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SETTLE HIGHER FOR 2ND DAY

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Delhi Services Bill sails through Upper House

Kejriwal calls it 'black law' aimed to belittle authority of elected Govt in Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Parliament witnessed a fiery session as the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023, was passed in the Rajya Sabha with 131 votes in favour in the 245-member Upper House. The Opposition MPs fell short with only 102 votes.

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who was present for voting, was seen in a wheelchair.

The Opposition demanded a division of votes on the services Bill, and due to a technical error in the automated voting machines, the voting was conducted using paper slips. The bill, which had already been passed by the Lok Sabha last week, has become a point of contention between the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), governing Delhi, and the Central Government. It aims to replace the existing Ordinance on the transfer and posting of officers, which was introduced shortly after the Supreme Court grant-

ed executive powers to the Delhi Government in service matters.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal strongly criticised the Bill, expressing that the Central Government's move aims to make the national capital their "Ghulam" or slave. "It's a humiliation to the voting rights of citizens," Kejriwal said in his immediate response following the Bill's late evening passage in Parliament. He labeled it a "black law" aimed at undermining the authority of the elected government in Delhi.

He alleged that the BJP resorted to backdoor tactics to gain control of the Delhi government after facing defeat in the last four elections to the AAP. "PM Modi does not heed the Supreme Court's orders. The public has unequivocally expressed their disapproval of the Centre's interference in Delhi by defeating them, but the PM appears unwilling to heed the public's voice," accused Kejriwal.

During the voting process, a dramatic situation unfolded



Union Home Minister Amit Shah arrives at Parliament House complex during the Monsoon Session, in New Delhi on Monday

in the Upper House when some members, including BJD MP Sasmit Patra and BJP MP Sudhanshu Trivedi, claimed that their names were included in the motion moved by AAP MP Raghav Chadha without their consent.

Home Minister Amit Shah, who presented the Bill in the Rajya Sabha and replied to the motion, stated, "Now it is a matter of investigation how the motion was signed." Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh assured a probe would be ordered into the complaints of

some Rajya Sabha MPs regarding the inclusion of their names without consent.

The Opposition strongly criticised the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023, during the debate in the Rajya Sabha, terming it "retrogressive, political fraud," and "unconstitutional." They repeatedly accused the Bill of being a "constitutional sin," raising questions about the support from BJD and YSRCP for the proposed legislation.

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SC sets up 3-judge panel to monitor Manipur relief

SC brings in ex-IPS officer to monitor probe, 42 SITs to probe cases not being handled by CBI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday proposed to set up a committee comprising three former High Court judges to address rehabilitation and other crucial issues in the strife-torn Manipur in addition to investigating the cases related to the ongoing violence. The court also ordered the formation of 42 Special Investigation Teams (SITs) that will specifically look into cases not transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

"Our efforts are to restore a sense of confidence in the rule of law. We will constitute, at one level, a committee of three former HC judges. This committee will be looking at things apart from the investigation — including relief, remedial measures, etc," said the three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud.

The three esteemed members selected for the committee are Justice Gita Mittal (former Chief Justice of Jammu & Kashmir High Court), Justice



Shalini Joshi (former Judge of Bombay High Court), and Justice Asha Menon (former judge of Delhi High Court).

In addition to this committee, the court has designated former IPS officer Dattatray Padsalgikar to oversee the CBI probe into the incidents of violence. "There will be five officers of at least the rank of DySP, brought into the CBI from various States. These officers will also be functioning within the four corners of infrastructure and administrative structure of CBI," the court clarified.

"There will be 42 SITs looking at cases that have not been transferred to CBI. These SITs should be supervised by DIG-ranked officers from outside Manipur. Each officer will monitor six SITs to see that the investigation is going correctly," the court added.

During the hearing, the Manipur Director General of

Police, Rajiv Singh, was present to answer queries on the ethnic violence and the administration's actions thus far. The court's order also includes the segregation of cases to facilitate effective and targeted investigations.

"Without allowing any external investigation, let SITs be formed at district levels," Attorney General R Venkataramani suggested.

In cases where there are more than 11 First Information Reports (FIRs) related to crimes against women being probed by the CBI, these will be handled by district-level SITs headed by women superintendents of police rank officers. "The CBI team, which will be investigating this, has two lady SP officers. CBI has officers from all across the country. We have taken that balance," Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said.

The court proceedings

involved various eminent lawyers presenting their suggestions and concerns. Senior advocate Indira Jaising suggested a two-fold approach, focusing on both investigations and preventing further crimes. Advocate Nizam Pasha, lauded by the Supreme Court previously for his valuable suggestions, urged the transfer of 16 FIRs related to crimes against women to the CBI and stressed the importance of an impartial selection process for SITs.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan underscored the necessity of an independent body to investigate the supply of arms and ammunition. However, the Centre argued that it may not be appropriate to distrust the police with the probe. "It may not be appropriate not to trust the police officers. For the proposed committee to be constituted by the Supreme Court, let judicial officers alone be included, not the civil society groups," SG Mehta said.

The Supreme Court's proactive measures come in response to the complete breakdown of law and order and the constitutional machinery in Manipur, as highlighted on August 1. The State police were criticised for a "tardy" and "lethargic" probe into incidents of ethnic violence, particularly those targeting women. As part of its efforts to restore order and justice, the court summoned the DGP to answer its queries on August 7.

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Back in LS, Rahul to lead Opp's no-trust charge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With his reinstatement as a member of the Lok Sabha on Monday morning, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will now lead the Opposition charge during the No-Confidence Motion in the Lower House on Tuesday.

Changing his Twitter bio from "Disqualified MP" to "Member of Parliament," Rahul signalled his reinstatement.

In a wave of excitement, Congress workers and members of the newly-formed INDIA alliance bloc celebrated Rahul's reinstatement. Both Congress members and Opposition MPs exchanged sweets in Parliament chambers and corridors. The suspension of Congress member Rajni Patil in the Rajya Sabha was also revoked during this time, adding to the jubilation.

After paying tributes to Mahatma Gandhi's statue, Rahul briefly attended the Lok Sabha proceedings, which were



Congress MP Rahul Gandhi being greeted on arrival at Parliament House complex on Monday

soon adjourned. Speaking to the media outside Parliament, he jokingly remarked, "Bhaiya aap lag bhi khushi lag rahein ho, ye kya ajeeb si baat hain? (Brothers, you too look happy, what's happening?)"

As the Lower House gears up to discuss the No-Trust

Cong took anti-India fund from China, BJP cites NYT report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On a day when Congress leader Rahul Gandhi returned to the Lok Sabha after his membership was restored following relief provided by the Supreme Court in a defamation case, the BJP attacked the Congress for allegedly "hobnobbing" with China. The Congress has denied the charges.

BJP Lok Sabha member Nishikant Dubey cited a report by the *New York Times* (NYT) in the Lok Sabha to claim that the Congress leaders and news portal NewsClick had received funds from China to create an "anti-India" atmosphere. The NYT article was published on August 5.

In a letter to the Speaker, Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury called Dubey's allegations "libelous" and "defamatory", and demanded that the BJP MP's remarks be expunged from records.

Dubey said the story has also mentioned the



Enforcement Directorate's (ED) raids on NewsClick in 2021.

In February 2021, the ED conducted raids on the residences of several officials and journalists associated with NewsClick, including owner Prabir Purkayastha and editor Pranjal Pandey.

The raids were allegedly linked to a probe related to foreign remittances and charges of money laundering.

Dubey said that NewsClick is part of an "anti-India gang, Tukde Tukde gang" that wants to break India.

He alleged that NewsClick and its owner are helping these

forces, and the money has been given to Naxalites and to journalists like Rohini Singh and Swati Chaturvedi to create an atmosphere against India" for which "they have been given Chinese money," he said.

Rohini Singh denied charges against her in a Twitter post and their names were reportedly expunged from the records.

"Between 2005 and 2014, whenever there was a crisis, the Congress received money from China. In 2008, they invited Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. In 2017, they were talking to the Chinese during the Doklam crisis," Dubey said.

Dubey made his charges after the House resumed its proceedings at 12 PM following the first adjournment in the morning, the House witnessed bedlam with Treasury Benches also countering the slogan-shouting by Opposition members as Dubey stood and made allegations against Rahul and the Congress.

Continued on Page 2

Will fight Guj polls in ties with Cong: AAP

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

In a significant move, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has announced that it will join hands with Congress for the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha polls in Gujarat. AAP Gujarat chief Isudan Gadhvi said both parties, as part of the Opposition bloc INDIA, have agreed to contest the polls on a seat-sharing basis.

Gadhvi told the media, "Both AAP and Congress are part of the INDIA alliance. This poll alliance will also be implemented in Gujarat. Though the talks of a tie-up are still at the primary level, it is sure that both AAP and Congress will fight the upcoming Lok Sabha polls in Gujarat under a seat-sharing formula.... If everything goes as planned, I guarantee that BJP will not be able to win all 26 seats in Gujarat this time."

The AAP leader revealed that his party had already begun researching potential

shoes to field their candidates.

However, the Gujarat Congress spokesperson, Manish Doshi, asserted that the final decision on seat-sharing rests with the central leadership of the party. He said, "I have just learned about his announcement. Seat-sharing agreements with other parties are finalised by the central leadership. Gujarat Congress will follow the directions of our national leaders in this regard."

The BJP seemed unperturbed by the prospect of the AAP-Congress alliance. Gujarat BJP spokesperson Ravi Patel brushed off the alliance's impact, dismissing AAP as a "B team" of Congress.

"The Central Government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is not scared of any such alliance. We are confident of winning the polls. With this announcement, it has now come to the fore that AAP is a B team of Congress." In 2022, Congress and AAP contested against each other.

CAPSULE

PM'S DEGREE: KEJRIWAL ON DEFAMATION TRIAL

Ahmedabad: A sessions court here rejected applications moved by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and AAP Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh for interim stay on trial against them in a criminal defamation case.

FIRE BREAKS OUT IN AIIMS-DELHI LAB

New Delhi: A fire broke out in the endoscopy room on the second floor of the old OPD building of AIIMS here on Monday. All patients were safely evacuated, officials said.

1 DEAD AS CAR CRUSHED BETWEEN TRUCKS

New Delhi: A 22-year-old makeup artist died after the car in which she was travelling was crushed between two trucks in north Delhi's Civil Lines area.



A team of ASI arrives to conduct scientific survey at the Gyanvapi mosque complex, in Varanasi on Monday

HC stops demolition in Nuh, seeks Govt's reply

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHANDIGARH

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has stepped in to halt the ongoing demolition drive in Nuh, which was initiated in the aftermath of communal clashes in the region. A Bench led by Justice GS Sandhawalia took suo motu cognisance of the matter and issued a notice to the Haryana Government, seeking an explanation for their actions.

The court raised concerns about the Government's demolition drive, which involved tearing down structures without serving prior notices to the affected parties.

In response to the court's intervention, the Deputy Commissioner, Dharendra Khadgata, immediately instructed the concerned teams to halt the demolition drive and prevent further illegal construction on



Shopkeepers look at the debris of their shops demolished by the administration in a drive against illegal construction, in Nuh district, on Monday

encroached land. The demolition drive had been ongoing for five days, during which the district administration had razed over 750 buildings and structures.

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Services Bill sin, renders Delhi's elected Govt powerless: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

An Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament (MP) Raghav Chadha on Monday launched a scathing attack on the Delhi Services Bill, labeling it as a "political fraud," a "constitutional sin," and an "administrative logjam." Taking part in the debate on the Bill in the Rajya Sabha, Chadha strongly criticised it, asserting that it was the most "undemocratic, unconstitutional, and illegal" legislation ever presented in the House.

Referring to a recent Supreme Court ruling, Chadha emphasised the court's unanimous reaffirmation on May 11, 2023, that civil servants in the Government of NCT of Delhi are accountable to the elected Council of Ministers, led by the Chief Minister. He stressed that this accountability is fundamental to a democratic and responsible form of governance.

However, Chadha argued that the newly-introduced Ordinance undermines this accountability structure by transferring control from the elected



AAP MP Raghav Chadha at Parliament House complex during the Monsoon Session, in New Delhi, on Monday. PTI

Government of Delhi to the unelected LG. He accused the Bill of diluting the power of the Delhi Government, rendering it a mere symbolic representation of a people's mandate but lacking the governing mechanism to fulfill that mandate. In his analysis of the constitutional implications, Chadha outlined five key points that render the Bill unconstitutional.

He argued that the Bill represents an abuse of ordinance-making powers, directly challenges the Supreme Court's authority, erodes federalism, and dismantles the triple chain of accountability. Moreover, he contended that the Bill hands over the authority of an elected government to bureaucrats under the LG, symbolizing the dominance of unelected officials over elected representatives.

Taking a dig at the BJP's perceived inconsistency, Chadha accused the party of adopting a "Nehruvian" stance when it suits their agenda. He urged the BJP to adopt a "Vajpayewadi" or "Advaniwadi" approach for Delhi, referencing the historical struggle for

statehood by veteran leaders. Continuing his speech, Chadha highlighted the significance of the statehood demand in elevating the BJP's political profile and acknowledged the efforts of veteran leaders in this pursuit.

He revealed that former Deputy Prime Minister, Shri LK Advani, had even introduced a State of Delhi Bill in 2003. Displaying manifestos and copies of the Bill, Chadha underscored BJP's commitment to Delhi's statehood from 1977 to 2015.

He criticized the current ruling party for not honoring the legacy of its veterans by disregarding their struggle when the opportunity arose, saying, "Please fulfill the wishes of Advani ji."

In a thought-provoking analogy, Chadha drew parallels between the historic war of Mahabharata and recited famous lines from Ramdhari Dinkar's writings, highlighting the gravity of the situation and the need for principled action.

The session witnessed passionate exchanges as the debate on the Delhi Services Bill continues.

Fire at AIIMS: Patients safe, emergency services reinstated

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A fire broke out in the endoscopy room on the second floor of the old OPD building of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here on Monday. However, all patients were safely evacuated, officials said.

No casualties were reported in the fire, the cause of which is still to be ascertained.

Hospital sources said the fire forced the suspension of endoscopy, emergency and diagnostics services in the old OPD building. However, in the evening they said "emergency services are in the process of being restored". Visuals from the spot showed black smoke billowing out of the windows at noon.

In a statement, AIIMS said security and fire control rooms were informed when information about the blaze out on the second floor of the old Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur OPD in the main AIIMS building was



Firefighters at the site after a fire broke out in the endoscopy room on the second floor of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, in New Delhi on Monday. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

received at 11.35 am. "The fire was controlled immediately by AIIMS Fire Services. Subsequently, fire tender staff of the Delhi Fire Services arrived. They supported the cooling off the area," the statement said.

Fire department officials, however, said the blaze erupted around 11.55 am. Thirteen water tenders were pressed into service and the fire was brought under control around 1 pm. AIIMS sources said water from the hospital's underground tank was also used to douse the flames. Police teams also arrived at the spot after receiving information about the fire and cordoned off the area.

A senior doctor said, "When the fire broke out, two patients were undergoing a procedure in the endoscopy room. These two patients along with around 80 others in the waiting area were evacuated." Another senior doctor added that 31 other patients, including six in the ICU, were shifted from the AB 2 ward to others in the building.

Doctors, nursing staff and guards also broke some of the glass windows on the second floor to allow the smoke to escape. Around 70 patients from the paediatric and adult emergency wards on the ground floor were also evacu-

ated as smoke filled the area. Some of the patients were shifted to the Safdarjung Hospital nearby. According to the sources, the second floor orthopaedic operation theatre was functional at the time and patients had to be evacuated from there as well.

"All the surgeries in the operation theatre had been completed except in operation theatre 2 where a surgery was underway. Extra manpower was called in to help in the timely completion of the surgery and all the patients were evacuated on time," the source said.

The fire broke out in the store area of the endoscopy room but the cause is not immediately known, the hospital sources said. A safety audit will be conducted to assess the damage. The AIIMS statement said no casualties or injuries were reported and that efforts are underway to restore normality in medical services at the earliest.

Police and fire services teams inspected the spot and found that the blaze originated in the store room on the second floor. The room had been closed for a long time, a senior officer said. The response by police and other emergency services contained fire without any injuries or casualties, the officer added.

Govt nod to increase in circle rates of farmland

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday approved an increase in circle rates of agricultural land and those adjacent to the Yamuna barrage, Revenue Minister Atishi said.

This is the first increase in circle rates of agricultural land since 2008, she said at a press conference.

In a statement later, the government said that since assuming power in 2013 and 2015, the Arvind Kejriwal government has been persistently striving to elevate the circle rates of agricultural land. The process faced obstacles due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Previously, agricultural lands across Delhi had uniform circle rates and they have now been delineated on a district basis. Moreover, they have been categorized into Green Belt Villages, Urbanized Villages and Rural Villages, the statement added.

In South Delhi and New Delhi districts, the circle rate of agricultural land will peak at Rs 5 crore per acre. This proposal will now be forwarded to the lieutenant governor (LG) for his approval, the minister said.

Kejriwal tweeted on the development and said, "The farmers of Delhi have been demanding for a long time that the rates of their agricultural



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal reacts on the passage of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023 by the Rajya Sabha, in New Delhi, on Monday. PTI

based on the outdated circle rate, resulting in inadequate compensation," she noted. The minister said that, until now, Delhi farmers had been receiving compensation based on a circle rate of Rs 53 lakh per acre, which significantly falls short of the prevailing market rate.

"Consequently, both farmers and the government have suffered losses. In cases where farmers do not receive equitable rates for their lands through government projects, the situation often escalates into legal disputes, leading to protracted court battles that can span years.

This, in turn, causes delays in the implementation of various government infrastructure projects," she stressed. Following the revision of the circle rate, farmers will now receive rightful compensation for their lands, she said.

"To address this issue, the Kejriwal government has introduced different circle rates for agricultural lands in different districts," she said.

The new circle rates of agricultural land in Delhi are Rs 5 crore per acre for South Delhi and New Delhi, Rs 5 crore per acre for North Delhi, West Delhi, North West, and South West Delhi, Rs 2.5 crore per acre for Central and South East Delhi and Rs 2.25 crore per acre for Shahadra, North East, and East Delhi.

land be increased. A few years ago, we also increased them, but due to some reasons, they could not be implemented at that time. Today, I am happy to inform all farmers of Delhi that your demand has been fulfilled."

Addressing the press conference, Atishi said the circle rate of agricultural land in Delhi has remained stagnant at Rs 53 lakh per acre since 2008.

"This lack of revision deprived farmers of fair compensation for their lands. Moreover, these agricultural lands are frequently acquired in Delhi for crucial infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, universities, or hospitals.

Yet, when farmers sold their lands for these projects, they received compensation



Congress supporters celebrating outside 10 Janpath after restoration Lok Sabha membership of party leader Rahul Gandhi, in New Delhi on Monday. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Optimise LINAC machine use: LG to LNH chief

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Lieutenant Governor of Delhi VK Saxena on Monday made a surprise visit to Lok Nayak Hospital (LNH) to assess the recently installed Linear Accelerator & CT Simulator Machine (LINAC) for cancer treatment.

The modern LINAC, procured at a cost of Rs 38.7 Cr. from the Government of India, aims to provide state-of-the-art Radiotherapy to cancer patients. However, it has been facing operational challenges, leading to a low patient count of just 18 in the last month



since its installation, despite having the capacity to serve 10-15 patients per shift. During his visit to the Dilli Gate-JLN Marg-Asaf Ali Road area on foot, the LG instructed the LNH Director to optimize the machine's utilization by run-

ning it in multiple shifts. The LINAC employs targeted laser-guided beam Radiotherapy, ensuring precise treatment of cancer cells without harming surrounding healthy tissues.

To address the teething problems, Saxena directed the LNH to train more technicians for operating the machine and immediately send four personnel to Mumbai for a two-month training program. He emphasized the need to expedite the treatment process for cancer patients who have been waiting in the queue for Radiotherapy. The LNH's Radiation Oncology

Department has been upgraded to a Tertiary Care Centre (TCC) under the National Programme for Preservation & Control of Cancer Patients, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases & Stroke (NPCCDS), with 100% funding from the Government of India.

The grant of Rs. 38.7 crore facilitated the procurement and installation of two machines - a Modern Linear Accelerator and CT simulator. The state-of-the-art Modern Linear Accelerator (True Beam) at LNH offers precise and accurate Radiotherapy treatment for various cancers,

including brain tumors, head and neck cancers, breast cancer, gastrointestinal tumors, genitourinary cancer, and pediatric tumors.

The availability of these advanced machines at Lok Nayak Hospital will greatly benefit economically disadvantaged cancer patients, as similar treatment in private hospitals costs around Rs two lakhs or more.

This free-of-cost advanced treatment facility is a significant step towards providing high-quality care to cancer patients and filling the gap in government hospitals in Delhi.

Atishi checks Sarai Kale Khan flyover work

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

PWD Minister. Atishi inspected the ongoing construction work of the flyover at the Sarai Kale Khan T-junction on Monday and expressed her dissatisfaction with the one-month delay in the project.

She reprimanded the officials responsible for the delay and issued a clear ultimatum that the remaining work must be completed within one month, or they will face appropriate action. Highlighting the significance of the flyover project in decongesting the busy Sarai Kale Khan T-junction and Ring Road, Atishi directed



Delhi Minister Atishi inspects construction work of Sarai Kale Khan flyover, in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

ed the officials to expedite the pending work and provide regular progress reports to ensure timely completion. During the

inspection, Atishi said, "The Kejriwal government will not tolerate delays in such important projects. Therefore, every

necessary step should be taken to complete the work within the newly set timeline, ensuring that the flyover is opened for public use at the earliest."

According to the officials, over 90% of the construction work has been completed, and they assured the Minister that the remaining work will be finished soon, with the flyover scheduled to open to the public in September.

Sarai Kale Khan is already one of the busiest areas in terms of traffic, and with the upcoming construction of the Rapid Rail Transit System, the traffic load is expected to increase further.

NGT panel to rectify G'gram polluted pond issue

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal has set up a panel to "verify the factual position and take appropriate remedial action" over a polluted three-acre pond in Gurugram's Sector 47 area.

The tribunal was hearing a petition that claimed the water body had been encroached upon and was being used as a dumping ground. "Due to waste dumping, the pond has become a breeding place for mosquitoes and other insects resulting in unhygienic and unsanitary environmental hazards," the petition said, seeking directions to the authorities



concerned for its restoration. A bench of Judicial Member Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi and Expert Member A Senthil Vel said, "Prima facie, the averments made in the application raise questions

relating to environment... We consider it appropriate that a joint committee be constituted to verify the factual position and take appropriate remedial action." The joint committee will include the Gurugram district

magistrate and representatives from the Haryana State Pollution Control Board, the bench said in an order passed last week.

The tribunal directed it to "meet within one week, undertake visits to the site, look into the grievances of the applicant, associate the applicant, verify the factual position and take appropriate remedial action by following due course of law".

The committee had to submit the factual and action-taken report within two months, the tribunal said. The matter has been posted to November 10 for further proceedings.

Delhi court convicts 2 for attempt to murder

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A court here on Monday convicted two accused in an attempt-to-murder case, noting the nature of injury was such that the victim's death was a distinct possibility.

The court also convicted the duo under the Arms Act for possessing a button-operated knife without a valid licence.

The court was hearing a case against Dinesh and Alok, accused of causing grievous stab injuries to Rahul Das on May 26 last year. "The nature of injury caused by the accused

persons was such that the death of the victim was a distinct possibility. Accused Dinesh and Alok are, therefore, held guilty of attempt to commit murder of the victim punishable under Indian Penal Code sections 307 (attempt to murder) and 34 (common intention). Additional Sessions Judge Vishal Singh said.

"The sentence shall be announced after hearing both sides and completion of the requisite procedure," he added.

Noting the evidence before it, the court said it was "proved" that the duo inflicted "grievous

stab injuries" on the victim's lumbar (lower back) and thorax (chest) region with the "prohibited knife." The intention of the accused to kill the victim was palpable from their utterances made on the spot while inflicting the injuries, it said.

According to the prosecution, Dinesh said "Aaj iska kaam tamam kar denge (we will finish him today)" while stabbing Das. The court also convicted the pair under provisions of the Arms Act for carrying a button-operated knife without a valid licence.

Subsidy under EV Policy to continue: Gahlot

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot on Monday announced that subsidy benefits under the existing Electric Vehicle Policy will continue till a new one gets notified.

The Delhi Electric Vehicle Policy, introduced in August 2020, aims at increasing the EV share in total vehicle sales to 25 per cent by 2024. According to official data, over 1.12 lakh electric vehicles have been sold under the policy.

"Today, we complete three years of Delhi's landmark EV policy that has propelled Delhi to becoming India's electric vehicle capital. "Since the formulation of a new electric



Picture for representation purpose only

vehicle policy is still under process, the subsidy benefits of the existing policy will continue till the new policy gets notified," Gahlot said in a tweet. Delhi's electric vehicle policy has so far achieved around 86 per cent of its measures and targets, the transport department said in May. The transport department and Delhi Electric Vehicle Cell also held a stakeholder consultation in May as part of the process of drafting a revised 'Delhi EV Policy 2.0'.

In June this year, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said Delhi has become the country's electric vehicle capital with highest number of such vehicles being bought in the city.

Unconstitutional, political fraud: Opp on Services Bill

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Opposition on Monday termed the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (amendment) bill 2023 as “retrogressive, political fraud” and “unconstitutional” during the debate on it in the Rajya Sabha.

While the treasury benches strongly defended the bill moved by Home Minister Amit Shah, the Opposition repeatedly also said it was a “constitutional sin” and “control freak.” They also questioned the BJP and YSRCP for backing the proposed legislation.

Former Chief Justice of India and nominated member Ranjan Gogoi said the bill is “perfectly legitimate” and power of parliament in framing legislation is not in question. The Lok Sabha has already passed the bill.

Initiating the debate, Congress member Abhishek Manu Singhvi said the bill was “retrogressive” and “control freak” besides anti-federal. Pointing flaws in the bill, he said it eliminates accountability of the bureaucracy and make the elected chief minister powerless. Claiming the bill was an attempt to grab power from the backdoor, Singhvi also said it was an insult of the



Members participate in the debate on the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023 in the Rajya Sabha during the Monsoon session of Parliament in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

people of Delhi. Attacking the government, Raghav Chadha (AAP) said the BJP lost successive elections in Delhi in the last 25 years and will face the same fate in future. He also said the bill was an attempt to gain control and termed it as a political fraud.

Chadha said the bill was a “constitutional sin” adding it will lead to administrative logjam. Questioning the BJP and YSRCP for backing the bill, he said these parties may be having their constraints and considerations in doing so. The AAP member also said the two parties could face the same

fate in their states including Odisha and Andhra Pradesh but his party will always stand by them.

It drew sharp reaction from V Vijaysai Reddy (YSRCP) who said the AAP was ‘Absolute Anarchy Party’ which added fuel to fire to this confusion.

He also charged the INDIA combine for opposing the bill for their political gains and misleading the public adding the AAP was not fit to rule the national capital. Defending his party, Sasmith Patra (BJD) said parliament has legislative competence in this matter and clarified that his

party maintains equal distant from the BJP and Congress. Participating in the debate, senior Congress member P Chidambaram said the Rajya Sabha is duty bound to protect rights of states.

Claiming the BJP has no moral right to bring such a bill as it has failed to win elections in Delhi, he also said proposed legislation takes away rights of people and give it to bureaucrats.

Sanjay Raut (Shiv Sena) termed it as a “dangerous bill” and an insult to country besides an attack on federal structure and murder of democracy.

Data protection Bill passed by voice vote in LS amid din

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Monday passed the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023, which details rules for handling and processing data as well as the rights of individuals.

The Bill proposes a maximum penalty of Rs 250 crore and minimum of Rs 50 crore on entities violating the norms.

Piloting the Bill for consideration and passage, Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said Opposition members had little concern for issues such as public welfare and the protection of people’s personal data, and hence, they were raising slogans. He also urged the House to pass the Bill unanimously.

Earlier on August 3, Information Technology Minister introduced Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023 in Parliament. He said it is not a money Bill and all issues raised by the Opposition will be answered during the debate. The bill was passed by a voice vote. The Digital Personal Data Protection Bill or data protection Bill provides for the processing of digital personal data recognising the right of individuals to safeguard their information and the need to process personal data for lawful purposes. It defines a



personal data breach as unauthorised processing of personal data or accidental disclosure, acquisition, sharing, use, alteration, destruction of, or loss of access to personal data, that compromises the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of personal data.

The Bill norms will apply to personal data collected within India from data principals online, and personal data collected offline, but subsequently digitised.

It will also apply to such processing outside India if it is for offering goods or services to individuals in India. The provisions of the Act do not apply to personal data processed by an individual for any personal or domestic purpose, personal data caused to be made publicly available by data principle.

Personal data can be processed only for a lawful purpose for which an individual has given consent and for certain legitimate uses. The Opposition members had said that the bill violates the fundamental right to privacy.

EAM lashes out at Opp for criticism on China border issues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Underlining that the Government has always given priority to improve border infrastructure, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday hit out at the Opposition over their criticism on matters of national security, including the border issue with China.

Making this assertion here in an interaction with a group of reporters, Jaishankar took a dig at the Opposition and said those who neglected border infrastructure cannot claim they were concerned about the border situation with China.

“When people in the political domain have an opinion and say they have a strong opinion, it is not about how loudly you speak, but what have you done on the ground,” he said. “The big effort has been to push our border infrastructure much more than what we have done,” he added.

Jaishankar said China had developed the border infrastructure by 2000. He said if the Galwan clash had happened in 2014, India would have been a huge disadvantage.

“In 2020, we were able to reach sooner when Galwan (clash) happened. If it happened in 2014, we wouldn’t have done so. When you go head to head, you need logistics. Earlier, we were at a great disadvantage but now our deployment (of our troops) is much faster,” he said.

Bilateral ties between India and China nosedived significantly following the clash in June 2020, which marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades.

The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over three-year confrontation at certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks. India has made it clear to China that until there is peace and tranquillity in border areas, the relationship between the two countries cannot progress.

Jaishankar said the armed forces were now better placed to quickly deploy troops and to counter-movement of the Chinese military effectively. “If you ask whether, after 2014, the Indian military and the Indian Air Force are able to deploy and counter any Chinese movement better, the



S Jaishankar

answer is “yes, absolutely,” he said. Jaishankar said the overall mobility of both the armed forces and the civilian population in the border areas has increased tremendously in the last few years because of the government’s focus on rapid enhancement of infrastructure in the frontier areas.

“The capability is growing year after year,” he said. The minister said the infrastructure push along the Northern border is going to determine India’s response to national security challenges.

Jaishankar said India and China made progress in five to six friction points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh through talks in the last three years and efforts were on to resolve the remaining issues. Slamming the Opposition for their criticism on the border issue, Jaishankar said complexities were involved and both sides are engaged in finding solutions.

“It was said that we will not be able to do anything, talks will not be successful, there will be no progress, disengagement cannot take place, but solutions were found in some of the focal points in the last three years,” Jaishankar said.

“There were five to six areas that were very tense. There has been progress (there),” he added. Jaishankar said no “full resolution” on the border issue has been found so far, asserting that “diplomacy takes time” and terming it a “complicated” matter.

On the issue of China border villages, the minister said the government’s priority was to ensure the people stay in those areas and not abandon their villages in the border areas. “Our concern is that if we do not provide services to our locals at border — last inhabitation — they will start moving out, which is not a scenario that would be helpful for India. Our effort is to ensure the villagers remain,” he stated.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICICI Bank | Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

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. | Praveen Verma/ Bharat Verma- LBKOT00005355110 | House No Ma 1/513, 5th Floor, Partap Apartment, Sector 29, Pratap Nagar, Jaipur, Rajasthan- 302001/ 04 August, 2023 | March 28, 2023/ Rs. 13,66,723.00/- | Gurgaon/ Jaipur/ Delhi/ Kota |

The above-mentioned borrowers (s)/ guarantors (s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : August 08, 2023
Place : Delhi/NCR (Gurgaon)
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

PUBLIC NOTICE

ICICI Bank | Regd. Office: ICICI Bank Limited, Landmark, Race Course Circle, Vadorwa 390007. Corporate Office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra- Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai 400051

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd Plot No.7, Community Centre S.D. Tower, Sector 8, Rohini, Delhi (UT)- 110085

A notice is hereby given that the following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non Performing Assets (NPA). The notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses as provided to the bank by them, that in addition thereto for the purposes of information of the said borrowers enumerated below, the said borrowers are being informed by way of this public notice.

| Sr. No. | Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address | Description of Secured Asset to be Enforced | Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice | NPA Date |
|---------|--|---|---|-------------|
| 1. | LVBGH000043365183/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT1104 | 31-May-23 Rs. 25,83,888/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 2. | LVBGH000043365203/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT1104 | 31-May-23 Rs. 2,48,840/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 3. | LVBGH000043365205/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT1103 | 31-May-23 Rs. 24,95,684/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 4. | LVBGH000043365216/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT1104 | 31-May-23 Rs. 2,41,960/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 5. | LVBGH000043365229/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT1104 | 31-May-23 Rs. 2,51,205/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 6. | LVBGH000043365606/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT1104 | 31-May-23 Rs. 2,50,384/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 7. | LVBGH000043282457/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT1104 | 31-May-23 Rs. 2,32,426/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 8. | LVBGH000043282505/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT1104 | 31-May-23 Rs. 2,40,227/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 9. | LVBGH000043282521/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT1104 | 31-May-23 Rs. 2,40,227/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 10. | LVBGH000043282804/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT0811 | 31-May-23 Rs. 24,66,104/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 11. | LVBGH000043283931/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT1104 | 31-May-23 Rs. 2,24,256/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 12. | LVBGH000043283944/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT1104 | 31-May-23 Rs. 2,37,577/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 13. | LVBGH000043284013/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT0818 | 31-May-23 Rs. 24,66,794/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 14. | LVBGH000043284032/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT0820 | 31-May-23 Rs. 24,66,794/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 15. | LVBGH000043284053/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT0815 | 31-May-23 Rs. 24,69,825/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 16. | LVBGH000043284067/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT1105 | 31-May-23 Rs. 24,70,087/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 17. | LVBGH000043284190/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT1102 | 31-May-23 Rs. 24,57,104/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 18. | LVBGH000043365199/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT1104 | 31-May-23 Rs. 2,27,126/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 19. | LVBGH000043463613/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | PRO 6035PRO 6035UP14KT1101 | 31-May-23 Rs. 24,51,092/- | 21-Dec-2022 |
| 20. | UVGH000041813670/ Krv Carriers India Private Limited/ Virendra Carriers Private Limited/ 8th Floor F-704/ Aditya Coporate Hub/ Rdc Raj Nagar/ Ghaziabad- 201002 | EICHER PRO 6031EICHER PRO 6031HR38X2107 | 31-May-23 Rs. 10,14,872/- | 21-Dec-2022 |

The above borrowers and/or their guarantors (where ever applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of issuance of notice U/s. 13 (2), failing which further steps will be taken after expiry of 60 days from the date of issuance of notice U/s. 13 (2) as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

Date : August 08, 2023
Place : Delhi
Authorized Officer
For ICICI Bank Ltd.,

Illegal mining: Multiple ED raids in Delhi, Hyr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday said it has conducted searches under the Prevention of Money-laundering Act at various locations in Delhi, Haryana, Bhiwani, Karnal and Yamuna Nagar (Haryana) belonging to Govardhan Mines and Minerals, Sunder Marketing and Associates and their partners in an illegal mining case.

The ED initiated money-laundering investigation as per the provisions of the PMLA based on the Prosecution Complaint or chargesheet filed by the Regional Officer, Haryana State Pollution Control Board, Bhiwani before Special Environment Court, Kurukshetra as the entities violated the conditions of Environment Clearance under



Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

The National Green Tribunal (NGT), Delhi has also imposed a penalty of Rs 65 crore on Sunder Mining and Associates and Govardhan Mines and Minerals for doing illegal and unscientific mining, causing large scale damage to the environment, the ED said.

“During the search operations by ED, various incriminating documents have been found and seized which reveal illegal mining done by these firms violating the environ-

mental clearances granted to them leading to acquisition of proceeds of crime to the tune of hundreds of crores (of rupees),” the agency said in a statement.

Further, documents found and seized also reveal that the manipulations in getting mining contracts by Sunder Marketing and Associate and others. Freezing orders in respect of bank lockers and bank accounts of the group were issued during the search operations under provisions of PMLA.

During the searches, a Mercedes car having acquisition value of approximately Rs 1.25 crore, cash of Rs 26.45 lakh and incriminating documents including digital evidence, hard disks and mobiles among others were seized. Further investigation is under progress, it added.

Case filed against Ahmedabad biotech firm for ₹46 cr fraud

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered a case against a private company based at Ahmedabad and its directors as well as other unknown public servants on the allegations of causing loss of Rs 46.79 crore to the Union Bank of India, Ahmedabad Branch.

“It was alleged that the accused had diverted/siphoned off funds disbursed to them through falsification of information/documents and had committed the offence of criminal breach of trust, cheating, misappropriation of public

fund in connivance with one another,” the CBI said in a statement.

Following registration of the case, searches were conducted at different locations in Ahmedabad at the premises of the accused, including the borrower company which led to recovery of incriminating documents.

Those named as accused in the FIR are Greendiamz Biotech Pvt. Ltd, Ahmedabad, Champat Rikhabchand Sanghavi, Deepak Champat Sanghavi, Ashwin R Shah and unknown public servant(s) and private person(s).



Several leaders from Jammu & Kashmir joined the Congress Party in the presence of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and KC Venugopal in New Delhi on Monday. AICC J&K in-charge Rajani Patil and Congress J&K president Vikar Rasool Wani are also seen. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Parl panel moots law for mandatory disclosure of assets by judges

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A Parliamentary committee on Monday recommended bringing a law to make it mandatory for Supreme Court and High Court judges to disclose their assets annually to an appropriate authority.

The standing committee on Law and Personnel said there is a need to institutionalise the mechanism of regular filing of assets by the judges and putting it in the public domain.

It observed that such a declaration by judges of the higher judiciary will bring more trust and credibility into the system. The committee said the last resolution of the Supreme Court on the decla-

ration of assets by judges on a voluntary basis is not complied with...The Committee recommends the government to bring about appropriate legislation to make it mandatory for judges of the higher judiciary (Supreme Court and High Courts) to furnish their property returns on an annual basis to the appropriate authority,” the committee headed by the BJP’s Sushil Kumar Modi said.

“The Restatement of Values of Judicial Life” adopted by a full court meeting of the Supreme Court on May 7, 1997, lays down certain judicial standards which are to be followed by the apex court and high court judges, it said. This resolution made it mandatory for every top court and high

court judge to make a declaration of their assets and liabilities at the time of appointment and thereafter, at the beginning of every year. Later, the full bench in its meeting on August 26, 2009, decided to disclose the statement of assets submitted by judges to the public by putting it on the Supreme Court website, the panel noted.

Again, the full court in its meeting on September 8, 2009, resolved to put the declaration of assets in the Supreme Court website on or before October 31, 2009, purely on a voluntary basis. “Presently, the website of the Supreme Court shows that 55 judges have so far uploaded their assets and declaration with last update done on March 31, 2018.

Raids conducted in Raj question paper leak case by ED

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday conducted fresh searches at a coaching institute as part of its ongoing money laundering probe into the alleged question paper leak of the Rajasthan Eligibility Examination for Teachers, 2021.

The agency searched the premises of the Sikar-based institute as part of its exercise to collect more evidence in the case. The money laundering case filed by the ED in April stems from two FIRs lodged by the Special Operating Group (SOG) of the Rajasthan Police

in connection with the alleged REET paper leak. In June, the ED arrested Ram Kripal Meena, the owner of a Jaipur-based private school, in connection with this case.

The agency had conducted searches at 27 locations in Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Ajmer, Dungarpur, Barmer, Sikar and Jalore on June 5 as part of this probe and a similar case of the senior teachers Grade-II recruitment examination held in 2022.

As many as 62 persons, including Meena, were arrested by SOG of the Rajasthan Police, which subsequently filed three charge sheets against them.

Lakhs of devotees through Kashi Vishwanath Temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Despite tight security arrangements in view of ongoing archaeological survey in Gyanvapi premises on the court's order, there was no decline in the faith of devotees as lakhs of devotees including thousands of saffron-clad kan-wariyas thronged one of the dwadasa jyotirlingas Kashi Vishwanath Temple (KVT) temple on the occasion of fifth Monday as this year, due to 'adimas' (extra month), the auspicious Shrawan is of two months long in which there will be eight Mondays. Throughout the day, the sprawling premises of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham (corridor) was echoed with the slogans of 'Har Har Mahadev' and 'Bol Bom'.

On this Monday, in shringar, Lord Shiva was seen in Parvati Swaroop (form) as in the last four Mondays, the Almighty was decorated in Chal Pratiima, Gauri Shankar, Amrit Varsha and Bhagirathi forms. As expected the rush of devotees was in lakhs as even during the midnight hours, there were more than long lines of devotees from Dadaswamedh ghat via Godowlia side and Maidagin. As the water level of river Ganga was at a high level, the devotees faced it tough to have a holy dip in this sacred river.

In view of the heavy rush, elaborate security arrangements were made and no vehicles were allowed to move between Godowlia and Maidagin throughout the day. To maintain law and order, the



KVT officials showering flowers on devotees at corridor premises in Varanasi on Monday.

devotees were checked at many places through metal detectors. Senior administrative and police officers were present there to keep watch on the stock of situation in KVC premises. All the activities were also watched through various CCTV cameras. To avoid congregation the devotees were asked to move towards Gyanvapi only through barricading and Rapid Action Force (RAF), para-military and PAC jawans were deployed both inside and outside of the premises.

Right from the early wee hours after Mangla aarti, the devotees started thronging the temple and there were continuous lines of devotees on both sides of the temple including Maidagin and Godowlia as well as Lalita Ghat. A large

number of saffron-clad kan-wariyas turned out this year from Prayagraj and other places. For the conveniences of the devotees, at several places big LED screens were installed to display the activities of garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum) as the devotees were not allowed to touch the Shivling and they offered jalabishek through big metal structure from outside the garbhagriha.

Besides, heavy rush of devotees was also seen at Markandey Mahadev Temple located near Varanasi-Ghazipur highway about 25 kms from here near the confluence of rivers Ganga and Gomti at Kaithi apart from all famous Shiva temples including Mahamritunjaya Mahadev (Daranganagar), Gauri Kedareshwar (Kedar Ghat),

Jogeshar Mahadev (Ishwargangi), Omkleshwar Mahadev (Chittanpura), Teel Bhandeshwar (Pandey Haveli), Sarangnath Mahadev (Sarnath) and many others in the city areas.

In the outskirts, a heavy rush of devotees was also seen at all the Shiva temples located on Panchkoshi Marg including Karmadeshwar Mahadev, Bhim Chandi, Rameshwar Mahadev, Panch Pandava and Kapildhara. Apart from these famous temples, heavy rush of devotees was also seen at Vishwanath temple in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) premises and Shool Tankeshwar Mahadev and scores of all others as the city is famous for having the replicas of all the dwadasa jyotirlingas.

Rivers rising at alarming speed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

If the water level of the Ganga and the Yamuna continues to rise with the existing speed, the Bade Hanuman temple near the Sangam will get inundated by Tuesday morning. The Ganga reached Bade Hanuman temple every year to bathe him. When the twin rivers swelled in the month of July owing to flash floods in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and the over flowing barrage of Haryana, flood waters had receded without touching the temple boundary.

This time the rivers are rising at an alarming speed and there is every possibility that the flood water will enter the temple by Tuesday.

Though the red mark of both the rivers read 84.734 metres at Prayagraj, flood level of the Ganga read 81.20 metres at Phaphamau and 80.27 metres at Chhatnaag, while the Yamuna read 80.94 metres at Naini.

During the past 24 hours both the rivers recorded a rise of over one metre owing to moderate showers all over but



Flooded Yamuna in Prayagraj

the rising trend slowed down Sunday evening, but the flood water is approaching towards the Hanuman temple after submerging the roads and park.

SP activist carrying reward held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A Samajwadi Party (SP) activist with a criminal record Mohammad Javed alias Pappu Ganjia has been arrested by the STF from Ajmer in Rajasthan. He was close to slant mafia don Atiq Ahmad and just a couple of days ago the reward on him was doubled from Rs 25,000 to Rs 50,000.

The STF team and the NOIDA police on Monday nabbed Pappu Ganjia from Ajmer. He was wanted in a number of cases, including one in Naini for extortion under Sections 386, 323, 504, and 506 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Mohammad Javed alias Pappu Ganjia, son of Hifazat Ali alias Fateh Mohammad of Jahangirabad was an active member of Gang IS 227 and over 40 cases of different nature, including murder, loot, extortion are pending against him.

He was initially lodged at Ajmer and process for bringing him here on transit remand had been initiated.

The police was making all out efforts to send Pappu Ganjia behind bars but he gave a slip every time. Immediately after doubling the reward to Rs. 50,000 information was received regarding his Ajmer hideout and this time the police succeeded in their mission.

BOMB ATTACK CASE: He had designed the bomb attack on himself in Kareli a couple of days ago to frame charges against his inlaws. Sensation had prevailed in Pillar Colony, Kareli a few days ago when two masked motorcycle-borne youths had lobbed bombs on Ashu alias Mohammad Amaan, son of Mashook Ansari. Ashu had escaped the attack and had

lodged an FIR with the Kareli police in this regard. The police started the investigation and went through the CCTV footage of the cameras installed in the locality to identify those who had hurled crude bombs.

Footage showed that the miscreants threw the bag on the spot in which they had been carrying the bombs. The bag was recovered and to the surprise of the police address printed on it was of Korba in Chhattisgarh. Further investigation revealed that a maternal aunt of the complainant Ashu lived in Korba and she had arrived here about a month ago. The police got suspicious and started working on the theory that Ashu had planned this attack. When Ashu was grilled he spilled the beans and told the police that he had a rift with his second wife Zainab who had married another man.

When he objected Zainab's father and other relatives had humiliated him so he decided to take revenge by framing criminal charges against them. He contacted Rahil and explained him the whole plot.

Another CCTV footage showed Ashu sitting at a nearby place with a friend and when the bike riders arrived on the spot he reached a safe place where he could protect himself from bomb explosion. Two bombs were lobbed there but Ashu came out unhurt.

In his statement Ashu accepted that he had planned this attack on himself and had given bombs and cloth in the above bag to Rahil for covering his face. He wanted to see father and other relatives of Zainab in jail. The police have initiated action against Ashu and launched a manhunt for Rahil.

Ganga crosses warning level in Ballia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The water level of river Ganga has crossed the warning level of 56.615 metres in downstream Ballia on Monday where the level is expected to reach at 57.3 metres at 8 am on Tuesday as the water level was increasing there by five cm per hour during the day and it speed will increase further as the river was recorded rising at 14 cm per hour at Ghazipur. With this, the low-lying areas of this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP) are facing serious flood threats. For the last many years, this region has been facing flood in almost every rainy season and due to this, as a large number of authorised or unauthorised colonies come into existence in the banks of river Ganga and Varuna in the city, they face a lot of problems when river water enters there.

The speed of rising trend of river Ganga, which was increasing at an alarming pace of 10 cm per hour a day ago, has been slowed down in Varanasi as it was recorded rising at four cm per hour during the day as per the report of Middle Ganga Division-III of Central Water Commission (CWC). During the 24 hours, the water level has increased by 1.34 metres, rising from 66.52 metres to 67.86 metres as recorded at 8 am on Monday.



Water level of river Ganga continues to rise in Varanasi on Monday.

The river continued rising right from Phaphamau to Ballia including Prayagraj, Mirzapur, Varanasi and Ghazipur. The river was recorded at 56.46 metres in downstream Ballia at 8 am while 60.54 metres at Ghazipur against the warning level of 62.105 metres and in upstream city Mirzapur at 73.45 metres (warning level 76.724 metres).

However, the residents of several villages of Daab area surrounded by rivers Ganga and Gomti have heaved a sigh of relief increased as the rising

trend of Gomti was recorded steady at Jaunpur but as the level of river Ganga in Varanasi has inched close to 69 metres mark, it has increased the heartbeats of residents of dozens of colonies located on both sides of river Varuna because if the rising trend continues, it may cause reverse flow of Varuna. During the last 24 hours, several areas of the region have received moderate to heavy rains. Jaunpur received 69.2 mm rain, Varanasi 29 mm, Chopan in Sonbhadra 28 mm and Ghazipur 22.6

mm.

In the city, as the water level of river Ganga continued to rise, it entered the Sheetla Mata Mandir at Old Dasaswamedh Ghat forcing the devotees to reach the temple through the water. Most of the 'chowkis' of pandas have been submerged into the water. The venue of famous regular Ganga Aarti had already been shifted upstairs. Dozens of low lying temples located at internationally famous 84-odd ghats were either submerged into the water fully or partially.

Watchman challenges robbers, killed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

One person was killed and several others injured when armed robbers targeted jewellery shops in Hetapatti village under the Tharvai police station late on Sunday night. The watchman of the market challenged the robbers but was attacked brutally by them and he died on the spot.

District police commissioner Ramit Sharma reached the spot in the morning and formed five teams to nab the robbers. Forensic team and sniffer dogs have been pressed to gather clues for reaching the criminals.

The injured have been rushed to SRN Hospital of Moti Lal Nehru Medical College. Around 1.00 am robbers reached Hetapatti village market and targeted the shop-cum-residence of Santosh Kesarwani and Rajendra Kesarwani who run clothes and jewellery shops there. When the family members got up they raised an alarm but the robbers attacked them to make a successful escape from the spot. On hearing the screams of women and children, watchman Ram Kripal Pal (60) challenged the

robbers reportedly four in number but was attacked brutally by them. He died on the spot while his wife also sustained serious injuries when she tried to intervene and save her husband. All the injured persons are undergoing treatment at SRN Hospital. Villagers claimed that the watchman was attacked with sharp-edged weapons as deep cuts were visible on his head and face but the police termed it as lathi blow injuries. Yet another jeweller of the market Ram Babu Soni found the shutter of his shop broken in the morning.

The police commissioner instructed the teams to nab the robbers as early as possible.

CME ORGANISED: A Continuing Medical Education (CME) on the topic

reduction in them are mostly symptomstic and include reddish rashes over the skin, bleeding from gums, nose, dark black or red stools and urine, excessive menstrual bleed, unexplained bruises and prolonged even after minor injuries.

There are many causes of thrombocytopenia, the common causes being TTP where platelets are consumed by our own antibodies, especially after infection.

Autoimmune diseases, viral infections, dengue and certain medications can cause low platelets too.

AMA Senior Vice-President Dr JV Rai felicitated the speaker and Chairperson Dr GS Sinha, Dr Radharani Ghosh and Dr Kachnar Verma. AMA Honorary Secretary Dr Ashutosh Gupta was the convener of the meet. He proposed the vote of thanks.

Dr Kamal Singh, Dr Ashok Agrawal, Dr Sujit Singh, Dr Yuganter Pandey, Dr Rajesh Maurya, Dr Subhash Verma, Dr Sapan Srivastava, Dr Atul Dubey, Dr Anoop Chauhan, Dr Utsav Singh, Dr Abhinav Agrawal and others were present.

Gyanvapi: ASI continues survey

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on Monday continued its scientific survey of Gyanvapi premises and appealed to both Hindu and Muslim sides to maintain the confidentiality of the on-going survey.

The ASI 42-member team continued its survey of Gyanvapi premises in a scientific way on the fourth day in succession on Monday after the Allahabad High Court cleared the way for the same. The ASI team started its survey at 10 am which lasted till 5 pm except the lunch time and time of namaz.

The ASI team expressed its displeasure over the statements made by the both Hindu and Muslim sides regarding the survey outside the Gyanvapi premises and appealed to them to maintain the confidentiality of the on-going survey.

As there was fifth Monday of the suspicious month of shrawan and the devotees in large number turned up at the Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple

The ASI team expressed its displeasure over the statements made by the both Hindu and Muslim sides regarding the survey outside the Gyanvapi premises

to have darshan and offer prayers of Baba Vishwanath, the district administration and police paid extra caution during the survey. The tight security arrangement has been made particularly at Gate No-4, the main entry point of the temple.

MGKV STUDENTS BAG TWO AWARDS: In a great achievement, the students of Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith (MGKV) bagged two awards of 'Best Delegate' and 'Special Mention' in Youth Parliament held in Banaras Hindu University (BHU).

The Youth Parliament was held in BHU on Sunday in which the students of MGKV proved their talents by participating in it and bagged the awards of 'Best Delegate' and 'Special Mention'.

The Activity Club of MGKV extended its congratulations to the students for their achievement and said that with the encouragement by the V-C Prof Anand Kumar Tyagi, the students of the university are showing excellent talents in the events such as Youth Parliament, Mock UNO, etc.

Earlier, the students of the university Namit Singh and Laiba Siddiqui won the award of the Best Delegate in the Lok Sabha Committee of Youth Parliament and United Nations Human Right respectively, while the student Shailushi Singh won the award of Special Mention in the meeting of All India Political Parties.

MAN HELD FOR KILLING FATHER: The rural police on Monday claimed to have arrested the son who

killed his father for the sake of money. The police also recovered the spade used in the crime.

Talking to the newspersons the DCP, Gomti Vikrant Veer informed that a case was lodged at Badagaon police station on Sunday that one Rajkumar Saroj, resident of Gopalpur village killed his father Ramji Saroj over money.

On the basis of the FIR, the Badagaon police led by SHO Rajkumar Pandey started an investigation into the matter and succeeded in rounding up the named accused Rajkumar Saroj on Monday. The police also recovered the spade used in the crime by the accused.

During the interrogation, the accused informed the police that he had exchanged heated words with his father on Sunday over the money issue and in anger, he killed the father with a spade. After killing the father, he had hidden the spade near a tube-well in the village and shirt stained with blood in a place, the DCP informed, adding that the accused was sent to jail.

One arrested for molesting girl

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The Madihan police on Sunday arrested an accused of molesting a girl and making her objectionable photos and videos as viral. One person had lodged a named FIR at Madihan police station on July 31 this year alleging that the accused had molested his daughter and made her objectionable photos and videos viral. After registering the case the police arrested the accused belonging to Birohiya village under Madihan police station and sent him to jail. Meanwhile the Vindhyachal police on Sunday arrested an accused of enticing away a minor girl and raping her. A man had lodged a named complaint on July 5 this year alleging that his minor

daughter was enticed away. After registering the case the police started the investigation and it also came to light that girl was also raped by the accused. The police added the relevant sections along with the POCSO Act. After the case was registered the accused was at large and was arrested a resident of Mahuari Kala under Vindhyachal police station on Sunday. In another incident the construction of garbage collection centre was going on in Akorhi village under Vindhyachal police station. The village pradhan said the land had been identified by revenue officials but Amit Singh of the same village was objecting to the construction. However, the construction was on and Jai Narain Singh (42) of the same village was looking after the

work. According to the village pradhan, Amit Singh allegedly came to the site along with four other accomplices on Saturday night and assaulted Jai Narain Singh with iron rods and sticks. Jai Narain Singh was brought to divisional hospital in an injured condition from where he was referred to trauma centre Varanasi and died during treatment. Jai Narain Singh died at Varanasi. After being informed about the incident the police authorities visited the spot and heavy police force has been deployed in the village. CO (City) Paramand Kushwaha the main accused Amit Singh was a histo-rysheeter and a case has been registered against him and his four other accomplices.

C O N V E N T I O N : Mahanth Yoganand Giri while

addressing the two-day convention of Vishwa Guru Shankaracharya Dashnam Goswami Samaj on Sunday has exhorted the people to work to keep the entire society intact. Addressing the valedictory session he said Dashnam Goswami Samaj has contributed a lot to the society and in view of the present situation it is the need of the hour that we do more to strengthen the culture as well as nation. The programme was presided over by national president of the organisation Kamlesh Giri, convened by Om Shankar Giri and his team and conducted by Chandra Prakash Puri. The vote of thanks was proposed by the state president Chandra Prakash Puri. Bhakti Kiran Shastri, Dharmendra Giri and others were present.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Restive Pak

Imran's arrest sends shockwaves through Pakistan and deals another blow to its fragile democracy

In a surprising turn of events, former Prime Minister Imran Khan was arrested yesterday in Pakistan, sending shockwaves through the country's political circles. The arrest has raised significant questions about the stability of Pakistan's political environment and its potential ramifications for the nation's future. Imran on Saturday was sentenced to three-year imprisonment by an Islamabad court in the Toshakhana case pertaining to the improper acquisition of state gifts. This ruling means that Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) chief is disqualified from politics for the next five years. Despite his absence during the court proceedings, Imran was arrested shortly. The case complaint was initially filed against Imran on October 21 last year and he was formally indicted on May 10. Imran has been ousted from power after losing a no-confidence vote in April 2022. Afterwards, he mentioned that a total of 76 cases had been filed against him. Imran, a former cricketer and charismatic leader, has been a key figure in Pakistani politics for over a decade. He rose to power in 2018 after a fiercely contested general election, promising to bring about transformative changes in governance, economy and foreign relations. His arrest comes amidst a backdrop of escalating tensions between his PTI party and the ruling party which has accused him of electoral manipulation and mismanagement.

The implications of Imran's arrest are multi-faceted. It is likely to deepen the existing political divide in Pakistan. Khan's supporters view him as a symbol of hope and reform, while his opponents criticise his administration for failing to deliver on many of his promises. The arrest could potentially fuel more intense and confrontational politics between the PTI and the government. Democratic Backsliding Concerns come calling with Imran's arrest. Though Imran had anticipated this arrest but not the manner in which it was done; some 200 armed policemen took him away to an undisclosed location. The very operation smacks of government's unease and nervousness. The arrest raises concerns about the state of democracy in Pakistan. Critics argue that using legal measures against prominent political figures could undermine democratic institutions and processes. This situation highlights the importance of upholding democratic norms and ensuring transparent legal proceedings. It could indeed be a turning point in the country's politics should the higher court fail to give him relief in the Toshakhana case. The arrest could galvanise Opposition parties to unite, potentially leading to a more coordinated effort to challenge the government. In the wake of Imran's arrest, Pakistan finds itself at a critical juncture in its political journey. The coming days will likely see heightened public discourse, calls for accountability and demands for transparency in the legal process. The nation's ability to navigate this situation while upholding democratic principles will play a significant role in shaping its political trajectory in the years to come.

PICTALK



Lord Shiva devotees 'Kanwariyas' carry holy water from the Narmada river, in Jabalpur

Trafficking: No end in sight

Despite best efforts by various governments and international agencies, the scourge of trafficking is showing up no let up

On July 30 World Day Against Trafficking was observed. It has been observed every year to raise awareness in human trafficking aiming to put pressure on governments, law enforcement agencies and civil society to strengthen the prevention of trafficking. Observing the seriousness of the problem, UN noted, "Trafficking in persons is a grave violation of human rights. Almost every country in the world is affected by trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit or destination for victims."

Human trafficking, one of the worst forms of human rights violations. It is nothing but exploitation of vulnerability, and mostly of those who expose their vulnerability. Human trafficking, as an organised crime, is growing at a rapid pace. No country, irrespective of whether they are part of G20 or not, can claim to be trafficking free. In India the situation is graver. According to the report, the top three states with highest number of human trafficking incidents based on number of cases reported are West Bengal, Rajasthan and Gujarat



and the top three states with highest number of human trafficking incidents based on crime rates are West Bengal, Daman and Diu and Goa. Assam had the highest rates of crime against women in India in 2021 with about 168 crimes reported for every 100,000 women. Among the union territories, Delhi had a crime rate against women of 147.

Goa has the highest rate of human trafficking cases per lakh population, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report for 2021 revealed. According to the data compiled by the NCRB, Goa records case of human trafficking per lakh population as against the national average of 0.2cases. US is also not behind. California witnessed the largest number of human trafficking cases (1,334), making it the worst state for human trafficking. Particularly, Los Angeles is regarded as a high-intensity

child exploitation area. Human trafficking in India, is a grave issue. It involves the illegal trade of women and girls for various exploitative purposes, such as forced labor, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, and even organ selling. This criminal activity violates basic human rights and has a devastating impact on the lives of the victims.

Several factors contribute to the prevalence of women trafficking in India. Economic disparities and lack of education push vulnerable individuals, particularly women and girls, into vulnerable situations, making them easy targets for traffickers. Gender inequality is another deep-rooted discrimination in Indian society lead to the devaluation of women's lives, making them more susceptible to exploitation and trafficking.

Limited access to education, especially for girls in some regions, exacerbates their vulnerability, as they are less aware of their rights and the dangers associated with trafficking. Moreover, inadequate implementation and enforce-

Crime pays hefty dividend in politics

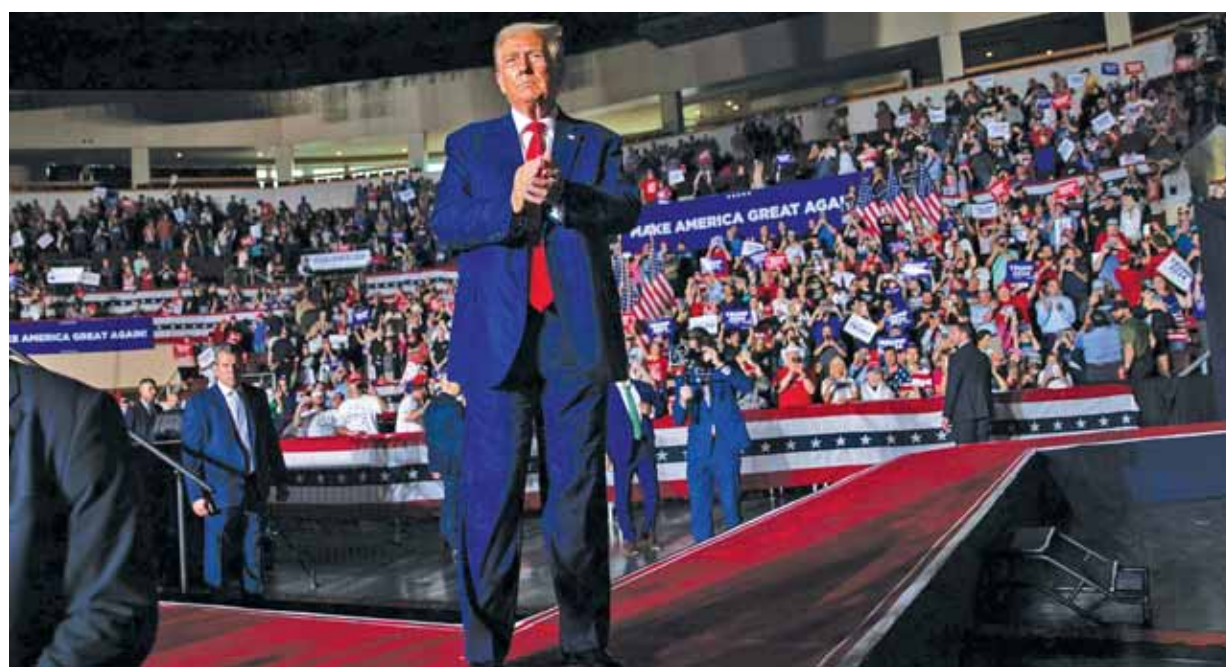
Even in democratic countries like India and the United States, it is often surprising that politicians with controversial pasts get elected

For instance, multiple indictments have been filed against ex-President Donald Trump. Does a leader have the right to use lies to stay in power, even if the people vote against them? The main question has arisen due to the recent indictment of the ex-President. The Department of Justice alleges that he tried to steal the 2020 election and undermine democracy, despite knowing he had lost. Trump is charged with possessing classified documents in Florida, paying off a pornographic actor in Manhattan, and trying to manipulate the election results in Georgia.

Last week's third indictment of the year had caused a significant split among voters. Democrats see it as a necessary act of justice for an attack on American democracy, while Republicans view it as evidence of partisan meddling in the legal system. Although there have been misconduct accusations, Trump has consistently denied them. Playing the victim card, he claims he is unfairly targeted for political reasons. The talking points of President Trump revolve around how the establishment and the 'deep state' are working against him. Trump has successfully pushed a politics of grievance, where the system is out to get you."

Many Republican voters continue to support the ex-President, despite facing numerous indictments. GOP officials were backing Trump's claim that the charges were politically motivated. Recent opinion polls show that Trump is leading the race against President Joe Biden. Many Trump supporters are willing to donate generously to his legal defence and campaign. After all, running for the presidency requires a significant war chest.

Discrediting his prosecutors, Trump has expressed doubts about why the charges were not brought up earlier. At a campaign rally in Pennsylvania on July 29, Trump asserted, "They're not indicting me; they're indicting you. I happen to be standing in their way." Trump's strategists plan to use his recent indictment to strengthen his defence. He portrays himself as a Washington



outsider despite being the President earlier. Trump sees himself as a defender against the "deep state." He claims, "They want to take away my freedom because I will never let them take away your freedom."

Earlier this year, the Trump campaign claimed that the charges against him were similar to those in Nazi Germany during the 1930s. Trump's power within his party has remained since his victory in the 2016 election as President of the United States. It's still being determined how the trials will affect the 2024 election, even though many people have made contradicting predictions. So far, the indictments have hurt Trump with independent voters but strengthened him with the Republican voters who decide primaries. There is no clarity on whether what happens to Trump — whether he's found guilty, not guilty, or the jury can't decide — will impact the election.

Unlawful conduct and corruption are not just issues in India. However, examining the situation can shed light on the difficulties that other democracies, like Pakistan and the Philippines, are grappling



ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN MISCONDUCT ACCUSATIONS, TRUMP HAS CONSISTENTLY DENIED THEM

with, as these issues are deeply ingrained. It will provide helpful insight into how common these issues are in democratic nations. What motivates political parties in India to select candidates with criminal charges? What drives voters to vote for them? Why do voters support politicians with a tarnished reputation, even after their past misdeeds? Political parties like the ruling BJP and the main Opposition Congress choose candidates with a known history of corruption and criminal record without hesitation. They do not show any remorse when picking these candidates.

India has a political system with three tiers and three million positions available. Campaigning for office requires a lot of resources. Unfortunately, many local political parties are controlled by influential individuals and clans who have complete control over their respective regions. These parties function like personal fiefs and often lack inner-party democracy. Wealthy candidates have an advantage in gaining a foothold. Parties also seek self-financed candidates who tend to be more competitive during elections. Running for office can be

expensive. Unfortunately, a candidate's wealth determines their likelihood of winning.

Will Indian democracy be affected by a Parliament made up mostly of wealthy representatives in a mainly impoverished country? Over 80% of Parliament members are millionaires. As a result, many qualified and knowledgeable people in India do not view politics as a career choice. It's the same analogy in the US. It is possible to contest and win elections if you are a multi-millionaire or supported by wealthy people. Coming back to India, although she had a questionable track record, the former chief minister of Tamil Nadu, J. Jayalalitha, even after conviction, has succeeded in winning multiple elections. Other notable politicians include BJP leader Y.S. Jeydyrappa and the late Gujarat Chief Minister Chiman Bhai Patel. Establishing a transparent and honest method of fighting elections is crucial to promote democracy and fairness in countries like the US and India. It will pave the way for a more equal and just society.

(The writer is a popular columnist. Views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RAHUL GANDHI IS BACK

Sir — With former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi eventually winning on the 'Modi surname' front that led to his disqualification as a Parliamentarian within 24 hours of the verdict, sentencing him to two years in prison, came. The Apex Court's categorical rejection of the High Court approving of the ujr court's order that originally sentenced Mr Rahul has paved way for the Congress' towering leader's reinstatement that remains merely a fait accompli, even as all eyes are on Lok Sabha Secretariat for the formal order coming in this regard now. On the contrary, Shiv Sena (Udhav) leader Sanjay Rawat has taken exception to the inordinate delay in reinstating Mr Rahul.

This decision has, however, come across as a big boost for the grand old party ahead of the assembly polls in the states of Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh (Congress-ruled), besides Madhya Pradesh and Mizoram going to polls in a couple of months ahead of the much-hyped Grand finale due in next year.

On the face of it, all this political razzamattaz has actually helped the former Congress president emerge as a non-controversial face of the United Opposition driving at taking on the formidable BJP in the next year's Lok Sabha polls, unitedly. Interestingly, taking a leaf from Samajwadi book, the Congress has tweeted 'Jannayak' for Mr Rahul Gandhi who will protect democracy in the Parliament the way 'Loknayak' JP (Jaya Prakash Narayan) would do. The political air is abuzz with curiosity as to which way this political cookie crumbles!

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

FOUR YEARS WITHOUT ARTICLE 370

Sir — It is said "better to be late than to become late". But for Article 370, 35 and 35A, better it became late though it is late. Four years have passed after the demise of Article 370, 35 and 35A. It marks the total integration of that part of Jammu and Kashmir with India which is under Indian administration. Kashmir is the dividing line of relationship between India and Pakistan.

Imran under arrest



Former cricketer and Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, who has vowed to change the system of Pakistan under the banner of Tehreek-e-Insaf Pakistan, is looking bleak today. On August 5, he was sentenced to 3 years in the Toshakhana case. The biggest thing is that there is a world of difference between the arrest of this time and the arrest of Al Qadir Trust scam in the month of May last.

In the first one, people came on the streets. His workers started attacking military bases. But this time, despite Imran Khan's appeal to the people to protest in the video message before his arrest, no news of protest is coming from anywhere. This is an alarm bell for his future. Because Pakistan is a country whose democracy was mortgaged to the hands of the army since its birth. The result of which is that, not only politics but whatever is necessary to run the system, it is run by the army, even indirectly. Even the events with which Imran Khan became the PM were also behind the hand of the army. But later Imran started feeling that maybe the people there are with him, so he doesn't need the army anymore. Because of this misunderstanding and overconfidence, today he is in jail. Perhaps his political career is over here as well.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

People were clueless when security forces were stationed and patrolling as a preemptive measure to prevent the possible disturbance. Article 370, Ram Mandir and Uniform Civil Code (UCC) are the core issues in the Indian political milieu. This discrimination and gross injustice have been removed by rescinding Article 35 and 35A. There is demand for statehood in Jammu and Kashmir. The centre is not averse to restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. Lok Sabha election is round the corner. If statehood is the aspiration of the people, the centre should accord it. After abolition of Article 370, there is a perceptible downslide in the terrorist activities.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

CARBON CREDIT TRADING FRAMEWORK

Sir — Carbon Credit Trading Framework is a system that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by giving incentives to individuals or organizations that reduce or avoid emitting carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases. A carbon credit is a certificate that represents the right to emit one tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e).

The framework sets a limit or a cap on the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions that are allowed for certain sectors or entities. Those who emit less than their cap can sell their surplus carbon credits to those who emit more than their cap. This way, the framework creates a market for carbon credits, where the price is determined by supply and demand. The framework also encourages innovation and investment in low-carbon technologies and projects.

Some examples of carbon credit trading frameworks are: The European Union Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), which is the world's largest carbon market, covering more than 11,000 power plants, factories, and airlines in 31 countries. The Indian Carbon Market (ICM), which is a proposed domestic carbon market that will set GHG emission intensity targets for selected entities in line with India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) for climate action.

Amarjeet Kumar | Hazaribag

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



PRABHA GUPTA



FIRST COLUMN

BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

Attain the 3Es, of equilibrium, equipoise and equanimity with meditation



RAVI VALLURI

Dispassion is the key to meditation. In such a state the mind is not hankering after materialistic goals. As Lord Krishna said, "An authentic yogi is one who drops all desires and hankering and reposes in the self." **QUESTION-ANSWER SESSION:** "Oh, Monarch of Zen, I have been privileged to listen to your lectures for several years," a disciple remarked during the question-answer time, "however I am not wise enough to imbibe the nuggets of wisdom that you have imparted. Therefore, I would be truly beholden if you can encapsulate the essence of Buddhism in a single sentence." The Zen Master cogitated on this comment. As silence descended in the monastery, he said that the truth of life is that everything is undergoing constant transformation therefore everything in life is impermanent. **IMPERMANENCE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF LIFE:** Among the various aphorisms in Buddhism is the singular hypothesis that everything in life is impermanent. The Zen Master deftly and tactfully referred to the concept of impermanence by stating that everything in life is ever changing. An individual could contemplate and muse upon this truth for hours together and yet be unable to grasp the pivotal tenet of impermanence.

This is a formational aspect of life as it teaches us the art of detachment. In such a state one learns to become a witness or a spectator to the events unfolding around us without getting emotionally involved. The mind is in deep rest and ripe to meditate. Thus, a true seeker assimilates this exemplary knowledge and is discerning enough to treasure the value of impermanence. The practice of mindfulness and awareness are twin characteristics to delve into meditation.

SO, WHAT IS MEDITATION AFTER ALL?: Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, incisively captures the phenomenon and practice of meditation. The Master has elucidated that effort is an act of the body, while meditation is essentially a state of no-mind, an act where there is no striving or assaying by an individual. It is primarily an act of doing nothing.



BENEFITS OF MEDITATION: The skill of being able to consciously relax through the practice of the unique rhythmic breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya, Kriya Yoga, Sahaj Samadhi meditation or Vipassana helps one to slip into deep meditation. It must be appreciated that meditation is not concentration, but is primarily an act of de-concentration as demonic thoughts and cobwebs get purged.

It is interesting to note that while awareness and mindfulness help in enhancing the quality of meditation, paradoxically the reverse of this is true too. Continuous practice of meditation helps an individual to develop greater awareness and mindfulness. With enhanced awareness comes the ability to discover oneself and improve interpersonal relationships.

We begin to see a mirror image of ourselves in fellow human beings. This enables us to metamorphose from animal instincts to more compassionate ones. Studies have revealed that meditation also helps in managing cholesterol levels by reducing LDL levels and increasing HDL levels. Regular meditation helps in reducing blood pressure and various coronary ailments too. The human mind attains the 3Es, of equilibrium, equipoise and equanimity. In such a state, it is not agitated and is always positive in thought process. Efficacious thoughts spring to the mind. With high levels of intuition, open mindedness clears channels in our system and enhances our aura.

Buddha was once questioned as to how he had profited from meditation. He replied, "I have gained nothing!" However, Buddha went on to say, "Let me tell you what I lost: anger, anxiety, depression, insecurity, fear of old age and death."

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway and is a faculty of the Art of Living)

Bring more life into Insurance sector

The middle-income segment needs health insurance more than ever before. It is the time for insurers to improve insurance penetration, writes Nirjhar Majumdar

The juggernaut of the life insurance industry of India continues to grow. The sector managed to grow at an inflation adjusted rate of 8.5% in 2021-22 while the global life sector could grow only at 4.5%. Even in the advanced markets, the growth was 5.4%. Insurance Penetration, defined as the life premium amount underwritten (new and renewal taken together) as a proportion of GDP, reached 3.2 which is a shade higher than the global average of 3. The customers continue to have the same issues about insurance intermediaries. Even though people continue to buy life insurance (as there is no substitute to this product), they do it mechanically and without much emotional involvement. The personalisation which they get in other products and services are awfully missing in insurance in general and life insurance in particular. Is there any way out for the life insurance industry to rejuvenate itself? Let's find out.

Life insurance has always been seen by the people as a product that benefits only the dependants, not the policyholder. This concept was okay when the members of a family were more dependent on each other financially and emotionally. But we are living in a more individualistic society today. This is a global phenomenon and India can no longer maintain a separate identity on this globalised planet. What happens in the insurance markets of the west also happens here, maybe with some time lag. The preferences of the people seen in the western world are very much the preferences here also, especially among the younger cohorts. People want more personalisation and more instant gratification. Life insurers have to change value propositions to accommodate changing preferences of the insuring public. They are using technology to modernise the processes. But they must first understand what the customers look for in a life insurance product and then see how technology can aid in developing products and offering value added services.

What are the Indian insurers doing now? They are focusing on high end customers living in the metros and adjoining areas. 74% offices of the private insurers are in metro areas only. All insurers are encouraging the agents to chase affluent customers with products that promise high returns quickly. More than 37% of premium incomes of the private insurers come from ULIPs only and we all know that ULIPs carry considerable market risks. The agents are enticed into the business with a promise that selling a few high value insurance policies to the NRI and HNI customers will catapult them into a league of MDRT clubs.

The agents (especially the younger ones) hope that they can become rich and famous by selling a few high value insurance products to the affluent class. This model has some serious flaws. The products (mainly ULIPs) which are touted as high return fetching products hardly bring high returns in the short run or even in the long. The customers who understand the false value proposition made by the insurers lose interest in life insurance products (with very little insurance component in any case) and surrender such products shortly after the lock-in period. This is also one reason why policy persistence (defined as proportion of policies that stay in the books of insurers as in-force policies) is so poor for most of the insurers.

When so many customers leave the insurance contracts by way of lapsations or



INSURERS HAVE TO MOVE FROM PROVIDER OF MORTALITY BENEFITS TO PROVIDER OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS BENEFITS. CONCERN OVER MORTALITY RISK IS FAST DIMINISHING

(The writer is insurance industry analyst)



surrenders, both the insurers and insurance intermediaries suffer a lot. This is the reason why so many new insurance agents quit within four years of taking up insurance agency. The irony is, insurers are still able to bring an equal number of new agents to the distribution channel by way of selling same promises which are unrealistic, to say the least. The question is how the industry manages to grow even under such unhealthy circumstances?

Reason is, the mass market and the middle market of the country served predominantly by LIC are still savings minded as people under these segments neither have high purchasing power nor risk-taking ability to go for risky linked products. Stock market or Mutual Fund investments are not yet sufficiently popular in sub-urban and rural areas. Another reason is, high level of churning of policies (meaning selling of new policies by making customers surrender the existing ones) ensures that money remains in the insurance industry even after surrenders. But this is not the right way to develop the industry in a country where there still exists an 83% life insurance protection gap. While insurers manage to grow at an impressive rate, they still fail to generate the desired interest and enthusiasm among people about insurance.

Insurers still live under the hypothesis that the rich only want to be richer very quickly. They forget a simple fact that the people including the rich also want to protect their hard-earned money through conventional yet personalised insurance products. Life expectancy is on the rise everywhere. A person retiring today from active working life may have to live for another twenty-five to thirty years. His self-respect prevents

him from becoming dependent on others financially. Even if he gets some pension either from the State or from his employer, the pension falls short of the amount he needs to maintain a desirable standard of living. Even in the western world (except perhaps the Netherlands and Spain), the proportion of salary replacement after retirement is falling rapidly.

The European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) is encouraging the insurers to develop Pan European Personal Pension (PEPP) products to help people live comfortably in their post-retirement years. Indian insurers have pension products too but these have to be made more attractive by including various other benefits allied to post-retirement living.

Insurers have to properly address the current problem which is a combination of declining pensions and absence of state healthcare expenditure for the greater number of people. In India, the affluent have no problem in combating rising healthcare expenses, even after retirement. The poorer households get generous insurance cover from the nationwide scheme of Ayushman Bharat. It's the middle-income segment which contains no less than 80 crores of Indians, who are in trouble. This is an opportunity for insurers to improve insurance penetration.

What can insurers do, to stay relevant to the customers? First of all, life insurance can be bundled with health insurance, retirement and wealth management, to remain more useful to the customers. As the customer becomes older, he should have the option to reduce risk cover and increase critical illness cover. After all, it is a globally accepted trend that as customers grow

older, their risk appetites shift from mortality to health and long-term care. Life and disability insurance is most relevant to early years of life. At older ages, people seek coverage for chronic illness and long-term healthcare. Unless insurers develop more flexible and useful products, life insurance will not look attractive.

Insurers are either building or harnessing ecosystems that provide multiple services, not necessarily allied with insurance. That increases customer touchpoints. Indian insurers will soon get the permission to sell services incidental to insurance. That will make insurance more useful to all segments of the market. That can possibly make life insurance more attractive.

Indian insurers should move from age-old hierarchy-based structure to skill-based structure. This can recognise the special skills of employees. This also enables innovations to flow freely within the organisation. If the industry wants to get the best of the talents, organisational culture has to undergo a sea change. The best talents available in the country can make the industry more attractive.

Insurers have to move from provider of mortality benefits to provider of health and wellness benefits. Concern over mortality risk is quickly diminishing. The emphasis has to be on living benefits. Life insurers can help customers switch over to healthier lifestyles. 71% of deaths now occur due to lifestyle related diseases like diabetes, heart diseases and lung cancer. Life insurers have an opportunity and also responsibility to help people embracing healthier lifestyles. If Indian insurers start following the best global practices, they can make life insurance a pull product in India, too.

'Design your degree' program is pathbreaking

'Design Your Degree' program of Jammu University has message for those who want better standards of higher education

During 2012-2014 Delhi University (DU) had made many landmark experiments, in the true spirit of autonomy of universities - to experiment with innovative ideas. One of those ideas was Four Year Degree Program (FYUP) where students could decide on their own courses including skill courses while studying. This could lead to self-employment during and after completion of the degree program. The man behind this idea was Professor Dinesh Singh, the then Vice Chancellor of Delhi University and the implementer was Professor Umesh Rai the then Director South Campus, DU. Somehow this very innovative scheme was withdrawn in 2015.

Now Rai is the Vice-



CHANDRA BHUSHAN SHARMA

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Chancellor of Jammu University (JU). Jammu University has launched a similar experiment by the name 'Design Your Degree' (DYD), in line with the recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which has recommended four year degree program as well and made it mandatory to do skill courses to qualify for the 'multiple entry, multiple exit' provision of the NEP 2020. Till the Eighteenth Century every individual contributed to the economy by doing some productive work. It was only after the invasions, in the last one thousand years, and the destruction of the Bhartiya education system that Bharat became a poor country. Since the Macaulay's policy of education, of 1835, the educated

became job seekers and not self-employed entrepreneurs.

The NEP 2020 for the first time reverses the trend and the DYD is a landmark initiative in that sense. The NEP 2020 is a vision (Darshan) of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He is the man behind this idea, the idea which will once again help Bharat regain the position of ViswaGuru. Globally undergraduate programs are of four year duration and in fact the Radhakrishnan Commission, had mentioned that even the United States has a four year degree program but our nation is not ready for it right now.

Finally the NEP 2020 also approved a four year degree program and universities are now in the process of implementing the four year degree

program. Jammu University (JU) will be considered a frontrunner as it has gone a step further by giving the choice of selection of courses to the students. The essence of the recommendation of Design Your Degree (DYD) is to create a job givers rather than job seekers. The JU, DYD is based on the philosophy that students must be allowed to choose courses of study on their own volition so that they can give their best into it, and finally make it their life-long passion and profession.

Students would be allowed to choose academic courses along with skill courses from across disciplines and departments. Teachers and students from different departments, disciplines and streams would work in collaboration to foster

the creative ideas of each individual learner. The major criticism of our institutions has been that they work in silos and the findings of research in one department is not even shared with the department across the wall. Through DYD teachers and students will form groups of individuals with common interests and come up with very novel and innovative ideas.

As the program visualises the courses would not be only classroom based but students can work at any location with members of the society or even industry, with a view to find solutions to their problems. The university teachers instead of being just classroom teachers would do hand holding and become mentors. Once the DYD gets going true inter-

disciplinary practice would emerge. Students would be admitted under the DYD from 2023 academic year. Admission would be through a process keeping Senior Secondary Board result (10%), Entrance test (60%), Group activity (20%) and Personal Interview (10%) into consideration. The admission criteria clearly shows domain knowledge is not being tested for admission but attitude and aptitude for exploration is being tested for admission. During the program the group of students along with the mentor teacher will spend a semester on ground and work and find solutions to real life problems.

Some of the courses that the university has planned for Semesters I to IV are Discover-

ring the Self, Exploring the Surroundings, Marvels of the World, Expressing Creativity, Life Skills, Art and Science of Communication, Understanding the World through Data, Decoding the World through Data, Digital Humanities etc. From the courses it would be apparent the program will give opportunity to learners to explore and innovate unlike the content based courses presently prescribed in the universities.

The motto of the program is: 'Teach to Transform'; 'Educate to Empower'; and 'Learn to Lead'. Autonomy to universities should not be seen as an undue favour. Institutions can experiment and innovate leading to new and great ideas only if they are provided autonomy.

ENGLAND 'SHOOT-OUT' NIGERIA

AFP ■ BRISBANE (AUSTRALIA)

England scraped into the quarter-finals of the Women's World Cup when they beat Nigeria 4-2 on penalties in Brisbane on Monday.

Despite Nigeria having the better of the chances, the European Champions — reduced to 10 players after 87 minutes — snuck home in front of 50,000 spectators after the match had finished 0-0 at the end of extra time.

England held on after playmaker Lauren James received a red card for a needless stamp and will know they have to improve if they want to add the World Cup to their European crown.

They will face Colombia or Jamaica on Saturday for a place in the semi-finals.

England got off to a terrible start in the penalty shootout when Georgia Stanway fired wide, but Desire Oparanozie couldn't take advantage and missed with an almost identical effort.

Beth England made no mistake, but Nigeria's Michelle Alozie shot way over top to give England an advantage they never surrendered, sealing the win when Chloe Kelly calmly converted.

"The first thing is we really stuck together as a team," said England coach Sarina Wiegman.

"It was a very, very hard game, then we had a red card but we made it through extra-time and then won on penalties.

"How we did that, and how



the team just kept going, I'm so proud of them."

"It says so much about this team. Not one game has been easy and we knew and knew before this game it will not be easy."

The Lionesses, who last year won the European Championship at a packed Wembley Stadium in London, were expected to win comfortably against the world's 40th ranked team.

The Nigerians, however, have shown in this World Cup that they have the game to challenge anybody.

They stunned hosts Australia in the group stage, taking advantage of their speed in the transition to score a 3-2 win.

And they employed the same tactics against England, whose back three were regularly exposed by the Nigerian attack.

"We were unlucky"

"They're very organised, very transitional, very physical and that's exactly what we saw," said Wiegman of Nigeria.

"But we made it through and I'm really happy."

Nigeria coach Randy Waldrum was proud of his side.

"To come in here and play the way they did tonight, I think we were every bit as good (as England), he said.

"We had every opportunity to get the result and unfortunately we didn't get it done."

"Obviously we didn't execute on our penalties and when it gets to that point, it's anyone's game. We had the best chances, we hit the crossbar twice in regulation play. We were a bit unlucky not to get something out of it."

"But credit to England, they are a great side."

Penalty practice makes perfect for England, says Kelly

AFP ■ BRISBANE (AUSTRALIA)

England's Chloe Kelly said plenty of penalty practice had paid off after scoring the winning spot-kick to send the Lionesses into the World Cup quarter-finals after a nervy 0-0 draw against Nigeria.

The European champions had to survive extra-time a player down after Lauren James was sent off towards the end of 90 minutes for violent conduct.

Georgia Stanway then fired England's first penalty wide, but Bethany England, Rachel Daly, Alex Greenwood and Kelly found the net to prevail 4-2 in the shootout and prevent a huge upset in Brisbane.

"It's amazing, anything that's thrown at us we show what we're capable of," said the Manchester City forward, who



scored the winning goal in last year's European Championship final. "We've been practising a lot and it's working."

Sarina Wiegman's side will face Colombia or Jamaica in the last eight and are among the favourites to win the Women's World Cup for the first time.

But they were fortunate not to follow the likes of Germany and United States from crashing out early as Nigeria enjoyed the better of the game and hit the crossbar through Ashleigh Plumptre in the first half.

"This team is special," added Kelly. "We keep pushing forward. There is more to come from this special team."

in the 23rd minute.

The second half followed the same pattern, but England had a golden chance to seal the match with 15 minutes left only for Chiamaka Nnadozie to pull off a fine save from Rachel Daly's powerful header.

In extra-time, Nigeria again looked most likely, Michele Alozie and Oshoala both going close, but neither team could break the deadlock.

England started the match strongly and rattled Nigeria in the opening skirmishes as the Lionesses found plenty of space out wide.

They also controlled possession, completing 173 passes in the first half to Nigeria's 83.

But it was the Nigerians who looked the most dangerous and they gave the European champions a real fright on a number of occasions.

England-born Ashleigh Plumptre had two golden chances to open the scoring, the first coming in the 16th minute when a strike from outside the box crashed into the crossbar.

A minute later she forced a fine diving save from Mary Earps.

The Nigerians had eight shots at goal in the first half, three more than England, whose best chance fell to Alessia Russo

Players ignored over 'dangerous' added time rules: Varane

AFP ■ MANCHESTER (UNITED KINGDOM)

Manchester United defender Raphael Varane said on Monday that players' views have been ignored on new guidelines that will see more time added on at the end of matches.

Competitions around the world have been instructed to more accurately calculate time lost to stoppages this season, including goal celebrations and VAR checks.

Football's lawmakers IFAB said in March that the approach to calculating added time was "positively received" when it was first tested at the men's World Cup in Qatar last year and would be rolled out worldwide.

Arsenal equalised in the 11th of 13 added minutes at the end of Sunday's Community Shield against Manchester City and went on to win on penalties.

City manager Pep Guardiola criticised the move for putting extra strain on players as he mocked the "big brain guys who decide these things."

Guardiola has been backed up from the other side of the Manchester divide as Varane said players were not being lis-



tened to. "From the managers and players, we have shared our concerns for many years now that there are too many games, the schedule is overcrowded, and it's at a dangerous level for players' physical and mental well-being," the Frenchman posted on social media.

"Despite our previous feedbacks, they have now recommended for next season: longer games, more intensity, and less emotions to be shown by players. We just want to be in good condition on the pitch to give 100 percent to our club and fans. Why are our opinions not being heard?"

Varane retired from international football at the age of 29 earlier this year, likening the slog of the top-level game to being in the cycle of a washing machine.

The new guidelines on added time have been introduced to tackle time-wasting and increase effective playing time. However, the impact of the extra added time on players over a sustained period has already been highlighted by global union FIFPRO, which reported earlier this year that the changes would amount to the equivalent of up to three extra games per season for players with the highest existing workloads.

Rangers, Marseille set sights on Champions League as Faroese dream

AFP ■ PARIS

Rangers and Marseille launch their bids to qualify for the Champions League group stage this week as rank outsiders KI Klaksvik of the Faroe Islands attempt to prolong their fairytale adventure.

Former European champions PSV Eindhoven also enter the competition in the third qualifying round, with six slots still to be filled in what will be the final season with 32 clubs in the group phase.

The winners of the 10 ties advance to the play-off round, for which the pairings will be drawn on Monday. Belgian champions Antwerp and Swiss champions Young Boys join before the final hurdle.

Rangers endured a miserable return to the Champions League's elite last year, finishing without a single point in their first group stage campaign since 2010. Michael Beale's side began the new Scottish season with a surprise 1-0 loss at Kilmarnock, underlining the size of the task ahead as they prepare to host Swiss side Servette on Wednesday.



"It's bitterly disappointing for the players and staff but ultimately for the fans who have been excited in the summer, so there's a bit of realism in the air with that result," said Beale.

"There's a lot of work to do moving forward but we'll bounce back."

Marseille also finished bottom of their Champions League section last term. An abject run

at the end of the season cost them a shot at automatic qualification and saw coach Igor Tudor depart.

Marcelino is Marseille's seventh full-time coach in eight years and the club have been busy in the transfer market, bringing in Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Geoffrey Kondogbia and Ismaila Sarr.

"It's an ambitious project in

terms of the recruitment and mindset," said Kondogbia, who is reunited with Marcelino after playing under the Spaniard at Valencia.

"Going through the qualifying rounds didn't put me off. The important thing is the intent and I've seen that in what's been said and done."

Kondogbia could be handed his Marseille debut away to

Greek side Panathinaikos, the 1971 European Cup runners-up whose last group stage appearance came 13 years ago.

Klaksvik made history last week as the first Faroese club to secure a place in the group stage of a European competition.

They knocked out Swedish champions BK Hacken on penalties to assure themselves of at least a spot in the Conference League.

Klaksvik, based in a town which boasts just 5,000 inhabitants, face Norwegians Molde on Tuesday.

Turkish giants Galatasaray meet Olimpija Ljubljana of Slovenia, with FC Copenhagen up against Sparta Prague and AEK Athens playing Dinamo Zagreb.

PSV rub shoulders with Sturm Graz of Austria as Portugal's Braga take on Serbian newcomers Backa Topola, with the losing sides dropping into the Europa League.

Starting next season, the Champions League will expand to 36 teams using the so-called "Swiss system" model for the group stage in which each side will play eight matches.

AFP ■ FRISCO (UNITED STATES)

Laionel Messi scored twice, including a brilliant late equaliser, as Inter Miami advanced past FC Dallas to the quarter-finals of the Leagues Cup on penalties after an enthralling 4-4 draw.

A trademark curling free-kick in the 85th minute, Messi's seventh goal in four games for Miami, took the game to a shootout after the Argentine's side had trailed 4-2 with 10 minutes to go.

Dallas exposed Miami's defensive weaknesses, in Messi's first game away from home, and kept Spanish midfielder Sergio Busquets relatively quiet for long stretches but the World Cup winner still made the difference.

"It's obvious that for him a free-kick around that area is like a penalty kick for another player," said Dallas's Spanish coach Nico Estevez of Messi's superb strike. Dallas began brightly before Messi put Miami ahead in the sixth minute with a precise side-foot finish from a pull-back from Jordi Alba, the former Barcelona full-back who was making his first start for the club.

It was initially ruled out for offside but the decision was reversed after the referee, on review, ruled that Miami forward Josef Martinez had not blocked the view of the goalkeeper.

Dallas drew level in the 37th minute through Argentine Facundo Quignon, who swung home a cross from overlapping full-back Marco Farfan.

They went ahead on the stroke of half-time through Bernard Kamungo, who rounded Miami keeper Drake Callender.

Another Argentine, Alan Velasco, made it 3-1 in the 63rd minute with a free-kick from the left which flew untouched into the far corner.

Messi magical again as Miami move past Dallas after shoot-out



Robert Taylor restored the two-goal cushion for Dallas at 4-2.

Messi then chipped a free-kick into the box and Farfan, unchallenged, inexplicably headed into his own goal to keep Miami alive.

Five minutes from the end Messi strode up and slotted home a free-kick from 20 yards to take it to penalties.

The Leagues Cup, the tournament for clubs from Major League Soccer and Mexico's Liga MX, does not feature extra-time, with drawn games going directly to penalties.

Messi converted the first penalty in the shoot-out, Paxton Pomykal missed

for Dallas and the 18-year-old Cremaschi secured Miami's place in the last eight with the final spot-kick.

"It's amazing what (Messi) can do," said Miami-born Cremaschi, whose parents are Argentine.

"He scored twice in almost every game and it's just impressive."

Miami were without a win in 11 games in Major League Soccer before Messi's arrival, but have triumphed in every game with him and Busquets in the team.

"You can see our mentality, how things have changed in this club, how we were willing to fight until the last

second, especially with the quality players that we have," said Cremaschi.

"We know that we could be down by a bunch of goals and still come back in a matter of seconds."

Miami's Argentine coach Gerardo Martino said that Messi's magic and the result should not disguise the clear deficiencies in his team.

"Obviously being 4-2 down in the 80th minute and then coming back like that, we are very happy with the result," he said.

"But the fact that we have gone through, shouldn't let us lose sight of the things that we have to improve."



Pak remain in semi race post win over China

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Goals from Muhammad Khan and Afraz helped Pakistan eke out a 2-1 victory over China to stay in the race for the semifinals in the Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Monday.

However, the defeat meant that China were knocked out of contention for the last-four stage.

The opening quarter happened to be a quiet one in terms of goal-scoring activities.

Pakistan earned a couple of penalty corners but failed to convert them. It was followed by a field goal chance from both sides, but to no avail, as it was goalless at the end of the first quarter.

Five minutes into the second quarter, Pakistan earned a penalty corner and Muhammad Khan successfully converted it to give his side the lead.

While China challenged the goal through video referral for dangerous height, the TV umpire ruled it in favour of Pakistan.

After a couple of more chances for Pakistan, including a penalty corner, it led 1-0 at the half-time break.

Two minutes following the restart, China showed some urgency and earned a penalty corner in the process, which was converted into a goal by Jiesheng Gao to draw level.

At this time, Pakistan's Ahtisham Aslam received a yellow card, while Abdul Rehman

was green-carded.

Nevertheless, in the 39th minute, Pakistan restored their lead, thanks to some passing game through skipper Umar Bhutta and Abdul Rana before Afraz angled it into the goal.

With Pakistan up 2-1 at the end of the third quarter, China upped their ante and switched to more possession and passing, while Pakistan began to press high.

But the tactics didn't seem to work for the Chinese, as the Pakistanis managed to hold on to the slender lead to take home the three points at full-time.

Pakistan take on hosts and arch-rivals India on Wednesday in a potentially high-voltage match, while China face Japan in their last fixture.

INDIA'S TOP-ORDER UNDER PRESSURE IN MUST-WIN GAME

PTI ■ PROVIDENCE (GUYANA)

India will need to bat with the fearlessness they often talk about as they look to avoid a series defeat in the third T20 International against the West Indies here on Tuesday.

The slow pitches on offer have not been the best for batting but as skipper Hardik Pandya pointed out after the loss on Sunday, India should have a found way to score additional 10-20 runs.

India, who last lost to the West Indies in a bilateral T20 series back in 2016, trail 0-2 in the five-match series.

The shortest format demands the batters to go hard from ball one and that is something India's top-order, comprising Ishan Kishan, Shubman Gill and Suryakumar Yadav, have not been able to do.

The top-order's failure has put extra pressure on the likes of Sanju Samson and rookie Tilak Varma, who has taken to international cricket like fish to water.

With focus on ODIs in a World Cup year, Gill, Kishan and Suryakumar would want to be amongst runs ahead of the Asia Cup beginning August 31.

"Batters need to take more responsibility," Hardik's message was clear to the batters following the two-wicket loss here on Sunday.

India have been playing with a long tail with Axar Patel batting at seven to maintain the balance of the side and it is unlikely to change in the next game.



India's in-form spinner Kuldeep Yadav missed Sunday's game due to a sore thumb and it remains to be seen if he is available for selection.

The bowlers, especially the spinners, need to find a way to contain a rampaging Nicholas Pooran. The southpaw has been batting with disdain against the likes of Yuzvendra Chahal and Ravi Bishnoi. Left-arm spinner Axar was not even used in the

last game. Hardik and Arshdeep Singh were able to swing the new ball in the second game and would be looking to repeat that on Tuesday.

Chahal, playing after a gap of two months, has been impressive in the series. Bishnoi's frequent googlies were not able to put pressure on the opposition, forcing him to rethink about his plans.

Pacer Mukesh Kumar has leaked most runs for India and there is a possibility that he could be replaced with Avesh Khan or Umran Malik.

West Indies are in an ideal position for their first series win over India since 2016.

Like the opposition, West Indies' top-order too has not been amongst runs with Pooran left to do the heavy lifting. The hosts would want to change that.

The likes of Pooran and Shimron Hetmyer will once again be looking to take the attack to the Indian spinners.

The home team's bowlers have done well to keep India in check and will be keen to maintain that with series on the line.

"It's a very good position to be in. Since 2016 we haven't won T20 series (against India)," said West Indies skipper Rovman Powell.



Rohit bhai has always been my inspiration: Varma

PTI ■ PROVIDENCE (GUYANA)

Rookie batter Tilak Varma feels the constant guidance from his mentor Rohit Sharma has played a big role in his stellar start to international cricket. Varma has been the stand out batter for India in the five-match T20 in the Caribbean. The visitors trail the series 0-2.

"He (Rohit bhai) has been a support system and always told me to enjoy the game. He always guides me how to play," Varma said after scoring his maiden T20 fifty albeit in a losing cause. "My inspiration from childhood is (Suresh) Raina bhai and Rohit bhai. I spend most time with Rohit bhai. In first IPL, he said 'Tilak is an all format player' and it boosted my confidence."

Varma hit 51 off 41 balls to guide India to 152 for seven in second T20, a target which West Indies overwhelmed in 18.5 overs riding on Nicholas

Pooran's 40-ball 67. "The wicket was slow and double paced. So first we thought 150-160 would be a good score but I think we were 10 runs short. Credit goes to Pooran, he batted really well. We knew if we get one wicket we can save the match because the wicket was not easy, it was on the slower side," Varma said about the match.

"They (West Indies) bowled really good, they used slower ones and bowled hard lengths. They used the wind conditions really well. Credit goes to them," Varma dedicated his celebration after scoring his maiden fifty to Rohit's daughter Samaira with whom he shares a close bond.

"It was towards Sammy, Rohit bhai's daughter," he told reporters after the match.

"I am very close to Sammy. I had promised her that whenever I will score a century or a fifty, I will do a celebration for

her," he added. Talking about his nascent journey in international cricket, Varma said the key to longevity is consistency.

"International cricket is not easy. To sustain you have to be consistent. You have to be disciplined off the field, on the field. You have to be disciplined in your work ethic. If you do all these things on a routine basis, you will get good results," he said. "The two IPL seasons I played was the turning point in my career. The performances there earned me India call and I am playing with that performance."

Varma also has high regard for India coach Rahul Dravid. "I have been talking to Rahul sir since U-19 World Cup. Rahul sir always says that follow your basics and spend as much time in the middle. He always tells me to 'enjoy the game'." The third T20I between the two sides will be played here on Tuesday.

Rohits banks on home support to win ODI WC after 12 years

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Skipper Rohit Sharma will be banking on the "massive" home support his team will get to win the ODI World Cup in India.

India's last ODI World Cup title came at home in 2011 when M S Dhoni and Co lifted the coveted trophy.

"I've never seen it so close. Even when we won in 2011, I was not part of the squad. But yeah, it looks beautiful, so many memories behind the trophy as well, the past, the history."

"Yeah, so, it looks beautiful and hopefully we can lift it, fingers crossed," Rohit, who is currently in the United States, was quoted as saying by the ICC.

The tournament beginning October 5 will be played across 10 venues in India.

"I know for a fact that every ground, every venue that we will be travelling to will get massive support. You know, it's the World Cup, so everyone is looking forward to this and the World Cup coming back to India after 12 years..."

"...You know 2011 was the last time we played a 50-over World Cup. We played a 20-over World Cup in 2016 but a 50-over World Cup after 12 years in the country, people are quite excited and we can see the buzz already back home. I'll be looking forward to playing in all venues."

Talking about his memories of the World Cup, Rohit said: "In 2003, India played really well up



until the finals. You know, Sachin Tendulkar was amazing with the bat, scored so many runs.

"And then comes the 2007 World Cup where we didn't have a great time, didn't even qualify after the league stage, so that was quite unfortunate."

"2011 was a memorable one for all of us, I remember watching it from home, every single match, every single ball which was being bowled and that was being played."

"There were two kinds of emotions, one was obviously I was not a part of it, so I was a little disappointed. I decided I was not going to watch the World Cup, but again, the second memory I remember was that India was playing so well, quarter-finals onwards."

Rohit had excelled in the 2019 edition in which he amassed five hundreds.

"And 2015 and 2019, I was a part of it, which felt really good to play the World Cup. We went to the semi-finals, tried

everything we could to go to the finals and play well in the finals, but again, a very unfortunate incident where we couldn't go through to the finals," he said.

"But hopefully, you know, we are back home again, so hopefully we can turn things around and it's still a long way to go. And you know you can't win the World Cup in one or two days. You got to play well for an entire month, month and a half, and be consistent," said Rohit.

Rohit feels the key to emerge victorious in the showpiece would be to start fresh in every game.

"I know every day is a fresh day. Every day is a fresh start, it's not like Test match cricket where you have the momentum with you and you carry the momentum to the next day."

"One-day cricket, limited overs format is like that, that's where the challenge comes. You've to start fresh every day and you know that's where I was (in 2019)," he said.



Labuschagne dropped from Aus extended ODI WC squad

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Marnus Labuschagne was Monday left out of Australia's 18-man preliminary squad for the ODI World Cup in India in October-November.

Labuschagne was part of Australia's last ODI squad that played three matches in India earlier this year. The right-handed batter has featured in 30 ODIs since making his debut in January 2020.

Uncapped leg-spinner Tanveer Sangha and all-rounder Aaron Hardie are the fresh faces in the Australia squad. The same 18-man extended squad, which will be trimmed later to 15 for the ODI World Cup, has been named for the series against South Africa and India in September ahead of the 50-over showpiece beginning October 5.

In a statement, Cricket Australia gave a fitness update

on skipper Pat Cummins, who injured his left wrist during the fifth and final Ashes Test at the Oval. He will miss the T20s in South Africa but will be available for the ODIs against the Proteas as well as India.

"Pat has an undisplaced fracture of his left radius which requires six weeks rehabilitation," said Australia's selection chair George Bailey.

"We view a period of enforced rest for Pat as a positive ahead of this important World Cup campaign."

"There are still a number of games he could play before the World Cup which is more than enough for him to have a strong preparation."

Seasoned all-rounder Glenn Maxwell will not be available for the ODIs in South Africa as he is expecting the arrival of his first child.

Sangha's selection has come as a surprise as he has not played any top-flight cricket

since August last year. Hardie, on the other hand, also finds himself in the squad for the T20 series in South Africa from August 31 to September 3. Mitchell Marsh will captain the T20 side.

"This side has been extremely impressive for several years in limited-overs cricket. There is an enormous amount of skill and experience in the group, which you need in a World Cup," added Bailey.

Australia can make changes to the World Cup squad until September 28.

Australia ODI squad (to be trimmed to 15 for World Cup): Pat Cummins (c), Sean Abbott, Ashton Agar, Alex Carey, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Aaron Hardie, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Mitchell Marsh, Glenn Maxwell, Tanveer Sangha, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, David Warner, Adam Zampa.

PCB re-appoints Inzamam-ul-Haq as chief selector



PTI ■ KARACHI

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Monday re-appointed the legendary Inzamam-ul-Haq as its chief selector, bringing back the former skipper for the role for a second term.

Inzamam, 53, had earlier held the position of chief selector between 2016 and 2019.

The 1992 World Cup winner had given his consent last week to become a paid selector.

Inzamam has played 120 Tests, making 8830 runs at an average of 49.60 with 25 hundreds and 46 fifties.

From 378 ODIs, Inzamam amassed 11739 runs at 39.52 with 10 centuries and 83 fifties. He had also played a lone T20I for his country.

In his latest role as the chief selector, Inzamam will succeed

Haroon Rasheed who stepped down last month.

Some very important assignments are in front of Inzamam as his primary task will be to name Pakistan squad for the 50-over World Cup to be held in India across October and November.

It may be recalled that Inzamam had picked Pakistan squad for the ICC World Cup 2019 as well. Now, the fate would have him drafting in the Pakistan squad for another World Cup four years down the line.

Apart from the World Cup, Inzamam will also have to pick Pakistan teams for Asia Cup, scheduled to take place in Sri Lanka between August 31 and September 17, and the three-match ODIs against Afghanistan, beginning in the island nation from August 22.

McGrath picks Australia, England, India and Pakistan as semifinalists

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The legendary Glenn McGrath on Monday picked India, Australia, England and Pakistan as the semifinalists of the 2023 ICC World Cup, adding that playing in an ODI series here prior to the showpiece would help his country immensely in terms of preparation.

The tournament will be held in India in October-November.

With Australia and England dominating the ICC competitions lately, McGrath feels that the two sides have the best chance of making it to the last-four stage of the showpiece.

well and have got enough experience, and also have some younger guys coming through. Also, they have enough matches in the sub-continent to prepare for the tournament."

"I put India and England as well. England has been playing some good one-day cricket lately. I will put Pakistan in there as well," he added.

Considering their performance in Pakistan, McGrath feels that Ben Stokes and Co could adopt the 'Bazball' approach on their tour of India as well.

"They have proved it can happen in England and even in Pakistan. Bazball is quite an aggressive form of cricket. It's all about playing with freedom."

"Teams have even played such cricket in the past, like the West Indies and even Australia during the Don Bradman era. But, how England plans to go in the Indian conditions, we will have to wait and see. But I like the concept," he said.

"Undoubtedly, if you are scoring six/seven runs an over, it is quite lively,



So, I think the bowlers need to adapt and adjust as well. It's the first time they have come across such a thing in Test cricket to that extent.

"We have got to look after Test cricket. This is a new era, and you have got to play it like that. So, let's wait and see what the future has for Test cricket and see if it's sustainable," he wondered.

McGrath has been associated with

the MRF Pace Foundation for over a decade, being the academy's director since 2012.

When asked if the bowlers primarily focus on learning the tricks of white-ball cricket or the red-ball, he said that the focus has always been on the longer version.

"I think they are more focused on learning for the longer version of the game. There are still a lot of people in India who focus on playing Test cricket and Ranji Trophy. If you perform and do well there, then obviously, there is IPL later on."

"But here (in his academy), it's all about making them an all-round fast bowler who is physically fit, strong, and mentally tough, along with the skills and ability."

"We will probably focus on white-ball bowling lately just to get their thought process clear ahead of the World Cup. But overall, it's about making them the best fast bowler," he signed off.

Don't judge India on basis of just two losses in West Indies: Kaif



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former cricketer Mohammad Kaif asserted on Monday that the Indian team has the capability to win the World Cup at home this year and it should not be judged on the basis of two T20I losses in the West Indies.

India, after winning the two-Test series and ODIs in the Caribbean, are trailing 0-2 in the five-match T20I series, leading to criticism over the side's preparations ahead of two major competitions - the Asia Cup in Pakistan and Sri Lanka and the ODI World Cup at home.

However, Kaif said at a function here that the fears of India under-performing in the World Cup were unfounded, although he indicated that pace bowler Jasprit Bumrah will have to be fully fit for the hosts to end the title drought.

"India has lost just two matches (T20Is against West Indies), so we do not need to get overly concerned. I am seeing a lot of negative reaction after the two losses. But I will only say that our team is extremely competitive."

"I am not going to judge (India) on two back-to-back losses (in the West Indies). The only thing is that key players are missing."

"Bumrah missing is the biggest factor. If he recovers fully... One aspect is to complete the recovery and the other aspect is to gain match fitness. If he regains that (match fitness), it will be a massive gain for Team India."

"If Bumrah is fully fit, we have a great chance of winning the World Cup at home," said Kaif.

Bumrah will be staging a comeback during the T20 series against Ireland after being out of action for almost a year following a back surgery, and Kaif attributed the 29-year-old quick's absence for India's string of losses in major competitions during that period.