



INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878
on Sunday



Former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh passes away
page 6



Three Jaish terrorists killed in encounter in J&K's Pulwama
page 7



Suicide bombings cast doubt on China's Pakistan projects
page 9



Amit wins silver in 10,000 m race walk at world u-20 athletics
page 14

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NEARBY
Punjab police seize 41 kg of heroin on border
CHANDIGARH
The Punjab police on Saturday said they had foiled a major bid to smuggle drugs from Pakistan and recovered 40.81 kg of heroin, estimated at about ₹200 crore in the international market, in the Panjagrai border outpost area of Amritsar.
NEWS ▶ PAGE 6

80 Indians evacuated; 150 miss flight as Taliban intercept them

IAF aircraft shifts evacuees to Dushanbe; likely to bring them to Delhi today

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI
At least 80 Indian nationals were airlifted from Afghanistan capital Kabul to Dushanbe in neighbouring Tajikistan on Saturday aboard an Indian Air Force C-130J aircraft. However, more than 150 others failed to get past the Taliban guards blocking access to the Hamid Karzai International Airport in time for the flight.

The airlift was part of the ongoing efforts of the government to bring back hundreds of Indian doctors, teachers, engineers and others who have been unable to leave the country since the Taliban took over more than a week ago.

Dropped in Doha
The group of 80 Indians, who managed to enter the airport perimeter on Thursday, boarded the special plane late on Friday night, and are due to return to Delhi by Sunday morning. A third, smaller group of Indians was able to board a NATO-operated charter which dropped them in Doha. They are expected to return to India by commercial flights.

On Saturday, the U.S.-led NATO forces guarding the airport in Kabul sealed sev-



Tense moments: Afghans waiting to get evacuated at the airport in Kabul. • AP

eral entry points due to the large rush of people clamouring to get in, and had to fire several rounds in the air to stem the crowds. Visuals on international channels showed an unconfirmed number of bodies of Afghans who died in stampedes and from severe dehydration. Others reportedly died in the violence and firing by the armed militia on crowds outside the airport.

Officials coordinating the movement of the second group of 150 Indians said the

convoy spent the entire day trying to enter the airport, and some of them were briefly detained by the Taliban forces outside the airport to have their documents checked. Despite being released and allowed to proceed subsequently, the group had been unable to reach the airport gates, at the time of going to press.

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INFILTRATION BIDS ▶ PAGE 7
BARADAR IN KABUL ▶ PAGE 9

14 arrested for pro-Taliban posts in Assam

The police in Assam have arrested 14 people, including a medical student, for "objectionable" pro-Taliban posts on social media platforms. They have been booked under Sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the IT Act and the CrPc. ▶ PAGE 7

Assam gets 45 days to finish detention camp work

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUAHAATI
The Gauhati High Court has given the Assam government 45 days to complete the construction of a standalone detention centre for declared foreigners at Mattia in Goalpara district. The court also sought the shifting of 177 inmates from the existing detention centres, now called transit camps. Hearing a petition, Justice Kalyan Rai Surana directed the State's Secretary of Home and Political Department to file the updated status report after 45 days from August 11.

'In a month'
"...The State envisaged that the construction of detention centre at Mattia, Goalpara, would be completed by September 2021. In this regard, the learned Advocate General has submitted although he has received specific instruction from the concerned authorities of the Home Department that expeditious steps are being taken to complete the construction work of the detention centre within a period of one month..."
CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

Lalu faces tough test as sons feud over RJD

AMARNATH TEWARY PATNA
For Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) patriarch Lalu Prasad, who has been recuperating from multiple health issues at the residence of his daughter in Delhi, the tussle between his two sons is posing new challenges to his health, family and the party. The siblings — Tej Pratap Yadav and younger brother Tejjashwi, whom Mr. Prasad has already declared as his heir apparent — are currently locked in a fierce fight for control of the party and have thrown the ball in their father's court to resolve the discontent between them.



A file photo of Tej Pratap Yadav and Tejjashwi, in white.

Mr. Tej Pratap, MLA from Hasnampur in Samastipur district, has religious leanings and is considered to have a colourful and happy-go-lucky personality.

SPECIAL
Sporting a *chandan tikka* (sandal dot on his forehead) and different coloured robes, he is a frequent visitor to the holy city of Mathura in Uttar Pradesh. He calls himself a devotee of Krishna and Shiva, and is said to be close to his mother and former Chief Minister Rabri Devi. Mr. Tejjashwi, MLA from Raghapur, is seen as close to his father. Unlike his younger brother who is also the Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, Mr. Tej Pratap is often in the news for his caustic remarks and rustic mannerisms, causing major embarrassment to the RJD and its leaders. Matters seem to have come to a head after a face-to-face confrontation between the brothers earlier this week in Patna. On August 20, Mr. Tej Pratap visited 10 Circular Road, the official residence of Rabri Devi, where Mr. Tejjashwi also lives, to discuss the differences between him and State RJD chief Jagdanand Singh. "While, we started talking with each other Sanjay Yadav (close aide of Mr. Tejjashwi) intervened and took Tejjashwi away. He did not allow me to talk to my brother," Mr. Tej Pratap alleged while leaving the meeting.
CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

Waterway



No entry: A waterlogged Minto Bridge remained closed to traffic till noon following heavy rain in New Delhi on Saturday. • R.V. MOORTHY (REPORT ON PAGE 2)

Markets, malls to stay open after 8 p.m. from tomorrow

City reports 19 cases, lowest in 16 months

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI
Markets, malls, restaurants and bars in the Capital can stay open beyond 8 p.m. from August 23 with the Delhi government announcing on Saturday that restrictions are being lifted following the decline in the number of COVID-19 cases. "In view of the coronavirus situation, the markets were presently allowed to stay open till 8 p.m. With the decline in COVID-19 cas-

es, this time limit is being done away with from Monday. The markets can stay open according to their normal timings," Mr. Kejriwal said in a tweet. Delhi reported only 19 new COVID-19 cases over 24 hours, the lowest since April 15 last year, taking the tally to 14,37,293, said a bulletin released by the government. No new COVID-19-related death was reported and the toll stood at 25,079. (With inputs from PTI)

War of words over silence on Article 370

PEERZADA ASHIQ SRINAGAR
A war of words erupted between Sajad Lone's People's Conference and Dr. Farooq Abdullah's National Conference on Saturday, a day after the virtual meeting of 19 Op-

position parties, chaired by Congress president Sonia Gandhi, stayed silent on the issue of the reading down of Article 370. Taking on the NC and Mehbooba Mufti's Peoples Democratic Party, Mr. Lone said,

"How can J&K leaders justify their presence in the meeting if they could not convince the leaders to talk about Article 370. What is the national Opposition's stance?"
DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 7

Plea to be filed against ex-DGP Saini's release

Vigilance Bureau to move recall petitions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH



Punjab's Vigilance Bureau has decided to file a recall petition in the High Court against the August 19 release orders of Sumedh Saini in a land fraud case. It will also petition against the court's interim bail order of August 12 in the disproportionate assets case against the former Director General of Police.

regard to the documentary evidence or banking transactions, this court is of the opinion that custodial interrogation of the petitioner is not required. The petitioner is granted interim bail subject to his joining probe within one week from today." Pointing out that the ex-DGP had chosen to visit the VB office late in the evening on the last day of the 7-day period, an official spokesperson of the Bureau said Mr. Saini had thus failed to follow the HC orders in letter and spirit. "Saini intentionally exhausted the seven-day period during which he had to join the probe, and even then he arrived at the Sector 68 Mohali office of the Bureau without any prior intimation to the investigating officer," said the spokesperson.

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TUESDAY, AUG. 24
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Delhi Weather

max	min
Delhi City	32 24
Safdarjang	32 24
Palam	32 25

Delhi Palam Today
33°C Rain would decrease. Few spells of light rain and thunderstorm possible with cloudy sky and gentle winds.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
34°C Warm and humid day with cloudy to partly cloudy sky. A spell of light rain and thunderstorm may occur at few areas.

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THE HINDU
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IN BRIEF

Metro services to start early on Raksha Bandhan
NEW DELHI
Delhi Metro services across many of its corridors will begin early on Sunday to facilitate passengers on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, the DMRC said on Saturday. Services on Sunday begins on Ph-III corridors at 8 a.m. on regular days. "In order to facilitate those travelling for Raksha Bandhan, metro services will begin at 6.30 a.m. on Pink Line and 6 a.m. on Magenta Line on 22 August," the DMRC said. #PTI

Indian Oil celebrates Raksha Bandhan
NEW DELHI
On the eve of Raksha Bandhan, Indian Oil officials gave away gifts to women customer attendants at COCO Niti Marg. They were gifted a kit containing ladies purse, sweets, two rakhi sets and a mask.

Management school celebrates Onam
GREATER NOIDA
BIMTECH celebrated Onam, the homecoming of King Mahabali and the popular harvest festival of Kerala, with great enthusiasm and spirit. The evening started with lighting of the lamp by director Hariwanah Chaturvedi.

Man who set self on fire outside SC dies

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI
A 27-year-old man, who had allegedly set himself on fire outside the Supreme Court, succumbed to injuries on Saturday, the police said. The man and a woman had tried to end their lives by setting themselves ablaze on August 16. The man had sustained 65% burn injuries and the 24-year-old woman suffered 85% burns. Officials deployed the court rushed them to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital. The woman is undergoing treatment. The woman — from U.P.'s Ghazipur — was allegedly raped by a BJP MP in 2019. The accused has been in jail for two years and the matter is undergoing trial. In a live video before the incident, the woman and the man alleged that a few police officers and other noted people were supporting the accused. In August, a local court in Varanasi issued a non-bailable warrant against her in a case of forgery based on a complaint filed by the accused MP's brother. **Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, Telephone: 011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. -7.30 p.m.**

Regularisation of illegal colonies awaits Centre's nod

'Colonies which do not meet basic requirements will have to go for compulsory redevelopment'

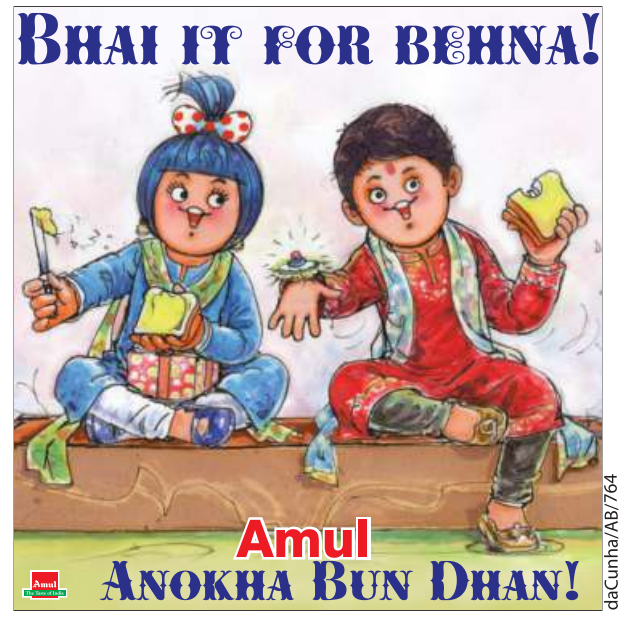
SHINJINI GHOSH NEW DELHI
In a bid to regularise unauthorised colonies in the national capital, proposals have been sent to the Central government, senior officials of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) said. To ensure better living conditions and to push for regularisation of the unauthorised colonies, the proposal entails regularising colonies as it is, in cases where the respective colonies meet basic requirements. **Better living** DDA vice-chairman Anurag Jain told *The Hindu*, "In the '70s and '80s, when colonies were regularised, there was not really much difference in their lives. What we have proposed is to make certain norms which will ensure better living in the colonies which get regularised. The first part of it is that if a par-

ticular colony meets the basic level of norms, then the DDA will regularise it, as it is." Stating that unauthorised colonies which do not meet the basic requirements will have to go for compulsory redevelopment. Mr. Jain explained, "If a particular colony is not meeting the basic norms, including the minimum width of a road and so on, the colonies will have to go for redevelopment. People will be asked to pool their lands. The more land that gets pooled, the incentives provided will be better. If for example, 2,000 square metre of land gets accumulated, then we will make multistoreys and regularise the colony. This will also ensure that the quality of life in the area improves." Senior officials said that the proposal is with the Centre and the guidelines

The pace of registrations and completed applications was hit by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic
ANURAG JAIN
DDA vice-chairman
will be finalised after receiving required approvals. Officials of the urban body also said that urban planning agencies like the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) have also been asked to select colonies on a random basis and make layouts of whether the proposed regularisation process can be implemented. **Model colonies** Mr. Jain said, "It is still at the planning stage but the NIUA has been asked to choose five to six colonies as model colonies and make plans accordingly to see whether the pro-

posed regularisation process can be implemented. The first few model colonies will most likely be the ones which can be regularised as it is, if they meet the basic requirements." **Had consultations** While the land-owning agency has had consultations with other departments like the fire department regarding basic requirements that are to be laid out, senior officials said that once a colony is regularised, agencies concerned like civic bodies and public works department among others, will have to carry out the required development work in the area. Meanwhile, as per official records, the DDA had issued over 8,000 conveyance deeds and authorisation slips as of August 15. The scheme was launched in December 2019 after the Centre passed a Bill to grant owner-

ship rights to people residing in unauthorised colonies. According to data provided by the DDA, the urban body has received over 4.25 lakh registrations under the scheme and over 78,000 applications. Speaking about the pace of the PM-UDAY scheme, Mr. Jain said, "The pace of registrations and completed applications was hit by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. There still exists a gap between the number of registrations and the number of completed applications. We are in the process of restarting camps to facilitate people. We have also changed our strategy and will be continuing the work in coordination with the civic bodies." "Apart from direct messaging through camps, in case of deficiencies in applications, we will also be doing targeted messaging," said Mr. Jain.



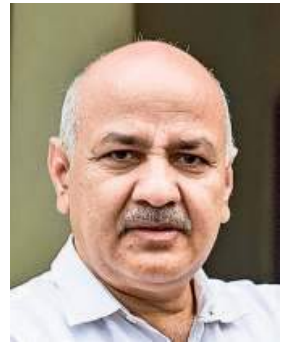
Over 10,000 doses given to inmates in Delhi jails

Jab drive began in Tihar on March 18
STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI
A total of 10,885 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered to the inmates of three jails in Delhi so far, the Delhi Prisons Department said on Saturday. According to the data shared by prison officials as on Thursday, 1,648 Tihar jail inmates aged above 45 and 5,750 below the age of 45 years had been vaccinated. In Rohini jail, 172 inmates above 45 years and 600 below that age were administered the vaccine. In Mandoli jail, 483 inmates aged above 45 and 2,232 below it have been vaccinated so far. Director General (Prisons) Sandeep Goel, "The inmates who received their first dose inside the prison and released on interim bail or emergency parole from the prisons," they said. Officials said that since the outbreak of the pandemic, the prisons department has remained vigilant and instructed its staff to maintain hygiene and social distancing among themselves.

Agencies given list of 15 names to file fake FIRs against: Sisodia

Many people on this list are from AAP, says Deputy CM

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI
Deputy Chief Minister and senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia on Saturday claimed that they have come to know from "reliable sources" that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a list of 15 people to the Central Bureau of Investigation, the Enforcement Directorate and the Delhi police to raid and file fake FIRs against. Many names in this list are from the AAP, he added. "PM Modi is using his brahmastra to falsely implicate the leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party in view of the coming elections. Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana's career graph has matched PM Modi's political



Manish Sisodia
growth, and thus, he has promised PM Modi that he will ruin these people through fake cases," Mr. Sisodia said during a 'online press conference'. Mr. Sisodia did not explain from where they got the information. "You are wel-

come to come and raid us in false cases, but don't forget that you couldn't find a single thing against us in all your past raids instead," Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said in a statement. Mr. Sisodia claimed that Mr. Modi had got houses of AAP leaders, including his raided in the past as well. Mr. Sisodia said that the Delhi government believes in honest politics and giving quality education. Mr. Sisodia said that the BJP is "scared" and upset of the increasing popularity of the AAP. "The growth graph of the AAP is increasing rapidly in Punjab, Goa, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh. Seeing this, the BJP is shaken," he said.

DU closes registration portal for PG courses

It received over 1.79 lakh applications

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI
The online registration portal for the various postgraduate courses in Delhi University closed on Saturday. The university received over 1.79 lakh registrations for PG courses. According to data provided by DU, as of 6 p.m. on Saturday, the university had received around 28,827 registrations for M.Phil and Ph.D courses. The online portal for PG, M.Phil and Ph.D registrations was launched by the university on July 26. According to officials,

there are around 20,000 postgraduate seats on offer this year. The university had earlier announced that the entire admission process would be online and applicants were not required to visit departments or campuses for any admission-related purposes. The Delhi University Entrance Test (DUET) will also be conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) between Sept. 26 and Oct. 1 for the various entrance based PG courses. The officials said the declaration of admission lists will be announced later.

Delhi govt. baffled over DTC bus inquiry: BJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI
Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta on Saturday called Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia's allegations against PM Narendra Modi "baseless". He alleged that these were being made in response to the Centre's nod for a CBI

probe in the DTC bus purchase scam by a "baffled" Delhi government. "It has been seen in the past seven years that whenever a scam of the Kejriwal government gets exposed, they are baffled and they start coming out with all kinds of unfounded and baseless statements," Mr.

Gupta said. He added that the AAP had "a history of first making unwarranted allegations and then apologising". He sought to issue a warning to Mr. Sisodia to either identify the sources behind his allegation or offer an apology to the Central government.

Couple held for killing two-year-old nephew

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI
A couple has been arrested for allegedly kidnapping and killing their 2-year-old nephew in west Delhi's Rajouri Garden, the police said on Saturday. DCP (West) Urvija Goel said the accused — Yamuna and her husband Rajesh — beg for a living. On Friday, a woman told an ASI that her son has been missing. During

probe, a woman can be seen carrying the child. "She was then apprehended from Tughlakabad," an officer said. Next, her husband was held on Saturday. They told police that they strangled the child and dumped him in a drain. Accused said they killed the boy because they believed he will grow up and rule the begging area while they will be sidelined.

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दिल्ली सरकार
Department of Power, Government of NCT of Delhi

HIBATULLAH AKHUNDZADA

The Mullah who took the reins of Afghanistan

The shadowy figure, under whose leadership the insurgents took Kabul back after 20 years, is set to become the ruler of the war-torn country

SRINIVASAN RAMANI

After a blitzkrieg operation to capture cities and towns following the withdrawal of U.S.-led military forces, the Taliban now control most of Afghanistan, including the capital city of Kabul. The only province that stands outside the Taliban's control Panjshir is in the north-central part of the country. Poised to form a new government, the Taliban are yet to clearly reveal the contours of their regime, but they had already been in power between 1996 and 2001 over vast areas in the country, which was then declared as the 'Islamic emirate of Afghanistan', and governed on the basis of a strict interpretation of 'Sharia law'. While their spokespersons, especially the political leaders based in Doha, Qatar, have evinced that the group has, over time, reformed and refined itself, there seems to be little inclination of any change in its core ideology.

The Taliban as a force are led by their "emir", Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada and are essentially controlled by the 'Quetta Shura', which has provided the ideological leadership for the insurgency as a "leadership council" on the top of a chain of command that extends itself into military groups and operations that now encompasses most of Afghanistan. The Quetta Shura is named so because it was protected and based in Quetta, Balochistan, in west Pakistan and even though only some of its leadership is believed to remain there, the name has stuck.

The Quetta Shura's leader-

ship council is also known as the 'Rahbari Shura' and is further divided into sub-committees. The members of this council are tasked with recruitment, training and planning the insurgency. The council was essentially a shadow government that controlled large parts of the country, especially the ethnic Pashtun dominated southern areas, during the insurgency. It has been helped by the protection provided by the Pakistani

The Taliban, led by their 'emir', Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada, are essentially controlled by the 'Quetta Shura', which has provided the ideological leadership for the insurgency

deep State and has financed the insurgency by various means such as donations from the Gulf and the opium trade in Afghanistan.

Akhundzada, who formerly headed the Taliban's ulama council (religious elders), took control of the Taliban after the death of his predecessor, Mullah Akhtar Mansour, who was widely seen as a violent and divisive leader, in a U.S. drone attack in 2016. Akhundzada, on the other hand, is revered by the outfit's rank and file for his religious credentials, having made his mark in deciding over thorny issues such as the insurgent group's use of suicide attacks, among other

ers. During Akhundzada's tenure as the emir, the Taliban's public face to the external world has remained its political office in Doha, Qatar, and represented by his deputy Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, a founder-leader who was captured by Pakistan security forces in 2010 at a time of internal discord within the outfit and released later in 2018. Other deputies include Sirajuddin Haqqani, son of Jalaluddin Haqqani who led the dreaded Haqqani Network that backed the Taliban during its tenure between 1996 and 2001 and have engaged in several terror attacks in Kabul and beyond.

Baradar has sought to project the Taliban as an anti-occupation force that was committed to the defeat and withdrawal of the U.S. military forces in Afghanistan but there has been little evidence of any reform in its core ideology.

Secretive movement

Formed in 1994 in the southern province of Kandahar, the Taliban, in their initial years and even after coming to power in Kabul in 1996, were a secretive political movement committed to a radical interpretation of Islamic ideology and jurisprudence. The movement emerged in the detritus of the bitter civil war between different factions of the mujahideen that fought for the spoils of power after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the fall of the communist government in 1992. It was led by former fighters of the mujahideen, who had taken part in the insurgency against the Soviet



ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

the U.S.'s intervention, the Taliban's leadership were driven away from Afghanistan, but they slowly gained and retained territory, particularly in the south.

No change to the core

The Quetta Shura managed to retain control in parts of rural Afghanistan by instituting a shadow government and even gained limited support beyond its core Pushtun ethnic adherents during the insurgency. However, even during peace and power sharing talks with the representatives of the Afghan government before the American withdrawal, the Taliban showed little inclination to dilute its core ideological tenets of establishing an Islamic emirate ruled predominantly by the emir (the Taliban leader), who would appoint the ulema of Sunni Muslims following the Hanafi sect and who would implement the sharia law.

The Taliban, as political scientist Barnett Rubin pointed out in a recent special report, released a draft Constitution in 2005, but had not published or adopted it. Taken together with other texts endorsed by the group, the Taliban have shown no indication that they will conform themselves in power to a democracy that will be committed to pluralism inherent in the ethnic, sectional and religious diversity of the country or anything other than a theocratic, unitary system of governance.

Akhundzada will seek to preside over an Islamic Emirate after annulling the 2004 Constitution of the Islamic Republic as the group has professed to do, and there is expected to be little difference in its intent from its rule in the 1990s. The Taliban have emerged as a more powerful military force than its 1990s avatar, following the U.S. withdrawal. This time, they have recognised the virtues of public relations exercises, world diplomacy and communication. But they will find it much more difficult to establish a theocratic, medieval regime without resistance in a country, which has seen a significant increase in nominal freedom of expression, participation of women in public life and other civil liberties.

PANJSHIR

The valley of resistance

Ahmad Massoud is trying to revive the Northern Alliance against the Taliban

STANLEY JOHNY

When the Taliban took Kabul in 1996, President Burhanuddin Rabbani and Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Massoud, along with their allies, retreated to northern Afghanistan. The Taliban had captured much of Afghanistan, except the north. Massoud, who was called 'the Lion of Panjshir', built a united front of anti-Taliban forces in the Panjshir Valley, and continued the resistance against the Taliban regime.

Massoud was assassinated by al-Qaeda on September 9, 2001, two days ahead of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York. But the Northern Alliance he had commanded played a critical part in the U.S.-led attacks on the Taliban that saw a quick collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001.

After 20 years, the Taliban are back in Kabul. The Taliban are now controlling almost all of Afghanistan—except Panjshir. In the province, located in the northeast of the country, Ahmad Massoud, the 32-year-old son of Ahmad Shah Massoud, is leading the new resistance against the Taliban. Amrullah Saleh, the First Vice President of the Ghani administration, is believed to be with Mr. Massoud in Panjshir. Last week, Mr. Saleh declared himself the 'legitimate caretaker President of Afghanistan' as per the Afghan Constitution.



While the Taliban are trying to tighten their grip on Afghanistan, early signs suggest a resistance to their rule is taking shape in Panjshir.

When Afghanistan became a republic in 1973, the 20-year-old Ahmad Shah Massoud was a student in Kabul University. Muhammad Daoud Khan, backed by the communist People's Democratic Party, became the first President of the country. Massoud, who was a member of the Muslim Youth, the student wing of the Jamiat-e Islami, started an uprising in Panjshir that was backed by the Pakistani intelligence. Initially Daoud Khan's regime put down the protests and Massoud had to flee to Pakistan. But he would return to Panjshir after the communists took over Kabul in 1978 through the 'Saur Revolution'. In the Panjshir Valley, literally the valley of five lions, Massoud built a guerrilla resistance against the communists. After the Soviets came to Af-

many fled to Kabul. Some others fled to Panjshir, hoping that the Valley, the traditional capital of the Tajik mujahideen, would hold off the Taliban onslaught. During the anti-communist war, the Mujahideen were backed by the U.S. with military and financial aid coming via Pakistan. When the Taliban were in power in the 1990s, the Northern Alliance was backed by India, Iran and Russia. And much of the country's north, including Badakhshan and parts of Takhar, besides Panjshir, was outside the control of the Taliban. This time, the Taliban appear to be stronger. Panjshir is the last province standing. The Taliban have also established contacts with Iran, Russia and China. It's not clear whether the resistance would gain regional or international support. In an article in *The Washington Post* on August 18, Ahmad Massoud said he's "ready to follow my father's footsteps". "But we need more weapons, more ammunition and more supplies," he wrote, in a direct call for help.

The more immediate questions Mr. Massoud and Mr. Saleh face is whether they can muster the kind of support among Afghans that the Northern Alliance did in the 1990s and whether Panjshir can survive as an island of resistance in an Afghanistan tightly controlled by the Taliban.

gghanistan in 1979, Panjshir emerged the hotbed of the anti-Soviet communist, with help coming from the U.S.

Mountainous terrain
Located 150 km north of Kabul, the Valley is near the Hindu Kush mountain range. It's divided by the Panjshir river and ringed by the Panjshir mountains in the north and the Kuhistan mountains in the south. The mountain tops are covered by snow throughout the year. This difficult terrain makes the Valley a nightmare for invaders. It allowed Massoud to keep the Valley away from first the communist government and then the Taliban regime. Earlier, Panjshir was part of Parwan Province. In 2004, the Valley and the surrounding region became an independent province. Roughly 1,50,000 people are living in Panjshir, a huge majority of them ethnic Tajiks. When the Taliban started taking provinces after provinces,

forces, especially in the Kandahar province.

As journalist Ahmed Rashid pointed out, the mujahideen in the south had coalesced around their Pushtun tribal identities and were led by tribal clan chiefs and their religious scholars (or the ulema). Following the withdrawal of the Soviets, the inter-cine war among the mujahideen also included battles between the rural tribal fighters and the more organised Islamists, who were funded by the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan, besides other external actors such as the U.S.' secret service, the CIA. After the decimation of what Mr. Rashid

calls the "traditionalists" from the tribal networks, the ground was laid for the emergence of the radical Islamists of the Taliban, who were initially student recruits (Talibs) from madrassas professing a version of Deobandi Islamic revivalism in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border areas. Akhundzada was an early member of the Taliban, tasked with fighting crime, and serving as part of the Taliban Supreme Court, before training recruits in seminaries.

The Taliban in the 1990s were led by Mullah Mohammad Omar, a reclusive leader who sought to gain the support of the people fed up

with the war and the corrupt leaders of the Mujahideen, by relying on religious piety and strict observance of Islamic law. The Taliban made rapid military gains after getting support from other fundamentalist groups and the military-driven deep State in Pakistan, which diversified its patrons from the Mujahideen to the new radical Islamists. Once in power, the Taliban, under Mullah Omar, pursued a radical Islamist rule, curbing women's rights, banning liberal institutions, and adopting medieval values, besides becoming a haven for other radical Islamist and terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda. Following

HAQQANI NETWORK

The sword arm of Taliban

The terrorist network is an influential faction among the Afghan insurgents

KALLOL BHATTACHARJEE

On August 17, Sirajuddin Haqqani, the leader of the Haqqani Network, arrived in Kabul from Quetta in Pakistan. The Haqqanis have been part of the Taliban and the responsibilities given to Sirajuddin point to the influence the group has over the Taliban. He is the leader in charge of military operations in Afghanistan. Believed to be in his 40s, Sirajuddin has established himself as a key figure in the Taliban-led "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" that will take shape in the coming days.

In terms of importance, Sirajuddin is seen as the third most powerful Taliban figure after Mullah Baradar and Hibatullah Akhundzada. With this, Sirajuddin is emerging as the top leader of the Haqqani Network, the much-feared group that first emerged to fight the Soviet troops in Afghanistan and continued to fight and defeat the U.S. with its terror tactics.

Although his stature has risen within the militant ranks, Sirajuddin remains a UN-designated global terrorist responsible for the suicide bombings and raids unleashed on the U.S. and NATO troops as well as civilians in Afghanistan over the past two decades. The Haqqani Network has also been responsible for some of the attacks on prominent targets in Afghanistan. In June 2011, they attacked the Ka-



bul Intercontinental Hotel. They have carried out attacks against the Indian and the U.S. Embassies in Kabul, the Afghan Presidential palace and the office of the NDS, the Afghan national intelligence.

Power tussle

In July 1988, Jalaluddin Haqqani had voted for peace along with the tribal elders of entire Afghanistan. He had put his signature in a long list of tribal leaders of the northeast Afghanistan, where his clan, the Haqqanis, dominated over an area that traditionally covers Waziristan of Pakistan. His representatives came to meet the UN-appointed special negotiator for Afghanistan, Diego Cordovez. The plan was to create the "broadest" possible government in Afghanistan that would put an end to the violence that had broken out in Afghanistan beginning with the Soviet invasion of the country in 1979. The peace process, or

the Cordovez formula, however, did not take off as Pakistan began to chart its own course after the withdrawal of the USSR. Afghanistan had become an open space for power tussle after Soviet withdrawal.

Jalaluddin belonged to the Zadran tribe in the northwest frontiers of Pakistan and the mountains in the eastern Afghanistan. These were some of areas where resistance to the Soviet occupation rose prominently among the Pashtuns.

The Haqqanis were associated with Younus Khalis of Hezb-e-Islami, one of the main anti-Soviet jihadist groups. As the resistance grew stronger in the 1980s, Jalaluddin's militants received weapons and training, including stringer missiles supplied by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The attacks by the Haqqanis on the Soviet forces in Afghanistan were legendary and they evolved as the conflict among the Mujahideen

groups intensified in the aftermath of the exit of the Soviet Union and the fall of the government of Mohammad Najibullah.

Ties with al-Qaeda

Jalaluddin, a Minister in the previous Taliban government from 1996 to 2001, was considered close to al-Qaeda and its founder Osama bin Laden. He had several sons from his multiple marriages — Badruddin, Nasiruddin, Anas, Azizuddin, Sirajuddin and Khalil. He lost most of his sons in the battles that the Haqqanis fought against the Americans and the NATO forces. Anas and Sirajuddin are now in the leadership of the Network. Anas was seen holding talks with former CEO of Afghanistan Abdullah Abdullah and Sirajuddin has proved to be the military successor of his father.

The Haqqani Network's emergence as the sword arm of the Taliban in Kabul has surprised many observers, who believe the Haqqanis are closely aligned with Arab insurgent groups such as al-Qaeda, a tradition that goes back to Jalaluddin's collaboration with the Arabs against the Soviets and his own marriage to an Arab woman. According to the Taliban-U.S. agreement, the leading figures of the Taliban and aligned groups are expected to be out of the list of global terrorists. Any delay to this effect will create complications for the Haqqanis, who are now in Kabul.

