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CAN RIGHTWINGERS
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GOVT OK'S NATIONAL
LOGISTICS POLICY

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 22, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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SURYAKUMAR
RISES IN ICC
T20I RANKINGS
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CAPSULE

INDIAN ARMY TO DO AWAY
WITH COLONIAL LEGACY

New Delhi: In an effort to do away with colonial legacy, the Indian Army has commenced review of its customs, regulations, uniform and old practices. Besides these issues, the Army will also look into practices like granting honorary commissions and ceremonies like Beating the Retreat to mark the end of Republic Day celebrations, sources said here on Wednesday after an internal discussion.

P5

ABG FOUNDER HELD IN
₹22K CRORE BANK FRAUD

New Delhi: The CBI on Wednesday arrested Rishi Kamlesh Agarwal, the founder of ABG Shipyard Limited, in connection with an alleged bank fraud of more than ₹22,842 crore, officials said. The CBI had booked Agarwal, a former chairman of the company, then ED Santhanam Muthaswamy, and directors Ashwini Kumar, Sushil Kumar Agarwal and Ravi Vimal Nevatia on February 7.

No criminality found in
Radia tapes: CBI to SCRatan Tata's plea
may be disposed
of in light of
privacy judgment,
CBI informs SCPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The CBI on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that it has found no criminality in the intercepted conversations of corporate lobbyist Niira Radia with some politicians, businessmen, media persons, and others. Taking note of the submissions of the probe agency, the top court directed it to file a status report on the matter.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the CBI, also told a three-judge bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud that petition filed by industrialist Ratan Tata seeking protection of the right to privacy in view of the emergence of the Radia tapes may be disposed of in the light of the right to privacy judgment of the apex court.

"I must inform you that the CBI was directed by your lordship to investigate all these conversations. Fourteen preliminary inquiries were registered and the report was placed before your lordships in a sealed cover. No criminality



was found in those. Also, now there are phone-tapping guidelines in place," Bhati said.

The law officer said nothing remains in the matter after the privacy judgment. The bench, also comprising Justices Hima Kohli and PS Narasimha, said it will hear the matter after the Dussehra vacation as there is a Constitution Bench next week.

"Meanwhile, the CBI may file an updated status report," said the bench and posted the matter for the next hearing on October 12.

The counsel for the petitioner informed the apex court that there is another petition filed by NGO Centre for Public Interest Litigation (CPIL), which had sought that these transcripts be made public in the larger public interest.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the CPIL, said Radia was a corporate lobbyist for two of the most important companies and there were attempts to influence public persons, etc, which was revealed. The apex court in 2013 directed a CBI enquiry into six issues arising out of the analysis of corporate lobbyist Radia's taped conversations.

"Radia's conversations reveal deep-rooted malice by private enterprises in connivance with Government officials for extraneous purposes," the top court had said.

The top court was hearing Tata's petition seeking action against those involved in the leakage of the tapes alleging the leakage amounts to infringement of his fundamental right to life, which includes the right

to privacy under Article 21 of the Constitution.

He had contended that as a corporate lobbyist Radia's phone was tapped for probing alleged tax evasion and the tapes cannot be used for any other purpose.

The conversations were recorded as part of surveillance of Radia's phone on a complaint to the Finance Minister on November 16, 2007, alleging that within nine years she had built up a business empire worth ₹300 crore. The Income Tax department had recorded 180 days of Radia's conversations — first from August 20, 2008, for 60 days and then from October 19 for another 60 days. Later, on May 11, 2009, her phone was again put on surveillance for another 60 days.

Why Govt mum on hate
speech on TV, asks SCPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday expressed displeasure over hate speech on TV news channel debates and wondered why the Government was a "mute spectator" and whether it intended to enact a law to curb it, as recommended by the Law Commission.

Noting that the role of the anchor is important during TV debates, the court said it's the duty of the anchor to prevent hate speeches on their shows. A bench of Justices KM Joseph and Hrishikesh Roy said that there needs to be an institutional mechanism to deal with hate speech.

"The role of anchor (in TV debates) is very important. It's their duty to see that hate speech doesn't occur," Justice Joseph observed, adding that "why is the Government remaining a mute spectator?"

The bench directed the Union of India to make clear its stand as to whether it intended to enact a law on the Law Commission's recommendations for prohibiting incitement of hate speech. The top court was hearing a batch of petitions about hate speech and rumour-mongering. The apex court said there should be a synchronised method to deal with the issue of hate speech and that the country needs to be a responsible democracy where there is accountability.

Justice Joseph said that while freedom of speech is important, hate speech cannot



be allowed on television and highlighted how one TV channel was heavily fined in the United Kingdom. "One channel was fined heavily in the UK. We don't have that here. They

are not being dealt with firmly. They can be taken off air, fined, if such sanction comes..." he remarked.

The court said that politicians benefit the most out of hate speech and television channels give them the platform for the same.

Justice Joseph also explained how hate speech has a layered impact.

"Killing someone, you can do it in multiple ways. Slowly or otherwise. They keep us hooked based on certain convictions."

The judge also emphasised that the media should be communicating to the masses what others are saying and not what they want to. "Pillars of democracy are supposed to be independent and not take orders from anyone," he added.

Putin escalates Ukraine
war, issues nuke threatWill use all means
against West's plot
to 'divide, destroy'
Russia: President

PTI ■ MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday ordered a partial mobilisation of some 300,000 reservists after the Russian military suffered a series of setbacks in the raging conflict with Ukraine, saying the move was essential to protect Russia's sovereignty as the "West is seeking to weaken, divide and finally destroy this country."

Putin made the announcement in a televised address to the nation in which he also said that Russia will use all the means, including nuclear bombs, at its disposal to protect its territory, warning the West that "this is not a bluff".

Ahead of his much-anticipated address, Putin had signed an Executive Order for the call-up to start the mobilisation immediately.

Since early September, Ukraine forces have swiftly recaptured large swaths of land in Ukraine's Kharkiv region that Russian troops took over in early weeks of the war which began on February 24.

The stretched-out frontline, the constant shelling of Russian borderline areas by the Ukrainian military and attacks on liberated regions required the call-up of servicemen from the reserve, Putin said in his address.

His speech comes a day



after the Lugansk and Donetsk People's Republics, as well as Russian-controlled Kherson and Zaporozhye regions on Tuesday announced that they would hold referendums on whether to join Russia from September 23-27.

Soon after Putin's address, Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu announced that 300,000 people will be called up for service during the partial mobilisation.

"Three hundred thousand reserve troops will be called up," Shoigu said during a Rossiya-24 TV broadcast.

Commenting on Putin's announcement, US President Joe Biden said that Russia has "shamelessly violated the core tenets" of the United Nations charter.

In his speech at the UN General Assembly session, Biden said President Putin's new nuclear threats showed "reckless disregard" for Russia's responsibilities as a signatory of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. "A nuclear war cannot be won and it must never be fought," he said.

Biden said this war is about extinguishing Ukraine's right to exist and the US "will stand in solidarity against Russia's aggression."

Reacting to Putin's address, Ukraine President Volodymyr

Russians rush for
one-way tickets
out of country

Belgrade: Large numbers of Russians rushed to book one-way tickets out of the country while they still could on Wednesday after Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a partial mobilisation of military reservists for the war in Ukraine.

Flights filled up quickly and the prices of tickets for remaining connections skyrocketed, apparently driven by fears that Russia's borders could soon close or of a broader call-up that might send many Russian men of fighting age to the war's front lines.

Zelensky said he did not believe the world would allow the Russian President to use nuclear weapons. "I don't believe that he (Putin) will use these weapons. I don't think the world will allow him to use these weapons," he told the German newspaper Bild, the BBC reported.

Zelensky warned against being cowed by Putin's threats, saying they would invite Russia to attempt to take more territory. The Russian president's announcement showed he wanted to drown Ukraine in blood - including that of his own soldiers, Zelensky said.

British Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said Putin's decision to mobilise military reservists shows that his invasion is failing.

Gehlot meets Sonia, ready
to take up Congress reinsPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot is all set to be the next Congress president. Gehlot on Wednesday arrived in Delhi and called on Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi. He is believed to have discussed the organisational poll and expressed his willingness to contest the polls if Rahul Gandhi does not agree to accept the responsibility.

Gehlot is likely to join the Rahul-led Bharat Jodo Yatra on Thursday and then visit Shirdi Sai Baba Temple the next day before returning to Jaipur and the National Capital.

The big question the Congress faces is whether Gehlot will pass the chief ministerial baton to his former deputy Sachin Pilot on election as the party president. Pilot on Wednesday joined the Bharat



Jodo yatra at Kochi and was seen walking along with Rahul. As of now, the Congress president election could be a contest between Gehlot and Shashi Tharoor.

The Thiruvananthapuram MP has already hinted he could join the fray.

Tharoor on Wednesday met the party's Central election authority (CEA) chairman Madhusudan Mistry and enquired about nomination formalities. After more than two decades, the Congress is likely to see a contest for the

post of its chief.

Asked about his meeting with Tharoor, Mistry informed that he cleared his enquiry on the voters' list, election agent, and the filing of nomination. "He (Tharoor) will be sending a person on (Sept) 24th to collect the (nomination) forms. He was satisfied," Mistry said. The meeting was mainly about queries on formalities for filing of nomination, he said.

The process for filing nominations for the election will be held from September 24 to 30.

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Delhi Police seizes
₹1,725 cr drugs in
biggest haul this yr

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In the biggest drug haul this year, the Delhi Police's Special Cell has seized more than 300 kilograms of heroin soaked in 20 tonnes of "licorice roots" consignment stored in a container at Jawahar Lal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) in Mumbai. The police said the value of seized contraband is ₹1,725 crore in the international market.

This seizure of heroin comes after Special Cell of the Delhi Police arrested two Afghanistan nationals identified as Mustafa Stanikzai and Rahimullah Rahimi. The police seized 312.5 kg of the narcotic drug methamphetamine and 10 kg of high-purity heroin valued at ₹1,250 crore from their

possession during a multi-State operation.

"During interrogation they told about a consignment of licorice roots stored at JNPT Mumbai.

The accused also disclosed that 17 bags containing licorice roots soaked with heroin, 350 to 400 gm per kg (amounting to a total of 345 kg of contraband), were concealed separately. The total weight of the consignment was 20,000 kg," said HGS Dhaliwal, the Special Commissioner of Police, Special Cell.

"After obtaining a search warrant, a police team reached Mumbai on September 16 and inspected each and every stick of the consignment, weighing around 20,000 kg in total.

Continued on Page 2

Trust motion in Punjab
put off as Guv cancels
spl House session order

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

The Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) move to call a special one-day session of Punjab Vidhan Sabha for moving the confidence motion has failed to win Governor Banwarilal Purohit's trust.

Acting on the representations by the Opposition leaders dubbing the move as "unconstitutional", the Governor on Wednesday withdrew his Tuesday's orders for summoning the special session on September 22, citing "legal" reasons.

Even as the opposition parties have welcomed the decision, the ruling AAP called it an "end of democracy", and "new tactics to take away constitutional powers of state".

A letter issued by the Principal Secretary of Punjab Governor JM Balamurugan,

addressed to Punjab Vidhan Sabha Secretary Surinder Pal, stated that the decision was taken as there is "no legal provision to convene a Special Session to move 'Confidence Motion' only, in favour of the State Government".

The Governor's "orders" read, "In absence of the specific rules regarding summoning of the Assembly for considering the 'Confidence Motion' only called by the Punjab Government on 22nd September, 2022, through 3rd Special Session of 16th Punjab Vidhan Sabha, I, Banwarilal Purohit, Governor of Punjab, hereby withdraw my orders dated 20th September, 2022, regarding summoning the sixteenth Vidhan Sabha... at 11.00 am on, the 22nd September, 2022, in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha hall..."

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Tata, KT Thomas,
Kariya Munda
made PM CARES
Fund trustees

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Modi Government on Wednesday nominated Chairman of Tata Sons, Ratan Tata, former Supreme Court judge Justice KT Thomas, and former Deputy Lok Sabha Speaker Kariya Munda as trustees of the PM CARES Fund. On Tuesday, they attended the first meeting of the fund chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Some eminent people also appointed to the fund as advisers include Rajiv Mehrotra, former Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Sudha Murthy, former Chairperson, Infosys Foundation; Anand Shah, Co-founder of Teach for India and former CEO of Indicorp and Piramal Foundation. They also attended the meeting.

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Funniest man faces the final curtain

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Popular comedian Raju Srivastava, who dabbled in movies, made a mark as a stand-up comic and later entered politics, died on Wednesday after more than 40 days in hospital. He was 58.

Srivastava, who joined the BJP in 2014 after a stint with the Samajwadi Party, had a heart attack on August 10 while working out at a Delhi hotel. He was rushed to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) where he underwent an angioplasty procedure. He was on the ventilator since then and never regained consciousness.

"I got a call in the morning saying he is no more. It is really unfortunate news. He had been waging a struggle for life in hospital for over 40 days," his brother Dipoo Srivastava told PTI from Mumbai.

Paying tribute, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "He (Raju) brightened our lives with laughter, humour and

positivity. He leaves us too soon but he will continue to live in the hearts of countless people thanks to his rich work over the years. His demise is sad. Condolences to his family and admirers. Om Shanti."

The artiste, who featured in Hindi films such as "Maine Pyar Kiya" and "Baazigar", was declared dead at 10.20 am, according to hospital sources.

Srivastava, who is survived by his wife and two children, was chairperson of the Film Development Council, Uttar Pradesh.

The last rites will take place on Thursday morning here, his brother said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was among the first to pay his condolences. "I am deeply saddened by the passing away of renowned comedian, Raju Srivastava ji. Apart from being an accomplished artist, he was also a very lively person. He was also very active in the social field. I extend my condolences to his bereaved family and fans. Shanti!" Singh tweeted.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said Srivastava took the genre of comedy to new heights with his talent and hard work.



25 December 1963 — 21 September 2022

Uttar Pradesh Assembly also observed a two-minute silence in his memory.

The entertainment fraternity paid homage to the actor-comedian.

"Raju Srivastava Om Shanti RIP" wrote veteran filmmaker Rakesh Roshan on Instagram. Ajay Devgn said he is saddened by Srivastava's death.

"In your lifetime you gifted us laughs & more laughs, on & off the screen... RIP Raju. Om Shanti. May the Almighty give your family strength in this hour of bereavement," he wrote on Twitter.

Prithvi Roshan, who worked with Srivastava in the 2003 film "Main Prem Ki Diwani Hoon", tweeted: "Forever in our hearts. Rest in peace Raju Srivastava Sir. My condolences to the family."

"Raju bhai, you made us all laugh throughout your life. May your soul rest in peace," Akshay Kumar posted.

Veteran actor Shekhar Suman, who served as a judge on "The Great Indian Laughter Challenge", remembered the comedian as a unique and inimitable talent.

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NCR PULSE



New Delhi: As part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations, a 'Wall of Delhi' has been painted on BSSES' South Extension II Grid. It was inaugurated by the Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture, Meenakshi Lekhi. Senior BSSES Rajdhani Power Limited and Municipal Corporation of Delhi officials were present on the occasion.

TATA POWER TO ORGANISE SPECIAL LOK ADALAT WITH DLSLA
New Delhi: Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power-DDL), in association with Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DLSLA), will be organizing a Special Lok Adalat on Sunday, September 25th. The Lok Adalat session will be held at EAC office – Rohini 3, from 10 am to 4 pm, and will enable on-the-spot settlements of power theft cases that is issues related to Meter Tampering, Direct Theft, and Disconnections.

DDMA TO MEET TODAY TO REVIEW COVID SITUATION
New Delhi: The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) will meet on Thursday to review the Covid situation here and conduct an assessment of dedicated resources deployed at hospitals to tackle the infection, officials said. In its last meeting in April, the DDMA had made it mandatory for people to wear face masks at public places and prescribed a fine of Rs 500 against defaulters. The DDMA meeting is scheduled at 4 PM on Thursday to review the Covid situation in Delhi.

GOVT PROVIDES 'SAFE HOUSES' TO 16 MARRIED COUPLES
New Delhi: The Delhi government has provided 'safe house' accommodation to 16 inter-caste married couples whose relationships were being opposed by their families or local communities since March 2021. This comes in a Right To Information (RTI) query by the social welfare department. Last year, the government had issued a standard operating procedure (SoP) for the protection of such couples from harassment and threats, and also directed setting up of 'special cells', headed by deputy commissioners of police, to look into such matters.

DJB LODGES FIR AGAINST PRIVATE COMPANY'S METER READER
New Delhi: Taking a stern action against the issue of frauds in meter readings, Delhi Jal Board (DJB) on Wednesday lodged a First Information Report (FIR) against a meter reader of a private agency that had been appointed for billing on behalf of the board. This move came after several complaints were received from customers against meter readers regarding frauds and irregularities in billing.

COURT SEEKS REPORT FROM DLSA ABOUT 2015 RIOT VICTIMS
New Delhi: A Delhi court Wednesday sought a report from the Delhi Legal Services Authority (DLSA) on loss and compensation to victims in a case of rioting in 2015 in which AAP MLAs Akhilesh Pati Tripathi and Sanjiv Jha were recently convicted. Additional Chief metropolitan magistrate (ACMM) Vaibhav Mehta directed the DLSA authorities to file their report by October 15, after which the court will hear arguments on quantum of sentence to be awarded to the politicians, and decide the fine amount to be imposed on them and the compensation to be awarded to the victims.

COURT EXTENDS AMANATULLAH'S CUSTODY BY 5 DAYS
New Delhi: A court on Wednesday extended by five days the custodial interrogation of AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan by the Anti Corruption Branch (ACB) in a case related to alleged irregularities in the Delhi Waqf Board recruitment. Special Judge Vikas Dhull passed the order on a plea moved by the ACB, which said that it needed more time to interrogate Khan for "thorough investigation".

POLICE NAB KHAN'S CLOSE AIDE FROM TELANGANA
New Delhi: The Delhi Police on Wednesday nabbed AAP Okhala MLA Amanatullah Khan's close aide Kaushar Imam Siddique from Telangana. Police said that he was in a case of Arms Act registered against him after a country-made pistol and three live rounds were found in his premises. The 47 year-old accused Kaushar Imam Siddique alias Laddan is a resident of Jogabai Extension.

DELHI LOGS 531 CASES OF LSD, 206 CATTLE RECOVERIES
New Delhi: The national capital has logged a total of 531 cases of lumpy skin disease so far and 206 cattle have recovered from the infection. According to the official's familiar with the matter, the number of active cases of infection stands at 325.

8 SENIOR STATE LEADERS OF CONGRESS JOIN AAP
New Delhi: In a big blow to Congress, eight senior state leaders including ex-councillor candidate Himanshu Pahuja join the AAP. AAP MCD In-charge and MLA Durgesh Pathak inducted all leaders into the party. MLA Rajkumari Dhillon welcomed everyone into the party and presented them with caps and patkas.

BJP MP MOVES SC AGAINST DECISION ON FIRECRACKERS
New Delhi: BJP MP Manoj Tiwari has moved the Supreme Court against the Delhi government's decision against production, storage, sale and use of all types of firecrackers in order to check the rising pollution levels in the city. Contending that freedom of religion cannot be taken away under the pretext of right to life, Tiwari has sought directions to the city government to issue fresh guidelines with regard to sale, purchase and bursting of permissible firecrackers.

BJP MP ALLEGES KEJRIWAL MISUSED HIS POWERS
New Delhi: BJP MP Parvash Sahib Singh alleged that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has misused his powers to appoint AAP workers in the Delhi Dialogue Commission (DDC) and they are being given salary and facilities at par with administrative officers. He has demanded an inquiry into this scam by the Lt Governor into this.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Jyoti Malik W/o Sh. Dinesh Kumar, Resident of House No- 310, Sector-45, Gurugram, Haryana, I have changed my name Jyoti Malik to Jyoti Balhara.

PD(90176)C

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As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	M/s Rare Impex/ Shubham Bansal/ Neelu Bansal/ Ajay Kumar/ A/c No. 000752001525/ 000705042068	Plot No G-113 Block-G, Second Floor Without Roof Rights, Ashok Vihar Phase-1 Delhi-110052/ September 19, 2022	June 13, 2022 Rs. 1,06,74,403.43/-	Delhi

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Date : September 22, 2022
Place: Delhi

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

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Rahul begins day 14 of Yatra with floral tributes to Sree Narayana Guru

ANI ■ KOCHI

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi along with party leaders resumed the Bharat Jodo Yatra from Kochi as the march entered its 14th day on Wednesday. The leaders, who camped in the Kochi district, started the yatra at 6.45 am from Madavana from where the leaders will walk 13 km in the morning till Edapally. Gandhi started his day by paying tributes to spiritual leader Sree Narayana Guru. "An inspiring start to the day. Offered my tributes to the great spiritual leader, philosopher and social reformer, Sree Narayana Guru whose teachings of equality are key to the idea of #BharatJodoYatra," Gandhi tweeted. Party's Secretary in-charge



Communications Jairam Ramesh informed that Sachin Pilot joined the yatra today. "Day 14 of #BharatJodoYatra started with @RahulGandhi paying floral tributes to Sree Narayana Guru. The padayatra started at 6:45am from Madavana and the Yatriss will be walking 13 kms in the morning till Edapally. @SachinPilot joined the Yatra today," Ramesh tweeted. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and party workers, followers and masses will be in the southern state of Kerala for

18 days. The Yatra is in its Kerala leg and would traverse through the state in the upcoming 11 days. The 3,500-km march from Kanyakumari to Kashmir will be completed in 150 days and cover as many as 12 states. From Kerala, the Yatra will traverse through the state for the next 18 days, reaching Karnataka on September 30. It will be in Karnataka for 21 days before moving north. The Padyatra (march) will cover a distance of 25 km every day. Earlier on Monday Congress MP Rahul Gandhi participated in a snake boat race exhibition in the Punnamada lake in Kerala. Rahul Gandhi was seen rowing the boat along with other men and had a smile at the end as he wiped his face. Gandhi took to Twitter and

UP Govt to survey all Waqf properties

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government has decided to undertake a survey of all waqf properties registered under the Waqf Act. The survey order will cover both the Sunni and Shia waqf properties. The order for survey of waqf properties comes close on the heels of a similar order for the survey of unrecognised private madrasas across the state. The Minority Welfare Department has issued a direc-

tive in this regard to district minority welfare officers, chief executive officers of Shia and Sunni Waqf Boards and revenue officers in districts. Official sources said the government has ordered the survey to vacate illegal possession and transfer of waqf properties by unscrupulous officers. The opposition reacted sharply to the government's decision, calling it a bid to "entangle people only in Hindu-Muslim issue". On Tuesday, the UP government revoked a

Government Order of 1989 issued by the then Congress government led by Chief Minister ND Tewari. The 1989 GO mandated automatic registration of high or mounded land, barren land, and alkaline land as Waqf property. The UP government has directed all the district magistrates and divisional commissioners to re-examine the documents of all the waqf properties which have been registered under the Waqf Act since April 7, 1989 and to record the status of such lands.

Shinde arrives in Delhi to seek bigger projects for Maha after losing Vedanta-Foxconn deal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of Maharashtra losing the Rs 1.54-lakh crore Vedanta-Foxconn semiconductor project to Gujarat and facing attack from Sena leader Aaditya Thackeray, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde arrived in Delhi on Wednesday to seek "bigger projects" for the state. He has meetings lined up with various Union Ministers including Road and Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari to discuss several highway projects of Maharashtra. Late evening, he targeted Uddhav Thackeray saying, "Even people were in disbelief that we previously formed a government with NCP and Congress. Shiv Sena isn't a private limited company, it's Balasaheb's party. Nobody is master or servant. People go from opposition to ruling party but we give power up." "Nobody can allege that I've taken a penny. But for them, I have their entire record. I'll talk about it in Maharashtra," he asserted adding Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home

Minister Amit Shah told him that despite all odds and lesser MLAs they gave their commitment to Nitish Kumar and made him Bihar CM. "In Maharashtra too, they fulfilled their promise," he said. The Chief Minister will seek the central government's assistance to widen the policy framework for state's industrial development, according to sources. Shinde along with three ministers, including Industries Minister Uday Samant, Ports Minister Dadaji Bhuse, and Horticulture Minister Sandipan Bhumare, reached the National Capital in the evening. He is also accompanied by Magathane MLA Prakash Surve. The Maharashtra government has been under criticism for losing the Rs 1.54 lakh crore Vedanta-Foxconn semiconductor project to Gujarat. The Chief Minister maintained that he had spoken to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and that the Centre had promised an even bigger project to Maharashtra. "There is likely to be a big announcement from Delhi today evening," said a senior

Maharashtra minister. Anil Agarwal-led Vedanta Limited and Taiwan's Foxconn on Tuesday signed Memorandums of Understanding with the Gujarat government for setting up a semiconductor and display FAB manufacturing unit in the state with an investment of over Rs 1.54 lakh crore. The Vedanta-Foxconn group under the MoU will set up a Display Fab Unit in Gujarat with an investment of Rs 94,500 crore as well as an integrated Semiconductor Fab Unit and OSAT facility in Gujarat with an investment of Rs 60,000 crore. Aaditya Thackeray on Wednesday slammed the Eknath Shinde-led Maharashtra government for letting the Vedanta deal slip away from the state and questioned the uninterestedness of the Shinde camp. "Our government is 2 months old. We've taken decisions not taken in 2 years. Vedanta will come to Maharashtra. I've spoken with PM Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah and have been assured. A lot of industries went out of the state because of the previous govt," Shinde claimed.

Major traffic snarl on Delhi-Jaipur highway

PNS ■ GURUGRAM

A huge traffic congestion was reported on the Delhi-Jaipur expressway after the Jaipur to Delhi section of the Hero Honda Chowk flyover was closed for load testing from September 21 to 26. The load test is to be undertaken by the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI). The Gurugram traffic police issued an advisory in this regard on Tuesday. The impact of the closure of the main expressway was severe that vehicles were in a queue stretching for 8 to 10 kilometres and commuters were taking up to 25 minutes to cover the two kilometre-stretch on the expressway. According to the traffic police advisory, those coming from Jaipur and intending to go toward Delhi were requested to use the service lane. Those commuters coming from Jaipur and intending to go towards



Subhash Chowk were requested to use the service lane and then take a U-turn under the flyover and later take left towards Subhash Chowk. "The commuters coming from Umang Bharadwaj Chowk and going towards Jaipur should use the underpass to go straight, take a U-turn after emerging out from the underpass and then turn left towards Jaipur. Those coming from Delhi and intending to go towards Umang Bharadwaj Chowk should take left towards Subhash Chowk and then take a U-turn to move towards Umang Bharadwaj Chowk through the underpass.

Mumbai Metro to earn ₹216 cr from naming rights of 5 metro-3 stations

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a novel infrastructure monetisation initiative, the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (MMRCL) has awarded naming rights for five stations on the Colaba-BKC-SEEPZ Metro-3 line for a whopping Rs.216 crore. Announcing this, MMRCL's Managing Director Ashwini Bhide said that the station naming rights contract will last for a period of 5 years starting from the commissioning of

the line. "The total value of station naming rights is Rs. 216 crore cumulatively over 5 years with 5 per cent annual escalation. This will help MMRCL generate non-fare revenue to the tune of Rs 40 crore annually," Ms Bhide said. The five stations for which the naming rights have been given are: Bandra Kurla Complex, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus to Kotak Mahindra Bank; Siddhivinayak Metro Station to ICICI Lombard; besides Churchgate



and Hutatma Chowk Metro stations to LIC. These companies and organisations will get branding space inside the station, a mention in train announcements and station maps. This is addition to the pre-fixing of brand names to the station name across the respective stations.

Delhi Police seizes...

From Page 1
The police got suspicious when they found that the colour of some of the sticks of licorice root was darker than the others," said the Special CP. "During the nightlong tedious exercise, the team was able to detect heroin in all the sticks that were darker in colour," said the Special CP. Explaining the modus operandi of the syndicate, the Special CP said that the contraband was transported in

containers to port of a neighboring country, from where it landed at different ports of India. "This time the consignment was first transported from Afghanistan to a neighboring country, from where it was shipped to a Middle-East country to avoid detection by the agencies. From there, the consignment containing the contraband blended with legitimate import goods was further shipped to JNPT, Mumbai," said the Special CP

Gehlot meets Sonia, ready to take up...

From Page 1
Gehlot is considered a frontrunner for the post as he is perceived to be having the backing and confidence of the present dispensation. The odds are heavily stacked against Tharoor, a member of the G-23 dissident group that had raised eyebrows in the party over its criticism of the current leadership. Gehlot said he will file his nomination if his party's people wish so and fulfill any

responsibility given to him. The Chief Minister has conveyed to his MLAs in Rajasthan that they will be asked to come to New Delhi if he decides to file his nomination for the party's presidential election. "The party and high command have given me everything. I have been on posts for 40-50 years. For me no post is important, I will fulfill any responsibility given to me," he said. He also asserted that not

only the Gandhi family, but scores of Congress members have faith in him. "I am very fortunate that I have got love and affection from Congressmen and women across the country and they have faith in me. Therefore, if they ask me to fill out the form (nomination), I will not be able to refuse... Will speak with friends. I was given the responsibility of being Rajasthan chief minister, I

am fulfilling that responsibility as a CM and will continue to do so," said Gehlot, after his meeting with Sonia. Meanwhile, Congress' State units continued to pass on a resolution backing Rahul Gandhi for the post of the party president. So far 15 Pradesh Congress Committees have come out in support of the Gandhi scion, even as it appears that after over two decades, the Congress is likely to see a con-

test for the post of party chief. Gehlot said he will try to convince Rahul Gandhi one last time to take on the post of party chief. If Rahul Gandhi led the Bharat Jodo Yatra as president of the Congress, it would add to the aura of the party, Gehlot said. The Chief Minister will offer prayers at Shirdi's Sai Baba Temple on September 23 and after attending local events in Maharashtra will return to Jaipur.

Delhi Govt asks depts to ensure timely Diwali bonus

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the festive season, the Delhi government has directed all its departments and agencies to ensure that contractors engaged by them give "Diwali bonus" to the workers on time. It also said that strict action will be taken against contractors who fail to pay the bonus and the payment will be recovered as arrears of land revenue as per law. This comes after the Delhi government's labour department received a large number of complaints as contractors are not in mood to give their workers "Diwali Bonus" this year.

According to an advisory issued by the Delhi government's Labour Commissioner, all the contractors establish-

ments, who have employed 20 or more workers on any day during the accounting year, are covered under the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965. "It is a statutory responsibility of the contractor to pay bonus to its employees for being their employer. A large number of workers are engaged by various Delhi government departments through contractors. Complaints regarding non-payment of bonus by the contractors have been received from outsourced workers, the advisory read. "The Payment of Bonus Act, 1965 is applicable on all private establishments and also establishments set up by state governments, like the ICSIL which employs 20 or more workers on any day during the accounting year," it said.

Funniest man faces the final...

From Page 1
"Raju was the funniest man alive. We will all miss him forever. I had the privilege and honour of judging him on many shows including 'The Great Indian Laughter Challenge' that catapulted him to unimaginable heights. Long live Raju!" Suman said. Actor Nimrat Kaur and director Sanjay Gupta remembered the comedian too. "Deepest condolences to the family and loved ones of Late Raju Srivastava ji. May God bless his journey into the light #RIPRajuSrivastava," Kaur tweeted. "Rest In Peace Raju. Thank you for all these years of fun and laughter," said Gupta. A familiar face in the entertainment industry since the 1980s, the comedian tasted unparalleled success after participating in the first season of the reality stand-up comedy show "The Great Indian Laughter Challenge" in 2005.

Speeding truck mows down 4 sleeping on divider in Seemapuri

4 killed, two hurt in early morning accident; driver apprehended from UP's Shamli area

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a tragic incident, four people sleeping on a road divider were killed and two others were injured when a speeding truck ran over them in Delhi's Seemapuri area at around 1:51 A.M. The accident occurred when the truck driver was crossing the DTC Depot red light and going towards DLF T-point.

According to police, the accused driver Sudhir Kumar has been apprehended from UP's Shamli with the help of CCTV footage. The truck has also been seized.

According to police, two people died on the spot and one person was declared brought dead to the hospital. The fourth person died during initial treatment. The four victims have been identified as Kareem (52), Chotte Khan



(25), Shah Alam (38), all resi-

(Top) Four people died and two sustained injuries after a truck ran over them while they were sleeping on a road divider in Delhi's Seemapuri early on Wednesday morning. (Left) The driver of the truck

dents of New Seemapuri, and Rahul (45), a resident of Shalimar Garden in Uttar Pradesh's Sahibabad. Of the two injured are 16-year-old Manish, a resident of Sahibabad and 30-year-old

Pradeep, a resident of Tahirpur. A CCTV video of the incident was also doing the rounds on social media. The footage showed a truck crossing the DTC Depot traffic signal and mowing down people sleeping

Families mourn their loved ones

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEWDELHI

Family of Chhote Khan, who was mowed down by the speeding truck on Wednesday has decided to donate his eyes. Mumtiyaz Khan, the elder brother of 25-year-old Chhote Khan, said he was informed about the incident by a friend over the phone. "Last night, I asked Chhote to sleep inside the house, but he chose to sleep outside," he said. "I live at another place in a nearby area. I was asleep when I got a call from one of my friends who informed me about the incident. I went to the spot and found bodies of the people on road." Chhote was married and

had a daughter. However, he got separated from his wife, Mumtiyaz said. Rahul's elder brother Anil Kumar said that a police person had come to their house in the morning and asked them to identify the body. "I am a driver and had come home around 4 AM.

Rahul had gone out with his friend last night and was sleeping on the divider," Kumar said. "Later, I was out again for my work, when I got a call around 11 AM from my daughter. She said that a policeman had come home and told them that Rahul had been mowed down by a truck. "I immediately reached the GTB Hospital and identified his body. Rahul

used to work as a mason and was the youngest among three siblings," he said. Family members of Kareem, 52, and Shah Alam, 38, — who too were killed by the truck — said that they used to sleep in the premises of a public toilet, but as it was hot, they had gone out to sleep on the divider that night.

Kareem's son-in-law Sheikh Habibul said that he got to know something bad had happened when he saw a crowd gathering near the divider. "We were sleeping when the incident happened. There was a gathering near the spot and we heard a commotion. When we went outside, we saw that the

body of my father-in-law Kareem was lying on road along with others and his skull was crushed. It was a horrifying sight for us," said Habibul. Hafiza Bibi, Alam's wife, said that his husband was the sole breadwinner for the family of five. "He was sleeping outside due to the hot weather. He used to collect scrap and was the sole breadwinner of the family. I have four daughters and only one of them is married," Bibi said.

Habibul said that the eyewitness told him that the truck, after it ran over the people, lost its balance, but the driver managed to bring it back under control and speed away.

on the road divider going towards the DLF T-point. The footage also showed the truck, after it ran the people over, hitting an electricity pole causing the streetlights to go off. Deputy Police Commissioner R Sathiyasundaram said that the truck was being driven rashly. "Out of those six victims, four were shifted to the Guru Teg

Bahadur Hospital. Several teams were formed to investigate the incident. After scanning CCTV cameras of the area, the truck was identified and police apprehended the truck driver, who was on run," said R Sathiyasundaram adding that a case has been registered under appropriate Sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC).

According to police Pradeep was currently "out of danger." "Scared and with his leg broken, Pradeep crawled and took shelter behind large bags of scrap lying near Seemapuri Depot early on Wednesday after truck ran over him and five other people," police said. Recounting the incident, Manish, a resident of Harsh

Vihar in Sahibabad, who was injured, said that he came here around 8 PM on Tuesday to sell scrap items. "It took some time and after having dinner, I slept on divider. The vehicle first ran over my hand and threw me on other side of divider. It then ran over other people sleeping on divider, hit a pole, and sped away," said Manish.

HRERA imposes penalty of ₹12L on ISH Realtors

Our aim is to shield the interest of allottees who have invested in project, RERA chairman

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

The Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority (HRERA) on Wednesday imposed a penalty of ₹12 lakh on ISH Realtors for selling properties in a commercial project without obtaining licence from the concerned department.

In another order, the regulator has restricted the sale and purchase in one of the projects of Vatika Limited and asked the developer to submit the documents required for its licence renewal and registration of the project. The DTCP (Department of Town and

Country Planing) had issued licence in favour of seven landowners in collaboration with Jitender Jhangu for development of the commercial project on a land measuring 3.7187 acres falling in the revenue estate of village Pawal Khusurpur, Sector 109, Gurugram. It is an on-going project and had to be registered with the RERA which came into existence in 2017 in Haryana.

"Our aim is to safeguard the interest of allottees who have invested their hard-earned money in the project that is why we have issued show-cause notices to licencees, landowners and collaborators after taking suo moto cognizance of the offence," said KK Khandelwal, chairman of RERA.

In a statement RERA said, the authority observed no mention of ISH Realtors as collaborator anywhere in any record

in the licence, yet it sold units and collected money from buyers in violation of RERA which took cognizance of offence in July. The penalty of ₹ 12 lakh has been imposed after the authority observed negligence in complying with the necessary documents that ISH Realtors was asked to submit to the authority for a scrutiny in order to complete the registration process. The ISH Realtors representatives failed to produce the BIP permission certificate before RERA during the hearing on Tuesday. BIP certificate is a document without which the company was not supposed to engage in any sale-purchase of the commercial spaces at its construction site in Sector 109, Gurugram. In July, Pushpender Singh Rajpurohit, director of Univer Solution Private Limited, had filed a complaint with RERA of cheating against ISH Realtors Private Limited. Rajpurohit

claimed he purchased super area space of 12,286 square feet from ISH Realtors at the rate of ₹6,300 per square feet and paid ₹2.02 crore in advance.

The authority issued directions to freeze the bank account in the name of the ISH Realtors Private Limited at IndusInd Bank, Defence Colony, New Delhi, or if any other account held by the directors of the company or the landowners where the amount realised from the buyers-cum-complainants are alleged to have been deposited.

In another order, the regulator has restricted sale and purchase of properties in Vatika India Next 2 project have been restricted due to non-compliance of the RERA Act. In a hearing on September 12, the regulator found that several developers, including Vatika, failed to submit the pending documents required for registration of their project.

Special Cell arrests gun supplier, recovers 15 pistols, 45 cartridges

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police's Special Cell has arrested a 32-year-old alleged arms supplier with 15 high-quality semi-automatic pistols and 45 live cartridges, meant to be supplied to gangsters in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. The accused has been identified as Dilshad, a resident of Baghpat district of UP. Police said that he was involved in illegal procurement and selling of firearms.

According to Rajiv Ranjan Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Special Cell, on September 19, specific inputs were received that an interstate illegal firearms supplier, Dilshad will be reaching Inner Ring Road from Dhaula Kuan bus stand on the way leading to Naraina with a large consignment of illegal firearms for sup-

plying the same to some unknown receiver. "Acting on the inputs, a trap was laid and at about 5:40 PM, Dilshad was nabbed. During cursory search of the black pithoo bag carried by the accused, 15 high quality semi-automatic pistols of .32 bore and 45 live cartridges were recovered.

Accordingly a case under section 25 of Arms Act was registered at Special Cell police station and the accused was placed under arrest," said DCP. "On interrogation, the accused disclosed that he used to procure firearms from local manufacturers in the area of Kairana in Uttar Pradesh and used to sell the same in area of Baghpat and Shamli," said the DCP "Earlier, on October 28, 2020, he along with associate Kamal was arrested by police officials of R K Puram police station.

Transport officials mull NCR inter-State road connectivity, safety

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Issues related to inter-State road connectivity among the National Capital Region states and road safety were among the key points discussed during a meeting of senior transport officials. The proposal of the Delhi Government to allow only buses running on CNG or environment-friendly fuel in Delhi was also deliberated in detail.

At the meeting, Kalindi By-pass road from Ashram Chowk, Delhi to Faridabad By-pass; elevated road along Shahdara drain-alignment form Chilla Regulator (near Mayur Vihar), Sector-14A to MP-3 road (Mahamaya Flyover) in Noida; 75 m wide road link connecting Gurgaon area with Najafgarh road; bridge connecting Sector 168 & 167-A, Noida with Lalpur Village, Faridabad; bridge connecting Sector 149-A & 150, Noida with Tilori Village, Faridabad Road from Ring Rd (Inder Lok Metro Stn) & existing Yamuna Canal Link Rd up to HR Border; existing Gurugram-Mehrauli road linking Nelson Mandela T-point (Near Vasant Kunj Flyover) through Delhi ridge were also discussed. According to a statement, the status of Combined Reciprocal Common Transport Agreement (Contract Carriage and Stage Carriage) (CRCTA) signed among the governments of Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh was also dis-

cussed during the meeting of Commissioner of Transport Secretaries and Commissioners of NCR (CoTS).

During the meeting, it emerged that the NCR states had taken action regarding issuing necessary notifications enabling all motor cabs, taxis, autorickshaws, educational institution vehicles and buses of state transport undertakings to ply without paying any tax or fee, once the vehicle registered in the NCR, once it had been paid in any adjoining state of the national capital state, it said.

Discussions were also held on ensuring vehicle location tracking devices and speed governors in all vehicles under the CRCTA, and working expeditiously towards formulating and harmonizing rules for motor vehicle aggregators in NCR, it said.

The NCR states were requested to explore possibilities of getting their diesel buses converted to CNG or replace their diesel buses with EVs.

The NCR states were requested to compile data on the black spots in the region along with locations of cameras, emergency trauma care centres along MDR, national highways, state highways and expressways, it added.

Principal Secretary, Haryana, Special Commissioner, Delhi, Special Secretary, urban development, Delhi and representatives from other states also participated in the meeting.

Delhi leaders condole death of comedy king Raju

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, Delhi BJP and other AAP leaders on Wednesday condoned the death of popular comedian Raju Srivastava.

"The death of famous comedian Raju Srivastava is very sad. May God give place to the departed soul at his feet. My sympathies are with his kin



and admirers in this hour of grief," Kejriwal said in a tweet in Hindi. The Leader of Opposition in Delhi Legislative Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri has expressed deep condolences on the demise saying that Raju Srivastava was not only a comedian but also a wonderful human being. "He made a place in the hearts of millions of viewers with his mimicry and different style of making fun.

His death has caused a great loss to the film and art

industry. As the Chairman of Uttar Pradesh Film Development Council, he had contributed a lot for the development of art in Uttar Pradesh," Bidhuri said.

Expressing condolence, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister, Manish Sisodia tweeted that demise of comedy king Raju Srivastava, who has carved a place in the hearts of people for decades by spreading laughter and happiness in every Indian household, is a great loss. "I pray that God rest his soul at

his feet and give courage to his family to bear this loss," Sisodia tweeted. "The one who made us laugh left us crying. The hardest thing is to bring a smile to the faces of people who are suffering from sorrows. Raju Bhai spread happiness in the lives of people throughout his life. May God rest his soul and give strength to his family and loved ones to bear this pain," Sanjay Singh, AAP Rajya Sabha MP tweeted.

Srivastava, 58, suffered a heart attack on August 8 and

was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), where he underwent angioplasty. Since then, he was on ventilator support and never gained consciousness. Srivastava, counted among the most high-profile and experienced comics in the country, is survived by his wife and two children. The artiste, who featured in Hindi films such as 'Maine Pyar Kiya' and 'Baazigar', was declared dead at 10:20 am, according to hospital sources.

DDA sold 870 of 1,281 Narela flats in 15 days: L-G

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has managed to sell 870 flats out of 1281 advertised in Narela, outer district within just 15 days.

According to Raj Niwas sources, the sudden increase in the applications for buying the Authority Low-Income Group (LIG) and Economically Weaker Section (EWS) flats in Narela is because of the Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) VK Saxena interventions that included amending the eligibility criteria for buying houses and concerted efforts towards developing Transport Connectivity, Security and Health Services in the area.

From linking it with buses to allotting land for setting up new police stations, authorities are working on propping up civil and security infrastructure in Narela, the outer Delhi area where thousands of houses built by the DDA still remain unsold because of poor connectivity. "The DDA has got a very impressive response on its latest advertisement for sale of LIG and EWS Flats at Narela on a 'first-come-first-serve' basis. In the time frame of 15 days,

out of total 1281 flats including EWS 772 and LIG 509 which has been put up for sale, the authority has received 1940 registrations. The 870 Flats consist of EWS 619 and LIG 251 has already been sold till the date. The sale of these 1281 Flats is expected to fetch Rs. 196.90 Crore," sources in Raj Niwas said.

The Delhi Lieutenant Governor is the chairman of the DDA. "The DTC has started operating two buses each in two shifts on route no 120C and no 120E from Narela Pocket-G and Narela Sector-A1 to Central Secretariat via major localities in the city," it said. Also, land has been allotted to Delhi Police for construction of 11 police stations in various sectors in Narela.

A ready-to-occupy flat has also been allotted in Sector-G7/G8 of Narela to the Delhi Police for setting up of a Police Chowki, and it will start functioning by end of this month, the statement said. "Similarly, flats have also been allotted for setting up of dispensaries by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi at the earliest, and surveys for the same have already been conducted," it said.

‘Demolish hotel built on encroached DDA land’

BJP leader built hotel on cremation ground, probe this land grabbing in Hauz Khas, Somnath Bharti tells L-G

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AP MLA Somnath Bharti wrote to Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) VK Saxena, demanding action on the demolition order passed by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) almost seven years ago against a building built on the encroached land of Rose Garden of Hauz Khas. Bharti also asked the L-G to build a 'Shamshan Ghat' to meet the requirement of the local people. Bharti alleged that the BJP leader Shailender Singh Monty built a hotel on a Hindu cremation ground. This is a matter of land grabbing, and the L-G must investigate it, he said.

"In almost every authority meeting I have been demanding action on the demolition order passed by the DDA almost 7 years ago against a building built on the



encroached land of the Rose Garden of Hauz Khas by a person named Shailendra Singh Monty.

This is duly recorded in the minutes of all authority meetings. At present this building is being used as a hotel and lakhs of rupees are being earned from this illegal structure built on DDA land. All demarcation reports have confirmed that this building is on DDA's encroached land," the letter read.

"For long I have been demanding the same to be converted into a 'shamshan ghat' to meet the requirement of a cremation ground for Hauz Khas Village residents and hence you are earnestly requested to direct officers concerned in the DDA to demolish this illegal structure and build a 'shamshan ghat,'" the letter read. "I have ear-

BJP holds protest at Bharti's house over 'land scam'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Led by the State BJP president Adesh Gupta, the Delhi BJP on Wednesday staged a demonstration outside the residence of AAP MLA Somnath Bharti against alleged encroachment of land worth Rs 1 crore at the Deer Park in Hauz Khas area in collaboration with the Waqf Board on the land adjoining the graveyard which is actually DDA's land. They also termed this alleged encroachment as 'Land Jihad'.

Addressing the protesters, Gupta alleged that after scams in the health and transport sectors, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has now started selling Government land. While demanding the dismissal of Bharti, Gupta said that Kejriwal's close aide Bharti has done a scam worth crores of



rupees by selling Government plots. Gupta said the protest will continue till concrete action is taken against AAP leaders on the issue of land

encroachment by Government-protected land mafia. He also asked Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena to punish five accused people involved in case. During

the protest senior party leaders including Leader of Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri and State vice-president Rajan Tiwari were present.

marked funds from MLALAD funds towards the construction of the same.

In every authority meeting you have clearly expressed that you are against encroachment and you will not allow any encroachment to continue on DDA lands. I have been requesting in every authority meeting for you to act against

this encroachment but nothing has yielded so far," it stated.

"Is the reason behind your inactivity on this issue due to the fact that the encroacher belongs to the BJP? Misuse of your office by this land mafia can be ascertained by the fact that when the DDA had passed this demolition order years ago, this illegal building was

sealed but Monty was given the liberty to de-seal the property illegally and start using the same," the letter further read. Bharti questioned why the BJP was not allowing the DDA to demolish Monty's encroachment? "The BJP has no right to call itself a well-wisher of Hindus. Their real face has been exposed in front of the

country. Monty grabbed a lot of land after he became a councillor in 2007. The L-G should order ED-CBI investigation on all the land he holds illegally. The AAP demands that land encroachment should be cleared and residents of Hauz Khas village need their cremation ground immediately," Bharti added.

US, France hail Modi message to Putin: ‘It’s not an era of war’

It is a statement of principle of what he believes is right and just and it was much welcomed, says White House

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/NEW YORK

President of France Emmanuel Macron, and the US, have welcomed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent message to Russian President Vladimir Putin that "today's era is not an era of war," on the sidelines of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation(SCO)summit in Uzbekistan.

Praising the Prime Minister's stand, Macron said in his address late Tuesday at the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, "Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, was right



when he said the time is not for war. It is not for revenge against the West, or for opposing the West against the east. It is the time for a collective time for our sovereign equal states. To cope together with challenges we face," he said.

Macron also said there was an urgent need to develop a new contract between the North and the South, an effective contract which is respectful for food, for biodiversity, for education. In a bilateral meeting with Putin at the SCO meet, Modi had said "Today's era is not of war." He also said "We spoke several times on the phone about India-Russia bilateral relations and various issues.



We should find ways to address the problems of food, fuel security and fertilizers. I want to thank Russia and Ukraine for helping us to evacuate our students from Ukraine."Putin said that he knows about India's position on the Ukraine conflict and "we want all of this to end as soon as possible".

Macron also hosted a dinner which was attended by Union external affairs minister S Jaishankar, a meeting that featured the impending Ukraine conflict.

Meanwhile, the US also welcomed Modi's message and said "it is a statement of principle" of what he believes is "right and just" and it "was very

much welcomed" the White House said on Tuesday.

Responding to a question on Modi's remarks, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters at a White House news conference that what the PM said was "a statement of principle on behalf of what he believes is right and just (and) it was very much welcomed by the US." The remark of the Indian leadership, which has longstanding relationships with Moscow, telling Russia that now is the time for war to end is commendable, he said.

And the way this war should end is for Russia to abide by the basic terms of the UN charter and to return the territories that it has seized by force. This is a message that every country—in spite of how they feel about Russia, Ukraine and the US — "should be able to centre around this basic proposition", Sullivan said.

"You cannot conquer your neighbour's territory by force. Peace will come fast and most decisively to Ukraine if Russia abandons that effort," he added.

Historic milestone as Bihar, Jharkhand's Burha Pahar are Naxal-free, says CRPF

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CRPF on Wednesday said Bihar can be dubbed Naxal-free and Jharkhand's so-called liberated zone of Burha Pahar has been freed from the clutches of the ultra-Left extremists. "An historic milestone has been achieved in internal security.

Our security forces have achieved commendable success in decisive fight against Naxals. Zero tolerance policy of Home Ministry against terrorism and Left-wing extremism (LWE) will continue," Home Minister Amit Shah tweeted.

CRPF Director General Kuldeep Singh said the security forces have achieved a decisive victory in the ongoing operations against Naxalism across the country.

In the run up to his retirement from service on September 30, Singh, in his briefing to the Press, said the forces have entered the Burha Pahar for the first and also accessed the Naxal strongholds of Chakrabandha and Bhimabandh in Bihar after successfully ousting the ultras and set up permanent security camps. "All these areas were strongholds of top Maoists and



a huge quantity of arms, ammunition, foreign grenades, Aero Bombs and IEDs were recovered by the security forces at these places," the DG said.

Describing Operation Octopus, Operation Double Bull and Operation Chakrabandha as unprecedented success of the joint operations of the CRPF and state police forces, he said seven Naxals were killed and 436 arrested or surrendered in Chhattisgarh, four killed in Jharkhand and 120 arrested/surrendered and 36 ultras arrested/surrendered in Bihar.

Likewise, in Madhya Pradesh, three Naxals have been killed by security forces. The attrition of the Naxals assumes significance as many of those liquidated had bounties of lakhs and crores of Rupees on their heads like Mithilesh Mahto had a reward of Rs 1 crore, he further said.



Lalu to join Nitish in Oppunity meeting with Sonia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/PATNA

RJD patriarch Lalu Prasad Yadav is likely to join Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for the proposed meeting with Congress president Sonia Gandhi this weekend. Earlier, only Nitish was scheduled to call on Sonia to discuss the nature of alignment of Opposition unity for the Lok Sabha elections 2024.

However, Lalu, who shares a very good rapport with Sonia, announced on Wednesday that he will accompany Nitish to meet the Congress chief who has now returned from abroad after her treatment.

"Sonia Gandhi was all this while abroad, now that she has returned, we will meet her. Once Rahul Gandhi comes back (from Bharat Jodo Yatra), we will also meet him," said Lalu, sitting alongside his son Tejashwi Yadav, who is the Deputy Chief Minister in the Nitish Kumar-led grand alliance Government in Bihar of which RJD, JDU and Congress are major partners backed by the Left parties.

Addressing a public gathering later, Lalu, who has been off the public glare lately owing to his ill-health, said that while in Delhi, he and Nitish will meet various Opposition leaders with the goal of 'throwing the BJP out of power' in 2024.

Lalu's announcement after his party's meeting in Patna comes a day after Nitish highlighted his 'interest' in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections. "I am just interested in one thing—if more and more parties come together, the

result in 2024 would be nice, favourable.

This is what I am working for. What is there for me in this? In everything, I aim to push the people forward, people like him (signalling towards Tejashwi Yadav). I want to prepare the new generation," Nitish stated.

Soon after quitting the BJP-led NDA fold, Nitish had met Rahul Gandhi and leaders of Aam Aadmi Party, Samajwadi Party, NCP, INLD, and Left parties. Sonia was abroad for treatment then.

Sources close to Nitish said that while the Opposition unity is certainly on agenda on Sonia-Nitish-Lalu meeting, the Bihar CM, who is being touted as the Prime Ministerial candidate of the Opposition camp, will also seek to know the Congress chief's mind on the issue.

Sources said that the possibility of a change in the Sonia-led UPA equation can also be discussed since fingers have been raised on it by Trinamool Congress supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, one of the important opposition stakeholders.

Party sources said before marching ahead to unite, Nitish now first desires to read the Congress' mind to work dedicatedly towards uniting the Opposition amidst the call of several fronts by leaders like Telangana Chief Minister KCR, AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal and Mamata Banerjee. Ever since Nitish changed sides, talks of projecting him as the PM candidate against Modi have been doing the rounds.

ED chargesheets Soren's aide in PMLA case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday said it has filed a prosecution complaint (chargesheet) against Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren's aide Pankaj Mishra and two others in a money laundering case linked to illegal sand mining cases.

The agency said it has identified 'proceeds of crime' relating to illegal mining to the tune of more than Rs 1,000 crore in this case.

Besides Mishra, the agency in its prosecution complaint filed before a Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Special Court at Ranchi also charged Bachhu Yadav and Prem Prakash. "PMLA Investigation revealed that Pankaj Mishra, who enjoys political clout, being the representative of the Chief Minister, MLA from Barhait, Sahebganj, Jharkhand, controls the illegal mining businesses as well as inland ferry services in Sahebganj and its adjoining areas through his



accomplices. He exercises considerable control over the mining of stone chips and boulders as well as installation and operations of several crushers, set up across various mining sites in Sahebganj," the ED said in a statement.

Proceeds of crime amounting to Rs 42 crore acquired by the accused Mishra have been identified till date. On Tuesday, the court took cognizance of the prosecution complaint. "During investigation, 47 searches were conducted throughout India on several dates resulting in the seizure of cash amounting to Rs 5.34 crore, freezing of bank balances amounting to Rs 13.32 crore, freezing of an inland vessel MVInfralink -III, reg. No- WB 1809, 5 stone crushers, two

Hyva trucks besides the seizure of incriminating documents along with two AK 47 Assault Rifles," the ED said in a statement. The ED had arrested Mishra on July 19, Bachhu Yadav on August 4 and Prem Prakash on August 25. The arrested accused persons are presently in judicial custody. The ED initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of FIR registered by Barharwa Police Station, Sahebganj district, Jharkhand under various sections of the Indian Penal Code against Pankaj Mishra and others.

Later on, several FIRs regarding illegal mining lodged under IPC, Explosive substances Act and Arms Act have also been taken into the ambit of scheduled offence.

ED finds fake beneficiaries in AP raids

New Delhi: The ED has launched a money laundering investigation into allegations of misappropriation of compensation funds provided by the Government to those affected by the Trans Arunachal Highway Project being built in the north eastern State of Arunachal Pradesh, the agency said Wednesday.

The about 2,396 km long road project aims to connect 16 districts of the state running from Tawang in western Arunachal to Kanubari in Longding district in the south-eastern part of the state.

The federal probe agency said in a statement that it carried out two search operations on September 20 in the state following which it froze, under the criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), fixed deposits worth Rs 3.95 crore.

CBI arrests ABG Shipyard founder in ₹22K cr fraud

New Delhi: The CBI on Wednesday arrested Rishi Kamlesh Agarwal, the founder of ABG Shipyard Limited, in connection with an alleged bank fraud of over Rs 22,842 crore.

The CBI had booked Agarwal, a former chairman of the company, the then executive director Santhanam Muthaswamy, and directors Ashwini Kumar, Sushil Kumar Agarwal and Ravi Vimal Nevetia in the case on February 7.

Agarwal was called for questioning on Wednesday at the CBI headquarters here during which he was evasive in his responses following which he was arrested, officials said. The CBI had registered the case on a complaint from the State Bank of India for the alleged offences of criminal conspiracy, cheating, criminal

breach of trust and abuse of official position under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Prevention of Corruption Act. The SBI with an exposure of Rs 2,468.51 crore was part of a consortium of 28 banks and financial institutions led by ICICI Bank.

The ABG Shipyard being a major player in Indian ship building industry operated from its shipyards located at Dahej and Surat in Gujarat with capacity to build vessels up to 18,000 dead weight tonnage (DWT) at Surat shipyard and 1,20,000 dead weight tonnage (DWT) at Dahej shipyard. The company, which had witnessed phenomenal rise having constructed 165 vessels in 16 years, started showing stress following global slump in the shipping industry bringing irregularities in repayment schedule.

People on poll duty must cast vote at designated centres, EC tells Law Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aiming to check the potential misuse of postal ballot facility extended to voters on poll duty, the Election Commission is set to ask the Government to change rules so that such people cast their vote at designated facilitation centres only and do not keep the ballot papers with them for a long time.

The proposal, if implemented, would minimise the potential misuse of keeping ballot papers by the voters on election duty for a long time with them, which is highly susceptible to undue influence, threats, bribery and other unethical means by candidates or political parties, sources said.

In its meeting held on September 16, the poll panel headed by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar decided to send a recommendation to the law ministry to ensure that voters on election duty cast their vote at the 'Voter Facilitation Centre' only. An amendment in Rule 18 of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 has been proposed to the government.

The sources said the poll panel has observed in previous elections that voters on election duty who are provided postal ballot do not cast their vote at Voter Facilitation Centre but take their postal ballot with them since they have time to cast postal ballot till 8 am of counting day according to election law and relevant rules.

Jagan as permanent YSRCP chief: EC rejects media reports

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taking note of media reports that Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy has been appointed the "permanent president" of YSRCP, the Election Commission on Wednesday directed the party to make a "clear and categorical public announcement" contradicting the reports as the matter has the potential to create "confusion" in other political organisations.

"The Commission categorically rejects any attempt or even a hint of any organisational post being of permanent nature, being inherently anti-democracy.

"Any action which denies the periodicity of elections is in complete violation of the extant instructions of the

Commission," the order said. The EC order came after the Yuva Jagan Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) initially informed the poll panel about the "unanimous" election of Jagan Mohan Reddy as president of the party on July 8 and 9 this year, but did not categorically admit or deny the specific allegation forwarded by EC regarding he being made permanent president for life.

The EC had sought a reply from the party following media reports. The YSRCP had later confirmed to the EC that the issue was reported in the media and that the party has launched an internal enquiry in this regard. It had also told the EC that "necessary action" on the same will be taken by the party on finding the facts.

5-member panel set up to address issues with pharma firms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has constituted a high-level committee to hammer out a legal mechanism to address the issue of pharmaceutical companies giving inducements for promoting their drugs and products.

The five-member committee chaired by Dr VK Paul, NITI Aayog member (health) will also review various other issues pertaining to the Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP). The panel includes secretary of the

department of pharmaceuticals S Aparna, Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan, and Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) chairman Nitin Gupta as members, and a joint secretary (policy) from the department of pharmaceuticals as member secretary.

An office memorandum issued on September 12 stated that the department of pharmaceuticals has also put in place a code of ethics, the UCPMP, for pharma companies, which has been in effect since January 1, 2015 and has been adopted by all the major pharmaceutical associations.

Environment Min's EAC gives nod for development project in Great Nicobar

This will involve felling of 8.5 L trees, loss of 20 HA of mangroves, coral translocation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



The project involves development of a military-civil, dual-use airport; international container transshipment terminal; a gas, diesel, and solar-based power plant, and a township. The Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) recommended granting envi-

ronmental and coastal regulatory zone clearance to the project in a meeting on August 22-23.

According to a Union home ministry letter dated March 30 to the environment ministry, the airport proposed at Gandhi Nagar-Shastri Nagar area would be a

joint military-civil, dual-use airport, under the operational control of the Indian Navy. "This project is for defence, strategic, national security, and public purposes. In view of this, the portion of deliberation made for the airport component may not be made public," it said. The Great Nicobar Island (GNI), which is the southernmost part of the Indian territory, is one of the most strategically important areas.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands provide India a commanding geostrategic presence in the Bay of Bengal and access to South and Southeast Asia.

The project is likely to affect 1,761 people, including the indigenous Shompen and Nicobarese communities. The island is home to rare flora and

fauna including the leatherback sea turtles, Nicobar megapode—a flightless bird endemic to the Nicobar islands; Nicobar Macaque and saltwater crocodiles. The project site is within a 10 km radius of the Galathea Bay National Park and the Campbell Bay National Park but is outside the ecologically-sensitive zone notified around the two national parks.

Three premier institutes—Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON)—provided scientific inputs to the EAC on the impact of the project on the flora and fauna of the GNI. "While the ZSI categorically stated in its recommendation that the proposed project will not have impact on the flora and fauna of GNI and can be

mitigated through stringent mitigation measures, the WII provided cautious inputs very specific to leatherback sea turtles, only suggesting that it has less site fidelity and can move to other suitable nesting areas in GNI," the minutes of the meeting read. The WII said the project can be undertaken but more intensive assessment and research is required on leatherback sea turtle and its movements to craft site-specific mitigation strategy, and suggested a 10-year roadmap to systematically implement mitigation measures.

The EAC said it is clear that about 30 of the 51 active nests of Nicobar megapode within the proposed project areas will be permanently destroyed. SACON and WII have provided a 10-year mitigation plan in this regard. The coral cover

required to be translocated from the proposed site is around 10 hectares. Approximately 16,150 of the 20,668 coral colonies will be translocated. The EAC has also directed the setting up of three independent committees to oversee pollution related matters, biodiversity and welfare and issues related to Shompen and Nicobarese tribes.

The panel has also asked the project proponent to not cut trees in one go. "Trees with nesting holes of endemic owls to be identified and geo-tagged with the help from SACON. Such trees shall be safeguarded, as far as possible," it said.

The committee said safe wildlife corridors at eight locations along the eastern side of the island connecting forest and seashore through via-ducts (elevated crossings) on the

north south arterial road should be provided. The use of vehicles or any recreational means on sea turtle nesting beaches will be strictly prohibited.

The A&N administration has been directed to establish a special medical unit having state-of-art infrastructure, medicine and qualified medical staff at GNI within six months to monitor human-induced diseases due to the expected influx of large domestic and international populations.

"All mechanisms must be in place to ensure that Shompen and Nicobarese are not exposed to the risks related to introduced diseases," the EAC said. The committee said the disposal of hazardous waste material, including batteries, pesticides, organochlorines etc, would not be allowed in GNI.

Army to do away with colonial legacy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to do away with colonial legacy, the Indian Army has commenced review of its customs, regulations, uniform and old practices.

Besides these issues, the army will also look into practices like granting honorary commissions and ceremonies like Beating the Retreat to mark the end of Republic Day celebrations, sources said here on Wednesday after an internal discussion. It was clarified the changes will be made only after detailed discussions and consensus.

The meeting focus was on the need to move away from archaic and ineffective practices, sources said, adding the review will also cover names of infantry regiments like Punjab, Gorkha, Jat, Sikh, Dogra and Assam as they were all named

by the erstwhile colonial rulers, they said.

The review entails laws, rules, institutes of colonial and English names of some units, roads, parks, they said. The overarching process will also look into customs followed in the Officers' Mess, sources said.

Addressing the Combined Commanders Conference last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called for indigenisation of doctrines, procedures and customs in the armed forces. He had advised the three services to "rid themselves of legacy systems and practices that have outlived their utility and relevance."

Units, establishments and institutes of colonial past are also on the review list, so are the names of buildings, roads and parks after the names of British commanders like Sir Claude Auchinleck and

Herbert Kitchener.

The affiliation of Army units with foreign armies, especially those which fought in the two World Wars will be reviewed, and there is a proposal that the regimental events and reunion should be restricted to the Army. The issue of "Colonel" as the head of regiment is also under review.

The names and Insignia in Unit, Crest of Colonial times, pre-independence theatre/battle honours, awarded by the British to quell the Indian states, and freedom and affiliation with the Commonwealth Graves Commission are also part of the proposed overhauling process. The theatre honours were given to some army units to mark the Anglo-Sikh wars, Anglo-Maratha wars and the Anglo-Gorkha wars.

Uniform and accou-



trements like lanyard (shoulder cord) will also be reviewed.

According to the Indian Army, it also needs to look into these legacy practices to align to the national sentiment in consonance with the five vows that the prime minister has asked people to follow.

The three Services have already decided to shift their annual Air Force Day (October 8), Army Day (January 15) and

Navy Day (December 4) from their traditional places in New Delhi for the IAF and Army and Visakhapatnam for the Navy.

While the Air Force Day parade and fly past will take place in Chandigarh, the Army Day parade will be held next year in the Southern Command area. The Navy may hold its annual day in Mumbai.

More trouble for Partha as Arpita may turn approver

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

There is more trouble for jailed former Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee. His close aide Arpita Mukherjee is known to have expressed her willingness to turn government approver in the cash recovery case.

The chargesheet filed by the Enforcement Directorate in the Partha Chatterjee case claims to have firmly established the links between Chatterjee Arpita from whose apartments the investigating agency had in July recovered about Rs 50 crore and jewellery worth another Rs 5 crore.

According to the ED, a director Snehamoyi Dutta of one of the shell companies owned by Arpita and Partha



the duo had a couple of years ago visited Phuket in Thailand.

The ED claims that apart from an official-cum-joy trip they might have acquired some properties in that country.

The duo is also known to have visited Singapore to take part the Beautiful Bengal summit to attract investment in the State, ED sources said.

Chatterjee had ever since his arrest on July 22 been denying any connection with Arpita together with whom he owned a number of shell

companies and bank accounts.

Sources in the ED said quoting the chargesheet that she had virtually offered to turn a 'state witness'. Contrary to what Chatterjee told the investigators, Arpita has repeatedly told them that the cash recovered from her apartments actually belonged to Chatterjee.

She told the ED officials that she had no idea regarding the source of the money. "Some people used to come from time to time and kept the money," she is known to have told the ED sleuths.

Meanwhile, a special court on Wednesday extended the judicial remand of Chatterjee and other senior officials including Nort Bengal VC Subires Bhattacharya, Kalyanmoy Ganguly and others.

J&K admin orders putting on hold Sept salary of PM Package staff on AWOL

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Taking strong note of the 'Unauthorised' absence of PM Package employees posted in different parts of the Kashmir valley, the Union Territory administration on Wednesday directed against releasing salaries for the month of September 2022 in favour of those employees remaining absent from their duties.

The office of Deputy Labour Commissioner, Kashmir Ahmad Hussain Bhat Wednesday wrote to Assistant Labour Commissioners, Kashmir division to furnish the complete leave account of the PM Package employees in

particular for the month of July and August so that the same could be forwarded to the higher authorities.

"It is enjoined upon all the Assistant Labour commissioner to furnish the complete leave account of the PM Package employees in particular for the month of July and August to this office so that the same could be forwarded to higher authorities who are asking for the same. Further the salary for the month of September 2022 should not be drawn in respect of those PM package employees who have remained absent during the month of September. The information in this regard should reach this office within a day positively", the com-

munication read.

The aggrieved Kashmiri migrant employees, appointed under the Prime Minister's package, have been sitting on a dharna since May 12 in support of their single point demand of relocation to safer places outside the Kashmir valley. A migrant employee Rahul Bhat was killed in cold blood inside the office of Tehsildar Chadoora in the central Kashmir district of Budgam on May 12.

In the absence of any fruitful negotiations between the UT administration and the agitating employees the situation is turning grim.

Addressing a press conference in Jammu on September 19, under the ban-

ner of All Migrant (Displaced) Employees Association, Kashmir the employees said that they will not budge an inch from their stand on relocation. "Either relocate us in Jammu or deploy /attach us in relief Commissioner's Office Jammu/ Camp offices in order to put final stop on continual process of KP genocide in the Valley", they said.

They also demanded revocation of unconstitutional bonds signed by employees under SRO 412 which is a sign of bonded labour. Besides, they demanded delinking of rehabilitation from the PM Package and declaring it as an economic package till all conditions of return and rehabilitation are met.

India's history being changed for political reasons: Mamata

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday launched a slant attack on the Centre alleging India's historiography was being changed and truth was being compromised --- all for political reasons.

Alleging that a conscious effort was on to obliterate the contribution of Bengal in the struggle for Independence and reminding the role of the region in ushering the great renaissance that helped build a new India Banerjee said, "there could have been no reawakening... no struggle for freedom... No reforms without active contribution of Bengal."

Banerjee's alleged playing of the Bengali card comes at a time when her government had suffered a massive loss of image in the wake of recent arrests of her senior cabinet and party colleagues --- including former Education Minister Partha Chatterjee and TMC strong man Anubrata Mondal --- on charges of corruption.

She said that real history of the country was being consciously erased and replaced by a pseudo history which had little relationship with facts.

Banerjee was speaking at the inauguration of a new Independence museum inside the historic Alipore Central Jail associated with the names of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose,



Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Masterda Surya Sen of Chittagong armoury case.

A museum will now stand in place of the colonial jail which has now been shifted to Baruipur in South 24 Parganas.

Though she would not name any one Banerjee said the leadership should not be guided by narrow interests. "A

leader who leads by example, who lead the people, the nation, the creed, the culture," Banerjee said drawing instant criticism from the Opposition.

"A leader like Mamata Banerjee who leads a government of the thieves and for the thieves has no right to teach the quality of a leader," said BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari.

Vijayan says RSS claim of 1963 R-Day participation is a lie

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's claim that it had participated in the 1963 Republic Day parade was a lie, according to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Addressing the media late on Wednesday evening, Vijayan said the Union Home Ministry itself has made it known that there was no invitation to the RSS to participate in the Republic Day parade.

In his first official reaction to the press meet held by Governor Arif Mohammed Khan on Monday, the chief minister said that Irfan Habib and Gopinath Raveendran were "globally respected" historians and the Governor who

had made it known that he was a camp follower of the RSS was attacking them to please the Sangh Parivar.

Vijayan said Irfan Habib and Gopinath Raveendran were responsible for bringing out the truth about India's history as well as freedom struggle. "That is the reason why these two eminent scholars have become eyesores for the RSS," he said.

The Chief Minister said that the Sarkaria Commission which was appointed by the Centre to study the Centre-State relations had concluded in its recommendations that the Governor being the Constitutional head of the State was expected to obey the State Government. "He has no ways other than to sign on the leg-



islations enacted by the State Legislature. If he has some differences, he is free to speak to the State Government about his reservations," said Vijayan. Vijayan also lambasted the Governor for spreading falsehood that liquor and lottery were the main sources of income. According to the chief minister, the press meet by Governor was nothing other

than a damp squib.

The Chief Minister also alleged that the Governor is bend upon appointing RSS men as vice-chancellors and faculty members in the universities in the State for back-seat driving. "The Tamil Nadu Government which saw through the evil designs of the RSS, scuttled such move and enacted legislation curtaining the role of the Governor in the appointment of Vice-Chancellors," said Vijayan.

Vijayan also said that the RSS leaders were responsible for the political murders happening in the State. "The persons who were arrested in connection with the murders were all RSS activists who had completed the advanced Officers Training Camps held by the

Sangh. People of Kerala and the CPI(M) were united in their opposition to the RSS," said Vijayan.

He also blamed the BJP and Sangh Parivar for bringing down the VP Singh led Government because of its intention to implement the Mandal Commission recommendations. "Arif Mohammed Khan was also responsible for bringing down the Government led by V P Singh," said Vijayan.

Vijayan reiterated his charge that Governor Arif Mohammed Khan was acting as a stooge of the RSS. "The BJP Government that was sworn in 2019 has a clear agenda to safonize the country. We will never be a part such a mission," he said.

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Government, in Vidhan Sabha on Wednesday, rejected the Opposition charge that Samajwadi Party leader Mohammed Azam Khan has been framed in fake cases and the Government has unleashed vendetta against the SP leader.

The issue was raised by SP MLA and former UP Assembly speaker Mata Prasad Pandey through an adjournment notice, alleging that the government is hounding Azam Khan. The Supreme Court on July 22 had granted interim bail to SP MLA Azam Khan in a land-grabbing case, exercising its special powers under Article 142 of the Constitution as it flagged the "peculiar" circumstances of the matter.

Raising the issue in the assembly through adjournment notice, Pandey said Azam Khan was framed in false cases and he was imprisoned for two years. He said even after the Supreme Court granted bail to the SP MLA, there was no let up in vendetta by the state government against Khan and several cases had been registered against him in September.

Pandey alleged that fresh



cases were being lodged against Azam Khan with the objective of cancelling his bail granted by the Supreme Court.

"Azam Khan is not a criminal. He is a 10-term MLA and was also a member of Rajya Sabha and was elected to Lok Sabha in 2019. His wife and son were also sent to jail in fake cases along with Azam Khan. He was kept in Sitapur jail like a hardened criminal in a small cell," Pandey said, adding that he had visited Azam Khan in Sitapur jail and no political person was treated in such a shabby manner in the past.

Pandey said he had raised the issue in the assembly in the hope of justice for Azam Khan. "If we do not get justice in the assembly, where else will we go?" he said.

Opposing the adjournment notice, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna said, "I can never agree on the allegation that fake cases have been registered against Azam

Khan and there is any vendetta against him."

Khanna said since the case was sub judice he could not speak much on it.

"It is highly misleading and erroneous to claim that Azam Khan has been framed in fake cases. There are serious charges of illegal occupation of land under Enemy Property Act, river bed land and sand land measuring 32 hectares, which was included in the private Jauhar University promoted by Azam Khan," Suresh Khanna said, and added, "He (Azam Khan) got four acre land of the Schedule Caste community registered in name of the university without obtaining the permission of the competent revenue authorities.

He rejected the charge of vendetta saying the government was committed to ensuring justice to all sections of society.

Khanna said on the complaint by Nanhe, son of Ali Bahadur, on September 17, a case was registered against Azam Khan in Kotwali police station of Rampur for allegedly threatening him to not testify against Azam Khan in a local court of Rampur.

CBI registers fresh FIR in connection with coal scam against RPG group

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered a fresh FIR in connection with the coal scam against RPG Group companies after conducting a Preliminary Enquiry for 10 years.

The agency has booked RPG Industries Limited, RPG Enterprises Limited and CESC Limited in connection with alleged irregularities in a 27-year-old allocation process of the Sarisatoli, Tara and Deocha Pachami blocks in West Bengal from 1993 to 1995, officials said.

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) had, on September 19, 2012, referred a complaint of the then Congress



MP Sandeep Dixit and six other MPs, seeking a probe into alleged irregularities in the allocation of 24 coal blocks during the 1993-2004 period, to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), following which a preliminary enquiry was registered by the probe agency on September 26, 2012.

The alleged irregularities in the allocation of the blocks to RPG Industries, RPG Enterprises and Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation

(CESC) Limited were mentioned in the complaint, they said. The FIR alleged that RPG Industries had requested the coal ministry for captive mining blocks for power generation by CESC in 1992.

The ministry had short-listed the Sarisatoli coal block for the purpose. Next year, CESC said the earmarked block was not sufficient to meet the needs of the Budge Budge and the Ballagarh thermal power stations and sought an adjacent coal block.

The CBI also alleged that RPG Industries attached two separate clearances while seeking the Mahan block for a project in Rajasthan's Dholpur in May 1995.

ED seeks transfer of bail hearing of Jain, SC asks Sessions Court to decide

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed a Sessions Court here to take up and decide on September 22 an Enforcement Directorate application seeking transfer of bail hearing of Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain in an alleged money laundering case to another judge.

Observing that any accused is entitled to expeditious hearing of his bail plea, a three-judge bench headed by Justice D Y Chandrachud asked the principal district and sessions judge of the Rouse Avenue court to take up the petition for hearing.



"We clarify that any party aggrieved by the decision on transfer petition can seek appropriate remedies available in law. The forum for hearing of bail will depend upon the decision of the District Judge," said the bench also comprising Justices Hima Kohli and PS Narasimha.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Jain, mentioned the matter before the Bench and sought an urgent hearing.

NIA arrests murderer from Mumbai in Amravati hate killing case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday arrested an absconding killer from Mumbai in pharmacist Umesh Kohle killing case of Amravati.

This is the 11th arrest made by the NIA in the Amravati killing case.

The NIA arrested accused Shaim Ahmed alias Shahim of Al Karim Nagar No.1, near Sharifa Masjid, Amarawati in the case related to the killing of Umesh Pralhadrao Kolhe. He

was arrested for his active role in the conspiracy, the NIA said in a statement.

The NIA had declared a cash reward of Rs 2 lakh for any information leading to his arrest.

Ahmed is also known by other aliases like Shaheem, Sahim Mathe, Monu and Mathe.

The case was initially registered as FIR No. 306/2022 dated June 22 at Police Station City Kotwali, Amravati, Maharashtra and re-registered by NIA on July 2. Earlier, 10 accused persons have been arrested in the case from June 23 to 25, July 2, and

August 2 and 11. Further investigations in the case are in progress, the agency added.

Pharmacist Kolhe was killed on June 21 for allegedly backing now suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma who is roiled in a controversy relating to the Prophet row.

Earlier, the agency seized digital devices (mobile phones, SIM cards, memory cards, DVRs), pamphlets spreading hate messages, knives and other incriminating documents and materials from the premises of the arrested accused.

Rajbhar meets Yogi, seeks inclusion of community in ST list

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP) president Om Prakash Rajbhar said here on Wednesday that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had accepted his demand for the inclusion of the Rajbhar community in the list of Schedule Tribes.

The SBSP president said he brought up the demand for tribal status for the Rajbhar community

before the chief minister who he said agreed with him.

Rajbhar further said that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath asked him to compile a proposal of his demand and send it to the Centre.

The SBSP president on Tuesday met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and raised the demand to include Bhar and Rajbhar communities in the Scheduled Tribes category. He met the chief minister along with his son Arvind Rajbhar.

FIRST COLUMN

HEAL INDIA FIRST, WORLD THEREAFTER

Amid limited healthcare infra, resources must serve Indians



SIDHARRTH SHANKAR

The 'Heal in India' initiative may have several positives but being alert on risks is even more important. Cognisance of the impact on the overall approach towards the Indian healthcare model is crucial. While there have been several 'hits', the 'Heal in India' initiative cuts across the misses that need to be looked at.

Affordability and accessibility are the two key issues in the healthcare sector in India. Almost 2.1 per cent of the GDP is committed to affordability, which is staggering low as compared with the 9.7 per cent in OECD countries. Moreover, more than 50 per cent of healthcare expenses in India are borne by citizens, pushing 55 million poverty-stricken people further down the abyss.

Almost 28 per cent of the urban population has access to 66 per cent of the beds in hospitals, while the remaining 72 per cent has access to only 33 per cent of hospital beds. In the case of the medical fraternity, 67 per cent of doctors are in the cities.

India has two successful models in the West for valuable lessons. One is the insurance-based model in the US and another is the UK's state-controlled National Health Service (NHS) model.



The Government is doing all to build the medical education base with new colleges, healthcare plans and reforms for a higher output of medical talent. However, this requires a multiplicity of regulatory checks, where merely the cheque-and-fee model should not be the deciding factor.

While Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) and 'Heal in India' initiatives aim to streamline the integrated digital health infrastructure, the ever-increasing healthcare needs of the neglected masses are overlooked. For instance, while the innovative thought of building an online repository of healthcare professionals will enable foreign patients to access the best-suited treatment line, this in no way ensures affordable healthcare for their own citizens. Since Covid-19 brought the world to its knees, nations have supported one another with life-saving vaccinations and medical kits. However, the fine line between the import/export of products and healthcare professionals may have been ignored and taken for granted. The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) in the 1990s also aimed to create a liberal healthcare world, and the results were criticised globally. A similar impact is caused by an overdose of medical tourism. When a country's limited healthcare resources are exploited or, more precisely, stretched to the utmost to serve the healthcare needs of stakeholders other than its own citizens, it makes a massive dent in the country's health equity.

India neither has a strong supply side nor a weak demand base that would benefit from such a repository. Instead, a registry is required at the national, urban, and rural levels to address the mounting healthcare challenges, which are manpower, access, affordability, etc. Such a registry along with strong public healthcare initiatives is the urgent need for India's current healthcare sector. The online National Health Resource Repository (NHRR) being planned and built robustly by the National Health Authority (NHA) will require Health Care Professionals (HCPs) to upload their professional details and achievements along with their preferred destinations. This will give foreigners a ready list of hospitals available for the most appropriate healthcare services. About 42 allied healthcare services that have been on offer via this portal have been identified, offering professionals access to serve foreign patients in the country of their choice.

It is time to prioritize our nation's healthcare needs and move in the right direction for 'Heal in India' first and then 'Heal by India'.

(The author is an advocate)

Reforms that make roads safer

Surface transport safety reforms can be implemented at the State and national levels to minimise the economic costs of road crashes

Road accident rates are seen increasingly rising across the Indian states. The recent unfortunate passing away of the noted industrialist Cyrus Mistry calls for an examination of the conditions of the roads, awareness promotion campaigns, acts of driving sensibilities, and behavioral angles.

Recent National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) reports show that road mortality cases increased by 1.55 lakhs in 2021 compared to 1.33 lakhs in 2020. The report further confirms a 5.1 per cent increase in road accident death rates compared to 2020. In addition, reports confirm that mostly accident cases and road crash deaths are rising across the types of roads. Road accidents have been seen in rural areas due to the dilapidated conditions and poor quality of road works.

Meanwhile, the accident rates on national and state highways are rising alarmingly. In 2019, Bosch Foundation revealed that the total socio-economic costs from road accidents across the Indian states vary from \$15.71-38.81 billion, which accounts for 0.55 per cent to 1.35 per cent of GDP. Such a staggering fact shows that higher road accidents have resulted in more significant economic and human capital loss. In 2021, major accident-related death cases mainly emanated from Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, and Gujarat. However, the highest rate of accident mortality rates occurred in the states of Chhattisgarh (59 per cent), followed by Puducherry (58 per cent), Haryana (52.3 per cent), Ladakh (51 per cent), and Madhya Pradesh (47.7 per cent).

In 2021, 21 states and UTs experienced an accident mortality rate higher than the national average. Among all types of accidental death cases reported in 2021, road traffic mortality constitutes 43.7 per cent across the states.

Apart from total deaths, two-wheelers nearly account for 30 per cent to 40 per cent of road crash deaths in the last three years. This might be because of the driver's behaviour, such as overtaking, over speeding, and potholes. Two-wheelers drivers frequently change lanes and, most of the time, avoid safety devices such as wearing helmets, using mobile phones while driving, and driving on the wrong side. Other factors like weather and driving timing have also contributed heavily to road crash incidents and death rates. In 2021, as per the NCRB report, nearly 81,000 road accidents out of 4 lakhs cases happen only at night time (6 P.M.-9 P.M.). The intensity of road accident rates at night times are the highest in Tamil Nadu (14,415 cases), Madhya Pradesh (9,798 cases), and Kerala (6,765 cases). This might be because drivers during evening and night times prefer not to wear seatbelts, a typical behavioral issue. In addition, over speeding and heavy alcohol intoxication are the proba-



ROAD TRAFFIC INJURIES ARE THE FIRST CAUSE OF DEATH AMONG CHILDREN AGED 5-14 AND YOUNG ADULTS AGED 15-29 (GLOBAL STATUS REPORT ON ROAD SAFETY, 2018). ROAD ACCIDENTS WERE THE EIGHTH LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH OF ALL AGES IN 2016

(Devi Prasad Dash & Yashobanta Parida are Assistant Professors of Economics at School of Management and Entrepreneurship, IIT, Jodhpur, and FLAME University, Pune, respectively. Aruna Kumar Dash is Associate Professor of Economics at IBS Hyderabad. All views expressed here are personal.)



ble reasons. In the morning hours, incidents of road accidents are relatively less due to the few vehicles and good visibility. However, in the early morning hours, it has been found that there is a steep increase in bus and truck accidents due to fatigue and sleeplessness. Further, a month-wise analysis of road accident statistics from NCRB has revealed that winter times, especially December, January, and February, account for nearly 28 per cent and 30 per cent of road accidents in 2021. This might be because of low visibility, fog, smog, and big festive seasons like Christmas and the New Year effect.

India has the worst road accident severity among the South Asian economies. World Bank Data on Road Mortality from 2000 to 2019 suggests that the higher the crash severity, the higher the probability of road mortality from the crash risk. Developing economies like Russia, Brazil, China, Mexico, and Middle Eastern Economies experience higher road crash deaths due to the drivers' erratic behavioral response, road safety conditions, and many factors associated with road safety.

According to the WHO Global Status Report on Road Safety, 2018, 1.35 million people worldwide die yearly from road accidents and injuries, which means one person is killed every 324 seconds. In addition, approximately 20 to 50 million people suffer nonfatal injuries, which in many cases

cause disability (WHO, 2020). Globally, road traffic injuries are the first cause of death among children aged 5-14 and young adults aged 15-29 (Global Status Report on Road Safety, 2018). Road accidents were the eighth leading cause of death for people of all ages in 2016 (Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018).

It was found that the situation is worse in low-income countries compared to high-income countries. The number of people who died in road accidents was three times higher in low-income countries compared to high-income countries (World Health Organization, 2018). This problem is highly concerning for low and middle income economies, which account for 60 per cent of the total vehicle ownership and 93 per cent of road crash fatality respectively (Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, 2020, Government of India).

This might be because strict enforcement of the law is missing and law enforcement is not being implemented properly. Some reform steps can be implemented at the state and national levels to minimize the economic costs of road crashes. First, an excellent holistic strategy is needed to look after the conditions and improve road quality, especially before winter and rainy days. Second, makers of two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and four-wheelers should install an automated message warn-

ing drivers when traveling beyond the speed limit and appeal to them to slow down. There should be no driver-side control over how loud the message is, as there is only one way to do so—by slowing down.

Third, checkpoints and random testing processes must be expedited at every checkpoint on state highways, national highways, and toll plazas where the incidents of accident rates are the highest. Fourth, legal and institutional rules must allow seatbelts mandatory across four vehicles for all passengers, including compulsory helmet wearing for two-wheelers.

Using a seatbelt won't prevent accidents during the rush hour, but it will lessen the possibility of severe injury or death. If it is found that such a rule is getting violated by a driver on several occasions, then strict enforcement of the law should be levied such as canceling the driving license for three months.

Fifth, through various national-level programmes, a graduated licensing system and risk awareness campaigns for drivers and pedestrians must be expanded. Sixth, proper planning should be made when constructing roadways and construction of plastic roads need to be implemented. Last but not least, using advanced technologies and artificial intelligence can assist India in meeting the United Nations' aim of reducing road accidents by at least 50 per cent by 2030.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI IS BEHIND THIS, BUT SOME BJP LEADERS ARE MISUSING THE CBI AND ED FOR THEIR INTERESTS. —BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE



SHE KNOWS THAT THE INVESTIGATION IS CATCHING UP TO HER. SHE IS TRYING TO GIVE A MESSAGE TO THE PM THAT SHE HAS NOTHING AGAINST HIM. —AGNIMITRA PAUL, BENGAL BJP MLA

Fostering glory by reviving decorated battalions

Infantry have deep-rooted sentiments with their war glories, which are also used as a tool to motivate their soldiers

The Guards - The Elites"; the 'THOUGHT' coined by General Carriappa, the first Commander-in-Chief of independent India to raise new regiment free from fixed class composition of British era and also to have units compatible to the "Elite Guards" particularly the "Cold Stream Guards" of the British Army raised in 1650 CE. Thus, in 1949, a new Regiment, the Brigade of The Guards, was raised by converting the four senior most, battle hardened and highly decorated infantry battalions.

In order to promote the "open Recruitment policy", it became the first Regiment based on "All India - All Class composition" and also the harbinger of fresh raisings



RAMESH DAVESAR

(The author is an Army veteran)

and reorganisations that subsequently took place to meet the emerging military challenges of post-independence. And close on the heels of Guards, the erstwhile British Indian Para Regiment of 1945 vintage was re-raised in 1952 and yet again by merging three senior battalions with glorious military background.

Subsequently, after the hiatus of about two decades, the Army embarked upon a major reorganisational programme. The first on the list was to create the mechanised wing of infantry. Though not a new concept, earlier also we had these units albeit under different incarnations such as the '3 Indian Motor Brigade', created in 1941, subsequently redesignated as '43 Lorried Brigade' in 1943. Post-inde-

pendence, we had a couple of infantry battalions as motorised units.

Commenced in 1969, it took one decade, when in April 79, yet again, in a reduced practice, 14 old infantry battalions with the good military credentials were converted to formally raise 'The Mechanised Infantry Regiment'. In all, these units on conversion were given the new Regimental Entity along with the mention of their lineal ancestors.

The thought behind the en-masse conversion of units could be many—a reward for their services rendered in line of duty or to save the efforts and resources required to raise a unit afresh. Irrespective of these, one gets

intrigued by the fact that 21, the oldest and the most illustrious Infantry Units with glorious history were taken away from their parent Regiments. For instance, the seven units that constituted the Brigade of the Guards and the Para Regiment had the history of 225 years with 93 battle honours earned by them. Look at 1 SIKH, now a Mech Infantry Unit; it too had a glorious lineage. Raised in 1846, perhaps the only unit to have had the honour of bagging 245 and 87 pre/post-Independence military awards, respectively.

A point worth pondering over: ever since their conversion ranging from 43-73 years, they have participated in various post-Independence operations

and actions, with most of them deservedly earning various military awards.

Exercising professional dexterity they have not only crafted their own history but also carved unique entities such as the regimental panache, ethos and customs. And it is fair to assume that their "post-conversion achievements" would take precedence over what they were inherited with from the constituent units.

In other words, the benign existence and achievements of the ancestral battalions are virtually obliterated into the historical annals. It is an accepted fact that the senior most battalions of all infantry regiments by virtue of their age have had relatively far more oper-

ational opportunities and military experience over their younger siblings. Obviously they earned more honours and awards which are ceremoniously celebrated by the regiments, except the donor regiments which are notionally celebrating the achievements of the units which in actual are neither with them nor existing.

The infantry have deep rooted sentiments with their war glories which are also used as a tool to motivate their soldiers to emulate the achievements of their elders. It further emboldens the argument to enliven and revive these military glories and also bring back those units from the historical hibernation.

Meanwhile, in continuation of our reorganisation

and restructuring drive, in the 1990s, a specialist and dedicated Force, 'The Rashtriya Rifles (RR)' was created to fight terrorism. Renouncing the erstwhile practice, the RR Battalions were raised by affiliating them with various infantry regiments for pooling manpower and their turnover. This model safeguarded and protected the entity of individual infantry units.

Coming back to the basic issue, military prudence demands that those units which brought glory must always remain alive to not only motivate the present generation but also leave their emulative foot prints for the coming generations. Then why not endeavour to revive "The 21 Rare Military Units"?

Russians rush for flights out amid partial reservist call-up

AP ■ BELGRADE (SERBIA)

Large numbers of Russians rushed to book one-way tickets out of the country while they still could on Wednesday after Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a partial mobilisation of military reservists for the war in Ukraine. Flights filled up quickly and the prices of tickets for remaining connections sky-rocketed, apparently driven by fears that Russia's borders could soon close or of a broader call-up that might send many Russian men of fighting age to the war's front lines.

Tickets for the Moscow-Belgrade flights operated by Air Serbia, the only European carrier besides Turkish Airlines to maintain flights to Russia despite a European Union flight embargo, sold out for the next several days.

The price for flights from Moscow to Istanbul or Dubai increased within minutes before jumping again, reaching as high as 9,200 euros (USD 9,119) for a one-way economy class fare.

Putin's decree stipulates that the amount of people called to active duty will be determined by the Defence Ministry.

Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said in a televised interview that 300,000 reservists with relevant combat and service experience initially would be mobilised.



Russia has seen a marked exodus of citizens since Putin ordered his troops to invade Ukraine almost seven months ago. During the early morning address to the nation in which the president announced the partial mobilisation of reservists, he also issued a veiled nuclear threat to Russia's enemies in the West.

Reports of panic spreading among Russians soon flooded social networks. Anti-war groups said the limited airplane tickets out of Russia reached enormous prices due to high

demand and swiftly became unavailable.

Some postings alleged people already had been turned back from Russia's land border with Georgia and that the website of the state Russian railway company collapsed because too many people were checking for ways out of the country.

Social networks in Russian also surged with advice on how to avoid the mobilisation or leave the country.

In an apparent attempt to calm the panic, the head of the defence committee of the lower

house of Russia's parliament, Andrei Kartapolov, said authorities would not place additional restrictions on reservists leaving Russia, according to Russian media reports.

A group based in Serbia, Russians, Belarussians, Ukrainians and Serbs Together Against War, tweeted that there were no available flights to Belgrade from Russia until mid-October.

Flights to Turkey, Georgia or Armenia also sold out, according to the Belgrade-based group. "All the Russians who want-

ed to go to war already went," the group said. "No one else wants to go there!"

Serbia's capital, Belgrade, has become a popular destination for Russians during the war. Up to 50,000 Russians have fled to Serbia since Russia invaded Ukraine and many opened businesses, especially in the IT sector.

Russians don't need visas to enter Serbia, which is the only European country which has not joined Western sanctions against Russia for its aggression in Ukraine.

4 Ukrainian regions schedule votes this week to join Russia

AP ■ KYIV, UKRAINE

Russian-controlled regions of eastern and southern Ukraine announced plans Tuesday to start voting this week to become integral parts of Russia. The Kremlin-backed efforts to swallow up four regions could set the stage for Moscow to escalate the war following Ukrainian successes on the battlefield.

The scheduling of referendums starting Friday in the Luhansk, Kherson and partly Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk regions came after a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin said the votes are needed and as Moscow is losing ground in the invasion it began nearly seven months ago.

Former President Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy head of Russia's Security Council chaired by Putin, said referendums that fold regions into Russia itself would make redrawn frontiers "irreversible" and enable Moscow to use "any means" to defend them.

In 2014, Russia sent troops into Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and then held a referendum there that paved the way for its annexation by Moscow.

The upcoming votes, in territory Russia already controls, are all but certain to go Moscow's way. But they were quickly dismissed as illegitimate by Western leaders who are backing Kyiv with military and other support that has



helped its forces seize momentum on battlefields in the east and south. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba denounced the planned votes as a sham.

"The referendums will change nothing," he told reporters at U.N. headquarters where he is attending the General Assembly's annual gathering of world leaders. "It's an act of desperation for Russia, but it is not going to help them."

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the United States would "never recognize this territory as anything other than part of Ukraine," he said, adding that the Kremlin effort reflects Russia's setbacks on the battlefield. "These are not the actions of a confident country. These are not acts of strength," he said.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who is also attending the U.N. General Assembly in New York, said: "It is very, very clear that these sham referendums cannot be accepted."

French President Emmanuel Macron said referendum plans amounted to "cynicism." "Russia declared war ... and now it explains that in this same region it is going to organize a referendum. If this were not tragic, it might be funny," he said, adding that the votes would have "no legal consequences."

Authorities installed by Russia in occupied areas of four Ukrainian regions had outlined plans to hold referendums on membership to the Russian Federation later this month. They have been condemned by Ukraine. Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics called for more sanctions against Russia and more weapons for Ukraine, tweeting: "We must say no to Russian blackmail."

In Donetsk, part of Ukraine's wider Donbas region that Putin has set as a primary objective of the invasion, separatist leader Denis Pushilin said the vote will "restore historic justice" to the territory's "long-suffering people."

Front line farming: Bombs disrupt critical Ukraine industry

AP ■ NOVOMYKOLAIVKA (UKRAINE)

An unexploded rocket sticks out of a field, and another is embedded in the ground of the farm compound.

Workers found a cluster bomb while clearing weeds, and there's a gaping hole in the roof of the shrapnel-scarred livestock barn.

All work has halted on this large eastern Ukrainian farm, whose fields and buildings have been hit so many times by mortars, rockets, missiles and cluster bombs that its workers are unable to sow the crater-dotted land or harvest crops like wheat.

Returning to planting and harvesting "will be difficult, very difficult," said Viktor Lubinets, who handles crop production at the Veres farm.

Even if the fighting ends, the fields must first be cleared of unexploded ordnance and shrapnel.

And the fighting is far from over. The roar of an incoming projectile fills

the air, the nearby detonation shaking the ground and sending a plume of black smoke into the sky. Lubinets barely flinches.

"I've got used to it. It was frightening during the first couple of days, but now — a person can get used to anything," the 55-year-old said, the smoke dissipating behind him.

"And we have to work. If we give all this up, we will abandon, other farmers will abandon, what will happen then?"

Agriculture is a critical part of Ukraine's economy, accounting for about 20 per cent of gross national product and 40 per cent of export revenue before the war, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation.

The country is often described as the breadbasket of Europe and millions rely on its affordable supplies of grain and sunflower oil in Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia where many already face hunger.



But Russia's invasion in late February has dealt a heavy blow, damaging farmland, crops, livestock, machinery and storage facilities, as well as severely hampering transport

and exports.

The FAO estimated in July that preliminary damage to the industry ranges from USD 4.3 billion to USD 6.4 billion — 15 per cent to 22 per cent

of the total value of Ukraine's pre-war agriculture sector, estimated at USD 29 billion.

The Veres farm is a stark example. Its 5,700 hectares (14,085 acres) of land would usually grow wheat, barley, corn and sunflowers, and it had 1,500 cattle.

But its location made it particularly vulnerable in what has been largely an artillery war. It lies in an almost direct line between the strategic city of Izium, seized by Russian forces in early April and retaken by Ukraine in September, and Kramatorsk, the largest city in the eastern Donetsk region still in Ukrainian hands.

The farm complex has been hit 15 to 20 times, Lubinets says, and he's lost count of how many times the fields have been struck.

The grain storage has been shelled, the electricity generation facility was destroyed, and multiple rockets rained down on the cattle barn — empty since the livestock was sold off as the

war started. Of a prewar workforce of 100 employees, most were evacuated and only about 20 remain.

Workers managed to plant wheat, but they didn't have time to harvest it. The crops burned down during a bombing on July 2.

Lubinets was devastated. As an agronomist, he had been looking forward to examining the results of five new types of wheat they had planted, part of annual research on crop performance.

"All this research work was destroyed," he said. "You see, how can I feel? How can a person feel if you wanted to do something, but somebody came and ruined it?"

Some farms in the area have been luckier. Nearly 10 kilometres (six miles) to the southwest of Novomykolaivka, a combine harvester moves methodically up and down a field, slicing dried sunflowers from their stalks and pouring their black seeds into waiting trucks.

Biden at UN to call Russian war affront to body's charter

AP ■ NEW YORK

President Joe Biden is making the U.S. case to world leaders at the United Nations that Russia's "naked aggression" in Ukraine is an affront to the heart of what the international body stands for as he looks to rally allies to stand firm in backing the Ukrainian resistance.

Biden, during his time at the U.N. General Assembly, also planned to meet Wednesday with new British Prime Minister Liz Truss and press allies to meet an \$18 billion target to replenish the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

He also announced \$2.9 billion in global food security aid to address shortages caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the effects of climate change.

White House officials said the crux of the president's visit to the U.N. this year would be a full-throated condemnation of Russia as its brutal war nears the seven-month mark.

"He'll offer a firm rebuke of Russia's unjust war in Ukraine and make a call to the world to continue to stand against the naked aggression that we've seen these past several months," White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said in previewing the president's address.

"He will underscore the importance of strengthening the United Nations and reaffirm core tenets of its charter at a time when a permanent member of the Security Council has struck at the very heart of the charter by challenging the principle of territorial integrity and sovereignty."

Intl court, EU agency publish evidence-collecting guidelines

AP ■ THE HAGUE (NETHERLANDS)

The International Criminal Court chief prosecutor and European Union judicial cooperation agency Eurojust have launched a set of guidelines for nongovernmental organisations collecting evidence of atrocities in Ukraine and elsewhere around the world.

"With the war in Ukraine, peace and justice are under the most severe pressure, and accountability for core international crimes and violations of human rights is more than ever essential for international criminal justice," Eurojust President Ladislav Hamran said in a statement Wednesday.

He said the guidelines will be "a key building block in efforts of authorities and civil society organisations to collect and preserve information and evidence that may become admissible in court."

They include advice on approaching and interviewing vulnerable witnesses, dealing with documents, digital information and items that could be evidence as well as storing, analysing and keeping the information and potential pieces of evidence secure.

Allegations of atrocities by Russian forces fighting in the nearly seven-month war in Ukraine have again come to the fore in recent days as Ukrainian forces have recaptured parts of



their country and discovered mass graves and possible torture sites.

International Criminal Court Prosecutor Karim Khan has opened an investigation in

Ukraine and sent teams to gather evidence. Other nations also are supporting investigation efforts by sending experts. The prosecutor hasn't yet announced any charges linked to the conflict.

In March, Eurojust helped set up a Joint Investigation Team with Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine. The ICC prosecution also agreed to participate in the team and in May it was broadened when Slovakia, Estonia and Latvia joined.

Khan said NGOs are "critical partners in our common goal to achieve accountability for international crimes. Now more than ever we must work together to strengthen our common work towards justice."

Germany raids 24 properties linked to Putin ally Usmanov

AP ■ BERLIN

About 250 police officers have raided two dozen properties across Germany linked to Russian oligarch Alisher Usmanov, a close ally of President Vladimir Putin, in connection with alleged breaches of sanctions and money laundering rules, officials said Wednesday.

Prosecutors in Frankfurt and Munich said in separate statements that state and federal police were searching the 24 properties in Bavaria, Baden-Wuerttemberg, Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein.

The statement by Frankfurt prosecutors named the suspect



only as a Russian businessman. But German weekly Der Spiegel, which first reported the raids, named him as Usmanov.

Two officials involved in the investigation, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to do so publicly, confirmed his identity to The Associated Press.

Usmanov is subject to sanctions in the United States and the

European Union.

Frankfurt prosecutors said the suspect of their investigation is alleged to have conducted several transactions between 2017 and 2022 using a complex network of offshore companies to hide the origin of the payments, which amounted to millions of euros.

"There is a suspicion that the sums transferred resulted from crimes, in particular tax evasion," prosecutors said.

Munich prosecutors said in a statement statement that their investigation centered on allegations of payments being made to security companies guarding the properties, in breach of sanctions rules.

Biden formally nominates new ambassador to Russia



AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden on Tuesday formally nominated a veteran foreign service officer with years of experience in Russian affairs to be the next U.S. ambassador to Russia.

The White House announced the nomination of Lynne Tracy, the current U.S. ambassador to Armenia, to the post after the Russian government signed off on the choice. Tracy's selection had been known for some time but had

not been announced pending Russia's approval. Ambassadorial nominations must be approved by the host government under the rules of diplomatic protocol.

Such approval is generally routine but couldn't be taken for granted at a time of particularly fraught U.S.-Russian relations over Ukraine, the detention of Americans in Russia, allegations of Russian meddling in U.S. and other elections, and an escalating spat over the staffing of embassies in Washington and Moscow. Tracy, who speaks Russian, previously served as a senior adviser for Russian affairs in the State Department's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, and as the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. She also held several posts in Central and South Asia.



Taliban official: explosion kills 3 people in Afghan capital

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

An explosion in Afghanistan's capital has killed at least three people and wounded 13 others, a Taliban official said on Wednesday.

According to Khalid Zadrar, the Taliban-appointed spokesman for the Kabul police chief, the blast occurred in a

restaurant in the city's western Dehmazang neighborhood. A team has arrived in the area to find out the cause of the blast, he added. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast.

The regional affiliate of IS, known as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province, has increased attacks on mosques

and minorities across the country since the Taliban seized power last August.

IS, which emerged in eastern Afghanistan in 2014, is seen as the greatest security challenge facing the country's new Taliban rulers. Following their takeover a year ago, the Taliban have launched a sweeping crackdown on IS.

Be patriotic, reorient Islam to Chinese conditions: Sr Communist Party official to China's Muslims

PTI ■ BEIJING

A top leader of the ruling Communist Party has asked China's over 25 million Muslims to "uphold the banner of patriotism" and reorient Islam to adapt to Chinese conditions, amid Beijing's diplomatic offensive to counter a damning UN report accusing it of serious human rights violations against Uygur Muslims.

Senior Chinese leader Wang Yang on Tuesday met with members of the newly-elected leadership of the China Islamic Association during which he called for full implementation of the ruling Communist Party of China's basic policy on religious affairs.

Wang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China



(CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, has asked the association to maintain the correct political direction, uphold the banner of patriotism and socialism, and further strengthen the Chinese orientation in developing Islam in China, and facilitate its adaptation to socialist society, state-run Xinhu news agency reported.

He called for efforts to rally Islamic figures and Muslims closely around the Party and the government for building China into a modern socialist country in all respects

and realising the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

Wang's meeting with the association comes in the backdrop of the UN Human Rights Commission's recent report stating that the charges of rights violations against Uygur Muslims constitute "crimes against humanity" in the volatile Xinjiang province. China has denounced the report released by UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet on September 1, hours before her term ended as a US-orchestrated report and declared it as "illegal, null and void."

The report, while falling short of terming the allegation of human rights abuse of Uygur Muslims of Xinjiang as genocide as alleged by the US and western countries, said the charges may constitute "crimes against humanity".

HOUSE TO VOTE ON ELECTION LAW OVERHAUL IN RESPONSE TO JAN 6

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The House will vote on an overhaul of a centuries-old election law, an effort to prevent future presidential candidates from trying to subvert the popular will.

The legislation under consideration beginning Wednesday is a direct response to the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection and former President Donald Trump's efforts to find a way around the Electoral Count Act, an arcane 1800s-era law that governs, along with the U.S. Constitution, how states and Congress certify electors and declare presidential election winners.

While that process has long been routine and ceremonial,

Trump and a group of his aides and lawyers tried to exploit loopholes in the law in an attempt to overturn his defeat.

The bill, which the House will start debating on Wednesday, would set new parameters around the Jan. 6 joint session of Congress that happens every four years after a presidential election. The day turned violent last year after hundreds of Trump's supporters interrupted the proceedings, broke into the building and threatened the lives of then-Vice President Mike Pence and members of Congress. The rioters echoed Trump's false claims of widespread fraud and wanted Pence to block Democrat Biden's victory as he presided over the joint session. The legislation intends to



ensure that future Jan. 6 sessions are "as the constitution envisioned, a ministerial day," said Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney, a Republican who co-sponsored the legislation with House Administration Committee

Chairwoman Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif. Both Cheney and Lofgren are also members of the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack. "The American people are

supposed to decide an election, not Congress," Lofgren said.

The bill, which is similar to legislation moving through the Senate, would clarify in the law that the vice president's role presiding over the count is only ceremonial and also sets out that each state can only send one certified set of electors. Trump's allies had unsuccessfully tried to put together alternate slates of illegitimate pro-Trump electors in swing states where Biden won.

The legislation would increase the threshold for individual lawmakers' objections to any state's electoral votes, requiring a third of the House and a third of the Senate to object to trigger votes on the results in both chambers. Currently, only one lawmaker in

the House and one lawmaker in the Senate has to object. The House bill would set out very narrow grounds for those objections, an attempt to thwart baseless or politically motivated challenges. The legislation also would require courts to get involved if state or local officials want to delay a presidential vote or refuse to certify the results.

The House vote comes as the Senate is moving on a similar track with enough Republican support to virtually ensure passage before the end of the year. After months of talks, House Democrats introduced the legislation on Monday and are holding a quick vote two days later in order to send the bill across the Capitol and start to resolve differences.



China dials down Taiwan rhetoric; US, Canada transit strait

AP ■ BEIJING

China toned down its rhetoric on Taiwan on Wednesday, saying it is inevitable that the self-governing island will come under its control but that it would promote efforts to achieve that peacefully.

The comments followed recent remarks by President Joe Biden that the US would defend Taiwan if China were to invade and came a day after US and Canadian warships sailed through the Taiwan Strait.

They don't appear to signal a change in policy as much as a broader attempt to calm the waters on multiple fronts in the runup to a major meeting of the ruling Communist Party next month.

"I would like to reiterate that ... we are willing to strive for the prospect of peaceful reunification with the greatest sincerity and utmost efforts," Ma Xiaoguang, the government spokesperson on Taiwan, said when asked about growing concern that China might resort to force.

China and Taiwan split in 1949 during a civil war that brought the Communist Party to power on the mainland. The rival Nationalists retreated to Taiwan and established their own government on the island off China's east coast.

China launched missiles into the waters around Taiwan during major military exercises held last month in response to a visit by senior US lawmaker Nancy Pelosi, the speaker of the House of Representatives.

Ma, speaking at a news conference on the Taiwan issue, did not use the word force in his response, as he has in the past. Instead, he said that China would take "resolute measures" against any provocative moves by Taiwan or its international supporters.

He said that China would introduce more policies to help Taiwan, highlight the benefits of integration with China and encourage people-to-people exchanges.

"The motherland must be unified and will certainly be unified," Ma said, calling it "a historical trend that no one can stop."

But Taiwanese, who have grown accustomed to democratic freedoms, appear unlikely to join China voluntarily — particularly after China's crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong, a former British colony returned to China in 1997. China's military, for the second time in recent weeks, noted the sailing of a US warship through the Taiwan Strait without calling it provocative, as it had done earlier this year.

Man arrested after protest outside Hindu temple in UK's Birmingham

AP ■ LONDON

A "minor disorder" during a protest outside a Hindu temple in the city of Birmingham involving fireworks targeted at police officers has resulted in a man's arrest and stop and search powers being deployed, UK police said on Wednesday.

Videos of Tuesday's protest outside Durga Bhawan temple on Spon Lane in Smethwick area of the West Midlands city were circulating on social media overnight, with groups of masked men seen shouting and hurling items. Police officers could be seen holding and pulling some of these masked men trying to scale the temple fence. "Following a protest gathering in Smethwick last night (September 20), there was some minor disorder and one person was arrested," West Midlands Police said in a statement. "We had a pre-planned police presence near the temple in Spon Lane where fireworks and missiles were thrown towards some of our officers. Thankfully no-one was injured," the police said, adding that it is also looking into reports of a "small number" of cars being damaged.

The 18-year-old man arrested on suspicion of possessing a knife remains in custody for questioning on Wednesday.

"We are continuing to provide a visible police presence, working closely with faith leaders and partners across the community to provide reassurance. We will continue to monitor the situation locally and across the region," the police said.

UK Govt caps energy bills for businesses for 6 months

AP ■ LONDON

Britain's government said on Wednesday it will cap wholesale energy bills for businesses this winter to ensure companies don't go bust amid soaring energy prices. Authorities said the government will pick up nearly half of all business energy bills for six months starting October 1 to ensure companies "are able to get through this winter."

"We're going to review it after six months. We'll make sure that the most vulnerable businesses like pubs, like shops, continue to be supported after that," said Prime Minister Liz Truss, who is in New York to attend the UN General Assembly. Treasury chief Kwasi Kwarteng said the government measures would "stop businesses collapsing, protect jobs and limit inflation." Officials have not provided



details on how much the support package will cost, but it is expected to run to billions of

pounds (dollars). The news followed similar measures announced earlier this month to cap domestic energy prices to help millions of people heat their homes amid a cost-of-living crisis.

Spiralling gas and electricity bills, together with steeply rising food costs, have driven inflation in the UK to its highest level in decades. The Bank of England expects the economy to go into a recession next

year. The consumer price index hit 10.1 per cent in July, though it decreased slightly to 9.9 per cent in August. Britons were accustomed for years to an average inflation rate of around 2 per cent.

The government, which predicted the measures would cut the UK's soaring inflation rate, is expected to push through emergency legislation for the relief plans once Parliament returns in Oct.

Palestinians reach truce to end West Bank clashes

AP ■ NABLUS (WEST BANK)

Palestinian security forces and militants agreed to a truce on Wednesday to end violent clashes in a flashpoint West Bank city, local officials said. The violence highlighted deep disenchantment with the internationally backed Palestinian leadership.

For now, the deal to end the clashes eases tensions in the area, which on Tuesday was gripped by some of the fiercest antagonism directed at the Palestinian Authority in years.

The clashes erupted after an arrest raid by Palestinian security against local militants. The two sides exchanged

fire as angry residents pelted an armored jeep with objects and chased it away. One man was reported dead. The violence was reminiscent of the way Palestinians typically protest against Israeli troops.

Also Wednesday, the body of a Palestinian man suspected of killing an 84-year-old Israeli woman was found hanged in central Tel Aviv, police said.

The unrest in Nablus reflected the deep unpopularity of the Palestinian leadership, which is widely seen because of its security ties with Israel as entrenching Israel's 55-year military occupation of the West Bank and its nearly 3 million residents.

Nepal President Bhandari refuses to sign Citizenship Amendment Bill

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal President Bidya Devi Bhandari has refused to sign within the stipulated deadline a key bill to amend the Nepal Citizenship Act, which was endorsed twice by both the houses of Parliament, a move described by constitutional experts as a serious blow to the Constitution.

A senior official at the President's Office Bhesh Raj Adhikari said that the bill was not signed as of midnight on Tuesday -- the deadline to authenticate the bill re-endorsed by both the House of Representatives and the National Assembly -- after the



President earlier sent it back noting that the Parliament required to reconsider the bill as per the Constitution. Speaker Agni Prasad Sapkota, who had on September 5 recertified the amendment bill, sent it to Bhandari for authentication.

The President however did not clear the bill within the 15-day timeline given by the Constitution for certification.

The second amendment to the Citizenship Act was aimed at addressing concerns of the Madhesh-centric parties and the Non-resident Nepali Association. The rejection of the bill has affected at least half a million stateless people waiting for its passage to get their national identity cards.

The Bill that defines the entitlement for Citizenship based on marital grounds and ensures non-voting Citizenship to non-resident Nepalis living in non-SAARC countries has come under criticism from some quarters of the society, citing it did not prevent foreign women marrying Nepali men from getting citizenship easily.

US, UK join Pacific allies in Fijian military exercise

AP ■ CANBERRA (AUSTRALIA)

A military exercise in Fiji involving the United States, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand ends this week as the traditional allies counter China's growing influence in the region.

The 11-day Exercise

Cartwheel in Fiji began September 12 and ends on Friday, the US Embassy in the Fijian capital, Suva, said on Wednesday in a email.

US Navy Cmdr. Victor Lange said the name of the exercise originated from Operation Cartwheel during World War II, in which the US



fought alongside the militaries of Australia, New Zealand and

Fiji — then a British colony — to neutralize the Japanese base at Rabaul in Papua New Guinea. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said China had "no objection to normal defense cooperation among the countries concerned." "But the cooperation should not be

directed at third parties," Wang told reporters in Beijing.

The US has promised greater engagement with the South Pacific after China and the Solomon Islands signed a bilateral security treaty in May that has raised concerns of a Chinese naval base being established in the region.

Iran says it's ready for new nuclear deal but asks if US is

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Iran's president insisted Wednesday that his country is serious about reviving a deal meant to prevent it from acquiring a nuclear bomb but questioned whether Tehran could trust America's commitment to any eventual accord.

The US had already "trampled" on a previous deal, President Ebrahim Raisi told the UN General Assembly, referring to America's decision to pull out of the accord in 2018. Ever since Iran's 1979 revolution that overthrew its Western-backed shah, Tehran has been at odds with the United States and has sought to project itself as a counterweight to American power.

Tehran's resolve to resist US pressure has seen it build close ties with countries like Russia, develop a domestic ballistic missile program and attempt to export its narrow revolutionary ideals to countries across the Mideast through Shiite militias and proxies. Its nuclear programme, which Iran insists is for peaceful energy purposes, is seen as an extension of its defiance of an American-led world order.

After former US President Donald Trump walked away from the deal brokered by the Obama administration, Tehran steadily abandoned every limitation the accord imposed on its nuclear enrichment.

But efforts to salvage the deal are now nearing a take-it-or-leave-it inflection point.

US urges UN court to toss out Iranian frozen assets case

AP ■ THE HAGUE

The United States on Wednesday urged the International Court of Justice to throw out a case brought by Iran seeking to claw back around \$2 billion worth of frozen Iranian assets that the U.S. Supreme Court awarded to victims of a 1983 bombing in Lebanon and other attacks linked to Tehran.

The leader of the U.S. Legal team, Richard Visek, told the U.N. Court that it should invoke, for the first time, a legal principle known as "unclean hands," under which a nation can't bring a case because of its own criminal actions linked to the case.

"Iran's case should be dismissed in its entirety based on the principle of unclean hands," Visek told the judges sitting in the court's Great Hall of Justice.

"The essence of this threshold defense is that Iran's own egregious conduct, its sponsorship of terrorist acts directed against the United



States and U.S. Nationals, lies at the very core of its claims," Visek said.

The Hague-based court has never used the "unclean hands" defense as a reason to toss out a case, but it has been successfully cited in international arbitration cases, Visek said.

"The United States submits that if there was ever a case for application of the principle of unclean hands — one that we recognize should be considered only in narrow circumstances — it is this case," Visek said.

On Monday, Iran said the U.S. Asset confiscation was an attempt to destabilize the Tehran government and a violation of international law.

UNICEF regrets poor response to \$ 39 million appeal for Pakistan's flood-hit children

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

UNICEF has regretted that its funding appeal for over three million children in Pakistan's flood-affected areas was still less than a third of the USD 39 million it sought, according to a senior official.

"The rains and floods have already claimed the lives of more than 550 children. Without a significant surge in support, we fear many more children will lose their lives,"



Unicef Pakistan chief field officer in Balochistan, Gerida Birukila, said.

"The world needs to come

together and help the children in Pakistan. Together we can save lives by delivering life-saving health, nutrition and education services to every child in Pakistan who needs it the most," Dawn newspaper quoted the representative of the United Nations Children's Fund as saying in Geneva on Tuesday.

She said that next week marked a month since catastrophic floods uprooted more than 3.4 million children from their homes in Pakistan.

Growing cholera outbreak in Syria infects hundreds, 39 dead

AP ■ BEIRUT

A deadly cholera outbreak in Syria has killed at least 39 people and infected hundreds more this past month, health officials said Wednesday, raising concerns about whether the war-torn country can put a stop to its spread.

The UN and Syria's Health Ministry have said the source of the outbreak is believed to be linked to people drinking unsafe water from the Euphrates River

and using contaminated water to irrigate crops, resulting in food contamination. The outbreak hit government-held parts of the country as well as the areas in the northeast. Syria's health services have suffered heavily from its years-long war and much of the country is short on cleaning water supplies. In government-held areas, the Health Ministry reported 23 deaths, 20 of them in the northern province of Aleppo in addition to at least 253 cases.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client that Mr. Suresh Kumar is the owner of Property of area measuring 280 Sq. Yds., Situated in the Mohali Adesh Colony, Gat No. 7, Bapgaol, Tehsil & District. Bagpat vide G.R. Deed dated 17.09.2022, Doc No. 7398. All persons are hereby informed that M/s Suresh Jewellers Rood Palace wants to mortgage the said property and intend to obtain a loan from our client against the said property, if anybody has any objection/s upon the ownership of above owner over the said property, its mortgage/pledge, and any other objections kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)
200, 1st Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Moti Nagar, N. Delhi 110 026
Ph: 01141025738 - 4100000000

DOON UNIVERSITY
Mothrowala Road Kedarpur,
PO Defence Colony, Dehradun
Empanelment Notice
Sealed applications are invited from the reputed firms for the Registration for the supply of books to the Central Library, Doon University, Dehradun. The detailed Terms and Conditions are available on the website: www.doonuniversity.ac.in

Registrar

SBFC
SBFC FINANCE PVT. LTD.
(Entirely Small Business Focused India Pvt. Ltd.)
Unit No. 103, First Floor C & B Square, Sangam Complex, 127, Andheri-Kurla Road, Village Chakala, Andheri (East), Mumbai -400059 | Telephone: +91 22 - 67875300 | Fax: +91 22 67875334 | www.sbfc.com | Corporate Identity Number: U67190MH2008PTC178270

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform & notify the Public about the relocation of **Lajpat Nagar, Delhi branch of SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd.** effective from **21.12.2022**
From: SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd., O-7, 1st Floor, Lajpat Nagar - 2, New Delhi - 110024
To: SBFC Finance Pvt Ltd, A-86, 1st Floor, Arjun Nagar, Bhisam Pitahma Marg, Opp. Defence Colony, New Delhi -110003

For more details, please contact:-
SBFC FINANCE PVT.LTD.
Phone: 9871627604

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General public that MRS. LATA JAIN is owner of FREE HOLD BUILT UP GROUND FLOOR AND SECOND FLOOR WITH ROOF RIGHTS PORTION OF TWO AND HALF STOREY PROPERTY BEARING NO RZ-4-110A, AREAMEASURING AREA 110 SQ. YDS. SITUATED IN THE AREA OF VILLAGE PALAM ABADI KNOWN AS RAJ NAGAR-II, PALAM COLONY, NEW DELHI 110046, vide registered GFTDEED dated 30.08.2022 registration No. 8376 with Sub Registrar IV NEW DELHI. All persons are hereby informed that MRS. LATA JAIN W/O PANKAJ JAIN has approached Fullerton India Home Finance Company Limited to take a Loan and they have lost it. Khataoni (1954-1955) in favor of Mr. Jug Lal Soni/Mr. Nandu (694in). 2) NOTARIZED GP along with LATA JAIN W/O PANKAJ JAIN has informed the Delhi Pectos dated 2022-09-20 with No. 814938/2022 about the loss of the above mentioned Documents. If anybody has any charge/interest in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 7 days of this notice.

Mrs. Prasoon Lata, Advocate,
SG Associates (Law Firm)
Unit No 7, Basement, Plot No C 78,
Sector 2, Noida, UP 201301.
E-MAIL: sgassociatespl@gmail.com,
Ph: 7011172764, 813020837

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/Traction Distribution, DRM's Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi for & on behalf of President of India, invites open e-tender under single packet system for the under noted work:

1 E-Tender No.:	23-TRD-NDLS-2022-23	24-TRD-NDLS-2022-23
2 Name of Work with its location	"Load Flow Study of modified "125KV system over NDLS-CPY2 section"	"Low frequency oscillation study of DLI area in zone CB-275 SBBTSS."
3 Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 19,03,733.33/-	Rs. 19,97,833.33/-
4 Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 38,100/-	Rs. 38,000/-
5 E-Tender Bid Online Submission Period :	30.09.2022 (10.30 hrs.)	
6 E-Tender Bid Submission End Date & E-Tender Open Date & Time :	14.10.2022, (15.00 hrs.)	
7 Fund Allocation :	EBR	
8 Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen :	www.ireps.gov.in	2473/2022

Serving Customers with a Smile

LOST & FOUND
I, Sanjay Mathur S/o Late Radhika Narain Mathur R/o. K - 2 Shree Ganesh Apartments, 93, I. P. Extension Patparganj Delhi - 110092 , inform that I have lost my original documents (i) Share certificate (ii) Allotment Letter (iii) Possession letter etc. Related to my Flat no - K-2 Shree Ganesh Apartments Plot No - 93, I.P. Extension Patparganj Delhi - 92 in Madhu Vihar Market I. P. Extension Delhi .
Sanjay Mathur

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform all concerned that my mother SMT. ANITA DHAWAN W/o SH. R.K. DHAWAN, R/o A-302, Sector-19, NOIDA, had executed a WILL in respect of her share in Residential Plot No.302, Block-A, Sector-19, NOIDA, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar-U.P. area measuring 171.0 Sq.Mtrs., in my favour which is registered. And whereas SMT. ANITA DHAWAN died on 14.06.2021 and after her death I, SONIK SAREEN W/o. SH. HEMANT KUMAR D/D/O SH. R.K. DHAWAN, R/o GD-103, Pitzpur, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi-110088, want to get mutation of her share in the said property in my favour. If anyone has any objection, he/she will submit his/her objection in the Residential (Plot), Deptt. of Noida Authority within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

[SONIKA SAREEN]

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General public that MRS. LATA JAIN is owner of FREE HOLD BUILT UP GROUND FLOOR AND SECOND FLOOR WITH ROOF RIGHTS PORTION OF TWO AND HALF STOREY PROPERTY BEARING NO RZ-4-110A, AREAMEASURING AREA 110 SQ. YDS. SITUATED IN THE AREA OF VILLAGE PALAM ABADI KNOWN AS RAJ NAGAR-II, PALAM COLONY, NEW DELHI 110046, vide registered GFTDEED dated 30.08.2022 registration No. 8376 with Sub Registrar IV NEW DELHI. All persons are hereby informed that MRS. LATA JAIN W/O PANKAJ JAIN has approached Fullerton India Home Finance Company Limited to take a Loan and they have lost it. Khataoni (1954-1955) in favor of Mr. Jug Lal Soni/Mr. Nandu (694in). 2) NOTARIZED GP along with LATA JAIN W/O PANKAJ JAIN has informed the Delhi Pectos dated 2022-09-20 with No. 814938/2022 about the loss of the above mentioned Documents. If anybody has any charge/interest in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 7 days of this notice.

Mrs. Prasoon Lata, Advocate,
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Unit No 7, Basement, Plot No C 78,
Sector 2, Noida, UP 201301.
E-MAIL: sgassociatespl@gmail.com,
Ph: 7011172764, 813020837

PUBLIC NOTICE
General Public is hereby informed that my clients Sh. Davinder Kumar Mahotra S/o Late V M Mahotra and his wife Ms.Mohini Mahotra R/o D-2 Pujari Apartment, Shiv Vihar, Rohtak Road, Delhi -110087 have separated and severed all relations with their son **Mr. Ankit Mahotra** and daughter-in-law **Ms. Debanita Sutradhar** and have debarred them from their self-acquired movable and immovable and intangible properties and any persons hereafter dealing with them shall do so entirely at his/her own risk and responsibility.

Advocate
Regn. No.....

PUBLIC NOTICE
To be known to all that I, Manju Jain S/O/W/O Shri D.C.Jain R/o SFS Flat No. 8049, Ground Floor, CAT-II, Pocket-I, Sector-B, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070, Submission of document in respect of property bearing Ref. No. F-126 (6100) 83/SFS/AN/III/III. The Original Documents Allotment Letter, Last & Final Demand Letter, Possession Letter, site Possession letter with enclosures, NOC for Water & Electricity Connection, Conveyance Deed of the above said property, has been lost. An FIR/NCR to this effect has lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi vide LR NO. 81368/2022. So No. 430/2014 Delhi Police. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone/8383861763. The person claiming any right, interest objections with respect to this property can personally inform or write to: The Assistant Director (SFS/II) Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Known to all that my client **Dhirendra Sharma** is Owner of the property i.e Residential plot area measuring 160 sq yds out of khasra no. 751, Village Chapraulha Guatm Budh Nagar, U.P. and mortgaging the same with OML Housing Finance Pvt. Ltd. Dhirendra Sharma not having Originals 1.Sale deed in favour of Mrs. Ramesh Devi & Mrs. Renu, 2.Registration particular of sale deed in favour of Mr. Brahm, it is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 8 days of this publication.

AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION
Ch. No. 760, Dwarka Court: Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75
M:- 9899013918

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles. **VEHICLES FOR SALE**
1) TATAMOTORS T_LPT25186G
REG. NO. HR47D5606-YOM -2018
UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS WITHIN 7 DAYS AT BRANCH ADDRESS: KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK 3RD FLOOR, PLOT NO 7, SECTOR 125, NOIDA-201313 OR CONTACT: JAGBIR SINGH KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. CONTACT NO. 9899996157 E-MAIL - jagbir.singh@kotak.com

Govt OK's national logistics policy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Cabinet on Wednesday approved the national logistics policy, which aims at reducing transportation cost and improve global performance of the sector.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week unveiled the policy which seeks to cut transportation costs by promoting seamless movement of goods across the country.

While launching the policy, the prime minister had said that "from 13-14 per cent (of the GDP), we should all aim to bring the logistics cost to single-digit as soon as possible".

An official statement said that the policy is targeted to reduce cost of logistics in India to be comparable to global benchmarks by 2030; improve India's ranking in the Logistics Performance Index from 44th in 2018; and create data-driven decision support mechanism for an efficient logistics ecosystem.

The target is to place India among the top 25 countries by 2030, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur told reporters while briefing media about the policy.

It added that to monitor its implementation, the policy will utilise the existing institutional framework - Empowered Group of Secretaries (EGoS) created under the PM Gati Shakti national master plan.

The EGoS will also set up a Services Improvement Group on the pattern of network planning group for monitoring of



parameters pertaining to processes, regulatory and digital improvements in logistics sector.

Focus will also be on enabling adequate development of warehouses, promotion of standards, digitization and automation across the logistics value chain and better track and trace mechanisms.

Important initiatives under the policy include the Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP), the Ease of Logistics Services platform, and e-handbook on warehousing.

Fourteen states have already developed their respective logistics policies and for 13 states, it is at the raft stage.

"This is expected to reduce logistics cost to achieve global benchmarks and improve country's Logistics Performance Index ranking and its global positioning," it added.

Commenting on the policy, Arshdeep Singh Mundi, Managing Director, Jujhar Logistics, said that it is a significant step towards strengthening the logistics sector by means of integration of efficient measures.

₹19,500-cr PLI scheme for solar PV modules

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Cabinet on Wednesday approved a ₹19,500-crore production linked incentive (PLI) scheme on 'national programme on high efficiency solar PV modules' with an aim to attract ₹94,000 crore investment in the sector.

One of the benefits expected from the PLI scheme is that about 65,000 MW per annum manufacturing capacity of fully and partially integrated solar PV modules would be installed.

Giving details about the Cabinet decision, information and broadcasting minister Anurag Thakur said that about 2 lakh direct jobs would be created in the sector.

The national programme aims to build an ecosystem for manufacturing of high efficiency solar PV modules in India and reduce import



dependence in the area of renewable energy.

The initiative is expected to reduce import substitution of about ₹1.37 lakh crore.

Solar PV manufacturers will be selected through a transparent selection process. PLI will be disbursed for 5 years after commissioning of solar PV manufacturing plants and sales of high efficiency solar PV modules from the domestic market will be incentivised.

Govt offers sops for chip, display manufacturers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Cabinet on Wednesday approved modifications in the scheme for semiconductor and display manufacturing ecosystem, with uniform fiscal support of 50 per cent of project cost for all technology nodes under the ambitious programme. Announcing the decision of the Cabinet, Union

Minister Anurag Thakur said the modifications will strengthen the semiconductor scheme, thus raising capacities within the country, encouraging investments, and creating employment opportunities.

"Under modified programme, a uniform fiscal support of 50 per cent of project cost shall be provided across all technology nodes for setting up

of Semiconductor Fabs," an official release said.

Given the niche technology and nature of compound semiconductors and advanced packaging, the modified programme shall provide fiscal support of 50 per cent of capital expenditure for setting up of compound semiconductors / silicon photonics / sensors / discrete semiconductors fabs.

Recession unlikely to hit India due to 'not so coupled' nature with global eco: S&P

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Global rating agency S&P on Tuesday said even though the US and the Euro zone are headed to recession, India is unlikely to face the impact given the "not so coupled" nature of its economy with the global economy.

"Indian economy is a lot decoupled from the global economy than we normally think of, given its large domestic demand, even though you (India) are a net importer of energy. But you have enough forex reserves on one hand and your companies have managed to maintain healthy balance sheets," Paul F Gruenwald, S&P global chief economist and managing director, told reporters here.

In fact, India was never coupled fully with the global economy and so is relatively independent of global markets, he said, adding that a lot depends on how global fund flows behave if there is a recession in the US and Europe. Their inflation numbers continue to dodge the monetary actions by their central banks as the gap between the US core inflation target and the actual number is three times at 6 per cent.

Listing out inflation and the resultant measures by the US Fed as the main threat to the US economy, he said, the world's largest economy is headed towards recession, which is the result of an overheated economy because even after inflation hitting a four-



decade high, unemployment rate is so low at 3.7 per cent.

"Our house view is of a 50-50 chance of recession in the US as the output gap is still positive but the consumer and business sentiment is negative. Whether this will be a soft-landing or not, it will be known either later this year or early next year as the impact of the massive rate hikes by the US Fed will be known only by then," Gruenwald added.

On the Euro zone, the managing director said the problem is more entrenched and structural. It will take time to recover as the crisis is the result of the geopolitical issues (Russia-Ukraine war) the sky-high energy prices after the EU nations began to lower their dependence on gas from the Russia since February. But again the EU joblessness rates are low at 6.5 per cent.

The continent will face the crisis if joblessness becomes more pronounced, Gruenwald said, adding, the house view is

less than a 50 per cent chance for a recession in the Euro zone which is saddled by the Russia-Ukraine war and by the resultant energy security issues. It will take a couple of years to recover if it falls into a recession unlike the US which may recover much faster.

The US and European recession depends on the central banks ignoring slowing growth and opting to fight inflation instead.

Describing the Chinese slowdown as the worst in decades, he highlighted that this is a self-inflicted pain arising out of its zero tolerance policy towards Covid.

According to him, China has never missed its growth targets as badly as this year (down from over 5 per cent to under 3 per cent or even less). The communist party congress in November may throw in some positive surprises, in which case the negative forecast may reverse.

To a question given all these global headwinds whether the agency has a new view on Indian growth numbers, Crisil Ratings (which is majority-owned by S&P Global Ratings) chief economist D K Joshi told PTI that they hold their recent forecast wherein they "expect the economy to grow at 7.3 per cent this fiscal and slow down to 6.5 per cent next fiscal, with more downside risks to both the numbers."

Joining Joshi, Gruenwald said, despite these headwinds, India will be doing a lot better than the rest of the world.

BUSINESS BRIEF

INDIAN SINGLE MALT A CHALLENGE FOR INT'L BRANDS

New Delhi: Indian single malt whiskies are giving top international premium brands a run for their money not only in the domestic market but also overseas. One such brand is Paul John Single Malts (PJSJM) from Bangalore-headquartered John Distilleries Pvt Ltd which has grown exponentially in overseas markets, particularly Europe, North America and Africa.



HERO LECTRO LAUNCHES 3 NEW E-CYCLE VARIANTS

New Delhi: Hero cycles e-cycle brand Hero Lectro on Wednesday the launch of three new variants of its existing C and F series line-ups -- C1, C5x and F1 — priced between ₹32,999 and ₹38,999, respectively. Powered by 250W BLDC rear hub motors and high power Li-ion batteries, the latest e-cycles are capable daily drivers across conditions. Apart from portable chargers, which are compatible with conventional power sockets, the C5x comes with detachable Li-ion batteries, which makes them even easier to charge and swap. These e-bikes are available on the company's D2C website as well as across its extensive network of over 600 dealers, e-commerce channels, among others, the company said.

AI EXTENDS FR POINTS VALIDITY TILL MARCH 2023

New Delhi: Air India has extended the validity of flying returns (FR) points, tier status and member status, and associated benefits under its frequent flyer programme till March 31, 2023, the company said on Wednesday. The airline has been extending the validity for its 3.3 million strong members since March 31, 2020 so that frequent flyers, who may have postponed their travel plans due to Covid, can still avail the wide range of benefits, it said.

KGE TIES WITH TATA CAPITAL FOR ELECTRIC 2W LOANS

New Delhi: Electric vehicle maker Kinetic Green Energy and Power Solutions Ltd on Wednesday said it has partnered with Tata Capital for providing electric two-wheeler loans. Customers can avail of loan up to 85 per cent of value of the company's electric two-wheelers and repayment period of up to 36 months, it said in a statement. The partnership will enable consumers access to digitally enabled loans at Kinetic Green dealerships across India, it added.

G20 trade Ministers discuss ways to strengthen WTO's dispute settlement mechanism

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Trade ministers of G20 countries on Wednesday discussed ways to strengthen the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism to make it more accessible and efficient.

The meeting was convened by US Trade Representative Katherine Tai on the sidelines of the G20 Ministerial Meeting in Bali, Indonesia.

"Participated in a discussion on WTO (World Trade Organisation) Dispute Settlement Reform convened by @AmbassadorTai...Exchange d views on ways to strengthen the WTO dispute settlement mechanism to make it more accessible and efficient," Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said in a tweet.

The Geneva-based multi-lateral body WTO deals with global exports and import-related norms. Besides, it adjudicates trade disputes between the member countries.

Global trade experts term the dispute settlement mechanism of the WTO as the "jewel in the crown".

There are two main ways

to settle a dispute once a complaint is filed at the WTO - the countries find a mutually agreed solution, particularly during the phase of bilateral consultations; and through adjudication which includes ruling by a panel and if not satisfied, challenging that ruling at the appellate body.

The appellate body is the apex institution to adjudicate disputes. Smooth functioning of this mechanism hit a road-block, when the US blocked appointments of members in the appellate body (AB). Though the AB stopped functioning from December 10, 2019, the panels are still working.

Since December 2019, as many as 24 appeals have been filed in the AB. Out of this, four are filed by India that includes Japan's case on India's safeguard measures on steel; the US case against India's export subsidies and Brazil, Australia and Guatemala's cases against India on sugar.

Developing countries are of the strong view that a two-tier system is fundamental for the smooth functioning of the dispute settlement mechanism.

Govt norms ensure no one makes money in payments space, says Axis Bank head

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Private sector lender Axis Bank on Wednesday said government mandates on the payments space ensure that no one can make money in the segment.

The bank's chief executive and managing director Amitabh Chaudhry feared that smaller entities will not be able to survive amid such dictates.

The comments from Axis Bank, which also runs the payments company Freecharge, come amid a debate on whether merchant discount rate (MDR) should be levied on the very popular UPI platform. The government, which wants to popularise digital payments, has been insisting that no charges should be levied.

"What the government is doing is that they're taking out the entire P&L (profit and loss) opportunity for us. So if you look at the payments space, no one can make any money in the country at all. You have to use payments as a platform to make money somewhere else,"



Chaudhry said at the Global Fintech Fest here.

The worry is that more and more of such demands will emerge, which will take away revenue and profitability pools and then only the big entities can survive and small players will struggle, he added.

The challenges emanating from regulatory and governmental mandates are not limited to payments alone, he said, pointing to difficulties with priority sector lending (PSL) requirements.

"The regulators do ask banks to do a lot of the things which don't make money for us, even though they fully understand that they need to allow us to do something where we make money to fund lot of areas where we don't make money," he said.

'Govt will very soon announce sugar export quota for '22-23 mkt yr'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government will "very soon" announce the export quota of sugar for the next marketing year starting October, Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said on Wednesday.

He did not disclose the quantity of sugar exports that will be allowed for the 2022-23 marketing year (October-September).

"Very soon," Pandey told reporters here when asked about the new export policy and quota for the 2022-23 marketing year.

The secretary was speaking on the sidelines of a sugar and ethanol conference organised by the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) and Datagro.

In May, the government imposed restrictions on the export of sugar beyond 10 million tonnes, but later allowed another 1.2 million tonnes of shipments, taking the total to 11.2 million tonnes for the 2021-22 marketing year.

India's sugar exports stood



at 7 million tonnes in the 2020-21 marketing year. 5.9 million tonnes in 2019-20 and 3.8 million tonnes in 2018-19.

Industry body ISMA President Aditya Jhunjhunwala said the sugar production after the diversion of sugar for 2022-23 is estimated at 35.5 million tonnes while the domestic demand is 27.5 million tonnes.

"We can export 8 million tonnes of sugar in 2022-23 marketing year. We have urged the government to announce export quota and overall policy at the earliest," he said.

The export window is till March only, after which Brazilian sugar will come into the global market, Jhunjhunwala said.

Sebi on ASBA-like facility for secondary market

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Sebi chairperson Madhabi S Puri Buch on Wednesday said the capital markets regulator is working on an ASBA-like facility for secondary market transactions as well.

Speaking at the Global Fintech Fest here, Buch said in an initial public offering (IPO), the Application Supported by Blocked Amount (ASBA) system helps ensure that money from an investor gets moved only when an allotment happens.



"We are now actively engaged in looking at ASBA-like (facility) for the secondary market. So if that can be done for the primary market, why can't it be done for the secondary market?" Buch said.

At present, the investor parks money with the broker, ensuring that the middleman

gets a float, whereas an ASBA-like facility will take away the money from such entities.

Buch said the moves like ASBA for secondary market are aimed at reducing "structural vulnerabilities" in the system and asked fintech players to avoid a few things in their business models.

"If your business model is such that it is going to increase concentration risk or structural vulnerability, chances are that sooner or later the regulator will move to eliminate," she said.

Central Bank of India shares jump nearly 7% as RBI removes co from PCA watchlist

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Central Bank of India on Wednesday jumped nearly 7 per cent after the RBI said the company has been removed from the Prompt Corrective Action Framework (PCAF).

The company's shares climbed 6.63 per cent to settle at ₹21.70 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it zoomed 15.47 per cent to ₹23.50.

On the NSE, it jumped 6.38 per cent to end at ₹21.65 apiece. On Tuesday, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said Central Bank of India has



been removed from the PCAF watchlist following improvement in various parameters and a written commitment that the state-owned lender will comply with the minimum capital norms. The bank was put under the PCA framework in June 2017 due to its high net non-performing assets (NPAs) and low return on assets.

SpiceJet shares fall over 4%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of SpiceJet on Wednesday fell over 4 per cent after the company said it has asked 80 of its pilots to go on a three-month leave without pay.

The company's shares declined 4.01 per cent to settle at Rs 41.85 apiece on the BSE.



During the day, it fell 4.24 per cent to ₹41.75.

The move is a temporary measure to rationalise cost, the Gurugram-headquartered airline said on Tuesday.

"This measure, which is in line with SpiceJet's policy of not retrenching any employee which the airline steadfastly followed even during the peak of the Covid pandemic, will help rationalise the pilot strength vis-a-vis the aircraft fleet," the budget carrier said in a statement.

The pilots, who have been forced to go on leave without pay, are from the airline's Boeing and Bombardier fleet.

HCL, UpLink invite global applications for 'aquapreneur' innovation initiative



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Global tech firm HCL Technologies and UpLink, the open innovation platform of the World Economic Forum, on Wednesday announced the Global Freshwater Innovation Challenge and have invited applications globally.

This is the first out of five challenges of the HCL and UpLink's Aquapreneur Innovation Initiative, a programme to source innovative solutions to conserve and restore freshwater ecosystems from 'aquapreneurs', HCL said in a statement.

The last date to apply is November 8, 2022. HCL has committed USD 15 million over five years to support the water focused entrepreneurs, it said.

Selected entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to work closely with industry experts, investors, and ecosystem partners to further develop their innovative solution, to scale and drive further impact.

Volkswagen to hike prices by up to 2% from October 1

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Volkswagen Passenger Cars India will be increasing prices by up to 2 per cent across its product portfolio owing to rising input costs.

The automaker sells models like Virtus, Taigun and Tiguan in the domestic market. "Effective October 1, 2022,

Brakes India to showcase new products at IAA Transportation '22

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Brakes India, engaged in the manufacturing of braking equipment for automotive and non-automotive applications and a TSF Group Company, would showcase its latest products at the ongoing IAA Transportation 2022 exposition in Hanover, Germany, the company said on Wednesday.

IAA Transportation 2022 is currently being held in Hanover from September 20 and would go on till September 25. It is the world's largest platform for transport and logistics sector currently being held after the impact caused by Covid-19 outbreak.

During the course of the event, Brakes India said it would be exhibiting a 22.5 inch light weight mono-bloc single piston air disk brake for the first time.

HDFC Capital launches tech innovation challenge for affordable housing

PTI ■ MUMBAI

HDFC Capital, the private equity arm of mortgage lender HDFC, has launched a tech innovation challenge in the affordable housing space and will invest a part of ₹500 crore in three winning ideas.

The second edition of the tech challenge will identify and award disruptive innovations in areas of construction,

sales, fintech, and sustainability, the company said.

The challenge is jointly being launched by HDFC Capital Advisors, the HDFC subsidiary that manages private equity funds focused on real estate sector and has a USD 3 billion real estate funding platform, along with the government-promoted Invest India.

"We have already raised

over ₹500 crore from global investors as the first close of this property technology fund, which will focus on investments in startups that drive innovation and efficiencies within the affordable housing ecosystem.

We are ready to invest a part of this money into three winning solutions," Vipul Roongta, MD and CEO at HDFC Capital told PTI.

TONEY EYES WORLD CUP AFTER ‘SURREAL’ THREE LIONS CALL-UP

AP ■ LONDON

Brentford striker Ivan Toney said on Tuesday he has set his sights on winning a place in England's World Cup squad after his "surreal" call-up for the forthcoming Nations League matches.

Uncapped Toney earned his berth in Gareth Southgate's group to face Italy and Germany following an impressive start to the Premier League season.

The 26-year-old has scored five times in seven top-flight games, including a hat-trick in a 5-2 win against Leeds. Toney also netted 14 times in all competitions last term in Brentford's first season in the English top-flight for 74 years.

With England boss Southgate still looking for a striker to serve as back-up to Harry Kane at the World Cup, Toney knows he has a chance to book a seat on the flight to Qatar in November.

"It is a massive opportunity for me to get myself on the plane," the forward told reporters.

"But I've just got to go game by game. Hopefully I'll get a few minutes in the games we have."

Toney's unexpected rise has come after spending most of his career labouring in obscurity in the lower leagues. He spent loan spells at Scunthorpe, Shrewsbury, Wigan and Barnsley while on Newcastle's books before finally finding a home with Peterborough in 2018.

Toney flourished at Peterborough, securing a 2020 move to Brentford that has propelled him into the Premier League and now the England squad.

The striker's road to the top is radically different from most of the other players in the England squad but he said he was not surprised by his call-up.

"I never doubted it," he said.

"I feel like I have full confidence in



myself. I have just got to keep working hard and it makes it that much sweeter when you get the chance.

"I never played for any of the other age groups so going straight to the senior squad is a big achievement. I'm proud of it and I wouldn't want it to go any other way."

England face Italy in Milan in the Nations League on Friday before hosting Germany at Wembley three days later.

It is a far cry from the start of Toney's career, when he failed to make the grade at Newcastle.

"So surreal. I feel like sitting here in an England top is such a privilege and is massive for me and my family and also my club."

PELLEGRINI & POLITANO LEAVE

Rome: Lorenzo Pellegrini and Matteo Politano left the Italy camp with injuries on Tuesday ahead of the European champions' Nations League match with England.

Midfielder Pellegrini played on with thigh pain during Roma's 1-0 home loss to Atalanta at the weekend

and he was sent home after tests at Italy's Coverciano training centre.

Politano was substituted with a sprained ankle shortly after scoring in Napoli's win over title rivals AC Milan on Sunday and coach Roberto Mancini decided not to risk further aggravating the injury.

The pair drop out a day after Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Marco Verratti was forced out of contention with a calf injury.

Mancini has called up Sassuolo's Davide Frattesi, Sampdoria forward Manolo Gabbiadini and youngster Salvatore Esposito, who plays for SPAL in Serie B.

Mancini's team host England at the San Siro on Friday and then travel to League A, Group C leaders Hungary three days later with a chance of qualifying for the finals in March.

Italy sit third on five points, two behind Hungary and three ahead of winless England with two matches remaining. Whoever wins the group makes it through to the final four, while the bottom team will be relegated to League B.



Cristiano wants to play till Euro 2024

AP ■ LISBON

Cristiano Ronaldo has set his sights on reaching Euro 2024 and the Portugal and Manchester United forward says he has no plans to retire any time soon.

"My journey is not over yet, you're going to have to put up with 'Cris' for a while longer," said Ronaldo on Tuesday, after receiving a trophy at the Portuguese football federation's (FPF) Quinas de Ouro awards in Lisbon for being the top national team goalscorer of all time.

"I want to be part of the World Cup and the Euros ... I feel very motivated. My ambition is great," the 37-year-old said.

Ronaldo has scored 117 goals in 189 Portugal appearances and is expecting to play in his 10th major international tournament for his country at Qatar 2022.

The forward's brace against the Republic of Ireland in September 2021 allowed him to overtake Iranian great Ali Daei's haul of 109 goals as the record international scorer.

ASPAS ‘HURT’ BY SPAIN SNUB

AP ■ BARCELONA

Celta Vigo striker Iago Aspas feels "hurt" by Luis Enrique not picking him for the Spanish national team, he told Cadena SER radio station on Tuesday.

The forward has five goals this season in La Liga and is behind only Real Betis's Borja Iglesias, with six, and top scorer Robert Lewandowski, on eight.

Iglesias was given his first call-up by Luis Enrique for the upcoming Nations League clash-



es with Switzerland and Portugal, along with Athletic Bilbao winger Nico Williams, with Aspas's chances of going to the World Cup in Qatar now negligible.

"It hurts not to go with the national team," he said on the show El Larguero. "I'm stubborn and I will fight to the end to go. That prize is around the corner and I will do all I can (to get it)."

Aspas finished as the top scorer of Spanish nationality in four of the last six seasons,

including the 2021-22 campaign, when he netted 18 league goals.

"I finished the last season playing well, it hurts that he didn't call me up," added Aspas. "I have never had any problems with the coach and if there was, he would have told me, because he speaks his mind."

Aspas, 35, has not played for Spain since 2019 and has a total of six goals in 18 appearances for his country, the last of them coming against Morocco in the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Federer admits he ‘stopped believing’ he could come back

AP ■ LONDON

Roger Federer on Wednesday said that he decided to retire because he "stopped believing" he could continue playing after a series of injuries.

The 20-time Grand Slam champion announced last Thursday he would be retiring from competitive tennis after a final appearance at the Laver Cup in London this week.

Federer last played on tour more than a year ago, at Wimbledon in 2021, after which he required knee surgery for the third time.

"The last three years have been tough to say the least," the 41-year-old Swiss great told BBC television.

"I knew I was on very thin ice for the last year ever since I played Wimbledon," added Federer, who last won a Grand Slam at the 2018 Australian Open.

"I tried to come back but there was a limit to what I could do. And I stopped believing in it, to be honest."

Federer had hoped to be back playing full-time in 2022 but said a scan a few months ago had been "not what I was hoping for."

"Very quickly we realised this was it. Then the question becomes: how do you announce and when do you announce?"



"It's been an emotional few weeks to go through those words to try to get them right, that they reflect how I'm feeling and thanking all the people who have helped along the way," he said.

The Laver Cup team event in London from Friday will give Federer a final chance to play competitively as part of the "Big Four" who dominated tennis over the past two decades.

Rafael Nadal, who holds the record for Grand Slam titles with 22, Novak Djokovic, who has won 21, and two-time Wimbledon champion Andy

Murray will all play together as part of Team Europe.

Federer said for a long time he did not want to even contemplate being the first of the quartet to bow out.

"I always pushed my retirement thoughts away," Federer admitted.

"I always said, the more I think about it, the more I'm already halfway retired and this is not the way to go to work, you know, for me as a tennis player, so we'll deal with it when it comes.

"And it did. And I dealt with it."



F1 adds Las Vegas as 2023 calendar grows to 24 races

AP ■ LAS VEGAS

Formula One provisionally added a first race in Las Vegas to the 2023 schedule announced on Tuesday, taking the total to a record 24.

The season will start in Bahrain on March 5 and finish in Abu Dhabi, more than nine months later on November 26. Las Vegas will be the penultimate round as F1 quickly adds a third race in the United States after Miami joined the schedule this season.

The Las Vegas race is subject to "homologation", or official approval of the circuit by FIA, the motor sports governing body.

The Chinese Grand Prix, last raced in 2019, returns as does the Qatar Grand Prix at Losail, which made its debut in 2021 but is not being raced this

year.

The French Grand Prix, first raced in 1906, making it the oldest Grand Prix, is dropped. It was previously dropped between 2009 and 2017 before returning at Le Castellet.

The Sochi Grand Prix, scratched this year following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, does not return.

Two races considered under threat -- Belgium and Monaco -- are retained.

"Formula 1 has unprecedented demand to host races and it is important we get the balance right for the entire sport," said Formula One president Stefano Domenicali.

The global distribution of races continues to shift. There are nine in Europe, eight in Asia, four in North America and one each in South America and Australia.

New Brighton boss De Zerbi gets seal of approval from Guardiola

AP ■ LONDON

Brighton's new manager Roberto De Zerbi said on Tuesday he has received the seal of approval from Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola after taking charge of the Premier League club.

Former Shakhtar Donetsk coach De Zerbi was hired by Brighton on Sunday as the successor to Graham Potter following his move to Chelsea.

The 43-year-old Italian has earned admiration for his sides' attacking brand of football, while his overachieving Sassuolo teams in Serie A attracted widespread praise.

His principles caught the eye of Guardiola, who reached out to his kindred spirit to congratulate him on joining Brighton.

"I spoke to Pep on Sunday evening, yes. He's very happy that I'm on board here," De Zerbi said.

"He told me very good things about the club. And he told me that if I need he will be very happy to help me. But of course not in the match we are playing against them!"

De Zerbi claimed he picked Brighton over a host of other managerial opportunities after leaving Ukrainian club Shakhtar in July following the Russian invasion.

"The choice of coaching in Ukraine was mine, I had chances to stay in Serie A but I chose to go to Shakhtar," De Zerbi said.

"Of course I was not expecting everything to finish when it did because of the start of conflict. It was bad also to leave something that was going very well.



"Other teams were interested in me but I'm delighted to be here."

Brighton owner Tony Bloom said De Zerbi was the top choice to replace Potter as his philosophy aligns with the club's.

"Roberto is a really good fit for the club, for the players we have, and the style," Bloom said.

"There's a lot of similarities between Graham Potter and Roberto, and that was a really important thing for us."

De Zerbi added: "Brighton strongly wanted me as a coach, and their style of play is very similar to my idea of football."

Brighton have enjoyed a superb start to the season and sit fourth in the Premier League after winning four of their first six matches before Potter's departure.

De Zerbi is confident Brighton can become established as a top-10 team after ending last season in ninth place -- their highest ever top-flight finish.

"I think the right vision is to try to improve always. And of course last season they ended in ninth so our vision is to stay in the first 10 teams of the league," he said.

"For me this is a big challenge. I'm coming to work in the most important league in the world.

"I come here very humble because I know where I'm coming to work. But of course I come here with my personality, to do what I know to do, bringing here my experiences of what I know to do."

Muguruza eager to see back of ‘tough’ season

AP ■ TOKYO

Former world number one Garbine Muguruza wants to end a "roller-coaster" season with "a different feeling" after winning her opening match at the Pan Pacific Open on Wednesday.

The Spaniard beat Greek qualifier Despina Papamichail 6-4, 6-2 to move into the quarter-finals in Tokyo and gain "a little bit more confidence" in a poor year for the two-time Grand Slam champion.

Muguruza has not managed to string together more than two wins at a tournament and fell out of the world top 10 earlier this month.

At the recent US Open she squandered two match points before losing to Petra Kvitova in the last 32.

Muguruza gave Wednesday's win a cautious welcome but said it was far too early to know whether she is turning a corner.

"It's been a tough season, a little bit of a roller coaster," said



GARCIA MAKES EARLY EXIT IN TOKYO

AP ■ TOKYO

US Open semi-finalist Caroline Garcia crashed out in her opening match at the Pan Pacific Open on Wednesday, squandering a match point to be ousted 4-6, 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/5) by China's Zhang Shuai.

France's Garcia, the num-

ber two seed, has been in red-hot form, winning the Cincinnati Masters last month before reaching her first Grand Slam semi-final at Flushing Meadows two weeks ago.

But she came up short against world number 28 Zhang in Tokyo despite hitting 27 aces to her opponent's four and holding a match point at

the 28-year-old, who is now ranked 12 in the world.

"I don't know if I'm going to be able, with these last tournaments, to have a different feeling. That's my goal."

Muguruza, who won the French Open in 2016 and Wimbledon a year later, started the year ranked number three but has since lost in the first round of six tournaments.

She struggled to put away Papamichail when she had her on the ropes several times in a tense first set and admitted that

5-4 in the second set.

Zhang fought back to level the match via a tiebreak before munching on a sandwich during the changeover.

It seemed to energise Zhang as she outlasted Garcia in final set, taking it on her second match point when the Frenchwoman hit long after two hours and 30 minutes.

she still lacked the killer instinct.

"I think that it's all about confidence and how well you're playing or how many matches you've been playing," she said.

"Definitely this year I feel that I haven't played that many matches so obviously when the important moments come, you really feel that confidence that is not quite there yet."

Muguruza knows she must stay patient.

"I think also trying and trying and trying, at some point I will get rewarded," she said.



Raducanu reaches Korea Open last 16

AP ■ SEOUL

Former US Open champion Emma Raducanu overcame a late wobble before defeating Japan's 126th-ranked Moyuka Uchijima in her opening match at the Korea Open on Wednesday.

The 19-year-old Briton, whose US Open defence collapsed in the first round last month, won 6-2, 6-4 to make the last 16 in Seoul.

The sixth seed will face Yanina Wickmayer of Belgium.

Raducanu reached a career-high 10th in the world, but is now 77th, having failed to build on her shock success at Flushing Meadows last year.

After rattling through the first set, the teenager picked up the pace in the second to surge into a 5-0 lead in less than 20 minutes.



A Raducanu double-fault in the sixth game gave Uchijima a whiff of survival and the Japanese won four straight games, before Raducanu finally sealed the match with a 114-kilometre per hour ace.

The match lasted one hour and 18 minutes.

Khanna quits as IOA acting president, takes dig at IOC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior sports administrator Anil Khanna on Wednesday quit as acting president of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), almost two weeks after IOC refused to recognise any "acting/interim president".

The IOC had, on September 8, issued a suspension threat, saying the IOA must hold elections by December this year.

Khanna took charge of IOA after a court ruling ended Narinder Batra's reign as chief of the apex sports body in the country.

Khanna, who is senior IOA vice president, said he "respects" the view of the IOC but at the same time asked the world's umbrella sports body as to who will have the final authority to "decide and interpret the Law of the Land" and the Constitution of an NOC.

Bhuvneshwar's death over bowling is real concern for Men in Blue: Gavaskar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The legendary Sunil Gavaskar feels senior pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar's poor show at the death overs is a "real concern" for India, going into next month's T20 World Cup. Bhuvneshwar has leaked quite a lot of runs at the death in the last few matches. His 16-run 19th over allowed Australia to pull off a record chase of 209 in the first T20I in Mohali on Tuesday night.

"I don't think there was too much dew. We didn't see the fielders or bowlers trying to use the towel to try and dry their fingers. That's not an excuse. We didn't bowl well. For example, that 19th over... That's a real concern," Gavaskar said on 'Sports Today'.

"Somebody like a Bhuvneshwar Kumar is going for runs every single time, when he is expected. In 18 deliveries he has bowled in three matches against Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and now Australia, he has given away 49 runs.

"It is almost three runs per ball. Somebody with his experience and calibre, you expect he will give 35-36 runs in those 18 deliveries. That really is an area of concern."

The former skipper said India have not been able to defend good totals but hoped a fit-again Jasprit Bumrah's return will strengthen the bowling department.

Bumrah has been out of action since the limited-overs series against England in July earlier this year as he was recovering from an old back injury.

"What we have seen in last few years is that it has been one of the areas where India have suffered. They have not been able to defend good scores," said Gavaskar.

"Maybe when Bumrah comes in, it might be a completely different situation because he gets wickets at the top.



India didn't get those today (Tuesday) as Australia got off to a flying start.

"Having said that, it's only the first match. Don't forget, Australia are world champions. They are expected to do extraordinary things."

Former head coach Ravi Shastri also came down heavily on India for their 'sloppy standard of fielding' in the first T20I.

Defending 208, Indian fielders dropped as many as three catches,

including that of Cameron Green (61 off 30 balls) and Matthew Wade (45 not out 21 balls).

"If you look at all the top Indian teams over the years, there is youth and experience. I find the youth missing here and hence the fielding," Shastri, who was in the commentary box, said.

"If you look at the last five-six years, I think this side is no match to any of the top sides when it comes to fielding.

BCCI announce 15-member India W team for T20 C'ship

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

No major change was made as BCCI on Wednesday announced a 15-member Indian women's team for the ACC T20 Championship, scheduled to be held in Bangladesh from October 1 to 15.

India retained the same squad that played against England in the three-T20 series with Taniyaa Bhatia and Simran Bahadur being put in standby.

Six-time champions India, who will be led by Harmanpreet Kaur, will launch their campaign with a clash against Sri Lanka on the opening day, while they will square off against arch-rivals Pakistan on October 7.

The duo was part of the 17-member squad which competed in England but didn't get any game time.

"The All-India Women's Selection Committee has picked India's squad for the upcoming

ACC Women's T20 Championship 2022 to be played at Sylhet, Bangladesh from 1st to 15th October," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in a release.

A total of seven teams, including hosts Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand are Malaysia and UAE, will compete in a round robin format with the top-four making it to the semifinal stage.

The semifinals will be played on October 13 with the summit clash scheduled on October 15.

India had lost 1-2 to England in the three-T20 series.

India's squad: Harmanpreet Kaur (Captain), Smriti Mandhana (vice-captain), Deepti Sharma, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Sabbineni Meghana, Richa Ghosh (wicket-keeper), Sneha Rana, Dayalan Hemalatha, Meghna Singh, Renuka Thakur, Pooja Vastrakar, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Radha Yadav, K.P. Navgire.

Standby players: Taniyaa Sapna Bhatia, Simran Dil Bahadur.

And that can hit badly in big tournaments.

"It means that as a batting side you have to get that 15-20 runs game after game, because if you look around the field, where is brilliance? There is no Jadeja. Where is that X-factor?"

Axar Patel was the first offender as he dropped a regulation catch at deep mid-wicket to give a life to Green when he was on 42. KL Rahul then failed to grab a chance in long-off in the next over.

However, the catch that proved

costly was that of Matthew Wade, who was dropped by Harshal Patel on his own bowling in the 18th over when the batter was on 1.

Wade went on to score an unbeaten 45 off 21 balls to take Australia home with four balls to spare.

"What I was disappointed today with was the standard of fielding. I mean, it looks sloppy and I think you need a big upping of the ante when it comes to the fielding if you have to beat big sides in big competitions," Shastri said.



You can't tell people I'm an opener or finisher: Samson

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Sanju Samson believes that in the past few years he has prepared himself in a manner that no one terms him a one-dimensional cricketer.

The dashing Kerala keeper-batter has missed the T20 World Cup ticket but understands that getting into the elite 15 of the national team is more challenging than ever with the kind of quality that Indian cricket is churning day in and day out.

"Playing different roles is something I have worked on for a lot of years. I am confident of batting anywhere in the order."

Samson believes that to be successful, one needs to be flexible.

"You should not fix a spot for yourself. You cannot tell people: 'I am an opener or I am a finisher.' In the last three-four years, playing in various roles and spots (in the order) has added a new dimension to my game," he added.

The 27-year-old, who has featured in 7 ODIs and 16 T20Is so far, said finding a spot in the Indian team is challenging and there is a lot of competition.

"It really does get challenging. Finding a place in the Indian team is really challenging. There is a lot of competition around, even within players who are in the team now. When these things happen, it is important to focus on myself," Samson said in response to a question.

"I am happy with the way I am performing. I want to improve..." he added.

Samson will be leading India A in the three List A games against New Zealand A, starting in Chennai from Thursday.

"The quality of cricketers we have in our team is unbelievable. So, it really helps each and every individual to raise their level. We keep on challenging ourselves. We try to perform every time we get an opportunity," Samson said.

The A series always keeps the fringe players in the selection radar and Samson is happy to lead the national A team.

"They (India A games) are really important. There is not much difference between an A game and international game. The competition is almost the same. So it is important to make use of the opportunities."

Elvis, Rimo first Indian relay team to cross North Channel

GUWAHATI: Indian long-distance swimmers Elvis Ali Hazarika of Assam and West Bengal's Rimo Saha have made history by becoming the first relay team from the country as well as Asia to cross the North Channel in Europe.

The ace swimmers also became the first from their respective states to successfully cross the North Channel, a strait between north-eastern Northern Ireland and south-western Scotland, in relay swimming.

The duo is the first Asian relay team to cross the North Channel and Hazarika is the oldest swimmer from India to achieve the feat in 14 hours and 38 minutes.

"I have been waiting for this day since a long time. After a lot of efforts and hours of pushing myself to work harder every day, I successfully became the first Assamese (North East) to cross the North Channel by swimming it in Relay Northern Ireland to Scotland," Hazarika said on his Facebook profile.

The team had to go through a lot of challenges, especially the huge Jelly fish that were accompanying them all the way, to complete the swim, he added.

Oval, Lord's to host WTC Final in 2023, 2025

PTI ■ DUBAI

The Oval and the iconic Lord's will host the World Test Championship (WTC) Final in 2023 and 2025 respectively, the game's governing body ICC said on Wednesday.

England were identified as the hosts for the next two WTC Finals during the ICC Annual General Meeting in Birmingham in July.

"We are delighted to be hosting next year's ICC World Test Championship Final at The Oval which has such a rich legacy and an amazing atmosphere, which is ideal for such an important fixture on the calendar," ICC chief executive Geoff Allardice said in a statement.

"Following that we will then take the 2025 Final to Lord's which will provide a fitting backdrop to the ultimate Test.

"Last year's final between New Zealand and India in Southampton was an engrossing encounter and I am sure fans the world over would be looking forward to the next WTC final at The Oval."

While the venues have been announced, the dates for both the 2023 and 2025 ICC World Test Championship Finals has not been confirmed yet.



Ireland to face England in 4-day Test match at Lord's

LONDON: Ireland Men's team is set to return to Lord's for a four-day Test match against England next year, said the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) on Wednesday as part of its 2023 home summer programme reveal.

The four-day Test match will be played between June 1-4 in a highly anticipated return for the Ireland men's team four years after the memorable first Test between the two sides at the Home of Cricket in 2019.

"As a player, there's no

doubt that Test cricket is the absolute pinnacle of our sport. We were fortunate to play a Test against England at Lord's back in 2019 - which was a memorable occasion for players and fans alike - so the news that we will be returning to play at Lord's next year is very welcome," said Ireland captain Andrew Balbirnie in an official statement.

There will also be a three-day warm-up game for Ireland to be played from 26-28 May with details to be announced in due course.

Steve Elworthy, CEO of Surrey County Cricket Club, the custodians of The Oval, said they are honoured to host the marquee match.

"It's a real honour that The Oval has been selected to host the final of the World Test Championship. To have the two best teams in the world playing here in south London will be a fantastic occasion.

"Next year promises to be a superb summer of cricket at The Oval and this match will be a brilliant part of it," he said.

The second edition of the World Test Championship begun on August 4 and is scheduled to finish on March 31 next year. Australia and South Africa are currently leading the WTC standings.

Suryakumar leapfrogs Babar to 3rd spot in T20I rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

India's Suryakumar Yadav has replaced Pakistan captain Babar Azam to occupy the third spot in the T20I batter's list in the latest ICC Men's Player Rankings issued on Wednesday. Yadav impressed with a classy 46 during India's four-wicket loss to Australia in the opening match of their three-game series at Mohali on Tuesday. The knock helped him to close in on Pakistan opener Mohammad Rizwan at the top of the T20I batter's chart.

The right-hander dethroned Babar from the third spot, with Rizwan now just 45 rating points ahead of him.

Rizwan hit a half-century in Pakistan's loss to England in Karachi on Tuesday and maintains a narrow advantage at the top of the rankings with a career-high total of 825 rating points.

South Africa's Aiden Markram (792 rating points) is in the second position ahead of Yadav (780).

Babar dropped to fourth in the latest rankings following his below par Asia Cup and a 31 against England in the series opener. England's Dawid Malan



(725) and Australia skipper Aaron Finch (715) complete the top 6.

Besides Yadav, star India all-rounder Hardik Pandya jumped 22 places to 65th overall following his superb 71 not out against Australia, while team-mate Axar Patel shot up 24 spots to 33rd in the list for bowlers after he collected three wickets on Tuesday.

Australia seamer Josh Hazlewood maintained his top spot among bowlers after picking up the key wickets of Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul in the opening T20I.

England spinner Adil Rashid is third and on the coat-tails of Hazlewood and second-placed Tabraiz Shamsi following a two-wicket haul against Pakistan.

MotoGP commits long-term plan to India, first race likely in 2023

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a massive boost for motor sport in the country, the MotoGP organisers on Wednesday announced that the biggest two-wheel racing event could come to India as early as next year.

An MoU, which promises seven races in as many years, was announced, but MotoGP organisers Dorna Sports and Indian promoters Faristreet Sports did not set a date for the first race, which is being branded as 'Grand Prix of Bharat'.

If 2023 doesn't work out, both parties aim to conduct a testing event the same year before the inaugural round in 2024.

Dorna will announce the 2023 calendar soon.

The MoU was announced in the presence of Dorna Sports MD Carlos Ezpeleta and Indian promoter Faristreet Sports (FSS) COO Pushkar Nath and director Amit Sandhill.

The round when it happens will also include races in junior category -- Moto2 and

Moto3.

The race venue will be the state of the art Buddh International Circuit, home to the defunct Indian Grand Prix.

Once the stakeholders can decide the dates, the track rack will be homologated by world governing body FIM, which is seen as a formality since the track has already hosted an event of the stature of Formula 1.

Formula 1 departed after three seasons due to financial, tax and bureaucratic hurdles but Ezpeleta expressed surprise that India, the world's largest two wheeler market, has not hosted MotoGP yet.

"Honestly from Dorna's side it is surprising the call has not been made before. MotoGP is a product meant for India and India is a country meant for MotoGP. The match is a good one," Ezpeleta said.

"We had not been approached for MotoGP in previous years but with support of the Indian promoters, all the parts boxes have been checked. "All the major manufac-

tures that are part of MotoGP have shown a lot of interest in coming to India," he added.

Though the official statement clearly mentioned the race will happen in 2023 but Ezpeleta said getting all the pieces together to host a race of this scale is always a complicated affair.

Around 5000 people including riders and staff work during a MotoGP round. Ezpeleta claimed that a MotoGP weekend generates economic activity of 100 million euros.

"The MoU is for seven years which can start as soon as next year. Putting together a MotoGP round is a huge job. A pre season test of machinery and tyres have to be tested at the venue.

"We publish our calendar season before. We are working out the dates whether we can make 2023 possible or whether there will be a test for the first event in 2024. It is complicated to organise, many pieces will have to fall into place," said Dorna Sports MD.

Duleep Trophy Final: West manage 250/8 on Day 1

PTI ■ COIMBATORE

West Zone's sought-after batting stars, including former India captain Ajinkya Rahane and KKR skipper Shreyas Iyer, flattered to deceive as South Zone restricted them to 250 for 8 on the opening day of the Duleep Trophy final here on Wednesday.

It was young Gujarat wicketkeeper Het Patel (96 batting) and his 83-run stand for the ninth wicket with Saurashtra veteran Jaydev Unadkat (39 batting) that helped West recover from a precarious 167 for 8 to a safer 250/8 by the end of 90 overs.

But, much was expected of an incredibly strong West's batting lineup that boasts of Rahane (8), Iyer (37), Sarfaraz Khan (34), Yashasvi Jaiswal (1) and current India A captain Priyank Panchal (7).

For South Zone, pacers Basil Thampi (2/42 in 15 overs) and CV Stephen (2/39 in 10 overs) blew away the West top-order within first half an hour.

And then, in-form left-arm spinner R Sai Kishore (3/80 in 32 overs) first choked and then ran through the middle-order before lower-order resistance somewhat brought the West back into the game.

In the morning, Hanuma Vihari



won the toss and wanted to make first use of whatever little help the conditions might offer.

The Andhra left-arm seamer Stephen answered his captain's call as Jaiswal was left poking outside the off-stump and caught by keeper

Ricky Bhui.

Rahane started with a boundary but old habits came to haunt him as Ravi Teja snapped one in the slip cordon when Kerala speedster Thampi got him to edge one behind the stumps.

For right-hander Panchal,

Stephen's delivery straightened a touch after pitching and had the India A captain plumb in-front of the stumps.

Once it was 16 for 3, the Mumbai pair of Sarfaraz and Iyer came together and looked like resurrecting the innings with a 48-run stand.

While Sarfaraz held one end up, Iyer played his strokes that included four boundaries and a six.

It was Sai Kishore, who had Iyer caught by Indrajith just when the batter looked set and in the identical manner got Sarfaraz when his 117-ball vigil ended.

The Tamil Nadu left-arm spinner then rocked West with his third scalp as left-hander Mulani was trapped by a delivery that turned back a shade into him. Het, on his part, stemmed the rot, during his 178-ball stay in which there were six boundaries and a six.

He first added 63 for the seventh wicket with Atit Seth (25) before Thampi got a breakthrough with the old ball.

Krishnappa Gowtham (1/73 in 26 overs) then had Tanush Kotian before Het-Unadkat defied South for 21 overs.

Brief Scores: West Zone 1st Innings 250/8 in 90 overs (Het Patel 96 batting, Jaydev Unadkat 39 batting, R Sai Kishore 3/80, Basil Thampi 2/42, CV Stephen 2/39) vs South Zone.