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REFLECTIONS ON THE
75 YEARS JOURNEY

WORLD 8

AREA NEAR UKRAINE N-PLANT
HIT AGAIN DESPITE US PLEAS

MONEY 10

COMMITTEE ON MSP SETS UP FOUR
SUB-GROUPS TO DISCUSS KEY ISSUES

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY AUGUST 23, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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MEN IN BLUE
WHITEWASH
ZIMBABWE
12 SPORTISIS fidayeen plotting to
avenge Prophet barb heldSuicide bomber
detained in Russia

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) has detained a suicide bomber, a member of the ISIS, who was plotting a terrorist attack against an Indian leader for avenging the alleged insult to Prophet Muhammad, Sputnik News reported on Monday.

The FSB is the top intelligence agency of Russia. It did not identify the detained terrorist, however, it said he underwent special training in a Central Asian country for carrying out the planned hit in India.

Reports suggested the radical is of Uzbek origin.

The announcement of the detention comes days after National Security Adviser Ajit Doval visited Moscow.

Assessments suggest the detained suicide bomber could be a member of the ISIS faction led by Gulmuraad Alimof based in southern Afghanistan and that the ISIS has developed a significant network of sleeper cells in India.

"Russia's FSB identified and detained a member of the Islamic State international terrorist organisation banned in Russia, a native of a country in the Central Asian region, who planned to commit a terrorist act by blowing himself up

against one of the representatives of the ruling circles of India," the authority said in a statement.

The FSB posted an interrogation video showing the suspect confessing that he was supposed to commit a terrorist act for blasphemy against Prophet Muhammad.

"In 2022... I flew to Russia, and from there I was to leave for India. In India I was to be met and given all the necessary things to commit an act of terrorism at the behest of the Islamic State for insulting Prophet Muhammad," he said.

In Turkey, the would-be-terrorist was conditioned both online on Telegram and during in-person meetings in Istanbul over a span of several months from April to June, the FSB said in its statement.

The foreign national was recruited by one of the Islamic State's ringleaders as a suicide bomber sometime between April and June 2022 while in Turkey, the Russian state-owned TASS news agency reported.

"The Federal Security Service has identified and apprehended in Russia a member of the outlawed (by the Russian Federation) Islamic State international terrorist organisation. The detainee is a native of a Central Asian country, who planned to commit a terrorist attack against a member of India's ruling circles by blowing himself up," the FSB



said.

The terrorist's "ideological indoctrination was conducted remotely via Telegram messenger accounts and during personal meetings in Istanbul with an IS representative," the Russian Federal Security Service's Centre for Public Relations (CPR) said.

The detained suicide bomber swore allegiance to the IS Emir (chief), after which he was instructed to leave for Russia, draw up the necessary documents and fly to India to commit this act of terrorism, the report said.

In June, BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma was suspended and the party's Delhi media head Naveen Kumar Jindal was expelled by the party after their controversial remarks against Prophet Muhammad sparked protests in the Islamic world.

The ISIS has an avowed agenda to change Central Asia to Darul Islam (Dominion of Islam).

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List of people
arrested for
planning attack
on Nupur Sharma

◆ Md Nadeem, Saharanpur UP, suspected Jaish-e-Mohammad Terrorist arrested by UP ATS

◆ Pakistani national Rizwan Ashraf nabbed by BSF in Sri Ganganagar district, Rajasthan

◆ Khadim of Ajmer Dargah Salman Chisti arrested by Rajasthan Police

◆ Faisal Wani, Kashmir-based YouTuber arrested for posting a video of beheading an effigy of Nupur Sharma

◆ Three of Patna PFI terror module — Md Jalaluddin, Arman Malik and Md Athar Parvez suspected to target Nupur Sharma as her photo was found on the mobile phone of the suspects

Was offered deal to break AAP:
Sisodia; lies, name person: BJPKejriwal: CBI-ED
raids attempt to
topple my Govt;
CM my political
guru: Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Monday made a sensational claim saying the BJP asked him to split the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and in return offered to close all cases registered against him by the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) into the excise policy. The BJP strongly rejected Sisodia's claim and asked him to name the person who made the offer.

After Sisodia's claims of being "approached" by the BJP, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the CBI-ED raids were attempts to topple his Government and asserted that "Operation Lotus" proved to be a failure in the national Capital.

"I have got a message from the BJP — leave the AAP and join the BJP, we will close all CBI/ED cases. My reply to the BJP: I am a descendant of Maharana Pratap, I am a Rajput. I will sacrifice myself but will not bow in front of the corrupt and schemers. The cases against me are false. You can do whatever you want," Sisodia tweeted.

Later addressing a Press conference in Ahmedabad,



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia address a press conference in Ahmedabad on Monday

PTI

Sisodia said he was surprised when someone came to him with a message that he has two offers from the BJP.

"The messenger said all big cases registered against you by the CBI-ED will be taken back. The other offer was that I break the party and they will make you Chief Minister," the AAP leader claimed. "I gave a clear political answer to them, saying Kejriwal is my political guru and I have learned politics from him. I have not come into politics to be CM or PM," Sisodia said.

In a dig at the BJP, Kejriwal in response to Sisodia's claims tweeted, "It means that the CBI and ED raids have nothing to do with the liquor policy and corruption? These raids were carried out only to topple the AAP Government in Delhi? Like they have done in other States."

Later, he tweeted, "Operation Lotus fails in Delhi." Lotus is the party sym-

bol of the BJP, and the term - Operation Lotus has been used by the Opposition parties for accusing the BJP of attempts to topple the elected Governments. Kejriwal and Sisodia are currently in Gujarat to strengthen the AAP's base there in the run-up to the State Assembly polls scheduled later this year.

Other AAP leaders, including Sanjay Singh, Atishi, and Saurabh Bhardwaj, too backed Sisodia but neither they nor the Deputy Chief Minister disclosed the name of the person from the BJP who had approached him with such offers.

On the other hand, taking to Twitter, BJP MP Manoj Tiwari asked Sisodia to name the person on whose phone messages were sent by the BJP since the Minister himself had earlier spoken about the CBI seizing his mobile following a raid at his residence on Friday.

Continued on Page 2

Excise scam: Then
Commissioner,
deputy suspended

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs on Monday suspended then Excise Commissioner Gopi Krishna, a 2012 batch IAS officer, and Anand Kumar Tiwari, the then Deputy Excise Commissioner, after their names came up in the alleged excise scam in the national Capital, said sources.

The decision to suspend them was recommended by Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena. Krishna is posted in Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu. "The decision to this effect has been conveyed to the Chief Secretary, GNCTD and the Principal Secretary, Vigilance, whose inquiry report into the excise scam formed the basis of LG's recommendation for suspension," the sources said.

Sisodia deserves
Bharat Ratna: CM

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday said his deputy Manish Sisodia deserves the Bharat Ratna for improving education standards in schools, but instead he is being hounded by the Centre.

Anti-Modi grand alliance not
needed, try new model: TMCRegional parties should
take on BJP in their
respective States in
2024 polls, says TMC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Claiming that "Narendra Modi-vs-Rahul Gandhi" is an old and outdated narrative, the Trinamool Congress has said a new model has to be brought in place to defeat the BJP in 2024 general elections.

Giving a thumbs down to the sewing up a grand alliance, the TMC suggested the regional parties should take on the BJP in their respective States with the other parties giving them the necessary backup.

Incidentally, this was the same refrain the TMC made in

the past also.

The TMC leadership has, however, said this model should be allowed to work in all the States save Maharashtra, Bihar and Jharkhand.

TMC Rajya Sabha leader Derek O'Brien on Monday said, "Except for Bihar, Jharkhand and Maharashtra, there is no need for a so-called grand alliance. On the stage on July 21, Mamata Banerjee made it clear she will fight to defeat the BJP wherever she can, then all will come together."

The TMC leaders also put Assam in the grand alliance list but ignored the Congress, which is the ruling party in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan and the principal Opposition party in Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.

Accordingly, regional

forces like the AAP in Punjab and Delhi, the DMK in Tamil Nadu, the TRS in Telangana, the TMC in Bengal, and the SP in Uttar Pradesh should take on the BJP in the respective States, he said.

In that case, if the BJP can be restricted to about 250 seats then some of its friendly parties like the YSR Congress and the BJD may join the post-poll alliance.

According to a senior TMC leader, Mamata is currently not willing to project herself as the leader of any grand alliance after the recent raids and arrest of some senior TMC leaders. On the contrary, she is willing to play the role of a "catalyst."

The leader would not however dwell on whether the TMC leadership had any talks with the Congress on the issue.



Thousands of farmers from various States gathered at the Jantar Mantar in Delhi on Monday to take part in a "mahapanchayat" called by a farmers' body, causing massive traffic snarls in Delhi, especially at the city's borders, including Singhu and Ghazipur

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

SC stays HC order to file
FIR against Shahnawaz
on 2018 rape complaintPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed the operation of the Delhi High Court order relating to the registration of an FIR against BJP leader Shahnawaz Hussain on a woman's complaint alleging rape.

The High Court on August 17 dismissed Hussain's plea challenging a trial court order directing the Delhi Police to register an FIR against him, saying there was no perversity in the 2018 order, and vacated its earlier interim order staying the operation.

The apex court issued notice and sought responses, including from the Delhi Government on Hussain's plea and posted it for hearing in the third week of September. A

bench headed by Justice UU Lalit observed that after hearing submissions of senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, who appeared for Hussain, it is of the prima facie view that this matter requires consideration.

The bench, also comprising Justices SR Bhat and Sudhanshu Dhulia, said pending further consideration, the effect and operation of the order under challenge before it shall remain stayed.

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CAPSULE

7 COVID DEATHS, 625
FRESH CASES IN DELHI

New Delhi: Delhi on Monday reported 625 fresh Covid-19 cases and seven deaths, while the positivity rate stood at 9.27 per cent, according to data shared by the city health department.

FOUR DIE IN ROAD
ACCIDENT IN G'GRAM

Gurugram: Four friends — two students and two private company employees — were killed and another person was seriously injured after their car was hit from behind by a bus, that was speeding, in Khetawas village on the Gurugram-Farrukhnagar road on Monday, police said. An FIR has been filed against the bus driver.

SC BENCH TO DECIDE
ON DELHI SERVICES

New Delhi: Chief Justice NV Ramana on Monday said he has set up a five-judge Constitution bench to hear the legal issue concerning the scope of legislative and executive powers of the Centre and National Capital Territory Government over control of services in Delhi.

SC scraps CoA, clears way for
lifting of FIFA ban on AIFFPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Paving the way for the holding of the Under-17 Women's World Cup 2022 in India and lifting the suspension of the All-India Football Federation (AIFF), the Supreme Court on Monday scrapped the three-member Committee of Administrators (CoA) headed by a former apex court judge, appointed by it nearly two months back for managing the affairs of the national football body AIF.

The top court said that it is modifying its earlier orders to facilitate the revocation of the suspension which has been imposed on AIF by FIFA and the holding of the Under-17 Women's World Cup 2022 in India.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and AS Bopanna said, "In the event that the above process is not taken to its logical conclusion, the court would consider any further order at the subsequent stage."



The apex court also postponed the August 28 elections of the AIF by one week to allow a changed electoral college and the start of the nomination process.

The order came on a fresh plea filed by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports seeking modification of the May 18 and August 3 orders of the court after consultation with the international football federation (FIFA) to ensure revocation of the suspension of AIF and the right for holding of the Under-17 Women's

World Cup 2022 in India.

It said, "The day-to-day management of AIF shall be exclusively looked after by the AIF administration led by the acting secretary general. The mandate of the committee of administrators appointed by the order of this court stands terminated."

The apex court on May 18 appointed a three-member CoA headed by Justice (ret'd) Anil R Dave, former chief election commissioner SY Qureshi, former Indian football team captain Bhaskar Ganguly and ousted NCP leader Praful Patel management committee, which had exceeded its tenure by over two and a half years.

The bench noted that the CoA has already submitted the draft Constitution for the AIF, together with a tabulated set of suggestions, to this court on July 15, 2022, and therefore appointed its counsel senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan to assist it as amicus curiae.

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Lockdowns, conservation raise
rhinos' number in India, Nepal2 countries add 516
greater one-horned
rhinos in three years

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Better law enforcement and conservation measures, aided by coronavirus-induced lockdowns and restrictions for a couple of years, have led to the number of greater one-horned rhinos in India and Nepal increasing from an estimated 3,588 in 2018 to 4,014 at the end of 2021.

Prepared for the 19th meeting of the CoP to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which will be held in Panama in November this year, the report has lauded conservation efforts, including strengthened law enforcement in this regard in the two neighbouring countries which share borders

ensuring free movement of the endangered wild species.

The report, however, found that 11 rhino poaching incidents were recorded in Asia (ten in India and one in Nepal) since the beginning of 2018, all of which involved greater one-horned rhinos.

Overall, world over rhino poaching rates declined since 2018, and trade data suggested the lowest annual estimate of rhino horns entering illegal trade markets since 2013.

"The overall decline in poaching of rhinos is encouraging, yet this remains an acute threat to the survival of these iconic animals," said Sam Ferreira, Scientific Officer with the IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group, in a statement from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

"To support the growth of rhino numbers, it is essential to continue active population management and anti-poach-



ing activities for all subspecies across different range states."

The report found that rhino poaching rates in Africa have continued to decline from a peak of 5.3 per cent of the total population in 2015 to 2.3 per cent in 2021.

At least 2,707 rhinos were poached across Africa between 2018 and 2021, accounting for both the white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum*), which is

vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species", and the rarer critically endangered black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*).

South Africa accounted for 90 per cent of all reported cases, predominantly affecting white rhinos in Kruger National Park, home to the world's largest white rhino population, added the statement.

Continued on Page 2

NCR-PULSE

DJB TO LODGE COMPLAINTS AGAINST GRAFT
New Delhi: Delhi Jal Board vice chairman Saurabh Bhardwaj on Monday asked officials to file police complaints against water meter readers and private companies indulging in corrupt practices, according to a statement. During a meeting with officials, Bhardwaj also directed them to resolve issues related to water meter readings and "erroneous" water bills in a time-bound manner, the DJB statement said.

DCW SEEKS ATR OVER GIRL'S RAPE-MURDER
New Delhi: The Delhi Commission For Women has sought an action-taken report from the police over the killing of an eight-year-old girl whose body was recovered near the Yamuna Khadar area here nearly a fortnight after she went missing. The panel said the details should be shared with it by August 26. It had received a complaint from the victim's mother on August 17 that her daughter has been missing since midnight of August 3.

MCD ATTACHES 8 COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES
New Delhi: The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Monday attached eight commercial properties in City SP Zone, over the non-payment of property tax worth Rs 26 Lakhs, in the national capital. According to a senior MCD official, these properties are situated in ward no. 88 (Delhi Gate) and ward no. 91 (Ram Nagar). It is pertinent to mention that property tax department of City SP Zone has been pursuing these cases for long and had sent many notices under various sections of DMC Act in the past.

2 INEBRIATED MEN ASSAULT CONSTABLE, GAURD
New Delhi: Two men in an inebriated state allegedly assaulted a Delhi Police constable and security guard at Lal Bahadur Shastri hospital in the national Capital. The incident took place at the hospital in Kalyanpuri on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday, police said, adding hospital property was also damaged by the miscreants. A purported video of the incident has surfaced on social media, police said.

INDUSTRIES DEPT AUTHORISED TO ACCEPT AADHAAR
New Delhi: Delhi government's industries department has been authorised by the UIDAI to accept Aadhaar for its eight online services, including conversion to freehold, and online payment of dues and refund requests. The other online services of the industries department that will be covered by voluntary Aadhaar authentication are permission of mortgage, application for possession, change of constitution, and extension for time for construction.

2 MEN HELD FOR KIDNAPPING 24-YR-OLD, FRIEND
Noida: Two men have been arrested in Beta -2 area of Greater Noida following an encounter by the Noida Police for allegedly kidnapping a 24 year old and his friend on Sunday. The accused had demanded ransom of Rs five lakhs from one of the victims' father who is a former district president of Banka district in Bihar from the Janata Dal (United) party.

FROM FASHION DESIGNING TO BHARATNATYAM
New Delhi: Arangemram is an important sacrament which marks the first milestone in the disciple's journey in the ocean of Bharatnatyam and a tribute to his/her guru. Anyanya, a well-known name in the fashion world among Bollywood celebrities, captivated the audience with her enthralling presentation and performance at Chinmaya Mission. Her guru Geeta Chandran said, "Such presentations are nothing short of well performed Guru Dakshina."

BMC's ex-chief favoured tainted bizman: I-T dept

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a damaging disclosure made before the Bombay High Court, the Income Tax (IT) Department has said that Maharashtra's former chief secretary Ajoy Mehta — in his capacity as the Commissioner of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) — had favoured Pune-based scam-tainted businessman Aviaash Bhosale for the grant of development rights of an existing 30 feet wide internal road. In an affidavit filed in a HC



bench headed by chief justice Dipankar Datta in a public interest litigation moved by RTI activist and lawyer Pravin Wategaonkar, Shailesh Jain,

Assistant Commissioner of Income Tax, Benami Transactions, Unit-I, has among other things said that Mehta in his capacity as the BMC Commissioner, had "backed" Bhosale's proposal for the grant of development rights of an existing 30 feet wide internal road that connects Jogeshwari-Vikhroli Link Road (JVLR) to Mahakali Caves.

Jain told the high court that Mehta had backed Bhosale's proposal overruling the contention by the BMC

chief engineer who argued that there was no provision to grant TDR on the existing amenity or road in the development plan. Mehta, who is the current chairman of the Maharashtra Real Estate Regulatory Authority (MahaRERA) bought the flat no 5-B in Samata Co-operative Housing Society Ltd at Nariman Point in south Mumbai. Samata Co-operative Housing society has been constructed on a government originally meant for serving/retired Judges.

Implementation of UCC will be greatest tribute to gender justice: JNU V-C

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Vice-Chancellor Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit said on Monday the "greatest tribute" to gender justice would be to implement a uniform civil code.

Delivering the Dr B R Ambedkar lecture series, she said uniformity of laws is meant to make people progressive and broad-minded.

The Vice Chancellor said Ambedkar wanted the implementation of a uniform civil code.

"Goa has a uniform civil code which was imposed by the Portuguese so there also Hindus, Christians and Buddhists and everybody has accepted it so why is it that it is not being done. Uniformity of laws, their accomplishment as per the Constitution, meant

making people progressive and broad-minded to accept the laws put for the society," she said.

Pandit was speaking on 'Dr B R Ambedkar's Thoughts on Gender Justice: Decoding the Uniform Civil Code'.

She said "unless we have social democracy, our political democracy is a mirage.

"It is pertinent you cannot have a minority having all the rights when the majority does not, sometime you will have a backlash that you will not be able to handle."

"The greatest tribute to gender justice would be to implement uniform civil code as ambitioned by Babasaheb," she added.

Talking about the need for reservation for women, she said most would favour it but even today out of 54 universities just six have women vice chancellors with only one from the reserved category.

Sharp decline in Left Wing Extremism incidents under Modi regime: Amit Shah

PTI ■ BHOPAL

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said there has been a significant decline in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) incidents during the Narendra Modi-led Government's tenure.

Shah made the remarks while chairing the 23rd meeting of Central Zonal Council in Bhopal. After the formation of the Modi government, besides stringently tackling the LWE problem, many important steps have been taken for the development of Naxal-affected areas, Shah said.

"This has yielded good results. When LWE violence was at its peak in 2009, the number of militant violent incidents was 2,258, which decreased to 509 in 2021," he said. "In 2009, altogether 1,005 people died in extremist violence while 147 people died in 2021. LWE violent acts on

police stations have also decreased. There were 96 such incidents in 2009 which reduced to 46 in 2021," an official statement quoted Shah as saying. The Centre is further strengthening security forces in LWE-affected areas, he said, adding 40 new security camps have been opened in the last three years and 15 more are to be opened. "This is a great achievement. The Centre, along with the states, is committed to eliminate the LWE problem," he said.

The Central Zonal Council comprises Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Chhattisgarh. These states are important for their geographical location, contribution to GDP and national development, he said. Shah, who is also the Cooperation Minister, said Modi has always worked to strengthen the spirit of cooperative federalism.

SC stays HC order to...

From Page 1
This was challenged by the BJP leader before a sessions court which had dismissed his plea. Hussain has denied the allegations.

During the hearing on Monday, Rohatgi said "absolutely bogus allegations" have been made in the matter against the BJP leader. The High Court has proceeded on the assumption that the only manner of investigation can be post registration of FIR, he said, adding this is an incorrect interpretation of the law.

The counsel appearing for the woman said that after the High Court passed the order, she was assaulted and was admitted to the AIIMS trauma

centre. Seeking protection for the complainant, the counsel alleged that the police were in connivance with the accused as they are powerful. Rohatgi said the petitioner is a public figure and bogus allegations have been levelled against him. The top court said the complainant is at liberty to file an affidavit in response to the petition within two weeks.

"The complainant is at liberty to approach the concerned police station and if any application is made, the concerned police station shall look into the matter and afford every possible help and assistance including the police protection, if required," the bench said.

ISIS fidayeen plotting to avenge Prophet barb...

From Page 1
Germany-based counter-terrorism expert and geopolitical security analyst of Afghan descent Dr Ajmal Sohail said, "The detained terrorist could be a member of ISIS leader Gulmuraad Alimof who has a

significant base in southern Afghanistan. Alimof controls about 500 fighters of the ISIS, most of Kazakh, Tajik, Uzbek and Chechen origin." Alimof is himself from Tajikistan and was earlier the ISIS commander in Syria and Iraq and moved his

assets to Central Asia and West Asia in 2014-15 after reverses at the behest of US forces. Post the withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan in August 2021, he moved his bases to Afghanistan. Alimof lost a number of his fighters in the Syrian

Lockdowns, conservation raise rhinos' number in India...

From Page 1
As a result, overall white rhino numbers on the continent have declined by almost 12 per cent (from 18,067 to 15,942 individuals) during this period, while populations of black rhino increased by just over 12 per cent (from 5,495 to 6,195 individuals). Overall, Africa's rhino population declined around 1.6 per cent per year, from an estimated 23,562 individuals in 2018 to

22,137 at the end of 2021. According to the report, global lockdowns and restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic saw several African countries experience dramatically reduced poaching rates in 2020 compared to previous years. South Africa lost 394 rhinos to poaching in 2020, while Kenya recorded no rhino poaching that year. However, as Covid-19 travel restrictions were lifted,

some range states reported new increases in poaching activities - for example, South Africa reported 451 and Kenya six poached rhinos in 2021. However, these numbers are still significantly lower than during the peak in 2015, when South Africa alone lost 1,175 rhinos to poaching.

However, in 2019, before the Covid-19 outbreak, the reported seized weight of illegal rhino

specimens reached its highest point of the decade, perhaps due to increased regulations and law enforcement efforts. While the range and consumer countries most affected by illegal trade remained the same as in previous reports, the lack of consistent reporting by some countries still limits the ability to better understand patterns of illegal trade in rhino horns, said the statement.

SC scraps CoA, clears way for lifting of FIFA...

From Page 1
Former Indian football team captain Baichung Bhutia and CoA opposed modification of the court's orders and said the court should not terminate the reform process and not come under pressure from threats of FIFA as sacrificing the Under-17 Women's World Cup now would eventually enable the youngsters of the country, in the long run, to look for the main World Cup.

The bench said that it understands the gravity of the situation but cannot sacrifice the World Cup scheduled to be held later this year in the larger interest of the country. "Had it been cricket and a World Cup would have been canceled due to the court order, everyone would have targeted us saying there are people who have done this or that. Here, we understand everything and our only concern is that the scheduled Under-17 Women's World Cup is held in India", it said. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta,

appearing for the Centre, said that there are two "disastrous consequences" the country is facing, if the orders are not modified -- one that India will lose hosting rights of any future football World Cup, and second our teams will not be able to play even friendly international matches across the world. The bench said bearing in mind the importance of the Under-17 Women's World Cup 2022 tournament being held in India, it is passing the directions on the application the election programme, which was fixed in pursuance of the order dated August 3, 2022, is permitted to be modified by extending the date of election by one week. "The voters' list for the ensuing elections shall consist exclusively of representatives of the Member Associations representing the States/Union Territories (35+1 Associations)", the bench said and excluded eminent players as directed earlier.

The top court's order said the time for the completion of the elections which were scheduled to take place on August 28, 2022, shall stand extended by a period of one week and appreciated the efforts of Justice (retd) Dave-led committee. "The Returning Officers shall, within the said period, refix the modalities for the filing of nominations from the stage which was reached on August 13, 2022, and ensure that the elections are completed on schedule", it said, adding the Executive Committee of AIFF shall consist of 23 persons.

The bench said 17 members (inclusive of the President, a Treasurer, and one Vice President) will be elected by the electoral college consisting of 35 associations representing States/Union Territories and six members shall be drawn from eminent players with four men and two women. The country is scheduled to host its first FIFA event from October 11-30.

Was offered deal to break AAP: Sisodia...

From Page 1
"Manish himself said the CBI seized his phone. Then, the name of the person on whose phone the messages were sent and the calls was made must be revealed and the device should be investigated," Tiwari's post on Twitter, roughly translated from Hindi, read.

He then said once the name of the person is disclosed and the phone is examined, everything will be crystal clear ("doodh ka doodh aur sharab ka sharab hojayeega"). Meanwhile, addressing a Press conference at the party headquarters, BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said the Government incorporated the provision of 10 per cent increase in liquor license fee at the time of renewal.

"But it was not taken,

which resulted in a loss of at least Rs 900 crore to the exchequer...Every time we ask them tough questions, they keep changing the goal post. We are giving them 24 hours to answer our question," said Bhatia. The BJP leader said the Delhi Government committee recommended that wholesale distribution should be kept with the government, retail vending should be given based on a new lottery system to ensure transparency in the process and make provision for a 10% increase in license fees at the time of renewal.

"But the committee's recommendations regarding the wholesale and lottery system were not incorporated in the policy. Kejriwal and Sisodia are the first Chief Minister and Deputy CM in the country


who don't trust Government agencies. The wholesale distribution (L1) was given to private players despite the committee's recommendation causing a loss to the exchequer," said Bhatia. Instead of a lottery system for retail vends for 32 zones, Bhatia said, "They selected 16 companies and gave them two zones each. They even gave a waiver of Rs 44 crore on license fee and waived off the earnest money deposit of a firm worth Rs 30 crore."

The BJP leader said Kejriwal's silence on corruption charges proves that he is "hardcore dishonest". Bhatia said Kejriwal and his deputy, who is "accused number one in the liquor policy scam", keep changing the goalpost every time the BJP asks them tough

questions. Bhatia said that the BJP is a "respected family" and has no place for "corrupt people".

"Earlier, we had given 24 hours to him to respond to the charges. If he's a 'kattar emandar' (hardcore honest man) why is he not answering the questions being raised? Only one tweet has come up which is meaningless. We again give 24 hours to Kejriwal to answer questions on charges of corruption in the Delhi excise policy," he said.

Referring to the Delhi excise policy, he said the AAP leader was "breaking records in corruption" ("bhrashtachar ka kirtiman"). BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri who was also present asked why Kejriwal was not answering the questions being raised on the excise policy.



New Okhla Industrial Development Authority
MAIN ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING, SECTOR-6, NOIDA, G.B. NAGAR (U.P.)
Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-TENDER NOTICE

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

S. No.	Jobs No.	Name of the work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
1	17/GM/SM (WC-2)/2022-23	D/o Village (Repair & Maintenance work in Atta & Morna Community Centre), Noida.	32.29
2	17/GM/SM -WC-03/2022-23	M/o Building (Renovation work in C Block Market Centre sector-39) Noida.	34.03
3	08/GM/SM -WC-03/2022-23	M/o Drain (Repairing of drain and placing of SFRC Cover in Block- B & F Sector-40) Noida	73.01
4	11//GM/SM -WC-03/2022-23	M/o Road (Rennovation of Market area in Block-A, Sector-44) Noida	44.77
5	14/PGM/SM -WC-03/2022-23	D/o Village (C/o C.C Road & Drain Dushyant Chauhan to sateshwar house and sukhveer chauhan to dushyant chauhan's house in Barola) Noida	68.38
6	16/PGM/SM -WC-03/2022-23	M/o Drain (Repairing of Drain and placing of SFRC cover in Sector-39) Noida Rs. 56.26 Lacs	56.26
7	12/GM/Sr.M (WC-4)/ET/ 2022-23	M/o Road Annual Maint. Of Central verge & footpath in work Circle-4 Area, Noida.	70.64
8	08/GM /S.M.-WC-6/2022-23	D/o Sector-116 (Covering of Drain along 30M wide road in Sector-117), Noida	55.60
9	24/GM /S.M.-WC-6/2022-23	D/o Sector-117 (C/o Boundary wall Towards Unitech Group House in Sector-117), Noida	71.91

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 05.09.2022 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 06.09.2022 at 11.00 AM.

B) Re- Tender Work:

S. No.	Jobs No.	Name of the work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
10	14/GM/ SM (WC-9)/2022- 23	D/o Village (M/o C.C. road in village Sultanpur), Noida.	49.00
11	09/GM/ SM(WC-9)/ET/ 2022-23	D/o Village (M/o CC road and drain in village Yakutpur) Noida.	89.27

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 29.08.2022 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 30.08.2022 at 11.00 AM.

Principal General Manager, NOIDA

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

Public Notice

My Clients **Deepak Kumar R/o WZ-93, 2nd flr,Gajraj Singh Complex,Paschim Vihar,ND-63 & Amit Kumar R/o-643, Pkt-6,Sec B-4,DDA Flat,Narela,ND-40** S/o Ramesh Kumar have severed all their relations with their Brother **Sumit Kumar & his wife Priya R/o-72,6th flr,Blk-A6, Pkt-1A,Sec-A1-A4,Narela, ND-40** due to their misbehaviour. If anybody deals with them in any manner he/she all do so at his/her own risk. My Clients shall not be responsible for the same in any manner.

Ramesh Chander (Adv),CH-68 Western Wing,Ts Hazari Court

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

LOST & FOUND

I, Khadija D/o. Arshad, R/o.832, Katra Hiddu, Farashkhana, Lahori Gate, Delhi have actually lost my original marksheet / certificate of 10th Roll No. 6344910 (CBSE Delhi, 2009), 12th Roll No.9639702 (CBSE Delhi, 2011) And B.A. (H) Arabic Mark-Sheet Roll No.11085206004 (Zakir Hussain College, DU, 2014) all Semester.

PD(90154)A

Heads roll in Excise scam as MHA punishes babus

Then Excise Commissioner Krishna and Deputy Excise Commissioner Tiwari suspended

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs on Monday suspended Gopi Krishna, the former Excise Commissioner of Delhi, and Anand Kumar Tiwari, the then Deputy Excise Commissioner, after their names came up in the alleged excise scam in the national Capital. Sources said their suspension was recommended by Delhi Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena.

Krishna, a 2012-batch IAS officer of the AGMUT Cadre, is currently posted in the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu. Tiwari, a DANICS officer, was the Deputy Commissioner to Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

“The decision to this effect has been conveyed to the Chief Secretary, GNCTD and the Principal Secretary, Vigilance, whose inquiry report into the excise scam formed the basis of the L-G’s recommendation for suspension,” the sources said.

The sources alleged that

the inquiry report brings out subversion of basic Government financial rules to provide benefit to licencees/tenderers.

“Officers of departments have tried to equate the failure of successful tenderer selected through a bidding process in obtaining a NOC from Airport Authorities, with unsuccessful bidders to justify the return of earnest money deposit (EMD) amounting to ₹30 crore of a successful tenderer who failed to obtain a NOC from the airport authorities.

“It is observed that there is a difference between an unsuccessful bidder and a successful bidder failing to meet pre-defined requisites — in this matter an NOC from the Airport Authority. Considering this condition, a successful bidder who has made an offer after considering the tender conditions, can’t be extended benefits in terms of Rule 48 (10) of Excise Rules 2010 which is applicable for unsuccessful bidders,” sources added.

The inquiry report reveals

that officers of the department have allowed pro rata waiver on tendered licence fees for closure of retail vends due to Omicron-related issues, despite the fact that no such specific provision for compensation in form of reduction in tendered licence fees was available in the tender document. “It also observed that despite specific recommendation of the accounts branch for not allowing compensations more than actual reduction in sale, the officers moved the same and the Minister in-charge vide an order dated 01/02/2022 directed to provide pro rata licence fee relief to each licencee of the closed vends,” sources said.

“The inquiry report points out that despite the finance department underlining specifically that the proposed changes/amendments in the Excise Policy 2021-22 were prima facie wrong and required approval of the Lt-Governor, Sisodia blocked the note to this effect and returned the file to the Finance Secretary,” the sources alleged.

BJP holds protest near CM’s house

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP on Monday staged a protest near Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal’s residence in Civil Lines area, demanding the dismissal of Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia from the Cabinet after the alleged Excise Policy scam.

Thousands of saffron party workers gathered near the CM’s residence in the national Capital and shouted slogans against Sisodia.

Speaking on the occasion, Leader of Opposition, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri alleged that retail shops were opened in those areas where they should not have been opened under the new Excise Policy, by going against the law. Bidhuri said that despite knowing the fact that they cannot open shops in non-conforming areas, the Kejriwal Government allowed liquor barons to open stores there. “The Deputy Chief



Minister also misled the Delhi Assembly on this issue when he was asked in the House if the Government had allowed opening of shops in non-conforming areas. More than 300 liquor vends were opened illegally and huge corruption was carried out,” said Bidhuri adding that the Kejriwal Government took money from the liquor mafia and by increasing the commission was done to directly benefit them.

Former Union Minister and MP, Dr Harsh Vardhan

alleged that Kejriwal has no explanation for corruption done under the new Excise Policy and hence, when questioned on it, he tries to side-track the issue by talking about education and health and pats his own back by getting paid news published in foreign media.

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta said Kejriwal should expel Sisodia from his Cabinet as he is “accused number one” in the case registered by the CBI.

Point-by-point rebuttal to CS’ report by AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP Government sources on Monday issued a point-by-point rebuttal to the Delhi Chief Secretary’s report flagging alleged “violations of rules and procedural lapses” in the implementation of the Excise Policy 2021-22, amid a CBI probe into the matter.

As per the report, seven specific violations and lapses, including waiver of licence fee worth ₹144.36 crore of licencees due to the Covid pandemic, refund of ₹30 crore earnest money deposit (EMD) of a bidder for the airport zone, reducing the number of dry days, and lack of coercive action on payment default are the issues that have been raised.

The AAP sources defended the rebates allowed in the Excise Policy, saying the Government had acted and capped discount to 25 per cent, when market distortions were feared due to hefty concessions offered by liquor vends.

According to Government sources, the licencees had approached the Government requesting waiver in the licence fee for the days of the lockdown that came soon after liquor shops opened from November 17. The Government initially ignored their requests, but it waived the licence fee after the licencees approached the High Court, although there was no such specific provision for compensation in the tendered document.

“The licencees approached the High Court, which in its order on January 6, 2022 directed the Government to dispose of the matter within a week.

The Excise Department had submitted to the Excise Minister not to consider the waiver as there was no such provision for it in the tender document. The Minister had asked the department to submit report if the licencees effected any sale on the days of Covid-19-induced restrictions,” sources said.

“On the basis of the Excise Department calculations, prorate licence fee waiver to each licencee was given separately.

Further, actual waiver granted to the licencees as a whole was actually 24.02 per cent (not 49.54 per cent) with individual relief varying from 9.94 per cent to 41.01 per cent, totalling Rs 144.35 crore,” the sources said. In the matter of refund of the EMD in the airport zone, the Government sources said, “It is absolutely wrong to say that there was a loss of revenue because it obtained what was due.”

The EMD of the H1 bidder who failed to obtain the no objection certificate (NOC) from the airport authorities was returned as per the policy approved by the Government, they explained.

The issue was placed before the Excise Minister who directed “in all fairness, that the EMD should be refunded if the applicant fails to obtain NOC from Airport Authorities within 30 days, since no licence is given by the department by that time,” the sources said.

The Chief Secretary in his report had cited that the Excise Department revised the formula for calculation of rates of foreign liquor and that both beer and foreign liquor were made cheaper for retail licencees which tantamount to extending “undue favour” to retail licencees.

The sources said the Excise Department had after approval of the Group of Ministers (GoM) and Cabinet changed import pass fees on beer and profit margin per unit for manufacturer of foreign liquor.

The GoM had recommended changing prevailing import fee of ₹5 per bulk litre to ₹50 per case for IMFL and ₹50 per bottle of foreign liquor. In the earlier excise regime, beer was exempted from levy of import pass fee.

Levy of import pass fee of ₹50 per case, as recommended by the GoM, would have led to a substantial hike in the wholesale price of beer segment, the sources said.

The profit margin in case of foreign liquor was added twice “inadvertently” as a result of this “double counting”, the price of foreign liquor was causing an increase by a margin of 80-95 per cent of the wholesale price in 2019-20, they said.

BJP used ED, CBI to push Sisodia to split party: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Monday alleged that the BJP had orchestrated CBI-ED investigations against Delhi Deputy Chief Minister, Manish Sisodia to pressurise him to cause a rift in the AAP and join the BJP.

Addressing a press conference, AAP spokesperson, Saurabh Bhardwaj said that Sisodia refused the BJP’s offer saying he won’t ever side with a party of traitors and anti-nationals.

“Sisodia replied to the BJP saying that he is a Rajput, a descendant of Maharana Pratap. He will have his head chopped off, but he won’t kneel before the BJP’s corrupt-criminals and traitors. The AAP and the whole of Delhi takes pride in Manish Sisodia,” said Bhardwaj.

Bhardwaj further accused the BJP of running a “political laundry service”. “Suvendu Adhikari, Himanta Biswa Sarma, Mukul Roy, Narayan Rane, Anil Sharma, Pema Khandu, Baijayant Panda were all labelled corrupt scammers by the BJP. ED-CBI raids were ordered on them, but the day they joined the BJP, all their sins were washed off and they became innocent honest leaders. The BJP used the same script to court Manish Sisodia. They offered to shut all cases against him if he joins the BJP, this is the level BJP has stooped to,” said Bhardwaj.

“The BJP had extended their offer to the extent of saying they need Sisodia in the BJP because they do not have a face to field against CM Arvind

“Suvendu Adhikari, Himanta Biswa Sarma, Mukul Roy, Narayan Rane, Anil Sharma, Pema Khandu, Baijayant Panda were all labelled corrupt scammers by the BJP. ED-CBI raids were ordered on them, but the day they joined the BJP, all their sins were washed off and they became innocent honest leaders. The BJP used the same script to court Manish Sisodia. They offered to shut all cases against him if he joins the BJP,” said Bhardwaj

Kejriwal. They switched between Satish Upadhyay, Harsh Vardhan, Manoj Tiwari, Adesh Gupta but Delhi refused to accept them. The BJP asked him to be the CM candidate, singing all sorts of praises, offering a long future,” said Bhardwaj.

“Sisodia very strongly told him that his loyalty doesn’t come with a price tag. His blood doesn’t bring such values along. He can’t betray his leader and mentor Arvind Kejriwal. The BJP need to know there are leaders like Sisodia who refuse to be pressured by them,” said Bhardwaj.

In another press conference, AAP legislator from Kalkaji, Atishi hit out at Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and said that the Prime Minister does not have time to pay attention to the issue of inflation, unemployment or education and healthcare facilities but he is only bothered about targeting the Opposition parties and pulling every trick in the book to topple non-BJP State Governments all over the country.

“We just now witnessed the undemocratic path taken by the BJP to dismantle the alliance of the Shiv Sena. We also saw how the BJP bulldozed Governments of State-after-

State in Goa, Karnataka and Manipur. The BJP uses its entire muscles to cause a rift in the ruling parties and topple their Governments. As per the Prime Minister’s and BJP’s modus operandi, investigation agencies of the Central Government are the most powerful weapon in their arsenal,” she said. AAP Rajya Sabha MP, Sanjay Singh said that the BJP had used CBI-ED to cause rifts in Maharashtra, Karnataka, MP and Goa Governments so they could come to power but the BJP’s plans completely failed in Delhi.

“The BJP is in deep shock ever since Manish Sisodia exposed their intentions. They have no answer to him. They are seeing their experiments of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Rajasthan and Bengal fall flat on their faces in Delhi. Their chain of breaking Governments and buying MLAs has completely failed today,” claimed Singh.

“It has been made clear how the ED-CBI are nothing but foot soldiers of the BJP that orchestrate this operation. They wrote the same script for Delhi but Sisodia refused to budge,” said Singh.

Cong demands resignation of Sisodia, Arvind Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former Delhi Minister and senior Delhi Congress leader Haroon Yusuf on Monday demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

Addressing the media, Yusuf said that Kejriwal was the protector of the liquor mafia, and should be held responsible for the Excise Policy scam. He said that Sisodia should have quit on his own when the

Lieutenant-Governor ordered a CBI probe into the scam, and raids were held at his office and residence and that of his associates in various locations.

“The curse of implementing the destructive liquor policy cannot be washed away by taking cover in the advertisement-based ‘Delhi Model of Education’, as the people of Delhi have now realised the kind of corruption perpetuated by the Delhi Government in the past eight years,” he claimed.

CBI grills Indospirit Managing Director

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Monday questioned the Managing Director of Indospirit Sameer Mahendru, along with other accused named in the FIR, in connection with the alleged excise policy scam.

The agency has already questioned Hyderabad-based businessman and accused in the case Arun Ramachandra Pillai once while Mahendru is being questioned again in connection with the case, officials said.

In its FIR, the CBI has mentioned two instances where Mahendru allegedly made payments to the tune of Rs 4-5 crore to “close associates” of Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who is the prime accused in the case.

Sisodia’s “close associates”. Amit Arora, director of Buddy Retail Pvt. Limited, Gurugram, Dinesh Arora and Arjun Pandey - were “actively involved in managing and diverting the undue pecuniary advantage collected from liquor licencees” to the accused public servants, according to the FIR.

The CBI has alleged that Radha Industries managed by Dinesh Arora received Rs 1 crore from Mahendru.

“Source further revealed that Arun Ramachandra Pillai used to collect undue pecuniary advantage from Sameer Mahendru for onward transmission to the accused public servants through Vijay Nair.

15 Chinese nationals sans visas arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

Fifteen Chinese nationals, including a woman, staying without valid visas in Gautam Buddh Nagar were detained on Monday by police.

The police commissionerate had launched a campaign for documents verification of foreigners living in the districts adjoining Delhi, after the arrest of a Chinese man in June, for staying illegally in Greater Noida. He is under investigation for suspected hawala links. “As part of the campaign, 15 Chinese nationals staying illegally in Gautam Buddh Nagar were detained by the Local Intelligence Unit and will be deported soon,” police said.

Farmers hold ‘mahapanchayat’ at Jantar Mantar, raise slew of demands

Major traffic snarls at Delhi’s borders as cops tighten security

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The farmers unions under the banner of Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) held a mahapanchayat at Jantar Mantar pressing their demands including legal guarantee to minimum support price, withdrawal of Agnipath scheme, arrest of Union Minister Ajay Mishra Tani, justice to those farmers’ families who lost their loved ones in the Lakhimpur Kheri “massacre” and release of the farmers who are in jail for

the last nine months. SKM claimed that farmers were being stopped from reaching Jantar Mantar. However, the Delhi Police denied the claim. The farmers’ union said that the mahapanchayat had ended today and a meeting will be convened at the Rakabganj Gurdwara to decide our future strategy.

The national Capital on Monday witnessed massive traffic jams at Delhi borders with some of the commuters getting stuck for more than an hour amid curbs put in place by the Delhi Police in wake of mahapanchayat call given by farmers. Police said that all vehicles entering the capital are being checked and the police personnel are on ‘alert mode’.

Since Monday morning, amid beefed up security at

Delhi borders due to the ‘mahapanchayat’ called by farmers’ body, long queue of vehicles were seen at the Ghazipur and Singhu border as each one was being checked by the police. Police said that this is part of the security arrangements put in place in view of the ‘mahapanchayat’. Massive traffic jam was also witnessed near on roads adjoining the borders, including, Karnal road, Libas Pur, Samaypur Badali, Narela.

Dependra Pathak, the Special Commissioner of Police, Law and Order said, “We have made adequate arrangements to ensure that law and order is maintained and there is no loss of life and property.”

During the daylong mahapanchayat, the farmers carrying the flags of their unions



Farmers assemble at the Jantar Mantar following farmers’ union’s call to stage a protest to press for a legal guarantee for MSP and other demands, in New Delhi on Monday

raised slogans against the BJP-led Centre for “not fulfilling” its promises. Farmers wearing pagadis (turban), mostly green and yellow demanded a law

ensuring minimum support price for crops, farm loan waiver, and sacking of Union minister Ajay Mishra.

The farmers, who came

Students protesting delay in scholarships manhandled by JNU security guards: ABVP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) on Monday alleged that their president along with a visually-impaired student was injured on Monday after security guards at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) roughed them up for protesting on campus.

The members of ABVP said that they have submitted five complaints with the police after the incident. “The complaints were given by Chirag Dhankar, Nishant Vidhyarthi, Raj, Govind Dangi and Abhishek Kumar just after the incident,” said an ABVP member. The students had staged a protest seeking the release of fellowship which they claimed has not come in over a year.

Around a dozen students have been hurt in the assault, the Right-wing group said.



“Today students ‘gheraoed’ the administration office regarding the release of fellowships and scholarships. Students said that the university administration has been ignoring their demands for the release of fellowships and scholarships for a long time,” JNU’s Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad president Rohit Kumar said.

“The JNU administration carried out a violent attack on the students to suppress the

scholarship scam. The students were badly beaten up by the security staff ordered by the administration,” he added.

As many as 12 students, including four female students, suffered injuries and are under treatment, said ABVP activist Ambuj.

Meanwhile, police said that so far no complaint has been received in this connection and necessary legal action will be taken if the matter is reported to the police.

4 killed as bus rams car; 1 killed as car runs into truck

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

In two separate road accidents, five people were killed while two were injured in the wee hours on Monday in Gurugram. Police said that of those killed in two separate incidents, three were students while two worked with a private company.

In first incident, four friends — two students and two private company employees — were killed and the other was seriously injured after their car was hit from behind by a speeding bus, in Khetawas village on the Gurugram-Farrukhnagar road on Monday.

The horrific incident, which happened in the morning in front of a petrol pump, when the five friends in a Baleno car were returning from a farm house after celebrating the birthday of one of their friends, was captured in the

CCTV camera installed at the pump. An FIR has been registered against the bus driver at Farrukhnagar Police Station. The injured were rushed to a nearby hospital where four of them died and one is said to be still critical.

According to the police, victims were identified as Paras Batolar (22), a resident of HBC colony, Sector 29, Faridabad, Abhishek Chaudhary (23), a resident of Madhu Nagar, Agra, Jeshnav Kakkar, a resident of Sector 28, Faridabad, and Aavin Chaudhary alias Nar, a native of Mathura in Uttar Pradesh. The person critically injured in the accident was identified as 23 year-old Nitin Sangwan, a resident of Baleswa colony in Faridabad.

Police said that the private bus was carrying Maruti company staff and was headed towards Gurugram coming from Charkhi Dadri.

In the second incident, a final year MBBS student was



killed while his classmate sustained injuries when the car in which they were travelling collided with a stationary truck on Budhera Road around 12.10 AM on Monday. The deceased was identified as Sunny a resident of district Sonapat in Haryana. The complainant, Ankit, a resident of the same district, stated in his police complaint that the accident took place when he and Sunny

the final year students of Shree Guru Gobind Singh Tricentenary (SGT) University in Budhera were returning to their college from Sector-83 on Monday morning.

The complainant alleged in his complaint that “I was driving my Creta car while Sunny was sitting on the rear seat and when they reached 50-metre Budhera Road the truck was parked on the wrong direc-

tion without any reflectors, indicator or parking lights and due to the headlights of oncoming vehicles, I could not notice the truck and our car collided with it.”

“I immediately took Sunny to SGT hospital where doctors declared him dead,” the complainant told the police.

“We are searching for the truck driver, who managed to flee from the spot, with the help of the vehicle registration number provided by the complainant. He will be arrested soon,” said assistant sub-inspector, Mandeep Kumar, the investigating officer of the case said.

The body of the victim was handed over the body to the kin after autopsy, he said.

An FIR under sections 283 (obstruction in a public way) and 304A (causing death by negligence) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered against the errant driver of the truck at Sector-10A police station.

Ready for ‘long battle’ to ‘unite’ country, says Rahul

Cong former chief reaches out to civil society ahead of his ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the his party’s mega ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’ campaign – being billed as the “longest yatra mounted in this country over the last century”, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Monday sought to reach out to the civil society and maintained that he is ready for the “long battle” to “unite” the country.

Addressing a gathering of civil society representatives, Rahul stressed that the politics of the country has become “polarised” and the idea of undertaking the yatra is to tell that on one side there is the ideology of the Sangh and on the other side is the ideology of uniting everyone.

Congress had announced last week it will launch on September 7 the ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’. “We are starting this journey with the belief that the people of India want the politics of uniting, not dividing,” he was quoted as saying during the interaction.

The ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra Conclave’ here was attended by over 150 civil society organisations, movements, professionals and Unions with the likes of Aruna Roy, Syeda Hameed, Sharad Behar, P V Rajagopal, Bezawada Wilson, Devanoor Mahadeva, GN Devy and Yogendra Yadav, participating in it.

The participant organisations in a statement welcomed



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi interacts with representatives of various civil society organisations during the ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’ conclave at Constitution Club, in New Delhi on Monday

PTI

the decision of launching the Yatra and expressed their willingness to engage with the initiative. It was also decided that an appeal will be issued in the coming days for larger engagement of various civil society groups, Jan Andolans and individuals, the statement said.

Senior party leader Digvijaya Singh presented the details of the ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’ to the civil society delegates and invited those speaking up on people’s issues to participate in it.

Speaking with reporters after the meeting, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh, who was present in both sessions, said Rahul spent almost 90 minutes interacting with about 150 civil society organisations drawn from 21-22 states of the country.

“He (Gandhi) answered questions from 35-40 people. He had no notes or pad in his hands, and definitely no tele-

prompter,” Ramesh said in an apparent swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi who he often claims reads from the tele-prompter.

Ramesh said Rahul talked about how the Yatra is planned and what he expects from that. He identified three main pillars of the Bharat Jodo Yatra -- economic, social and the political, Ramesh said.

Ramesh elaborated saying there were very grave economic challenges confronting the country on account of inflation, unemployment and concentration of economic wealth and growing regional disparities.

He also pointed to social polarisation on the basis of caste, religion, dress, food and language and there were political challenges on account of growing use of the Centre’s institutions and complete weakening of the states.

“The yatra is by the

Congress. Its leaders are participating in it. It is a political yatra in a non-partisan way. We have appealed to other political parties, civil society groups and individuals who are worried, concerned, anguished and pained at the current state of the Indian democracy, society and economy to participate in the Yatra,” he said.

“We will launch logo, tagline and website of this 3,500-km long yatra which will be the longest yatra mounted in this country over the last century or so,” he added.

The former party chief will participate in the yatra starting September 7 from Kanyakumari, Ramesh said.

The “padayatra” (foot march) will cover 12 states and two Union territories. It will be about 3,500-km long and will be completed in about 150 days, Ramesh told reporters last week.

5-juge SC bench to hear dispute over control of services in Delhi

Will hear scope of powers of Centre, Delhi Govt over Delhi services

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Justice NV Ramana on Monday said he has set up a five-judge Constitution bench to hear the legal issue concerning the scope of legislative and executive powers of the Centre and National Capital Territory Government over control of services in Delhi. The CJI said a bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud will hear the dispute between the Centre and the Delhi government.

On May 6, the top court had referred to a five-judge Constitution bench the issue of control of services in Delhi. The apex court had said the limited issue of control over services was not dealt with by the Constitution bench which elaborately dealt with all legal questions.

“The limited issue that has been referred to this Bench relates to the scope of legislative and executive powers of the Centre and NCT Delhi with respect to the term services’. The Constitution bench of this court, while interpreting Article 239AA(3)(a) of the Constitution, did not find any occasion to specifically interpret the impact of the wordings of the same with respect to Entry 41 in the State List.

“We, therefore, deem it appropriate to refer to the above-limited question, for an authoritative pronouncement by a Constitution Bench...,” it had said. Sub Article 3 (a) of



239AA (which deals with the status and power of Delhi in the Constitution, deals with the law-making power of the Delhi Legislative Assembly on the matters enumerated in the State List or the Concurrent List.

The Central Government had also sought a joint hearing of two separate petitions of the Delhi government on control over services and challenging the constitutional validity of the amended GNCTD Act, 2021 and the Transaction of Business Rules, which allegedly give more powers to the Lieutenant Governor respectively, saying they are prima facie correlated.

The plea by the Delhi Government arises out of a split verdict of February 14, 2019, in which, a two judge-bench of Justices A K Sikri and Ashok Bhushan, both retired since had recommended to the Chief Justice of India that a three-judge bench be set up to final-

ly decide the issue of control of services in the national capital in view of its split verdict.

Justice Bhushan had ruled the Delhi Government had no power at all over administrative services. Justice Sikri, however, made a distinction. He said the transfer or posting of officers in top echelons of the bureaucracy (joint director and above) can only be done by the Central Government and the view of the Lieutenant Governor would prevail in case of a difference of opinion on matters relating to other bureaucrats.

In the 2018 judgement, a five-judge Constitution bench had unanimously held that the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi is bound by the aid and advice of the elected government, and both needed to work harmoniously with each other.

SC seeks Gujarat Govt response on Teesta’s bail plea



Hearing on Aug 25

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday sought the Gujarat Government’s response on activist Teesta Setalvad’s bail plea and posted the matter for hearing on August 25. Setalvad was arrested in June for allegedly fabricating evidence to frame “innocent people” in the 2002 Gujarat riot cases. A bench headed by Justice UU Lalit issued notice to the state on her plea.

On August 3, the Gujarat High Court issued notice to the

State Government on the plea and had fixed the matter for hearing on September 19. Before this, on July 30, a Sessions Court in Ahmedabad rejected the bail applications of Setalvad and former DGP RB Sreekumar in the case, saying their release will send a message to wrongdoers that a person can level allegations with impunity and get away with it.

Setalvad and Sreekumar, who was also arrested in June, are accused of fabricating evidence to frame “innocent people” in the post-Godhra riot cases. Former IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt, the third accused in the case, has not applied for bail. Bhatt was already convicted in a case related to custodial torture and facing trial in one more criminal case.

Terrorism, fundamentalism, Af situation among agenda in SCO meet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will discuss the challenge posed by terrorism and fundamentalism besides other security-related issues like situation in Afghanistan with his counterparts of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) combine countries in a conclave in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on Wednesday.

Defence Ministers of China and Russia Wei Fenghe and Sergei Shoigu, respectively besides other member coun-

tries will also participate in the annual Defence Ministers’ meet of the SCO. The event is taking place at a time when conflict is raging in Ukraine and stand-offs persist at some friction points at the border in Eastern Ladakh for the past two years. Defence Minister of Pakistan may also take part in the conclave.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the SCO summit in Tashkent in September second week and is likely to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping and Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on

the sidelines of the summit. Russian President Vladimir Putin will also attend the meet.

Recently, the SCO foreign ministers’ meeting took place in Tashkent and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar represented the country.

The SCO comprises Russia, China, Pakistan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan with Afghanistan, Belarus and Iran having observer status. India joined the SCO in 2017.

The defence ministry said here on Monday Rajnath will reach Tashkent on Tuesday.



He will hold bilateral meeting with Uzbekistan Defence Minister Lt General Nizamovich. Rajnath will also interact with the Indian community there.

“Tomorrow, August 23, I will be in Uzbekistan to take

part in the SCO Defence Ministers Meet being held at Tashkent. I will be holding a bilateral meeting with Uzbekistan’s Defence Minister, Lt. General Nizamovich, and also interact with the Indian community. Look forward to it,” Rajnath said in a tweet message on Monday.

The SCO is an influential economic and security bloc and has emerged as one of the largest transregional international organisations. It was founded at a summit in Shanghai in 2001 by the presidents of Russia, China, the

Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

India has shown a keen interest in deepening its security-related cooperation with the SCO and its Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS), which specifically deals with issues relating to security and defence.

India was made an observer at the SCO in 2005 and has generally participated in the ministerial-level meetings of the grouping, which focus mainly on security and economic cooperation in the Eurasian region.

UK academician moves Delhi HC against denial of entry into India

Researcher on fishing communities was deported after his arrival in Kerala on March 23

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

An anthropologist and academician from the United Kingdom involved in research on fishing communities in Kerala Monday approached the Delhi High Court against denial of entry into India and his deportation upon arrival at Thiruvananthapuram airport earlier this year.

Justice Yashwant Varma

asked the counsel for the Centre to seek instructions on the plea and listed the case for further hearing in October.

In his plea, Filippo Osella, said that till date, the reasons behind his “forceful” deportation from Thiruvananthapuram airport and denial of entry on March 23 in spite of a valid visa are “unknown” and his representatives to the authorities remain unanswered.

The social scientist said that the conduct of the authorities was “unfair, unjust and arbitrary” as well as against the Indian and international laws.



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Monday called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi here and sought ₹10,000 crore on an ad-hoc basis to expedite the Polavaram Irrigation Project on the Godavari river. The Chief Minister later also paid a courtesy visit to President Droupadi Murmu

PTI

India, Australia form working group to promote 2-way mobility of institutions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and his Australian counterpart, Jason Clare, on Monday announced the establishment of a working group on transnational education to build shared understanding of the regulatory settings in both countries and promote opportunities for a two-way mobility of institutions.

Pradhan, who is on a four-day visit to Australia, held a bilateral meeting and co-chaired the sixth meeting of the Australia India Education Council (AIEC) with Clare at the Western Sydney University (WSU).

He also raised the issue of pending visas of Indian students planning to go to Australia for further studies. “During the bilateral meeting at Western Sydney University (WSU), the ministers had fruitful discussions on further strengthening cooperation in education, skill development, research, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Pradhan welcomed Australian universities and skilling institutions to set up their campuses in India and explore areas of collaboration with Indian institutions,” according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Education.

“Later, the ministers also held a joint press conference in which they announced establishment of a working group on transnational education to build shared understanding of the regulatory settings in both



countries and promote opportunities for two-way mobility of institutions. Pradhan reiterated that India remains committed to build knowledge bridges and deepen bilateral engagements with Australia in education, skilling and research for mutual growth and prosperity,” the statement said.

Pradhan also invited Clare to visit India by the end of the year. “The ministers agreed to expand the cooperation in learning, skilling and research with a view to make education a key pillar under the India - Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Pradhan also raised the issue of pending visas of Indian students going to Australia.

The Australian minister has assured cooperation in expediting the pending visas,” the statement said. “Pradhan stressed on the research collaboration between the two countries in the areas

of ayurveda, yoga, agriculture. He called for collaboration in skill certification and areas like mining, logistics management, among others.

He further said that India has set up Digital University and Gati Shakti University for which the two countries can work together to develop curriculum and other aspects,” it added.

Later, Pradhan visited the Homebush West Public School in New South Wales (NSW) for insights on school excellence frameworks and best practices in universalising early childhood education.

The education minister also interacted with the vice-chancellors of Australian universities and senior representatives of the Australian government’s department of education at an event organised by Universities Australia on “transforming our future through institutional collaboration” at UNSW, Sydney.

IN SHORTS

BJP SLAMS USE OF FORCE AGAINST JOB PROTESTERS

New Delhi: The BJP on Monday slammed the Bihar Government for police using “brutal” force against teaching job aspirants protesting in Patna and blamed Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for their woes, saying the Education Ministry was with his JD(U) for over 15 years. “If anyone is responsible for their problems, it is Nitish Kumar alone,” former Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi said.

TREND TO TARGET JUDGES MUST BE CONTAINED: V-P

New Delhi: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Monday said the recent “unfortunate emergence” of a pernicious trend to target individual judges in the public domain calls for exemplary containment.

DEBASISA MOHANTY NII’S NEW DIRECTOR

New Delhi: Senior scientist Debasisa Mohanty was on Monday appointed as the Director of the National Institute of Immunology (NII), according to a Personnel Ministry order.

INDO-B’DESH JOINT RIVERS PANEL MEET ON AUG 25

New Delhi: Ahead of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s visit to India, a Minister-level meeting of the Bangladesh-India Joint Rivers Commission is scheduled on August 25. No official comment has been made by the Government, sources have said.

HEARING CONCLUDES ON SORE MINE LEASING CASE

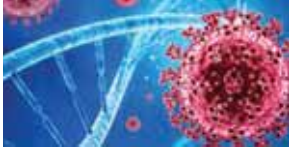
New Delhi: The hearing in the Hemant Soren mine leasing case, has concluded, sources said on Monday. The Election Commission is likely to send its opinion to the Jharkhand Governor in the next fortnight, they said.

Covid-affected children too at risk of neurological, psychiatric disorders

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

It’s not that coronavirus has affected just the mental health of adults across nations in the long term. Covid survivor children too are at an increased risk of neurological and psychiatric conditions such as cognitive deficit, insomnia, ischaemic stroke, nerve/psychotic disorders, and epilepsy or seizures even months after they were infected, researchers have found following a large-scale observational study of more than 1.25 million patient health records.

The report is published in The Lancet Psychiatry journal.



The study that looked at data of 185,748 children found that post-Covid risk trajectories differed in children compared with adults. Children were not more likely to experience mood or anxiety disorders in the six months following SARS-CoV-2 infection.

However, they had “an increased risk of cognitive deficit, insomnia, intracranial haemorrhage, ischaemic stroke, nerve, nerve root, and plexus disorders, psychotic disorders,

and epilepsy or seizures”.

Unlike adults, cognitive deficits in children had a finite risk horizon (75 days) and a finite time to equal incidence (491 days).

“Children have a more benign overall profile of psychiatric risk than do adults and older adults, but their sustained higher risk of some diagnoses is of concern,” said the study. In both generations, a sizable portion of older persons who were given a neurological or psychiatric diagnosis, particularly those with dementia, epilepsy, or seizures, later passed away.

Immediately following the appearance of the delta variant,

higher rates of ischemic stroke, epilepsy or seizures, cognitive deficits, insomnia, and anxiety problems were noted.

“With Omicron, there was a lower death rate than just before emergence of the variant, but the risks of neurological and psychiatric outcomes remained similar,” revealed the study, led by researchers at the University of Oxford in the UK.

“The fact that neurological and psychiatric outcomes were similar during the Delta and Omicron waves, indicate that the burden on the health-care system might continue even with variants that are less severe in other respects,” the researchers warned.

Inclusion of non-locals as voters will end J&K's identity: Farooq

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ SRINAGAR

Raising the bogey of "inclusion of non-locals as voters" in Jammu and Kashmir, the National Conference President Dr Farooq Abdullah Monday said it would "end J-K's identity".

Dr Abdullah, however, failed to forge a unity among the Kashmir-based regional political parties over this 'contentious' issue. The Sajad Lone-led People's Conference and Altaf Bukhari-led Apni Party decided to boycott the All Parties meeting convened at the Gupkar residence of Dr Abdullah.

Putting up a brave front after the meeting ended Dr Abdullah announced the decision was not acceptable to the

political parties here in Kashmir.

Dr Abdullah warned, "The assembly will be in the hands of the outsiders and the people here will be denied it. We discussed the issue and have come to a decision that we do not accept it," he said.

He said all parties, which participated in the meeting, were united against the move to provide voting right to outsiders. "We are not ready to accept it," he said.

Responding to a question after the meeting Dr Abdullah told reporters, "We'll invite the leaders of all national parties to Jammu & Kashmir in September & keep our issues before them". We are against this new law (voting rights for non-locals in J&K), we oppose

it. We are also thinking about going to court on this," he further stated.

The meeting convened was attended by PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, Congress' J-K unit president Vikar Rasool, CPI(M) leader M Y Tarigami and Shiv Sena leaders. In Jammu, senior BJP leaders brainstormed to chalk out a "counter-strategy" against the meeting called by the National Conference leader.

Addressing a separate press conference in Srinagar Sajjad Lone said we will sit on hunger strike in front of Parliament in Delhi if the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir are compromised. Referring to the All parties meeting at the residence of Dr Abdullah Lone said "If this effort was serious,

it would not be held under media gaze. Had it been serious, we would have met and you (media) would not even know about it. I don't agree with the politics of Farooq Abdullah but I have immense respect for him".

He claimed that the gathering appeared to be a contest for points and that he would not want to participate in it. Attacking PDP Chief, Lone said, "Mehboobaji, desperate to retrieve her (lost) ground, issues diktat for calling all party meeting Maharaja Hari Singh's era has long gone by," he added.

The Union Territory administration had earlier issued a clarification on Saturday, saying the reports of a likely addition of over 25 lakh

voters after the summary revision of electoral rolls is a "misrepresentation of facts by vested interests".

In Jammu, J&K BJP Chief Ravinder Raina Monday slammed the NC, PDP and others for raking up the issue of "inclusion of non-local voters" in the revised electoral rolls in the Union Territory and alleged they were spreading propaganda to disturb the peace. Former CM Mufti 1989 contested elections in Muzaffar Nagar in Uttar Pradesh and later he took oath as Home Minister. Former CM Ghulam Nabi Azad won election from Maharashtra and nobody called him non-local.

When they need to contest elections they feel home in every part of Nation but when

it comes to give rights to everyone they are unsafe, Raina asked.

Raina said, "West Pakistani Refugees (WPRs), Valmikis, Gorkhas were residing in J&K for decades but were denied their rights by these parties to vote in assembly, DDC, BDC etc. There were gross human rights violations with these people. Why these parties are opposing rights to these all?"

Raina added that the people of J&K are residing in Delhi, Maharashtra etc for many years, they have surrendered the vote in J&K and have got voting rights there. There was no propaganda there and no one called them outsiders in those places.

"The Congress party will have to answer to the people of



the country, the law which Pandit Nehru brought in 1950, why is the Congress party opposing that law?" said Ravinder Raina. For 70 years, there was discrimination with

Paharis, Gujjars-Bakkarwals, OBCs but these were never given their rights. These parties are the enemies of people enemies of peace and progress in the Nation, Raina said.

Bihar Speaker should resign: RJD Patna cops beat protesters on way to Raj Bhavan

PTI ■ PATNA

The RJD on Monday demanded that Bihar Speaker Vijay Kumar Sinha, a BJP leader, resign forthwith in view of the no-confidence motion moved against him by the 'Mahagathbandhan' earlier this month.

RJD state spokesman Shakti Singh Yadav said in a statement that as per the Vidhan Sabha rules Sinha cannot preside over the special session convened on August 24 when the new government is also scheduled to prove its majority on the floor.

"Vijay Kumar Sinha should make an honourable exit and step down. We wonder what he is trying to prove by sticking around. He cannot sit in the Chair when the House meets. As per rules, the business will have to be conducted by the deputy speaker till a new



Bihar Speaker VK Sinha

Speaker is elected", said Yadav, who is also a former MLA.

More than 40 MLAs of the seven-party 'Mahagathbandhan', which now also includes Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U), had submitted a no confidence motion against Sinha on August 11 soon after the BJP stood stripped of power with the swearing in of a new government. According to the rules, a no confidence motion

against the Speaker can be taken up in the House two weeks after its submission.

The 'Mahagathbandhan' comprises more than 160 MLAs in the 243-strong Assembly, where a simple majority is required for a no confidence motion against the Speaker. Speculations are rife that the RJD, the single largest party in the Assembly with 79 MLAs, will be staking claim for the speaker's post. There is talk that party veteran Awadh Bihari Chaudhary will be nominated for the constitutional post.

The acting chairman of Bihar legislative council Awadhesh Narain Singh, who is also a BJP leader, may be replaced as well.

The JD(U), which has the largest number of MLCs, is said to be mulling nominating its legislator Devesh Chandra Thakur for the post.

PTI ■ PATNA

Police baton-charged and used water cannons in the heart of the Bihar capital on Monday when hundreds of people, many owing allegiance to a political party, staged a demonstration to press several demands.

According to Patna District Magistrate Chandrashekhar Singh, trouble erupted at the Dak Bungalow crossing where two separate groups, one comprising teachers' eligibility test qualified candidates seeking jobs and the other consisting of workers of the Jan Adhikar Party, gathered and tried to proceed towards the Raj Bhavan, situated a couple of kilometres away.

"It was a huge crowd that could not have been allowed to proceed beyond Dak Bungalow crossing. Mild use of force was resorted to as they refused to

disperse despite an offer that a five-member delegation can visit the Raj Bhavan along with a magistrate and submit a memorandum," the DM said.

Meanwhile, a video clip went viral of an official raining blows on a young protester who can be seen rolling on the ground, writhing in pain, while holding aloft a tricolour.

State Congress spokesman Asit Nath Tiwari, whose party is an ally of the ruling coalition, issued a strongly worded statement condemning the episode. "The official is K K Singh, an additional district magistrate with a reputation of high-handedness. During the Covid epidemic, he had commanded citizens to produce videos of themselves beating utensils failing which their applications will not be considered," Tiwari alleged.

"We could have understood had the youngster been



involved in stone-pelting or any type of physical violence himself. But beating up a Tricolour-wielding young man who posed no menace is unacceptable and the official concerned must be punished," Tiwari demanded.

The DM, when asked

about the episode, said the administration has set up a two-member inquiry committee to look into the allegations and examine the video footage.

"The committee will submit its report in two days and action may be taken accordingly," he said.

However, the DM also added that "a case will be lodged against those taking part in the demonstration as well. No processions are allowed at the Dak Bungalow crossing and hence, the protesters will be booked under relevant sections".

Another soldier injured in fidayeen attack on Pargal post passes away

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

One more soldier, injured during the Uri type fidayeen attack on Pargal post in Darhal area of Rajouri on August 11, succumbed to his fatal injuries during the treatment in command hospital on Monday. The soldier who made the supreme sacrifice has been identified as Havaladar Satyapal. His mortal remains were dispatched to his native Jaiyapur village of district Bhuhana, Rajasthan after a solemn wreath-laying ceremony.

Lt-Gen Upendra Dwivedi, Army Cdr Northern Command and all ranks paid homage with full Military Honours to the braveheart Hav Satyapal. In a press statement Defence Spokesman said, "Havaladar Satyapal fought gallantly during the terrorist attack in the Rajouri sector". Two heavily-armed terrorists were neutralised

during the encounter while they attempted to storm an army camp taking advantage of the darkness and thick foliage.

In the initial firefight three soldiers of the Indian Army were killed in action while Rifleman Nishant Malik succumbed later, taking the Army's toll to four.

The slain terrorists were believed to be the members of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) fidayeen squad.

The Pargal Army post, located 25 kms away from the Line of Control, acted as an active base of an Army unit deployed in the forward area.

The post accommodated a large number of soldiers in the remote area and was



guarded by sentry positions and barbed wire fencing.

Akhilesh: No new tie-ups, will contest 2024 Lok Sabha polls with old allies

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said his party would not forge a new alliance and would go to the 2024 Lok Sabha along with old allies.

The SP chief claimed that the Bharatiya Janata Party would be routed in Bihar after the collapse of its alliance with the Janata Dal (United) and formation of a new government there with the support of the Rashtriya Janata Dal.

Akhilesh Yadav was in Azamgarh on Monday to meet jailed party MLA Ramakant Yadav. This was his first visit to Azamgarh after losing the bypoll to Azamgarh Lok Sabha

seat to BJP in June last.

"Ramakant Yadav has been framed in a 20-year-old case. The Yogi Adityanath government intends to keep the MLA in jail till 2024 Lok Sabha election. The BJP will be routed in Bihar and will meet a similar fate in UP during the next Lok Sabha election," Akhilesh Yadav said. The SP chief claimed that Ramakant Yadav was a victim of the conspiracy by the BJP-led UP government.

"Ramakant Yadav was granted bail in old cases but he was booked in fresh cases. The BJP is pursuing the politics of vendetta against its political opponents across the country. The BJP has unleashed terror against the opposition party



leaders by misusing the Central Bureau of Investigation, Enforcement Directorate and the Income Tax Department. Their sole objective is to break the morale of the opposition parties," Akhilesh Yadav said.

"It is not only in Azamgarh; Samajwadi Party leaders are

being targeted across the state and are being framed in fake cases and sent to jail. Their assets are being attached and their commercial establishments and buildings are being demolished without following the due process of law," SP chief alleged.

Killing of IAF men: Yasin Malik rejects court's legal aid offer, insists on physical appearance

PTI ■ JAMMU

A special court here on Monday offered legal aid to JKLF chief Yasin Malik, but he turned it down and again insisted on his physical appearance in the hearing on the killing of four Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel in 1990.

Malik appeared in the hearing via video conference from Delhi's Tihar Jail where he is currently lodged, standing counsel for the CBI Monika Kohli said. Malik, 56, is serving a life sentence in a terror-funding case.

After the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief declined the offer of legal aid, the court asked him to submit his stand in writing on the next date of hearing in the third week of September, Kohli said.

Turning down his plea for physical appearance, the court said there were clear directions from the high court for producing the accused in all cases through video conferencing.

However, the court offered him legal aid but he declined, the CBI counsel said.

Malik observed a 10-day



hunger strike from July 22 after the Centre did not respond to his plea for allowing him to physically appear in a Jammu court hearing the

Rubaiya Sayeed abduction case in which he is an accused.

Kohli is the chief prosecutor in the two key cases against Malik - the 1989 abduction of Rubaiya Sayeed, the daughter of then Union home minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, and the killing of four IAF personnel -- which had taken place when militancy broke out in Kashmir Valley.

She has been representing the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) as a retainer counsel in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court since 2015.

Amit Shah praises CM Yogi for restoring law and order in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has praised Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for restoring law and order in Uttar Pradesh and for completing long-pending irrigation projects.

Participating in the 23rd meeting of the Central Zonal Council which concluded in Bhopal on Monday, Shah said that rule of law had been established after a long time in Uttar Pradesh under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. He added that the chief minister had also succeeded in depoliticising the government machinery.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressed the meeting virtually as he could not reach the venue because of bad weather. Shah said that UP had not only com-



pleted irrigation projects which were pending for years but had also expanded their capacities and launched new projects.

"In the field of infrastructure also, UP has connected the entire state by building many roads, bridges and culverts," he added. Shah added that a lot of work had also been done in the Defence Manufacturing Corridor of UP.

Barring three issues, all other issues were resolved in the Central Zonal Council meeting and it was decided to hold the next

meeting in Rishikesh. Each state will have a 10-minute presentation of its three successful works, so that other states may also take advantage of the good work.

Shah said that there was a time when Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Chhattisgarh used to come under the category of BIMARU states. "It is a matter of joy for us that now all the four states have come out of this category. On behalf of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, I want to congratulate all the chief ministers for bringing Modi's concept of Team India on the ground in your own state. In the last meeting of the Central Zonal Council, 26 out of 30 issues were resolved. In the 14th meeting of the standing committee, out of 54 issues, 35 issues were resolved ahead of the meeting," he said.



People enjoy a boat ride across the Hooghly River as they watch a sunset, in Nadia on Monday

No more blockade

Delhi-NCR has suffered enough during the campaign against the three farm laws; redux shouldn't be allowed

Will the people of Delhi have to suffer another period of farmers' stir? The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), which is a federation of farmers' organisations, recommenced its 75-hour sit-in at Lakhimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh from Thursday. They demand, among other things, the removal of Union Minister Ajay Kumar Mishra, who represents Lakhimpur Kheri in the Lok Sabha, and a law guaranteeing minimum support price (MSP). Mishra's son Ashish is accused of an incident on October 3, 2021, in which eight persons, including four farmers and a journalist, were killed. The SMK now plans a protest at Jantar Mantar. Delhi Police has beefed up security at the Singhu and Ghazipur borders. The SKM has already rejected the Narendra Modi government's committee on MSP. It had earlier successfully fought against the three farm laws which were brought to reform the farm sector. The campaign against the laws continued for over a year, resulting in huge problems for the people of Delhi and the adjoining cities. Unbothered about the inconvenience and misery of the people adversely affected in Delhi-NCR, farm leaders continued their stir; they practically held the people in this region to ransom. On the face of it, theirs was a democratic protest; in reality, however, it was a prolonged sit-in, which meant an equally prolonged torture for the millions of commuters, goods suppliers, etc.

The biggest irony was that the three laws were the most pro-farmer pieces of legislation ever enacted in Independent India. They had a lot of enabling provisions—that is, enabling farmers. For instance, the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act intended to remove stock limits and movement restrictions on essential commodities like food-grains, pulses, edible oils, and onions; the restrictions could be imposed only in extraordinary situations like war and famine. A more pro-farmer law is impossible to conceive, but it was depicted as anti-farmer; it was said that it was brought because the government wanted to help some businesspersons. A photograph, showing silos owned by an industrial house, went viral. See the cronies are already prepared to reap the windfall gains, the protesters and their supporters told the media. Fact-check by various media houses, however, proved that the silos were over 10 years old, but the agitation had a very high emotional quotient. Sentimentalism, which is the bane of India's public discourse, transformed the farmer into the annadata. Some news channels are especially prone to cheap sentimentalism; the annadata phraseology drove out facts and reason from political debate. Left-liberals joined in the fun. Normally, these guys are not very favourably disposed towards the rural gentry—which was spearheading the campaign—but at that time our intellectuals started depicting them as the representatives of Bharat (in contradistinction with India), of 'real India,' as the salt of the earth, and so on. Withdrawal of the three laws emboldened the stir leaders. They, however, should not be allowed to blockade Delhi this time.



Sidhi: Tigress T28 trains hunting to three cubs of her dead sister along with four of her own, at National Park, Sidhi

More trouble for congress

Anand Sharma's resignation puts Congress in a precarious position in Himachal ahead of polls

The resignation of veteran congressman Anand Sharma from the Congress steering committee of Himachal Pradesh is a big blow to the congress in the state which is to go to the polls shortly. The resignation also gives credence to the theory that there is indeed a G-23, a group of disgruntled congressmen who are unhappy with the way the party is being run by the Gandhis. Sharma's resignation comes days after GhulamNabi Azad resigned from the campaign committee in Jammu and Kashmir. Though it could well be a coincident and not a case of solidarity for a like-minded colleague, it calls for party bosses to set their house in order if the grand old party is to perform at the hustings in the states ahead of 2024. These elections are crucial as they will be indicators and also rejuvenate the party workers at the ground level. Sharma was appointed the chairman of the steering committee to steer the party through the elections. Congress sees it as a big opportunity to make a comeback as the BJP's government in the state faces anti-incumbency and also displeasure from various sections of voters which the congress could capitalize on. But Sharma was left out if not insulted by the party's high command after this. He hasn't been invited to the 20-odd meeting held since he became chairman. He wasn't part of the consultations held by central party observer BhupeshBaghel on August 7 in New Delhi and which might have been the reason for his resignation. Though Sharma may be still very much a congressman, it signals a divided house in Himachal Pradesh where Sharma has his ancestral house and clout. Congress



party had won Assembly and Parliamentary by-elections held in October 2021 under the then-party president Kuldeep Singh Rathore. But after that party started wilting. Kajal and Lakhwinder Rana, two of its MLAs joined the BJP. Moreover, the growth of AAP in HP is adding to its woes.

The Congress party high command should indeed be more careful about how it treats its senior leaders, especially when it is facing an existential crisis of sorts and many people who swore by the party are leaving it. The congress leaders, the senior ones at least should not wash their dirty linen in public, they could bring up these issues in the congress working committee before going public or taking extreme steps which further weakens the party they say they have allegiance to.

Reflections on the 75 years journey

High moral values and ethos guided us through the freedom movement and the same became the hallmark of our national journey ever since

The President of Mexico Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador wants the UN to set up a Three-member Commission with Pope Francis, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and Narendra Modi. He wants the three of them to work out a global plan to end wars and violence everywhere. One feels highly elated as this is a great recognition of the credibility India has acquired internationally under NarendraModi. To sustain and enhance India's international presence, the celebrations of 'Azadi Ka Amrita Mahotasava on the completion of seventy-five years must reflect on how far the national initiatives to take the nation and its people ahead on the path of progress and development have succeeded.

The place India enjoys on the global platform requires a strong, cohesive, forward-looking image of the nation that respects its ancient culture and is committed to generating and utilizing new knowledge for the welfare of its people. My mind goes to the disdain with which Indians were treated by their imperial masters. Winston Churchill; who called Gandhi the half-naked fakir; had serious doubts whether India would survive after independence! Seventy-five years is a very minuscule period in the life of any nation, but it's long enough to reflect on the journey of a lifetime. Persons who have seen independent India in its initial years fondly recall the past but are full of pride and self-assurance on achievements in equity, equality, and social justice, so prominently assured in the Constitution of India. The youngsters in schools and colleges could smell of the freedom struggle all around. In school and college functions, dramas and debates, one would invariably find the presence of freedom struggle, and stories connected with the lives of great leaders, young revolutionaries. One recalls the commonality of emphasis on the sacrifices of the political leaders and, probably more than that, the revolutionaries. We also came across teachers in schools who strictly followed Gandhian instructions 'live to serve others!'



India was known for its adherence to ethical, moral, and human values. Where do we stand now on this count? Any detailed assessment of the decline would not be encouraging. India just cannot drift away from its cherished values that enjoy historic continuity from ancient days to Gandhian practices. And hence, India just cannot ignore any decline in these values if it has to acquire quality, excellence, self-dependence; and regain the unique Indian comprehension of a good life, that prepares people to devote themselves fully for the welfare of all: 'SarvaBhuthiteRatah'.

Every Indian could be proud of the strength of its democracy when Atal Bihari Vajpayee was defeated in the lower house of the parliament by one vote, people and nations around yet he handled and won the Kargil war as care-taker prime minister. India had the strength and ammunition to confront the enemy, as it had progressed much ahead of the 1962 Chinese attack. This is also the time to salute the leaders of great stature, vision, and insight who took over the reins of power in 1947 from the alien rulers who had squeezed India to bare bones. Our achievements in science, technology, ICT, space research and its utilization, and success in the area of atomic

THE PACE OF HUMAN-CENTERED PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT DEPENDS ON IDEAS AND IMAGINATION, FORESIGHT AND VISION, AND CONSIDERATION OF THE LEADERSHIP AT THE TOP

and nuclear energy, particularly its peaceful utilization are the products of their vision and ingenuity. They understood the role of academic and professional institutions in the process of forth and development, the outcomes of which are before us in the shape of Institutions like IITs, IIMs, AIIMS, NCERT, AICTE, CSIR, and its regional laboratories, and many more. There is a big lesson -in recalling all this -for the generations ahead:

The pace of human-centered progress and development depends on ideas and imagination, foresight and vision, and consideration and compassion of the leadership at the top. Hence Institutions that nurture ideas, imagination, and leadership must be consistently strengthened. And this has to be achieved on a vast and varied canvass.

The measure of social cohesion and religious amity that is achieved on the playfields could be an eye opener to those not familiar with its strength and outreach. It emanates the positive vibes of 'learning to live together, a critical ingredient in achieving social cohesion and religious amity in India known globally for its diversities.

Institutions develop values, compassion, and caring for others. These become the centers of nurturing talent and creativity that lead to innova-

tions and serious research, the most sought-after ingredient in the knowledge society. The history of social, cultural, and philosophical evolution in India has consistently emphasized human values. In the current global crisis, it is the Indian value - and practiced tradition - of Aparigraha -non-accumulation - that could show the path to retrieve the dangerously declining mature relationship. Our internal inadequacies are many. Mutual Trust and respect amongst people and their representatives have declined, leading to several anomalies in the manner our legislatures function. Cases of corruption amongst the senior functionaries - both in bureaucracy and ministerial levels - upset people and reduce the confidence of the young in, say, recruitment procedures, which was not the case at least for the first two-three decades after independence. Our national agenda for the decade ahead must remain conscious of such inadequacies that are hurtful to individuals and consequently, to the nation. Adherence to norms, ethics and morals has suffered under the onslaught of the glitz and glamour of globalization.

(The writer is a Professor and works in education, social cohesion, and religious amity. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ECONOMY REMAINS A WORRY

Sir — With India now in its 75th year of Independence, perhaps the biggest disappointment has been its failure to become an economic powerhouse. In more confident times, back in 2019, the Prime Minister had spoken of building a \$5 trillion Indian economy by 2025. But with three years to go, and India's GDP currently at \$3.1 trillion, it is difficult to find anyone who still believes he can achieve this goal. The economy has been stumbling, with GDP growth decelerating each year and inflation rising, and unemployment reaching a record figure. As per reports, India currently has 53 million unemployed people and its labour force participation rate has declined from 58 per cent in 2005 to just 40 per cent in 2021.


Almost 80 years later, the hopes of the young and old alike lie in tatters. Although COVID-19 and subsequent lockdowns caused the economy to contract by 7.3 per cent in 2020, problems were apparent well before the pandemic. With the disastrous demonetisation of large-denomination bank notes in 2016, all of the economy's major growth engines consumption, private investment and exports remained subdued, and the Government failed to provide a significant fiscal stimulus to end the slowdown.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

THE BOON CALLED STEM CELLS

Sir — A stem cell is capable of self-replication and can save a person from death-threatening diseases such as cancer. Stem cells can also help patients recover from diseases like diabetes. Stem cells are repair units of the body that serve a central function in the maintenance and regeneration of organs and tissues throughout an organism's lifetime. The umbilical cord is also a kind of stem cell. Nowadays, many countries including India have started preserving the stem cells of babies so as to secure their future. The stem cell is not only beneficial for the babies but also for their par-

Bitter fight in Telangana



This refers to the news report, 'BJP will destroy farmers: KCR' (August 21). The BJP's two out of four bypoll wins in Telangana since 2018 have whetted the party's appetite for success in the southern State and bolstered its pitch to be seen as a viable alternative to the ruling TRS. It has set its eyes on the youngest State in India to expand its footprint in southern States, which

has so far proved to be a daunting task for the BJP. The bypoll in Munagode was necessitated after MLA Komatreddy Raj Gopal Reddy resigned from the Congress to join the BJP. While infighting ensued in the Congress over who would be awarded the ticket, speculation is rife that more Congress leaders are set to join the saffron party. Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao's mega rally on Saturday, a day before Amit Shah's public rally in the same town, has given a clear picture that battle lines have been drawn for the Munagode bypoll. The emerging situation implies that the fight between the parties is going to be ferocious like what was witnessed between the BJP and TMC in last West Bengal Assembly election. A deft and astute politician, KCR, is a hard nut to crack in Telangana. However, it remains to be seen who will have the last laugh in the Munagode mini war.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

ents and grandparents. Their main function is to replenish dying cells.

Based on extensive stem cell research findings, many scientists claim that the cells could potentially generate cures and treatment for various diseases including cancers, cardiovascular diseases, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and spinal cord injuries. Stem cell preservation is widely known for its usefulness. Although the initial cost of stem cell preservation is too high for many, it will become a trend with time as its cost comes down. Further development and versatility of the stem cell may cause reduction of treatment costs for people currently suffering from incurable diseases.

Ishita Patidar | Ujjain

RED CARD FOR INDIAN FOOTBALL

Sir — Dark clouds seem to be hovering over the Indian football landscape, especially at a time when the chance of hosting an international competition hangs in

balance. What comes as a rude shock is the suspension of All India Football Federation (AIFF) by world's football governing body, FIFA, in view of undue third party intervention which goes against the democratic character of a football governing body. The federation is in the process of finalising a new constitution and electing office bearers.

AIFF must take into account FIFA's suggestion of including over 25 per cent of eminent players in its executive committee that was summarily rejected by the Committee of Administrators (COA) appointed by the SC. The root cause of this sorry state of affairs can be attributed to the lethargy in conducting regular elections, considering that a non-sports entity like Praful Patel continues at its helm beyond 12 years.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Raise taxes on people, cut taxes for Mitron - the 'natural course' of action for suit-boot-loot sarkar.

Congress leader
—Rahul Gandhi

This is the sort of tin pot activity that we would ridicule if it was in a non-democratic country.

Australian PM
—Anthony Albanese

Film fare has finally withdrew my bests actress nominations, but this doesn't stop me from taking legal action against them...my endeavour is to put an end to these unethical practices and stop such malicious award shows.

Actor
—Kangana Ranaut

Under Virat Kohli captaincy India really took Test cricket seriously.

SA cricketer
—Graeme Smith

The father of an 'Ace cricketer' who rose through the ranks & became BCCI Secretary (purely on merit) is visiting Telangana today. He will campaign for a gentleman whose brother is an MP & whose wife was an MLC contestant. And he will lecture & enlighten us on Parivarvad.

Minister Telangana
—KTR

FIRST COLUMN

GIVE & TAKE BEST FOR HEALTHY RELATIONS

Good relations require unburdened expectations



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR **NIKUNJ JI**

Human relationships are infinitely complex and tricky to manage. They need immense patience, understanding, acceptance, acknowledgement and engagement. Most of us may have had this experience, where a very close and loving relationship with some friend or a dear one went completely sour. The relationship that lasted for years suddenly ended.

While one keeps on wondering and thinking about reasons for such sad events that lower one's self esteem, one forgets to do a simple self-check as to what was my fault? Where did I go wrong? As a result of this, one starts blaming the opposite person and the bitterness in heart keeps on increasing day by day, leaving no scope for reconciliation.

There is a well-known saying, 'we see things not as they are but as we are'. While our physical eyes see everything and everyone the same way, it is actually thoughts and feelings that accompany the act of seeing, which form an impression in the mind about what we are seeing. So, if our feelings are light and pure, we feel the same way about everything we see. On the other hand, if we are in a negative frame of mind, we might perceive things negatively.



It's a known fact that when we easily develop bad feelings or negative attitudes towards others then we see and keep thinking about their faults. In fact, most of us are well experienced in this, aren't we? The simplest thing to get out of this is that, we only need to think about the things that we like in that person, and soon our feelings would start changing.

In short, focusing our mind on positive qualities automatically frees us from negativity. Just as we choose the food which will enter our stomach, or people who will enter our house, we should very well choose what will enter our minds. So, if someone behaves badly, I don't have to keep this image of him/her in my mind. I can actively choose to keep in mind some good behaviour by the same person in the past, because everyone has at least one quality for me to concentrate on.

Most people are caught up in their own lives and their problems, which for them are big issues. But if we look at the larger picture, we realize that what we spend so much of our time and energy on is really a trifle in the journey of our life, and even more insignificant in relation to events unfolding on the huge stage of the world, or the universe.


Hence, we must try and pick up whatever positive virtue we can, from anyone who comes in our contact. Ultimately, it is something that's going to contribute to our own growth. This kind of positive attitude changes our consciousness from a limited one to an unlimited one. Remember, it is up to us whether to have a universal attitude towards everything or a narrow attitude to make our life miserable. It is up to us as to how we take the little inconveniences we face in daily life or the problems that crop up in relationships.

Such an attitude helps us remain stable in the face of all the challenges. It also helps others around us. Lastly, there is one question we all could ask ourselves every night which would certainly contribute to forming better relationships: What did I give from my heart to anyone today? Remember, better relationships will result if we give the best and take the best.

(The author is a spiritual teacher.)

Aurobindo's task of awakening spiritual India

Aurobindo's evolution from a nationalist revolutionary to a spiritual teacher was ordained divinely



SWAMI ANAND **ARUN**

On August 15, 1947, India attained independence from the British Raj. Seventy-five years earlier on the same day Sri Aurobindo, a great yogi and a spiritual reformist, was born, who was one of the pioneers of the Indian independence movement.

Aurobindo's father Dr Krishnadhan Bose was a professional doctor in England. Krishnadhan was so influenced by the western culture that he wanted to rear and educate his child according to British standards. So, Aurobindo's entire upbringing, including his education, took place in England. When he was five years old, he was sent to Loreto School in Darjeeling. He was seven years old when he was sent to

(The author is a spiritual teacher.)

Skilled people needed for sustainable growth

Higher education institutions have to rise to the occasion so that their alumni use their talents in nation building

Indian skilled workforce can easily be divided into three categories – primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary skilled workforce consists of those who are simply matriculates, school dropouts or even illiterates, but work as barbers, cooks, mansions, carpenters or plumbers. Secondary skilled workforce mainly comprises youths, who have some degrees or certificates but without any certified exposure or experience in sync with their skills. The last category is certainly those who have higher educational degrees, skills, ability to articulate or visualize and execute or achieve work targets at a level which leads to the creation of assets or capital.

Still, we are not in a happy situation! An estimate suggests that we added 4.5 lakh employees to the tech workforce during FY 2021-22. A report by Nasscom-Zinnov says that India will face a shortage of 14-19 lakh tech professionals by 2026. As compared to the current tech workforce of 47 lakh in the country, India needs 52 lakh tech professionals. By 2026, as per the report, India is estimated to have 75-78 lakh tech professionals. However, the requirement is being pegged at 93-96 lakh techies, reflecting a gap of 14-19 lakh tech workforces.

CII's 'Decoding Job Report 2022' talks of comprehensive collaboration between industry and academia. Educational institutes lack in providing industry-relevant skills to students. It is a proven fact that our youth carrying degrees of higher education are not well skilled. Quite often we also read in newspapers, how our Post- graduates, Graduates and Research Scholars apply for clerical government jobs. I can recall the days when qualified people used to apply for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) cards, presuming that they will get them some fixed amount every month from the government without any work.

There is an important take away from this, which is relevant even today and an important issue to ponder over. It is the employability of youths who are armed with degrees conferred upon them by higher education institutions (HEIs), but they are not well equipped with employable skills.

I am not questioning either their abilities or the quality of education imparted to them by their alma maters. However, as an expert and employer, I wonder if they will ever get a job on the basis of their degrees. Some of them will do some professional or add-on courses to acquire some employable skills. For example, B. Com students will upgrade their accounting knowledge to get some jobs.

Similarly, students of Pure Sciences or those who have done liberal studies will do B. Ed so that they become teachers if they do not get government jobs. It is here that we are seriously erring. It is nowhere written or proven that students of Humanities cannot become a skilled workforce. We've wrongly presumed that skills are not meant for all. Let me disagree.



INDIA NEEDS 52 LAKH TECH PROFESSIONAL S. BY 2026, INDIA IS ESTIMATED TO HAVE 75-78 LAKH TECH PROFESSIONAL S. HOWEVER, THE REQUIREMENT IS BEING PEGGED AT 93-96 LAKH TECHIES, REFLECTING A GAP OF 14-19 LAKH TECH WORKFORCE

(The author is a training partner with National Skill Development Corporation, GoI. Views expressed in the article are personal.)



Today skills are needed by all. The Ministry of Education recently released the National Institution Ranking Framework-2022 (NIRF-22). Minister of Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan was quoted saying in an official note that "a robust and objective framework for assessment, accreditation and ranking will play a major role in enhancing quality in the higher education ecosystem."

The minister further stated that "we are moving towards creating a knowledge-based economy which is innovation-led and technology-driven." "Our higher educational institutions have to play a key role in making India a leading global innovation and digital economy and making quality education affordable and accessible for the bottom of the pyramid population," he added.

Five broad categories of parameters identified in the NIRF are teaching, learning and resources; research and professional practice; graduation outcomes; outreach and inclusivity, and perception. Skills or entrepreneurial skills are not a parameter. Indian Institute of Technology, Madras retained its first position in 'Overall Category' for the fourth consecutive year and in 'Engineering' for the seventh consecutive year. Interestingly, the top 100 academic institutions in the overall category consists of 40 centrally funded technical institutions (CFTIs) and centrally funded universities (CFUs), including 38 technical institutions, 26 state universities, 24 deemed universities, six private universities, seven medical institutions and three management

institutions.

However, in order to improve the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, we need to educate our students in a way that not only enhances their knowledge but also provides the skill to live a fulfilling and useful life. It should happen in all HEIs, and not just a few hundreds of them. No doubt, the National Education Policy 2020 lays down the roadmap for the 21st century education system. Synergy between education and skills is creating a new ecosystem. We are certainly striving our best to make learning more vibrant, harness 'Industry 4.0' and sow the seeds for shaping the destiny of India@100 but are we really aligned to global trends and future challenges remains a million-dollar question.

To excel in the 21st century labour market, India needs a comprehensive skill set composed of cognitive skills, which encompass the ability to understand complex ideas, adapt effectively to the environment, learn from experience, and reason; socio-emotional skills, which describe the ability to navigate interpersonal and social situations effectively; technical skills needed to perform a specific task; and digital skills, which are cross-cutting.

Are our HEIs aligned to withstand the present and future challenges of the labour market? Is there a complete alignment between relevance and efficiency of technical knowledge, which our youths are getting in HEIs?

No, there is not! There are critical gaps, which we need to admit and we ourselves are to be blamed for those gaps. We are paying the price for being routine in our approaches towards education in general, and skill education in particular.

Look at some of the countries, which are known for their skilled workforce. Japan tops the list followed by South Korea, Germany, China, United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Norway, Switzerland, Singapore, and so on. They have invested a lot in their higher education. The way China has skilled its masses is remarkable. They can make anything or everything whatever is used on this planet. Switzerland is blessed with the most skilled workers, enjoying very low crime rates, clean cities, minimal homeless population, clean air and beautiful landscapes.

Look at Singapore, whose education system produces a large, reliable workforce every year. Predominant industries in Sweden are telecommunications, industrial machines, chemical goods, pharmaceuticals, motor vehicles, precision equipment, iron and steel, and home goods and appliances. All skilled based! Denmark boasts of some world-leading advanced industries with a major focus on maritime shipping, pharmaceuticals, and renewable energy. The country has a highly educated and well-informed population, with international schools across the country.

The message is loud and clear. Fast-paced sustainable growth with marked improvement in people's life can be possible only when we create a highly skilled workforce for which our HEIs have to rise to the occasion so that their alumni justify their degrees and make the most of their talents in building a new India.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

IT IS SURPRISING THAT THE CBI RAIDS DIDN'T HAPPEN EARLIER. BE IT LIQUOR CASE, ROOMS IN SCHOOLS... THERE SHOULD'VE BEEN NOT ONE BUT 10 CBI RAIDS. —CONGRESS LEADER **SANDEEP DIKSHIT**



. MY POINT WAS ABOUT THE CONGRESS' CONTRADICTIONARY POSITIONS WHERE THE INVESTIGATIVE AGENCIES ARE CONCERNED. —FORMER J&K CM **OMAR ABDULLAH**

England. He spent the next 14 years studying at a school in Manchester, and later attended St. Paul's College, Cambridge.

Later, in 1892, he received the top marks for the main paper of the Indian Civil Service examinations. By then he had already become well acquainted with the freedom fighters of the Indian independence movement and an intense nationalistic fervor and patriotism had awakened in him.

He refused to become the administrator of the English establishment by deliberately skipping horse-riding competition, which was the final part of the test. Instead, he became an active member of 'Lotus and Sword', the revolutionary, semi-underground organization based in India. It was during this time that he met Maharaja Gaekwad of Baroda who urged him to return back to India for good and work for the government of Baroda, while continuing to help the Indian independence movement.

In 1893, Sri Aurobindo received his degree and returned back to India. For the next nine years, he served the Baroda government. During this time he also got acquainted with Indian culture, yoga and the freedom movement.

While he was still stationed in Baroda, Aurobindo married 14-year-old Mrinalini Devi. At this time, he was also active in organizing an armed rebellion against British rule. As his political aspiration deepened, his interest in meditation and spirituality matured, too. Due to the 'sanskars' of his past lives, in spite of his hectic schedule, he started managing time for inner exploration, and his search for a Guru led him to Bishnubhaskar Lele of Maharashtra.

Lele could see great potential in Aurobindo. He urged him to spend some time with him and meditate together. It was very difficult for Aurobindo to arrange free time but he managed three days out of his busy schedule. He meditated in seclusion with Lele for three days and had deep experiences of meditation. He experienced the state of thoughtless consciousness and realized that he was a witness—a state that often takes years for a normal meditator to achieve.

Lele was very much impressed by the progress and advised Aurobindo to leave his worldly affairs and devote full-time to meditation. Aurobindo felt that leaving India under British rule to go and meditate would be escaping the need of the moment and didn't agree to do so. However, he continued meditating regularly. He started to get instructions and inspiration from within during his meditation. He shared his experiences with Lele, who was very happy to hear them.

Lele told him, "If you have full faith in your inner voice then you don't need any advice from outside."

In 1906, Aurobindo left Baroda for Kolkata, which was a fertile ground for the revolutionaries. He had accepted the post of principal at the Bengal National College but spent most of his time encouraging

the revolutionaries, editing pamphlets and newspapers and supporting organizations. In 1908, the family of Kingsford, the British Governor of the area, was assassinated in a bomb blast. Aurobindo was one of the prime suspects. He was arrested and put in Alipur Jail.

Initially, Aurobindo was disheartened but when he started to meditate in the jail, his inner voice said, "Just wait and watch."

Since his political and professional career had hindered him from exploring the deeper aspects of yoga and meditation, he found out that his arrest had been a blessing in disguise. He spent his days studying the Gita and the Upanishads and meditating.

In Alipur Jail, among other things, Aurobindo experienced

levitation of his body. He also heard instructions from Swami Vivekananda continuously for 15 days although it had already been six years since Swami Vivekananda had left his body. While meditating in the jail, a lot of his dormant siddhis also awakened.

There was a Kadamba tree right in front of his cell. Sri Aurobindo had the darshan of Lord Krishna, who, too, advised him to leave all other work and devote full-time to his meditation. Aurobindo was still worried about the Independence Movement.

Krishna assured him, "You just meditate in solitude; I will take the responsibility of India's freedom. The Independence of India will come as a gift on your birthday." (To be continued)

Fate of Ukrainian lands held by Russia still seems unclear

AP ■ TALLINN (ESTONIA)

According to Russian state TV, the future of the Ukrainian regions captured by Moscow's forces is all but decided: Referendums on becoming part of Russia will soon take place there, and the joyful residents who were abandoned by Kyiv will be able to prosper in peace.

In reality, the Kremlin appears to be in no rush to seal the deal on Ukraine's southern regions of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia and the eastern provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk, even though officials it installed there already have announced plans for a vote to join Russia.

As the war in Ukraine nears its six-month mark, Moscow faces multiple problems in the territory it occupies — from pulverized civilian infrastructure that needs urgent rebuilding as colder weather looms, to guerrilla resistance and increasingly debilitating attacks by Kyiv's military forces that have

been gearing up for a counteroffensive in the south.

Analysts say that what could have been a clear victory for the Kremlin is becoming something of a muddle.

"It is clear that the situation won't stabilise for a long time," even if referendums eventually are held, says Nikolai Petrov, a senior research fellow in Chatham House's Russia and Eurasia Program.

"There will be the guerrilla movement, there will be underground resistance, there will be terrorist acts, there will be shelling.

Right now, the impression is that even the Kremlin doesn't really believe that by holding these referendums, it would draw a thick line under it."

Moscow's plans to incorporate captured territories were clear from the outset of the February 24 invasion.

Several weeks in, separatist leaders of the self-proclaimed "people's republics" of Donetsk and Luhansk, which the Kremlin recog-

nised as independent states, voiced plans to hold votes on becoming part of Russia.

While forces backed by Moscow control almost all of Luhansk, some estimates say Russia and the separatists control about 60 per cent of the Donetsk region.

Similar announcements followed from Kremlin-backed administrations of the southern Kherson region, which is almost completely occupied by Russians, and in the Zaporizhzhia region, large swaths of which are under Moscow's control.

As summer wanes, there is still no date for the referendums. Pro-Russian officials in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia say the votes will take place after Moscow takes full control of the rest of the Donetsk region, but the Kremlin's gains there have been minimal recently.

Still, campaigns promoting the votes are reportedly well underway.

Russian TV shows cities with billboards proclaiming, "Together with Russia." Stremousov reports



from Kherson almost daily on social media about his trips around the region, where he meets people adamant about joining Russia.

In the Russian-controlled part of Zaporizhzhia, the Moscow-installed administration already has ordered an election commission to prepare for a referendum.

Balloting aside, there are other signs that Russia is planning on staying. The ruble has been introduced alongside the Ukrainian hryvnia and has been used to pay out pensions and other benefits.

Russian passports were offered to residents in a fast-track citizenship procedure. Schools were reported to have switched to a Russian curriculum, starting in September. Russian license plates were given to car owners by traffic police, with Kherson and Zaporizhzhia assigned Russian region numbers 184 and 185.

The Russian Interior Ministry, which oversees the traffic police, did not respond to an Associated Press request for comment to clar-

ify how that was legal, given that both regions are still part of Ukraine.

Ukrainian officials and activists, meanwhile, paint a picture that contrasts sharply with the Russian TV portrayal of a bright future for the occupied territories under Moscow's generous care.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai told AP that 90 per cent of the population in the province's large cities has left. Devastation and squalor "reigns" in the cities and towns seized by Russia, he said, and there are only a few villages not under Moscow's control after weeks of exhausting battles.

Russian political analyst Dmitry Oreshkin said that because so many people have left the occupied regions, "there will be nothing close to a proper polling of the population about their preferences."

But Ukrainian authorities still have to regard such votes as a serious issue, said Vadim Karasev, head of the Kyiv-based Institute of Global Strategies think tank.

Area near Ukraine N-plant hit again despite US pleas

AP ■ NIKOPOL

Russian shelling across the Dnieper River from Ukraine's main atomic plant wounded four people on Monday, an official said, only hours after the latest international pleas to spare the area from attacks to prevent a nuclear disaster.

Nikopol, on the opposite bank of the Dnieper River and about 10 kilometers downstream from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, came under fire three times overnight from rockets and mortar shells, hitting houses, a kindergarten, the bus station and stores.

Mayor Oleksandr Saiuk said four people were wounded, including two who were hospitalized.

Reports of sustained shelling around Europe's largest nuclear power plant further highlighted the dangers of a war that will hit the half-year mark on Wednesday.

After UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres again urged caution during a visit to Ukraine last week, US President Joe Biden further discussed the issue with the leaders of France, Germany and Britain on Sunday.

The four leaders stressed the need to avoid military operations in the region to prevent the possibility of a potentially devastating nuclear incident and called for the UN's atomic energy agency to be allowed to visit the facilities as soon as possible.

But nothing seemed certain in a war that has spread fear and unease far beyond the front lines in eastern and southern Ukraine and also into the



Russia-annexed Crimea Peninsula and as far as Moscow, where on Saturday night a car blast killed the daughter of an influential Russian political theorist often referred to as "Putin's brain."

On Monday, Russian authorities were looking for further clues who could be behind her death, after authorities said preliminary information indicated 29-year-old television commentator Daria Dugina was killed by an explosive planted in the SUV she was driving.

A former Russian opposition lawmaker, Ilya Ponomarev, said an unknown Russian group, the National Republican Army, claimed responsibility for the bombing. The Associated Press couldn't verify the existence of the group. Ponomarev, who left Russia after voting

against its annexation of Crimea in 2014, made the statement to Ukrainian television.

Ukraine officials have denied involvement.

In Crimea, anxiety has spread further following a spate of fires and explosions at Russian facilities over the past two weeks. The governor of Sevastopol, Mikhail Razvozhayev, ordered that signs showing the location of bomb shelters be placed in the city, which had long seemed untouchable.

Monday's statement follows a series of drone incursions into Sevastopol, which is home to Russia's Black Sea Fleet. A drone exploded at the fleet's headquarters on July 31 and another was shot down over it last week. Authorities also say air-defense systems have shot down other drones.

Razvozhayev said on Telegram that the city is well protected, but "it is better to know where the shelters are."

Russian President Vladimir Putin didn't mention Russia's military operation in Ukraine during a speech marking National Flag Day on Monday, but echoed some of the justifications cited for sending in troops.

"We are firm in pursuing in the international arena only those policies that meet the fundamental interests of the motherland," Putin said. He maintains that Russia sent troops into Ukraine as effectively a protective measure against the encroaching West.

"The desire to live according to one's will, to choose one's own path and follow it, has become part of the genetic code of our people," he said.

On Ukraine's front line, a fight to save premature babies

AP ■ POKROVSK (UKRAINE)

Echoing down the corridors of eastern Ukraine's Pokrovsk Perinatal Hospital are the loud cries of tiny Veronika.

Born nearly two months prematurely weighing 1.5 kilograms, the infant receives oxygen through a nasal tube to help her breathe while ultraviolet lamps inside an incubator treat her jaundice.

Dr. Tetiana Myroshnychenko carefully connects the tubes that allow Veronika to feed on her mother's stored breast milk and ease her hunger.

Before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February, three hospitals in government-controlled areas of the country's war-torn Donetsk region had facilities to care for premature babies.

One was hit by a Russian airstrike and the other had to close as a result of the fighting, leaving only the maternity hospital in the coal mining town of Pokrovsk still operating.

Myroshnychenko, the site's only remaining neonatologist, now lives at the hospital. Her three-year-old son divides the week between staying at the facility and with his father, a coal miner, at home.

The doctor explains why it's now impossible to leave: Even when the air-raid sirens sound, the babies in the hospital's above-ground incubation ward cannot be disconnected from their lifesaving machines.

"If I carry Veronika to the shelter, that would take five minutes. But for her, those five minutes could be critical," Myroshnychenko says.

Hospital officials say the proportion of births occurring prematurely or with complications has roughly doubled this year compared to previous times, blaming stress and rapidly worsening living standards for taking a toll on the pregnant women still left in the area.

Russia and Moscow-backed separatists now occupy just over half the Donetsk region, which is similar in size to Sicily or Massachusetts.

Pokrovsk is still in a Ukrainian government-controlled area 60 kilometres west of the front lines.



Inside the hospital's maternity wards, talk of the war is discouraged.

"Everything that happens outside this building of course concerns us, but we don't talk about it," Myroshnychenko said. "Their main concern right now is the baby."

Although fighting in the Donetsk region started back in 2014, when Russia-backed separatists began battling the government and taking over parts of the region, new mothers are only now being kept in the hospital for longer periods because there's little opportunity for them to receive care once they have been discharged.

Among them is 23-year-old Inna Kyslychenko, from Pokrovsk. Rocking her 2-day-old daughter Yesenia, she was considering joining the region's massive evacuation westward to safer areas in Ukraine when she leaves the hospital.

Many essential services in government-held areas of the Donetsk region — heat, electricity, water supplies — have been damaged by Russian bombardment, leaving living conditions that are only expected to worsen as the winter grows near.

"I fear for the little lives, not only for ours, but for all the children, for all of Ukraine," Kyslychenko said.

More than 12 million people in Ukraine

have fled their homes due to the war, according to UN relief agencies. About half have been displaced within Ukraine and the rest have moved to other European countries.

Moving the maternity hospital out of Pokrovsk, however, is not an option.

"If the hospital was relocated, the patients would still have to remain here," said chief physician Dr. Ivan Tsyganok, who kept working even when the town was being hit by Russian rocket fire.

"Delivering babies is not something that can be stopped or rescheduled," he noted.

The nearest existing maternity facility is in Ukraine's neighbouring Dnipropetrovsk region, a 3 1/2 hour drive along secondary roads, a journey considered too risky for women in late-term pregnancy.

Last week, 24-year-old Andrii Dobrelia and his wife Maryna, 27, reached the hospital from a nearby village. Looking anxious, they talked little as doctors carried out a series of tests and then led Maryna to the operating room for a C-section.

Tsyganok and his colleagues hurriedly changed their clothes and prepared for the procedure.

Twenty minutes later, the cries of a newborn baby boy, Timur, could be heard. After an examination, Timur was taken to meet his father in an adjoining room.

Latvia to topple Soviet-era monument a week after Estonia

AP ■ COPENHAGEN

Latvia will tear down a Soviet-era monument on Tuesday that commemorates the Red Army's victory over Nazi Germany, authorities said, coming a week after Estonia removed a similar landmark.

Police have erected a yellow fence to cordon off the area near the monument, which stands like a high-rise in downtown Riga's Victory Park. It has an 80-meter (260-foot) concrete spire with a Soviet star on top, with two groups of statues beside the edge of a pond.

The monument, built in 1985 while Latvia was still part of the Soviet Union, will be felled using machinery on Tuesday, said Janis Lange, the Latvian capital's executive director. He told a news conference that it will be topped without the use of explosives, according to Latvian television.

It wasn't immediately clear what would happen to the monument after it's taken down.

The concrete obelisk is part of a complex that includes two groups of statues — a band of three Red Army soldiers and on the other side a woman representing the "Motherland" with her arms held high. The whole complex will be taken down.

Latvia, which shares a 214-kilometer (133-mile) border



with Russia, has a large group of ethnic Russians living in the country. On Russia's annual Victory Day holiday on May 9, they gather in front of the monument to lay flowers with concerts also organized.

The event has caused controversy among people in Latvia, which since regaining independence in 1991 has become a member of NATO and the European Union.

Over the weekend, the Latvian Russian Union said it plans to stage a protest on Monday evening. The group says it has gathered more than 10,000 signatures of people who are against removing the monument, the Baltic News Service said.

But Lange told a news conference Monday that the Riga City Council said it won't issue permission for them to hold a

protest.

In May, Latvia's parliament voted to pave the way for the demolition of the monument in the capital and the Riga City Council followed suit.

The Baltic countries have removed many monuments glorifying the Soviet Union or communist leaders.

In 2007, the relocation of a World War II monument of a Red Army soldier in Estonia's capital, Tallinn, sparked days of rioting. Last week, Estonia removed a Soviet-era monument with a tank on top outside the town of Narva in the Baltic country's Russian-speaking east, and moved the tank replica to a war museum north of Tallinn.

Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania have taken a hard-line stance against Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

AP ■ WARSAW

On March 8, nearly two weeks after Russia invaded Ukraine, Taisia Mokrozub took her infant son, parted from her husband and joined an exodus to safety in Poland. She believed the war would end quickly and she would be home by May.

But a half-year later, with shelling near a nuclear power plant in her hometown of Zaporizhzhia, and the front line so close, the 36-year-old's husband is telling her to stay in Poland with their now-11-month-old baby. She now dreams of being home by winter, hoping Ukraine will have prevailed by then against Russia's onslaught.

As the war reaches the sixth-month mark Wednesday, many refugees are facing the sad realization that they will not be going home soon, if they have homes to return to at all. With missiles falling even far from the front line, many wouldn't feel safe yet, even in areas under Ukrainian control.

So they are biding their time, waiting for the end of a war that shows no signs of ending soon, longing for home and refusing to think too far into the future.

With a new academic year starting, some are reluctantly



enrolling their children in schools abroad, worried they will fall behind in the Ukrainian system. Others take jobs below their skill levels. With most refugees being women, those with very young children, like Mokrozub, are unable to work.

"It seems to me that not only for me but for all Ukrainians, time has stopped," Mokrozub said. "We all live in some kind of limbo."

Russia's invasion has created the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. The UN refugee agency says a third of Ukrainians have fled their homes, with more than 6.6 million displaced within the

country and over 6.6 million more across the continent.

European countries have welcomed them without the political backlash that met influxes of refugees from the Middle East and Africa in past years, however.

Poland has taken in the most Ukrainians, with an estimated 1.5 million having registered for national ID numbers that allow them social benefits. Germany, which doesn't require visas for Ukrainians, has registered more than 900,000, though it isn't clear how many of those may have gone home or headed elsewhere.

Warsaw now has 180,000

Ukrainian refugees — representing a tenth of the Polish capital's population of 1.8 million — the largest single grouping anywhere.

Though Ukrainian and Russian — which is also commonly spoken back home — are heard on the city's streets and grocery stores now carry some Ukrainian foods, the newcomers have integrated with little trouble and seem almost invisible.

For many of the refugees, Poland's Slavic language and culture offer something familiar and reassuring. The country's proximity to Ukraine makes it possible to travel back for short visits with husbands and fathers who are banned from leaving due to the war effort.

"We didn't want to go farther," said Galina Inyutina, 42, who arrived in Poland in early March from Dnipro with her 11-year-old son. They long terribly for their forests and fields and food.

"Mom, if we go farther away then it will take us longer to get home," he told her.

The arrival of so many people has exacerbated a preexisting housing crisis in Warsaw, where rental prices have surged 30% over the last year, as well as other cities that have attracted large numbers of refugees.

Russia's FSB blames Ukrainian intelligence for car bombing

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russia's top counterintelligence agency on Monday blamed Ukrainian spy agencies have organised the killing of the daughter of a Russian nationalist ideologue.

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), the main KGB successor agency, said the killing of Darya Dugina has been "prepared and perpetrated by the Ukrainian special services."

Dugina was the daughter of Alexander Dugin, a Russian nationalist ideologist who was described by some in the West as "Putin's brain."

It charged that the killing was perpetrated by a Ukrainian citizen, who left Russia for Estonia after the killing.

The FSB said that the suspect, Natalya Vovk, rented an apartment in the building where Dugina lived and shadowed her. Vovk and her daughter were at a nationalist festival, which Alexander Dugin and his daughter attended just before the killing.

Ukraine has previously denied any involvement in the killing.

Chinese ship leaves Lanka after controversial visit



PTI ■ COLOMBO

A high-tech Chinese research ship docked at the strategically important Hambantota port departed from Sri Lankan waters on Monday after a controversial six-day visit.

The ballistic missile and satellite tracking ship 'Yuan Wang 5' ship was originally scheduled to arrive at the Chinese-run port on August 11 but it was delayed in absence of permission by Sri Lankan authorities following security concerns raised by India.

The Chinese ship arrived in the southern Sri Lankan port of Hambantota on August 16 at 8:20 am local time. It was docked there for replenishment.

The ship left the port at 4 pm local time, harbour master Nirmal Silva told reporters here.

Its next port call is at China's Jiang Yin port, officials said.

The Hambantota port officials said as agreed there was no rotation of personnel during the call. Sri Lanka provided the necessary assistance sought by the Chinese embassy here during the ship's visit.

Sri Lanka had asked China to defer the visit amid India's concerns over it. On August 13, Colombo granted the port access to the vessel from August 16 to 22 on condition that it will keep the Automatic Identification System (AIS) switched on within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Sri Lanka and no scientific research to be conducted in Sri Lankan waters.

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

It said no rotation of personnel would take place during the port call and the Sri Lankan government was requested to provide the necessary assistance by the Chinese Embassy in Colombo.

The security and cooperation in the neighbourhood are of utmost priority in handling the issue of the Chinese vessel Wang Yang 5, the Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry said in a statement earlier this month.

The local telecommunications regulatory authority had issued a No Objection

Letter for the use of frequencies and communication equipment subject to non-interference and non-protection basis.

There were apprehensions in New Delhi about the possibility of the vessel's tracking systems attempting to snoop on Indian defence installations while being on its way to the Sri Lankan port.

China says the ship is used for scientific research, but the US Defence Department says the ship is under the command of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) and is capable of tracking satellites and missile launches.

The ship's arrival at the Hambantota port became controversial as China leased the port from Sri Lanka in 2017 for 99 years after Colombo failed to pay debts related to the construction of the facility.

Colombo's nod to the docking of the Chinese research vessel was crucial as the cash-strapped Sri Lankan government is seeking an early bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

China is a major creditor of Sri Lanka, and is vital to Sri Lanka's efforts to restructure its debt to secure a bailout from the IMF.

Kansas recount confirms results in favour of abortion rights

AP ■ OLATHE (US)

A decisive statewide vote in favour of abortion rights in traditionally conservative Kansas was confirmed with a partial hand recount, with fewer than 100 votes changing after the last county reported results on Sunday. Nine of the state's 105 counties recounted their votes at the request of Melissa Leavitt, who has pushed for tighter election laws.

A longtime anti-abortion activist, Mark Gietzen, is covering most of the costs. Gietzen acknowledged in an interview that it was unlikely to change the outcome.

A no vote in the referendum signalled a desire to keep existing abortion protections and a yes vote was for allowing the Legislature to tighten restrictions on ban abortion. After the recounts, "no" votes lost 87 votes and "yes" gained 6 votes. Eight of the counties reported their results by the state's Saturday deadline, but Sedgwick County delayed releasing its final count until Sunday because spokeswoman Nicole Gibbs said some of the ballots weren't separated into the correct precincts during the initial recount and had to be resorted Saturday.

She said the number of votes cast overall didn't change.

A larger than expected turnout of voters on August 2 rejected a ballot measure that would have removed protections for abortion rights from the Kansas Constitution and given to the Legislature the right to further restrict or ban abortion. It failed by 18 percentage points, or 165,000 votes statewide.

The vote drew broad attention because it was the first state referendum on abortion since the US Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in June.

Gietzen, of Wichita, and



Leavitt, of Colby, in far north-western Kansas, have both suggested there might have been problems without pointing to many examples.

Recounts increasingly are tools to encourage supporters of a candidate or cause to believe an election was stolen rather than lost. A wave of candidates who have echoed former President Donald Trump's lie that the 2020 election was rigged have called for recounts after losing their own Republican primaries.

Kansas law requires a recount if those who ask for it prove they can cover the counties' costs. The counties pay only if the outcome changes.

Leavitt and Gietzen provided credit cards to pay for the nearly USD 120,000 cost, according to the secretary of state's office. Leavitt has an online fundraising page. Gietzen also said he is getting donations from a network built over three decades in the anti-abortion movement.

Gietzen said on Sunday he doesn't accept the results of the Sedgwick County recount because of the discrepancy about the way the ballots were sorted and because some of the recount happened on Saturday without outside observers present to watch. "We still don't know

what happened in Sedgwick County. I won't pay for Sedgwick County," he said.

He said he's also concerned about the results statewide because of a report out of Cherokee county in southeast Kansas about the results of one county election being transposed between two candidates when the results were transferred on a thumb drive from one voting machine to a tabulating machine. Gietzen said he plans to file a lawsuit Monday seeking a full statewide recall.

Gietzen said he won't publicly report the names of private donors helping him finance the recount, even though a state ethics official says it's required. Gietzen, who leads a small GOP group, the Kansas Republican Assembly, argues that he's not campaigning for the anti-abortion measure but is instead promoting election integrity.

Votes were recounted in Douglas County, home to the University of Kansas' main campus; Johnson County, in suburban Kansas City; Sedgwick County, home to Wichita, Shawnee County, home to Topeka; and Crawford, Harvey, Jefferson, Lyon and Thomas counties. Abortion opponents lost all of those counties except Thomas.



End of Singapore's gay sex-ban small step in Asia-Pacific

AP ■ BANGKOK

Singapore's decision to decriminalise sex between men is being hailed as a step in the right direction for LGBTQ rights in the Asia-Pacific region, a vast area of nearly 5 billion people with different laws and attitudes.

Although many places have decriminalised sexual acts between people of the same sex, only a few allow same-sex marriage, partnerships or unions.

Singapore tempered its decision by saying it will amend its constitution to prevent such unions from ever taking place.

Many of the region's bans on sex between men were instituted under British colonial rule in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the laws describe such acts as violations against the "order of nature."

Here are some details on the situation in the Asia-Pacific region:

AUSTRALIA

All states and territories repealed gay sex bans between 1975 and 1997, while Parliament legalised same-sex marriage throughout the country in 2017. The age of consent became equal for all sexual acts as of 2016.

People convicted for consensual sexual acts that are no longer illegal can have their criminal records cleared.

CHINA

Homosexuality is not criminalised by law, but same-sex marriage remains unlikely to be legalised in the near future. While the largest cities have vibrant LGBTQ scenes, the stigma remains strong in Chinese society.



Many still seeking food, shelter a year after Haiti quake

AP ■ LES CAYES (HAITI)

The cinderblock home with a tin roof that Erline Castel and Dieunord Ernest rented was among the more than 130,000 houses damaged or destroyed by a powerful earthquake that struck southern Haiti last year, killing more than 2,200 people.

In the days after the magnitude 7.2 quake hit, they gathered sheets, tarpaulins and wood and made a shelter for themselves and their three children.

More than a year after the August 14, 2021 quake, the family is still living in the same makeshift tent like hundreds of others, and still wondering if anyone will help them.

If recent history is any guide, few people will.

The Associated Press visited several camps surrounding the southern coastal city of Les Cayes, which was one of the hardest hit areas, and over and over again people complained that no government official had visited them despite repeated promises that they would come to help.

As the family waited for help, Ernest died of prostate cancer last year. So today, Castel is alone, fighting for her family's survival like many struggling to restart their lives after the quake.

On Thursday morning, she tried to get her nine-month-old daughter to suckle. But after a year of surviving on scraps in a makeshift camp, Castel had no milk. The tiny girl, Wood Branan Ernest, fell asleep during her failed attempt.

"I don't have anything to provide for them," Castel said. What's worse, others are victimised by the quake victims.

In one camp, friends of the property owner are trying to take back the land where the refugees settled. Thugs have ripped apart the shacks, thrown rocks at families and tried to set the camp on fire twice in recent months.

Trump's turbulent White House years culminate in Florida search

AP ■ NEW YORK

Mounds of paper piled on this desk. Framed magazine covers and keepsakes lining the walls. One of Shaquille O'Neal's giant sneakers displayed alongside football helmets, boxing belts and other sports memorabilia, crowding his Trump Tower office and limiting table space.

Well before he entered politics, former President Donald Trump had a penchant for collecting. And that lifelong habit — combined with his flip disregard for the rules of government record keeping, his care-



less handling of classified information, and a chaotic transition borne from his refusal to accept defeat in 2020 — have all culminated in a federal investigation that poses extraordinary legal and political challenges.

The search of Trump's Mar-a-Lago club earlier this month to retrieve documents from his

White House years was an unprecedented law enforcement action against a former president who is widely expected to run for office once again.

Officials have not revealed exactly what was contained in the boxes, but the FBI has said it recovered 11 sets of classified records, including some marked "sensitive compartmented information," a special category meant to protect secrets that could cause "exceptionally grave" damage to U.S. interests if revealed publicly.

Why Trump refused to turn over the seized documents despite repeated requests

remains unclear. But Trump's flouting of the Presidential Records Act, which outlines how materials should be preserved, was well documented throughout his time in office.

He routinely tore up official papers that later had to be taped back together. Official items that would traditionally be turned over to the National Archives became intermingled with his personal belongings in the White House residence. Classified information was tweeted, shared with reporters and adversaries — even found in a White House complex bathroom.

Death toll rises to 225 in Pakistan's flood-hit Balochistan province

PTI ■ KARACHI

At least 225 people have died in Pakistan's Balochistan province as heavy monsoon rains and thunderstorms continue to lash the region, which remains cut off from the rest of the country, officials said on Monday.

The death toll was confirmed by Quetta Commissioner Sohailur Rehman Baloch who informed the media of receiving reports of at least 225 deaths across the province.

Quetta received fresh heavy downpour on Sunday, resulting in urban flooding in Pashtoonabad, Hazara Town, Qadirand, Aminabad, Nawar Killi, Killi Qambrani, and Sariab areas, where floodwater entered several houses and claimed nine more lives.

The commissioner said that heavy rains and floods have cut off all major highways connecting Balochistan to the rest of Pakistan.

"It is a dire situation and with more rains forecast we

are taking all measures to carry out rescue and relief work," he said.

According to Baloch, the Karkhassa Dam near Quetta was breached at one point due to hill torrents, inundating several areas near Western Bypass.

Public Notice
This is to inform general public that Mr. Satpal & Mr. Harish Chand has acquired the Built up property no. 1019, area measuring 158 sq. yds. out of khasra no. 11513, situated at Ward no. 7, Mehrauli, New Delhi vide Relinquishment deed dated 29.01.1999 executed by Mrs. Premwati & Mrs. Kaushliya Rani and Now, Mr. Kapil Arora, Mr. Satpal & Mr. Harish Chand are mortgaging the above said property with Fullerton India Credit Company Limited & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Munesh Dhawan/ Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas North, Unit no 907, 9th Floor, GD-ITL Tower, (B-08), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/9818228636 (M).

Public Notice
This is to inform general public that Mr. N.S. Sonhal has acquired the Plot no. 23, Land area measuring 294.483 sq. mtrs. in Block-A, in the layout plan of The Shakti CHBS Ltd. situated at Paschim Vihar, New Delhi-110063 vide Conveyance deed dated 21.06.2007 as Doc. no. 11672. Unfortunately, Mr. N.S. Sonhal expired and leaving behind Mrs. Baljit Kaur (wife), Mr. Haminder Singh Sonhal and Mr. Parminder Singh Sonhal (son) are the legal heirs of the said property and Now, Mrs. Baljit Kaur (wife), Mr. Haminder Singh Sonhal and Mr. Parminder Singh Sonhal (son) are intending to sell the said property to Mrs. Aruna Anjeja and he is mortgaging the above said property with Kotak Mahindra Bank & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Munesh Dhawan/ Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas North, Unit no 907, 9th Floor, GD-ITL Tower, (B-08), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/9818228636 (M).



AP ■ SEOUL

The United States and South Korea began their biggest combined military training in years Monday as they heighten their defense posture against the growing North Korean nuclear threat.

The drills could draw an angry response from North Korea, which has pushed its weapons testing activity to a record pace this year while repeatedly threatening conflicts with Seoul and Washington amid a prolonged stalemate in diplomacy.

The Ulchi Freedom Shield exercises will continue through Sept. 1 in South Korea and include field exercises involving aircraft, warships, tanks and potentially tens of thousands of troops.

While Washington and Seoul describe their exercises as defensive, North Korea portrays them as invasion rehearsals that justify its nuclear weapons and missiles development.

Cho Joong-hoon, a

spokesperson of South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, said the South hasn't immediately detected any unusual activities or signs from the North.

The United States and South Korea had cancelled some of their regular drills and reduced others to computer simulations in recent years to create space for diplomacy with North Korea and because of COVID-19 concerns.

Ulchi Freedom Shield, which started along with a four-day South Korean civil defense training program led by government employees, will reportedly include simulated joint attacks, front-line reinforcements of arms and fuel, and removals of weapons of mass destruction.

The drills came after North Korea last week dismissed South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's offer to exchange denuclearisation steps and economic benefits, accusing Seoul of recycling proposals Pyongyang has long rejected.

किच्चा शुगर कम्पनी लिमिटेड, किच्चा
जनपद-अजमेर, सिंगर नगर (उत्तराखण्ड)
Mob. No. 832928226, 9410121168 Email: purchase@kichha.com
बसंत मेवा/किच्चा/2022-23/914 दिनांक : 20.08.2022

ई-निविदा सूचना
वित्तीय वर्ष 2022-23 के लिए सामग्री क्रय एवं जीब कार्य हेतु GST के अन्तर्गत पंजीकृत निर्माता/अधिकृत विक्रेता/सहम रेकेदारों से, उत्तराखण्ड अधिष्ठान्त (प्रोक्योरमेंट) नियमावली 2017 में निहित प्रविधानों के अन्तर्गत दो निविदा प्रणाली (Two Bid System) की ई-निविदाई www.uktenders.gov.in पर विभिन्न तिथियों में आमंत्रित की जाती है। जिसकी विस्तृत सूचना मिल की वेबसाइट www.kichhasugar.com पर उपलब्ध है।
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MAHINDRA RURAL HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED **Possession Notice**
Corporate Office: Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd. Sadhana House, 2nd Floor, 570, P.B.Marg Worli, Mumbai 400 018 India,Tel: +91 22 66523500 Fax: +91 22 24972741
Regional Office: LDA Colony,B2/B70 Kanpur Road, Near Phoneix Mall, Lucknow.
Branch Office: F/F, Plot No-17, Sanajay Nagar, District Center, Near Vishal Megha Mart And Pnb Bank, Sanjay Nagar Ghaziabad UP 201001.

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

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

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

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

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

S.N.	Name of the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Description of Secured Asset (Immoveable Property)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Date of Possession
1.	(LC No: 859799 GHAZIABAD Branch) ARUN KUMAR (Borrower) MAYA DEVI (Co Borrower) DINESH KUMAR (Co Borrower)	KHASRA NO-1275, VILLAGE-GARHI MOHALLA SADDIKPURA PILKHWA, GHAZIABAD-HAPUR,UTTAR PRADESH -245304 , PLOT AREA 429.498 SQFT, EAST: OTHER PLOT, WEST: PLOT OF DAYAWATI, SOUTH: LAND OF SITA RAM, NORTH : 10 FT ROAD	30/5/2022 Rs. 7,58,863/-	19-08-2022 Symbolic Possession
2.	(LC No: 743816 GHAZIABAD Branch) HAJMUDDIN (Borrower) HANEEF KHAN (Co Borrower)	KHASRA NO-826A H.NO-485/1, VILLAGE-MASURI PARGANA - DASNA, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH - 201001, PLOT AREA 447.26 SQFT, EAST: ROAD 14, WEST: PLOT FAISEL, SOUTH : PLOT OTHER, NORTH : PLOT OTHER	30/5/2022 Rs. 10,14,294/-	19-08-2022 Symbolic Possession

Place :- **DELHI, AGRA** Date:-**23.08.2022** Sd/- Authorised Officer Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Limited

PARIJAT PAPER MILLS LIMITED
CIN : L21012UP1989PLC010589
Vill: Jat Mujhera 10.6 km Stone Bhopa Road,Muzaffarnagar - 251 308 (U.P.)
Website: www.parijatpapermills.com Email: parijatpapermills@yahoo.com

NOTICE OF 34th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REMOTE E-VOTING INFORMATION AND BOOK CLOSURE

1. Notice is hereby given that the 34thAnnual General Meeting (AGM) of the members of Parijat Paper Mills Limited (Company) will be held on Friday, 16th day of September, 2022 at 11:30 A.M. IST at the Registered Office of the Company at Vill-Jat Mujhera, 10.6 KM Stone Bhopa Road, Muzaffarnagar-251308, Uttar Pradesh, to transact the businesses as set out in the Notice of AGM in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 (Act) and Rules framed thereunder read with General Circular issued from time to time, respectively circulars issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs ("MCA Circulars").

2. Electronic copies of the Notice of the AGM and the Annual Report for the financial year ended March 31, 2022 of the Company shall be sent to all the members, whose email ids are registered with the Company/RTA/Depository participant(s), as on the cut-off date i.e. 19th August, 2022. Please note that the requirement of sending physical copy of the Notice of the 34th AGM and Annual Report to the Members have been dispensed with vide MCA Circulars. The Notice and the Annual Report will also be available and can be downloaded from the website of the Company www.parijatpapermills.com.

3. The facility of casting the votes by the members ("e-voting") will be provided by Link Intime India Private Limited and the detailed procedure for the same is provided in the Notice of the AGM. The remote e-voting period commences on 13th September, 2022 (09:00 A.M.) and end on 15th September, 2022 (05:00 P.M.) During this period, members of the Company, holding shares either in physical form or in dematerialized form, as on the cut-off date of 10th September, 2022, may cast their vote by remote e-voting or by e-voting at the time of AGM. Members participating through in person shall be counted for reckoning the quorum under Section 103 of the Act.

4. Members, who are holding shares in physical/electronic form and their e-mail addresses are not registered with the Company/their respective Depository Participants, are requested to register their e-mail addresses at the earliest by sending scanned copy of a duly signed letter by the Member(s) mentioning their name, complete address, folio number, number of shares held with the Company along with self-attested scanned copy of the PAN Card and self-attested scanned copy of any one of the following documents viz., Aadhar Card, Driving License, Election Card, Passport, utility bill or any other Govt. document in support of the address proof of the Member as registered with the Company for receiving the Annual Report 2021-22 along with AGM Notice by email to parijatpapermills@yahoo.com. Members holding shares in demat form can update their email address with their Depository Participants. The notice of the AGM contains the instructions regarding the manner in which the shareholders can cast their vote through remote e-voting or by e-voting at the time of AGM.

5. The Register of Members and Share Transfer books of the Company will remain closed from Saturday, 10th September, 2022 to Friday, 16th September, 2022 (both days inclusive).

6. The Notice of AGM and Annual Report for the financial year 2021-22 will be sent to members in accordance with the applicable provisions in due course.

For Parijat Paper Mills Limited.
Sd/-
Amit Mittal
Director
Date: 22.08.2022
Place: Muzaffarnagar
DIN: 00754471

COMMITTEE ON MSP SETS UP FOUR SUB-GROUPS TO DISCUSS KEY ISSUES

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The committee on Minimum Support Price (MSP) formed four sub-groups on mandated topics, including making "MSP more effective and transparent" in its first meeting on Monday but Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) remained absent.

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

The panel has 26 members including the chairman, while three membership slots are kept aside for representatives of SKM.

"After a day long deliberation, the committee decided to form four sub-groups or committees on three mandated topics," the committee member Binod Anand told PTI.

Anand, who is holding the charge of general secretary at



farmers' group CNRI, said the first group will study Himalayan states as well as the cropping pattern and crop diversification and how to ensure MSP support in those states.

The second group on micro irrigation -- to be headed by Sukhpal Singh from IIM-Ahmedabad -- will study how to make micro-irrigation farmer-centric. Currently, micro irrigation is driven by

government subsidies and the group will examine how to generate farmers demand for this, he said.

The third group -- led by a representative of National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) -- will study 'zero budget based farming', including organic and natural farming methods, and generate consensus of farmers.

The fourth group -- to be

led by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) -- along with Hyderabad-based Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA) and Nagpur-based National Bureau of Soil Survey and Land Use Planning (NBSSLUP) and one more institute will study the crop diversification and cropping pattern across the country and submit a background report, he added.

"The four groups will hold separate meetings and the committee's final meeting will be held in September-end," Anand said.

He said that SKM representatives were not present in the day-long meeting. Niti Aayog member Ramesh was also not present due to other engagements.

SKM, which necessitated setting up of this committee on July 18 after leading the farmers' protest against three farm laws and forcing the government to repeal them, has already rejected this committee and decided not to nominate its representatives.

While announcing the repeal of three farm laws in November last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised to set up a committee to look into farmers' MSP issues. Other members who attended the meeting included agri-economists CSC Shekhar from Indian Institute of Economic Development, Sukhpal Singh from IIM-Ahmedabad, and Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) senior member Naveen P Singh.

Among farmer representatives who attended the meeting were National award-winning farmer Bharat Bhushan Tyagi as well as Gunwant Patil, Krishnaveer Choudhary, Pramod Kumar Choudhary, Guni Prakash and Sayyed Pasha Patel. IFFCO chairman Dilip Sanghani was present.

Senior members of agricultural universities, central government secretaries and chief secretaries of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim and Odisha were also present in the meeting.

Equity investors poorer by over ₹6.57 lakh crore in two days

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A decline in equities for two sessions has eroded investors' wealth by more than Rs 6.57 lakh crore. The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 872.28 points or 1.46 per cent to settle at 58,773.87 points on Monday. In two straight sessions, the benchmark index has tanked 1,524.13 points or 2.52 per cent.

The weak trend in the broader market have pulled down the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms by Rs 6,57,758.04 crore to Rs 2,73,95,002.87 crore (over Rs 273.95 lakh crore) in two days.

"While correction was overdue for sometime after the recent upsurge, fresh concerns of a likely hawkish stance by the US Fed in its September meet and strengthening dollar index turned investors jittery and triggered a massive fall in banking, IT, metal and realty stocks," Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail) at Kotak Securities Ltd, said.

According to analysts, fresh concerns related to the global economic growth have dampened investor sentiments.

"Negative global cues weighed on indices at the Dalal Street as Nifty ended below the psychological 17,500-mark and



Sensex too fell way below its recently reclaimed psychological 60,000-mark.

"Blame the negativity to last week's Fed meeting minutes which pointed towards more aggressive rate hikes to curb inflation. If the last two days' trade is any indication, then expect investors to stay on the sidelines in the coming session," Prashanth Tapse - Research Analyst, Senior VP (Research) at Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

On Monday, Tata Steel was the biggest laggard in the Sensex pack falling 4.50 per cent, followed by Asian Paints, Wipro, Sun Pharma, Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finance, UltraTech Cement and Bajaj Finserv. ITC and

Nestle India ended higher.

All the BSE sectoral indices ended lower, with metal falling 2.69 per cent, followed by realty (2.47 per cent), basic materials (2.44 per cent), consumer discretionary goods & services (2.01 per cent), finance (1.88 per cent) and bank (1.88 per cent).

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge fell 1.80 per cent and the smallcap index declined 1.17 per cent.

"Consolidation was triggered in the market in anticipation of tighter monetary policy by the Fed and worries over a slowdown in global economic activity," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Sales of luxury homes in Jan-Jun across 7 cities surpass demand in full 2021

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sales of luxury flats, priced above Rs 1.5 crore, stood at 25,680 units across seven major cities during January-June 2022 and have surpassed sales in each of the last three years, according to Anarock.

The Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) contributed more than 50 per cent of the total luxury housing sales in the first half of this year.

Property consultant Anarock said the luxury housing segment has performed "remarkably well" this year.

As per the data, sales of luxury homes were 25,680 units during January-June 2022, which is higher than 21,700 luxury flats sold in the entire 2021 calendar year across seven major cities -- Delhi-NCR, MMR, Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata. In full 2020, sales of luxury apartments fell to 8,470 units from 17,740 units in 2019 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There are four-five reasons for sharp rise in sales of luxury homes. First, there have been completion of many luxury residential projects this year. The demand for ready-to-move in units was higher as customers wanted to shift immediately," Anarock Chairman Anuj Puri told PTI.

Further, he said the high net worth individuals (HNIs) have made money during the pandemic from stock market which they are investing in real estate now.

"Joint families have realised during the pandemic the need

for larger spaces and that too immediately. This is also one of the major demand drivers," Puri said.

The consultant also noted that housing prices have risen after the second wave of the pandemic. "Prices are still at reasonable level. Prospective buyers feel that rates may go up further, so they are buying now". Lastly, NRIs (non-resident Indians) have also been snapping up luxury homes in India because of the favourable exchange rate," he added.

Anarock data suggests that share of luxury homes in the overall housing sales of 1.84 lakh units across the seven cities rose to 14 per cent during the first six months of 2022.

If compared with the pre-pandemic year of 2019, the share of luxury homes in the total sales was just 7 per cent.

Mukesh Singh, Director - Sales, Kalpataru Ltd, said: "With the onset of the pandemic, buyers are looking for homes that provide luxury amenities. Consumers are looking to buy bigger and luxurious homes from renowned developers who have a robust track record of executing projects on time." The data showed that luxury homes sales in Delhi-NCR stood at 4,160 units in January-June this year. Sales were 1,680 units in 2019, 700 units in 2020 and 2,520 units in 2021 in Delhi-NCR.

The MMR saw sales of 13,670 units in the first six months of 2022. The city witnessed sales of 10,210 units in 2019, 5,840 units in 2020 and 13,720 units in 2021.

Auto component industry looks to maintain double-digit sales growth this fiscal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The auto component industry expects to maintain double-digit sales growth in the current fiscal after having reported its highest-ever turnover in FY22, with demand expected to remain robust.

As per the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association (ACMA), the sector reported a turnover of Rs 4.2 lakh crore last fiscal, a growth of 23 per cent over 2020-21, as passenger and commercial vehicle production increased by 20 per cent and 30 per cent respectively due to increased demand and fewer supply chain disruptions. Auto component sales to original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) in the domestic

market stood at Rs 3.41 lakh crore last fiscal, up 22 per cent as compared to FY21.

Similarly, exports of auto components witnessed a growth of 43 per cent to Rs 1.41 lakh crore (USD 19.0 billion) in 2021-22, as against Rs 0.98 lakh crore (USD 13.3 billion) in 2020-21.

"If the growth trend continues, we have no reason to believe it won't," ACMA President Sunjay Kapur told PTI when asked if the sector could see double-digit growth in the current fiscal as well.

"Everything we see is pointing in the right direction. Demand is good, manufacturing is looking strong. Unless something happens that we are not in control of, like a pandemic, lockouts or a global



recession, it is in the right direction," he added.

The sector has come to the pre-pandemic levels in terms of volumes and the next phase of growth is expected to come from newer platforms, revival of two-wheeler and commer-

cial vehicle segments, Kapur said. With a slew of new launches, vehicle sales are expected to gain traction during the festive season, he added. "The component industry is also transforming itself as sales of two-wheeler and three-

Rupee ends flat at 79.84 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee recovered early losses to close flat at 79.84 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday amid a strong greenback overseas and massive sell-off in equities.

However, lower crude oil prices supported the local unit, forex dealers said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened weak at 79.90 and moved in a range of 79.78 to 79.92 during the session. It finally settled flat at 79.84 against the US dollar.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.20 per cent to 108.38.

Meanwhile, Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.81 per cent to USD 95.94 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 872.28 points or 1.46 per cent lower at 58,773.87, while the broader NSE Nifty fell 267.75 points or 1.51 per cent to 17,490.70.

LIC Housing Fin, Bajaj Housing Fin hike lending rates by 0.50%

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mortgage lenders Bajaj Housing Finance and LIC Housing Finance on Monday announced a 0.50 per cent hike each in their lending rates.

The revisions come amid a rising interest rates scenario, which has seen the RBI hiking its key lending rate by 1.40 per cent since May to tame inflation.

Bajaj Housing Finance hiked its rate by 0.50 per cent, and the lowest priced product for the salaried and professional applicants will be 7.70 per cent now, as per an official statement.

Despite the latest hike, the company claimed to be offering loans at competitive rates compared to most of its peers.

LIC Housing Finance has increased its prime lending rate (LHPLR) by 0.50 per cent and the new interest rates on home loans will now start from 8 per cent as against 7.50 per



cent previously.

The company's chief executive and managing director Y Viswanatha Gowd said the RBI's decision to hike the repo rate by 0.50 per cent has caused "minimum fluctuation" in monthly instalments or tenure of home loans and exuded confidence that demand for housing will remain robust.

Godrej Agrovet signs MoU with 3 NE States for promotion of oil palm cultivation

PTI ■ GUWAHATI/KOLKATA

Leading diversified agribusiness company Godrej Agrovet on Monday announced it has signed MoUs with Assam, Manipur and Tripura governments for development and promotion of oil palm cultivation in the three states under the National Mission on Edible Oils-Oil Palm scheme.

India is a net importer of palm oil.

The MoUs are in line with Godrej Agrovet's long-term strategy to be the catalyst in India's oil mission through sustainable growth of the plant's production and double farmer's income, the company's Managing Director Balram Singh Yadav said in a statement.

As per the MoU, the company will be allotted land in the three states for promotion and development of sustainable palm oil plantation in the region.

The collaboration will bring new opportunities and growth in building oil palm plantations in these three states and would help to provide the required support to the farmers, Yadav said.

"With more than thirty years of experience in the oil palm business, Godrej Agrovet has been working and educating farmers from the North East on sustainable palm oil plantation processes. Currently, we have around 65,000 hectares under palm oil cultivation across the country, which we plan to increase to one lakh hectares in the next few years," he said.

The North-eastern states promise huge opportunities for growth and improving income of the farming household, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)-Oil Palm Sougata Niyogi said.

According to industry estimates, the NE states have utilised less than one per cent of their potential.

"With our processing plant in Mizoram, we are prepared to sustainably serve the demand of the northeast markets," Niyogi said.

Godrej Agrovet's palm oil is currently present in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Goa, Maharashtra, and Mizoram. Its range of products, including crude palm oil, crude palm kernel oil and palm kernel cake, are produced at its six oil palm mills spread across the country.

In August 2021, the government launched the National Mission on Edible Oils-Oil Palm scheme with a planned outlay of Rs 11,040 crore.

Under this mission, the government has envisaged to raise the area under cultivation of oil palm to 10 lakh hectares by 2025-26 and 16.7 lakh hectares by 2029-30 with special focus on the North East region and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

INBRIEF

AYUSH GUPTA TAKES OVER AS GAIL DIRECTOR (HR)
New Delhi : Ayush Gupta on Monday assumed charge as Director (Human Resources) of GAIL (India) Limited. Prior to this, he was working as Chief General Manager (Human Resource Development) in the organisation. An electrical engineer of the 1992 batch from IIT Roorkee and MBA in Operations Management, Gupta has over 30 years of varied and rich experience. Gupta is recipient of the prestigious Chevening Rolls Royce Science, Innovation, Policy and Leadership fellowship from Oxford University in 2013, Winner of the National Corrosion Awareness Award 2004 and Emerging HRD Thinkers Award in 2011.

INDIA'S FIRST FIRM TO MAKE PYROXASULFONE TECHNICAL
New Delhi: Best Agrolife Limited has been granted registration for the indigenous manufacturing of Pyroxasulfone Technical by Central Insecticides Board & Registration Committee. With this Best Agrolife Limited (BAL) will become the first Indian agrochemical company to manufacture Pyroxasulfone Technical in India. BAL also received the registration for indigenous manufacturing of another crucial pesticide Kresoxim Methyl Technical u/s 9 (4) in the same RC meeting. Pyroxasulfone is a novel pre-emergence herbicide for wheat, corn, and soybean.

Burger chain Jumboking to expand in Delhi and other markets

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) chain Jumboking Foods, which operates burger chains, is expanding its store network and aims to double in every two years, said a top company official.

The vegetarian burger chain is expanding its presence in Delhi, Hyderabad and some other markets where it has recently entered, said Jumboking Foods founder and managing director Dheeraj Gupta.

"We have set for ourselves a pace for doubling every two years, that is a CAGR growth rate between 40-45 per cent," Gupta told PTI.

The company presently operates about 120 stores and a majority (85 per cent) of them are based in Mumbai, he added.

Jumboking entered the Delhi market 8-9 months ago and has six stores here. It has also entered Hyderabad and has some presence in Lucknow.

The company, as per its strategy, would mainly focus



on Delhi and Mumbai markets.

Asked about the potential of both markets for Jumboking, Gupta said: "It is a market of close to 800-1,000 stores."

According to Gupta, Jumboking has now become the country's third largest burger chain. "Specifically, in Mumbai, we are in the top two in terms of a number of stores - second only to McDonald's in terms of customer touch-points," he added.

Jumboking is in the middle of its pan-India expansions, said Gupta. Over the sales/turnover, Gupta said it has an average business of Rs 80 lakh per store per year.

Banks' AT-1 bond issuances likely to decline to ₹20,000 crore in FY23

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The issuance of Additional Tier-1 (AT-1) bonds by banks is likely to more than halve to Rs 20,000 crore this fiscal compared to the all-time high amount of Rs 42,800 crore raised in FY22, says a report.

AT-1 bonds are those debt instruments without a terminal maturity date.

In FY22, a majority of the funds raised through the instrument were to refinance bond issues done in FY17, Icrs Ratings said in the report on Monday. Majority of the bonds have a call option in the fifth year, resulting in the significant jump in new issuances which are basically for refinancing the earlier obligations.

The issuances in FY17 stood at Rs 32,100 crore for the state-owned banks and Rs 10,900 crore for private sector lenders. In FY18, the amounts stood at Rs 10,900 crore and Rs 23,500 crore, respectively, Icrs said.

According to the report, lenders have already refinanced the FY18 bonds because of the lower interest rates in FY22.

Lenders have already raised Rs 5,320 crore from the instru-



ment in the first four months of FY23.

As the net of new offerings and redemptions between April and July 2022, the AT-1 bonds outstanding as on July 31 was Rs 1.02 lakh crore and is expected to touch Rs 1.1 lakh crore by March 31, 2023, the report said.

The rating agency's Vice President Anil Gupta said a bulk of Rs 20,100 crore of the new issuances will be from state-owned lenders to fuel their growth aspirations while the private sector banks will be

"modest" depending on the market opportunities.

On the demand side, investors are also more desirous of betting on AT-1 bonds now, driven by the public sector banks' improved financial positions.

Yields on the AT-1 bonds recently issued by the public banks ranged from 8 to 8.75 per cent compared to 7.25 per cent on a five-year government bond and 7.55 per cent on a five-year AAA corporate bond, the report said.

Bhutia, CoA favour reforms in AIFF

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Indian skipper Baichung Bhutia and the Committee of Administrators (CoA) on Monday told the Supreme Court that the reform process in the national football body AIFF should be allowed to continue despite threats from FIFA.

The Centre told the top court that Bhutia is a legend in football like Sachin Tendulkar or Sunil Gavaskar is in Cricket and it is considering a bigger role for him due to his contribution to Indian Football and the government would request him that what he is aiming for in AIFF (post of President) may not be appropriate to his stature.

Bhutia, who has moved the top court saying that the draft constitution of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) prepared by CoA should be adopted said that though he has played over 100 matches for India over the period of 10 years in the present situation prevailing in the national football body, does not know whether he will be able to get into the administration of football in this country.

The top court also asked for an interim and final report of the forensic audit of AIFF, which allegedly indicated larger scale



siphoning and defalcation of funds by the Praful Patel-led management committee to be submitted to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and orally directed it to proceed under law.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and AS Bopanna asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, to look into the proposal of considering Bhutia for some appropriate position as per his stature in football administration.

Advocate Raghenath Basant,

appearing for Bhutia, said that his only concern is to remove the vested interest prevailing in the football administration in the country.

"I captained India in football and have played 107 matches over the period of ten years. I may be a legendary player but I have absolutely no chance to get into its administration if the current reform process is not allowed to continue", Basant said.

He said that the court has to direct the implementation of its

draft constitution despite FIFA's objections and reforms being in the larger interest of the game.

The bench asked him what would happen if the court asserted its authority and sacrificed the under-17 Women's World Cup.

Basant said that four years ago India hosted the under-17 men's world cup but what had happened, India was still ranked 104th in the World in the game.

"Even if you ask a small child, he will tell you that there is no chance of India qualifying for the FIFA World Cup. I

would rather sacrifice the Under-17 Women's World Cup and go for reforms and aim for the main World Cup", he said.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for CoA, clarified that the committee has no intention to "cling" to the management of AIFF and it was the court's mandate that they were following.

He took objections to the tone and tenor of the FIFA letters and said that it is like undermining the authority of the court and by calling there is third-party interference.

Sankaranarayanan said that reforms are necessary for the football administration and informed the court that the CoA has during this period hired a private agency for a forensic audit and it has given its interim report, which shows large-scale defalcation and siphoning of funds by the earlier management.

He said that the contempt petition is pending and they wanted that persons be not allowed to participate in the election process of the AIFF.

The bench asked Sankaranarayanan to be the amicus curiae in the matter and said that he can submit one copy of the forensic audit to the court and the other to the ministry of youth affairs and sports.

Mehta said that if the court directs the sports ministry is ready to look into the report as per the procedure laid down under the law.

Senior advocate Rahul Mehra, who is the original petitioner before the Delhi High Court, said that disbanding of CoA may have an impact on other sports bodies where such committees have been formed by court orders as it would become a precedent.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for former AIFF President Praful Patel, said that he has absolutely no interest in holding any position in the national football body and he only wants the World Cup to be held here and for that, he is endorsing what Mehta has submitted.

"I don't want any position in AIFF. I have brought the world cup to the country and I want it to be held", Sibal submitted.

Mehra said that Patel has also brought a suspension of AIFF.

The bench asked Sibal whether Patel would also step down from FIFA to which he said that he has been an elected member of the international football federation.

Sibal replied he is an elected member of FIFA, not a nominated one.



Praggnanandhaa beats Carlsen but loses out on top prize

PTI ■ MIAMI

Young Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa produced a superb performance, winning three straight games including two in the blitz tie-breaks to outwit world No.1 Magnus Carlsen 4-2 in the final round of the FTX Crypto Cup here on Monday.

However, despite the win over Carlsen, the 17-year old could only take second place in the final standings.

The Norwegian won the top prize on the basis of a higher score. He finished with 16 match points to the Indian prodigy's tally of 15.

"I've been playing badly all day, but now I'm getting the results I deserve... It's never good to lose, but this is as good

a time as any!," Carlsen said after the match.

Alireza Firouzja, another highly-rated teen and a prodigy, also finished on 15 points but had to settle for third place as he had lost the clash against Praggnanandhaa earlier.

The first two games of the Carlsen-Praggnanandhaa match were drawn before the world No.1 went ahead by clinching the third.

In a surprise turn of events, the Indian won the fourth game to push the match into the tie-breaks. He shocked the Norwegian by winning both the games in the tie-break.

Praggnanandhaa has been in splendid form this year and had previously beaten the world champion twice in online events.



Lewa opens Barca tally with brace on birthday

AP ■ SOCIEDAD

Robert Lewandowski got off the mark for Barcelona with a double as Ansu Fati starred as a substitute in a 4-1 victory over Real Sociedad on Sunday, while Villarreal won at Atletico Madrid.

Lewandowski, celebrating his 34th birthday, put Barca ahead inside 50 seconds before Alexander Isak levelled for La Real in San Sebastian.

But Fati came off the bench to create goals for Ousmane Dembele and Lewandowski, before completing the scoring himself.

Barca's first win of the season followed a disappointing goalless draw at home to Rayo Vallecano on the opening weekend.

Coach Xavi had called for "patience" from supporters after a summer spending spree which saw Lewandowski, Raphinha, Andreas Christensen and Franck Kessie all move to the Camp Nou.

That quartet all made their debuts against Rayo, but France defender Jules Kounde is still to be registered by the club after his transfer from Sevilla as they look to overcome financial problems.

The visitors made a dream start on Sunday, though, as 18-year-old full-back Alejandro Balde raced clear and sent in a low cross which was tapped home by Lewandowski.

He scored 344 goals during a trophy-laden eight-year spell at Bayern Munich before leaving for 45 million euros in July.

But the home side hit back in the sixth minute, as Frenkie de Jong lost the ball in midfield and Isak raced clear before lofting the ball into the net.

Sociedad were proving a tough nut to crack for Barca, but the game changed when Fati was sent on in the 64th minute.

The 19-year-old's brilliant backheel teed up Dembele to drill a left-footed strike into the bottom corner just two minutes later, before another clever touch found Lewandowski to score.

Fati, who endured two injury-plagued seasons after breaking into the first team in 2019/20, got a goal himself late on as he collected Lewandowski's volleyed flick and slotted in.

Earlier, Villarreal moved to the top of the fledgling table as second-half goals from Jeremy Pino and Gerard Moreno secured a 2-0 victory at Atletico Madrid.

BWF Worlds: Sen, Srikanth, Prannoy win; Praneeth loses

PTI ■ TOKYO

Commonwealth Games champion Lakshya Sen continued his impressive run, trouncing Danish Hans-Kristian Solberg Vittinghus in straight games to progress to the men's singles second round at BWF World Championships here on Monday.

Sen's senior team-mates Kidambi Srikanth and H S Prannoy also won their respective first round matches.

India also registered twin wins in women's and mixed doubles competition on the opening day which saw B Sai Praneeth bow out after losing in three games to world number 4 Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei.

The 20-year-old Sen, who had returned with a bronze on his debut in Spain last year, prevailed 21-12, 21-11 over an erratic Vittinghus in his opening match. Sen will next face Luis Enrique Penalver of Spain.

Praneeth, a 2019 Bronze medalist, put up a brave effort before going down 15-21, 21-15, 15-21 to Chen in little over an hour.

It was yet another forgettable outing in Tokyo for Praneeth, following his struggles at last year's Olympic Games, where he participated without a proper coach or physio to bow out early.

Birmingham CWG Bronze medalist Srikanth, seeded 12th in the tournament, had to toil in his 22-20, 21-19 win over Nhat Nguyen of Ireland, while Prannoy secured a dominating 21-12, 21-11 win over Luka Wraber of Austria.

Srikanth will face Zhao Jun Peng of China in the second round while Prannoy will be up against second seed Kento Momota of Japan.

Former Commonwealth Games Bronze medalists Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy progressed to the



women's doubles second round with a 21-7, 21-9 win over Maldives' Aminath Nabeeha Abdul Razzaq and

Fathimath Nabaaha Abdul Razzaq. Ashwini and Sikki will face an uphill task of taming top seeds Chen

Mbappe scores in record time as PSG win



AP ■ PARIS

Hat-trick star Kylian Mbappe matched one Ligue 1 record by scoring after just eight seconds in Lille to set Paris Saint-Germain on their way to

a 7-1 victory on Sunday, while the division hit a modern high with 11 red cards in one weekend.

Mbappe equalled a 30-year-old record when he burst into space, collected a pass from

Lionel Messi and surprised Lille goalkeeper Leo Jardim with a lob to score his second league goal of the season.

The goal matched Michel Rio's strike for Caen against Cannes on February 15, 1992,

although statisticians MisterChip calculated that Rio was slightly faster, scoring after 7.9sec to Mbappe's 8.3.

Mbappe then hit a post when facing an open goal, but Messi, Achraf Hakimi and Neymar all scored before half-time as PSG tore apart the only other club to win the French title in the last five seasons.

Stories of tensions between two of PSG's superstars, Mbappe and Neymar, had swirled around the club this week but the Brazilian scored twice and Mbappe three times.

"It's a real satisfaction to see them happy on the field, playing for each other," PSG coach Christophe Galtier said.

"Obviously there is talent, and when this talent comes together, it makes for a very enjoyable match."

Neymar added a fifth early in the second half. After Jonathan Bamba replied for Lille, Mbappe struck twice, set up both times by Neymar.



Bennacer saves point for Milan

AP ■ MILAN

A tough Serie A encounter at Atalanta with a hard-earned 1-1 draw on Sunday, while Napoli's new boy Khvicha Kvaratskhelia starred in a 4-0 thumping of promoted Monza.

Ismael Bennacer made sure that champions Milan came away from the Gewiss Stadium with a deserved point with a well-placed curling effort midway through the second half.

"I think we could have

done more. We tried to win this match," said Bennacer to DAZN.

"They were well drilled and it was hard for us to find spaces. But when you can't win it's important that you don't lose. And we didn't lose."

Stefano Pioli's side had been trailing to Ruslan Malinovskyi's deflected opener in a typically feisty encounter between local Lombardy rivals which left both on four points from their first two games of the season.

AP ■ CINCINNATI

Borna Coric, who only returned in March after missing a year with a shoulder injury, dominated fourth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas on Sunday to win the ATP Cincinnati Masters.

The world number 152 from Croatia dispatched the Greek star 7-6 (7/0), 6-2 to become the lowest-ranked player to ever lift a Masters trophy.

"This is unbelievable," Coric said. "I thought I would lose in the first round."

Coric lost his only previous final at this level, going down to Novak Djokovic in Shanghai four years ago.

On Sunday, Coric replaced 143rd-ranked Spaniard Roberto Carretero, the 1996 Hamburg champion, as the lowest-rated Masters trophy lifter.

"This has been a very good tournament for me," Coric said. "I always enjoy coming back here. I had to watch on television the last two years and I wasn't happy about that."

Coric came back from an early deficit, trailing Tsitsipas 4-



1 before turning the corner and sweeping the tiebreaker to love.

Momentum shifted further in the second set for the Croat, who was supported by a few

fans wearing the national colors.

"I really can't realize what has happened," Coric said. "It was a very, very tough match.

Coric upsets Tsitsipas to win Cincinnati title

QUALIFIER GARCIA DOWNS KVITOVA

AP ■ CINCINNATI

Qualifier Caroline Garcia completed a dream week on Sunday at the ATP and WTA Cincinnati Masters with a 6-2, 6-4 title defeat of Petra Kvitova.

The French winner claimed her third Masters-level title - her 11th overall - after winning Wuhan and Beijing in a Chinese double



"At the start I was not playing well and he was pushing me hard. I slowly started serving better and fighting hard."

Coric fired seven aces and saved three of four break points in a two-hour victory.

Coric improved to 2-1 all-time against Tsitsipas, having retired from their first meeting in Rome in 2018 and won in the third round of the 2020 US

Open in a fifth-set tiebreaker. "You've kicked my ass the last couple of times," Tsitsipas said to Coric in the trophy ceremony.

Then he praised Coric's title run at Cincinnati, which included victories over Rafael Nadal, Britain's Cameron Norrie and Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime.

"You've proved yourself

five years ago.

The number 35 who fell on her back after clinching victory maintained her lead on the Tour with a 27th match victory since June.

"It's hard to believe that I'm standing here," the winner said. "It's been such a crazy week."

"Huge congrats to Petra, one of the nicest girls on the Tour."

over and over again," Tsitsipas said. "It was an incredible comeback from injury. You are proving that you are up there with us."

Tsitsipas said he is still seeking a first title on outdoor hardcourt losing six finals played on cement.

"It kind of sucks," the Greek said. "I still hope to come back here and win it one day."

Zverev pulls out of US Open with ankle injury

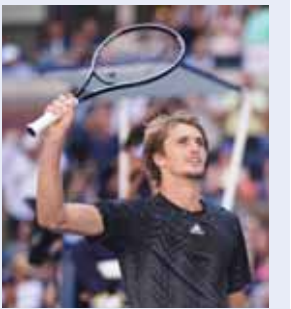
AP ■ PARIS

World number two Alexander Zverev has withdrawn from the US Open as he continues his recovery from torn ankle ligaments, tournament organisers announced on Monday.

Zverev, 25, has not played since the injury he suffered during his semi-final against Rafael Nadal at the French Open in June.

His place in the main draw of the August 29-September 11 tournament will be taken by American Stefan Kozlov.

Zverev had played in 27 consecutive Grand Slams since his 2015 debut before



the injury forced him to miss Wimbledon.

He has been named in Germany's team for the group stage of the Davis Cup finals next month.

Zverev might not be the only top-10 men's player absent from the year's final Grand Slam.

India whitewash Zimbabwe

Gill's 1st int'l hundred trumps Sikandar's fighting 115 as Men in Blue win by 13 runs

PTI ■ HARARE

Sikandar Raza's lion-hearted effort took Zimbabwe on the cusp of a famous victory before India held their nerves to pull off a 13-run win in the third ODI and complete a series sweep here on Monday.

The final game of the series too was heading India's way until Raza (115 off 95 balls) brought Zimbabwe back into the contest with the support of Brad Evans (28 off 36).

The duo shared a 104-run stand off 77 balls for the eighth wicket to raise hopes of a memorable result against their mighty opponents. However, Raza fell to a brilliant catch by Shubman Gill in the penultimate over, as India scraped through.

It was Gill who had set up the game for India as he smashed his maiden international hundred to take the visitors to 289 for eight. Zimbabwe's innings ended at 276 in 49.3 overs.

Gill (130 off 97 balls), who reached a major career milestone more than three years after making his India debut, shared a 140-run stand with Ishan Kishan (50 off 61) after the visitors decided to bat for the first time in the series.

Sean Williams (45 off 46) and Raza played some bold strokes early in the Zimbabwe chase.

Deepak Chahar once again impressed with the new ball while left-arm spinner Axar Patel got welcome wickets in the middle overs.

Chahar got his first wicket with a booming inswinger as Innocent Kaia (6) was trapped while charging down the wicket. The Indians were convinced that the full ball hit the pad first and went for a review that turned out to be successful.

His opening partner Takudzwanashe Kaitano (13 off 22), who walked back to the dressing room with leg pain, returned to the middle but not for long. India spinner Kuldeep Yadav drew him forward with a wrong un that had the Zimbabwean stumped.



Though Zimbabwe kept losing wickets regularly, the seasoned Raza stood strong before completing his third hundred in the last six innings.

The crowd got more involved when Raza smashed Shardul Thakur for three fours in the 39th over that eventually yielded 20 runs.

The Indian bowlers were found wanting with Raza and Evans collecting boundaries at will. In the end, the hosts fell agonisingly short.

Opting to bat for the first time in the series, India did not have the most fluent of starts as they struggled to 63 for one in 15 overs.

Both the seasoned openers -- skipper K L Rahul (30 off 46) and Shikhar Dhawan (40 off 68) -- would be disappointed at not being able to convert their starts.

Coming back from a long injury break, Rahul had an ideal opportunity to get back into groove ahead of the Asia Cup T20. He played on to a length ball off medium pacer Brad Evans who ended up taking five wickets for the first time.

The first hour has proved to be tricky for the batters here but with so much experience under their belt, both Dhawan and Rahul should have gone on to make big ones.

Barring the stand between Gill and Kishan, not much stood out from the Indian innings.

Gill, who made his ODI comeback with the series against the West Indies, was a treat to the eye during his innings comprising 15 fours and a six. The 22-year-old played shots all around, with his straight drives and cover drives standing out.

Gill had a few nervous moments in the 90s before he reached the milestone.

Evans appealed for a close leg before call but the DRS was turned down after UltraEdge showed that the ball touched Gill's bat before thudding into the pads. On the same ball however, Kishan was run out at the other end after he left his crease for a quick single, but Gill was preoccupied with the appeal.



It's tough not being India regular: Sanju

PTI ■ HARARE

Indian wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson says it has been "tough" for him to remain on the sidelines throughout in his international career but he prefers to stay positive.

Having shot to prominence as a teenager and then making International debut in a T201 against Zimbabwe here in 2015, the Kerala cricketer has featured only in seven ODIs and 16 T20Is till date.

Samson finally got chances in the second string side in team's recent tour of Ireland, West Indies and Zimbabwe. He will make way for regular keeper-batter Rishabh Pant when the Asia Cup begins in the UAE.

"I am a believer that whatever you go through in your career, you have to take it in a positive manner," Samson told the official broadcasters of the India-Zimbabwe ODI series.

"It's very tough, it definitely gets into your head when you know that all your friends are playing and you're not," Samson said.

Despite playing so little, Samson said he's fortunate to have a "good fan following".

"I feel surprised (on his fan following) that despite playing very little for India, I get good support."

Samson, who took three catches, anchored India's 162-run chase with an unbeaten 43 not out to return with the man-of-the-match in India's series-clinching second ODI against Zimbabwe here on Saturday.

Batting at six, the Kerala player struck four sixes and three boundaries in his 39-ball knock.

"I feel there are a lot of Malayalis (in the crowd) as I hear cheers of 'Chetta Chetta' (elder brother) which make me feel proud," he said.

Having led Rajasthan Royals to their second final in the IPL history this year, Samson credited domestic cricket for his growth as a player.

"I really enjoyed playing domestic cricket for the last four-five years. It is challenging to do well there and that has made me a better player."

Samson finished among top-10 leading run getters in the IPL-2022 with 458 runs from 17 matches.

He further said captaining the Royals was a big turning point for him.

Latham leads Kiwis to maiden ODI series win in West Indies



AP ■ BRIDGETOWN

Stand-in captain Tom Latham stop-scored with 69 to lead New Zealand to a series-clinching five-wicket victory over the West Indies in the third and final ODI match in Barbados on Sunday.

Kyle Mayers' second ODI century and a blistering 91 by captain Nicholas Pooran took the hosts to 301 for eight in their 50 overs.

But the Black Caps made light of an imposing target as four of the first five in their batting order scored half-centuries to reach 307 for five off 47.1 overs and underline their status as the top-ranked nation in the 50-over format.

New Zealand's come-from-behind 2-1 win over the three matches was their first ODI series success in the Caribbean. It followed their 2-1 T20 series triumph the previous week in

Jamaica.

In the absence of injured Kane Williamson, Latham led the New Zealand effort and enjoyed a 120-run fourth-wicket partnership with Daryl Mitchell, who made 63, which tilted the contest in favour of the touring side.

"It's nice to come here, where other teams have struggled in the past, and get the series win," said player-of-the-match Latham.

"It was a better wicket today and we knew the target. I am just happy to be able to make a contribution."

Opener Martin Gupthill with 57 and Devon Conway, who plundered 56, also played key roles in the chase.

The West Indies cause was not helped by heavy dew on the outfield after dusk which required the ball to be changed four times during New Zealand's innings and made it difficult for

the home bowlers.

For the West Indies, Mayers' 105 off 110 balls with 12 fours and three sixes dominated an opening stand of 173 with Shai Hope, who made 51.

But it was Pooran's explosive 55-ball contribution, with nine sixes and four fours, that enabled the hosts to get beyond the 300-run mark.

"We missed our chance to take the series in that second game and paid the price here," said a downbeat Pooran. "We have a special bunch of guys here and I believe we will get better."

New Zealand spinner Mitchell Santner, who was named player of the series, claimed two for 38 in a containing 10-over spell while left-arm swing bowler Trent Boult was the leading wicket-taker with three for 53.

Jason Holder was the pick of the West Indies bowlers with two for 37 in seven overs.

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Fast bowler Dushmantha Chameera was on Monday ruled out of Sri Lanka's Asia Cup squad with a leg injury, dealing a 'big blow' to the islanders' prospects in the continental event.

Chameera had sustained an injury on his left leg during the team practice, the ICC said in a press release. He has been replaced by Nuwan Thushara in the 18-man squad.

Sri Lanka had announced their squad last Saturday minus Binura Fernando and Kasun Rajitha, who are also nursing injuries.

While Sri Lanka have an experienced spin bowling lineup, their fast-bowling unit now mostly features uncapped players in T20Is -- Dilshan Madushanka, Pramod Madushan, Asitha Fernando and Matheesha Pathirana; the replacement Thushara only having played a handful of T20Is.

The 28-year-old Thushara, who debuted in February this year, has featured in four T20Is and picked up two wickets.

Sri Lanka are part of Group B in the Asia Cup and their campaign will begin on August 27, against Afghanistan in Dubai. Their second match will be against Bangladesh on September 1.

Sri Lanka squad: Dasun Shanaka (capt), Danushka Gunathilaka, Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Mendis, Charith Asalanka, Bhanuka Rajapaksa, Ashen Bandara, Dhananjaya de Silva, Wanindu Hasaranga, Maheesh Theekshana, Jeffrey Vandersay, Praveen Jayawickrama, Chamika Karunaratne, Dilshan Madushanka, Matheesha

Chameera out of Asia Cup with leg injury



Pathirana, Nuwanidu Fernando, Nuwan Thushara, Dinesh Chandimal.

HASNAIN IN FOR AFRIDI

Islamabad: Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Hasnain has replaced the injured Shaheen Shah Afridi for the Asia Cup in the United Arab Emirates.

The 22-year-old Hasnain returned to cricket in June after remodelling his bowling action. He was suspended in February after being called by umpires during the BBL.

The right-arm fast bowler has taken 17 wickets in 18 T20s and played his last T20 against the West Indies at Karachi in December 2021.

Paine could make 1st-class comeback

AP ■ HOBART

Australia's former Test captain Tim Paine could return to first-class cricket after joining practice with Tasmania's state squad as an uncontracted player.

Paine tearfully quit as Australia captain in November last year ahead of the home Ashes series against England after revelations of a scandal involving the sending of inappropriate texts to a female co-worker in 2017. He subsequently took an indefinite mental health break from the game.

Cricket Tasmania on Monday said the 37-year-old Paine was back at practice and would make his return to competition with

his club in the state's domestic competition. Tasmania's first four-day game in the Sheffield Shield begins October 6.

Ricky Ponting, another former Australia captain from the island state of Tasmania, has previously said he'd like Paine to play for the Hobart Hurricanes franchise in the T20 Big Bash League.

Paine has already made one successful career comeback. After struggling with a finger injury that restricted his international career to four away Test matches in 2010, Paine had been considering retirement in 2017 before being drafted back into Australia's squad as first-choice wicket-keeper.

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh will not have a designated head coach for the Asia Cup but their board announced on Monday that technical consultant Sridharan Sriram, a former India all-rounder, will assist the team in the tournament.

With eight days to go for the team's tournament opener against Afghanistan at Sharjah, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan said head coach Russell Domingo has been asked to shift focus to Test and ODI cricket.

"There's not going to be a head coach (for the T20I side)," Hassan told reporters here on the eve of the team's departure to the UAE.

"Russell Domingo won't be part of the T20 set-up. He will be with ODIs and Tests."

"We have a batting coach (Jamie Siddons), a spin coach

Sriram takes charge of Bangladesh team, Domingo exits T20I set-up

(Rangana Herath), a fast-bowling coach (Allan Donald) and a fielding coach (Shane McDermott).

"We have the captain (Shakib Al Hasan). We also have a technical consultant (Sriram) for T20s. He will give the game plan. We will have the team director, Jalal (Yunus) bhai and myself. Who else (do we need)?" Hassan asked.

The 47-year-old South African's defensive approach was highlighted by the BCB's cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus during their maiden series defeats against Zimbabwe earlier this month. Bangladesh lost both the T20I and ODI legs by identical 2-1 margins.



"Our head coach (Domingo) is a very knowledgeable coach, but he is not that aggressive. We want that aggression," Yunus was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

Hailing the move, Domnigo said the split-coaching plan for Bangladesh was a "great idea". "It gives me a nice focus on the Test match and 50-overs stuff," Domingo said. "We have

had some great results, and bad results, in T20s. I don't think it is a bad idea to make a fresh approach in T20s. I am very open-minded about it.

"It is not my team. It is not about me. I am all for making the team better. It gives me nice clarity with the 50-over World Cup coming. We know there's a lot of work (to be done) with the Test team."

The Shakib Al Hasan-led side are clubbed with Sri Lanka and Afghanistan in group B and two teams make the cut for the Super 4.

"I believe we're a good side. If we can make the best use of our resources and we can do it once or twice, you will realise we have the ability," Shakib said.

Losing Shaheen Afridi is big setback for Pakistan: Saqlain

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan head coach Saqlain Mushtaq on Monday said losing injured Shaheen Shah Afridi for the upcoming Asia Cup is a "big setback" but backed his bowling unit to deliver the goods in the continental tournament.

Saqlain backed Naseem Shah to perform in the Asia Cup after the right-arm pacer shone bright in the three-match ODI series against the Netherlands in Rotterdam.

"Obviously, losing Shaheen is a big setback to us before the tournament and for the England series because he is someone who has proven himself at the top level and done well against



the best batsmen," Saqlain said.

"It is never easy to replace a player like Shaheen because of his quality but the resources we have are good and we are backing them to deliver for us."

"Naseem, I see as a star in

the making because of the control, aggression, attitude and execution he has displayed in his bowling. He has been very impressive for us."

Saqlain said Naseem, who is yet to make his T20 debut, had helped Pakistan win the last match by nine runs.

"He (Naseem) changed the course of the match and the other bowlers supported him well."

"His (Afridi's) injury is unfortunate but we are hoping he recovers soon as we have important cricket coming up."

Saqlain, a former Test off-spinner, said overall Pakistan had a compact bowling attack capable of doing well against all teams.