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PANDORA'S BOX  
OF CORRUPTION

WORLD 8

'6 RUSSIAN MILITARY OFFICERS  
SACKED SINCE WAR BEGAN'

MONEY 10

INDIA'S OUTBOUND TOURISM TO  
SURPASS \$42 BN BY 2024: REPORT

RAIPUR, MONDAY AUGUST 8, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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BRACE IN PSG's  
5-0 LIGUE 1 WIN  
12 SPORT

# 'Indian federal structure became model for world'

We showed it's possible to overcome challenges, PM tells Niti meet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday asserted that India's federal structure and cooperative federalism emerged as 'a model for the world during the Covid crisis' and the country had sent a "powerful message" to the developing nations — that it is possible to overcome challenges with resilience, despite resource limitations.

Chairing the seventh Governing Council meeting of the Niti Aayog at Rashtrapati Bhavan's Cultural Centre in the national Capital, the Prime Minister gave credit to States for delivering on the ground saying "every State played a crucial role according to its strength and contributed to India's fight against Covid. This led to India emerging as an example for the developing nations to look up to as a global leader."

The agenda of the Niti Aayog meeting included crop diversification and achieving self-sufficiency in oilseeds and pulses and agri-communities, implementation of the National Education Policy-school education, implementation of the National Education Policy-higher education, and urban governance.

This was the first physical meeting of the Governing Council since the onset of the pandemic. The 2021 meeting was held via video conferencing.

The meeting was attended by 23 Chief Ministers, three Lieutenant-Governors and two Administrators.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other Ministers and Chief Ministers of States/UTs at the 7th Governing Council meeting of Niti Aayog at Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre, in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

## Opp makes slew of demands

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

From urging the Centre to increase the share of States in the central taxes and duties to the allocation of funds for disaster management to MSP for farmers, Opposition Chief Ministers on Sunday made a slew of demands in the 7th Governing Council Meeting of the Niti Aayog, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Non-BJP ruled States, such as Chhattisgarh, Kerala, and Rajasthan have in the past also demanded that the compensation regime be extended by five years. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee emphasised that the Centre should look into the demands of the State Governments 'more seriously' and no policies should be forced on them.

Banerjee stressed that there should be a "greater cooperation" between the Centre and the States. The Trinamool Congress supremo also said that State Governments should not be pressurised to implement the NEP. She left the meeting mid-way citing the cyclone situation in Kolkata.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel reiterated his demand to the Centre seeking a five-year extension for the compensation paid to States for revenue shortfall due to GST implementation and called for revising the rates of royalty for coal and other major minerals from the State. On the occasion the Chief Minister noted that the Niti Aayog has appreciated the better performance of the State in the last three-and-a-half years. He, however, added that there are

still resource problems in the State, which should be resolved.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann informed the media that he raised the issues of farmers including Minimum Support Price (MSP) while adding that he was happy with the meeting.

"It was the first for me after becoming the Chief Minister. It is unfortunate that no one has come from Punjab in the last three years. I went with detailed homework today and kept Punjab's issues. The biggest issue was of the variety of crops," Mann said he was satisfied with the Niti Aayog's meeting as all issues were listened to.

Delhi CM and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal could not attend the meeting as he is away in Gujarat. Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Reddy boycotted the meeting.

# Golden and silver shower for India on Super Sunday

Eldhose Paul wins first triple long jump gold in CWG

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

It was a Super Sunday for India as it saw a huge haul of gold, silver and bronze medals at the Commonwealth Games. Eldhose Paul won a historic triple jump gold in a 1-2 finish for India as the country bagged four medals on the concluding day of athletics competitions at the Commonwealth Games here. After the mad rush of four medals coming within 30 minutes, India's medal tally from athletics swelled to eight -- 1 gold, 4 silver, 3 bronze -- the best in the CWG history outside the country and only second to the haul at the 2010 edition in Delhi.

The 25-year-old Paul became only the sixth Indian to win a CWG gold since legendary Milkha Singh won it in 1958 in 440 yards. The Ernakulam-born Indian Navyman led India's historic 1-2 finish with a best jump of 17.03m in his third attempt after opening with 14.62m. His jump was though wind-assisted and his second best was 16.63m. Before Sunday's jump, he had a personal best of 16.99m. Paul's historic 1-2 finish in men's triple jump at the Commonwealth Games was followed by fellow Kerala athlete Abdulla Aboobacker here on Sunday as he finished at 17.02m, which he managed in his fifth attempt.

Meanwhile, in boxing, the indomitable Nikhat Zareen added a Commonwealth Games light flyweight (50kg) title to her bulging trophy cabinet while Amit Panghal (51kg) began his redemption journey with a much-needed gold winning show. Nikhat, who is on a winning spree since the Nationals last year, asserted her dominance over Northern Ireland's Carly McNaul as she punched her way to a comprehensive 5-0 win in her maiden CWG appearance.

Panghal, on the other hand, avenged his 2018 Commonwealth Games final loss against Kieran MacDonald by clinching the title with a comprehensive 5-0 win over the favourite. Indian boxers made it three out of three golds on the day as young Nitu Ghanghas (48kg) too reigned supreme on her CWG debut. Sagar Ahlawat will play his final bout later tonight.

The India pugilists will return with seven medals from Birmingham, two less than the previous edition.



Boxer Nikhat Zareen with the gold medal after winning the final of 48kg-50kg (Light Flyweight) boxing match, at the Commonwealth Games 2022 in Birmingham, UK on Sunday. PTI

## Women win hockey medal after 16 yrs

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Skipper Savita Punia led from the front with a spectacular display as the Indian women's hockey team overcame the stop-watch controversy to beat New Zealand 2-1 in shootout and win the bronze medal at the

Commonwealth Games here Sunday.

This is the team's first medal at CWG in 16 years. Leading 1-0, India conceded a penalty corner with less than 30 seconds to go for the final hooter, as the match went into shootout after Olivia Merry's equaliser. In the

regulation time, India got the lead through Salima Tete in the 29th minute.

Coming off their heartbreaking loss to Australia in a controversial semi-final, India showed the intent to wrap up their campaign with a win and earn a podium finish.



Indian players Vandana Kataria, Lalremliam and Sangita Kumari celebrate their win over New Zealand in the women's hockey bronze medal match at the Commonwealth Games 2022, in Birmingham on Sunday. PTI

## China seeks meeting as Lanka relents to Indian pressure

PTI ■ COLOMBO

China's embassy here has sought an urgent meeting with senior Sri Lankan authorities after Colombo sought a deferment of the planned docking of a high-tech Chinese research vessel at the strategic Hambantota port over which India raised concerns, sources said. The Chinese space and satellite tracking research vessel 'Yuan Wang 5' was scheduled to dock at the Hambantota Port from August 11 to 17, weeks after Sri Lanka witnessed a major political turmoil following massive mass protests over the country's worst economic crisis in decades.

Media reports said that India was worried the vessel would be used to spy on its activities.

Detailed story on P8

# Satellites not usable after deviation: ISRO on SSLV maiden mission

'The SSLV-D1 placed them in elliptical orbit instead of circular one'

PTI ■ SRIHARIKOTA

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Sunday said the satellites onboard its maiden Small Satellite Launch Vehicle "are no longer usable" after the SSLV-D1 placed them in an elliptical orbit instead of a circular one.

The space agency said a committee would analyse and make recommendations into Sunday's episode and with the



ISRO's new offering Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) during its launch from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, in Sriharikota on Sunday. PTI

implementation of those recommendations "SSLV-D1 placed the satellites into 356 km x 76 km elliptical orbit instead of 356 km circular orbit. Satellites are no longer usable. Issue is reasonably identified. Failure of a logic

identify a sensor failure and go for a salvage action caused the deviation," ISRO said in an update on its official Twitter handle. In its maiden SSLV mission, the launch vehicle carried The Earth Observation Satellite

EOS-02 and the co-passenger student satellites AzaadiSAT. SSLV had suffered 'data loss' in its terminal stage, after performing "as expected" in all stages. It had earlier after lifted off from the spaceport here on Sunday morning.

Screens showed that the satellite was well on its trajectory before suffering "data loss" as described by Chairman S Somanath. "All stages performed as expected. The first stage performed and separated, second stage performed and separated, the third stage also performed and separated, and in the terminal phase of the mission, some data loss is occurring and we are analysing the data and we will come back on the status of the satellites as well as the vehicle performance soon," he said from the Mission Control Centre, minutes after the launch.

# In a first, US warship arrives in India for repairs, maintenance

This marks major boost to Indo-US ties, 'Make in India' initiative

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian shipbuilding industry achieved a major milestone when a US warship arrived here for the first time for repairs and maintenance. It also marked the growing defence and strategic ties between the two countries.

Providing a huge boost to "Make in India" and "Aatmanirbharta in Defence" and adding a new dimension to the burgeoning Indo-US strategic partnership, US Navy Ship Charles Drew arrived at



US Navy Ship (USNS) Charles Drew at L&T's Shipyard at Kattupalli for undertaking repairs and allied services, in Chennai. PTI

Larsen and Toubro's (L&T) shipyard at Kattupalli, Chennai on Sunday for undertaking repairs and allied services.

The ship will be at the Kattupalli shipyard for a period of 11 days and undergo repairs in various areas.

This is the first ever repair of a US Navy ship in India. The US Navy had awarded a contract to L&T's Shipyard at Kattupalli for undertaking maintenance of the ship. The event signifies the capabilities of Indian shipyards in the global ship repairing market.

# TRF to step up terror activities in Valley

Jaish front gives guidelines to intensify attacks on kin of officials who are not local

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Resistance Front (TRF), a front of the Pakistani terror group Jaish-e-Mohammad, which is responsible for the bulk of violence in Jammu & Kashmir, has issued

a detailed set of guidelines for ratcheting up terrorist actions in the Valley.

The intensity of target and explosive attacks are also to be increased, especially, outside Jammu & Kashmir as part of the latest terror tactic evolved by the terror grouping, according to the guidelines.

The guidelines include implementation of the "indigenous" character of armed resistance and attacks at various installations in the Valley, especially those directly linked to the armed forces besides identifying and targeting the near and dear ones of those non-local officials stationed there.

Non-local officials from administrative departments or police are to be identified and targeted at their native places, according to the latest jihadi tactic of the Pakistan-sponsored terror group.

During the last few years, the TRF has gained notoriety for being responsible for the bulk of violent incidents in the Valley. Anyone who advocates or supports the "occupation" and "brutalities" of the Indian regime is to be a prime target residing or stationed anywhere in or outside Jammu & Kashmir, according to the guidelines. Non-locals coming to Jammu & Kashmir with the

intention to reside and help/strengthen the Indian occupation are to be targeted. Kashmiri Pandits who are settled outside Jammu and Kashmir and "spread venom" against the so called resistance struggle of the terror group are to be considered as prime targets, the guidelines have outlined. Non-locals and Kashmiri pandits residing in Jammu & Kashmir are also to be identified and targeted.

Tourists who are encouraged to travel to the Valley to show normalcy and demonise the so-called Kashmir resistance struggle are also to be targeted.

# Won't join Union Cabinet: JD(U)

Nitish's party has no presence in Modi Cabinet after RCP Singh was denied RS renomination

PNS ■ PATNA

Amid reports of a widening rift between Janata Dal (U) and BJP, the Nitish Kumar-

led outfit has decided not to join the Union Council of Ministers. After RCP Singh resigned from the Modi Government on being denied a Rajya Sabha renomination by Nitish, there is no representation of the JD (U) in the Union Cabinet.

"We stick to our stand of 2019 when, after the Lok Sabha polls, we had decided not to join the Government at the Centre," JD(U) president Lallan Singh told a Press conference on Sunday. Singh asserted that in 2019 when Nitish decided that the JD(U) will not join the Union Cabinet, he held wide consultation with the

party leaders. However, RCP Singh, as the then JD (U) president decided on his own to join the Modi Cabinet, he said.

"RCP Singh may be claiming that he had the consent of Nitish Kumar to join the Modi Cabinet, but has Nitish ji ever said so?" Lallan Singh asked.

The JD(U) president also said that in the 2109 State Assembly elections, the JD(U) was reduced to the third position in Bihar behind the RJD and the BJP because Nitish became a victim of a conspiracy.

"When the time comes we will expose the conspirators," Singh said. It is widely believed

that Chirag Paswan sabotaged the JD(U)'s prospects on dozens of seats at the behest of the BJP by putting up LJP candidates in the fray. The BJP has denied the charge, but the JD(U) leaders are not convinced by it.

Singh also said that it is not decided that the JD(U) and the BJP will contest the 2024 Lok Sabha poll together. "How can we give that guarantee? When the time comes we will decide," he said.

Incidentally, recently BJP chief JP Nadda announced in Patna that BJP and JD(U) will contest the 2024 LS polls in the alliance.



# CM demands special package to deal with drought

NITI AAYOG MEETING

PNS ■ RANCHI

Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Sunday expressed concern over the dry spell in the state, which is impacting the state's farming practices.

Soren said that due to poor monsoon and lack of irrigation facilities the state has had to face drought every three to four years. This year as well, there is rain deficit of 50 percent due to which and less than 20 percent paddy sowing has been done. The CM said that in the present situation, Jharkhand is moving towards drought urging the central government to approve a special package for the state of Jharkhand.

The Chief Minister Hemant Soren was in New Delhi attending the meeting of the Governing Body of NITI Aayog under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Jharkhand CM talked on several issues related to State.

He said that for the last two years, the economic and social development of a backward state like Jharkhand has been adversely affected due to Covid-19. He said that in last two and a half years, Jharkhand has taken various steps in the field of economic, social development and social justice. Work is being done to strengthen the basic infrastructure of the state. He further demanded the support of the Central Government and said it should be given to all the states, especially the backward and tribal-dominated states like



Chief Minister Hemant Soren at NITI Aayog meeting on Sunday in New Delhi.

Jharkhand.

CM Soren further informed that out of 38 lakh farmers till 2019, only 13 lakh farmers were able to get KCC benefit. In the last two years, due to the efforts of the government, five lakh new farmers have received the benefit of KCC, but still more than 10 lakh applications are pending in various banks. He urged the NITI Aayog to give necessary instructions to banks for the approval of KCC. Till now no specific action plan has been worked in the direction of diversifying crops in Jharkhand.

We have reached 4 to 8 lakh tonnes of paddy procurement in two years but still special cooperation of the central government and FCI is needed to move ahead in this area, the CM added.

The Chief Minister informed that there is an acute shortage of irrigation facilities in the state and irrigation facilities are available on only 20 percent of the land. He demanded a special

package be approved to increase irrigation facilities through minor irrigation projects in the state of Jharkhand. Talking of the Birsra Harit Gram Yojana being implemented for the expansion in the field of horticulture, the CM said that with the implementation of the scheme, the poor farmer families of the state are being given permanent livelihood opportunities, better management and utilization of the land in a large area is being ensured.

CM Hemant Soren further said that approval has been given by the Jharkhand Legislative Assembly to establish the first Pandit Raghunath Murmu Tribal University to open new doors of higher education for tribals. Apart from this, the establishment of Skill University in the state is also under process, which will create new dimensions of vocational higher education in the state. Gurugi Credit Card Scheme will be implemented soon to provide loans at a low-interest

rate to the students for pursuing higher education in the state. This will benefit 2 to 3 lakh students.

He further talked of schemes started by the state government, under which a plan has been prepared to develop 80 schools of excellence at the district level, 325 model schools at the block level and 4036 schools at the panchayat level as model schools.

The Chief Minister further informed the PM that all the companies that tried to set up mining and industries have exploited the water, forest and land here. No attempt has been made by any mining company to reclaim the land by mining. There has never been a proper effort to solve the problem of displaced people.

I feel that a state like Jharkhand should get the maximum share of the income from the mining of mineral wealth, but the policy changes that have taken place in the last few years have proved to be just the

opposite. For example, Jharkhand has suffered a lot due to the implementation of GST, but efforts have not been made to compensate for it properly, the CM added.

CM Soren further said, We have raised this issue in various meetings and have also corresponded in this regard but all our efforts have been fruitless so far. The Central Government should direct these mining companies to pay these dues to Jharkhand, so that this amount can be used for the all-round development of the people of the state.

Soren added that about 30 percent of the area of Jharkhand is covered by forest land and most of the mineral wealth is located in the forest area, for which there is a need to divert the forest land. In recent times, new rules have been made under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, in which the provision of the consent of the Gram Sabha before the stage 2 clearance for forest land disposal has been abolished, which in my opinion is in the interests of tribal and backward classes.

He said, In Jharkhand, about 1 lakh 36 thousand crore rupees are outstanding in respect of the land acquisition, royalty etc. of various companies, but the companies are not showing any interest in its payment. Many efforts were made in this regard, the result of which was nil. I would also like to request the Hon'ble Prime Minister and NITI Aayog to reconsider this decision.

# Ranchi MP Seth distributes tricolors

PNS ■ RANCHI

On occasion of Amrit Mahotsav coinciding with 75th years of Independence tricolors was distributed by BJP Ranchi MP Sanjay Seth at different places in the six Assembly segments under Ranchi Lok Sabha. Tricolor campaign is going on across the country on the call Prime Minister Narendra Modi. We got freedom due to the sacrifice and penance of our ancestors, from Lord Birsa Munda to millions of immortal sacrifices, we have got freedom, Tricolor is the pride of our nation. This is a campaign to remember the people who laid down their lives for our country who sacrificed everything for freedom.

Appealing to the people, MP Seth said that everyone should ensure their participation in the Amrit Mahotsav of Independence, which will run from August 13 to August 15, everyone should put the tricolor at their homes and inspire the people around them to put the



tricolor in their homes. Senior BJP leader Samar Singh, Satyanarayan Singh, former MLA Ramkumar Pahan, Ranchi Mahanagar president KK Gupta, Rural District President Surendra Mahto Balram Singh Mukesh Mukta, Anita Verma, Shashi Bhushan Bhagat, Manoj Chaudhary Manoj Gupta, Raju Singh Thano Munda Ramlagan Ram Satish Sinha Neha Singh Vishal Chaudhary, including the presidents of all the divisions were involved in hundreds of BJP workers.

Also, Handloom Day was organized under the chairmanship of State Mahila Morcha President Aarti Ku-

jur. Aarti Kujur said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji encouraged Local for Vocal in the country, every Indian should contribute in making Swadeshi India, with this message, today the handloom by Mahila Morcha. On the day, the artisans of the potter society were presented with the tricolor.

Manjuta Dubey, Suchita Singh, Babita Verma Singh, Soni Hemrom, Madhuri Devi, Manju Devi, Ranju Devi, Kripal Prajapati, Krishna Prajapati, Doma Prajapati, Ranthu Prajapati, Shakuntala Devi, Veena Devi etc. were present in the program.

# With APEDA's help Lohardaga farmers' to get better market

PNS ■ RANCHI

Agricultural and Processed Food Export Development Authority (APEDA), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India in association with Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) organized an export-oriented capacity development programme for the FPOs, FPCs and progressive farmers from Schedule Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST) community at Lohardaga District in Jharkhand. Ankur Abhiyan, a NABARD sponsored NGO played a crucial role in the arrangements made to organize the event.

This is for the first time, a program of this level being organised in the State. This is the beginning of the groundwork to promote potential tribal products for exports from the area. Around 45 farmers were present in the programme to get various activities going on to promote the market so that they could get better prices. Officers from APE-



DA Regional Office Kolkata, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, BAU, ITDA, JHAMFCOFED, State Agriculture Department and others addressed the event. Few APEDA registered exporters from the district and adjoining countries participated the event.

During the meeting it was discussed in detail about the

commitment of the Central and State Government to provide quality produce to the world. In addition, production of the products, market linkages, farmers' income and other export related issues were also discussed. To develop the sector, exporters were informed about the APEDA's Financial assistance scheme and

instructed all farmers to contact local agriculture department about any quality production related issues.

It was also discussed during the programme about the new concept of entrepreneurship around the Country helping the FPOs, FPCs getting converted into exporters themselves. The farmers will definitely be

benefited if their produce is exported to other Countries which may fetch them a higher price and eliminate the support of mediators and also the trouble faced to carry their produce from the farm to the nearest market.

The opportunity to promote the export from the State's own port is also to be explored to avoid dependency on other states and ports. This will save the inland transportation costs of the buyers and sellers.

In this meeting, the views of the progressive farmers as well as the farmer producers companies and the farmer producer organisations were taken. In addition, farmers got the opportunity to communicate directly with APEDA registered exporters. The stakeholders of the program felt that such events should be continued to be organized in different areas of the district in near future. More such programs are also planned for other districts so that the farmers of the state could get better market to sell their products.

# ATM fraudster in police net

PNS ■ RANCHI

Ranchi Police on Sunday arrested a youth involved in committing more than 300 ATM fraud cases in three states. The arrested youth identified as Ranjan Raju alias Boogal, a resident of Roshana village of Fatehpur police station area of Gaya district of Bihar. Police arrested the youth from Namkum police station area when he was preparing to commit a fraud in an ATM located in Lowadih. During the arrest of the accused, other gang members managed to escape from the spot. Police have also recovered half a dozen ATM cards of various banks, Mahindra SUV 300 (JH 01 DR 9704), card swipe machine, Rs30,000 cash and many other items from his possession.

The accused told during in-



terrogation that till now he has cheated people in various places of Bihar, UP and Jharkhand in Varanasi, Aurangabad, Sasaram, Patna, Jamshedpur, Dhanbad, Bokaro, Ramgarh Giridih and Ranchi. The accused works in cyber fraud since 2016. The youth said that the gang members also included girls.

Namkum police station in-charge said that on Saturday, information was received that some cyber criminals were

roaming near the ATMs of Axis Bank and HDFC Bank located in Lowadih with Mahindra XUV. Those who make illegal withdrawal of money from their account by cloning the card and taking the ATM PIN by taking people on the hood and converting their ATM card into useless ATM card. Apart from this, the ATM machine looses the card slot with a screwdriver.

Due to which the card goes inside the machine when the card is inserted in the ATM machine. After which illegal withdrawal of money is done. When Namkum police station reached Lowadih on information, a suspect was seen, who was arrested after police interrogation. While other associates including a young woman fled from the spot. Police is trying to identify the absconding accused.

# Stage ready for historic student felicitation programme today

PNS ■ RANCHI

First of its kind of mega students felicitation programme in the history of Jharkhand all the necessary preparations have been completed. The programme is being organized by the Private School and Children Welfare Association (PASWA) at Khelgaon, Ranchi on August 8. Chief Minister Hemant Soren, Finance Minister, Dr Rameshwar Oraon, Drinking Water and Sanitation Minister, Mithlesh Thakur, Health Minister, Banna Gupta will be present to facilitate the students secured more than 80 per cent marks in 10th and 12th examination conducted by CBSE, ICSE and JAC Board.

The process of reaching Ranchi for students and teachers and parents from different districts has started to participate in the award ceremony.

The registration work is going on in various districts including Ranchi for the State level student talent award ceremony, while on Monday, on the day of the ceremony, the registration



of talented students will also be done at the venue of Khelgaon. This registration is completely free. For registration, 20 counters have been arranged at the venue. Registration can be done from 7 am to 10 am.

For the first time in Jharkhand, all the arrangements and preparations are being finalized under the leadership of PASWA, National Chief, Shamail Ahmed and the State Chief, Alok Kumar Dubey to make the State-level student talent award being held on such a large scale. The purpose of this award ceremony is to moti-

vate the students so that they can achieve success in various fields in future. Along with the toppers in the award ceremony, the purpose of honoring the students who have scored more than 80 percent marks is that there is only one topper, but due to various reasons, students who fail to become a topper by getting some marks, they have to be encouraged so that in future these children can also become toppers.

Ahmed, after taking stock of the preparations at the venue on Sunday, said in a conversation with the media

persons that within a year under the leadership of Dubey, the organization has solved the problems of students, parents and teachers and private school operators. It has done important work in the direction of improving the quality of education by raising the voice of removing. The way PASWA, under the leadership Dubey has created a wonderful example in the direction of reforming the organization and has tried to collect private school operators under one banner, it will automatically I have a wonderful example of setting up an organization, he added.

On the occasion Dubey said that teachers, Principals, Directors and Operators of various private schools would also be honored in the ceremony. At the same time, preparations are also being made by many schools to present cultural programs during the function. All the meritorious students would be felicitated by the guests with their own hands with medals and citations. The purpose of

this award ceremony is to encourage the talented children, so that they can become the support of their family in future and contribute in the development of the State and the Country, he added.

A meeting of teachers of private schools and officials of Paswa was also held at the venue of Khelgaon program in which the program outline was finalised, it has been decided to start the registration at 7:00 am so that children and parents coming from all over the State can get access.

The meeting was presided over by Dubey. National President Syed Shamail Ahmed was present as the chief guest in the meeting. State Vice President Lal Kishore Nath Shahdeo, Dr Rajesh Gupta, Arvind Kumar, Mujahid Islam, Preeti Mishra, Sanjay Prasad, Rashid Ansari, Menhul Dubey, Altaf Ansari, Falak Fatima, Randhir Kaushik, East Singhbhum District President Raman Jha and General Secretary Subhash Upadhyay.

## INBRIEF

### ABSL Mutual Fund Launches Investor Education Campaign

A large cap fund would provide exposure to the frontline stocks, flexi cap fund would allow flexibility to the fund manager to spot opportunities and invest across stock categories while the balanced advantage fund would take care of the asset allocation between equity and debt and a combination of these funds would take care of various market cycles and volatile periods. Commenting on the launch of the campaign, Managing Director and CEO, Aditya Birla Sun Life (ABSL) AMC Limited, A Balasubramanian said, A combination of 3 funds Flexi cap, Balanced Advantage and Large cap, will aim to enhance returns in a bull market while managing risks in a bear market. By balancing risks and accelerating returns, the combination of funds seeks to perform well in all market cycles and helps in wealth creation in the longer run. With this campaign, we continue to aim to educate and empower investors in their quest to achieve financial independence.

### ICICI Prudential Life Insurance posts strong performance

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has posted a strong financial performance for Quarter 1-Financial Year-2023 registering a 31.6 per cent growth in its Value of New Business (VNB), a measure of profitability of the Company. The VNB of the Company stood at ₹4.71 billion with a VNB margin of 31.0 per cent. Annualised Premium Equivalent (APE) registered a strong growth of 24.7 per cent year-on-year. The Company's New Business Sum Assured grew by 24.9 per cent year-on-year to ₹2.21 trillion in Q1-FY2023. Significantly, the Company has achieved overall market leadership with the market share increasing from 14.7 per cent in Quarter 1 in Financial Year 2022 to 15.8 per cent in Quarter 1-Financial Year 2023.

### ASUS Introduces all-new ROG Zephyrus Duo 16 and Flow X16

ASUS India, Republic of Gamers (ROG) today strengthened its Zephyrus and Flow lineup with the launch of the ROG Zephyrus Duo 16, Zephyrus G14, and Flow X16. Alongside the refreshed editions of Zephyrus G15, and Flow X13, packed with power and upgraded performance. The laptops feature AMD Ryzen 6000 series mobile processors and a MUX Switch to deliver uncompromising powerful gaming performance. The laptops are an addition to ASUS' extensive gaming portfolio and are designed to uplift the competitive edge of the gamers with state-of-the-art technology. Resonating the philosophy of Compact is the new Impact, the latest gaming lineup offers versatility to the gamers by bolstering the gaming experience. The product pricing for Zephyrus Duo 16 starts from INR 249,990, Zephyrus G14 - INR 146,990, and Zephyrus G15 - INR 157,990 and will go on sale online and offline. While the pricing for ROG Flow X16 starts from INR 171,990 and Flow X13 INR 121,990 onwards and will be available online and offline.



# PM Modi hails C'garh Godhan Nyay scheme



**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
RAIPUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday praised Chhattisgarh's Godhan Nyay Yojana, saying the scheme is in the interest of farmers. The vermi-compost prepared from cow dung helps in increasing crop productivity, an official statement of the state government claimed.

He was addressing the 7th Governing Council meeting of NITI Aayog which Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel also attended.

Baghel elaborated on the scheme, adding that the state government had also started procuring cow urine to produce natural fertilizers.

Baghel said agricultural research institutes should be given the responsibility of providing free seeds of newly developed crop varieties,

mini kits and breeder seeds to ensure crop diversification. He spoke on innovative steps taken to increase the production of pulses and oilseeds.

Elaborating, the Chief Minister said a provision had been made to provide Rs 10,000 per hectare to farmers who cultivate pulses, oilseeds or do plantations instead of paddy.

Baghel sought relaxation under the Forest Conservation Act in setting up of 5 MW solar power plants in 10 aspirational districts of the state.

He sought to implement MGNREGA in rural areas located near cities and cities with populations less than 20,000.

He reiterated Chhattisgarh's demand for GST compensation, loss of revenue of Rs 5,000 crore, extending compensation grant for next five years,

transferring amounts collected as 'additional levy' from coal block companies and reimbursement of expenditure of Rs 11,828 crores made by the state government to eradicate Naxalism.

Baghel sought release Rs 13,089 crore in the Union Budget of the last three years, the curtailed shares of central taxes. The demand for Rs 4,140 crore deposited at the rate of Rs 294 per tonne on coal mining from coal block companies with the Central government be released to the state, he said.

Highlighting that about 65 percent of the mineral revenue is the source of iron ore mines operating in the state, he called for revision of royalty rates in the financial interest of the state.

He also requested for refund of deposits in the New Pension Scheme and ensuring availability of jute gunny bags.

## Villager killed in Bijapur

**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
BIJAPUR

A 25-year-old man was killed on Sunday by unidentified persons in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, with police suspecting a Maoist link to the crime, an official said.

The reason behind the killing, which took place in Galgam village, was not yet known, Bijapur Additional Superintendent of Police Pankaj Shukla said.

Somdu Madvi of Galgam village was murdered by unidentified persons, probably Maoists, the official said.

No one has claimed responsibility for the crime.

# 18 students in Jashpur test Covid-19 positive

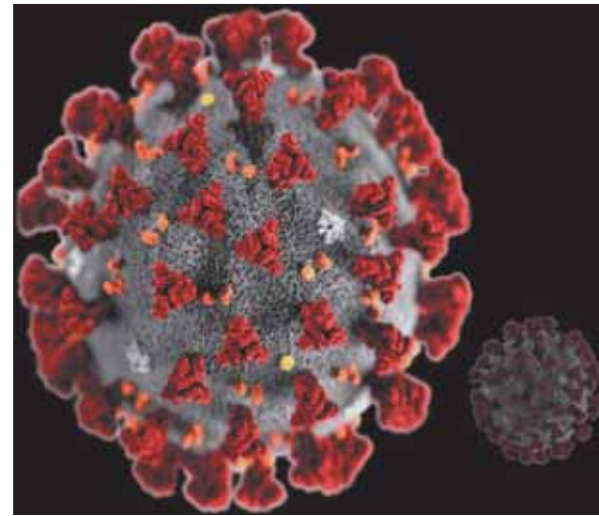
**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
RAIPUR

Eighteen girl students were found Covid-19 positive after testing in Chhattisgarh's Jashpur district on Sunday.

This was reported from Kasturba Gandhi Residential School, Mahadevdhand. The students started to report ill. Covid-19 tests confirmed 18 students had contacted Covid-19.

The students have been provided medical care by isolating them in the school premises. Their condition is stable, an official communication said.

The school has been shut down.



Earlier, 53 students and staff were found Covid-19 positive at the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in

village Chindpali in Mahasamund district on August 2.

The Health and Family welfare department said on Saturday that the positivity rate in Chhattisgarh was 5.30 percent after testing 9,306 persons. The positive cases detected were 493. Twenty-eight districts have reported positive cases.

The total number of active cases in the state is 3,371 and four deaths were reported. The highest number of positive cases reported in a single day was in Durg (70), Raipur (46), Dhamtari (39), Rajnandgaon (37) and Balod (35).



Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel holds hands with his Rajasthan counterpart Ashok Gehlot at Niti Ayog's meeting in New Delhi on Sunday while Prime Minister Narendra Modi looks on.

Pioneer Photo

# Ukraine-returned med students protest for admission in C'garh

**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
RAIPUR

Several Indian medical students who fled Ukraine demonstrated here on Sunday demanding that the Chhattisgarh government accommodate them in the state's medical colleges.

The students had to leave Ukraine midway and their medical course remains incomplete.

They staged a day-long dharna at Budha Talab and asked the Health Minister to get them admitted in local



medical colleges.

They said they had expected the war to end soon so that they could go back for studies but the war was continuing.

The students warned of an indefinite protest if their demand was not met.

# Cong to hold Tiranga Yatra from tomorrow

**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
RAIPUR

The Congress is going to hold Tiranga Yatras in all 90 assembly constituencies in Chhattisgarh from August Kranti Diwas, which falls on August 9.

Chhattisgarh PCC chief Mohan Markam on Sunday said Congress leaders and activists will cover a distance of 6,750 km in six days. The yatras from different assembly areas will



culminate in Raipur on Independence Day, August 15.

Freedom fighters will be remembered during the event, Markam said.

**The yatras from different assembly areas will culminate in Raipur on Independence Day, August 15**

He appealed to the people to extend their support to the Yatra and to revive the feeling of patriotism which prevailed during freedom struggle.

# CM to honour martyrs' families

**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel will honour here on August 13 several families of soldiers and other security personnel from Chhattisgarh who were killed since the birth of the state.

At the district level, Ministers, legislators and public representatives will honour them.

After the formation of Chhattisgarh, 32 soldiers have sacrificed their lives for the security of the country, an official

**At the district level, Ministers, legislators and public representative s will honour them**

communication said.

Similarly, 1,344 jawans including 802 from Chhattisgarh Police and 542 from central forces were martyred.

# Photo Expo on World Indigenous Day, Aug 9

**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
RAIPUR

The Culture Department of Chhattisgarh will hold a three-day photo exhibition to mark the World Indigenous Day.

The exhibition will commence on World Indigenous day on Tuesday and end on Thursday.

The venue would be art gallery Mahant Ghasidas Museum, Raipur.

An official communiqué said the objective of organizing the exhibition was to share information on Chhattisgarh tribes and their lives to people.



Photographers devoted to recording tribal lives -- Dipendra Diwan, Akhilesh Bharos and their team -- are contributing to the exhibition.

# Generic medicines available at 'Dhanwantri' at affordable price

**STAFF REPORTER ■**  
RAIGARH

Quality generic medicines, available under the 'Shree Dhanwantri Medicine Scheme' of the Chhattisgarh government, are proving beneficial for customers as they are available at an affordable price.

The scheme was launched in October 2020.

An official communiqué on Sunday said that in Raigarh district alone, 11 generic medical shops were run where rebate worth Rs 2.75 crore had been provided to customers.



It said that sales of medicines worth Rs 4,37,33,251 were reported in Raigarh district.

These shops have been allocated by civic bodies on rent at Rs 2 per square feet based on a government decision. It is mandatory for the shops to make available 251 kinds of medicines and 27 surgical items.



# Monkeypox: 2 UAE returnees found infected with strain A.2 of virus

## NIV conducts study on two patients, finds they had been infected with a less seen variant of current strain of infection

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As India's Monkeypox tally continues to rise, the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune on Sunday said that after analysis of the two cases pertaining to travellers who had returned from the UAE and subsequently tested positive in July, it has been found that they were infected with virus strain A.2. They said it is related to the lineage of hMPXV-1A clade 3.

In other words, the two patients had been infected with a less seen variant of the current strain of infection and bears similarity to cases that have cropped up in several Western nations earlier this year. Clade 3 is various 'branches' of monkeypox, each of which have unique genomic signatures and varying severity. Mentioning the details, the study also showed that the 35-year-old male and 31-year-old male from UAE -- tested positive for Monkeypox -- had no traces of sexual contact.

The development came soon after the country reported two fresh cases on Friday.

"Phylogenetic analysis revealed that the two cases were infected with Monkeypox virus strain A.2 which belong to hMPXV-1A lineage of clade 3...The complete genome sequences obtained from skin lesions of cases 1 and 2 showed similarity of 99.91% and 99.96% respectively with MPXV\_USA\_2022\_FL001 West African clade," said the



ICMR-NIV study.

The term 'hMPXV' is an abbreviation for 'human monkeypox virus'. While scientists have traditionally classified monkeypox cases based on location - clade 1 for Congo Basin as it was the first to be detected and 2 for West African - many argue that the new strain (akin to the typically milder West African strain) deserves a fresh categorisation as clade 3.

Genetic data from other parts of the world however have indicated that there are at least two 'separate' monkeypox outbreaks underway outside of Africa at present, with a majority of the genomes across the world which belonging to the B.1 lineage. The A2 strain meanwhile has been detected in several Indian cases includ-

ing a Kerala man who returned from the UAE who had succumbed to the virus last week.

"Case 1, a 35-year, male, resident of UAE had developed low-grade fever and myalgia on July 5 2022. On the next day, he developed multiple vesicular rashes in the oral cavity and lips followed by a single lesion on the genital organ. The lesions were umbilicated with the size 0.5 to 0.8 cm," the study explained.

Another case pertained to a 32-year-old male from Dubai who travelled to his hometown Kerala on July 13, 2022, and tested positive for Monkeypox.

According to the study, he had developed dysuria and genital swelling on July 8. The next day he developed fever with chills, myalgia, backache and headache followed by mul-

tiple vesicular rashes on the genital organ and both hands on July 10. The lesions progressed and later spread to the face, back, neck and forearm with cervical lymphadenopathy by July 15, 2022. "He did not have any co-morbidity and denied any sexual or physical contact with suspected or confirmed MPXV case," it added.

The Niv on 6 August analysed two monkeypox cases of travellers who had returned from the UAE.

According to the study, the two cases were infected with monkeypox virus strain A.2 which is related to the lineage of hMPXV-1A clade 3.

"The complete genome sequences obtained from skin lesions of cases 1 and 2 showed similarity of 99.91 and 99.96 per cent respectively with MPXV\_USA\_2022\_FL001 West African clade," read the ICMR-NIV study.

"Phylogenetic analysis revealed that the two cases were infected with Monkeypox virus strain A.2 which belong to hMPXV-1A lineage of clade 3," it added.

Both the cases' samples from multiple sites -- lesion fluid, lesion roof and lesion base -- were collected on the ninth post-onset day of illness i.e. 13 July, 2022, and July 16, 2022, respectively. They referred to the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for emerging and re-emerging diseases, ICMR-National Institute of Virology, Pune, India for the MPXV diagnosis.

# Health Min renews facilities for nurses

## Annual health check-ups, creche facility, 40/W working hours in list



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Annual health check-ups, a creche facility and work hours not exceeding 40 in a week are among the measures that the Union Health Ministry has proposed in a recently released draft guidelines with an aim to improve the working conditions of nurses in all healthcare institutions.

It has also recommended that all healthcare establishments may, as far as possible, provide accommodation to their nursing staff within or near their premises.

The healthcare establishments will have to establish internal complaint committees in accordance with the provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at

Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and should also take necessary measures to ensure the security of nurses during night shifts. Appropriate measures may be taken to ensure proper lighting in and around the work settings to promote the safety of nurses.

The draft guidelines have been released on the ministry's website for comments from the public and the stakeholders within 30 days from the date of issuance. The document stated that the WHO Global Strategy on "Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030" calls for upholding "the personal, employment and professional rights of the health workforce, including safe and decent working environments free from all kinds of discrimina-

tion, coercion and violence".

Conducive working conditions would enhance patient care and contribute substantially to the overall healthcare outcomes. A safe and healthy work environment for nurses is imperative in order to envision quality nursing care. "Therefore, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has drafted the guidelines to give effect to the resolution towards improving working conditions of nurses in various healthcare establishments," it said.

According to the draft guidelines, all healthcare establishments have to ensure adequate infrastructure and well-equipped work stations in all units or wards to enable efficient functioning of the nursing staff.

It also mandates that all

healthcare establishments will have separate washrooms and changing rooms (including drinking water, pantry facilities, lockers, clean uniforms etc.) for the nursing staff and should identify designated resting rooms for nurses working for a prolonged hours.

The guidelines said the healthcare facilities should take initiatives to recognise outstanding nurses and take measures to upkeep the morale and motivation of the nursing staff. All healthcare institutions should provide paid maternity leave in accordance with the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 and other authorised leave or allowances and facilities in accordance with the government's guidelines or existing policies.

# Parliament has become dysfunctional, democracy gasping for breath: PC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister P Chidambaram on Sunday said he was veering to the conclusion that Parliament has become "dysfunctional" and alleged that democracy is "gasping for breath" in India with almost all institutions tamed, emasculated or captured.

He also said Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu "failed" to protect Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge last week from being summoned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) when the House was in session.

The senior Congress leader also dismissed Home Minister Amit Shah's remarks linking the Congress' demonstration against price rise on Friday to the Ram temple foundation day, saying the anniversary of the 'shilanyas' was "far from our mind" when the date for the protest was fixed.

It was fixed taking into account that all the MPs will be in Delhi on Friday because the voting for the vice presidential poll was on Saturday, he said, adding that one can always twist logic to blame someone.

"Moreover, it was on August 5, 2019 that the illegal dismembering of Jammu and Kashmir took place! Let's leave

these aside when discussing a serious issue," Chidambaram said.

Shah had linked Congress leaders' protest in black clothes over the issues of price rise, unemployment and GST hike to what he said was the party's "appeasement" politics to convey its opposition to the Ram temple foundation stone laying by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 5 in 2020.

Chidambaram also rejected BJP leaders' charge that the Congress' protest on August 5 was an attempt to save the party's top leadership that is facing questioning by the ED in the National Herald case.

"We had announced and

made it clear that the protests on August 5 were exclusively on inflation, unemployment and Agnipath. If people pretend to be deaf and blind to the announcement, what can we do?" he said.

On about Kharge's summoning by the ED during the working hours of Parliament last Thursday, he said it was a "sad day" for Rajya Sabha when the Chairman "failed to protect" the Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge from being summoned when the House was in session.

On ED probes against several Opposition leaders, Chidambaram refused to comment on any particular case but



asserted that it was increasingly and abundantly clear that the powers of investigation and the laws were directed only at members of the Opposition.

"Institutions have been tamed or emasculated or captured. Democracy is gasping for breath. We may have the shell of democracy, but inside, the shell has been hollowed out. This applies to almost all institutions, which is what Rahul

Gandhi alluded to in his reply (at a press conference Friday)," he said talking to a section of news agency.

With Parliament unable to transact much business during the Monsoon session due to frequent adjournments amid logjam between the Opposition and Treasury benches over a host of issues including price rise, Chidambaram said he is "veering to the painful conclusion that Parliament has become dysfunctional".

He asserted that the single big reason for this was that the Treasury bench had "no interest" in dialogue, discussion and debate.

"Let me ask, what calamity

ty would have befallen if the government had agreed to a debate under Rule 267 on price rise on the first day? The debate would have been concluded in one day. Instead, we wasted two weeks," he said.

The BJP seems more comfortable with governing without debate and without an Opposition, he alleged.

Chidambaram also hit out at Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for her reply to the debate on price rise in Parliament in which she said that India did not face any risk of either recession or stagflation as its macroeconomic fundamentals are "perfect".

No one from the

Opposition hinted at an impending recession or stagflation and these were set up by the government like "straw men" so that the government can shoot them down, he said.

"Our concerns were rising prices and rampant unemployment. The twin factors have placed an unbearable burden on the poor and the middle class. The finance minister was obliged to spell out the steps that the government intended to take to moderate prices and to create jobs. The FM did not," he said.

Chidambaram also criticised Sitharaman's comparisons with other countries, saying they were "odious".

# NIA arrests Delhi man for collecting funds for ISIS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested an active ISIS member from the Batla House area of the national Capital.

The "radicalised" individual Mohsin Ahmad, hailing from Patna, was collecting funds for the global terror group and was arrested during searches here in connection with the ISIS module case.

"Yesterday (06.08.2022), the NIA conducted a search in the residential premises of accused Mohsin Ahmad, son of Mohd. Shakil Ahmad presently residing at F- 18/27, Japani Gali, Jogabai Extension, Batla house, New Delhi and permanent resident of New colony,



ITI women, Digha, Dinapur cum Khagaul, Patna, Bihar and subsequently arrested him in the case pertaining to online and on ground activities of ISIS," the agency said in a statement on Sunday.

The case was registered suo-moto by the NIA on June 25.

"Accused Mohsin Ahmad is a radicalised and active

member of ISIS. He has been arrested for his involvement in collection of funds for ISIS from sympathisers in India as well as abroad. He was sending these funds to Syria and other places in the form of cryptocurrency in order to further the activities of ISIS. Further investigations in the case are in progress, it said.

On July 31, the anti-terror agency had carried out searches at 13 premises of suspected persons across six states -- Bhopal and Raissen in Madhya Pradesh, Bharuch, Surat, Navsari and Ahmedabad in Gujarat, Arariya in Bihar, Bhatkal and Tumkur City in Karnataka, Kolhapur and Nanded in Maharashtra and Deoband in Uttar Pradesh.

# HAL developing long-endurance drone for vigil over LAC

**New Delhi:** State-run aerospace behemoth Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) is working on an AI-driven multi-role, advanced and long-endurance drone for strategic missions in high-altitude areas including the frontiers with China, people familiar with the development said on Sunday.

The rotary-wing drone will have the capability to carry a load of 40 kgs, including missiles and sensors, and it is being developed considering the requirement of the armed forces to keep a strong vigil over the mountainous areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), they said.

The HAL has set a target

of conducting the maiden test-flying of the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) by the middle of next year and plans to produce 60 such platforms in the first phase of the project, the people in the know told PTL.

They said the operating system of the long-endurance drone will feature applications of Artificial Intelligence and the armed forces will be able to use it for multiple purposes including transporting essential supplies. "The drone is being developed in such a way that it can carry a wide range of vital military systems including sensors, missiles and various other weapons," said one of the people cited above.

# Climate change making prediction difficult for weather agencies across world: IMD

**New Delhi:** Climate change has hampered the ability of the forecasting agencies to accurately predict severe events, and weather bureaus across the world are focusing on augmenting the observational network density and the weather prediction modelling to improve predictability, India Meteorological Department (IMD) Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said.

He also said that though the monsoon rainfall has not shown any significant trend in the country, the number of heavy rainfall events has increased and that of light rainfall events has decreased due to climate change.

"We have got the digital data of the monsoon rainfall since 1901. Parts of north, east

and northeast India show a decrease in rainfall, while some areas in the west, such as west Rajasthan, show an increase in precipitation.

"Thus, there is no significant trend if we consider the country as a whole -- the monsoon is random and it shows large-scale variations," the IMD chief said when asked about the impact of climate change on the Indian monsoon.

On July 27, the government had told Parliament that Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Meghalaya and Nagaland have shown significant decreasing trends in the southwest monsoon rainfall during the recent 30-year period (1989-2018, both years included). The annual rainfall over these five states, along

with Arunachal Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh, has also shown significant decreasing trends, it said.

Mohapatra said an analysis of the day-to-day rainfall data since 1970, however, shows that the number of very heavy rainfall days has increased and that of light or moderate rainfall days has decreased.

"That means if it is not raining, it is not raining. If it is raining, it is raining heavily. The rainfall is more intense when there is a low-pressure system. This is one of the most important trends found in the tropical belt, including India. Studies have proved that this increase in heavy rainfall events and decrease in light precipitation are due to climate change," he told PTI.

# Nocturnal lizard endemic to Eastern Ghats on verge of extinction

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Endemic to India's Eastern Ghats, Jeypure ground gecko (Cyrtodactylus jeypurensis), an enigmatic nocturnal lizard, is on the extinction path due to deforestation, mining, rapid urbanization and forest fires coupled with huge pet trade demand fuelled by booming social media amongst reptile breeders and keepers.

India has now sought its inclusion in the Appendix II species of the Convention on International Trade In Endangered Species of Wild Fauna And Flora (CITES) to be

held in November in Panama. Enlisted Appendix II species means they are not necessarily threatened with extinction but could become so if their trade is not regulated.

The proposal is likely to be taken up at the nineteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties CoP Panama City (Republic of Panama) to be held mid-November.

India, in its document submitted to the Convention, that on the basis of available trade data and information on the status and trends of the wild population, it can be inferred that the regulation of trade in the species is necessary to

avoid it becoming eligible for inclusion in Appendix I in the near future.

Once thought to be extinct and then discovered again in 2010, C. jeypurensis is endemic to Eastern Ghats of India and has been recorded from very few localities in southern Odisha and northern Andhra Pradesh. The species is listed as Endangered in the IUCN Red List.

India expressed concerns that C. jeypurensis is or may be affected by trade because it is an attractive species and could become the target of commercial collection. "The species is handsome looking and docile,



which makes it vulnerable for the pet trade and there appears to be demand for it amongst reptile breeders and keepers outside India.

Live specimens of the species are in trade outside India as evidenced by advertisements on social media," as per the document. To corroborate its apprehension, the Government has attached annexures giving proof of details of the sale offers of the lizard on Facebook and Instagram.

Due to the restricted area of occurrence of the species, the ongoing decline in the species' population and continued

threats to the species, any collection of the species for the international pet trade is very likely to have a detrimental impact on its status.

"While the species may actually qualify for inclusion in CITES Appendix I, an Appendix II CITES listing as a start would provide regulation of international trade in the species and penalties for breach thereof, thereby helping to control illegal export of the species from India; and generate trade data regarding international trade and demand for the species.

Surveys indicate that the population of the species may

be declining at a fast rate. In the Galikonda and Aaraku valleys, Andhra Pradesh, the population spotted by a team of researchers from IISc was revisited by a team of scientists and research scholars of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) in 2021, which resulted in no observation during the same month in October.

Similarly, Paderu hill, where this species was found in good numbers (6 individuals) during a survey conducted by IISc team, was revisited by the ZSI team in October 2021 and only one individual was observed, said the document.

# Maha Cabinet expansion likely before August 15

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde is likely to expand his Cabinet this week by inducting at least 15 Ministers and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is expected to keep the crucial Home portfolio, sources said on Sunday.

Top Government sources also said the civic polls in the State, delayed due to the OBC reservation issue being heard by the Supreme Court, are likely to be held in October after getting a clarification from the apex court.

Shinde and Fadnavis were sworn in as Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister respectively on June 30 after the resignation of Uddhav Thackeray due to a rebellion in the Shiv Sena ranks.

The duo have been functioning as a two-member cabinet since then, inviting criticism from opposition leaders, including NCP leader and for-



mer Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar.

"Ajit Pawar is leader of the opposition. He will have to say such things. Ajit dada conveniently forgets that when he was in the government there were just five ministers for the first 32 days," Fadnavis told reporters here on Sunday.

The expansion of the Maharashtra cabinet will take place "before you can even imagine", Fadnavis said in response to repeated questions from reporters.

Sources said the exercise will be carried out before August 15.

On Saturday, Chief

Minister Shinde said the functioning of the state government has not been affected in any way due to the delay in the expansion of the council of ministers and that more ministers will be inducted soon.

"The work of the government has not been affected in any way. The decision making process has not been affected. I and the deputy chief minister have been taking decisions and there is no impact on the working of the government," the chief minister told reporters here.

Fadnavis said the BJP has embarked on a mission to improve its footprint in Maharashtra in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections by identifying 16 parliamentary constituencies where opposition parties have had a consistent winning streak.

He said these constituencies included those held by Shiv Sena leaders who have now joined the Shinde camp.

"Since Shiv Sena and BJP

will contest the Lok Sabha elections as a coalition, the BJP will work to ensure the victory of the sitting Lok Sabha members from these constituencies," Fadnavis said.

He said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has been given the responsibility to coordinate efforts to better the BJP's performance in Baramati, where the party had polled a good number of votes in the previous elections.

Fadnavis said Sitharaman is likely to tour Baramati in September and travel programmes of other central BJP leaders and Union ministers tasked with responsibilities for Lok Sabha polls will be finalised soon.

"In these 16 constituencies, the central BJP will concentrate its energies to better the party's performance," Fadnavis said.

Baramati is currently represented by Supriya Sule, the daughter of NCP chief Sharad Pawar. The seat is considered a bastion of the Pawar family.

## Security beefed up at Kolkata's Indian Museum after shooting

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Security was heightened at the Indian Museum in Kolkata on Sunday after a CISF personnel killed a colleague and injured an assistant commandant of the force in indiscriminate firing.

CISF head constable Akshay Kumar Mishra, who fired around 15 rounds

from an automatic rifle on Saturday evening, was arrested, a senior Kolkata Police officer said.

An official at the state-run SSKM Hospital said that the injured assistant commandant of CISF, who suffered a bullet wound in one hand, was in a stable condition.

Security arrangements at the Indian Museum, the oldest and largest in the country, were increased following the incident, officials said.

Mishra has alleged that he was subjected to "harassment" by a superior for over two months, which led him to resort to the indiscriminate



firing that killed one CISF personnel and injured another.

The firing incident took place at the CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) barrack at the Indian Museum situated near Esplanade here. CISF has been in charge of security at the museum since December, 2019.

In June, a city police constable had fired several rounds outside the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata before shooting himself dead. A woman travelling pillion on a two-wheeler died after being hit in the firing.

## ITBP jawan held for raping, impregnating Sikkim teenager

PTI ■ GANGTOK

An ITBP jawan was arrested in Sikkim for allegedly raping a 13-year-old girl multiple times at his official quarters after which she became pregnant, police said on Sunday.

The incident happened in Rangpo town in Pakyong district, they said.

In her complaint, the girl's mother alleged that a teenaged local boy also sexually assaulted her for months. Police said they have detained the boy as well.

The girl's mother alleged that the paramilitary personnel, an assistant sub-inspector, raped her multiple times at his residential quarters in Raj Bhavan's Winter Camp in Rangpo since April.

Police booked the jawan, a native of Dharchula in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district, under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act's section 4 (punishment for penetrative sexual



assault) and section 6 (punishment for aggravated penetrative sexual assault).

In the same complaint, the girl's mother alleged that the local boy was also sexually assaulting her since February.

Police said they have nabbed the boy and taking legal action against him.

The girl was medically examined at the primary health care in Rangpo, they said.

Police said they are investigating the case, and trying to ascertain if the local boy and the ITBP jawan had any connection. The sequence of events is being established, they said, refusing to divulge details about how the alleged rapes and assaults continued for so long.

# Ahead of Gujarat polls, Kejriwal promises sops for tribals

PTI ■ VADODARA

Aam Aadmi Party national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday promised implementation of the Constitution's Fifth Schedule and the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act in tribal regions of Gujarat if the AAP is voted to power in the State.

Kejriwal also promised that Gujarat's tribal advisory committee would be headed by a person from the community instead of the chief minister, as has been the case in the state.

He claimed the Gujarat Assembly elections, due later this year, will be a direct contest between the ruling BJP and the AAP.

Talking to reporters in Vadodra before addressing a rally in tribal-dominated Chhotu Udepur district, Kejriwal also said that if AAP comes to power in Gujarat, each tribal village will get a



good government school and a "mohalla clinic".

Multi-speciality hospitals will also be set up in the region for free treatment of tribals, the Delhi chief minister said.

He also promised simplification of the caste certificate issuance process and houses to those who do not own one.

The government will also connect tribal villages with roads, he said.

The Fifth Schedule of the

Constitution deals with provisions related to the administration and control of scheduled areas and scheduled tribes.

The PESA Act was enacted by Parliament in 1996 to ensure self-governance for people living in scheduled areas. The states were required to formulate rules for the effective implementation of the Act to strengthen gram sabhas in scheduled areas.

Kejriwal said despite 75

years of independence, tribals have remained backward.

"They are remembered before elections and have only been exploited by all. The Constitution provides for a separate system for tribals because the community has a different culture and is very backward," he said.

No government is ready to implement provisions made for them in the Indian Constitution because they are always eager to usurp their natural resources, Kejriwal claimed on the second day of his two-day visit to Gujarat.

"We will implement provisions of the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution word to word. We will also strictly implement the PESA Act which says no government can take action in a tribal area without the gram sabha's consent," he said.

"There is a tribal advisory committee. Its work is to oversee the development of tribal

regions, how to utilise funds. The law says the tribal advisory committee chairman will be a tribal. In Gujarat, the chief minister heads the committee. This will be stopped," he said.

Kejriwal said tribals will also be provided employment and free electricity which he has guaranteed for everyone in Gujarat.

He claimed the forthcoming Gujarat Assembly election will be a direct contest between the BJP and AAP.

"So many Congress leaders have joined the BJP, many more will flock the saffron party, and the remaining will join the BJP after the election. It is more or less a merger of the Gujarat Congress into the Gujarat BJP," he further claimed.

"The ILU (I love you) politics between the two parties has come to an end. Now it will be politics of people, which is what the AAP does," he said.

Kejriwal said while on one hand is the BJP's "misgovernance" of 27 years (in the state), corruption and incidents of spurious liquor, or the other hand is a "new politics (of AAP) with new faces and new hope".

"I guarantee you that we will make the future of your children. But if you vote them to power, they will offer you spurious liquor," he said.

"Because they (BJP) are worried (of the outcome) in Gujarat, they harass us (AAP leaders) in Delhi," he alleged.

Asked about the AAP's chief ministerial face in Gujarat, Kejriwal said every person is his party's CM face.

"Every Gujarati will be the CM. We have come up with a new hope, new politics. Ours is the first party that talks of honesty," he said.

Can any other party talk about honesty, promise to construct schools? he asked.

"If we can construct schools in five years (of AAP governance in Delhi), why can't they (other parties)? But they will not do because their intention is not right," Kejriwal said. On the "revani" (sweet) or freebies that he has been promising during his campaigning, Kejriwal claimed the BJP government waived "Rs 10 lakh crore of its friends" and wants to waive more, but is short of money.

"So, they now say there is no need for free education and hospitals. I would like to ask the people of the country whether it is right to provide free education to your children or waive loans of their friends?" he said targeting the political opponents.

Without naming anyone, he also demanded a probe into whether people whose loans were waived offered donations to the party. "Whether the loans were waived for free or

something happened?" he asked. Kejriwal said he had faith in the Supreme Court which was hearing a plea related to freebies offered by political parties.

The AAP convener said he does not oppose any political party or its leaders and all he does is work for the people.

"Can anyone object to me over the issue of construction of schools for children? I had made an open offer that whoever wants to learn from me--whether he is the chief minister of BJP or Congress (ruled states)--come and learn, our country is one," he said.

Kejriwal also referred to a "survey", claiming 99 per cent people in Gujarat agreed to have free education, 97 per cent wanted free medical treatment, and 91 per cent said they would like to have free electricity. "Even the survey shows what we are announcing is liked by the people," he said.

# Court issues warrant against UP Min Sanjay in 2015 case

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After Rakesh Sachan, another Minister in the Yogi Adityanath Government, Sanjay Nishad, has landed in trouble as a court has issued a non-bailable warrant against him. The court in Gorakhpur has ordered the arrest and production of Nishad by August 10. The responsibility of compliance with this order has been given to Shahpur police.

Chief Judicial Magistrate Jagannath has ordered the police to produce Fisheries Minister Sanjay Nishad in the court, and if necessary, to take him in custody in compliance with his orders.

It may be mentioned that the NBW against Cabinet Minister Nishad was issued in a 7-year-old case. On June 7, 2015, a movement was going on in Kasarwal under Sahjanwa police station, to press the demand of 5 per cent reservations for Nishads in govern-



ment jobs. The agitators were sitting on the railway track. Meanwhile, a dispute escalated and the police resorted to lathi-charge in which one person had died while 24 policemen were injured in the violence.

Then it was alleged that the man had died after being shot by the police.

Due to this the movement became violent and the agitators clashed with the police. Several police vehicles were torched by the agitators. After this, a case was registered against many people, including NISHAD Party chief Sanjay

Nishad, for rioting, sabotage, arson and other related sections of the Indian Penal Code.

Significantly, Sanjay Nishad's party is an ally of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. Both the parties had come together before the Lok Sabha elections in 2019. One son of Sanjay Nishad is an MP and the other is an MLA. Apart from this, Sanjay Nishad himself is a member of the UP Legislative Council.

Earlier, a Kanpur court, on Saturday, found UP's Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Minister Rakesh Sachan guilty in the 1991 Arms Act case. Unhappy with the decision, the lawyers and supporters of Rakesh Sachan allegedly left the courtroom after he was found guilty. However, the minister denied the allegation and called it a rumour.

Rakesh Sachan said, "Some cases are pending, the things that are going on are misleading". He added that the court's

decision would be accepted.

The court filed a complaint against Rakesh Sachan in the Kotwali police station late at night. The court in its complaint has asked Kanpur police to register a case in this matter.

Kanpur Nagar's Joint Commissioner of Police Anand Prakash Tiwari, after receiving the complaint, started an investigation in this matter. He said, "The statements of all related people will be recorded, the CCTV footage will be checked and then further action will be taken."

He added, "The facts of the complaint will also be examined. The investigation is expected to be completed in a day or two. Further action will be taken accordingly."

Sachan claimed on Sunday that he was currently in Kanpur. He said that he had to talk to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on this issue and after that he could be called to Lucknow.

# After Indian woman kills self in US, FIR filed in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Bijnor police registered a case in connection with the death of a 30-year-old Indian-origin woman in the US who reportedly committed suicide after suffering years of alleged domestic abuse by her husband.

Mandeep Kaur, 30, allegedly committed suicide on August 3 after posting a video online in which she spoke about years of domestic abuse by her husband Ranjodhbeer Singh Sandhu, who works as a truck driver.

Moments before her death, Kaur had released a video in which she narrates the details of the torture she faced during her 8-year-long marriage.

"It has been eight years. I cannot take daily beatings now. Papa, please forgive me. I am going to die," she said in the video.

The video led to a massive outrage on social media. Kaur left behind two young daughters aged 4 and 6 years.

In the video posted online, Kaur, seen crying and distressed, says she cannot take the abuse anymore and also talks about taking her own life.

According to reports, Mandeep Kaur moved to New York after her marriage but was allegedly abused by her husband Ranjodhbeer Singh Sandhu for not bearing a son and over dowry.

The Indian Embassy in New York expressed grief over Kaur's death and said it was in

touch with the US authorities at all levels and would render all kinds of assistance required.

Mandeep Kaur's sister Kuldeep Kaur said her sister was married in February 2015 and after the couple went to New York, the husband started torturing her. The sister claimed that the husband wanted a son and Rs 50 lakh in dowry.

Mandeep was found hanging from the ceiling fan of the house in New York where she

lived.

The father of Mandeep Kaur said that her husband had been torturing her for years, demanding a son. But Kaur said she won't leave her husband as she couldn't raise her two daughters, the father claimed.

In one of the unverified videos that is widely shared on social media, her husband can be seen beating her while the two daughters are crying in the background.

# UP crosses 1 cr Covid booster dose mark

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In what comes as an incredible achievement ahead of the Independence Week celebrations in the State, Uttar Pradesh crossed the major milestone of administering over one crore 'precaution doses' of Covid vaccine on Sunday.

As a result of the successful execution of the ongoing special 75-day 'Amrit Dose' campaign in Uttar Pradesh under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath, the state achieved another milestone while continuing to conduct one of the most successful vaccination campaigns in the country since the rollout of the mass immunisation drive.

Committed to providing additional protection to the people against the novel coronavirus, Uttar Pradesh began administering booster shots (precaution dose) from January 10, an official spokesman claimed here on Sunday.

The state, on July 15, launched a special 75-day special drive to administer precaution doses to all aged 18 years and above at public vaccination centres free of cost.

In pursuance of the directives issued by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the authorities concerned are carrying out awareness campaigns regarding the importance of booster doses to encourage every individual above 18

years of age to take the booster doses.

Through these campaigns, information about vaccination centres, where booster shots are being administered, is also being provided.

Uttar Pradesh has so far administered over 35.27 crore total vaccine doses. Out of these, about 17,63,25,382 are first doses, while as many as 16,63,14,727 individuals are fully-vaccinated. Besides, over 2,70,85,700 vaccine doses have been administered to children in the age group of 15-17 and over 1,58,35,391 doses to children in the age group of 12-14 in the state.

It may be recalled that the Uttar Pradesh government has set a target to provide the



precaution dose of Covid vaccine to at least 13 crore people who are eligible for it

within the 75-day special drive which will continue till September 30.

Office of the Superintending Engineer  
**1<sup>st</sup> Circle, Public Works Department, Almora**

Phone/Fax: 05962-230295 Email: sepwdalm@rediffmail.com

No. 2520 (I) Tender-2022-23

Dated 06.08.2022

**NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (E- Tendering)**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**

The Superintending Engineer, 1<sup>st</sup> Circle, PWD Almora Public Works Department, Almora invites tender through E-Tendering. (Two Bid System) on behalf of Honourable Governor of Uttarakhand for following works. All other information will be available from dated 10/08/2022 & onwards on website <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>

S. No.	Name of work	Cost of Tender Form	Earnest Money (Rupee in lakh)	Validity of Tender	Time of Completion	Contractor's Category of Registration for tendering
1	<b>Construction Division PWD Kapkot</b> Construction of Karuli Bend to Gajli Bijoria Motor Road from Km. 1.00 to 5.00 Under State Sector (CM Ghoshna) in Kapkot Constituency distt- Bageshwar. (Remaining work)	₹ 5000.00+ 18% GST	5.10 Lakh	120 Days	15 Months	Category "B" & above (Road Works)
2	<b>Construction Division PWD Kapkot</b> Construction of Ramadi — Kanauli Motor Road in Km. 3.50 to 8.00 Under State Sector in Kapkot Constituency distt- Bageshwar. (Remaining work)	₹ 5000.00+ 18% GST	3.88 Lakh	120 Days	15 Month	Category "B" & above (Road Works)
3	<b>Construction Division PWD Ranikhet</b> Improvement & Damarikran work in Baser Bend to Kuna Dhanyari Motor Road in constituency Dwarahat Under State Sector Distt Almora	₹ 5000.00+ 18% GST	3.48 Lakh	120 Days	15 Month	Class "B" & Higher in Road Works
4	<b>Construction Division PWD Ranikhet</b> Improvement & Damarikran work in Ganoli-Bawan Motor Road in constituency Dwarahat Under State Sector Distt Almora	₹ 5000.00+ 18% GST	3.34 Lakh	120 Days	15 Month	Class "B" & Higher in Road Works
5	<b>Construction Division PWD Ranikhet</b> Improvement & Damarikran work in Kaffara-Barat-Tipola Motor Road in constituency Dwarahat Under State Sector Distt Almora	₹ 5000.00+ 18% GST	4.16 Lakh	120 Days	15 Month	Class "B" & Higher in Road Works
6	<b>Construction Division PWD Ranikhet</b> Construction of Dwarahat- Surikhet Motor road to Bayela - Nar Motor Road Under SCP	₹ 5000.00+ 18% GST	4.55 Lakh	120 Days	15 Month	Class "B" & Higher in Road Works





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Making it meaningful

Boycott by any Chief Minister of Niti Aayog Governing Council meeting is not good for nation building

The seventh meeting of the Governing Council of Niti Aayog on Sunday, under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is a good occasion for the political class to thrash out the most important national issues. The Council comprises, apart from the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers of all states and Union Territories with legislature, Lt Governors of other UTs, ex-officio Members, Niti Aayog Vice-Chairman, and Niti Aayog full-time Members. Union Ministers were special invitees. That this was the first in-person meeting of the Council after the pandemic made it even more important. Agriculture, especially self-sufficiency in oilseeds and pulses, topped the agenda. National Education Policy and urban governance were other important subjects discussed at the conference. The Government wanted the Council to finalise a roadmap and outcome-oriented action plans. So, by any reckoning, it was a very important meeting. But, unfortunately, it was politicised. Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao announced that he would stay away from the meeting as a mark of strong protest against the present trend of the Central government to discriminate against the states and not treat them as equal partners. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, an ally of the Bharatiya Janata Party's, also missed the meeting. It may be mentioned here that Kumar also didn't attend a dinner hosted by PM Modi for the newly elected President Droupadi Murmu.



Political parties will hurl allegations and counter-allegations at each other for the absence of some Chief Ministers, but this will just generate a lot of heat and dust, which already aplenty in the political arena. It is unfortunate that politics has been reduced to petty politicking, scoring brownie points, and one-upmanship; such things happen in every democracy, but there is also meaningful discussion and informed debate, in legislative chambers and outside them. But, sadly, that is no longer the case in India. Self-righteousness is the disease that afflicts all parties; now political adversaries are not seen as leaders who have a different viewpoint but as enemies. The Niti Aayog Governing Council is a perfect forum where both the Central and state governments can express their views and present the problems they face in formulating and executing policies. The Chief Ministers who refuse to attend it actually lose the opportunity to tell the country that they feel discriminated against; in a way, they banish themselves out of a major national forum. The Centre too must share some portion of the blame; some acts of omission and commission are responsible for the mistrust. All political parties must ponder over a couple of simple questions: Should every interaction between them be marked with bombastic acrimony and self-righteousness? Should they exchange charges all the time? One hopes that all chief ministers attend the next meeting of the Niti Aayog Governing Council or any such gathering.

### PICTALK



A ragpicker collects recyclable items from the offerings and idols of Goddess Dashama, left by devotees in Ahmedabad

PTI

## Address pendency issue

The courts have four crores pending cases; inordinate delays leave lakhs languishing in jails

It is high time to address the issue of pendency in lower courts so that speedy justice can be delivered in a minimum of time. The slow justice has ruined many lives and many people who should have been in jail are out of it thanks to their resources and the slow pace at which the judiciary works in the country.

The issue of pendency of cases in the Indian courts especially the lower ones has once again come to the fore. The Supreme Court Bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and MM Sundresh have appealed to the government to solve this issue else it would haunt the country for the next thousands of years.



This came after the prime minister's contention that more under trials should be released in the 75th year of India's independence and his appeal to the judges of lower courts to expedite the cases. To put things in perspective, there are four crore cases pending in the Indian courts and 75 per cent of people languishing in Indian jails are under trials booked for petty crimes. Most of them are poor, illiterate, hapless, and cannot even afford a lawyer.

It may be a great idea but executing it would indeed be a Herculean task as we all know that courts function at their own pace and takes forever to reach a decision. It is a fact that long delays in solving cases make the process of getting justice a punishment in itself.

The excruciatingly slow process of getting bail not only ruins the life of an individual but also puts undue pressure on jails and the judiciary. Having said that, it is difficult but not impossible if all concerned make a resolve to solve it. For instance, the suggestion that first-time offenders involved in petty offences could be let off. Far from reforming long stay in jail actually makes them hardened criminals. Moreover, video hearings could be implemented across the country to the lowest court level. Though increasing the number of judges is easier said than done. Besides, making some changes in the Indian penal code could also ease the burden on the judiciary. IPC was passed in 1860 to suit the colonial rulers. Many laws such as sedition law and the like have become archaic and need to be redone. There are phrases that need to be defined properly like 'obscene'. The loose phrases put extra pressure on courts and hence more time. But first of all, a political will and an earnest desire for radical change is a must.

# Pandora's box of corruption

The gold worth crores of rupees was unearthed by ED in Bengal from a minister's close confidant, revealing how deep the rut goes



BRIJENDER SINGH PANWAR



The recent incident of the unearthing of more than Rs 50 crore in cash, gold and jewelry worth crores in flats belonging to a close associate of West Bengal's former Industries Minister, Education Minister, and Secretary General of Trinamool Congress Party (TCP), Partha Chatterjee, as well as disclosure of many properties allegedly jointly owned by them or their families, have opened a Pandora box of corruption. It is not an overnight happening. During his tenure as Education Minister, recruitment scams were a regular occurrence, and the media highlighted the interviews of ordinary people who paid for jobs to local small-time politicians who were authorized to collect the booty for their masters. The public witnessed with apparent indifference the eight-year ordeal of the cheated State Level Selection Tests (SLST) candidates who protested against this grave injustice, but, nobody took notice. Where was the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mamta Banerjee, who is now seen distancing herself from tainted Partha Banerjee, when all these malpractices were going on with full impunity right under her nose? This gives credence to the statement of Chatterjee that the money is not his and he will disclose the source at the right time. It is but, obviously, that this practice of monetizing posts in the education system and in other services was carried out in a big way by people who had the patronage of the big wigs and they were individual profiteers as well.

During the tenure of Chatterjee as Education Minister, the clear implication was that the system was manipulated in such a way that all school posts, of teaching and non-teaching staff, were open for sale at a price. From 2016 onwards, the appointment of teachers qualifying for the SSCs had violated the merit list, for reasons of nepotism, money or political clout. Investigation reveals that irregularities in the recruitment by SSC of group D staff in state-aided schools, after the tenure of the original panel of

appointees for 13,000 posts had expired.

It was found that at least 269 primary school teachers in government-aided schools were ineligible for appointment. Considering the facts, the declaration of Additional Solicitor General Suryaprakash V Raju that they were looking for at least Rs 120 crore in the SSC recruitment scam is not out of place. However, the education scams in West Bengal are not something new. The left-party governments started the process. Although the SSC was set up way back in 1997, the prospective teachers were asked to pay a substantial amount before they could join as teachers in schools to which they have been appointed through the SSC. This was true for lower-level jobs in government and public sector industries as well. The scale of demand was not as high as it is now. The saving grace was that college and university posts or those of Vice Chancellors were not sold, though most appointments were guided by political consideration.

At present, under the TMC regime, the system has degraded to such a low level that not only the coffers of the party are filled to the brim,



IT WAS FOUND THAT AT LEAST 269 PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN GOVERNMENT-AIDED SCHOOLS WERE INELIGIBLE FOR APPOINTMENT

but, the money is siphoned off at all levels of the political hierarchy. Soon after the controversial minister assumed charge, the rot was extended to the higher education system. As per the information available, lakhs were extorted for college appointments and for vice chancellors. Like the corrupt practices followed in the construction industry, the education sector also passed into the hands of powerful 'syndicates' functioning at the behest of the ruling party. Corruption seeped in even in the admission process in colleges. After taking charge of the Education Ministry, the first decision taken by Chatterjee was to do away with the centralised online undergraduate admission process paving the way of the selling of seats in colleges which was decided by politically affiliated students' and teachers' union's functionaries earning lot of money while the concerned authorities were looking the other way. Imagine the loss of society and the institutions where incompetent teachers are appointed for a period of 30-35 years and an entire generation suffers. Such cases are common in India. Hardly a day passes when we do not hear about

the incidents of "leaking" of examination papers and forging of mark sheets in one state or the other and the practice continues unabated.

No wonder, the report of Transparency International places India at 85 out of 180 countries in terms of the Global Corruption Perception Index (GCPI). The greed of a few people who hold power in connivance of their stooges often hijack the system to further their petty interests and that is the reason why we lose our talent to the developed countries. If we want to emerge as a developed country, this trend needs to be reversed. Corruption, nepotism, and favouritism are the biggest curse that is a hindrance to the development of any society. We should come together to stop such malpractices. Public opinion need to be built to oppose such incidents. The guilty should be identified and punished so that nobody can dare to repeat the mistakes. The law enforcement agencies should be given free hand to deal with the situation so that justice is done.

(The writer is a senior journalist and Chairman, Panwar Group of Institutions, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### CHINESE MACHINATIONS

Sir — Following US Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, China recently dispatched 27 fighter planes into Taiwan's airspace. On August 11, a Chinese research and survey ship is anticipated to dock in the southern port of Hambantota, Sri Lanka. Despite the statements made by China and Sri Lanka that the ship is for survey and research, it needs to be closely watched since it might be having hidden weapons since China might aim to vanquish India the same way as they vanquish Taiwan. Now Bandula Gunawardhana, the head of the Sri Lankan government, made a mistake by allowing it to anchor in the port area in the first place despite India's warning. India is helping Sri Lanka in its gravest moment yet it is still inclined toward China. This is not fair and the government of India should ensure that Sri Lanka does not fall into the lap of China.

Vijaykumar H K | Raichur

### CASTEISM IS STILL PREVALENT

Casteism is still prevalent Sir — The poison of casteism is now seeping into the temples of education. A shocking incident has come to the fore in which children refused to eat the food cooked by a Dalit chef. As reported, in a school in Morbi, many children of the OBC community refused to eat food because the food was prepared by a "Dalit lady" cook. A complaint regarding this has been filed. Allegedly the children of the OBC community, influenced by their parents, refused to eat the food prepared by the Dalit woman. This is so unfortunate that we are still grappling with the problems that we started our journey with. Unfortunately, it does not have a legal solution. It is a social problem that can only be solved by education and creating awareness. The children were doing so at the behest of their parents and guardians. Children are too tender to be punished for it. If punished they would become even more inclined to be discriminatory. So it

### TIRANGA IS OUR PRIDE

The country is celebrating 75 years of independence and there can be nothing more significant than to hoist Tiranga to mark the occasion as it symbolises the heritage of India and represents the ethos of independence movement. Tiranga is our pride. As citizens of this great country, we have a responsibility to celebrate the 75th independence anniversary with pride and honour and to dedicate ourselves to the growth and development of Bharat. We need to be stronger from the inside to take on forces that are trying to divide our country and preserve the fraternity of this great nation. National pride has been reborn under the current Government. As we hoist the flag as a part of the Har Ghar Tiranga initiative, these very thoughts will be echoing in every Indian's heart. India is my country and all Indians are my brothers and sisters. I love my country, and I am proud of its rich and varied heritage. I shall always strive to be worthy of it. I shall give respect to my parents, teachers, and all the elders, and treat everyone with courtesy. To add to that the health workers, who did a marvelous job during Covid. Tiranga hoisting is a timely measure on the eve of the 75th year of Independence.



Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

is the parents who must be convinced about the wrong lessons they are giving to their children. The principal of the school says that she has had two meetings with the school monitoring committee in which the parents were also involved but they are adamant and don't want to give up their casteist thinking. Under Article 17 of the Constitution, untouchability or treating someone, as an untouchable is illegal. In our country, everyone has 6 fundamental rights, one of which includes the right to equality. In which all persons have equal rights without any discrimination, if a person discriminates against any casteism, then it is illegal. I support all irrespective of the caste they belong to, General, OBC, SC, ST, for me they are all same and for everyone, they all must be the same. Let's hope, sense prevails soon.

Garima Shrivaspal | Ujjain

### THE FINANCIAL STRAIN OF FREEBIES

Sir — It refers to "Shun freebies". It is a very sensitive issue raised by our Prime Minister and needless to say that every

political party in the country is guilty of revdi culture to some or other extent. Ideally, the apex court should not have been involved in this debate, but now since the ball is in their court, let us see what is the ideal solution for this. No political party would like to lose votes in absence of these freebies, and they are right in their approach because in electoral politics parties go to any length to woo voters. Ideally, all political parties, including the ruling party need to sit together and arrive at a consensus that none of them would offer any freebies and will abide by it in letter and spirit. Unfortunately no political can come clean on it, including the BJP as every political party has used it as an electoral tool to harvest the votes. If it is not addressed now then the financial health of many states will go from bad to worse and they will be responsible for that fiasco. BJP has to walk the talk.

Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

## SOUND BITE

From one point of view 8 years is less for 80 miracles! In the 8 years of Modiji's leadership, India has seen 80 miracles happen on the ground.



Jai Shakti Minister  
—Gajendra Singh Shekhawat



As we continue to power healthy jobs growth, Democrats are ferociously fighting back against America's families.  
Speaker, US HQR  
—Nancy Pelosi

Been working the last few days non stop...so needed to indulge in my favourite past time...the love of my own person' & to pamper myself



Actor  
—Shahrukh Khan



Penalty miss hua Australia se and the Umpire says, Sorry Clock start nahi hua. Such biasedness used to happen in cricket as well earlier till we became a superpower, Proud of our girls.

Cricketer  
—Virender Sehwag

This government has got an uncanny knack of ignoring what's important & concentrating on headlines — instead of GDP govt bothered about our DP.




Mahua Moitra  
—TMC MP

FIRST COLUMN

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS IS MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Material cravings remain brief; spiritual progress gives better life



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

What are our hopes for near and dear ones when they depart? That they would have gotten a better birth. This actually defines the philosophy of life. Let us critically examine what we consider success in life.

Let me begin with wealth. Practically, everyone wishes to have lots of it in order to obtain everything desirable, because money is the means for acquiring material objects, including ways for comfortable living. The underlying idea is to avoid suffering at any cost and enjoy life.

Sufferings are determined by fate and they are inevitable. Steve Jobs, cofounder of Apple, died at the age of 56 due to a terminal disease. Wealth didn't help him beat the ailment.

Another human craving is for power, because it allows control over others, situations, etc. Do we succeed? Yes and no. Yes, for a limited duration, because power is also a material acquisition. It is a result of pious activities. Once they run out, power is gone. Hitler wanted to control the entire Europe, and maybe the whole world, with the help from his allies. He ruled Germany and some parts of Europe for a brief period and then he was stripped of his power. This shocked him to such an extent that he died by suicide; yes, suicide.



Fame is another human trap. We all crave for attention. There is nothing wrong with such a desire, but when fame becomes the yardstick for success, we go horribly wrong. Michael Jackson desired big success, which would ensure tremendous fame. He did succeed for some time till his insatiable appetite for fame took his life. He had sacrificed his sleep to be able to work more and more. And he had to be administered drugs to help him sleep. Doses kept on increasing till he never woke up.

The fourth yardstick of success is beauty. Models, film stars, etc., are paid huge sums, because beauty sells. Marilyn Monroe found out the dark side of it in a very depressive way, and she too died by suicide.

Fifthly, being independent, i.e. above rules, is another measure of success. What happens to some toppers in All India competitions when they flout all rules for their personal benefits? They are caught and put in jail. Their idea to prolong their sukha ends in lots of dukkha.

All popular notions of success are flawed, and they don't make us big or independent. They don't even prevent suffering or make our sukha permanent. What then should be the yardstick for success? It should be progress in life. Yes, progress is what we should look for. In younger days, it should be mainly material progress, because that will set us up nicely for our later years. Subsequently, it must be spiritual progress, however small it may be, because this will connect us with God, who is everything (The Geeta 7.19) and source of everything superior. (10.41) Then, all our inherent shortcomings won't matter; God will supplement whatever we lack. Fortunately God is ever willing to help; we just have to approach Him in a humble mood, in order to take His shelter.

From experiences of countless fortunate souls, who took shelter in God, we learn that we begin to succeed in all aspects of our lives. Our health in all its manifestations begins to improve. Physically we benefit; mentally we become stranger; emotionally we become mature; intellectually we become wise; and spiritually we advance. Our interpersonal relationships improve; we become more useful; and we get set for a better next life.

(The author is a spiritual teacher)

# Defence Atmanirbharta is a real game changer

## PM's push for defence Atmanirbharta can bring about a sea change in our armed preparedness

The contemporary battlefield is a complex mix of traditional and hybrid warfare. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has immensely contributed to the national security policymaking by reformulating the security objectives and displaying a political resolve to bring profound changes in security governance.

Modi's approach is purely India centric. One of his landmark achievements is the initiative of Atmanirbharat Bharat. Launched in May 2020, it seeks India's self-reliance in different sectors. As the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) has transformed the nature of wars from mechanical to electronic, the import of different systems makes the security systems prone to various vulnerabilities like hacking.

The issue of spare parts and path dependency creates new complications tactically and geopolitically. The problem gets complicated with the new developments in hybrid warfare involving drones for drug and small arms trafficking, apart from the malicious use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Thus, the policy was well-founded and was the need of the hour.

In 2020, while we were grappling with the Corona pandemic and its impact on the supply chains in different sectors, PM Modi used the problem to find new opportunities and launched Atmanirbhar Bharat. Before officially formulating the policy, in 2018, the PM set up the Innovation for Defence Excellence (Idex) to create a defence and aerospace ecosystem that engaged the R&D institutes, academia, industries, and promoted start-ups. These sectors could now directly deal with the armed forces via open challenges.

The Army Design Bureau is a facilitator and provides financial support to start-ups and MSMEs. The 100th contract of Idex was recently signed. Apart from allowing the local firms, it was a stepping stone to India's civil-military fusion.

India's defence exports have increased considerably from a mere ₹2,059 crore in 2015-16 to a whopping ₹13,000 crore in 2021-22, with a rise of 54.1 per cent over the previous year. As the numbers of successful case studies are impressive, it becomes pertinent to highlight some achievements of PM Modi's initiative in the defence sector.

From the development of small equipment like the P7 heavy drop system that helps deliver combat stores in inaccessible areas to aircraft carrier Vikrant for the Navy, Atmanirbhar Bharat is achieving significant milestones. It is important to highlight the contribution of the PM in stopping the payment of royalties to Russia for the technologies that were transferred by the former Soviet Union and were domestically manufactured in India. For example, in the case of the T-72 tank, PM Modi himself brought the issue to the notice of President Vladimir



ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT-II IN THE DEFENCE SECTOR WILL INCLUDE REFORMS REGARDING THE PRODUCTION OF CORE TECHNOLOGIES VIA A PPP MODE. IT WILL ALSO LIBERALISE THE TESTING AND CERTIFICATION OF PRODUCTS, A SHIFT FROM THE PAST PRACTICES

(The author is Assistant Professor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda)



Putin and the needful was successfully done. This led the PM to bring out a list of banned items for defence imports in August 2020 and May 2021, with the third list announced in April 2022. The positive list currently has banned 310 items from being imported. The Indian army is now equipped with the Ashlesha radar, predominantly a 'Low Level Lightweight Radar' (LLLWR). The radar successfully detects multiple objects of the adversary like helicopters, fighters and UAVs at low and medium altitudes and can be used in diverse terrains like plains, deserts, mountain tops, etc. It is currently helping the country against the Chinese PLA on the Northern and Eastern borders.

Developing the Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar is an important development for the Air Force. The radar enhanced India's technical capability in electronic warfare, making the country fifth in the world to possess such technology. The radar is 95 per cent indigenous, with only one subsystem imported. Other necessary inductions such as LCA (Tejas), Astra Air to Air missile, Akash Surface to Air missile system, and Light Combat Helicopter systems pile up the success stories of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Given the threat of PLAN, attempts are being made to upgrade the naval facilities through Swavlamban (self-reliance), focusing on developing 75 indigenous technologies. The past electronic warfare platforms such as 'Ajanta', 'Kite', etc., have been upgraded and can now successfully detect enemy combatants' presence without dis-

closing our position. The list is impressive, from developing underwater sensors to electro-optical Fire Control System (FCS), a world-class Combat Management System (CMS) and 'Battle Damage Control Systems'.

Moreover, 'Project 75-India' aims to build a series of future aircraft carriers and submarines that will qualitatively increase the stealth of the Indian Navy. The tactical importance of the submarine project can be ascertained from the fact that even our closest partners like Russia and France have refused the technology transfer of Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) technology that allows the submarines to stay underwater for a longer duration. So, one can ascertain the financial and strategic interests of the countries with a war-based economy.

Some critical but lesser known indigenous productions in Artificial Intelligence (AI) are Face Recognition System under Disguise, AI-Based Intercept Management System (IMS) for the western theatre, iSentinel threat detection and tracking system and finally, the swarm drones. These indigenous productions will redefine how we respond to the threats of hybrid warfare. Using such technologies for counter-terrorism will help bring peace to the country. Space has been added as a new battlefield domain, and in 2019, DRDO successfully conducted the Anti-Satellite (ASAT) test by accurately hitting a target. Further, under the Defence India Start-up Challenge 5.0, 35 areas such as cyber security, quantum technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), and

augmented reality (AR) have been identified as focus areas.

In 2021, two Defence Industrial Corridors (DICs) were established in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu to boost Defence manufacturing to attract investment of Rs 10,000 Crore in each DIC.

Creation of Defence Space Agency and Armed Forces Special Operations Division apart from the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) with Department of Military Affairs (DMA) to conduct joint operations will ensure that the next 25 years would be an 'Amrit Kaal' for the Ministry of Defence. New challenges have been accepted. For instance, Bhoomi, a hackathon initiative of the BSF, contributed to finding solutions in tunnel detection and an anti-drone system.

The objective of the PM is to ensure that we are battle ready for the next war, be it conventional, electronic or even on two fronts. Soon, Atmanirbhar Bharat II in the Defence sector will be unveiled, which will include reforms regarding the production of core technologies via a public-private partnership (PPP) mode. It will also liberalise the testing and certification of products, a shift from the past practices.

The aforementioned case studies are just a few contributions of the policy that the upcoming generation needs to be told. Such achievements of the country should be incorporated into the school textbooks at different levels to inculcate a feeling of nationalism and pride apart from encouraging the scientific temper amongst the budding scientists.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

ON THIS DAY MODIJI HAD LAID THE FOUNDATION STONE OF SHRI RAM TEMPLE, SO CONGRESS IS OPPOSING IT.ED AND INFLATION ARE JUST EXCUSES. —HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH




THE ONE WHO INFLECTS PAIN ON THE WEAK BY INCREASING PRICES, ATTACKS LORD RAM & MISREPRESENTS THOSE AGITATING AGAINST INFLATION, INSULTS LOKNAYAK RAM. — CONGRESS LEADER PRIYANKA GANDHI

# Countering radicalisation in Assam with long-term vision

## Elimination of Ayaman al-Zawahiri is an opportunity for Assam administration to counter radical elements

The precision strike against Ayman al-Zawahiri will have far reaching implications for India. Indeed, the eliminated Al-Qaeda Emir's gaze had already been on India ever since 3 October 2014 when he proclaimed the formation of the Al-Qaeda in the Indian subcontinent.

The 'shadow of Zawahiri' had encompassed the Rakhine province of Myanmar, Bangladesh, West Bengal and most of Assam. Moreover, Zawahiri had made controversial statements when the Hijab controversy broke in Karnataka. Although the recent arrests of several cadres of the Al-Qaeda affiliated Ansarulullah Bangla Team from different places in Assam has not come as a surprise, the matter of concern is



JAIDEEP SAINIA

(The author is a conflict analyst)

the state's inability to fathom the extent to which the radicalisation efforts have taken place.

Indeed, the state has witnessed subterfuge by Islamists since the late 1990s when Pakistan-trained radical elements were arrested from the heart of Guwahati. However, the threat had all but weakened with en masse surrender of cadres after their return from places such as Batrasi in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). Indeed, by their own admission, the wayward group had realised that the motivation for which they had gone to train alongside tanzems such as the ISI chaperoned Lashkar-e-Toiba were at variance with their local objectives to garner aspects such as reservations for Muslims in the legislature.

Nizam-e-Mustafa, which

has become the primary goal for almost all Islamist groups that have a global bearing, was not in their agenda. The syncretism that characterised Assamese society of the time ascertained it and got disenchanted with the alien exhortation by the ISI, which had included assassination of political leaders and engineering of pogroms against the Bodo community, which sat cheek-by-jowl with the Muslims, and the belligerence dissipated.

However, there were some who, eschewing attention, continued with their sinister endeavours. Indeed, for a time it was felt that Assam was rid of the radical threat. But quite clearly they were silent, "not by the absence of activity but by the presence of non-activity".

However, the present

apprehensions of the Islamists that have brought back the limelight of the Islamist intimidation to Assam are not indicative of a turnaround in the Assamese Muslim psyche. While it is true that the target group for the Islamist minders have undergone a sea change and are directed primarily on the educated class, the fact of the matter is that an important constituency among the Muslim population of Assam ignored the overtures of the Islamists.

The atmosphere that prevails in the rest of the country, too, has had a sobering effect on the Muslim community, and it was evident that the quam sought no truck with the Islamists. In any event, the chaperons that are seeking to radicalise the Muslim community are exclusively from Bangladesh and have very little to do with the manner in which an indigenous Assamese Muslim identifies himself with the state's inclusive character.

But the fact of the matter is that there is a clear move by the Islamists from Bangladesh to make inroads into the Muslim community of Assam. An alert Special Branch of the Assam Police has been able to pre-empt the attempts and, to a considerable extent, thwart at least the opening moves of the Islamists.

However, marshes and warrens are plentiful in the Lower and Middle Assam and it would be less than prudent to lower the vigilance that

has characterised the manner in which the Special Branch has, albeit temporarily, halted

the march of the radicals. The porosity of the border with Bangladesh coupled with the pressure that the Islamists are facing in the country dictate greater watchfulness. After all, one of the primary motivation for the Bangladesh-based Islamists is to utilise the demographic jungle of Lower Assam as a safe haven and construct a "doorway" to metropolitan India in order to perpetrate terror which would be visible to a global audience.

Indeed, therein lies their intent. The fact that Ayman al-Zawahiri had mentioned Assam during his televised statement on 3 September 2014 when he announced the creation of the Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent must be seen in the light of the fact that that Assam and thereabouts



# Ukraine grain headed for Lebanon under wartime deal delayed

AP ■ BEIRUT

The scheduled arrival on Sunday of the first grain ship to leave Ukraine and cross the Black Sea under a wartime deal has been delayed, a Lebanese Cabinet Minister and the Ukraine Embassy said.

The cause of the delay was not immediately clear and Marine Traffic, which monitors vessel traffic and the locations of ships at sea, showed the Sierra Leone-flagged Razoni at anchor in the Mediterranean Sea near Turkey.

Lebanon's transportation minister, Ali Hamie, tweeted the ship "that was supposed, according to what was rumored, to reach Tripoli port in Lebanon" changed its status. Hamie refused to comment further when contacted by The Associated Press.

The ship left Odesa last Monday carrying Ukrainian corn and later passed inspection in Turkey.

It was supposed to arrive in the northern port of Tripoli at about 10 am on Sunday. According to Marine Traffic, the ship Saturday changed its status to "order" meaning the ship was waiting for someone to buy the corn.

The Ukrainian embassy in Beirut said the arrival of the



ship has been postponed adding that an "update for the ceremony will be sent later when we get information about exact day and time of the arrival of the ship".

The shipment that was supposed to arrive in Lebanon comes at a time when the tiny Mediterranean nation is suf-

fering from a food security crisis, with soaring food inflation, wheat shortages and bread lines. The ship is carrying some 26,000 tons of corn for chicken feed.

The passage of the vessel was the first under a break-through deal brokered by Turkey and the United Nations

with Russia and Ukraine.

The four sides signed deals last month to create safe Black Sea shipping corridors to export Ukraine's desperately needed agricultural products as Russia's war upon its neighbour grinds on.

Lebanon's worst economic crisis in its modern history

that began in late 2019 has left three-quarters of its population living in poverty while the Lebanese pound has lost more than 90 per cent of its value.

The economic meltdown rooted in decades of corruption and mismanagement was made worse by a massive blast in August 2020 that destroyed Beirut's port and the country's main grain silos inside the sprawling facility.

Large parts of the silos collapsed in recent days after fire caused by remnants of grain that started fermenting and ignited in the summer heat last month. Lebanese officials said last week that the Razoni was supposed to leave Ukraine and head to Lebanon on February 24 but the departure was delayed by the war that broke out days later.

On Friday, three more ships carrying thousands of tons of corn left Ukrainian ports and travelled through mined waters toward inspection of their delayed cargo, a sign that the international deal to export grain held up since Russia invaded Ukraine was slowly progressing.

Four more ships carrying agricultural cargo held up by the war in Ukraine received authorisation Sunday to leave the country's Black Sea ports.

# 6 Russian military officers sacked since war began: UK Intelligence



IANs ■ LONDON

At least six senior Russian military officers are believed to have been sacked since Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, according a British intelligence update on Sunday.

The poor performance of the armed forces during the invasion has been costly for the Russian military leadership, most likely leading to the dismissal of at least six commanders, dpa news agency quoted the UK's Ministry of Defence as saying in its regular intelligence update.

Among others, General

Alexander Dvornikov was removed after being given overall command of the operation in Ukraine.

In addition, at least 10 Russian generals were killed on the battlefield in Ukraine, the update said.

Altogether, all this probably contributed to Russia's tactical and operational difficulties in the war against Ukraine.

The British Ministry of Defence publishes some of its intelligence on the Ukraine war in a daily update on Twitter.

Russia itself remains largely silent on personnel and tactical decisions.

# Ukraine's Vatican envoy suggests Papal visit may be imminent

IANs ■ ROME

The Ukrainian ambassador to the Vatican suggested that Pope Francis might soon visit the war-torn country.

Ukraine has been waiting for the head of the Catholic Church since Russian launched its ongoing war on February 24, Andrii Yurash said in a tweet following an audience with the Pope, adding they would be happy to "welcome him before his trip to Kazakhstan", dpa news agency reported.

The Pope is planning a three-day trip to Kazakhstan on September 13. The Vatican did not make public any details of the conversation with Yurash, but only confirmed the meeting on Saturday.

The Ambassador, on the other hand, reported that Francis had underlined his closeness to the Ukrainian people and expressed the willingness to show this in a visit.

Since the war began, Pope Francis has said several times that he would like to visit Ukraine to promote peace.

However, he has been plagued by a knee injury for some time that has often forced him to use a wheelchair, so it seems unlikely he would make a long train journey to Kiev, for example.

# Ukrainian risks life to rescue wild animals from war

AP ■ KYIV

Natalia Popova has found a new purpose in life: Rescuing wild animals and pets from the devastation wrought by the war in Ukraine.

"They are my life," says the 50-year-old, stroking a light-furred lioness like a kitten. From inside an enclosure, the animal rejoices at the attention, lying on her back and stretching her paws up toward her caretaker.

Popova, in cooperation with the animal protection group UA Animals, has already saved more than 300 animals from the war; 200 of them went abroad and 100 found new homes in western Ukraine, which is considered safer.

Many of them were wild animals who were kept as pets at private homes before their owners fled

Russian shelling and missiles.

Popova's shelter in the Kyiv region village of Chubynske now houses 133 animals. It's a broad menagerie, including 13 lions, a leopard, a tiger, three deer, wolves, foxes, raccoons and roe deer, as well as domesticated animals like horses, donkeys, goats, rabbits, dogs, cats and birds.

The animals awaiting evacuation to Poland were rescued from hot spots such as eastern Ukraine's Kharkiv and Donetsk regions, which see daily bombardments and active fighting.

The Ukrainian soldiers who let Popova know when animals near the front lines need help joke that she has many lives, like a cat.

"No one wants to go there. Everyone is afraid. I am also scared, but I go anyway," she said.

Often she is trembling in the car on her way to rescue another wild animal.

"I feel very sorry for them. I can imagine the stress animals are under because of the war, and no one can help them," Popova said.

In most cases, she knows nothing about the animals she rescues, neither their names and ages nor their owners.

"Animals don't introduce themselves when they come to us," she joked.

For the first months of the war, Popova drove to war hot spots alone, but a couple from UA Animals recently offered to transport and help her.

"Our record is an evacuation in 16 minutes, when we saved a lion between Kramatorsk and Sloviansk," Popova said.



An economist by education with no formal veterinary experience, she administered anesthesia on the lion because the animal had to be put to sleep before it could be transported.

Popova says she has always been very attached to animals. In kinder-

garten, she built houses for worms and talked to birds.

In 1999, she opened the first private horse club in Ukraine. But it wasn't until four years ago that she saved her first lion.

An organisation against slaugh-

terhouses approached her with a request for help saving a lion with a broken spine. She did not know how she could help because her expertise was in horses. But when she saw a photo of the big cat, Popova could not resist.

She built an enclosure and took in the lion the next morning, paying the owner.

Later, Popova created a social media page titled "Help the Lioness", and people began to write asking for help saving other wild animals.

Yana, the first lioness she rescued, has become a family member since she could not find a new home due to a disability. Popova took care of her until she died two weeks ago.

The shelter is just a temporary stop for the animals. Popova rehabilitates them and then looks for new homes for them. She feels a special

connection with each big cat, but says she does not mind letting them go.

"I love them, and I understand that I do not have the resources to provide them with the comfortable life they deserve," says Popova.

At first, she bankrolled the shelter with her own funds from the horse business. But since Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, the horse business has not been profitable.

With more than USD 14,000 a month needed to keep animals healthy and fed, she has turned to borrowing, and seen her debt grow to USD 200,000.

She gets some money from UA Animals and from donations, but worries about how to keep everything together have kept her up at night.

"But I will still borrow money, go to hot spots and save animals. I can't say no to them," she said.

# China seeks meeting with Lanka as Colombo seeks postponement of research ship's visit to Hambantota

PTI ■ COLOMBO

China's embassy here has sought an urgent meeting with senior Sri Lankan authorities after Colombo sought a deferment of the planned docking of a high-tech Chinese research vessel at the strategic Hambantota port over which India raised concerns, sources said.

The Chinese space and satellite tracking research vessel 'Yuan Wang 5' was scheduled to dock at the Hambantota Port from August 11 to 17, weeks after Sri Lanka witnessed a major political turmoil following massive mass protests over the country's worst economic crisis in decades.

A 'third-person' note from Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry to the Chinese embassy in Colombo dated August 5 says "the ministry wishes to request that the arrival of the vessel Yuan Wang 5 in Hambantota to be deferred until further con-



sultations are made on the matter."The Chinese embassy in Colombo sought an urgent meeting with the higher Sri Lankan authorities to discuss the issue after receiving the note from the Foreign Ministry seeking a delay in the visit, sources here said.

Some Sri Lankan news portals also reported that Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe held a closed-door meeting with China's Ambassador Qi Zhenhong after Colombo sought a deferment of the planned docking.

But the President's Office denied the media reports over the meeting. On July 12, amidst the political turmoil in Sri Lanka, the then government approved the Chinese vessel's docking at the Hambantota port.

The Chinese vessel was expected to dock at the Sri Lankan port for 'refuelling and 'replenishment' and will conduct satellite control and research tracking in the north-western part of the Indian Ocean region through August and September.

# WFP concerned about food crisis in Sri Lanka



IANs ■ COLOMBO

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) is concerned about the impact of the ongoing economic crisis in Sri Lanka on food supplies for the country's poorest.

Nearly 6.3 million people, or three in 10 households, are at risk of food insecurity and need assistance, the WFP said in a statement of thanks for an aid contribution from Norway of the equivalent of about \$500,000.

Recent WFP surveys show that 61 per cent of families are either eating less, or eating less nutritious food, or even skip-

ping meals altogether, due to the acute emergency, reports dpa news agency.

An emergency programme is being set up to help 3.4 million people in Sri Lanka who are most at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition, it added.

The island nation, with a population of about 22 million, is in the midst of its worst economic crisis since it gained independence in 1948.

Most recently, the country, which is \$51 billion in foreign debt, lacked the money to import essential goods such as fuel, medicines and gas for cooking. Food prices have risen sharply and inflation is already over 60 per cent, according to official figures.

"We are deeply concerned about the impact of the current economic and political crisis on the people of Sri Lanka," Norwegian Ambassador Trine Joranli Eskedal was quoted as saying. Food shortages and rising prices have had a particularly negative impact on women and children in the island nation.

# Ukrainian energy agency warns of risk at Zaporizhzhya nuke plant

IANs ■ KIEV

Ukraine's state nuclear agency Enerhoatom has warned against an increasing risk of fire and radiation due to the shelling of the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

"The Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant is operating at risk of violating the norms of radiation and fire protection," the agency said on Telegram, following an attack on the site on Saturday.

Shelling the previous day damaged a nitrogen plant and an auxiliary part of the power plant, dpa news agency quoted Enerhoatom as saying.

"There remains a risk of hydrogen leaking and radioactive particles dispersing, and the risk of fire is also high."

Ukrainian power plant personnel are trying to maintain safety levels despite these conditions but the threat due to the occupation of the power plant by Russian troops, however, remains high. The plant may have been mined by Russian troops, according to a report by The Insider which is critical of the Kremlin.

A video allegedly shot at the beginning of the week showed Russian military trucks driving onto the factory site and unloading goods.

One of the trucks drove into the plant's engine room.

The Insider said either the power plant itself or the area around it has been mined.

"The EU condemns Russia's military activ-



ities around the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, which is a serious and irresponsible breach of nuclear safety rules and another example of Russia's failure to respect international norms," said EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell, demanding access for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to the plant.

On March 4, the nuclear and thermal power stations were both captured by Russian forces.

The plant continues to be operated by Ukrainian staff, under Russian control.

Last week, IAEA chief Rafael Grossi expressed grave concerns about the physical integrity of the plant, whether all necessary repairs and maintenance were being done, and the security of nuclear material.

# 2 dead, 5 missing after migrant boat capsizes in US

AP ■ KEY WEST (US)

Two people died and five were missing after a boat believed to be carrying migrants attempting to enter the US illegally capsized off the coast of the Florida Keys, the Coast Guard said.

Eight people were rescued, the Coast Guard said in a news release on Friday.

The agency described the boat as a "rustic vessel" that was making an illegal voyage with 15 migrant passengers. It was not immediately clear where the migrants were originally from.

Reports of the capsized vessel about 23 kilometers south of Sugarloaf Key reached the Coast Guard around 10 am on Friday. One person was rescued



from the water by the Royal Caribbean cruise ship Mariner of the Seas, the Coast Guard said.

"Our search continues for others that may have survived this tragic incident," said Rear Adm. Brendan McPherson,

commander of the Seventh Coast Guard District.

"This situation highlights the risks these migrants face as they attempt to enter the US illegally by sea."

Meanwhile, the Coast Guard responded to a ground-

ed sailing vessel that was believed to be carrying more than 100 migrants on Saturday afternoon.

The boat was spotted off the coast of Key Largo, near the gated community of Ocean Reef, officials said.

Rescue crews transferred the people from the grounded vessel to Coast Guard ships, officials said. Some entered the water without life jackets and needed to be rescued, the Coast Guard said. Photos taken from a WPLG-TV helicopter showed dozens of people sitting on the grass, having been given blankets and towels.

Officials did not immediately release details about where the people were from or specify how many were on board.

# 1 dead, 17 missing, 121 hurt in fire at Cuban oil facility

AP ■ HAVANA (CUBA)

A fire set off by a lightning strike at an oil storage facility raged uncontrolled in the Cuban city of Matanzas, where four explosions and flames injured 121 people and left 17 firefighters missing. Cuban authorities said a unidentified body had been found.

Firefighters and other specialists were on Saturday still trying to quell the blaze at the Matanzas Supertanker Base, where the fire began during a thunderstorm Friday night, the Ministry of Energy and Mines



tweeted. Authorities said about 800 people were evacuated from the Dubrocq neighbourhood closest to the fire.

The government said it had asked for help from international experts in "friendly countries" with experience in

the oil sector.

Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernández de Cossio said the US government had offered technical help to quell the blaze. On his Twitter account, he said the "proposal is in the hands of specialists for the due coordination".

Minutes later, President Miguel Díaz-Canel thanked Mexico, Venezuela, Russia, Nicaragua, Argentina and Chile for their offers of help. A support flight from Mexico arrived on Saturday night.

The official Cuban News Agency said lightning hit one tank, starting a fire, and the

blaze later spread to a second tank.

As military helicopters flew overhead dropping water on the blaze, dense column of black smoke billowed from the facility and spread westward more than 100 kilometers toward Havana.

Roberto de la Torre, head of fire operations in Matanzas, said firefighters were spraying water on intact tanks trying to keep them cool in hopes of preventing the fire from spreading.

Cuba's Health Ministry reported that 121 people were injured with five of them in critical condition.



# China keeps up pressure on Taiwan with 4th day of drills

AP ■ BEIJING

China said Sunday it carried out its fourth consecutive day of military drills in the air and sea around Taiwan in the wake of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to the self-ruled island, despite international calls to calm the tensions.

The People's Liberation Army said the exercises focused on testing its long-range air and ground strikes. It did not say if it will continue the drills after Sunday.

Taiwan said that it continued to detect several batches of Chinese aircraft, ships and drones operating around the Taiwan Strait, which separates the island and mainland China, and "simulating attacks on the island of Taiwan and our ships at sea."

Taiwan's official Central News Agency meanwhile reported that Taiwan's army will conduct live-fire artillery

drills in southern Pingtung County on Tuesday and Thursday, in response to the Chinese exercises.

The drills will include snipers, combat vehicles, armored vehicles as well as attack helicopters, said the report, which cited an anonymous source.

China set up no-go areas around Taiwan for the four-day drills it announced immediately after Pelosi's trip to Taipei on Tuesday and Wednesday that infuriated Beijing, which saw it as a violation of the "one-China" policy.

China claims Taiwan and has threatened to annex it by force if necessary.

The two sides split in 1949 after a civil war, but Beijing considers visits to Taiwan by foreign officials as recognizing its sovereignty.

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence emphasised that its military was surveilling the situation and had dis-



patched aircraft and ships to respond accordingly.

Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen has called on the international community to "support democratic Taiwan" and "halt any escalation of the regional security situation."

China has so far conducted missiles strikes on targets in the seas around Taiwan, and sent warships across the Taiwan Straits median line. It has also cut off defense and climate talks with the US and imposed sanctions on Pelosi in retaliation for

her visit.

The Biden administration and Pelosi say the US remains committed to the "one-China" policy that recognises Beijing as the legitimate government but allows informal relations and defense ties with Taipei.

## US, Australia, Japan urge China to immediately cease military exercises around Taiwan

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The United States, Australia and Japan have urged China to immediately cease its military exercises launched following US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei, as they reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

Pelosi, 82, was the highest-profile US official to visit Taiwan in 25 years. Pelosi's visit on Wednesday and her meetings with President Tsai Ing-wen and other leaders has infuriated China, which views the self-governed democratic island as its territory that should be reunified with the mainland, even by force.

China fired a barrage of ballistic missiles into the waters around Taiwan as it launched large-scale military exercises in response to her visit to Taipei.

A joint statement was issued by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong,



and Japanese Foreign Minister Hayashi Yoshimasa after their in-person meeting in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, on the margins of the 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

"The Secretary and the Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," the statement said on Saturday.

Sharing the region's desire for diplomacy to avoid the risks of miscalculation, they expressed their concern about

the People's Republic of China's (PRC) recent actions that gravely affect international peace and stability, including the use of large-scale military exercises.

"They condemned the PRC's launch of ballistic missiles, five of which the Japanese government reported landed in its exclusive economic zones, raising tension and destabilising the region. The Secretary and the Foreign Ministers urged the PRC to immediately cease the military exercises," said the joint statement.

## Biden leaves White House for 1st time since getting Covid-19



AP ■ REHOBOTH BEACH

Ending his most recent COVID-19 isolation, President Joe Biden on Sunday left the White House for the first time since becoming infected with the coronavirus last month, settling in for a reunion with first lady Jill Biden in their home state of Delaware.

The president had tested negative Saturday, clearing the way to emerge from an isolation that lasted longer than expected because of a rebound case of the virus. The White House physician, Dr. Kevin O'Connor, had said in his last update that Biden, "in an abundance of caution," would continue his "strict isolation measures" pending a second negative test. The White House on Sunday did not say whether the president had a second negative test and had not provided a new report from O'Connor since midday Saturday.

"I'm feeling great," Biden said before boarding Marine One outside the White House.

The Bidens were expected to spend the day in Rehoboth Beach, a popular vacation destination.

## Israeli airstrike kills 2nd top Islamic Jihad commander

AP ■ GAZA CITY

Israel said Sunday that it killed a senior Islamic Jihad commander in a crowded Gaza refugee camp, the second such targeted attack since it launched its high-stakes military offensive against the militant group just before the weekend.

The Iran-backed militant group has fired hundreds of rockets at Israel in response, and the risk of the cross-border fighting turning into a full-fledged war remained high.

Gaza's ruling Hamas group, which fought an 11-day war with Israel in May 2021, appeared to stay on the sidelines for now, possibly because it fears Israeli reprisals and undoing economic understandings with Israel, including Israeli work permits for thousands of Gaza residents, that bolster its control.

The Islamic Jihad commander, Khaled Mansour, was killed in an airstrike on the Rafah refugee camp in southern Gaza late Saturday.

Two other militants and five civilians were also killed in the attack, bringing the



Palestinian death toll to 31 since the start of the Israeli offensive on Friday. Among the dead were six children and four women. The Palestinian Health Ministry said more than 250 people were wounded since Friday. Israel says some of the deaths were caused by errant rocket fire, including one incident in the Jebaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza in which six Palestinians were killed Saturday. On Sunday, a projectile hit a home in the same area of Jebaliya, killing two men. Palestinians held Israel responsible, while Israel said it was investigating whether the area was hit by an errant rocket.

Mansour, the Islamic Jihad commander for southern Gaza, was in the apartment of a member of the group when the missile struck, flattening the three-story building and badly damaging nearby houses.

"Suddenly, without warning, the house next to us was bombed and everything became black and dusty with smoke in the blink of an eye," said Wissam Jouda, who lives next to the targeted building.

Ahmed al-Qaissi, another neighbour, said his wife and son were among the wounded, suffering shrapnel injuries. To make way for rescue workers, al-Qaissi agreed to have part of his house demolished.



## UNSC to address Gaza airstrikes as toll reaches 24

IAN ■ TEL AVIV/GAZA

The UN Security Council (UNSC) is to discuss Israel's airstrikes on Gaza in a closed doors session in New York on Monday, as the death toll continued to rise, with 24 people confirmed dead and 203 injured, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

The UN's most powerful body agreed to address the attacks following requests for it to do so made by the United Arab Emirates, Ireland, France, Norway and China on Saturday, dpa news agency reported, citing diplomatic sources.

Israeli forces launched Operation Breaking Dawn on Friday, a series of targeted airstrikes on Gaza that resulted in the killing of Taisir al-Jabari, a senior leader of the

Palestinian Islamic Jihad militant group, among many others.

Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which is classified as a terrorist organization by both the European Union and the United States, is closely linked to Israel's arch-enemy Iran and is the second most powerful militia in the Gaza Strip after the ruling Hamas militant group.

Fearing reprisals for al-Jabari's killing, Israel closed its border with Gaza causing a fuel shortage at Gaza's sole power plant that forced it offline on Saturday.

As a result, Gaza residents are now limited to just four hours of electricity a day, compared to the previous 12, in what an energy company official described as a "catastrophic situation."

## Blinken in South Africa on Africa tour

AP ■ JOHANNESBURG

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken began his three-nation tour of Africa with his arrival in South Africa on Sunday.

Blinken's visit to Africa is seen as part of a competition between Russia and Western powers for support from African countries over the war in Ukraine. Blinken's trip to Africa follows recent tours by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and French President Emmanuel Macron.

South Africa is one of many African countries that have maintained a neutral stance on the war and have not publicly criticized Russia.

On Sunday after an early morning arrival, Blinken is to visit the Hector Pieterse memorial in Soweto township, which commemorates a student killed in 1976 when protesting South Africa's regime of racial oppression, apartheid, which ended in 1994.

On Monday, Blinken will describe the United States' strategies for sub-Saharan Africa in a major policy speech at the University of Pretoria. Africa has been hard-hit by the effect



of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the rising food and oil prices caused by Russia's war in Ukraine.

Blinken and Pandor will also hold a press conference Monday in which the two countries' different positions on the Ukraine war are expected to be visible.

Blinken will go on to visit Congo and Rwanda this week to end his international tour which also took him to Cambodia and the Philippines.

## Gunmen kill 4 in attack targeting lawmaker in NW Pakistan

AP ■ PESHAWAR

Gunmen shot dead four people including two police in northwestern Pakistan in an attack targeting a provincial lawmaker from former Prime Minister Imran Khan's political party, police said.

Lawmaker Malik Liaquat Khan — no relation to Imran Khan — of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party was wounded in the attack late

Saturday along with three others and was hospitalized in the provincial capital of Peshawar, police said.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

The assault took place in the Maidan area of the Lower Dir district of conservative Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which is governed by Khan's party.

Police officer Zar Badshah said among those killed were the



nephew and brother of the PTI lawmaker, who was returning home after attending a funeral late Saturday.

The area has been a stronghold of late religious leader Sufi Mohammad, who preached a strict version of Islam in the 1990s and later led his followers in fighting in Afghanistan against the US and allied forces. It remained under the influence of the Pakistani Taliban until 2009.

## 9 wounded in shooting outside Cincinnati bar, say police

AP ■ CINCINNATI (US)

At least nine people were wounded — none critically — in a shooting outside a Cincinnati bar early Sunday, police there said.

Most of the victims suffered wounds to their lower halves, Lt. Col. Mike John of the Cincinnati police told news outlets. A police officer fired at a suspect who fled the scene,



but it was unclear if that person was actually shot. The sus-

pect was not in custody as of Sunday morning. "It is a little unusual when we do not know for certainty whether the individual the officer fired on was struck or not," John said.

John said police used what he called two "bang balls" — a "percussion instrument" with a "very loud noise" — to disperse a crowd they said had gathered around officers trying to provide aid to the wounded.

## Bangladesh seeks China help to repatriate Rohingya refugees

AP ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh on Sunday sought cooperation from China to repatriate Rohingya refugees to Myanmar during a visit by Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who promised better trade ties, investment and support for infrastructure development in the South Asian nations.

China had used its influence in Myanmar to broker a November 2017 agreement to repatriate about 700,000 Rohingya Muslim refugees who fled persecution in Myanmar in August that year. Despite attempts to send them back, the refugees refused, fearing danger in Myanmar, which was exacerbated by the military takeover last year.

Yi arrived in Dhaka on Saturday evening and met with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister A K Abdul Momen. They discussed bilateral and global issues before his departure on Sunday



morning, said Shahriar Alam, Bangladesh's junior minister for foreign affairs.

Bangladesh has strong relations with China, which is a major trade partner mostly for raw materials. But maintaining close ties with Beijing is challenging for Bangladesh, which also balances diplomatic and trade relationship with both India and the United States, China's main rivals.

More than 500 Chinese companies are active in Bangladesh. China is involved in the country's all major infrastructure projects such as sea-

ports, a river tunnel and highways, and helped built its largest bridge over the River Padma at a cost of \$3.6 billion.

Amid recent tensions between China and Taiwan, Bangladesh issued a statement reiterating its support for the "one-China" policy.

After winning elections in 2008, Hasina's administration closed the Taiwanese business representative office in Dhaka in response to a request from China, and since then China has increased its engagement in Bangladesh.

## US Democrats climate, energy Bill clears initial Senate hurdle

AP ■ WASHINGTON

US Democrats pushed their election-year economic bill toward Senate approval early on Sunday, starting the sprawling collection of President Joe Biden's priorities on climate, energy, health and taxes on a pathway that the party hopes will end in final congressional passage by the end of this week.

The evenly divided Senate voted on Saturday to begin debating the legislation 51-50, with Vice President Kamala Harris breaking the tie and overcoming unanimous Republican opposition.

A dwindled version of earlier multitrillion-dollar measures that Democrats failed to advance, the package has become a partisan battleground over inflation, gasoline prices and other issues that polls show are driving voters.

The House, where Democrats have a slender majority, could give the legislation final approval next



Friday.

"The time is now to move forward with a big, bold package for the American people," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-NY.

"This historic bill will reduce inflation, lower costs, fight climate change. It's time to move this nation forward."

Republicans said the measure would damage the economy and make it harder for people to cope with sky-high inflation. They said the bill's business taxes would hurt job creation and force prices

upward and urged voters to remember that in November.

"The best way to stop this tax and spend inflationary madness is to fire some of the 50 so they can't keep doing this to your family," said South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, top Republican on the Senate Budget Committee.

Nonpartisan analysts have said the legislation, which Democrats have named the Inflation Reduction Act, would have a minor impact on the nation's worst inflation bout in four decades.

## Ex-rebel sworn in as Colombia's president in historic shift



AP ■ BOGOTA (COLOMBIA)

Colombia's first leftist president was sworn into office on Sunday, promising to fight inequality and heralding a turning point in the history of a country haunted by a long war between the government and guerrilla groups.

Sen. Gustavo Petro, a former member of Colombia's M-19 guerrilla group, won the presidential election in June by beating conservative parties that offered moderate changes to the market-friendly economy, but failed to connect with voters frustrated by rising poverty and violence against human rights leaders and environmental groups in rural areas.

Petro is part of a growing group of leftist politicians and political outsiders who have been winning elections in Latin America since the pandemic broke out and hurt incumbents who struggled with its economic aftershocks.

The ex-rebel's victory was also exceptional for Colombia, where voters had been historically reluctant to back leftist politicians who were often accused of being soft on crime or allied with guerrillas.

A 2016 peace deal between Colombia's government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia turned much of the focus of voters away from the violent conflicts playing out in rural areas and gave prominence to problems like poverty and corruption, fuelling the popularity of leftist parties in national elections.

Petro, 62, has promised to tackle Colombia's social and economic inequalities by boosting spending on anti-poverty programs and increasing investment in rural areas.



# 8 of top-10 firms add ₹98,235 cr in m-cap



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Eight of the 10 most valued firms together added Rs 98,234.82 crore in market valuation last week, with IT majors Infosys and TCS emerging as the biggest gainers amid a positive momentum in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex advanced 817.68 points or 1.42 per cent.

From the top-10 pack, HDFC twins were the only laggards.

The market valuation of Infosys jumped Rs 28,170.02 crore to reach Rs 6,80,182.93 crore.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) added Rs 23,582.58 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 12,31,362.26 crore.

The market valuation of Reliance Industries Limited climbed Rs 17,048.21 crore to stand at Rs 17,14,256.39 crore and that of ICICI Bank advanced Rs 13,861.32 crore to Rs 5,83,261.75 crore.

The market capitalisation (m-cap) of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) went higher by Rs 6,008.75 crore to Rs 4,34,748.72 crore and that of Bajaj Finance increased Rs 5,709.2 crore to Rs 4,42,157.08 crore.

State Bank of India's valu-

ation went up by Rs 2,186.53 crore to Rs 4,73,584.52 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) advanced by Rs 1,668.21 crore to Rs 6,21,220.18 crore.

On the other hand, the m-cap of HDFC declined by Rs 4,599.68 crore to Rs 4,27,079.97 crore.

HDFC Bank's valuation dipped Rs 4,390.73 crore to Rs 7,92,860.45 crore.

In the ranking of top-10 firms, Reliance Industries retained the title of the most valued domestic company, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, HUL, ICICI Bank, SBI, Bajaj Finance, LIC and HDFC.

# India's outbound tourism to surpass \$42 bn by 2024, says report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Outbound trips from India will surpass USD 42 billion by 2024 and the government could bring about certain policy changes to boost this growing market, a report said.

The report titled 'Outbound Travel and Tourism - An Opportunity Untapped' by Nangia Andersen LLP in association with FICCI, highlights the up-and-coming Indian travel market and outline a framework for creating a more value for money experience for Indian tourists and travellers.

To facilitate ease of doing business and promote the interests of Indian firms dealing in outbound travel the government could look at steps like increasing direct connections to popular and upcoming destinations, allowing foreign cruise vessels to operate on Indian waters, besides taking concerted and coordinated efforts on multiple fronts to propel the outbound tourism market, the report said.

Nangia Andersen LLP Head — Government and Public Sector Advisory Suraj Nangia said Indian outbound tourism is going to surpass USD 42 billion by 2024.

"We are soon going to be the most populous country in the world with the fastest growing economy. The Indian outbound travel market is among the fastest growing markets globally with approximately 80 million passport level of purchasing power, especially among the middle class."

The report noted that allowing foreign cruise vessels to include Indian destinations



as a stop would encourage both inbound and outbound tourism as well as increase revenue for Indian ports.

With a growing economy, young population, and growing middle class, India is ideally positioned to become one of the most lucrative outbound tourism markers in the world. Europe sees 20 per cent of the travellers from India's outbound traffic. 10 per cent travel to Australia and New Zealand, while the rest of the traffic is towards South east Asia, it said.

Nangia Andersen LLP Partner — Government and Public Sector Advisory

Poonam Kaura said, "With the positive response of foreign delegations and their policies, our government can surely establish bilateral relations with tourist-friendly countries for both inbound and outbound tourists".

In 2021, Indians spent approximately USD 12.6 billion in outbound trips, compared to USD 22.9 billion in 2019. While the reason for decrease in spending could be due to the pandemic but these figures point out the huge value that can be captured from Indian outbound travellers, the report added.

## Revenue share from EV segment to touch 50% by FY27: Sona Comstar MD

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Automotive Technology firm Sona Comstar expects its revenue share from the electric vehicle segment to touch 50 per cent by FY27, on strong pipeline of orders and an expanding EV market, a top company official said.

The revenue share of the company's EV segment in the overall topline jumped to 29 per cent in the June quarter from a meagre 2 per cent in FY20, Sona Comstar Managing director and Group CEO Vivek Vikram Singh said.

"As much as 66 per cent of our overall order book pertains to the EV segment. So, it (EV segment revenue) should account for 45 per cent in the overall revenue for sure in the next 3-4 years," Singh told PTI.

Singh further said, if the electric two-wheeler segment takes off in India, the EV segment revenue would be higher. "So, we will have to wait and see. If we win more programmes in the orderbook shape that will also help (us), then this share could reach 45-50 per cent by FY27," Singh said.

The company earlier this week reported a 5 per cent growth in profit after tax at Rs 75.80 crore and 18 per cent increase in the topline to at Rs 589.20 crore in the June quarter over the year-ago period aided by a 68 per cent rise in the Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV) revenue compared to Q1FY22. The Gurugram-based company has two business verticals -- driveline and motor -- with 13 products. It has nine manufacturing facilities in four countries -- India, USA, China and Mexico -- as well as three R&D centres.

Its EV-focussed products include differential assemblies, reduction gears, traction motors, motor controllers, e-axes and integrated modules among others. According to Singh the company has won a total of 13 new programmes -- six from EV customers and remaining seven from the non-EV applications during the June quarter.

Of the six EV programmes, three are significant ones which will drive diversified EV growth. This includes one programme from an Indian original equipment manufacturer (OEM) of electric and ICE (internal combustion engine

# 'Inflation hasn't impacted imported spirits segment, investing in brand building'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The premium spirits segment has not been impacted by high inflation while affordability has improved in some states due to changes in the excise policy, said an official of American spirits major Brown-Forman, the maker of many popular brands including Jack Daniel's.

The company is seeing buoyancy in the on-trade segment with faster than expected recovery post pandemic and a "massive shift" in the upgradation and modernisation of the retail stores in many cities, including Tier 2, which also augurs well for premium spirits, said Siddharth Wadia - General Manager - India, Middle East & North Africa (IMENA) at Brown Forman.

India is a "strategic emerging market" for Brown-Forman, where it is strengthening its presence in tier II cities and actively investing in brand building and marketing initiatives through increased retail presence.

Brown-Forman, which had some launches in the recent past

with the RTD (ready to drink) offerings and some other variants, has plans to bring more innovation-based products to the Indian market. Besides Jack Daniel's official merchandise has seen encouraging responses here, he said.

"We continue to evaluate innovation opportunities in RTDs, flavoured whiskeys as well as in the overall premium spirits category," he said.

"In the premium spirits category, we are not seeing any impact on discretionary spending. From what we have seen so far, inflation has not really impacted the premium-end of the albo-bev segment and therefore it continues to experience high growth rates."

The company believes that even despite this inflation, consumers will continue to enjoy their aspirational or favourite drinks because it is witnessing a fundamental shift in quite a few of the markets towards premium spirits.

"Not to say that inflation is not hurting, but just that we feel that the net result of that inflation is still not as impactful on



the imported spirits segment," Wadia added.

It is seeing buoyancy in the on-trade segment with faster than expected recovery post the pandemic. There is no dearth of travel that is happening and that is a "positive sign".

"The other thing is that the reservations of in-home con-

sumption will continue to get lowered as an outcome of the pandemic from a long-term perspective because it has just opened up the comfort around the consumption of liquor while staying at home," he added.

While talking about the trends of the Indian market, Wadia said here consumers are

not only upgrading to international spirits but are also looking for newer whiskey and brands.

"Millennials, are totally clued into the latest trends and brands across the world. And with increasing aspirations, disposable incomes, and exposure to global brands, I believe they

are more open to experimenting and trying out newer things and different whiskeys from around the globe," he added.

Over the online sales and delivery of liquor in some states here, Wadia said the channel is still very small but "we believe that it definitely holds promise for the future of our category".

"Some states have been progressive and allowed e-commerce and online aggregators to deliver alcohol to consumers. It drives accessibility and reach, apart from also allowing consumers to make purchases in a safe and convenient environment," he said.

Jack Daniel's competes with brands such as Jim beam of Beam Suntory and Royal Challenge American Pride bourbon whiskey, recently launched by Diageo, through its Indian subsidiary United Spirits Ltd.

"We see competition as a positive development and welcome it. Given the fact that we have a heavy Scotch drinking legacy culture, with more brands coming into the American Whiskey space, not

only speeds up the awareness around American Whiskeys but also helps consumers to see multiple brands playing in this category which continues to enhance the salience of the segment," Wadia said.

Over the Jack Daniel's merchandise business, Wadia said it needed a bigger push and has launched its own online store in collaboration with its licensee in India.

"The merchandise helps us leverage the powerful equity of our globally iconic Jack Daniel's trademark by creating additional revenue streams and to connect with our consumers at a deeper level. And the response has been fairly positive and we continue to focus on expanding that," he said.

Globally, officially licensed Jack Daniel's merchandise is a huge draw among consumers. Jack Daniel's T-shirt is globally the second highest selling item after Jack Daniel's Old No. 7 whiskey and Jack Daniel's licensed products are sold across six continents and over 20,000 retailers worldwide, he added.

# Auto industry expects car sales on fast lane in festive season

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The auto industry expects car sales to be on the fast lane this festive season on the back of new launches and improved production but is cautiously optimistic on the road ahead once the festivities peter out.

The festive season, which usually witnesses a spike in automobile sales, begins this year on August 11 with Rakshabandhan stretching up to Diwali on October 25.

"We expect the festive season this year to be the best in terms of passenger vehicle sales on the back of new launches and improved production activity. The industry has been rolling out over 3 lakh units on an average in the past 4-5 months which is helping in retails," automobile dealer's body FADA President Vinkesh Gulati told PTI in an interaction.

He listed erratic monsoon in some parts of the country, inflationary pressures and the looming threat of a China-Taiwan war as some of the challenges to watch out for in the days ahead.

The Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) represents over 15,000 automobile dealers across the country. Kia India Vice President and Head of Sales & Marketing Hardeep Singh Brar said that supply chain issues are now showing signs of easing off, and market sentiments remain bullish.

"We are optimistic that a good festive season is ahead of us in terms of sales," he added. Tata Motors President



Passenger Vehicle and Electric Vehicles Shailesh Chandra said the company does not see a concern regarding the customer demand until the end of the festive season.

In an analyst call, he said that the automaker expects the vehicle supply to improve with better semiconductor availability in the second quarter. "Going forward the challenges we see is that the high inflation and interest rate may start impacting the auto demand while there's no stress as far as the second quarter is concerned," he stated.

As far as Tata Motors is concerned, the company remains focused on demand generation activities, Chandra noted. Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Director (Marketing and Sales) Shashank Srivastava said the demand seems to be steady at the moment.

"We have to watch out for the retails, currently we are digging conclusions based on wholesales and on the pending bookings...Retail sales have been below wholesales for the last few months... We also need to see how the economy performs overall and how the inflation and interest rates move," he noted.

# 28 firms secure Sebi's clearance to float IPOs worth ₹45,000-cr in Apr-Jul FY23

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi has given its nod to 28 companies to raise funds totalling Rs 45,000 crore through initial public offerings (IPOs) in April-July period of 2022-23 which has already seen 11 debutantes raising over Rs 33,000 crore.

Among the firms that have secured the regulator's clearance include Lifestyle retail brand FabIndia; Bharat FIH, a subsidiary of FIH Mobiles and a Foxconn Technology Group; TVS Supply Chain Solutions; Blackstone-backed Aadhar Housing Finance; Macleods Pharmaceuticals and Kids Clinic India, which operates super-specialty mother and baby care chain Cloudnine.

These firms are yet to announce the launch date of their IPOs and are waiting for the right time to float their issues as current market conditions are challenging, merchant bankers said. "Current environment is challenging

and companies with approvals in hand are waiting for the right window of opportunity to launch the initial share-sales. In fact, many of them have concluded the roadshows and are waiting for the right time," Prashant Rao, Director and Head Equity Capital Markets, Anand Rathi Investment Banking, said.

Going by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) data, total 28 companies obtained the regulator's clearance to tap the IPO route for fundraising during April-July 2022-23. Together, these firms are expected to mop up Rs 45,000 crore.

So far in current fiscal year, 11 companies have gone public to garner Rs 33,254 crore. Of these, a lion's share (Rs 20,557 crore) was raised by the public issue of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).

All these companies hit the primary market during April-May and not a single public issue was launched after May, suggesting a dry spell in the

## Steel players expect Govt to withdraw export duty; to go ahead with capex plans

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The export duty imposed on certain steel products recently will not force steel makers to review their capital expenditure plans as top producers expect it to be a "short-term" move to stabilise inflation.

On May 21, the government hiked the duty on exports of iron ore by up to 50 per cent and for a few steel intermediaries to 15 per cent. It also waived customs duty on the import of some raw materials, including coking coal and ferromanganese, used by the steel



industry.

The measures were taken to boost domestic availability, check inflation, stabilise prices of coal and address the issues of steel producers reeling under high input costs.

However, steel industry players had said imposition of export duties on steel products

will send a negative signal to investors and adversely impact capacity expansion projects under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme.

The Indian Steel Association (ISA), which represents the domestic steel companies, had said India may lose export opportunities and the decision may also impact the overall economic activity in the country.

According to the steel ministry, the sector's exports in FY22 increased by 25.1 per cent to 134.94 lakh metric tonnes (LMT), while imports dipped 1.7 per cent to 46.69 LMT.



IPO market.

This came after as many as 52 companies tapped the primary market to raise a record Rs 1.11 lakh crore in the entire 2021-22. The impressive fundraising could be due to a slew of public issues from new age loss-making technology startups, strong retail participation and huge listing gains.

The lack of appetite for the IPO

in current fiscal year could be attributed to sharp correction in the secondary market, disastrous performance of new digital companies, like Paytm and Zomato, and poor post listing performance of LIC negatively impacting the sentiments, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

## Vodafone Idea says industry needs tariff increases at regular intervals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



operators — Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone-Idea Ltd (VIL) — last year raised charges for data, arresting average revenue per user (ARPU) declines. Despite this, "the industry still operates on unsustainably low tariffs", VIL said in its latest annual report.

India continues to have the lowest tariffs globally, while the proliferation of unlimited data bundles have led to India

having one of the highest data usage (per subscriber) in the world," it said.

The ARPU levels remain lower in comparison to historic trends, despite consumers getting much more value in terms of unlimited voice and daily data allowances, compared to five years ago.

"The company thus believes that the industry will have to further raise tariffs at regular intervals, which is essential for operators to generate reasonable returns on their capital employed and support future investments, including new technologies," the firm said.



# 1-2 FINISH FOR INDIA IN MEN'S TRIPLE JUMP



PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Elidhose Paul won a historic triple jump Gold in a 1-2 finish for India as the country bagged four medals on a Super Sunday on the concluding day of athletics competitions at the Commonwealth Games here. After the mad rush of four medals coming within 30 minutes, India's medal tally from athletics swelled to eight — 1 Gold, 4 Silver, 3 Bronze — the best in the CWG history outside the country and only second to the haul at the 2010 edition in Delhi. The 25-year-old Paul became only the sixth Indian to win a CWG Gold since legendary Milkha Singh won it in

1958 in 440 yards. The Ernakulam-born Indian Navyman led India's historic 1-2 finish with a best jump of 17.03m in his third attempt after opening with 14.62m. His jump was though wind-assisted and his second best was 16.63m. Before Sunday's jump, he had a personal best of 16.99m. Paul's Kerala statement Abdulla Aboobacker was second with a fifth round jump of 17.02m. Aboobacker, who has a season's and personal best of 17.19m, was at fourth spot at the end of the fourth round but soared to 17.02 in his next attempt to jump to second. Jah-Nhal Perinchief of Bermuda won the Bronze with

his best jump of 16.92m. The other Indian in the fray, Praveen Chitravel, who came to the CWG as the second best Indian with a season's best of 17.18m, finished at fourth with 16.89m. India has won four triple jump medals in the past editions but this is the first time two athletes from the country have got podium finishes. Mohinder Singh Gill had won a Bronze and a Silver in 1970 and 1974 editions while Renjith Maheswary and Arpinder Singh had finished third in 2010 and 2014 editions. The experienced Annu Rani also scripted history as she became the first Indian female javelin thrower to win



a medal, a Bronze, with a best effort of 60m in her fourth attempt. The 29-year-old was well below her season's best and national record of 63.82m but that was enough for a third-place finish behind two Australians -- world champion Kelsey-Lee Barber (64.43m) and Mackenzie Little (64.27m). Rani's medal came on a day the country was celebrating National Javelin Day to mark Neeraj Chopra's historic gold in Tokyo Olympics on the same day last year. Before Rani, Kashinath Naik and Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra had won a Bronze and a Gold in the men's javelin throw respec-

tively. Naik had won the medal at the 2010 Delhi Games, while Chopra won the gold in Gold Coast in 2018. The other Indian in the fray, Shilpa Rani was seventh with a best of 54.62m. Veteran race walker Sandeep Kumar added another Bronze in men's 10,000m event with a personal best time of 38:49.21. The other Indian in the fray, Amit Khatri finished ninth with a season best time of 43:04.97. Kumar's medal was the second in this edition after Priyanka Goswami's Silver in the same event on Saturday. He also became only the second Indian male race walker to win a medal in CWG after Harminder Singh, who won a Bronze in 20km event in the 2010 edition. Kumar also holds national record in both 20km and 50km race walk events. But, he was competing in 10,000m as the 20km event was not there in the Birmingham CWG.

## 'Influence of late Nikolai in my career is unmatched'

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Coaches may come and go but late Nikolai Snesev will have a special place in star steeplechaser Avinash Sable's heart for his contribution in his overall growth as an international athlete. Sable beat a strong field of Kenyan athletes to win Silver in the 3000m steeplechase at the Commonwealth Games on Saturday and it was the Belarusian, who instilled that self belief in the army man. Snesev tragically passed away in 2021 after he came back to India that year, following a long gap. "I will never forget what coach Nikolai Snesev did for me. Many coaches will come and go in my life but his influence on my career has been life-changing. He changed my belief. I have never seen a more honest coach in my life," Avinash choked up while speaking about Snesev. "The preparations for the Olympics were going well when he left us (died in March 2021). It was a really difficult time for me. I would have never believed that Indians could fight Kenyans. I thought Indians go to international events just to participate. He changed that for me," he added. "Indians have the ability to do well in all events at the world level. We have to believe that we have skills and talent. We should not be intimidated when we are up against international athletes. It is not as difficult as we often think," Avinash said.



## Gold Rush in Boxing

Nikhat Zareen, Amit Panghal, Nitu grab maiden CWG yellow metals

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

The indomitable Nikhat Zareen added a Commonwealth Games light flyweight (50kg) title to her bulging trophy cabinet while Amit Panghal (51kg) began his redemption journey with a much-needed Gold winning show, here on Sunday. Nikhat, who is on a winning spree since the Nationals last year, asserted her dominance over Northern Ireland's Carly McNaul as she punched her way to a comprehensive 5-0 win in her maiden CWG appearance. Panghal, on the other hand, avenged his 2018 Commonwealth Games final loss against Kieran MacDonald by clinching the title with a comprehensive 5-0 win over the favourite. Indian boxers made it three out of three Golds on the day as young Nitu Ghanghas (48kg) too reigned supreme on her CWG debut. Sagar Ahlawat will play his final bout later tonight. The India pugilists will return with seven medals from Birmingham, two less than the previous edition. Nikhat started off the year by clinching a Gold at the prestigious Strandja Memorial tournament before going on to become a world champion. The Telangana boxer, who dropped from 52kg to 50kg for the CWG, glided around the ring, landing hooks and tight jabs at will. Her defence was equally impressive. Such was her dominance that when the nine minutes ended there was no



doubt which way the decision would go. Having lost to a Briton four years ago at the same stage in Gold Coast, the 26-year-old Panghal was at his aggressive best against MacDonald as he clinched the yellow metal with a 5-0 verdict. With the Gold, Panghal also put his disappointing Tokyo Olympics outing where he made a round of 16 exit, behind. Nitu, on the other hand, upstaged 2019 world championships Bronze medallist Demie-Jade Resztan of England by a 5-0 unanimous verdict. The first Indian boxer to take the ring, Nitu, competing in her first CWG, looked completely in control throughout the nine minutes, giving the home boxer no chance. "I am so happy, I can hardly breathe," Nitu told reporters. The legendary MC Mary Kom had won the coveted yellow metal in the same category at the 2018 Games.

## Sindhu, Sen one step away from maiden Gold



PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Double Olympic medallist P V Sindhu stayed on course for an elusive Gold medal while Lakshya Sen regained his rhythm just in time to enter his maiden final at the Commonwealth Games here on Sunday. Sindhu rode on her superior technical superiority to outwit Singapore's Yeo Jia Min 21-19, 21-17 in a 49-minute contest to reach her second successive final. The Indian had also beaten her in the team event. In the following match, world number 10 Sen lost his way after a dominating start against 87-ranked Jia Heng Teh of Singapore. Sen however recovered to complete a 21-10, 18-21, 21-16 win in the men's singles semifinals. Satwik Sairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty ensured a third Gold medal match for India on Monday when they downed Malaysia's Chen Peng Soon and Tian Kian Men 21-6, 21-15 to reach the men's doubles final. The world number 7 duo was too



good for the Malaysians. It could have been an all-Indian men's final but an error-prone Kidambi Srikanth squandered a first game advantage to lose to lower-ranked Tze Yong Ng of Malaysia 21-13, 19-21, 21-10. The world number 42 Tze had shocked reigning world champion Yew Kean Loh of Singapore in the quarterfinal. The last edition's Silver medallist will now fight for the Bronze and so will the Indian women's doubles pairing of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichane who lost to the seasoned Malaysian combine of Thinnah Muralitharan and Pearly Koon Le Tan in the semifinals in straight games.

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Star Indian para table tennis player Bhavina Patel won a Gold medal in the women's singles class 3-5 at the Commonwealth Games here on Saturday. The 35-year-old from Gujarat, who had won a Silver at Tokyo Paralympics, prevailed 12-10, 11-2, 11-9 over Nigeria's Ifechukwude Christiana Ikpeoyi to cap off a superb show at the quadrennial event. Bhavina reached the world No. 2 ranking by winning the Silver medal in the individual category at the 2011 PTT Thailand Open.

## Bhavina wins Gold, Sonalben bags Bronze medal in para TT



Besides, she also won a Silver medal in the women's singles class 4 at the Asian Para Table Tennis Championships in Beijing in 2013. In 2017, Bhavina bagged a Bronze in the Asian Para Table Tennis Championships in Beijing. Sonalben Manubhai Patel also gave India a medal, claiming a Bronze in women's singles class 3-5.

## If I am training right I become my own psychologist: Vinesh

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

A drastic change in training regimen and the extra push that her family gave enabled Vinesh Phogat to turn the tide after a forgettable last 12 months during which she "hit rock bottom mentally". A premature exit from the Tokyo Olympics, where she went in as the top seed, injury issues and run-ins with the wrestling federation pushed her into an abyss. The 27-year-old's existing training methods were not yielding results. She had to go back to the drawing board. After undergoing an elbow surgery in September, Vinesh only wanted to get her training right. "If my training is going right, I feel fine mentally as well," she said after easing to a 53kg Gold at the Commonwealth Games on Saturday. "Only I know what I have done to win this medal. It feels a lot more special considering what I have gone through over the past 12 months," said Vinesh who is now a three-time CWG Gold medallist. Vinesh, who had to really dig deep to win the trials to make the CWG squad, was struggling for sparring partners in her category. The women were not strong enough so she decided to train with the U-15 boys. "She was not getting the required training earlier, now she is. That is the difference according to me," said national coach Jitender Yadav on Vinesh's victorious comeback.

## Sharath-Sathiyan settle for Silver

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

The seasoned Indian pair of Sharath Kamal and G Sathiyan was outsmarted by familiar foes Paul Drinkhall and Liam Pitchford of England in the men's doubles final at the Commonwealth Games here on Sunday. The Indian duo had to settle for Silver for the second successive edition after losing 11-8, 8-11, 3-11, 11-7, 4-11 to the English combine. It was a repeat of the 2018 final in Gold Coast and to the disappointment of the Indians, it was the same result. The Indian contingent has been getting tons of support from the crowd here but at the NEC table tennis arena on Sunday, English fans outnumbered the Indians. With very little separating the two pairs, the Indians began well with Sathiyan hitting a crisp forehand winner to go 1-0 up in the gold medal match. Drinkhall and Pitchford fought back in the second game. A down the line backhand from



Pitchford made it 5-1 for England. The Indians were having a tough time retrieving the serve with their opponents mixing things up. Sharath's returns from the backhand were yielding mixed results. Pitchford's cross court winner after a long rally gave England a 7-5 lead before they levelled the tie. The English pair ran away with the third game which had the best rally of the match which Indians won after trading a series of booming forehands far away from the table. The Indians were able to take the final to the decider after course correction in the fourth game. However, Drinkhall and Pitchford took a huge six point lead from 4-4 to gain six gold medal points in the fifth game. They converted the very first one drawing a huge roar from the crowd. The Indian pair shook hand with its opponents who once again proved better on the day. With the Silver, 40-year-old Sharath increased his CWG medal count to 11 with the



Sreeja misses Bronze by whisker

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

India's Sreeja Akula suffered a heartbreaking loss at the Commonwealth Games here as she went down to Australia's Yangzi Liu 3-4 in a close Bronze medal play-off. Sreeja went down 11-3, 6-11, 2-11, 11-7, 13-15, 11-9, 7-11 after staging a slew of comebacks in a match that lasted more than one and a half hour. mixed doubles Gold medal match scheduled later on Sunday.

## Women's hockey team win medal after 16 years

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Skipper Savita Punia led from the front with a spectacular display as the Indian women's hockey team overcame the stopwatch controversy to beat New Zealand 2-1 in shootout and win the Bronze medal at the Commonwealth Games here Sunday. This is the team's first medal at CWG in 16 years. Leading 1-0, India conceded a penalty corner with less than 30 seconds to go for the final hooter, as the match went into shootout after Olivia Merry's equaliser. In the regulation time,

India got the lead through Salima Tete in the 29th minute. Coming off their heartbreaking loss to Australia in a controversial semifinal, India showed the intent to wrap up their campaign with a win and earn a podium finish. The Indians were done in by a horrendous timing faux pas in the shoot-out against Australia. In the shootout on Sunday, India captain and goalkeeper Savita showed her class, pulling off three spectacular saves to give her side its third CWG medal. After Megan Hull put New



Zealand ahead, an agile Savita denied Rose Tynan, Katie Doar and Olivia Shanon, while Sonika and Navneet scored for India to register a famous win. "We knew it wouldn't be easy, so before we came, we worked every minute and every second. I am so proud. We fought as a team," Savita said. On the pressure of being a goalkeeper in the shootout, she said, "The pressure is always there, but all credit goes to my coach (Janneke Schopman) who told me 'you are good, so just believe in yourself and watch the ball'."

## Viswanathan Anand becomes FIDE deputy president

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Indian chess legend Viswanathan Anand was on Sunday elected deputy president of FIDE, the sport's world governing body, while incumbent president Arkady Dvorkovich was re-elected for a second term. Five-time world champion Anand was part of Dvorkovich's team. Dvorkovich received 157 votes as against 16 by his rival Andrii Baryshpolets while the number of invalid votes was 1 and abstentions stood at 5. The elections to the world

chess body were held during the FIDE Congress which is being conducted here alongside the 44th Chess Olympiad. After an illustrious career during which he won numerous titles and honours, the Chennai-based Anand has in recent times cut down on his tournament play and focussed on coaching. He shot to prominence as a teenager and became India's first ever Grandmaster after winning the world junior title and have since led the country at the global level in chess. He also won five world titles with the last being the world rapid title in 2017.



# A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE AND APPROACH WAS REQUIRED AFTER LAST YEARS' T20 WC: ROHIT

PTI ■ LAUDERHILL

A disastrous campaign in the last T20 World Cup has forced the Indian team to bring about a radical change in its attitude and approach, skipper Rohit Sharma has said.

Rohit is now gearing up to lead the Indian side in the upcoming edition of the T20 showpiece in Australia, but before that, they have the Asia Cup to deal with.

Speaking on Star Sports show 'Follow the Blues', Rohit said, "We've made it very clear after the T20 World Cup in Dubai, where we didn't qualify for the finals, that we felt there needed to be a change in our attitude and approach in how we play our game."

India will enter the Asia Cup as defending champions.

With Team India adopting a more aggressive batting style in the past few months, Rohit spoke about how the squad is getting ready for the upcoming challenges.

"If the message is clear from the captain and the coach about where the team is trying to head, then the individuals will definitely try to do that. For that to happen they need freedom and clarity and that's what we are trying to do. We are trying to give them as much freedom as possible."

When asked about his experience of captaining a team with so many young leaders, Rohit said, "I know it's very exciting honestly to create so many leaders around the team because it's always a good sign."

"And you want the guys to handle the pressure, who understand the game and know each other really well. And when they are leading the team, all these things can happen."

India have had six different cap-



## 'Turned to slower to unsettle WI batters'

PTI ■ LAUDERHILL

India pacer Avesh Khan's redemption, after being whacked around the Caribbean grounds with strong wind and short boundaries, came about after he slowed down his pace following skipper Rohit Sharma's advice.

Khan said he has received "enormous amount of confidence" from Rohit and coach Rahul Dravid when he was struggling to come to grips with the strong wind and short boundaries.

The bowler's match-winning performance (2/17 in 4 overs) helped India seal the T20I series against West Indies with a 59-run victory in the fourth match here on Saturday.

"They have given me an enormous amount of confidence, despite the fact I did not perform well in my last two games."

However, Rohit bhai and Rahul Sir's support have given me the confidence both on and off the field... And told me that rough patches do happen," Khan told reporters after the match.

Khan had leaked 54 runs in six overs on his ODI debut in Port-of-Spain last month. In the ensuing first two T20Is in St Kitts, he continued to bleed runs but Rohit, regardless of his pacer's struggles, had tasked Khan with defending nine off the final over in the second T20.

Khan failed to deliver, but the

team management kept backing him.

"They also backed me by saying that an average performance in two matches do not make anyone a bad bowler, especially in T20s, given how the format is."

"I was backed the same way in this match too and I am happy that I performed well. They provided me necessary support during the South Africa tour as well."

"When a player is constantly encouraged by the captain and coach to perform well, it automatically motivates him to give his best. Rohit bhai is a fantastic leader. Not only me, he always backs and supports everyone in the team," Khan added.

tains in the past eight months owing to a combination of factors.

"I think it's very important to have that leadership, but obviously, you know we play the IPL and it's a 10-team tournament. So there will be 10 captains which at some stage will be a part of the Indian team as well."

"You know, I think it's fantastic because honestly my job is much lesser as these guys understand everything pretty well. So, it's just about if someone's having a thought, how am I going to back up that thought. For me as captain that is my role and that is what I'm trying to do," he said.

Looking ahead, Rohit mentioned that the role of coach Rahul Dravid is vital for the Indian team.

"With Rahul bhai I have played some games with him as he was my first captain when I made my ODI debut. So, obviously we have some kind of understanding. I have spent a lot of time in the NCA when I was injured and he was there."

"We had regular chats happening all the time and he was closely following my game as well," he said.

The 'Hitman' also spoke about the importance of having a coach whose vision and belief aligns with the team.

"When he (Dravid) became a coach here, we met and sat together in a room for a while and decided how we want to take this thing forward and he was pretty much on the same thought process as to what I was thinking."

"That made it a little easier for me to give out a clear message to the boys because we don't want to create confusion among the group; and of course, we wanted him to change the style of cricket as well."

"We wanted to play a certain way in all three formats and he was ready to accept all of that."



## Zimbabwe beat B'desh by 5 wickets, seal ODI series

AP ■ HARARE

Zimbabwe trounced Bangladesh by five wickets in the second ODI. With that, the hosts clinched an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. Batting first, the Bangla Tigers hoarded 290/9, courtesy of the fifties from Tamim Iqbal (50) and Mahmudullah (84\*). Chasing 291, the hosts stumbled at the start, but centuries Sikandar Raza (117\*) and Regis Chakabva (102) steered them home (291/5).

Raza has been a man possessed in the limited-over duels played this year. This series has been no different for the all-rounder. In addition to picking three wickets, Raza brought up his fifth ODI ton (10 to seal the series for the hosts. Notably, it's his fifty-fifth-plus score in a span of seven innings in ODIs, including a 135\* in the last outing.

Chakabva had class written all over him in the pivotal duel. The wicket-keeper batter clobbered a hostile-look-

ing 102 off 75 deliveries, studied with 10 fours and two sixes. It was his maiden ODI ton. He has breached the 1,000-run mark (1,057) while averaging 21.57. He also fetched a colossal 201-run stand alongside Raza to put Zimbabwe back in the chase.

Mahmudullah Riyad and Tamim Iqbal hit half centuries as Bangladesh scored 290-9. Coming in at 127 for three in the 24th over Mahmudullah was unbeaten on 80 at the close of the 50-over innings.

Captain and opener

Tamim followed up his half-century in a five-wicket loss on Friday by making 50 before becoming the first Bangladesh batter to fall, with 71 runs on the board.

Mahmudullah scored his runs off 84 balls with his knock including three sixes and three fours at Harare Sports Club.

Tamim, who on Friday

became the first Bangladeshi

to score 8,000 ODI runs, was

equally brisk, reaching his

total off 45 deliveries.

# World No.1 Medvedev ends ATP title drought

AP ■ LOS CABOS

World number one Daniil Medvedev won his first ATP title of 2022 on Saturday, roaring past defending champion Cameron Norrie 7-5, 6-0 in the final of the hardcourt tournament in Los Cabos, Mexico.

Medvedev snapped a five-match losing streak in finals — a stretch that included his agonizing five-set loss to Rafael Nadal in the Australian Open final in February.

He also came up short this year in 's-Hertogenbosch and Halle. He didn't get a chance at Wimbledon, where Russian and Belarusian players were banned because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

His first trophy since he won the US Open last year — denying Novak Djokovic a calendar

Grand Slam — comes just as he launches the final build up to his title defense in the final Grand Slam of 2022.

Next he'll defend his Canadian Open title before tackling the Cincinnati Masters.

### ROGERS SAN JOSE FINAL

San Jose: Shelby Rogers, ranked 45th in the world, qualified for the WTA hardcourt tournament final in San Jose, California, on Saturday with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over 19th-ranked Veronika Kudermetova.

Rogers reached her first final since 2016 and will be seeking a first WTA Tour title when she takes on No. 12 Daria Kasatkina.

Rogers continued an impressive week that included an opening win over former US Open champion Bianca Andreescu and



a victory over world number three Maria Sakkari, the top seed.

The 28-year-old hasn't dropped a set all week. Rogers will be playing her first final since Rio de Janeiro in 2016. She was runner up at Bad Gastein in 2014.

### KANEPI VS SAMSONOVA

Washington: Estonia's Kaia Kanepi, trying to end a nine-year WTA title drought at age 37, advanced to the Washington Open final on Saturday by defeating Australian Daria Saville 6-3, 6-1.

World number 37 Kanepi will play for the crown against 60th-ranked Liudmila Samsonova, who routed China's Wang Xiyi 6-1, 6-1 in the other semi-final at the ATP and WTA hardcourt event, a US Open tuneup.

Kanepi seeks her fifth career WTA title but her first since the 2013 Brussels Open. She won her only WTA hardcourt title at Brisbane in 2012.

In her first WTA final since a 2021 Australian Open tuneup at Melbourne, Kanepi needed only 73 minutes to dispatch Saville, who was in her first WTA semi-final since 2018 at Acapulco.

"I played my best match," Kanepi said. "Everything was very smooth for me. I hit a lot of lines."

# Messi, Neymar combine to script PSG's 5-0 win

AP ■ CLERMONT

Lionel Messi scored twice in the second half, including with a stunning overhead kick, as Paris Saint-Germain began their defence of the Ligue 1 title with a 5-0 demolition of Clermont on Saturday.

Neymar was also in outstanding form for a PSG side who did not miss the injured Kylian Mbappe, with the Brazilian opening the scoring in Clermont before setting up Achraf Hakimi and Marquinhos for further

goals before half-time.

Messi then exchanged passes with Neymar before sidefooting in the visitors' fourth goal with 10 minutes left.

Yet Messi saved the best for last, darting into the box four minutes from the end to control a Leandro Paredes pass on his chest with his back to goal, before converting with an acrobatic overhead kick.

That goal had the crowd at Clermont's Stade Gabriel-Montpied singing the name of the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner, who endured a dif-



PSG's victory in new coach

Christophe Galtier's first league game in charge was achieved despite Mbappe missing the trip due to an adductor injury.

Mbappe also missed last week's 4-0 defeat of Nantes in the season-opening Champions Trophy due to suspension.

Messi had opened the scoring in that game, while Neymar netted a brace.

The duo therefore already have six goals between this season, with PSG looking in ominous form.

# Rahul & Virat set to return for Asia Cup T20

The 2022 edition of the Asia Cup T20 tournament will take place in the United Arab Emirates from August 27. The tournament was initially supposed to take place in Sri Lanka, but due to the ongoing political and economic crisis there, it was shifted to the UAE, but Sri Lanka will remain the host. This year, in preparation for the T20 World Cup, which will be held in Australia from October 16 to November 13, the Asia Cup will be played in the T20I format, making the upcoming matches, in which India will face Pakistan at least twice, crucial. Ahead of the team selection in Mumbai on Monday for the multi-nation event, **DRITATRI** takes a look at the 15 players who can find a place in the squad.

**OPENERS:** Even though since the end of last year's T20 World Cup, India have tried as many as eight players as openers, Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul are

almost certain to be picked. And with Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant, and Virat Kohli also capable of batting at the top in case of any mishap, there are almost negligible chances for a reserve opener.

**MIDDLE ORDER:** Virat Kohli will make his comeback for India in the Asia Cup after taking a break from the West Indies tour. He will bat at his usual number three position, and in the middle, joining him will be Suryakumar Yadav. The Mumbaier has established himself in the white-ball format of the game.

**WICKETKEEPER:** Even though there are options in the form of Ishan Kishan, Sanju Samson, and Dinesh Karthik, Rishabh Pant is almost certain to be picked up as India's first choice wicketkeeper-batter. His numbers in white-ball cricket are not as high as they are in

Test cricket, but he cannot be dropped.

**ALL ROUNDERS:** Hardik Pandya and Ravindra Jadeja are two of the best all-rounders in world cricket at the moment, and both of them are almost certain to be picked. Apart from contributing with the bat and ball, both are excellent fielders and now also have the experience of leading an IPL side, which will come in handy as the tournament progresses.

**FINISHER:** There's no one better than Dinesh Karthik in the world at the moment as a number seven batter. The veteran Indian stumper made a sensational comeback to the Indian shortest format side and is now on his way to the big events.

**RESERVES:** Since the squad for the Asia Cup is almost likely to be the one that India will field in the T20 World Cup later this year, it becomes interesting to see which other four players get the selectors' nod. Since Harshal Patel is out of the Asia Cup due to an injury, there are question marks over his availability for the T20 World Cup as well. But India have enough options to replace him and the

likes of Deepak Chahar, who will return to action for the first time since February 20 against Zimbabwe this month, Avesh Khan, Arshdeep Singh and Mohammed Shami will be in the fray. As far as a back-up middle order batter is concerned, Shreyas Iyer is likely to get the nod of selectors over Deepak Hooda, who has also impressed in the limited chances he has had so far. And in the back-up spinner category, Axar Patel is likely to pip Ashwin, Ravi Bishnoi, and Kuldeep.

**India's likely squad for the Asia Cup:** Rohit Sharma (Captain), KL Rahul, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wk), Hardik Pandya, Dinesh Karthik, Ravindra Jadeja, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Jasprit Bumrah, Yuzvendra Chahal, Shreyas Iyer, Axar Patel, Deepak Chahar, Arshdeep Singh

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Whereas the undersigned is the Authorised officer of Muthoot Housing Finance Company Ltd. ("MHFCL") under Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s), Co-Borrower(s), Guarantor(s) to discharge in full their liability to the Company by making payment of entire outstanding including up to date interest, cost and charges within 60 days from the date of respective Notices issued and the publication of the Notice as given below and as way of alternate service upon you: As security for due repayment of the loan, the following Secured Asset (s) have been mortgaged to MHFCL by the said Borrower(s), Co-Borrower(s), Guarantor(s) respectively.			
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1	Loan Account No. 18600073674, 1. Sandip Hirralal Banjar, 2. Neelam Hirralal Banjar, 3. Satish Kumar Hirralal Banjar	30-Nov-2018	Rs.24,42,081.00/- (Rupees Twenty four Lakh Forty two Thousand Eighty one Only)As on 22-Jul-2022
<b>Description of Secured Asset(s) / Immovable Property (ies) :</b> All That Part And Parcel Of The Property Being Bhoomi Swami Haq Ki Yaake Mauja Village Kushalpur (Raipur Khas) Yaman Rao Lakhe Ward No 64, Raipur, P.H.No. 106-A/46, R.N.M.- Raipur -1, Tehsil And District Chandel Land Located Under Municipal Corporation Limits In Raipur Chattisgarh Whose Account No 2477, Changed Kh. No. Part Of 1320/1 D/ 26, The Area Is Admeasuring 685 Sq. Ft. On Which The House Is Built Bounded By - East: Sarjanik Yadav Bhavan, West: Road, North: House Of Nandeshwar, South: House Of Sharad Patel			
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Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors & Loan Account Number	Demand Notice Date	Description Of Immoveable Property / Properties Mortgaged	Date of Possession Type of possession
1)HANUMAN MOBILE ACCESSORIES	24.05.2022	PROPERTY NO. 1 SHOP NO. 71, FIRST FLOOR RAVI BHAWAN COMMERCIAL COMPLEX ADMEASURING AREA 160 SQ. FEET	05.08.2022
2) HARCHANDRAM CHOUDHARY	Rs. 44,74,702/- (Rupees Forty four Lakh SEVENTY FOUR THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED TWO ONLY )	SITUATED AT PART OF SURVEY / KHASRA NO. KH. NO. 625, 626/1, 626/2, 629 & 630, SADAR BAZAR WARD NO. 39 JAI STAMBH CHOUK GE ROAD PH NO. 106-A RAIPUR CHATTISGARH 492001 BOUNDARIES EAST :- SHOP NO. 76 WEST :- PASSAGE NORTH :- PASSAGE SOUTH :- SHOP NO. 57 TOTAL AREA 160 SQ. FT.	SYMBOLIC
3) PINKY CHOUDHARY ACCOUNT NUMBER # 191601310240736 & 191601310468383		PROPERTY NO. 2 SHOP NO. 76, FIRST FLOOR RAVI BHAWAN COMMERCIAL COMPLEX ADMEASURING AREA 160 SQ. FEET SITUATED AT PART OF SURVEY / KHASRA NO. KH. NO. 625, 626/1, 626/2, 629 & 630, SADAR BAZAR WARD NO. 39 JAI STAMBH CHOUK GE ROAD PH NO. 106-A RAIPUR CHATTISGARH 492001 BOUNDARIES EAST :- PASSAGE WEST :- SHOP NO. 71 NORTH :- PASSAGE SOUTH :- SHOP NO. 42 TOTAL AREA 160 SQ. FT.	
The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the Charge of Fullerton India Credit Company Limited for an amount mentioned herein above 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. Date:08.08.2022. Place: RAIPUR			
Anoop Agrawal-Authorised Officer Fullerton India Credit Company Limited			