

Team MLA to Meet Prez NAAO CARE celebrated Van Mahotsav



Bhubaneswar(KCN): An all-party delegation of Odisha Legislative Assembly headed by Speaker Bikram Keshari Arukh have left for New Delhi on Tuesday to felicitate newly elected President Droupadi Murmu. Mr.Arukha said as per the program the MLAs are scheduled to meet the President, the daughter of Odisha and pride of the state at 11.30 am on Wednesday and

felicitate her. They would also seek the cooperation of the President for the development of the State, he said. The members of the BJD, BJP and the Congress have already left for Delhi. The Odisha Legislative Assembly had passed a unanimous resolution on July 25 congratulating Droupadi Murmu for assuming the top constitutional post of the country.

India extends 100 million USD line of credit to

Maldives; Greater Male connectivity projects launched

NEW DELHI(KCN): India and Maldives on Tuesday inked six agreements to expand cooperation in a

Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, Modi also said that India will provide 24 vehicles and a na-

forays into the Indian Ocean region, considered the backyard of the Indian Navy. The Maldivian presi-

cooperation in capacity building, cyber security, housing, disaster management and infrastructure development in the Maldives.

The Maldives is one of India's key maritime neighbours in the Indian Ocean Region and the overall bilateral ties including in areas of defence and security have been on an upward trajectory in the last few years.

In his comments, Modi said the India-Maldives partnership is not only working in the interest of the citizens of both countries but also becoming a "source" of peace, stability and prosperity in the region. The two leaders also virtually witnessed the pouring of the first concrete for the ambitious greater-Male connectivity project.

In August last year, the island nation sealed a contract for

CONTINUED ON: P-7



range of areas including cyber security, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi announcing a USD 100 million financial aid to help the island nation complete certain infrastructure projects.

Prime Minister Modi announced a Line of Credit of USD 100 million (one million = 10 lakh) for Maldives for the completion of development projects in a time-bound manner. After wide-ranging talks with visiting

val vessel to the Maldivian security forces, besides developing police infrastructure in 61 islands in that country. In his media statement, Modi, in the presence of Solih, said India "has been and will continue" to be the "first responder" to any need or crisis facing the Maldives.

The bolstering of bilateral defence and security ties including in the maritime domain comes in the backdrop of concerns over China's growing

dent, who arrived here on Monday on a four-day visit, said his government is fully committed to taking the bilateral ties to new heights. "Our relationship with India will always be of the highest priority. The Maldives will always remain a true friend of India, firmly committed to our shared vision of peace and development in our countries and the region," Solih said.

The six pacts inked between the two sides will facilitate



Govt. U.P. School, Mahulia, Baripada

Bhubaneswar (KCN): The current climatic emergency demands more plantations. The members of the Navodaya Alumni Association of Odisha (NAAO) understand the importance of trees. NAAO believes that trees are our true friends and they are a vital part of our ecosystem. In a mission to contribute to making the planet greener and a better place to live, NAAO has celebrated "Van Mahotsav" under the banner of NAAO CARE

on Dt. 31st July 2022 at Panikoili, Konark, and Baripada, in collaboration with the Alumni Associations of JNV Jajpur, JNV Puri, and JNV Mayurbhanj, respectively. In addition to that, individual alumni members have also taken part in this celebration by planting trees at their places of living. On this occasion, NAAO has passed a resolution to plant at least 10000 trees every year with the help of its widely spread alumni network.

LS deadlock ends, MPs return



NEW DELHI(KCN): The deadlock in Lok Sabha ended on Monday after the suspension of four Congress MPs was revoked. Congress MPs Manickam Tagore, Jothimani, Ramya Haridas and T.N. Prathapan, who were suspended for the session after they waved placards during a protest in the House, walked in to participate in the discussion under Rule 193 on price rise.

As the House passed the motion revoking their suspension, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said that such protests lower the dignity of the House and must not be repeated. During the discussion on price rise, members raised issues of rising fuel prices resulting in inflation.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that despite global issues like Covid, Ukraine-Russia war, the Indian economy is robust and

inflation is well within 7 per cent. She said there is zero probability of India slipping into stagflation or recession as MPs expressed concerns that India may face an economic crisis like Sri Lanka. "On Saturday, Raghuram Rajan (ex-RBI governor) said 'RBI has done a good job in increasing foreign exchange reserves, insulating India from problems being faced by neighbouring countries such as Pakistan and Sri Lanka'. Differentiating India from its vulnerable neighbours, Raghuram Rajan further added 'New Delhi is less indebted', calling it a good sign," Ms Sitharaman said. However, as the FM countered Opposition points, the Congress, DMK and other MPs walked out before the FM could complete her reply. Citing GST and macro data, Sitharaman said the Indian economy is getting robust.

US kills Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri in Kabul drone strike

WASHINGTON(KCN): President Joe Biden announced Monday that the United States had killed Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri, one of the world's most wanted terrorists and a mastermind of the September 11, 2001 attacks, in a drone strike in Kabul.

In a somber televised address, Biden said he gave the final go-ahead for the high-precision strike that successfully targeted Zawahiri in the Afghan capital over the weekend.

"Justice has been delivered and this terrorist leader is no more," Biden said, adding that he hoped Zawahiri's death would bring "closure" to families of the 3,000 people killed in the United States on 9/11.

Qaeda leader Zawahiri: 9/11 planner and bin

Laden successor



A senior administration official said Zawahiri

was on the balcony of a house in Kabul when he was targeted with two Hellfire missiles, an hour after sunrise on July 31, and that there had been no US boots on the ground in Afghanistan.

"We are not aware of him ever leaving the safe house. We identified Zawahiri on multiple occasions for sustained periods of time on the balcony of where he was ultimately struck," the

official said.

According to the official's account, the president gave his green light for the strike on July 25 -- as he was recovering in isolation from Covid-19. Biden said there were no civilian casualties in the operation.

The US official called Zawahiri's presence in the Afghan capital Kabul a "clear violation" of a deal the Taliban had signed with the US in Doha in 2020 that paved the way for the US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

It was the first known over-the-horizon strike by the United States on an Al-Qaeda target in Afghanistan since American forces withdrew from the country on August 31, 2021.

Zawahiri, an Egyptian CONTINUED ON: P-7

Workshop on road safety conducted by MATOA

Barbil(KCN) The Barbil mining area truck owner association conducted a Workshop on the subject of road safety on 2nd August at the conference hall of Barbil association to



address issues related to Road Accidents and to create awareness on road safety among members and truck drivers. The workshop was inaugurated by Miss Sharmistha Sahu, additional Tahsildar, Barbil who was the chief guest and was attended by Alok Parida, Sub inspector police, Bhagabat Naik Additional sub inspector of police of Barbil police station, Durga Prasad Ray, Junior Motor vehicle inspector from road and transport department, Barbil, Chandragupta Prasad, Secretary, Vikas Sarwogi, president, Ranjit Mahata, Joint secretary, Dillu Swami vice president, Dayal Singh, former president of MATOA and other stakeholders. Mr Chandragupta, Secretary conducted the proceedings and Mr. Vikas Sarwogi, president of MATOA welcomed the guest and all participants expressing hope that this workshop will go a long way in educating the

stakeholders for safer roads. Miss Sharmistha Sahu, Addl. Tehsildar spoke on the subject in detail citing the statistics on road accidents which were alarming. She also assured to the association to take the issues of the association at a higher level through proper channel. Mr. Durga Prasad Ray, Jr MVI, delivered the keynote address and gave details of Ministry's initiatives to bring legislative as well as administrative changes to control road accidents. He also appealed truck owner to take care of fitness of their vehicle to avoid penalty. Mr. Parida second officer, Barbil police station spoke at length on the subject and appealed all truck owner to obey the traffic rule and resume their transportation on the route assigned to them. Mr Chandragupta

not to violate the guidelines given time to time from the administration. He also requested administration to take strict action against those violet order and carry transportation activities in side the populated area. According to him, administration has given them route to carry their transportation from Thakurani mines to siding through Dalki, Nalda and Karakhendra. Some of their members including some out side transporter carrying transporting activities inside Barbil city area. People have objected such transportation in the city. Mr Dayal Singh, former president of the association also appealed all member to co-operate administration in maintaining road safety by way of making awareness among their drivers. Mr Dilu Swami extended vote of thanks to all esteem guests.

Hajmola Limcola launches new Campaign 'Hajmola Te Lemon Er Chotok' with Actor Abir Chatterjee

Kolkata(KCN) Dabur Hajmola, a tasty, fun-filled digestive from the house of India's leading Science-based Ayurveda Company Dabur India Ltd today launched a new Campaign "Hajmola Te Lemon Er Chotok". A new TVC in Bengali for its Limcola Variant with Actor Abir Chatterjee has been released.



"We are happy to launch "Hajmola Te Lemon Er Chotok" campaign in West Bengal. To highlight the consumers' preference and demand of an easy to take digestive option in mind, we have collaborated with famous face of Tollywood Abir Chatterjee for this campaign. This association will help us to reach and communicate with the Bengali consumers easily and on a larger scale." Mr. Ajay Singh Parihar - Marketing Head- Healthcare OTC, Dabur India Ltd said. Mr. Subhdeep Roy - Business Head-East, Dabur India Ltd said, "We are excited to launch a new regional TVC of Hajmola Limcola in the West Bengal market. The brand has taken a step forward in its efforts to recognize its content for different markets based on regional consumer insights. I am sure, with the new TVC, we will be able to communicate to the consumers that they can enjoy their meal and can take care of their post-meal digestion with the new Hajmola Limcola. It

is fun, tasty and truly 'Lemon-er Chotok'. "Hajmola has been the most preferred post meal digestive brand for millions of people, for decades now. As a market leader, Hajmola has been constantly innovating in terms of product, packaging and communication. The New TVC showcase, the tradition of Bengali Culture for their love towards Jamai (son in law) in a playful way, along with serving Hajmola Limcola for his digestion. We are confident that the new TVC - 'Lemon-er Chotok' would be liked by our consumers." Mr. Sandeep Kumar Sah - Regional Marketing Manager (East), Dabur India Ltd. said. About Hajmola: Dabur Hajmola, a tasty, fun-filled digestive, is available in 7 different Variants - Regular, Pudina, Chatcola, Anardana, Imli, Chatpati Hing & Limcola in interesting formats like tablets and candies. A tasty mix of traditional Indian culinary herbs, spices and edible salts, Hajmola enjoys an over 50% share of the branded digestive tablets market in India. Hajmola's huge success can be gauged by the fact that over 2.4 crore Hajmola tablets are consumed in India daily. About Dabur India Ltd: Dabur India Ltd is one of India's leading FMCG Companies. Building on a legacy of quality and experience for 138 years, Dabur is today India's most trusted name and the world's largest Ayurvedic and Natural Health Care Company. Dabur India's FMCG portfolio includes nine Power Brands - Dabur Chyawanprash, Dabur Honey, Dabur Honitus, Dabur Pudina Hara and Dabur Lal Tail in the Healthcare space; Dabur Amla, Dabur Red Paste and Vatika in the Personal care space; and Réal in the Foods category.

Odisha Karmachari Sangram Samiti Made Serious Allegations Against DIET, Principal

Khurdha (KCN): Odisha Karmachari Sangram Samiti made serious allegations against Tapas Kumar Nayak, principal DIET, Khordha. In the office letter no-107, dated-01.09.2021 of Odisha Karmachari Sangram Samiti, Advisor, Pratap Das made serious allegations against former Director of TE & SCERT, Odisha, Gangadhar Sahoo and the former Asst. Director at Present Principal DIET, Khordha, Tapas kumar Nayak and prayer for vigilance inquiry. Mr. Das in his letter alleged that government have established a Educational Directorate as TE & SCERT, Odisha to streamline the Educational Training and Education that to the misfortune of the then Director Gangadhar Sahoo and the then Asst. Director and at present, Principal DIET, Khordha, Tapas kumar Nayak both have playing their hegemony to a unlawful circumstances and creating maladministration, corruption, scams, sexual harassment, misbehavior to their vested whims and jeopardize the truthful interest of an Educational Institutions, i.e. TE & SCERT, Odisha by affected the interests of students, teachers, women employees over the institutions itself. A

visible mark scam has been done at DIET, Kendrapada at Balia by the then Asst. Director at present principal DIET, Khordha, Tapas kumar Nayak being posted as In-charge Principal, DIET, Kendrapada at Balia and being placed simultaneously at the both charges at Kendrapada & BBSR by the Director. In the meanwhile former Director Sri. Sahoo harassed a lady Principal in class-I rank and to that extent she has not allowed to sit at TE & SCERT, not assigned any work from 7.5.2021 to 18.06.2021 and also tried to defy the government order which was issued vide- S & ME department Odisha vide notification no-9693/SME, dt-21.05.2021 i.e her transfer to Jagatsinghpur. One Mrs. Sramistha Jena, jr. Clerk now accountant has been sexual harassed by one Sri. Dillip kumar Moharatha, jr. Asst. of TE & SCERT, Odisha under the provocation of one Binod kumar Nayak, illegally engaged after retirement and also admitted his fault on 21.03.2021 that he has committed the same offence in a stamp paper. The then Director has gone to that extents even to cover up these criminal activities at his Directorate. One Sri. Subhrajit Mohanty working as a contractual Data Entry Operator at the Directorate of TE & SCERT, Odisha, BBSR, under the direct control of the Director and getting salary at the Directorate being approved & allowed by Tapas kumar Nayak regularly with duty assigned by the Director vide his O/O- no-3747/TE & SCERT, Odisha, BBSR, but allowed to go to Govt. Teacher Training College, Phulbani, at the same time being sponsored by the Director TE & SCERT, Odisha, vide his letter no - 5 3 3 7 , dt - 19.09.2019. One Sri. Binod kumar Nayak was involved in Rs.30,000/- bribe case & the inquiry committee found Sri. Nayak guilty in its inquiry report. But the then Director have gave him a clean cheat issued vide latter no-1659, dt-22.03.2021 and promoted Sri. Nayak to the post of A. S.O. and then reappointed Sri. Nayak after his retirement on 30.06.2021 at the same Directorate against the guidelines framed by the G. A. & P. G. Dept. Resolution no-23750/Gen. dt-27.08.2014. Sri. Binod kumar Nayak who has been reengaged after his retirement has misbehaved in slang languages to an Associate Professor Sri. Premananda Biswal on 18.08.2021 and Sri. Biswal submitted his written complaints before the Director TE & SCERT, Odisha on 19.08.2021 itself but the Director not taken any action against Binod kumar Nayak. 34 Computer Instructors & 30 Sweepers have been appointed through a private agency namely Shree Solutions, BBSR, without any tender notifications. 34 Teachers, Educators, including contractual TE have been illegally and forcefully transferred in a day i.e. 11.06.2021 in three separate letters which shows the manuscript of hidden agenda. Tapan kumar Nayak the then Asst. Director, TE & SCERT, at present Principal, DIET, Khordha, was taking house rent illegally by residing in the government quarter allotted to Sri. Kunja Bihari Pradhan, jr. Clerk of the Directorate. Tapan Kumar Nayak a Sr. Teacher Educator is staying as Asst. Director, TE & SCERT, Odisha since-2006 at the Directorate under manipulation & violative of government norms on transfer. Under these spectrum information Mr. Pratap Das have already ventilated these factors to the Chief Minister of Odisha under intimation to all concerned on 26.07.2021 & 24.08.2021 as well as vigilance department to inquire into the matter and take legal action against him.

Battery theft nabbed by Barbil police



Barbil(KCN): Barbil police busted a gang involved in stealing batteries and arrested two persons in this connection. The arrested are Md Sahid (27) and Md Tabrej (24) of Barkat Nagar under Barbil police station in Keonjhar district of Odisha. Batteries worth around Rs one lakh were recovered from their possession. Barbil IIC Sushant Kumar Dash said one Md Jalin owner of Bikan electrical

of Nalda village had complained at Barbil police station about the theft of batteries from his shop on date 29th August, night. On his direction sub inspector Barada Sahu a special police team was formed to nab the battery thieves. 30 batteries and a Max pick up van bearing regd. OD 14 7576 used in the theft were recovered. Those theft batteries were to be sold at Chaibasa.

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Shanthnu Bhagyaraj joins Vijay's 'Thalapathy 64'



After back-to-back Thalpathy 64 updates over the past two days, it is clear that the makers of the film are keen to capitalise on the trend. Today, they have

announced yet another detail about the Lokesh Kanagaraj directorial.

As we had earlier speculated, actor Shanthnu Bhagyaraj has in-

deed been roped in for Vijay's upcoming film, which already boasts of a stellar cast that includes names such as Vijay Sethupathi and Angamaly Diaries-

fame Antony Varghese.

This project will have Anirudh Ravichander composing for a Vijay film for the second time after Kaththi. Sathyan

Sooryan, who is the cinematographer for Lokesh's upcoming film, Kaithi, will handle camera duties in Thalpathy 64 as well.

Bankrolled by

Xavier Britto of XB Film Creators, Thalpathy 64 is also speculated to feature Malavika Mohanan, and this might be the update that the makers are expected to announce later today.

Weird that women still need to protest for rights, says Shruti Haasan



MUMBAI(KCN): Actress Shruti Haasan has raised question over why women still feel the need to protest for their rights, not only in India but all around the world.

"People organise marches and protests for women's rights and I find it weird that we still feel the need to do these protests for women's safety and equality rights. It has been happening for years. I do believe there is a change in the scenario but I feel sad that the problem still exists," said Shruti, while interacting with the media at an RPG Foundation-

organised get-together for women who work under their CSR initiative on Tuesday in Mumbai.

ALSO READ: Shruti Haasan's latest to cross over to Hollywood

She added: "I don't feel it is happening only in our country. It is happening all around the world. When you look at international news, you realise this topic comes up many times."

Asked what she felt about the fact that there were lesser female-centric films made in India, she said: "I think slowly things are changing. Films are

being made that are rooted around women characters, so change is taking place. But it should have happened bit earlier."

ALSO READ: Shruti Haasan to have break-up song in her debut EP

Talking about Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary on October 2, Shruti said: "It's such an important day and important part of our history. My father (Kamal Haasan) really believes in his philosophies."

Shruti Haasan will next be seen in an untitled film directed by Mahesh Manjrekar, along with Vidyut Jammwal.

'Joker' review: Solid filmmaking, messy politics

In many of its seedy street side shots, Todd Phillips's Joker focuses on a theatre and clearly shows the titles playing. There is Zorro the Gay Blade, which came out in 1981, a time that seems closer to the mood this film is going for – the late 70s and impending Reagan era vibe of New York that it lends Gotham City. But the more interesting title it shows is probably Ace in the Hole.

Is it the Billy Wilder film? It's a film that hints at media manipulation and Joker insists on a

kind of manipulation by everything from TV, press to upbringing and economic condition that drives Arthur Fleck (Joaquin Phoenix) to become the murderous eponymous character.

Ace in the Hole was also one of Wilder's famous critical and commercial failures. Failure and rejection are important driving forces in this film that's more honest and focused on its visual splendour than it is on the condition and circumstances that create the space

for a turn like that of Arthur Fleck's to Joker. Also, who refers to Harvey Dent as "ace in the hole"? Heath Ledger's Joker in The Dark Knight.

ALSO READ: There are many ways to see 'Joker', says director Todd Phillips The Gotham City and its socio-economic atrophy that writers Phillips and Scott Silver envision can come across as unconvincing and out of context. It talks of class issues but without clear markers for the oppression it wants us to zero in on.

Between the faithful and predators, does the Pope's Apology bring a new hope

The supreme patriarch of the Catholic Church the Pope apologizes again. This time it is Pope Francis who extended an apology

to the indigenous community of Canada. The pope's visit to the country was mainly to tender an apology to the community for the forced assimilation of their children at the residential schools run by the Catholic Church and the gruesome persecution carried on them. He called his tour of Canada a "penitential pilgrimage". This time, in his usual gesture of apology, the Pope said that he regretted and begged forgiveness for the evil committed by the Catholic Christians against the indigenous people of Canada. By doing this the Pope was referring to the innocent children who never returned from the schools where they were forcefully taken away for education by the Church. The assimilation policies of the church, he reiterated, has marginalized the indigenous people and robbed them of their language and culture. A cultural genocide as it is known today has been committed on a genuine group of people who lived a life of natural concomitance along the line of nature and purely indigenous in their behaviour and pattern of life. About 150000 indigenous children were forcefully taken away from their families and sent to church-run residential schools in Canada. And they were neglected and were made to suffer physical and sexual abuse and many of them never returned and those who survived could never come out of the trauma. More than 60 percent of the schools were run by the Roman Catholic Church and an investigation carried

out on the missing Indigenous children unearthed hundreds

of graves reaffirming the death of more than 4000 of them due to neglect and sexual abuse. Pope Francis represents the spiritual papacy of 1.3 billion Catholics across the globe and an estimated 20 million Catholics live in India. Before him, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II also apologised on various occasions. The faithful are supposed to swallow the brutality that the church dispensed on its people and the apology by the papacy is believed to hold the power to purify the rot. Though nunneries are part of the Catholic religious establishment, it is largely a patriarchy that runs its administration. The darker side of the Christian history is a reality which is essentially a depiction of the coercive and atrocious intimidation by the church. The policy of the church was to civilize the indigenous settlers by converting them to Christianity and the means and methods chosen by it remained unquestionable. One of the other occasions when the Pope regretted and expressed 'pain' was when a startling revelation brought the horror stories of sexual abuse ran on more than 216000 children by members of the clergy in France over a period of 70 years. The Pope did not hesitate to hold a summit on 'paedophilia in the Church' and demands to criminalise sexual abuse in the church establishment followed. But unfortunately the church itself covers and conceals the errors that it committed inside the confinements of its institutions. There were multiple occasions in which the papacy apologised to the victims on whom the church was brutal. Most of the apologies were made for the

M. R. LALU

cruelty committed by the clergy.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) came out with guidelines for the followers of the church with a mind to seriously check the sexual assault that its clergymen are known to be involved. The document was titled "CBCI guidelines to Deal with Sexual Harassment in Workplace." The Catholic Church has about 174 dioceses in India with hundreds of congregations and service activities and firms run by Catholics across the country. The guidelines were to check the increasing number of sexual assaults and Pope Francis's "zero tolerance" exhortation made the Indian wing of the church to come heavily on the issue. The clergy under the papacy is expected to follow celibacy and remain unmarried by the customs and traditions and standards of the church under its monastic disciplines. This indeed throws a large number of its clergymen into committing unpardonable crimes like sexual harassment on children and nuns but most of such offences are usually covered up or whitewashed. But the issues that see the light of the day bring bone chilling evidence of pain and persecution. The sexual abuse of religious sisters by priests and bishops is a bitter reality that in recent days has shattered the hopes of many among the faithful in India too. Sister Lucy Kalapura, the famous rebel Catholic nun of Kerala made chilling revelations on the depth of decay that has been polluting the seminaries and monasteries run by the Roman Catholic Church. She was later dismissed by the Vatican on charges of "violation of vows of obedience and poverty". Her dismissal from the church was

signalling to what we call the dominance of the patriarchy which controls the system. Lucy's agitation demanding the arrest of Bishop Franco Mulakkal who was accused in a case pertaining to the rape of a nun belonging to Jalandhar based Missionaries of Jesus had ultimately lasted in her ouster from the church and the accused bishop was later acquitted by a Kerala court. There is plenty of evidence for an invincible patriarchal power that frequently curtails the freedom of nuns and controls their lives within the church. Sister Abhaya was 21 when she was brutally attacked inside a Kerala convent and dumped in a well inside its premises. The judgement after 28 years brought justice to her family sending a priest and a nun who threw the young woman in the well to jail. We can also see instances in which the Pope refused to offer an apology. The clerical sex abuse controversy in Chile did literally put the Vatican in trouble, to which the papacy responded by sending a sex crime expert to that country. The Pope culminated the accusations on the predator priest calling them mere slanders and stayed away from extending an apology for want of solid evidence to prove the crime. The accused priest was later appointed to head another diocese. The steps taken to curb sex abuse by the priests in the religious edifice of Catholic Church could not help the menace melt and Pope Francis, for that matter, could not provide any credible solution to protect his flocks from predator priests. Between the faithful and predators, does the Pope's apology bring a new hope?

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Former Governor of Bangladesh Bank comments on promising India-Bangladesh joint ventures

Atiur Rahman, the former Governor of Bangladesh Bank and the former director of the state-owned Sonali Bank, the largest in

Bangladesh, who is dearly called 'the banker of the poor' for his contributions in developing the economy of Bangladesh recently visited Kolkata and attended a Special Lecture on 'Regional Connectivity on Indo-Bangladesh Trade Expansion held in association with Department of International Relations at Jadavpur University and a symposium on 'Regional Connectivity and Indo-Bangladesh Economic Expansion' held at Kolkata Press Club. Both the discussions were graced by decorated individuals including the Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Kolkata, Andalib Elias. In-between these events, Journalist Abhijit Seth from Kolkata interacted with Mr. Atiur Rahman where Rahman talked about the promising and fruitful joint ventures of Bangladesh and India.

-You are revered as "the banker of the poor". What would be your comments on that?

AR: As I have sincerely promoted financial inclusion to reach the unbanked and underserved, the people may have given this honor to me. I am indeed grateful to all of them who think that I could have brought some structural changes in the banking industry to work for the bottom of the social pyramid without going out of their business goals as financial inclusion means more financial stability for the sector.

-You are credited for instituting changes in the banking industry of Bangladesh that greatly increased the foreign exchange reserves of the country and brought massive automation and digitization in the banking sector of Bangladesh. What were your mission and vision?

AR: We were then in the middle of the global financial crisis of 2008-09. So we had to create a lot of buffers for the external economy to getting stronger. So we encouraged agriculture to reduce food import in addition to easing payment system

through faster digitization so that remitters could send

money to their families through banking system and also provided incentives to the exporters so that they earned more. And all of these stakeholders ie farmers, remitters and exporters responded positively to help grow our foreign exchange reserves which expanded more than four and a half times just in six years. However, despite high reserves Bangladesh like all other emerging countries including India are facing the pressure from tightening of monetary policy by Fed leading to stronger dollar. All currencies except dollar are weakening due to this pressure and Bangladesh has been doing slightly better than others as it does not have to import so much of food. Also larger reserves help it avoid foreign debt default risk like many of its South Asian peers. Yet, it is not an easy sailing now for Bangladesh either.

-Bangladesh has recently qualified to be a developing nation. What economic boosts according to you does the country still need in order to progress more?

AR: Yes, Bangladesh has been upgraded as a developing country which will be officially said so from 2026. However, it needs to prepare itself for this graduation by not only contribution of its GDP growth but also higher skills development and free trade agreements with its earlier trade partners like US, EU, UK and India. This will need a lot of human capital investment to get the strength for smarter economic diplomacy. But, before anything else, the country has to come out well from the ongoing external economic turmoil created after pandemic and Ukraine war that forced it to experience expanding trade and current account deficits. This will not be an easy job. But Bangladesh government and the central bank are trying hard to stabilize the external economy including the volatile exchange rate. This will take some time. But as the Moody's said, there is no downside risk of default, thanks to its reserves so aptly built up.

-You had earlier commented that China has done so well economically because they invested in their neighbours and that

Abhijit Seth

you hope Indian economic leadership will do

the same. How promising and fruitful would the joint ventures of Bangladesh and India be on that aspect?

AR: Yes, China was very prudent in developing deeper trade and investment cooperation with neighbors like Thailand, Singapore, South Korea and Vietnam. I said earlier in one occasion that India should also invest more in enhancing further trade and investment cooperation with its neighbors including Bangladesh. Of course, both India and Bangladesh are working very closely in developing rail, water, road infrastructures for greater trade and investment between the two countries. The connectivity has really been improving by leaps and bounds. Now is the time to improve the operational facilities in the land and sea or river ports with increased digitization and service delivery methods to take advantage of the heightened political understanding that exists today. This is true for both parties. The smaller initiatives like border trade should graduate into free trade or economic zones across the entire border line.

-How far according to you has Bangladesh been able to fulfil Bangabandhu's dreams of building a 'Sonar Bangla'?

AR: Bangladesh under committed and strong leadership of the daughter of Bangabandhu has been moving in the inclusive growth trajectory with complementary social development to fulfill the dream of Sonar Bangla of Bangabandhu. Bangladesh has been the most dynamic development hub in Asia for almost a decade defying global financial crisis and the onslaught of the unprecedented covid 19. However, the fallouts of the Ukraine war disrupting further supply chains and pushing imported inflation have been creating many challenges for Bangladesh as well to continue that dynamic development journey. However, given its focus on meeting the infrastructural gaps including completion of mega projects like Padma bridge and metro rail and Karnafuli tunnel, Bangladesh is well positioned to weather this latest global economic crisis as well. But it will not so

easy. There is an imperative for deeper economic cooperation between Bangladesh and India to face the latest round of global economic crisis.

-You come from a very humble background. Your father was a farmer and at some point of time you had to quit school and then you joined back again. Now, when you look back, how does it feel? How would you describe your journey from being the son of a landless farmer to the Governor of Bangladesh Bank?

AR: This has been a rewarding journey indeed. I must give credit to my teachers and the educational institutions where I studied for grooming me up for this transition. Also I must thank my friends who always helped me grow in cohort to become what I am. I am particularly thankful to Dhaka University where I studied and am still teaching for giving me the social melting pot which helped me transform into a fuller human being. My students and colleagues have been always cooperative and their support proved so crucial in making this social transformation. I must also express my indebtedness to the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for putting her trust in me to run the central (Reserve) bank for about seven years where I could experiment my innovative ideas of developmental central banking in the challenging context of global financial crisis. The support from the central and all other banks was phenomenal in transforming the banking system into more digital, inclusive and humane one. The interface between the central banking and commercial banking was so well orchestrated mainly because of the change in mindset of the human resources of the entire banking industry, more particularly that of the central bank itself. I could also bring the university, industry and the central bank nearest to help transform the human capital for the desired financial transformation which is still in practice. Of course, there are ethical and other challenges in the banking sector even today. We must work together to weather these structural challenges as well.

Journalist, Kolkata.

U.S. to ban Russian flights from American airspace

WASHINGTON: The U.S. government on Tuesday announced a

of the day Wednesday and will suspend operations of all air-

major U.S. carriers who have taken the step after Russian

operate via a different route that does not use Russian airspace.

White House officials had privately asked if the move would harm U.S. supply chains or have other negative impacts, sources told Reuters.

Russian flights have been effectively barred from U.S. destinations for the most part in recent days because of bans on the use of Canadian and European airspace. Some foreign governments have privately questioned why the United States did not move faster to ban Russian planes as have some U.S. lawmakers.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has asserted Ukraine committed "genocide" in the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine, without presenting evidence, and said the invasion, called a "special operation" by Russian officials, was therefore justified to end it.



ban on Russian flights from American airspace following similar moves by the European Union and Canada after Russia's invasion of neighboring Ukraine. "I am announcing that we will join our allies in closing off American airspace to all Russian flights, further isolating Russia and adding an additional squeeze on their economy," Biden said in his State of the Union address.

The U.S. Transportation Department Federal Aviation Administration orders will take effect by the end

craft owned, certified, operated, registered, chartered, leased, or controlled by, for, or for the benefit of, a person who is a Russian citizen. This includes passenger and cargo flights, and scheduled as well as charter flights "effectively closing U.S. air space to all Russian commercial air carriers and other Russian civil aircraft," the Transportation Department said.

Late on Tuesday, United Airlines said it had temporarily suspended flying over Russian airspace, joining other

troops last week poured into Ukraine. United had been continuing to fly over Russian airspace to operate some flights to and from India in recent days. Delta Air Lines, American Airlines and United Parcel Service all confirmed this week they had halted flights over Russia. FedEx on Tuesday did not respond to emails asking if it has stopped flying over Russia.

United is canceling two flights to India for Tuesday and Wednesday as it evaluates how it could continue to

AP rules out fresh survey on Polavaram for 'backwater effect' at 50 L cusecs

Vijayawada: As the Telangana government raises its concern over the 'backwater effect' due to the implementation of the Polavaram project on Bhadrachalam and at others places, Andhra Pradesh says there is no scope for a fresh survey. "Three surveys have been already held based on directions from the Central Water Commission and there is no need for a fresh survey to gauge the possible maximum flood possibility of 50 lakh

while AP, IIT, Hyderabad and a joint team of engineering from both AP and TS have been carried out on submergence areas of Polavaram project and these did not notice any major issue of concern over submergence.

The initial survey found the submergence area comprising 373 habitations in 272 villages at the 45.72 meter contour level.

Moreover, the AP government has taken up a Li-



cusecs unless otherwise warranted," the AP government has said.

Telangana water resources engineer-in-chief C Muralidhar wrote a letter to the chief executive officer of Polavaram Project Authority recently, expressing concerns over the backwater effect from the Polavaram project on Bhadrachalam town and other places. He called for another round of backwater studies by involving a neutral agency for a revised PMF of 50 lakh cusecs and for initiating protection measures against the drainage congestion vis-a-vis Kinnerasani and Murreduvagu rivers.

AP water resources authorities say the maximum flood received in Godavari river in the last 500 years was 28 lakh cusecs. In 1986, it was 36 lakh cusecs (at Sir Arthur Cotton barrage at Dowleswaram), against 28 lakhs cusecs in 2006 and 26 lakh cusecs in the recent floods.

They say that the Polavaram project dam's height has been fixed at 45.72 metres FRL, based on an assessment that the maximum flood received is to the tune of 36 lakh cusecs only and the Polavaram's concrete spillway has been designed to withstand floods upto 50 lakh cusecs, which is cited as a factor for safety.

The authorities say that three surveys involving Andhra Pradesh Engineering Research Lab in erst-

dar survey (light detection and ranging), a remote sensing method used to examine the surface of the earth to find out the submergence areas. The processing and analysis of data are in progress and the details are expected to be out shortly to give a clear picture of areas of submergence due to the Polavaram project, AP officials said.

Referring to Telangana seeking protection against drainage congestion of Kinnerasani and Murreduvagu rivers, the AP authorities say that such a situation could last for a few hours or a day when the water level in Godavari river is above the water levels in the two rivers. "Once the water level starts receding, the water from rivers joins the river water," they said, referring to the study reports.

The AP authorities also raise concern saying that both Odisha and Chattisgarh have not conducted any environmental impact study on the submergence of their areas due to the backwater effect from the Polavaram project so far. This, even as the AP government has made it clear it is ready either to compensate or to strengthen their flood banks, keeping in mind the heavy floods witnessed at 36 lakh cusecs level.

If Telangana asks for a fresh study at 50 lakh cusecs of floods, both the states may ask for the same, causing fresh hurdles to the execution of the Polavaram project, it is pointed out.

CM KCR likely to skip PM's meet on Independence Day fete



HYDERABAD: Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao is most likely to skip the national committee meeting on Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi on August 6. The Chief Ministers of all the states are members in this committee. Official sources said the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) has received an invitation from the Prime Minister on Monday.

The Lok Sabha Speaker, Governors, Union ministers, political leaders, officials, media personalities, spiritual leaders, artists, film personalities and eminent persons from other walks of life are also members of this committee.

However, the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS)

sources said the chances of the Chief Minister taking part in this meeting are remote as Rao had been avoiding meeting Modi since February 5 this year.

When Modi came to Hyderabad to take part in 20th annual celebrations of Indian School of Business on May 26, the Chief Minister flew to Bengaluru a couple of hours before his arrival. Rao did not meet Modi, when he came to the city again to take part in BJP's national executive meeting on July 2 and 3. Rao last met Modi on September 3 last year in Delhi and submitted representations on several pending issues concerning Telangana. After the Huzurabad bypoll in November last year, the relations between TRS and BJP were strained and thereafter Rao never met Modi.

PM's brother Prahlad Modi stages dharna at Jantar Mantar with fair price shop dealers' demands

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brother Prahlad Modi, who is

to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, listing our long-standing demands for the sake

action will be decided. AIFPSDF national general secretary

Further, the members said all due margins for all the states, including Jammu and



also the vice president of All India Fair Price Shop Dealers' Federation, on Tuesday staged a dharna here with various demands of the organisation.

Prahlad along with several other members of the All India Fair Price Shop Dealers' Federation (AIFPSDF) gathered at Jantar Mantar, holding banners and raising slogans. "A delegation of AIFPSDF will submit a memorandum

of our survival. With the current situation of hike in the cost of living and overhead expenditures for running shops, a raise of mere 20 paise per kg in our margin is a cruel joke. We request the Union government to grant us relief and end our financial miseries," Prahlad said.

He further stated that AIFPSDF will hold a national executive meeting on Wednesday and based on that, their next course of

Biswambhar Basu told PTI that they also plan to meet Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Wednesday. The AIFPSDF has been demanding compensation for loss on rice, wheat and sugar, and also for edible oil and pulses to be supplied through fair price shops.

It has also demanded that the 'West Bengal Ration Model' of free distribution be implemented across the country.

Kashmir, should be reimbursed immediately. "We also demand that edible oil, pulses and LPG gas cylinders be supplied through fair price shops. Rural areas' fair price shop dealers should be allowed to function as direct procurement agents for rice and wheat. Our demands were also raised by TMC MP Sougata Roy in Parliament," Basu said, adding that their protests will continue until their demands are met.

Hyderabad-bound AirAsia India flight struck by lightning, returns to Bengaluru

BENGALURU: In a rare incident, an AirAsia India flight was struck by lightning while on its way from Bengaluru to Hyderabad on Tuesday morning. As a result, the flight was forced to return to the Kempegowda International Airport. None of the passengers on board the flight were hurt. But the aircraft appears to have suffered minor damages. The Airbus A320 took off from Bengaluru airport at 7.39 am. It had 91 passengers on board. According to an airline spokesperson, "AirAsia India flight I5-1576, operating from Bengaluru to Hyderabad, returned to Bengaluru due to air traffic congestion caused by inclement weather."

An inspection by the airline later revealed that the aircraft had encountered a lightning strike.

"Lightning strikes although rare, do occur and aircraft are safeguarded against strikes which do not pose a risk. The safety of guests and the aircraft remained intact at all points," the spokesperson said.

A passenger Dr Arun Mavaji had tweeted that after returning to Bengaluru and refuelling, airline staff realised the aircraft was damaged.

Medical emergency mid-air forces diversion of Bengaluru-Kolkata AirAsia India flight; passenger dies

UVP wrote a Letter to Honorable collector for some issues of Cuttack Sadar

Cuttack Sadar(KCN) - Cuttack Sadar Based



social organisation Utkal Vikash Parishad(UVP) President Honorable Er.Prakash Chandra Sethi wrote letter to Honorable Collector & DM Cuttack Shri Bhabani Shankar Chayani about some long standing demand for the betterment of society as Barapata issue lots of farmers are in trouble for water issue,needs to construct a culvert at Bodhapur which help to release water to Sukapaika from Barapata farmland and second demand is for Health matter of public more than 15GP people depends to Kishorenagar PHC it needs to convert PHC to CHC and other demand to reconstruction of damaged The Mahanadi river road from Barda to Sirlo with get repair RD from Sompurto Kishorenagar and Kamarpada respectively. So request the collector to this matter seriously and to avoid the delay of resolving the above work and take necessary action.

Minor gang-raped in car along Odisha National Highway-53, 6 detained

SAMBALPUR(KCN): In a horrifying incident, a minor girl was gang-raped by four persons inside a car by National Highway-53 under Burla police station limits in the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday. Sambalpur Police detained six persons including a woman in this connection on Monday. The incident took place near a dhaba along the National Highway-53 at Goshala area. The victim whose age is presumed to be 16 years was brought to



be her acquaintance, on the pretext of having dinner. As soon as they reached there, four miscreants waiting at the dhaba joined them. After dinner, while the girl was waiting outside the dhaba, the woman kept discussing something with the four men. Soon, the four forcibly took the girl inside a car parked near the dhaba and took turns raping her. In the meantime, some passersby witnessed the chaos and in-

formed police about the incident. A PCR Officer, Burla police station, Satya Dash said, six persons including the woman have been detained and interrogation is underway. "Their identities cannot be revealed until the investigation is complete and any arrest is made," he said. A medical examination of the victim was conducted and treatment was provided to her. A medical examination of the four men will also be conducted. After a medical report of the girl is received, her age can be confirmed, police said. Official sources informed that during preliminary investigation it came to the fore that the woman worked as a pimp involved in trafficking of young girls and pushing them into prostitution.

van of the police arrived there and rescued the girl though the four had fled by then. The parents of the girl lodged an FIR in this connection on Sunday. The girl was rushed to Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR), Burla while the woman and the dhaba owner were picked up from the spot. The four miscreants too were later traced and have been detained. Sub-Divisional Police

College in Odisha bans smartphones on campus, students vexed

BERHAMPUR (KCN): Students of Mahamayee Mahila Mahavidyalaya on Monday opposed the decision of college authorities to ban smartphones on campus. On July 30, the college had issued a notice banning use of smartphones inside the campus. Upset over the decision, the students met Princi-



pal S Narayana Rao and submitted a letter of their time in college on smartphones. Many parents also came in support of the ban on smartphones. "No doubt smartphones have made the life of students easy by providing them access to learning materials. However, these gadgets should not be misused," they said. A senior officer of Berhampur University, whose daughter is a student of the college, said, "Phones are not allowed during examinations. The same should be applicable in classrooms. There should not be any hue and cry as the college authorities have allowed mobile phones with keypads inside the campus," he added.

They are watching videos during college hours. "Since we want students to spend their time in college on studies, the restriction was necessary," he said. The principal, however, said students are allowed to carry mobile phones with keypads.

demanding the lifting of the restriction. The students argued that in today's digital world, smartphones were a necessity. However, Rao did not accept the letter and asked the students to discuss the matter with their parents. Rao said many girls were spending most

SOA Promotes Oral Hygiene

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Talk shows on Radio and Television on the importance of main-



taining a clean mouth and an academic lecture marked the Oral Hygiene Day observed by the Department of Periodontics at the Institute of Dental Sciences, faculty of dental sciences of Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) here on Monday.

Prof. (Dr.) Rashmita Nayak and Prof. (Dr.) Anurag Satpathy participated in the talk shows to explain in detail the need to have a clean mouth.

At the institute, a beautiful 'rangoli' created

Covid vax under tree, Health dept under lens in Odisha's Balangir

BALANGIR: The Balangir health administration has landed in soup for conducting a Covid-19 vaccination drive under a roadside tree at Brahmani Dunguri village under Magurbeda gram panchayat on Monday.

The incident has sparked outrage in the district with many demanding strict actions against the erring officials. Sources said a health team was supposed to carry out the inoculation drive at the local Anganwadi centre. But when the team reached the centre, they found that there was no space as it was stocked with eggs and other things. Unable to find another suitable place, the health teams decided to conduct the drive at the roadside under a tree.

Villagers gather at the vaccination site under a tree in Brahmani Dunguri. (Photo | Express)

by interns at the entrance, raised the curiosity of patients who inquired about the significance of the day which was explained to them.

An academic program was organised on the occasion which was inaugurated by the Dean Prof. (Dr.) Neeta Mohanty in the presence of the Head of the department of Periodontics Prof. (Dr.) Rinkee Mohanty. It was attended by heads of all departments, senior faculty members, interns and BDS students. Besides, a half day educational program was conducted where Prof. (Dr.) Abhaya Chandra Das delivered a lecture on the subject 'Importance of Oral Health'.

A street play on oral hygiene was also organised by BDS students while Prof. (Dr.) Manoj Kumar and Dr. Saurav Panda conducted a quiz on the subject. The department had made special arrangement for the patients visiting the Out Patient Department where a dedicated team of doctors explained the need for maintaining oral hygiene to the visitors besides presenting them with tooth paste and mouth wash samples along with pamphlets educating on oral cleanliness. The program would continue for a week.

outvaccination in a safe environment. As per guidelines, there should be adequate space at the inoculation site including the provision of waiting, vaccination and observation rooms. But vaccination drive was conducted at Brahmani Dunguri village in violation of the SOP.

While health experts said such practice is unsafe and could be fatal for persons taking the vaccine, locals criticised the health officials for their carelessness. They demanded an inquiry into the incident and stringent action against the officials concerned to prevent the recurrence of any such incident.

Additional public health officer Dr Sudha Barla termed the incident as unfortunate. Additional district medical officer Dr Kuber Chandra Mahanta said this was a serious issue and a probe will be conducted into the matter.




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Household spending up for 61% families in July: Survey

NEW DELHI: Overall household spending has increased for 61% of families in July -- a

on Tuesday. While spends on essentials like personal care and household items

car, and refrigerator continue to remain the same for 88% of the families, according to the sur-

35% last month. ALSO READ | RBI likely to raise key policy rate by at least 35 bps to check inflation: Experts

Interestingly, the survey also points out that about 92% of consumers said they would prefer Indian brands, while only 6% said they would buy Indian as well as imported brands.

The August report also shows increased awareness towards sustainable options with 63% saying that they are prepared to pay more for environmentally friendly

or natural products.

Pradeep Gupta, Chairman and MD, Axis My India said, "A sense of resilience, a belief in home-grown brands and an optimistic outlook towards the future is noteworthy. While inflation and lack of employment opportunities continue to be of concern, a major chunk believes that their living standards have improved in the last

few years."

ALSO READ | Your money faces headwinds amid surging inflation and economic slowdown. Watch out! The survey is based on telephonic interviews with a sample size of 10,205 people across 34 states and Union Territories. 71% of the respondents belonged to rural India, while 29% were from urban centres.



2% increase from the previous month -- consumer data intelligence company Axis My India has found in its findings released

have increased for 45% of the families -- a 1% increase over June -- spends on non-essential and discretionary products like AC,

vey. At the same time, consumption of health-related items has increased for 38% of the families, as against

5G Auction: Record Rs 1.5 lakh cr bids; Jio top bidder

New Delhi: After a competitive bidding battle that lasted an entire week, India's first-ever mega 5G spectrum auction finally ended on Mon-

Adani group bought only 400 MHz, or less than one per cent of all spectrum sold, for Rs 212 crores. "Sunil Mittal's Bharti Airtel was the sec-

ond-highest bidder with 19,867 MHz spectrum in various bands worth Rs 43,084 crores, while Vodafone Idea snapped up 2,668 MHz worth Rs 18,784 crores. The total bids worth Rs 1,50,173 crores for 71 per cent of the total bids of 72,098 MHz of spectrum offered across 10 bands in this latest auction," the minister said, adding the government in the first year will get Rs 13,365 crores in payment for the spectrum, and 5G services could be launched by October this year.

The auction was stretched to seven days because of the bidding fight over UP East circle among participants. The UP East circle -- which



day, with spectrum worth a total of Rs 1,50,173 crores being sold to telecom companies. The auction saw about 71 per cent of total spectrum bid out in the latest auction. Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio was the top bidder, winning a bid of over Rs 88,000 crores to consolidate its leadership position in the telecom space. Bharti Airtel, a cash-strapped Vodafone Idea and Adani Data Networks came second, third and fourth respectively in the bidding for their priority circles. Briefing the media after the final day's auction on Monday, telecom minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio emerged as the largest bidder for the 5G spectrum, acquiring close to half of all the airwaves sold in the latest auction for Rs 88,078 crores, while the

ond-highest bidder with 19,867 MHz spectrum in various bands worth Rs 43,084 crores, while Vodafone Idea snapped up 2,668 MHz worth Rs 18,784 crores. The total bids worth Rs 1,50,173 crores for 71 per cent of the total bids of 72,098 MHz of spectrum offered across 10 bands in this latest auction," the minister said, adding the government in the first year will get Rs 13,365 crores in payment for the spectrum, and 5G services could be launched by October this year.

While the Adani group bought spectrum in the 26 GHz band, which is not for public networks, Jio acquired spectrum across several bands, including the coveted 700 MHz band that can provide 6-10 km of signal range and forms a good base for fifth generation or 5G in all 22 circles in the coun-

Adani Data Networks participating selectively in the bidding. While the government had put on offer spectrum in 10 bands, it got no bids for high-priced airwaves in 600 MHz, 800 MHz and 2300 MHz bands. At the end of the auction, the mop-up from the 5G spectrum is estimated to be almost double of the Rs 77,815 crores worth 4G airwaves sold last year, and triple of the Rs 50,968.37 crores garnered from the 3G auction in 2010. "About two-thirds of the bids were offered for the 5G bands (3300 Mhz and 26 GHz), while more than a quarter of the demand came in the 700 Mhz band -- a band that had gone unsold in the previous two auctions (2016 and 2021)," the sources added.

The mega 5G spectrum action kicked off last Tuesday with bidding over Rs 1.45 lakh crore on Day 1.

includes Lucknow, Allahabad, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Kanpur -- saw bidding activity pick up once again for 1800 MHz, a band primarily used by telcos for 4G services. UP East -- which has over 10 crore mobile subscribers -- accounted for all the incremental spectrum sales on Sunday, amid a pitched battle for radio waves among players such as Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel.

As of May this year, Reliance Jio had 3.29 mobile subscribers in UP East, Bharti Airtel (3.7 crore) and Vodafone Idea (2.02 crore). "The bidding intensity for 1800 MHz band in Uttar Pradesh East circle had peaked between Wednesday and Friday, then subsided somewhat Saturday. On Sunday, however, renewed interest was seen and demand flared once again outstripping the spectrum supply," the sources said.

India extends 100 million USD line of credit to Maldives; Greater Male connectivity projects launched

Continued from page-1

the implementation of the India-funded connectivity project, billed as the largest infrastructure initiative being rolled out in the island nation.

Under the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP) project, a 6.74 km long bridge and causeway link will be built to connect the capital city Male with adjoining islands of Villingli, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi.

"We welcomed the beginning of work on the greater Male connectivity projects. It will be the biggest infra project. We also reviewed projects for the construction of 4,000 social housing units in Greater Male," Modi said.

"I am happy to announce that we will additionally provide financial support for 2000 social housing units. We have also decided to provide an additional line of credit of USD 100 million so that all projects can be completed in a time-bound manner," Modi added. The prime minister said there has been a renewed vigour in the friendly relations between India and Maldives and the closeness has increased.

"The threat of trans-national crime, terrorism and drug trafficking is serious in the Indian Ocean. And therefore, close contact and co-ordination between India and Maldives in the field of defence and security are vital for the peace and stability of the entire region," Modi said.

The prime minister also elaborated on greater bilateral cooperation in dealing with the pressing challenges.

"It includes cooperation in capacity building for the Maldivian security forces and their training. I am happy to announce that India will provide 24 vehicles and a naval boat for Maldivian security personnel. We will cooperate in developing infrastructure for police in 61 islands of the Maldives," he said.

The prime minister said that India will also assist the Maldives in achieving its target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

The Maldivian leader thanked India for its generous assistance when his country was reeling under the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Was it not for generous assistance received in the form of budgetary support, medical assistance and supplies, and the Covishield vaccines donated by the government of India, our economic recovery would have been hard and long," he said.

Solih said he and Modi also discussed the challenge of terrorism.

"We both reiterated our firm commitment towards work against terrorism and strengthen cooperation in the maritime safety and security in the Indian Ocean Region," he said.

Referring to the cyber security pact, he said it is based on "equality reciprocity and mutual benefit".

The Maldivian president also invited Indian investors to explore the opportunities in his country and forge a mutually beneficial partnership.

"We welcome the operationalisation of the RuPay cards in the Maldives and agreed to consider further measures to boost bilateral travel and tourism and economic linkages," Solih said.

US kills Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri in Kabul drone strike

Continued from page-1

surgeon who grew up in a comfortable Cairo household before turning to violent radicalism, had been on the run for 20 years since the 9/11 attacks. He took over Al-Qaeda after Osama bin Laden was killed by US special forces in Pakistan in 2011, and had a \$25 million US bounty on his head.

Zawahiri death: Did US use secret 'flying ginsu' missile?

Over the weekend the Afghan interior ministry denied reports circulating on social media of a drone strike in Kabul, telling AFP a rocket struck "an empty house" in the capital, causing no casualties.

Early Tuesday in Kabul, however, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid tweeted that an "aerial attack" was carried out on a residence in the Sherpur area of the city.

"The nature of the incident was not revealed at first. The security and intelligence agencies of the Islamic Emirate investigated the incident and found in their preliminary investigations that the attack was carried out by American drones," his tweet said.

The news comes a month before the first anniversary of the final withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, leaving the country in control of the Taliban insurgency that fought Western forces over the preceding two decades.

Under the 2020 Doha deal, the Taliban promised not to allow Afghanistan to be used again as a launchpad for international jihadism, but experts believe the group never broke their ties with Al-Qaeda.

"What we know is that the senior Haqqani Taliban were aware of his presence in Kabul," the Biden official said.

Taliban interior minister Sirajuddin Haqqani also heads the feared Haqqani Network, a brutal subset of the Taliban blamed for some of the worst violence of the past 20 years and which has been described by US officials as a "veritable arm" of Pakistani intelligence.

Zawahiri's presence in Kabul a 'clear violation' of accords by Taliban: US

Doctor turned jihadist

Zawahiri, 71, lacked the potent charisma that helped bin Laden rally jihadists around the world, but willingly channelled his analytical skills into the Al-Qaeda cause. He was believed to be the main strategist -- the real mastermind who steered operations, including the September 11 attacks, as well as bin Laden's personal doctor.

Al-Qaeda is believed to have been degraded in the years since the US invasion of Afghanistan, and the White House official said Zawahiri was "one of the last remaining figures who carried this kind of significance."

The organization, agreed Soufan Center researcher Colin Clarke, is "at a crossroads."

"Despite Zawahiri's leadership, which minimized AQ's losses while rebuilding, the group still faces serious challenges going forward. For one, there's the question of who will lead al Qaeda after Zawahiri's gone," he said.

Zawahiri's father was a renowned physician and his grandfather a prayer leader at Cairo's Al-Azhar institute, the highest authority for Sunni Muslims.

He became involved with Egypt's radical Muslim community at a young age and published several books which came for many to symbolize the radical Islamist movement. He left Egypt in the mid-1980s, heading for Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar where the resistance to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was based.

It was at that time, when thousands of Islamist fighters flooded into Afghanistan during the 1980s, that Zawahiri and bin Laden met, and in 1998 he became one of five signatories to bin Laden's "fatwa" calling for attacks against Americans.

Jihadist monitor SITE said some militants were questioning the veracity of the report he had been killed, while others believed Zawahiri had achieved his desire of "martyrdom."

As for Al-Qaeda's future without him, SITE said jihadists were bullish, with one writing: "If Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri is dead, there are a thousand Aymans."

Historic gold: India's fab four win CWG women's fours lawn bowl event

BIRMINGHAM: The Indian women lawn bowls team bagged a historic gold medal at

three rounds. All four athletes hail from different back-grounds. Pinki was a

ham, on August 2, 2022. (Photo | PTI) Lovely, who will turn 42 on Wednes-

done," said Saikia. Team manager Anju Luthra said years of toil has finally culmi-

Rupa said, "We were brimming with confidence." "We wanted to carry

pared better for did not want to get the colour of the



the Commonwealth Games on Tuesday, an unheralded quartet pulling the sport from obscurity to limelight with its inspiring show. The Indian team of Lovely Choubey (lead), Pinki (second), Nayanmoni Saikia (third) and Rupa Rani Tirkey (skip) overcame mid-match slump to beat South Africa 17-10 in the women's fours final. The team had got the nation hooked to the sport after its surprise win over New Zealand, and its incredible campaign culminated in the best possible manner. This is India's fourth gold and first outside the weightlifting arena in this edition. The Indian team led 8-2 at one stage but the South African side comprising Thabelo Muvhango (lead), Bridget Calitz (second), Esme Kruger (third) and Johanna Snyman (skip) made it 8-8 to spice up the contest. The Indians though kept their nerves to pull away in the last

cricketer from Delhi, and Assam's Nayanmoni Saikia was a national-level weightlifter in the early 2000s. Jharkhand's Lovely Choubey was once a long jump athlete, and Rupa Rani Tirkey was a kabaddi player in the past. The 'leader' of the pack, Lovely is a constable with Jharkhand Police while Rupa, who too is from Ranchi, works in the sports department. Pinki is a sports teacher with DPS R K Puram in New Delhi while Nayanmoni comes from a farming family in Assam and works in the state's forest department. The players would now expect that the gold medal winning performance will "open the doors" for further progress of the game. India's Nayanmoni Saikia in action during the Lawn Bowls Women's Fours final match against South Africa, at the Commonwealth Games 2022, in Birming-

day, said the success in Birmingham will go a long way in raising the profile of the sport. "We wanted to do something not only just for this team but for India. We knew that without medal doors will remain shut. Now doors have opened. I thank media, our federation, IOA, our manager Anju madam for support," Lovely said. "Anju madam gave us the freedom to select our shots, and make decisions. It made it easy for us," she added. Pinki, 41, was naturally ecstatic. "The hard work has finally paid off today, we have created history. We knew that gold medal will create more impact, so we are happy." Nayanmoni Saikia said the team did not lose heart after the South Africans staged a comeback to make it 8-8. "The skip (Rupa) told us we can do it because we are a good team. We should not lose focus and enthusiasm, it will be

nated in happy memories. "We were losing from very close. I have been with this team since 2010 Games. The margins of defeats were not much in previous editions. We were losing by one point and that was not letting us sleep. We were determined to do something this time. We have created history and this is the luckiest (best) day in Indian lawn bowls history," she said. ALSO READ | CWG: Four athletes from different back-grounds put India into final in Lawn Bowl Sports officer Rupa felt it is a life-changing achievement. "We had won medals in Asia Pacific and Asian Championships in between but we had to win this medal in CWG to attract everyone's attention. We came into the Games with a lot determination," she said. Asked what the team was thinking after making the final,

the momentum and go into the game with a lot of passion and determination. We could not sleep properly thinking about what would happen tomorrow. There was tension. But I thought it was a new day, new beginning and wanted to make it count," she said. Pinki said they pre-



these Games. "I meditated and we were focused on finishing the event. We

excited. The confidence that we got yesterday we have been able to change

medal. We want to get medals in other events too, in CWG," she said.

Marie Bouzkova wins Prague Open for her first WTA title

PRAGUE: Eighth-seeded Marie Bouzkova cruised past seventh-seeded Anastasia Potapova 6-0, 6-3 on Sunday to win the Prague Open for her first WTA title. The 24-year-old lifted the trophy after playing in her fourth WTA final, the second this year after she lost to American Sloane Stephens in Guadalajara, Mexico in February. "I'm extremely happy I won right here," the Czech told the cheering crowd in Prague. The Wimbledon quarterfinalist broke Potapova seven times to win the final in one hour and 11 minutes. Bouzkova didn't drop a set during the hard-court tournament. The 21-year-old Potapova was also playing in her fourth final. The Russian claimed her first title in Istanbul, Turkey in April. In Prague, she eliminated top-seeded World No. 2 Anett Kontaveit 6-1, 6-1 in the

quarterfinals. Bouzkova and Potapova previously only met in qualifying for the Miami Open earlier this year with the Czech winning 6-3, 3-6, 6-4.



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