif Khan out-punched Amey Nitin in the feather weight category.

Then Ashish Sharma suffered at the hands of Karthik Satish Kumar in the light weight category.

Gurpreet Singh also notched an unanimous decision win over Saikhom Rebaldo while Faizan Anwar registered a knockout victory over Sachin Nautiyal in the welterweight competition.

We'll continue to oppose tenure guidelines of draft 2017 Sports Code: IOA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Thursday "welcomed" the interim relief granted to it by the Supreme Court, saying it will continue to challenge the "contentious" clauses of the National Sports Code, primarily related to "tenure guidelines" for officials and voting rights" of state bodies.

Ordering status quo, the SC on Thursday said the Delhi High Court-appointed three-member Committee of Administrators (CoA) will not take over the affairs of IOA.

The SC took note of the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and the IOA, that the IOC (world body) does not recognise any un-elected bodies like the CoA and consequently, India may be barred from taking part in international sports events.

The Apex court has posted IOA's appeal for further hearing on August 22.

"It is a welcome order by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. The IOA and the government jointly approached SC. We had the full support of the government. We are happy that the Court took into consideration our submission," IOA secretary general Rajeev Mehta told PTI.

According to the draft National Sports Code 2017, the age and tenure restrictions will be applicable to all officials and not just the president, secretary and treasurer of the nation's sports bodies.

While the tenure of an official

can be a maximum of three terms, 12 years to be precise, including a cool-off period, the upper limit of age is kept at 70 years.

But as per the current IOA Constitution, an official can hold his or her office for 20 years without any cooling-off period.

The IOA said it will continue to oppose these "contentious" guidelines.

"Our main objection is on tenure guidelines. The Sports Code has already reduced the tenure of a sports administrator from 20 years to 12 years. After two terms of four years each, an official has to go for a cooling off period, we can't accept this," Mehta said.

"The Sports Code also took away the voting rights of state associations and non-Olympic sports federations, which is not fair. We want the Hon'ble Supreme Court to rectify the erroneous guidelines of the Code. We can only appeal, rest depends on the Court. We just hope a favourable order comes on August 22," Mehta added.

The Delhi High Court had on August 16 ordered the setting up of a three-member CoA to manage the affairs of the IOA.

The high court said the "persistent recalcitrance" of the IOA to comply with the Sports Code made it imperative that its affairs be put in the hands of the CoA, comprising former Supreme Court judge Justice Anil R Dave, former Chief Election Commissioner S Y Quraishi, and former Secretary of Ministry of External Affairs Vikas Swarup.

Wolves sign Nunes from Sporting CP for \$46 mn

AP ■ WOLVERHAMPTON

Wolves have broken their transfer record to sign Portugal international Matheus Nunes from Sporting Lisbon for an initial fee of 45 million euros (£38 million, \$46 million).

Nunes, 23, was one of the stars as Sporting won their first Portuguese title for 19 years in the 2020/21 season and he helped them reach the Champions League last 16 last season.

The Brazil-born midfielder was described by Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola as "one of the best players in the world" after Sporting's run in the Champions League was ended by the English champions in March.

Nunes had been linked with a move to Liverpool, but he has instead joined Wolves' array of Portuguese talent thanks to the club's close con-



nections with super agent Jorge Mendes.

The fee could rise a further five million euros in add-ons.

FTX Crypto Cup: Praggnanandhaa beats Nieman in 3rd round

PTI ■ MIAMI

Young Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa beat Hans Nieman 2.5-1.5 in the third round to notch up a third straight win in the FTX Crypto Cup, the American finale of Champions Chess Tour, here on Thursday.

The 17-year-old Indian is on top of the standings with nine match points along with world No.1 Magnus Carlsen, a 2.5-1.5 winner over Levon Aronian.

Praggnanandhaa bounced back brilliantly after losing the first game to secure victories in game two and four after a drawn second game to pick up three points.

Having started his campaign with victory over world No.4 and the top ranked junior Alireza Firouzja, the Indian prodigy beat Anish Giri in the second round.

Ineos billionaire Ratcliffe 'potential buyer' of Man Utd

AP ■ LONDON

British businessman Jim Ratcliffe is "definitely a potential buyer" of Manchester United if the English football giants go on sale, a spokesman for the Ineos petrochemicals billionaire said on Wednesday.

Ineos was responding to reports United's current owners, the US-based Glazer family, are considering selling a minority stake, with the team currently bottom of the Premier League following a woeful start to the season under new manager Erik ten Hag.

The Ineos spokesman told The Times that Ratcliffe, reportedly Britain's richest man, would be prepared to buy such a stake as a prelude to assuming full control at Old Trafford.

"If something like this was possible, we would be interested in talking with a view to long-term ownership," the

spokesman added.

The Glazers, who bought United in 2005 in a leveraged buyout that saddled the club with huge debts, have long been accused of taking more out financially than they have invested in terms of transfer funds or in redeveloping the club's crumbling Old Trafford ground.

They further angered United fans by backing the failed European Super League project in April last year which would have led to the club joining a breakaway competition.

United last won the Premier League in 2013 and have not lifted a major trophy since 2017, with last weekend's humiliating 4-0 loss away to Brentford leaving them bottom of England's top flight for the first time in 30 years.

"This is not about the money that has been spent or not spent," the Ineos spokesman also told The Times.

Benfica closing in on UCL group stage



AP ■ PARIS

Benfica took a big stride towards qualifying for the Champions League group stage on Wednesday by defeating Dynamo Kyiv 2-0 in Poland in the first leg of their play-off tie.

Gilberto and Goncalo

Ramos scored first-half goals for twice former European champions Benfica in the Polish city of Lodz, where Dynamo are in exile following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Red Star Belgrade, the 1991 European Cup winners, lost 3-2 away to Israeli cham-

pions Maccabi Haifa, who are hoping to reach the group stage for the third time after 2002-03 and 2009-10.

Haitian forward Frantzzy Pierrot struck twice for Maccabi as the hosts opened the scoring but then fell behind as Red Star replied with goals from Aleksandar Pesic and Guelor Kanga.

Pierrot equalised shortly after half-time and Tjaronn Chery grabbed the winner on the hour to give Maccabi a narrow advantage heading into next week's return leg in Serbia. Qarabag drew 0-0 with Czech champions Viktoria Plzen in Baku.

BERARDI EXTENDS STAY

Domenico Berardi signed on Wednesday a new contract with Sassuolo that ties the Italy winger to the Serie A club until the end of June 2027.

The 28-year-old, who has played his entire professional career at Sassuolo, has extended a deal which was due to expire in 2024.

INDIA THUMP ZIMBABWE BY 10 WICKETS

PTI ■ HARARE

Pacer Deepak Chahar made an impressive comeback to international cricket with an incisive spell and openers maintained their consistency as India outclassed Zimbabwe by 10 wickets in the opening One Day International, here on Thursday.

Donning the blue jersey for the first time in six months after a long injury lay-off, Chahar hit the straps right away with figures of 3/27, which was instrumental in India restricting Zimbabwe to a sub-par 189 in just 40.3 overs.

With very little scoreboard pressure, it was a walk in the park for the Indians as the in-form opening pair of Shikhar Dhawan (81 not out) and Shubman Gill (82 not out) knocked off the target in just 30.5 overs.

With skipper KL Rahul foregoing his spot at the top of the order to let the in-form pair maintain its momentum, Dhawan and Gill scored their third half-centuries in last four games. Not to forget that it was also their third century-plus stand from the start of the West Indies series. Their lowest opening partnership had yielded 48 runs in second ODI in Caribbean.

On a track that had something for the bowlers, the Indian openers did start in a sedate fashion but with very little on the board, it did not take them much time to accelerate.

Dhawan played his signature square cuts off seamers and lofted shots off the slow bowlers during his 113-ball knock while Gill played within himself for the first 30 deliveries before starting to chance his arms and surpassed his senior partner in terms of strike-rate, facing only 72 balls.

He played some eye-catching strokes on either side of the wicket, including a huge six over deep mid-wicket off Wessly Madhevere.

Between them, they hit 19 boundaries in all.



CHAHAR SETS UP

It didn't take long for Chahar to find his rhythm on a Harare Sports Club track that offered steep bounce. The balmy morning conditions aided quality swing bowling.

He was well supported by Mohammed Siraj (1/36), who worked up brisk pace while bowling the ideal 'Test match length'.

Prasidh Krishna (3/50) and Axar Patel (3/24) also got their share of middle and lower-order victims while Kuldeep Yadav (0/36) was restrictive despite going wicket-less.

It was the record ninth-wicket stand of 70 runs between Brad

Evans (33) and Richard Ngarava (32) that took Zimbabwe close to the 200-run mark.

None of the Zimbabwe batters looked comfortable during those opening overs as Chahar got a lot of deliveries to dart back late while some straightened after pitching.

Opener Innocent Kaia (4 off 20 balls) saw a ball climb up from back of length and Sanju Samson caught it on second attempt.

His left-handed partner Tadiwanashe Marumani (8 off 22 balls) drove a fuller-length delivery that swung late and Samson had an easy catch.

Chahar's best delivery was the one that got Wessly Medhevere (5) which seemed like drifting on pads but swung away late squaring up the right-hander, who was found plumb in-front.

Once Siraj had Sean Williams caught at first slip by Shikhar Dhawan, there wasn't much resistance left in the Zimbabwean batting although skipper Regis Chakabva (35 off 51 balls) tried to put up a brief fight before Axar castled him.

Just at the start of his spell, Chahar was struggling a bit with his run-up but once he got his first

wicket, it seemed that he could take wicket with every delivery he bowled.

The banana inswing was back and more importantly, he was getting to move the ball late, causing a lot of doubt in batters' mind.

While Chahar has been kept on stand-by for the Asia Cup with Bhuvneshwar Kumar in the first 15, the tables could well turn once the Indian team touches base in Australia. This is because there will be at least one spinner less in the final composition of the squad as side's won't require four spinners for pitches Down Under.

Good to see bowlers putting balls in right areas: Rahul

PTI ■ HARARE

India captain KL Rahul was Ivery impressed with his bowling unit which fashioned a 10-wicket victory over Zimbabwe by restricting the hosts to under 200 in the first ODI here on Thursday.

Rahul, himself was making a comeback to international cricket after more than two months but decided to continue with the crack opening pair of Shubman Gill and Shikhar Dhawan, who added 192 runs for an unbroken opening stand.

"Picking up wickets was crucial. There was swing and seam movement as well. But it was good to see them (bowlers) put the ball in right areas and be disciplined," the skipper said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

Three players in the first XI, Rahul, Deepak Chahar and Kuldeep Yadav were making a comeback after long rehabilitation process.

"As good as it can be, I am on the field and I am happy. We do play a lot of cricket, injuries are going to be a part of it," Rahul said.

"Being away from the game is hard. Rehab and everything everyday gets boring. We'd rather be playing 365 days than be with the physio. For a few of us, it is great to be back in the Indian dressing room."

laying international cricket after a gap of six months is really tough and he was nervous at the onset, seamer Deepak Chahar said after a successful comeback with figures of 3/27.

"When you are playing an international game after six-and-



a-half months, you are always nervous. Before coming here I played four-five practice games. But playing for the country, you wanted to do well and the mind and the body was not working together," he said about the start of his spell where he looked unsure about his run-up.

"That ball I wanted to bowl a bouncer and the spikes didn't go through and I slipped. The landing area was little hard and my nails were not going in and were slippery." Dhawan is enjoying a purple patch in ODI cricket and his partnership with Gill is much talked about.

"I am enjoying batting with the youngster (Gill) and I feel like a youngster too. I enjoyed the consistency from the West Indies. I knew that once I was set, I would go after the bowlers," Dhawan said after scoring unbeaten 81 off 113 balls.

"I wanted to rotate the strike as well and then plan was to accelerate. My rhythm with Gill has settled nicely. The way he bats and times the ball is lovely to watch. He has shown the consistency in converting fifties into big fifties.



Rabada takes five wickets as SA dismiss England for 165

AP ■ LONDON

South Africa fast bowler Kagiso Rabada completed a five-wicket haul as England were dismissed for just 165 on the second day of the first Test at Lord's on Thursday.

Rabada, who had been doubtful for the opening match of the three-Test series, finished with figures of 5-52 in 19 overs — the 12th time he has taken five wickets in an innings.

Only Ollie Pope, with 73, offered prolonged resistance among England's top order.

Rabada, 27, did the early damage in England's innings by removing openers Alex Lees and Zak Crawley for single-figure scores on the rain-shortened opening day.

South Africa captain Dean Elgar won the toss on a green-tinged pitch and in overcast conditions that aided his four-man pace attack but his quicks backed up that call with a skilful display.

Express quick Anrich Nortje had followed up Rabada's initial good work by taking three wickets, including the prized scalp of in-form Jonny Bairstow for a duck.

England have won all four of their Tests under their new leadership pairing of captain Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum after switching to a mode of all-out attack.

But the policy did not work against a quality four-man pace attack that has helped South Africa climb to the top of the World Test Championship table.

England resumed on 116-6 on Thursday, with Pope 61 not out.

Pope, who had reached a 69-ball fifty on the opening day, was quickly into his stride on Thursday, pulling the third ball of the day, from Rabada, for four.

But he should have been out three balls later for 67 when he edged Rabada straight to first slip, only for Sarel Erwee to floor a routine chance despite four juggled attempts to keep hold of the ball.

Stuart Broad, nought not out overnight, got off the mark when he edged Nortje over the head of wicketkeeper Kyle Verreynne for four.

Rabada then got the wicket he deserved when Pope chopped on to a full-length ball for 73 to end a 102-ball innings, leaving England 134-7.

Rabada showed there was more to his game than sheer speed when he undid Broad (15) with a clever slower ball that the tailender lobbed to Elgar at point.

Siraj to play Warwickshire's last three County games

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

India fast bowler Mohammed Siraj will join the English county bandwagon as he gears up to play Warwickshire's last three first-class games in September.

Siraj is currently playing the ODI series in Zimbabwe but is not there in India's T20 scheme of things.

"Warwickshire County Cricket Club has signed India international fast bowler Mohammed Siraj for the final three matches of the County Championship season. The 28-year-old will arrive at Edgbaston ahead of the Bears home fixture against Somerset on Monday, 12 September," the county club stated in a media release.

The right-arm fast bowler took 4/66 in the first innings of the fifth and final Test between India and England at Edgbaston in July, before adding a further six wickets in three ODI matches that followed.

A natural swinger of the ball, Siraj has played for his country 26 times in all formats, taking 56 wickets. In total, he has taken 403 wickets in 207 career matches with 194 of those in first-class cricket.

"I can't wait to join up with the Bears squad. I have always enjoyed playing in England with India and I'm excited to experience County Cricket," Siraj said.

"Edgbaston is a world class stadium and the atmosphere it created this year for the Test was special. I am really looking forward to



making it my home in September and hopefully helping the Bears end the season well.

"I would like to extend my gratitude to both Warwickshire County Cricket Club and BCCI for this opportunity."

Siraj will be the second Indian player to represent Warwickshire this season after Krunal Pandya signed up for the Royal London Cup One Day Championship.

Pakistan beat Netherlands by 7 wickets in 2nd ODI, seal series

AP ■ ROTTERDAM

Mohammad Rizwan and Agha Salman made unbeaten half-centuries as Pakistan eased to a seven-wicket win over the Netherlands in the second one-day international in Rotterdam on Thursday to complete a series victory.

Pakistan captain Babar Azam, the world's top-ranked ODI batsman, scored 57 off 65 balls before Rizwan and Salman led the tourists home in their pursuit of 187 with 16.2 overs to spare.

Dutch seamer Vivian Kingma removed openers Fakhar Zaman and Imam-ul-Haq cheaply as Pakistan stuttered early, but Azam and Rizwan steadied the innings before Salman finished it off by blasting his first ODI fifty.

Zaman, who made 109 in the first ODI, was caught and bowled by Kingma for three and Imam was lured into a loose drive four balls later to reduce Pakistan to 11-2.

Azam passed fifty for the 38th time in 89 ODI innings but top-edged off-spinner Aryan Dutt to Bas de Leede at midwicket, ending an 88-run stand with wicketkeeper Rizwan.



Rizwan adopted a relatively cautious approach as he compiled 69 off 82 deliveries, in contrast to the fireworks delivered by Salman, who clubbed the final ball of the match for six to finish 50 not out in just his second ODI.

Haris Rauf and Mohammad Nawaz took three wickets apiece to dismiss the Netherlands for 186 in the second of a three-match series.

De Leede (89) and Tom Cooper (66) struck battling half-centuries to lift the Dutch from 8-3 but only one other batsman

passed double figures for the hosts.

Naseem Shah removed Vikramjit Singh in the second over as the teenage opener edged behind and Max O'Dowd followed when he drove Rauf straight to Azam at mid-off.

The 38-year-old Wesley Barresi was bowled by Naseem for three, two days after scoring just two in his first international innings since 2019.

De Leede and Cooper set about restoring order and put on 109 for the fourth wicket.

Windies beat NZ by 5 wickets in first ODI



AP ■ BRIDGETOWN

Shamarh Brooks scored 79 and shared a 75-run partnership with captain Nicholas Pooran which guided the West Indies to a five-wicket win over top-ranked New Zealand in the series-opening ODI.

Brooks reached his fourth ODI half century from 58 balls and had faced 91 deliveries when he was out in the 34th over with the West Indies closing on New Zealand's inadequate total of

190.

Jason Holder (13) and Jermaine Blackwood (12) were at the crease when the home team reached its target with 11 overs to spare.

Earlier, Akeal Hossain took 3-28 and Alzarri Joseph returned 3-36 as the West Indies bowled out New Zealand for 190 in 45.2 overs after choosing to bowl in the first of three ODIs at the Kensington Oval.

It was the first time New Zealand has been dismissed

in a 50-over match since March 2020.

"Watching the Kiwis bat I realized it was a bit tough going early for them," Brooks said in a television interview. "I guess credit must go to our bowlers for reducing them to a score of 190."

"I was just focused on going out there, getting some partnerships and getting that total off."

Rain breaks punctuated the West Indies innings but couldn't disturb the steady momentum set by Brooks. The first came in the opening over of the innings and the second in the 29th when the West Indies were only 42 runs from victory. At that point the West Indies already were well ahead of a winning total under the Duckworth-Lewis system.

Pooran was out for 28 immediately after the second rain break but Brooks retained a strong guiding hand on the run chase.

The second game will be played Friday at the same venue.



Ireland secure T20I series win vs Afg

AP ■ BELFAST

George Dockrell edged Ireland to a T20I series victory over Afghanistan in a tense conclusion to a rain-affected decider in Belfast.

Dockrell hit the decisive run as the home side clinched a 3-2 win by seven wickets after reaching a reduced target of 56 with two balls of their seven allotted overs to spare.

Having won the toss and put the Afghans in, Ireland got off to a good start when Mark Adair removed openers Hazratullah Zazai, who had dispatched the two previous balls to the boundary, and Rahmanullah Gurbaz in his first over. When Adair had Ibrahim Zadran caught by Barry McCarthy, he had 3-16 and the tourists had been reduced to 26

for three inside four overs.

Usman Ghani steadied the ship, but Josh Little had Najibullah Zadran and Mohammad Nabi caught behind by Lorcan Tucker off successive deliveries in his second spell, but with Ghani unbeaten on 44 and his side having reached 95 for five from 15 overs, rain intervened.

Paul Stirling needed just five runs to reach 3,000 in T20Is as Ireland's reply got under way, and he made it within three balls, cutting Naveen ul Haq for four off the first and taking a single from the third. Fellow opener Andrew Balbirnie was trapped in front for nine attempting to sweep Muejeb Ur Rahman with the score on 17, Muejeb had Stirling caught at deep midwicket for 16 to give his side hope, and Tucker soon followed for 14.

Neeraj in list of Diamond League Meeting competitors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Olympic champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, who pulled out of the recent Commonwealth Games due to a minor injury, figured in the list of competitors for the Lausanne Diamond League Meeting on August 26.

But he is yet to take a call on his participation in the prestigious competition.

The 24-year-old had missed the Birmingham CWG due to a "minor" groin strain he suffered while winning a historic silver in the World Championships in Eugene, USA last month. He was advised one-month rest.

"Neeraj is working on his rehabilitation and his team will take a call about the Lausanne Diamond League closer to the event," said a source.

Birmingham Commonwealth Games silver medallist Avinash Sable figured in the men's 3000m steeplechase event.