

OPINION 6 BEING HUMANE

WORLD 8 NEGLIGENCE OR MISSILE MAY HAVE CAUSED BLAST: LEBANON PRESIDENT

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Published From DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol. 9 Issue 217 *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

RAIPUR, SATURDAY AUGUST 8, 2020; PAGES 12 *3

the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



2020 A WAKE-UP CALL: BHUMI 10 VIVACITY

16 die as AI plane breaks into 2

Plane overshoots Kozhikode runway, plunges into valley, both pilots killed

PNS/PTI ■ KOCHI

Seventeen people — pilot, co-pilot and 14 passengers — were killed and several others injured when a Dubai-Calicut Air India Express flight with 191 passengers and crew on board overshoot the runway at Kozhikode airport and fell into a valley, breaking into two portions, on Friday around 7.41pm, police sources said. There were 184 passengers, including 10 infants, and five-member cabin crew when the flight approached the airport.

The Civil Aviation Ministry said the flight IX 1344 operated by B737 aircraft from Dubai overshoot runway at Kozhikode at 7.41 PM on Friday. "No fire reported at the time of landing," it noted. "As per the initial reports rescue operations are on and passengers are being taken to hospital for medical care. We will soon share the update in this regard," it stated.

While the aircraft broke into two, nearly 50 ambulances were seen coming out of the airport with the injured persons. Kozhikode airport is designated as a table top aircraft (airport atop a hill). Capt Sathe was a wing commander in the Indian Air Force before he switched over to Air India.

"AI Exp flight overshoot Kozhikode runway in rainy conditions, went down 35 ft into slope, split into 2. Formal enquiry will be conducted by Aircraft Accident Investigation



Rescue work in progress as an Air India Express flight with passengers on board en route from Dubai skidded off the runway while landing in Kozhikode on Friday. PTI

Bureau," said Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

The injured include one of the cabin crew members. Sources in Kozhikode airport said at least 40 passengers have been admitted to various hospitals in and around

Kozhikode. The front portion of the aircraft had to be cut open to take the body of the pilot from the cockpit.

According to information coming out of the airport, the aircraft crash landed on the runway from where it skidded

off. The first visuals shown by local TV channels were that of a totally damaged aircraft, the front side of which has been damaged totally. It was raining heavily when the aircraft touched the ground. Most of the passengers were heard cry-

ing in pain. The co-pilot has been injured seriously while some of the passengers in the aircraft suffered injuries. The flight was part of the Vande Bharat Repatriation Mission operated by the Government of India.

ED grills Rhea for 8 hrs for money laundering

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bollywood actor Rhea Chakraborty was on Friday questioned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in Mumbai in connection with a money laundering case relating to film star Sushant Singh Rajput's alleged suicide. Her request to put it off the interrogation was rejected by the agency.

Chakraborty arrived at the agency's office minutes after the 11.30 am deadline. Rhea Chakraborty left the ED office after 8 hours of interrogation.

Her father Indrajit Chakraborty and brother Showik, both accused in the abatement to suicide case lodged by Patna Police, were also seen with her.

Chakraborty's statement was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

Rajput's father Krishna Kumar Singh had in his complaint before Patna Police alleged financial irregularities in the late actor's bank accounts.

In the complaint, Singh alleged ₹15 crore was siphoned off from Rajput's bank account in one year to accounts of persons not known or connected to the late film star.

Two companies linked to Rajput and some financial deals involving Chakraborty, her father and Showik who are stated to be directors in these companies, are under the scanner of the ED, officials said.



Bollywood actress Rhea Chakraborty arrives at Enforcement Directorate office for questioning in connection with a money laundering case in Mumbai on Friday. PTI

Bihar seeks in SC dismissal of plea to transfer case

PNS ■ MUMBAI

New Delhi: The Bihar Government on Friday sought in the Supreme Court dismissal of Bollywood actress Rhea Chakraborty's plea for transfer of the Patna FIR against her to Mumbai in actor Sushant Singh Rajput death case, terming it 'premature, misconceived and non-maintainable'.

The 28-page affidavit of Patna SP Upendra Sharma, filed through Bihar's advocate Keshav Mohan, said the state police has the jurisdiction in the case as the consequences of the offence are in Patna as well as the late actor's family members — on Friday sparked a new debate in the media in connection with the probe into Rajput's death.

She spoke 287 times with the late actor's domestic help Manu Miranda during a year time. PTI

Rhea's call details spark up debate

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Coming ahead of and during her questioning by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) team in the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide case in Mumbai, Rhea Chakraborty's call record details — with the late actor, Bollywood personalities, a senior Mumbai police official and her own family members — on Friday sparked a new debate in the media in connection with the probe into Rajput's death.

She spoke 287 times with the late actor's domestic help Manu Miranda during a year time. PTI

SC: Full damages for victims before Italian marines' case closure

'Won't pass order without hearing victim families'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court made clear to the Centre on Friday that it would not pass any order on the plea seeking closure of cases against two Italian marines, accused of killing two Indian fishermen, without hearing the victims' families who should be given adequate compensation.

A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde allowed the Centre to file within a week an application making the victims' family members as parties to its plea seeking closure of Italian Marines case. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, informed the bench, also comprising Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, that Italy has assured the Indian Government that it would prosecute the Marines there as per law.

When the bench insisted that adequate compensation

should be paid to the kin of victims, Mehta said Centre will ensure that maximum compensation is given to them.

The bench said it appreciates the steps taken by Italy to prosecute these marines but the court is on the issue of adequate compensation. "We want that adequate compensation be paid to the victims' family".

The SC referred to the case against the marines pending before the special court and said that without applying for withdrawal of prosecution of case how the Centre can come and seek its closure.

Mehta replied that the top court had earlier said that proceedings on the special court be kept in abeyance.

The bench said, "You can apply for withdrawal of prosecution. The victims' families will have the right to oppose it. The victims' families are not even a party here. We will not pass any order without the victims' family being heard," and allowed the Solicitor General to implead family members of the victims as party in its closure application.

16 die in Idukki landslide as heavy rain batters Kerala

PNS ■ KOCHI

Torrential downpour and landslides across the hilly regions of Kerala early Friday claimed 16 lives while 52 persons were washed away by the fury of the nature. The mishap occurred at Munnar in Idukki district on the slopes of the Kerala side of the Western Ghats.

All 16 who died in the landslide were workers of tea plantation in Munnar of Idukki district and were sleeping in their company quarters (known in local parlance as layam) when the mishap happened. Though the landslide and the disaster occurred early morning, the outside world came to know about the mishap after five hours. The NDRF from Tamil Nadu reached the site by 4.30 pm and was engaged in rescue operations "when reports last came.

Cooking utensils buried in mud, asbestos and tin sheets strewn around were all there to be seen at the area, which was the habitation of around 80 odd workers near a tea plantation, about 30 km from the tourist town of Munnar.



Rescuers work at the site of a mudslide triggered by heavy monsoon rain in Idukki, Kerala on Friday. AP

Priest among 5 missing in Karnataka landslide

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Five people, including the priest at Talacauvery, the origin of river Cauvery, have gone missing due to massive landslide at Bramhagiri hills triggered by heavy rain in

Kodagu district. According to Kodagu district administration officials, heavy rain at Talacauvery in Bhagamandala late Thursday night led to landslides at Bramhagiri hills, in which two houses of the temple priests were buried.

Covid cases go past 11K in State

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Seven deaths of Covid patients were reported in Chhattisgarh while the State crossed the 11,000 Covid positive mark on Friday.

In all, 298 fresh positive cases were recorded on Friday while 221 Covid patients were discharged from hospitals, officials said.

Leader of the Opposition Dharamlal Kaushik was also found Covid positive. He tweeted that he was going to AIIMS Raipur for treatment.

"After I noticed initial symptoms of corona 1 was tested and reported positive. My health is fine now and I am heading to AIIMS for further treatment. I request that whoever came in contact with me in the past few days please isolate yourself and get tested," Dharamlal Kaushik tweeted.

Among the seven deceased was a 32-year-old man from Sarapali in Mahasamund district. He was admitted in Dr BR Ambedkar Memorial Hospital, Raipur, on August 1 with complaints of breathlessness, cough and fever.

He was found Covid positive on August 4. The man developed acute pneumonitis and died of cardiopulmonary arrest and acute respiratory

Spl panel for Covid death audit

Raipur: The Health Department has formed a special committee to look into the Covid deaths in Chhattisgarh. The four-member committee will be headed by Dr Shubhas Pandey, Joint Director in the department. Dr Shridhar, a health specialist

from UNICEF, Dr O.P. Sundaram, an intensive care specialist, and Dr M.P. Maheshwari, a medicine specialist, has named the committee's members. So far 84 people have died due to Covid in Chhattisgarh. PNS

failure on Thursday, the officials said.

A 55-year-old man from Arang block in Raipur was admitted in a private hospital on July 31 after a snake bite. On August 5 he was shifted to Ambedkar Hospital and was detected Covid positive. On Thursday he died of sepsis, respiratory failure and other complications.

A 19-year-old youth from Bhatgaon locality in Raipur was admitted in Ambedkar Hospital on August 1 with breathlessness, fever and cough. He had tuberculosis in both lungs and was detected Covid positive. He died of cardiorespiratory arrest on Thursday, the officials said.

A 50-year-old woman of Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh, who had tuberculosis and died of cardiopulmonary arrest and acute respiratory

She was detected Covid positive and later moved to Ambedkar Hospital where she died on Friday.

A 50-year-old man from Raigarh was admitted in a private hospital in Raigarh on August 4 due to fever, blood in cough and breathlessness. He was a diabetic and died on August 5. He too was detected Covid positive.

A 65-year-old man from Dharamajgarh, suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure and coronary heart disease, was admitted in a private hospital. He was detected Covid positive and shifted to AIIMS Raipur. He died on Thursday, the officials said.

A five-month-old boy whose parents were also detected Covid positive and was admitted in Balodabazar Covid Hospital died on Friday, the officials added.

Trump cites India's action, bans Tik Tok

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump, citing India's recent ban on Chinese social media apps, has signed executive orders that would prevent TikTok and WeChat from operating in the US as they threatened America's national security and economy.

The ban comes into effect in 45 days, Trump said in two separate executive orders signed on Thursday. India was the first country to ban TikTok and WeChat, citing national security concerns.

India has banned 106 Chinese apps, a move welcomed by both the Trump administration and US lawmakers.

ASHA workers on strike over paltry payment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government's Covid-19 fight has hit a major hurdle with around six lakh ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) workers going on a two-day strike on Friday, protesting late and paltry payment besides lack of protection equipment from infection. There are around ten lakh ASHA workers across the country who have been playing a key role in contact-tracing, conducting surveys, and organising of awareness schemes for the pandemic.

They have also been involved in screening interstate passengers, migrant workers, and others in the community for symptoms of the virus in their respective States.

SII plans ₹225/dose Covid-19 vaccine

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major development, Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII), the world's largest vaccine manufacturer by volume, has entered into a partnership with Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to accelerate the manufacture and delivery of up to 100 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine for India and low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) as early as 2021.

Created in 2000, Gavi is an international organisation, a global Vaccine Alliance, bringing together public and private sectors with the shared goal to improve access to new and

undrugged vaccines for children living in the world's poorest countries.

As per pact, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will provide \$150 million in at-risk funds towards helping the Serum Institute to develop the candidate vaccines, including those from AstraZeneca and Novavax, to be priced at USD 3 per dose (around ₹225). It will be made available in 92 countries in GAVI's COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), the company said in a statement.

The collaboration, which involves GAVI, The Vaccine Alliance, will provide SII with "upfront capital" through the Foundation's Strategic Investment Funds.

Govt OK's OCIs from Germany, US, UK, France to visit India

New Delhi: Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card holders from the US, UK, German and France, with whom India has signed "air bubble" arrangements, will be allowed to visit the country, the Home Ministry announced on Friday. Other foreigners from these countries have also been allowed to avail Indian visa facility for business, medical and employment purposes. "Ministry of Home Affairs has permitted to enter India OCI card holders who belong to countries with which 'air bubble' arrangements have been finalised by Ministry of Civil Aviation," a Home ministry spokesperson said.

Whopping over 61K cases in a day

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES: 20,86,483 DEATHS: 42,564 RECOVERED: 14,25,717 ACTIVE: 6,17,744

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	4,90,262	17,092	3,27,281
Tamil Nadu	2,85,024	4,690	2,27,575
Andhra Pradesh	2,06,960	1,842	1,20,464
Karnataka	1,64,924	2,998	84,232
Delhi	1,42,723	4,082	1,28,232
Uttar Pradesh	1,13,378	1,981	66,834
West Bengal	89,666	1,954	63,060
Telangana	75,257	601	53,239
Bihar	71,794	400	46,265
Gujarat	68,885	2,604	51,792
Assam	55,497	132	37,225
Rajasthan	50,159	767	36,195
Odisha	42,550	292	28,698
Haryana	40,054	467	33,444
Madhya Pradesh	37,298	962	27,621
Kerala	31,700	103	19,147

Hockey captain Manpreet, 3 other players test +ve

New Delhi: The Indian men's hockey team captain Manpreet Singh and three other players have tested positive for Covid-19 ahead of the national camp's

resumption in Bengaluru, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on Friday. Besides Manpreet, defender Surender Kumar, Jaskaran Singh and drag-flicker Varun Kumar have also tested positive for the deadly virus. PTI

DELHI JOB PORTAL

9L jobs so far but job seekers number lesser: Min

CHANDAN PRAKASH ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government will launch a poster campaign from next week to apprise people about the job portal as the number of job seekers is lesser than the number of jobs available on the portal.

is 8.64 lakhs. Till date, 22 lakh job posts were made by different employers at the job portal," he said. Elaborating it further, Rai said that 2.5 lakh such job posts were cancelled due to duplication and some posts were fake. He also said that till today 10 lakh vacancies were closed by the employers as they have received the required number of people and till date, there are 8.64 lakh job applicants who are applying for jobs.

sector. Many workers left the city due to lack of work and various industries are now facing the crunch of workers," he said. To synchronize and match these two sides, the Delhi government has launched a job portal - 'jobs.delhi.gov.in', where employers can post jobs citing desired qualifications, designation, position, experience, he added.



the Delhi model of fighting against the COVID pandemic and now the Rozgar Bazar has also become a model.

task and now we have made a task force to analyse these posts. "We noticed that there is a duplication of posts and also fake job posts. After a thorough study, we have cancelled nearly 3.5 lakh such job posts. Some of these posts were duplicates and in the other cases when we reached out to the employers they could not give a proper answer about their job posts," he said.

Till today, nearly 10 lakh vacancies were closed by the employers which means they have received the required number of people. Till today

nearly 9 lakh job vacancies are still open and the employers are looking for people," he said. Giving details about the number of vacancies posted by various companies, he further said, "Till today 8.64 lakh job seekers have enrolled in this portal. This shows that the number of job seekers is lesser than the number of jobs available." Till today nearly 6,271 companies have posted their vacancies. Aditya Birla Group, Flipkart, HDFC bank, Kotak Mahindra, Assam tea, Sangrilla Hotel, Reliance, G4S security, Amba embroidery,

Amazon are the top companies who have posted job vacancies. "The most demanding job categories are, back-office job, data entry, customer support, teaching, telecaller, sales, marketing, business accountant and warehousing, lighting, admin, receptionist, HR, IT, hardware, networking and delivery," he said. "Nearly 12.57 lakh people had their first-time interaction regarding jobs through this portal. Today I want to appeal all the youth of Delhi to register here for the jobs," he said.

BSES discoms' replacement scheme for ACs, fans

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The BSES discoms have launched a replacement scheme for its consumers in Delhi to have energy-saving air conditioners and fans for substantial discount.

A senior discom official said that the BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) and the BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL) have been promoting energy conservation by promoting safer and sustainable technologies.

Consumers in south, west, east and central Delhi can exchange their old ACs with the new energy-efficient five-star rated ACs at a substantial discount of up to 64 per cent under the scheme.

The BRPL has also launched a fan replacement scheme, wherein consumers can replace old fans with energy-saving ones at a discount up to 67 per cent. A similar scheme may also be launched for BYPL consumers of east and central Delhi, he said.

The official said that the consumers can avail the schemes by calling on the helpline numbers or visiting websites of the discoms. "A consumer can save up to 1,000 units annually on the running cost of an AC, depending on the model and type of the AC under the scheme," he said. Each consumer is eligible to replace up to three ACs and fans under the limited period scheme, he said. Typically, the cooling load is around 50 per cent of a consumer's bill, he said.

Govt sends notices to 5,584 firms for not filing GST returns

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Friday sent notice to 5,584 companies under GST Act 2017 for not filing the tax returns. Significantly, the Government is also making a list of tax defaulters.

While nine sectors including E-Commerce, insurance and financial services were not affected by the pandemic according to Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, around 935 companies under these sectors have paid zero tax and 2017 companies have paid 50 per cent tax.

Sisodia who also holds the portfolio of Finance Minister said that Delhi government is working round the clock to increase the revenue which will help the government to perform various development works and also COVID works. "It was found that 10800 companies registered under GST have either paid no tax or paid lesser tax to the Delhi government in the last quarter.

The Delhi Government has initiated action against these companies. VAT notices have been sent to 36 companies for not filing tax returns," said Sisodia. The minister observed that sectors such as Automobile, Electronics, E-Commerce, Insurance, Financial Services, Consulting, Pharmaceuticals, Security and Healthcare sectors were not affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"In reference to the GST collection for FY 2020-21, we analysed the data for the Quarter 1 collection. Cognizant that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected consumption, a deep dive analysis was conducted of those sectors whose consumption would likely be unaffected by the pandemic and the resultant lockdown. Some industries, like e-commerce, would have possibly grown in term of their sales. The sectors are: Automobile, Electronics, E-Commerce, Insurance, Financial Services, Consulting, Pharmaceuticals, Security and Healthcare," noted

the Deputy CM. He also observed that the Delhi government will strictly scrutinise the reasons behind not filing tax returns by these companies from unaffected sectors to finance department officials.

Delhi Government will strictly scrutinise the reasons behind not filing tax returns by these companies from unaffected sectors. He further observed, "In view of this, enclosed is the list of 935 dealers who have paid 0 in Q1 2020-21 and 2017 dealers who have paid less than 50 per cent of what they paid in the previous corresponding quarter (Q1 2019-20). Since the dealers' returns were not filed, the government is further scrutinizing their relative piecemeal tax payment may be undertaken."

Earlier, Sisodia directed the Dialogue and Development Commission of Delhi (DDC) to prepare a detailed study to improve the revenue base in Delhi.

Pay salaries of Covid warriors, Cong workers tell Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress on Friday held "Nyay March" at the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal residence, demanding immediate payment of pending salaries to the Covid warriors.

The Congress president submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister, demanding the salaries of sanitation workers, ad hoc employees, gardeners, marshals, nurses and doctors be paid immediately.

Hundreds of party workers participated in the march that was led by Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar and vice-president Jai Kishan.

The Delhi Government should clear the pending salaries of the Corona warriors of the MCDs and Delhi Government, who have been on the forefront in fighting the pandemic and many of them became victims of the virus and their wages have been held up as the Delhi Government, Kumar said.

EWS FLATS SCAM FIR filed against 12 people including six revenue officials

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

After eight months of investigation, the CM Flying Squad has registered a case against 12 people including six Naib Tehsildars for fraudulently registering flats of economically weaker sections (EWS) quota at the Sector-29 police station.

The Registrations of these flats were done in Wazirabad and Gurugram tehsils from the year 2013 to 2017.

On the basis of an inquiry conducted by the CM Flying Squad and after examining the registry of these flats, the FIR was filed and Investigations have revealed irregularities in hundreds of registries.



The investigation team sought information from the district town and country planning (DTCP) on behalf of the builders of the EWS flats.

According to the police, the CM Flying Squad, had received a complaint in January 2019 over the illegal registrations of EWS quota flats.

The investigation team sought information from the district town and country planning (DTCP) on behalf of the builders of the EWS flats. The investigation found that the flats under the quota were sold to other people before the fixed five-year period.

The investigation team also found that about 75 per cent of the people got their flats registered within one to one and a half years without fulfilling the stipulated time of five years.

The officers were stunned after seeing that the flat owners started selling the flats after one month only after receiving the possession letter of EWS flats from the builder.

"The accused got the registries illegally in connivance with revenue officials and tehsil employees. Unreasonable benefits were also extended to the revenue officials concerned for this," said an official of CM flying squad.



SDMC swings into action as vector-borne diseases surge

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After sudden spurt in cases of vector-borne diseases reported in the National Capital, South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) has swung into action and asked all Heads of Departments of various agencies to nominate the nodal officers to ensure preventive measures.

The various agencies such as Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, Delhi Jal Board, Health and Education Authority, Delhi Police, Public Works Department and Central Public Works Department have been

asked to cooperate, a senior SDMC official said. SDMC Commissioner Gyanesh Bharti on Friday issued advisory on prevention and control of vector borne diseases in Delhi. He has called for prevention of mosquito breeding at source and made it clear that the reduction in breeding is the only effective tool for prevention and control of these diseases.

Bharti said that this year, there is a need to concentrate more on educational institutions like colleges and schools as they are closed due to corona crises and have higher chances of mosquito breeding. He also requested the heads of educational institutions and offices to cooperate in controlling mosquito breeding. The designated nodal officer of these institutes must ensure that there is no artificial water collection in open grounds, roofs of buildings and flower pots, etc, he said, adding that overhead tanks should be emptied, covered and locked.

The Commissioner has requested all the heads of all agencies to ensure that overhead and other water tanks are

kept properly covered with lid and overflow air vent are covered with wire mesh.

"All coolers should be scrubbed and cleaned once a week and mopped dry before refilling. In coolers that cannot be emptied, put one tablespoon of tempos granules or petrol," he said.

Delhi Municipal Corporation by letters 1975 on Malaria and other vector borne diseases provides for an action on failure to take specified preventive measures. On detection of repeated breeding, besides legal notice, challan, Police complaint may be lodged under section 269 of Indian Penal Code," he said.

Bharti has called upon RWAs and civic associations and general public to take preventive measures failing which the outbreak of dengue and chikungunya may become uncontrollable. He has sent advisory to all offices of the Delhi government and CPWD, PWD, DDA, Delhi Police, DJB, DMRC, registrars of all universities and deemed universities in Delhi, all associations of professionals and all associations of traders.

Delhi rolls out EV policy to boost economy

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Government on Friday launched its Electric Vehicle Policy aiming to boost economy and helping in fight against vehicular pollution in the Capital.

Claiming the policy for pollution-free and sustainable development, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the policy will also generate job opportunities in transportation sector mainly.

Unravelling the plan, Kejriwal said electric vehicles to contribute to 25 percent of all new vehicle registrations by 2024 which is barely 0.2 percent presently.

Touting the policy, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo said the EV Policy will make Delhi a world leader in the field of electric vehicles in the next five years. "This is one of the most progressive EV policies in the world."

In winters, the Capital faces tough time due to high concentration of noxious particles in air while with the induction of e-vehicles, one factor - the less number of vehicles may bring a sigh of relief for city.

Under the EV Policy, the Delhi government is providing a subsidy up to Rs 30,000 on the purchase of two-wheelers, auto-rickshaws, e-rickshaws, and three-wheelers and Rs 1.5 lakh incentives on cars.

Interestingly, there is a scheme named as FAME India Phase 2 scheme of the Central government, where major incentives and subsidies are available. The incentives announced by the Delhi government are in addition to the incentives by the central government.

To encourage masses to

buy e-vehicle, government is also providing scrapping incentives. "Many people have collectively worked together to reduce pollution levels by 25 per cent. But we have to go further. During the pandemic, we saw that PM10 and PM2.5 levels witnessed a drastic reduction. We could see the clear skies and feel the clean breeze."

"Now when we are opening the economy, and moving towards a normal life, we do not need a kind of development where there is only and only pollution. Let us come together and build a Delhi of the future, which is a Delhi with clean air where we can breathe clean and there is no pollution, which is sustainable, and this EV Policy will work in the same direction of reducing pollution levels, boost the economy of Delhi, and create jobs for the people," he added.

Kejriwal said, "We have held several discussions on the policy in the last 2.5 years. This policy has not been created by any officer or a politician in the air-conditioned cabins. You all who are sitting here, we have held consultations, we called experts from all across the country, we studied the electric vehicle policies of the nations from all over the globe, and we took out all the good points from the policies and used it in the creation of our policy. But there may be some lags in the policy as nothing is perfect. This policy shows the intent of the Delhi government, that we want to go in a better direction. Right now, this policy is for three years, after which it will be reviewed. If required, we will refrain and change this policy from time to time."

Second, the EV policy will reduce pollution. In the last five years, the people of Delhi have collectively worked together to reduce pollution levels by 25 per cent. But we have to go further. During the pandemic, we saw that PM10 and PM2.5 levels witnessed a drastic reduction. We could see the clear skies and feel the clean breeze."

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Apart from this, jobs will be created at a huge level in the field of driving, servicing, financing, charging, etc, new kinds of jobs will be created. "We have to go further. During the pandemic, we saw that PM10 and PM2.5 levels witnessed a drastic reduction. We could see the clear skies and feel the clean breeze."

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CSE welcomes notification of EV Policy

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi-based think-tank, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) welcomed the notification of Electric Vehicle Policy by the Delhi Government to achieve the target of 25 per cent electrification of new vehicle fleet by 2024 and said this notification will set the stage for greening of the economic recovery.

cy, CSE and head of the Centre's air pollution and sustainable mobility programmes said, "It is commendable that this much-awaited notification has happened despite the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and economic slowdown. In fact, this policy is being seen as a stimulus strategy to boost jobs and economy."

"This step in Delhi can not only accelerate zero emissions trajectory to reduce air pollution and toxic emissions from internal combustion engines, it can also have a national spin-off. According to the last available Road Transport Year Book of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in 2016-17, Delhi is ninth among all states and top among all cities in terms of cumulative vehicle registrations," Roychowdhury added.

According to CSE's analysis of the VAHAN database revealed that while overall vehicle sales have nosedived during the lockdown period, electric vehicles had plummeted even lower, especially when the country went into a lockdown. Nationally, the registration of electric vehicles dropped by a whopping 93.4 per cent between March and April 2020.

"But, the sector recovered to some extent, registering a seven-fold increase between April and July, although the numbers were still less than about 50 per cent of the March 2020 registration level. In Delhi, the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on electric vehi-

cle registration was just as bad, reducing it by 89 per cent between March and April 2020, while recovering in June and July. The challenge, therefore, is to recover from this abysmal low level to meet the 25 per cent target by 2024," CSE said. "It is now important that the Delhi government refine the strategy for implementation to meet the milestones for incentives, charging network and requisite infrastructure to achieve this target by 2024." It is hoped that the economic recovery nation-wide will include fiscal stimulus to accelerate the electric vehicle programme," CSE said.

It is encouraging that Delhi's move aligns with the global trend in which several major vehicle markets have stayed on course to continue to support the electric vehicle programme despite the economic slowdown, it said.

China arrests netizen for spreading 'rumours' of death of Chinese troops

Beijing: Chinese police have arrested a man for posting "rumours" on social media alleging that poor-quality military vehicles have caused the "death" of PLA soldiers during the India-China border clash, the official media here reported.

Recently, a netizen surnamed Zhou was arrested by police for "spreading rumours online stating that the poor quality of military vehicles supplied by the Dongfeng Off-road Vehicle Co., Ltd. Has caused the death of Chinese soldiers during the China-India

border clash," a report in Chinanews.com, which is attached to the Chinese Ministry of Defence, said.

On August 3, Dongfeng Company complained to police about the online post by Zhou after learning that he had posted "rumours" on his WeChat Moments by claiming that internal party led to the poor quality of its military vehicles resulted in the casualties of Chinese soldiers on the China-India border, the report said on Thursday. Zhou was arrested on

August 4 by police. "He confessed to his crime of rumour-mongering, showed remorse, and wrote a sincere apology letter," the report said.

"Fabricated rumours about corruption of individual personnel of the Dongfeng off-road vehicle company, resulting in poor quality of military vehicles provided, and finally causing soldiers to die in the frontline at the China-India border and return of 5,000 military vehicles."

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Reconsider dismissed forest rights claims: CM

CM reviews progress of Forest Rights Act

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Friday told officials to reconsider the claims on forest rights dismissed earlier and to pace up the distribution of forest land right lease.

Baghel said his government has included review of the dismissed forest rights claims under the Forest Rights Act among its priority works.

To pace up the execution of this work, all the departments concerned have been asked to work in coordination and provide forest land lease to eligible beneficiaries. Baghel has directed the Chief Secretary to monitor this work.

At a meeting here, the Chief Minister called for



ensuring ground leveling and fencing of the land allotted to beneficiaries under the Forest Rights Act.

Officials have been told to ensure tube-well digging for irrigation facility and

provide seed and agricultural equipment to the beneficiaries for farming.

The meeting was told that so far 422,000 individual forest rights lease certificates have been distributed in

Chhattisgarh. Similarly, 30,900 community forest rights lease certificates too have been distributed.

After reviewing and reconsidering the revoked Forest Rights Lease certi-

ates, 26,924 individual forest rights claims have been approved since January 1, 2019, out of which 16,716 individual forestland lease certificates have been approved for allotment.

The meeting also learnt that 10,727 community forest rights claims have been approved and 6,311 community forest land lease certificates have been issued.

Baghel reviewed the land development works done on the land allotted to beneficiaries, distribution of fertilizers, seeds and agricultural equipment, and the irrigation facilities provided.

It was informed that 3365-80 crores have been sanctioned for ground leveling and fencing work on 58,812 hectares of land allotted to 49,762 beneficiaries

under the Forest Rights Act.

Likewise, ₹43.45 crores have been allotted for providing seeds and fertilizers to 1,84,311 beneficiaries and ₹4.44 crores have been sanctioned for providing agriculture equipment to 11,040 beneficiaries.

The meeting was also told that 95,957 beneficiaries with forestland lease have benefited under the Prime Minister Housing Scheme (Rural).

Among those present were Forest Minister Mohammad Akbar, Panchayat and Rural Development and Health Minister T.S. Singh Deo, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Jay Singh Agarwal, Excise Minister Kavasi Lakshma and Food Minister Amarjeet Bhagat.

CM unveils ₹96 crores of devp work for Bijapur



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Friday did the e-inauguration and bhumi puja of 171 development works worth nearly ₹96 crores for Bijapur district.

The Chief Minister inaugurated the newly-built trauma center in Bhaingarh block via video conferencing from his residence office in Raipur. He announced that an ambulance and boat will be provided for commuting in the Indravati river in Bhaingarh.

The programme, organized at the Community Health Centre of Bhaingarh block, was presided over by Panchayat and Rural Development and Health Minister T.S. Singh Deo, also via video conferencing.

Baghel e-inaugurated 39 works worth nearly ₹29.15 crores and did the bhumi puja of 132 construction and development projects worth nearly ₹66.85 crores.

The Chief Minister spoke about the various steps taken to improve health, education, and other facilities

in the state, adding that making health services accessible for every person is the top priority.

He congratulated the people of Bijapur after it was ranked first among all the aspiring districts of the country. The Chief Minister interacted with the beneficiaries of various schemes and public representatives, and discussed the implementation of Godhan Nyay Yojana, Forest Rights Lease distribution and the doorstep delivery of caste certificates.

'Amcho Bastar' canteen for Naxalite violence hit families

STAFF REPORTER ■ JAGDALPUR

As part of rehabilitating families hit by Maoist violence in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region, the district administration has given a group the responsibility of running a special mobile canteen.

The first 'Amcho Bastar' has been provided to a group of families who had been displaced by the Maoist violence and who had made it to Jagdalpur to start a new life but did not know what to do, an official press release said.

The canteen has been given a place in the 'chhatpati' in Jagdalpur city so that it



can get more customers, officials said.

The decision was taken by the district administration after they found that several families hit by Naxalite violence had reached Jagdalpur and were looking of some kind of employment.

The 'Amcho Bastar' can-

teen has 10 people who were given necessary training.

Seeing the response, the district administration with help from the Jagdalpur Municipal Corporation is converting ambulances now not in use into mobile canteens to help more Naxalite victims.

At 4.84L, C'garh tops in FRCs distribution

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh is the leading state in the country in terms of distribution of community and individual forest rights certificates (FRC).

A total of 4,84,975 individual and community forest rights papers have been distributed in Chhattisgarh. The figure stands at 2,56,997 in neighbouring Madhya Pradesh, 1,72,116 in Maharashtra and 443,000 in Odisha.

Immediately after the formation of the new government in Chhattisgarh, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel had made it clear that ensuring access to forest rights' patta to all eligible people would be the top priority of his government.

Baghel has said that the dream of building a Nava-Chhattisgarh cannot be realized without ensuring access to all kinds of rights to the tribals. The tribals have the first right over the forests on which their lives and livelihoods depend.

Chhattisgarh is far ahead of other states in the area of forest land, which has been recognized through forest

Baghel has said that the dream of building a Nava-Chhattisgarh cannot be realized without ensuring access to all kinds of rights to the tribals

rights papers. Individual and community forest rights have been given on more than 50,16,085 acres of forest land in Chhattisgarh through both individual and community forest rights letters. In Madhya Pradesh, this figure stands at 22,79,000.

A maximum 4,41,429 individual forest rights recognition cards were distributed in Chhattisgarh, in which forest rights were recognized in 9,18,788 acres of land.

Similarly, in Chhattisgarh, through the distribution of 43,546 Community Forest Charter letters, forest rights have been recognized in 40,97,297 acres.

SPC invites expression of interest for research

RAIPUR: The State Planning Commission (SPC) in Chhattisgarh on Friday invited expression of interest for research projects from higher educational institutions, renowned research institutes and researchers. The last date for submission is August 30.

According to an official communication, the interested eligible researchers, institutes and organizations for the research projects on relevant subjects to the state can submit their proposal in the specified format online.

These can be sent to Member Secretary, State Planning Commission, email ID: ms.spc@gov.in

The eligibility, application formation, research guidelines and other details can be collected from the State Planning Commission website <http://spc.cg.gov.in>.

Police reshuffle in Chhattisgarh

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government brought about a minor reshuffle among the Indian Police Service (IPS) and Chhattisgarh State Police officers on Friday, giving them new postings.

According to an order issued by Manoj Kumar Shrivastava, Additional Secretary in the Home (Police) Department, D. Shrawan (IPS, 2008), Superintendent of Police (SP) in Mungeli, has been shifted as SP, Rajnandgaon.

Sadanand Kumar (IPS, 2010), SP, Economic Office

Wing, has been shifted as Commandant, 16th Battalion, Chhattisgarh, Armed Force (CAF), Narayanpur.

Arvind Kujur (IPS, 2010), Assistant Inspector General of Police, CID, Police Headquarters, Raipur, has been posted as SP, Mungeli district.

Jitendra Shukla (IPS, 2013), SP, Rajnandgaon, is now Commandant, 17th Battalion, CAE, Kairdiham.

Sanjay Mahadeva (CPS), Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Jagdalpur (Bastar), has been posted as ASP, Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi.

CM to open webinar on 'Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi'

RAIPUR: Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel will inaugurate a webinar on August 8 on the 'Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi in Contemporary Scenario: Global Pence'. It will be held from 6.00 pm to 8.30 pm.

The webinar has been organized by the Society for Empowerment. Dr Olek Netzer from Israel, William Westerman from the US and A.K. Pandey, Bhadra Bahan, Prof S. Narayan and Bhairav Lal Das from India will participate.

Lokvan on 'Nyay Schemes, New Trends' on Aug 9

RAIPUR: The 9th in the series of Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel's monthly radio talk, addressed to the residents of the state, will be on 'Nyay Schemes, New Trends' and is scheduled on August 9 (Sunday). The Chhattisgarh-based Akashvani Centres, FM Radio and regional news channels will transmit it from 10.30 am to 11.00 am.

CHHATTISGARH STATE POWER TRANSMISSION CO. LTD.
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER (STORE & PURCHASES)
 Third Floor, SLD Building, CSPICL, Daganija, Raipur-492013
 Website: www.cspc.co.in Ph. No. Phone 0771-2574240/36 Fax: 0771-2574246
 No.02-16/CE/IR-20/S&P/17/730 Raipur, Date: 07/08/2020

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Scaled tenders are invited from experienced eligible outsourcing agencies for deployment of 02 Nos. Computer operator, 05 No. Security Guard & 04 Nos. Attendant GR-III(L) (Unskilled) on contract basis in the office of Executive Engineer (Area Store), CSPICL, Bilaspur for a period of one year, detailed here as under:-

S. No.	Tender No.	Particulars	Qty	E.M.D	Last date of Submission	Due date of Opening
1	TR-20/S&P/17/730	Computer Operator	02 Nos.	RS.20,000/-	28/08/2020	28/08/2020
2	07/08/2020	Security Guard	05 Nos.	19,567/-	(15,000Rs)	(15,300Rs)
3	07/08/2020	Attendant GR-III(L) (Unskilled)	04 Nos.			

Note: Other details of NIT please visit our website www.cspc.co.in
 2 Tender cost- printed form Rs.1120/- & downloaded from website Rs.1180/-
 CHEF ENGINEER (S&P) CSPICL, RAIPUR

Bank of Baroda Zonal Stressed Asset Recovery Branch, Jabalpur, 1489, Wright Town, Near Manas Bhawan, Jabalpur- 482002 (M.P.)
 Ph.: 0761-2480150, 2480160, Mob.: 7024101852, 7772088987, Email: armbja@bankofbaroda.co.in

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

"APPENDIX- IV-A (See proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 8 (6))"

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets for the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower, Mortgagor (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" and "Without recourse basis" for recovery of dues in below mentioned accounts. The details of Borrower(s) / Mortgagor (s) Guarantor (s) / Secured Assets/Dues/Reserve Price/Auction date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below:-

S. No.	Name & address of Borrowers / Guarantors	Description of the immovable property with known encumbrances, if any name of Property Owner / Nature of Possession	Reserve Price		Date & Time of E-auction	Demand Notice Date Possession Date Total Dues
			EMD	Bid Increase amt.		
1	(1) M/s J P Traders Proprietor Mrs. Bharti Tharani W/o Ajit Tharani, Village: Rajadhar, Bhatapara, Dist. Balodabazar-Bhatapara. (CG) 493118 (2) Mrs. Bharti Tharani W/o Ajit Tharani, Madadewalya Ward, Near Circus Maidan, Bhatapara, Dist. Balodabazar-Bhatapara. (CG) 493118	Open land stated at Kh. No. 224/1 & 224/4, PH No. 10, Total Area 30880 Sq. Ft., Village Aalesur, Bhatapara, Tahsil-Bhatapara, Dist. Balodabazar-Bhatapara (CG). In the name of Mrs. Bharti W/o Ajit Tharani. Boundaries: North-Govt. Land, South-Open Field, West-others land. (As per sale deed dated 28.03.2009)	Rs. 16.60 Lacs	Rs. 1.61 Lacs	17/09/2020 12.00 pm to 1.00 pm	01/01/2019 03/06/2019 Rs. 20640244.24 + interest and charges w.e.f. 31/12/2018
			Rs. 20,000/-	Symbolic Possession		
2	Mr. Arvind Kumar Tiwari Proprietor Mr. Vasu Idwani, Factory Address: Village: Surajpura, Bhatapara, Dist. Balodabazar-Bhatapara.(CG) 493118 (2) Mrs. Ladharam Tiyomari Proprietor Mr. Vasu Idwani, Registered Office: Lalbahadur Shastri Ward, Bhatapara, Dist. Balodabazar-Bhatapara. (CG) 493118 (3) Mr. Vasu Kumar Idwani, Sadar Bazar, Bhatapara, Dist. Balodabazar-Bhatapara. (CG) 493118	Residential land & Building situated at nazul Sheet No. 12C, Plot No. 123, PH No. 25, Bandobast No. 491, Area 914.60Sq. Ft., Situated at Sadar Bazar, Bhatapara, RIC & Tahsil Bhatapara, District Balodabazar-Bhatapara (CG). In the name of Mrs. Meena Bai Idwani, Mr. Shiv Idwani, Mr. Vasu Idwani & Mr. Gopal Idwani. Boundaries: North-House of wife of Ram Narayan, South- After Gali House of Ladharam & Nathulal Jain, East-Gali (Narrow Road), West-After Gali House of Mulshankar Nathani.	Rs. 21.12 Lacs	Rs. 2.12 Lacs	17/09/2020 12.00 pm to 1.00 pm	03/09/2019 29/11/2019 Rs. 18702766.10 + interest and charges w.e.f. 02/09/2019
			Rs. 20,000/-	Symbolic Possession		
3	(1) M/s Sunil Industries Proprietor Mr. Harid Lal Gidwani, Village: Acoreshi, Revidas Ward No Bhatapara, Dist. Balodabazar-Bhatapara. (CG) 493118 (2) Mr. Nand Lal Gidwani (3) Gulab Gidwani (4) Mr. Kailash Gidwani (5) Mr. Shiv Gidwani (6) Mrs. Nirmala Bai Gidwani C/o Mr. Gulab Gidwani, 2-6 (a) Ward No.23, Bhivni Gali, Bajrang Ward, Behind Shiv Temple, Bhatapara, Dist. Balodabazar-Bhatapara. (CG) 493118	Factory land and Building located at Kh. No. 314/6, PH No.7/24 (admeasuring 0.045 Hect. (Approx. 5000 Sq. Ft.)), Bhatapara No.53, Village Avreshi, Ravi Das Ward No.01, RNM-Bhatapara, Tahsil-Bhatapara, District Balodabazar-Bhatapara(CG), in the name Nand Lal Gidwani and Sunil Kumar Gidwani both s/o Pritam Das Gidwani. Boundaries: North-Road, South-Plot of Sunil Kumar Gidwani, East-Nand Lal Gidwani, West-Road.	Rs. 18.76 Lacs	Rs. 1.88 Lacs	04/09/2020 12.00 pm to 1.00 pm	21/12/2017 11/10/2018 Rs. 386.25 Lacs + interest and charges w.e.f. 20/12/2017
			Rs. 20,000/-	Physical Possession		
4	Land & Building bearing Kh. No. 80/1, PH No. 7/24, Bandobast No. 147, admeasuring 0.228 hect. (Approx. 2320 sq. ft.), Village Khokhi, Bhatapara, Tah. Bhatapara, District-Balodabazar-Bhatapara (CG). In the name of Mr. Kailash Kumar Gidwani & Mr. Gulab Gidwani both s/o Pritam Das Gidwani. Boundaries: North-House of Anil Kumar Agrawal, South-Part of Kh. No.80/1, East-Road, West-Part of Kh. No.80/1	Open diverted land Situated at Kh. No. 707/1, 2, 3, 4, and part of Kh. No. 711/3, 9, 10, 13, numbered as Kh. No. 707/15 amalgamated Kh. No. 711/24, admeasuring 0.068 Hect. or 7358 sq. ft., Situated at Mouza Hathni Hathipara Ward, RIC & Tahsil Bhatapara, District-Balodabazar-Bhatapara (CG). In the name of Mrs. Meena Bai Idwani, Mr. Shiv Idwani, Mr. Vasu Idwani & Mr. Gopal Idwani. Boundaries: North-House of wife of Ram Narayan, South- After Gali House of Ladharam & Nathulal Jain, East-Gali (Narrow Road), West-After Gali House of Mulshankar Nathani.	Rs. 64.07 Lacs	Rs. 6.41 Lacs	04/09/2020 12.00 pm to 1.00 pm	21/12/2017 11/10/2018 Rs. 386.25 Lacs + interest and charges w.e.f. 20/12/2017
			Rs. 20,000/-	Physical Possession		
5	Land & Building bearing Kh. No. 80/1, PH No. 7/24, Bandobast No. 147, admeasuring 0.228 hect. (Approx. 2320 sq. ft.), Village Khokhi, Bhatapara, Tah. Bhatapara, District-Balodabazar-Bhatapara (CG). In the name of Mr. Kailash Kumar Gidwani & Mr. Gulab Gidwani both s/o Pritam Das Gidwani. Boundaries: North-House of Anil Kumar Agrawal, South-Part of Kh. No.80/1, East-Road, West-Part of Kh. No.80/1	Open diverted land Situated at Kh. No. 707/1, 2, 3, 4, and part of Kh. No. 711/3, 9, 10, 13, numbered as Kh. No. 707/15 amalgamated Kh. No. 711/24, admeasuring 0.068 Hect. or 7358 sq. ft., Situated at Mouza Hathni Hathipara Ward, RIC & Tahsil Bhatapara, District-Balodabazar-Bhatapara (CG). In the name of Mrs. Meena Bai Idwani, Mr. Shiv Idwani, Mr. Vasu Idwani & Mr. Gopal Idwani. Boundaries: North-House of wife of Ram Narayan, South- After Gali House of Ladharam & Nathulal Jain, East-Gali (Narrow Road), West-After Gali House of Mulshankar Nathani.	Rs. 62.94 Lacs	Rs. 6.30 Lacs	04/09/2020 12.00 pm to 1.00 pm	21/12/2017 11/10/2018 Rs. 386.25 Lacs + interest and charges w.e.f. 20/12/2017
			Rs. 20,000/-	Physical Possession		

For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.bankofbaroda.in/e-auction.htm> and <https://fbapi.in>. Also, prospective bidders may contact the authorized officer on Tel No. Mobile - 7772088987

Place: Jabalpur, Date: 8/8/2020

Authorised Officer, Bank Of Baroda

Congress, BJP slug it out over 'you love China'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress and the BJP on Friday continued to spar publicly levelling 'you love China' allegations against each other.

The Congress on Friday maintained its pressure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the "Chinese incursion" by directly attacking him besides the BJP for just crafting an image and spending millions of rupees to win elections. The party also questioned the influence China wields on Indian establishments and why the BJP took Beijing's help in the Lok Sabha elections by sharing vital data of Indian citizens with it.

The Congress said Modi's love for China is now visible to the world and this, dates back to his tenure as the Gujarat Chief Minister in Gujarat. The party also quipped that foreign policy does not mean that the Prime Minister is constantly on aeroplane mode.

"Why did you compromise the data security and privacy of crores of Indians by involving Chinese companies linked to the PLA," Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said at the AICC press conference. The party shared documents about BJP having partnered with those Chinese com-

panies who have now been banned by the Government for their links with the Chinese establishment.

"UC Web Mobile got banned in July this year. In 2019, according to the expenditure report submitted by the BJP to the Election Commission, they hired this very company to run their campaign. It is the same Alibaba-owned company - UC Web Browser - which was also red-flagged by the Modi gov in 2017 for sending crucial data of Indians to China. What was the compulsion of involving the same company for elections which you had red flagged two years ago," Khera questioned.

There is another company called Gamma Gaana Limited (GGL) which was founded by Yung, one of the directors of this company is also the director in 10c India Pvt Ltd. Gamma Gaana Ltd is funded by Tencent. Last month, the government banned it saying it was a threat to national security connected with the PLA. This company too was used by the BJP in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the Congress alleged.

According to the Congress, the third company called ShareIT technology has an app called ShareIT. It was banned by the Government last month for being a threat to the 'sovereignty and integrity of India' but it was also hired by the BJP in elections last year, the

Cong had MoU with China in 2008, BJP hits back, asks Sonia to explain



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the Congress attacking the Prime Minister, BJP president J P Nadda on Friday took to the field again to direct his volleys at his Congress counterpart Sonia Gandhi and her predecessor Rahul Gandhi. Nadda sought an explanation from her about their party's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with China in 2008 saying even the Supreme Court has expressed surprise at the MoU.

"The BJP's attacks on the Congress have heightened with Rahul's continued questioning of Chinese 'incursions' on

the Line of Actual Control in East Ladakh. Nadda in a tweet cited the observations of the Supreme Court on a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) and sought an explanation from Sonia and Rahul.

"Even the SC is surprised at the MoU signed by the Congress party with the Chinese Gov., Mrs Gandhi & her son, who led the signing, must explain. Does this explain donations to RGF and opening Indian market for the Chinese in return, which affected Indian businesses?" he tweeted.

Nadda's remark came after the Supreme Court refused to entertain a PIL seeking NIA probe into the alleged 2008 agreement between the Congress and the Communist Party of China.

The apex court asked the petitioner to file his plea before Congress charged.

The Prime Minister crafted an image for himself - an image of a leader who before

the High Court, but expressed surprise how a political party could enter into an agreement with China.

BJP's national spokesman Sambit Patra who referred to his party president's tweet also asked Congress leaders to explain the nature of the MoU and the alleged dealings with China.

He alleged that even during the Doklam border standoff with China, Congress leaders' conduct was suspect. In line with Nadda's assertions, Patra said that Sonia and Rahul need to clarify their dealings with Beijing.

He also wondered whether a national party could sign an MoU with a political party of a foreign nation.

BJP spokesman said according to the MoU, both the parties were to exchange information with liberty to approach all international issues.

2014, roared on issues of border security. Several companies were roped in, spending crores of rupees to create this image

SC refuses to hear PIL for probe against Congress over China pact

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Friday refused to entertain a PIL seeking NIA probe into the alleged 2008 agreement between the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of China.

A bench, headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde, asked senior lawyer Mahesh Jethmalani appearing for PIL petitioners Shashi Shekhar Jha and journalist Savio Rodrigues, to withdraw the plea and approach the high court.

"Every relief which you are seeking can be granted by the high court. Secondly, high court will have the advantage of high court order also," said the bench, which also comprised Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian.

The top court, in the hearing conducted through video conferencing, allowed the petitioners to "withdraw the petition with liberty to approach the high court."



At the outset, Jethmalani alleged that it was an "agreement between a political party of this country with the only political party in that country (China)" and the issue pertained to national security.

"We find that there is something which appears to be, what might be called, unheard of and absurd in law. You are saying that China has entered into an agreement with a political party and not

the Government. How can a political party enter into an agreement with China," the bench observed.

On being stressed by the lawyer that this was the case, the bench said, "We will allow you to withdraw this and file a fresh petition. We will examine what you say in the petition and if we find any false statement, we may prosecute you."

PTI

Modi: NEP has potential to transform entire nation



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Outlining that there has not been any allegation of bias against the New Education Policy (NEP) unveiled by his Government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that it has the potential to not only change the education system but to also transform the entire nation. He said the NEP will be the foundation of the 'New India, one that focuses on "how to think" rather than "what to think" that was being stressed upon till now.

Addressing a conclave on "Transformational Reforms in Higher Education under National Education Policy", Modi also spoke on the contentious issue of mother tongue as the mode of teaching in the initial years. Justifying it, the PM said, "We need to make our students global citizens and yet be rooted in their culture. The learning power of students will

improve if the language they speak in and the language in which lessons are taught in school is the same. That is why we have recommended teaching in the mother tongue as far as possible - at least class 5. This will strengthen their foundations."

Lauding the NEP, he said the fact that there was no allegation from any region or segment that it had any kind of bias or inclination is an indicator that the "changes people wanted to see for years in the education system, they have got to see".

Asking all stakeholders to discuss the ways to implement the new policy, the PM said: "In recent years, there have not been major changes in education and thus the 'values of curiosity and imagination were not given the thrust. Instead, we moved towards a herd community. The mapping of interest, ability, and demand was allowed. We need to do such critical thinking and innovative thinking abilities in our youths. It will be possible if we have purpose, philosophy, and passion of education."

The PM said students should get a chance to follow their passion. "We are also try-

LoR launched to benefit street vendors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to give access to street vendors who do not have Identity Card (ID) and Certificate of Vending (CoV), the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on Friday launched a Letter of Recommendation (LoR) module to provide benefit to street vendors under the PM SVANidhi scheme. Those who are not included in any survey list also get benefitted from the LoR module.

The module provides for an end-to-end digitally-enabled process wherein an eligible vendor can request for a Letter of Recommendation from the Urban Local Body and on receipt of the same he/she can apply for the loan under PM SVANidhi. Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, launched the module.

According to the ministry, for applying for the LoR from ULB through the online module on PM SVANidhi portal, a vendor needs to possess any one of the documents: Proof of availing one-time assistance, provided by certain States/UTs, during the period of lockdown; or the membership details with the vendors' asso-

ciations; and any other documents to prove that he is a vendor. Further, a vendor can also request ULB through a simple application on white paper to conduct local enquiry to ascertain the genuineness of the claim as vendor. ULBs will have to dispose of the request for issue of LoR within a period of 15 days.

The vendors possessing LoR will be issued Certificate of Vending / ID Card within a period of 30 days. This provision will help in extending benefits with concentration and memory - and a general decline in quality of life.

The research team - involving multidisciplinary specialists from the University of Leeds, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust and Leeds Beckett University - had followed 100 Covid-recovered patients four-to-eight weeks after being discharged from hospital.

Findings: "Post-discharge symptoms and rehabilitation needs in survivors of COVID-19 infection: a cross-sectional evaluation, have been published in the Journal of Medical Virology. It holds importance also for India where the

Do not let your guard down: Researchers warn Covid patients who have recovered

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Do not let your guard down, is what researchers have warned patients who have recovered from the coronavirus infection. For, they said, the road to recovery for infection-recovered patients may take months and need special rehabilitation to ensure quality life.

The researchers found that infection-free patients faced one or many health issues like fatigue, breathlessness, psychological distress - including problems with concentration and memory - and a general decline in quality of life.

The research team - involving multidisciplinary specialists from the University of Leeds, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust and Leeds Beckett University - had followed 100 Covid-recovered patients four-to-eight weeks after being discharged from hospital.

Findings: "Post-discharge symptoms and rehabilitation needs in survivors of COVID-19 infection: a cross-sectional evaluation, have been published in the Journal of Medical Virology. It holds importance also for India where the



Government has been maintaining that the recovery rate by people who were hospitalised with the Covid-19 is that is not the same for infection-free patients.

The researchers identified a pattern of longer-term symptoms likely to be experienced by people who were hospitalised with the Covid-19 infection.

Some patients, particularly those who had been in intensive care, had symptoms associated with cases of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). PTSD symptoms are a well-recognised component of post-intensive care unit syndrome caused by a variety of factors including fear of dying, invasive treatment, pain, delirium, inability to communicate, weakness,

immobility, and sensory problems and sleep deprivation. The emerging evidence is that for some, the road to recovery may take months and it is vital that specialist rehabilitation is on hand to support them. This research gives an important insight into patient needs, and that we help shape services in the community."

More than two-thirds (68.8 per cent) of patients in the intensive care group and just under half (45.6 per cent) of the other group said their overall quality of life had deteriorated.

India opens to and fro travel with 4 countries

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Friday opened international travel to and from the USA, the UK, Germany and France.

The Union Home Ministry said that Indians can also go to these countries and foreigners including OCI's with valid visa can now travel to these nations and come to India. India's Civil Aviation Ministry has entered into an "air bubble agreement" with the USA, the UK, Germany and France. The Ministry said that soon more countries will be in this bilateral agreement of air travel known as 'air bubble agreement' in the wake of Covid-19 situation.

In the order, Union Home Ministry said that allowing travel will be subject to health checks and only applicable to those who are not having Covid-19 and other norms stipulated by the Civil Aviation Ministry. The MHA also said that the travellers must have valid visa. "Ministry of Home Affairs has permitted OCI cardholders to enter India who belong to countries with which "air bubble" arrangements have



been finalised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Other foreigners from these countries have also been allowed to avail Indian visa facility for business, medical & employment purposes. Indian citizens have also been allowed to travel to such countries on any type of visa," said MHA in a statement.

The Civil Aviation Ministry, for its part, said that Delhi Airport has developed new features in their portal for international travellers for "contact-less declarations". The Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) announced that it has developed a first-of-its-kind portal where India-bound international arriving flyers can fill the mandatory self-declaration form and also apply online for exemption from mandatory institution quarantine process.

EC settles matter over Baldev Singh appointment as SEC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Disposing of a complaint of Maharashtra Congress leader Sachin Sawant questioning procedures for appointment of State Chief Electoral Officer Baldev Singh in 2019, the Election Commission (EC) on Friday said no action is needed in the matter as the appointment was done after consultation with the State Government. "Singh had been rated outstanding in his performance appraisal records during the five years of his service prior to his appointment," the EC said.

"The Commission having duly considered the matter, does not find any reason for taking any action in the matter. The CEO's appointment is done in consultation with the concerned state government/union territory wherein a panel of officers is furnished to the poll body," the EC said in a letter addressed to Sawant.

The EC further said that Baldev Singh, a 1989 batch IAS officer of Maharashtra cadre was appointed by the



Commission following due procedure wherein the State Government had clarified that he was clear from the vigilance angle and as per records, he had been rated outstanding in his performance appraisal reports during the five years of his service prior to his appointment as CEO, Maharashtra.

Sawant had alleged that Singh was facing an inquiry initiated by CVC and the ministry of industry and commerce in an alleged irregularity in SEEPZ SEZ. Sawant questioned why the credentials of the CEO were not cross-checked while appointing him to the post and whether the Election Commission of India was working under pressure of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

J&K Bank loan fraud case: ED raids 17 locations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches at 17 locations in Delhi, Ludhiana, Jammu and Srinagar for connections with the J&K Bank loan fraud case involving Hilal Ahmed Rather in a money laundering case worth ₹177.68 crore. Hilal is son of former Minister Abdul Rahim Rather, who served as Finance, Agriculture, Rural Development, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister under the National Conference-led government in the erstwhile State.

The investigation under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act was initiated on the basis of an FIR registered by the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Jammu.

Investigation conducted by ED revealed that a loan of Rs 177.68 crore was sanctioned by the J&K Bank, without verifying documents and in violation of guidelines of RBI, to Paradise Avenue for funds from the loan account of Paradise Avenue to various entities and rerouting the funds back to the firms controlled by the ED. Several incriminating documents and digital evidence have been seized during the search operations, the agency added.

The residences of Abdul Rahim Rather in Srinagar and Hilal Rather in Jammu were among the premises searched by the ED. Several incriminating documents and digital evidence have been seized during the search operations, the agency added.

Purchase of 75 Pilatus basic trainer aircraft for IAF: ED raids multiple locations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches at multiple locations in various cities in connection with a money laundering case relating to alleged corruption in the purchase of 75 Pilatus basic trainer aircraft for the Indian Air Force (IAF) in 2009.

The searches were conducted at 14 premises including a dozen in the national capital and one each in Gurgaon and Surat, officials said.

The ED had initiated a money laundering case to probe the deal and is carrying out the search operation to gather evidence under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said.

The case involves absconding arms dealer and alleged middleman Sanjay Bhandari, who is already facing separate ED and CBI charges for corruption and alleged possession of undeclared assets in the country and abroad. Bhandari is suspected to be staying in the UK at present and the ED is in the process of initiating extradition proceedings against him. The CBI had filed a criminal case in the Rs 2,895 crore

Pilatus deal in June last year. The PMLA case was lodged by the ED after cognisance of the CBI FIR to probe the money laundering angle in the case and alleged creation and generation of illegal assets by the accused.

"The CBI had named Bhandari as an accused in the case along with unidentified officials of the Indian Air Force, the Defence Ministry and Switzerland-based Pilatus Aircraft Limited in the case. The Swiss company was one of the bidders for the contract floated in 2009.

The CBI had alleged that Pilatus had entered into a criminal conspiracy with Bhandari and Bimal Sareen, both directors of Offset India Solutions Pvt Ltd, and dishonestly and fraudulently signed a Service Provider Agreement with Bhandari in June 2010 in violation of the Defence Procurement Procedure, 2008.

The deal was allegedly done to get the contract for supply of 75 basic Trainer Aircraft to the IAF. The agency had alleged that the company made a payment of CHF 1,000,000 in the account of Offset India Solution Private Limited with the Standard Chartered Bank, New Delhi in two tranches in August and October, 2010.

AHEAD OF WB ASSEMBLY POLLS

Join BJP parivar: Nadda to people

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

With the Assembly elections less than a year away the BJP on Friday mounted fresh attacks on the Mamata Banerjee Government...

Nadda was speaking ahead of the beginning of a membership drive by the saffron outfit. The party on Friday launched a massive membership drive...

Rabindranath Tagore to give a lecture in Bengal... and today they say we are a party of non-Bengalis.

supporters to join the BJP in hopes he said "you had once dreamt of bringing a change in Bengal not only by removing the Marxist Government but also by doing social work but your dreams were shattered by the present Government."

TMC rejects Modi's claims on NEP debate

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Friday rejected claims made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi that the State or its Government was consulted before bringing about the new education policy (NEP).

my knowledge, nothing has happened no one was consulted... not even a single time...

Regarding the draft resolution of the NEP he said it is being said that "discussions were held with states for 3 to 4 years but no such discussion took place" and added "my discussion was held with someone but not with us."

Kerala likely to see hike in cases: CM

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Kerala is in for tough times as the number of Covid-19 cases in the State are likely to see a hike, according to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

The Chief Minister had on Monday lambasted the State authorities and frontline health workers charging that the Covid-19 preventive measures had gone out of control because of mismanagement and irresponsible attitude of the Government staff deployed to tame the pandemic.

On Friday, the State saw 1,251 new persons testing positive for Covid-19, said the health department...

The 1,251 included 77 expatriates and 94 persons who returned to Kerala from other parts of India.

119 succumb to virus in TN

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu on Friday saw 119 persons succumbing to Covid-19 and 5,888 persons joining the list of coronavirus patients, according to a press release by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

The casualties registered on Friday make it the highest number of deaths on a single day for Covid-19 in the State.

The number of new patients diagnosed with covid-19 on Friday is on the higher side, when compared to that of Thursday (5,684).

As 6,488 patients were cured and returned home from hospitals, the number of patients recovered from the pandemic rose to 2,27 lakh.

A single day saw Tamil Nadu health authorities testing 65,189 persons and the number of testing centres functioning in the State rose to 126.

While Chengalpatt tested 319 positive cases, Kancheepuram saw 166 new patients and Thiruvallur (388).

My mission to end militancy: J&K L-G

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Reaching out to the common people of Jammu & Kashmir the newly appointed Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday clearly spelt out his mission in the UT will be to bring peace, end militancy and to ensure development by all means.



Manoj Sinha, the newly appointed Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, is seen with people during his arrival in the state.

Sinha also emphasised his priority would be zero tolerance for corruption besides establishing dialogue with the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Interacting with the media persons soon after he was administered the oath of office by the Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir High Court Gita Mittal, Sinha said, "J&K is India's heaven and crown. I have been given a chance to play a role here. August 5 is a historic day and will be remembered in history".

Referring to his brief interaction with the section of senior officers, Sinha said, "I met some officers and they told me that in the past one year, there has been a lot of development in all sectors. I will take forward the same process of development with a speed and vigour".

Interestingly, the oath ceremony was attended by only BJP and Jammu and Kashmir Apni party leaders. None of the representatives of the National Conference, Peoples Democratic Party and Congress attended the oath ceremony.

Listing out his priority areas, Sinha said, "I have no specific agenda and there will be no disparity. There will be equal treatment to all. And we will work for the welfare of people of J&K. I will try on that front and I have spoken to some officers in that regard already".

Vijayan lashes out at media over gold smuggling case

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

For the first time since the gold smuggling scam hit the headlines, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan lashed out at the media on Friday.

reported quoting a statement made by the NIA to the Special Court that Swapan Suresh, the kingpin in the smuggling racket, was known to Vijayan and the Pinarayi family.

"There is a media syndicate working in the State with an intention to tarnish my image. The people in the State know about me. However hard you try, you will not succeed in your attempts," said a visibly upset Vijayan when he was asked about reports attributing to the National Investigation Agency that appeared in a section of the media.

Some media houses had reported quoting a statement made by the NIA to the Special Court that Swapan Suresh, the kingpin in the smuggling racket, was known to Vijayan and the Pinarayi family.

The press briefing, convened to inform the media about the Covid-19 update ended in a not so pleasant note as a section of the media persons expressed their displeasure in private over the ire of the Chief Minister when faced with inconvenient questions.

Paswan accuses 11 States of passing on Central PDS subsidies as their own

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan on Friday accused 11 states of passing on Central PDS foodgrains and passing subsidies to end users as their own without giving any credit to the Centre.

Under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), the central government is providing foodgrains to States for distribution through Public Distribution System (PDS), also known as ration shops, at a subsidised rate of ₹2/kg rice and ₹3/kg wheat, costing over ₹1 lakh crore annually to the exchequer.

He said this trend is apparent in 11 states, mostly non-BJP ruled, that are trying to undermine the efforts of the Centre in ensuring that no poor goes hungry.

"We are spending over ₹1 lakh crore annually on subsidising 11 PDS foodgrains distribution, but in several states there is no mention or credit given to the Union government,"

1 civilian killed, 5 hurt in Pak LoC shelling

JAMMU: A civilian was killed and 5 others received injuries during 'unprovoked' ceasefire violation by the Pakistan Army along the line of control in Tangdhar sector of North Kashmir's Kupwara district on Friday.

He said the Pakistan Army targeted civilian areas. A total number of six civilians were injured in the CFV, Col Kalia said, adding a befitting response being given.

According to ground reports, Pakistan Army targeted several civilian pockets and hit residential structures using long range mortars and other weapons. Hitting back, the Indian army gave them a befitting reply.

Till the time of filing the report, the Indian army was giving a befitting response, said Col Kalia. According to Jammu based Defence PRO, Lt-Col Devender Anand, "in the morning Pakistan army resorted to ceasefire violation in the Balakote sector and later in the evening they trained their guns towards the forward Indian posts in the Krishna Ghati sector. The Indian Army gave them a befitting reply, he added.

AP crosses two lakh-mark, single day high of 89 deaths

PTI ■ AMARAVATI, AUG 7 ():

Riding on a rapid surge of infections, Andhra Pradesh on Friday crossed the two lakh-mark in the overall number of Covid-19 cases as another 10,171 were added fresh for the third consecutive day.

From its maiden case on March 12, APs Covid-19 tally has crossed two lakh cases in just 149 days, witnessing a meteoric rise, particularly in the past three weeks, and reaching the third spot in the country behind Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

Two three-day spells, first from July 29-31 next from August 5-7, where Covid-19 spread to virulent levels with over 10,000 cases each daily saw the state gallop to the third spot in the national table.

The Covid-19 tally on Friday showed 2,06,960 over all cases, of which 84,654 were active, 1,20,464 recoveries and 1,842 deaths.

Mizoram bans entry of vehicles carrying non-essential goods

PTI ■ AIZAWL

The Mizoram Government on Friday Decided to ban entry of trucks and other vehicles carrying goods into the State after 18 truck drivers' handymen from outside tested positive for novel coronavirus, officials said.

However, vehicles carrying essential commodities will be exempted from the ban, they said. A decision to this effect was taken at a meeting of the Mizoram cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Zoramthanga.

The meeting decided to temporarily ban entry of vehicles carrying commodities barring those carrying essential commodities at the existing two entry points in Vairengte on the Mizoram-Assam border and Kanhnun on the state border with Tripura until further order to prevent further spread of virus in the state, an official said.

PUBLIC NOTICE: I, hereby inform the Public at large that my Client (1) Shri. Suresh Sharma & Co. Late Vid Prakash Sharma & (2) Mrs. Rosa Sharma...

WESTERN RAILWAY: E-PROCUREMENT - TRACK MACHINES DATED 04.08.2020. Chief Engineer, Western Railway, Chunchurige invites the following E-Procurement Tenders...

WESTERN RAILWAY: PROCUREMENT OF HYDRAULIC AND PNEUMATIC HOSES. Chief Engineer (TMC), Western Railway, HQ Office, Mumbai-400 020. Invites e-Tender as per the details given in e-Tender No.: W41/22/2020...

Action sought against mental therapist for disclosing Rajput's health details

TR RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Charging that Sushant Singh Rajput's mental health therapist Susan Walker Moffat had violated professional ethics and patient confidentiality by disclosing details of the actor's mental health, senior Mumbai BJP leader Ashish Shelar on Friday demanded that action be initiated against Susan for trying to prejudice the investigations and violating the Mental Health Act.

alluded to a media interview, in which she "has revealed confidential aspects of Sushant Singh Rajput's mental health status". "Her actions seem prima facie in violation of the Mental Health Act 2017 and her India residency visa conditions. Medical and mental health professionals hold the highest level of standards and ethics when it comes to confidentiality and reveal details only after following due process of law, as they are liable to face strict legal action for violating Indian Mental Health Act, 2017," Shelar wrote.

What or who made Susan Walker breach confidentiality, knowing full well that her mental health practice, which is rumored to earn her upto crores rupees per year, will be badly affected by her disclosure?" Shelar stated.

things, the BJP leader said: "As Susan Walker is foreign citizen, steps be taken to ensure Susan Walker is not on investigation in Mumbai. Susan Walker should be summoned for further detailed questioning. Mumbai Police must initiate action against Susan Walker as her unethical actions of disclosing Sushant Singh's mental health details is a direct violation of Mental Health Act, 2017 Section 23(2) and her actions attract punishment including criminal prosecution, fines and jail sentence on conviction and seeks to prejudice the investigation angle of the Police. 4. How is Susan Walker practising in Mumbai?"

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male. Name: Unknown. S/O: Unknown. R/O: Unknown. Age: approx. 50-55 years. Height: 5'7". Complexion: Wheatish. Face: Round. Built: Thin. Hair: Black. Wearing: Black & White colour T-Shirt and lower body nude, who was found dead at side of Ganda Nala Hakikat Nagar, Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi. In this regard a case DD No. 47A Dated 03.08.2020 U/S 174 Cr. PC has been registered at P.S. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi.

Big win for Mahinda

With the pro-China Rajapaksa clan in full control, India has to work on strategic engagement and economic alliances



The Sri Lankans have chosen stability over liberalism, performance over democracy in returning the Rajapaksa clan to power with a massive mandate in the nation's parliamentary elections. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's ruling party, the Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP), won 145 of the 150 seats, that would now allow him to amend the Constitution, expand his executive powers and ensure that his elder brother, Mahinda, continues as Prime Minister. In short, the dynastic hold on Sri Lanka's politics is now absolute. And the brothers could overturn any reformatory attempts that have been made by previous Governments to consolidate their

position. Sri Lankans, much like other nations around the world, including India, have voted for nationalist pride and muscular leadership in tough times. The Government's smart COVID-19 management has scored big with the voter, the island nation reporting just 11 deaths and managing the elections without any cluster outbreaks during the polling process. The Rajapaksa brothers are seen as strongmen and deliverers and seem to have consolidated their hold among the Sinhalese Buddhist majority in the aftermath of the Easter bombings, which showed how scattered IS modules were choosing virgin targets. And no matter how militarist Gotabaya may seem, the Sinhalese trust him to tackle terrorism as he cleaned up the Tamil movement ruthlessly, an operation that had earned him the moniker of the "terminator." For India, though, the return of Mahinda Rajapaksa is worrying as he has a hardliner approach to Tamils and has welcomed Chinese strategic interests and investment at our expense. In the past, he accused New Delhi of intervening in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka, propping up his own protégé Maithripala Sirisena against him and ensuring he lost the elections. Sirisena's SLFP and ally UNP, whose leader Ranil Wickremesinghe became Prime Minister, formed a coalition Government which was pro-India. The Indian establishment was also too overt rather than being covert about its interventions. So a hurt Mahinda never getting down, his party scoring on local elections till he forced a coup, subduing Sirisena, setting him to sack Wickremesinghe and becoming Prime Minister for 51 days. Gotabaya took charge of Defence and Security, kept the Tamil-majority areas under strict military vigil and put Indian diplomats under surveillance. It is this distrust that needs to be healed now for geo-strategic reasons if we don't want China to run ahead.

Little wonder then that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was one of the first dignitaries to wish Mahinda, with whom he has been in touch over regional COVID-19 management. India's diplomacy in the neighbourhood has to factor in the pragmatism by lesser neighbours, who have successfully played on its anxieties with China and are negotiating the best of both worlds given the competitive muscle-flexing by two Asian giants. Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka are all happily walking the trajectory of "trade ties" with China and "historical linkage" with India to buttonhole both nations into giving concessions. Mahinda, too, seized the moment by calling India a "friend" with whom he had a "long-standing cooperation." The Modi Government is pushing proactive participation over historical assumptions in its Lanka policy. Yet, the Chinese are way ahead in Lanka. They have a 99-year lease on the Hambantota port after Sri Lanka's failure to repay loans and are using it to enhance their military arc in the Indian Ocean region for the way to east Africa. The Chinese have even created an island off Colombo, a new financial hotspot and a key conduit to East Africa, besides controlling the island nation's infrastructure sector, hospitality and supply chains. And while we may have halted Huawei's 5G technology, Sri Lanka has no security fears about the new-generation mobile telephony technology. India has, therefore, to do a very tightrope act with Sri Lanka if it wants to protect its strategic interests amid a Chinese swamp. That, too, without compromising too much on Tamil interests. We need to work on investment and project partnerships, encourage soft diplomacy via people-to-people contacts and strengthen an institution like BIMSTEC to ensure continuous communication. And we must take care to not appear exploitative or patronising.

COVID spiral

As the virus spreads, India must ramp up its testing capacity, focus on the hinterland and come up with a standard protocol



The dreaded community spread has India well and truly in its grip because, from the time the pandemic began in the country, we had recorded 1.5 million cases till July 28 but have added a whopping 5,00,000 infections in just nine days. This is an average of 50,000 fresh cases recorded each day. India has breached the 20-lakh barrier and fatalities have touched the 41,000 mark. The country that has been fighting to rapidly ramp up its poor healthcare infrastructure is now snapping at the heels of Brazil, which has more than 2.8 million cases, and the US, which is leading the list of worst-hit countries with five million cases. And if the

experts are to be believed, the community spread has only just begun and the next million cases may take just a little over two weeks if infections continue to spread at the same rate at which they are now. Expert opinion has it that the country needs to shift its focus on the war against the pandemic to rural India, which has multiple challenges of a high population density, patchy administration and a tottering healthcare infrastructure.

Another area where the country needs to improve its performance is testing that has been dismally slow. Till August 5, the country had just tested 16,617 people per million, which is a paltry 1.66 per cent of the population. Compare this to other nations like the US, which has tested 18.8 per cent of its population, Russia 20 per cent, South Africa five per cent and the UK 25 per cent. The Government's excuses of overpopulation and being a poor country hold no water as even a country like Brazil, which has a much lesser GDP than ours, has tested 6.3 per cent of its population. Moreover, a small country like Iran has tested three per cent. If we are to beat the pandemic, we have to ramp up our testing and take it up to five per cent at least, which is around 32 million more people. Testing also helps us map the trajectory of the disease and prepare containment strategies or it would look like we are just flying blind as some Western experts are suggesting. Right now, while the urban centres are bending the curve, unexpected hotspots are emerging, which need to be contained lest they set off a ripple effect that can lead to a "viral" blast. Also, what is needed is a national protocol for a standardised response, better guidance and a balanced allocation of resources. The silver lining in the dark cloud is that the recovery rate in the country is continuously rising and the fatality rate has remained much below the global average. If the figures being bandied about by the Health Ministry are anything to go by, the recovery rate has risen from 51.08 per cent on June 15 to a record high of 67.98 per cent on August 7, while the fatality rate has gone down to 2.05 per cent. These two in tandem have enabled a higher and rising difference of more than 7.7 lakh between the number of recovered patients and active cases in the country, claims the Ministry. Of course, there is still a problem of unaccounted deaths and cases that may completely change the picture. Plus, we have come a long way from the time we faced a shortage of simple things like hand sanitisers to the more complex PPEs and ventilators. Now, after four months, we are actually exporting these to other nations. The two indigenous vaccines are showing promise and developers are preparing to begin simultaneous phase 2 trials that study immune response and additional safety in a large population. In some more good news, pharma major Lupin has launched its Favipiravir drug at a very reasonable price. So, while we may not yet be winning the COVID war, all is still not lost. India can live to fight another day. But we must stick to a mapping and tracking plan and not get complacent. More importantly, not let up. Given our population, we will have recurring waves.

Being humane

Following the pandemic, there has been a resurgence of hatred against stray dogs who are left to fend for themselves. Not many understand how their lives have turned upside down



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected human behaviour throughout the world, causing new focal points of irritation to emerge and the old ones to intensify, sometimes to levels where violence follows inevitably. This, in turn, is the result of the fear of catching the disease and boredom caused by prolonged confinement at home, either by choice or compulsion created by lockdowns. Moods marked by irritation and anger intensify old animosities and create new ones. An example is the resurgence of hatred towards stray dogs, who have been an integral part of India's habitation and popular consciousness since the time of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, if not earlier.

Directly or indirectly, animals and creatures that live in water or the sky feature prominently in the philosophy of the *Upanishads* and the narratives of the *Vedas*, *Brahma Sutra*, the *Puranas* and the epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Examples are many, but two well-known ones merit a mention. In *Mahabharata's Mahaprashastika Parva* (The Chapter of the Great Departure), a small brown dog began to follow the five Pandavas and Draupadi as they began their final journey out of this world. One by one, Draupadi and four Pandavas fell dead as they climbed Mount Meru. Yudhishthir, the eldest Pandava, and the dog marched on. The dog, who was named as Dharmad, appeared in his dying chariot and said that he had come to take Yudhishthir to heaven in his mortal body. Assured that Draupadi and his four brothers were already there and well, he asked whether the dog could come with him. On being told that heaven had no place for a dog, he refused to go without the latter. It was then that the dog appeared in his true self as Dharma, the God of Virtue, and said this was Yudhishthir's final test. He would not have been able to enter heaven unless he had agreed to abandon the dog.

This account is widely known and cited. Another incident is found in the Bengali translation of the *Saptakanda Ramayana* (The *Ramayana* in Seven Parts) by Krittibas Ojha. It happens when Ram, after defeating Ravana and sending Sita to save Valmiki's hermitage, was holding court in Ayodhya with Lakshman guarding the entrance. A white dog with red eyes, lame in one leg and limping, with thick patches of congealed



blood on his head, indicating that it has hit with a stick, came and touched Lakshman's feet. Asked why he had come, he said he would relate the cause of his sorrow to Ram if the latter granted him an audience.

Told of the dog's request by Lakshman, Ram asked for the dog to be brought before him forthwith. Arriving in Ram's presence, he began to sing the former's praise with folded hands and head bowed. Asked about the reason for his coming, he said, "A *sanaysi* (a mendicant ascetic who has renounced the world) has hit me for no fault of mine. Distressed and hurt after being hit, I have come to your court after starving for three days. The court should please ask the *sanaysi* what was my fault that he should have hit me with a stick?" Ram said that the *sanaysi* should be brought immediately before him so that the court could judge. How could a *sanaysi* be cruel to an animal? (All quotations are from *Saptakanda Ramayana* translated from Bengali to English by this author).

The dog, who accompanied Ram's messenger, identified the *sanaysi* as he was brought before Ram, who asked, "Why have you abandoned your *dharma* and are cruel to animals? One who perpetrates *adharma* has to live in hell. What kind of renunciation is yours when your body is so full of anger? Castigation of others and malevolence towards others are grave sins. A terrible hell is the punishment for a cruel and malevolent *sanaysi*. A sage who has

given up greed, illusion and desire, is respected in this world. And, though a *sanaysi*, you suddenly burst into anger! What was the fault of the dog that you hit him with a stick?"

The ascetic replied, "I went to the town for alms after reciting prayers on the banks of the Ganga during the whole day. Begging for alms, the whole body burning with hunger, I found the dog lying in front occupying the whole road. I loudly asked him to give way but he pretended not to hear. He was asleep with one eye closed and looked at me with the other. I became angry and hit him on the head with a stick. Now that I have said all this before the court, you decide what punishment to give me."

On being asked by Ram about the punishment, the courtiers said that the *sanaysi* should be barred from bathing in the Ganges. At this, the dog said that he should not be punished but made the ruler of the kingdom of Kalinjari. The courtiers laughed as Ram made the *sanaysi* the king of Kalinjari climbing onto the back of an elephant. His splendour enhanced by the royal sceptre, the *sanaysi* began travelling happily towards Kalinjari as people laughed at his attire — a loin-cloth — with the royal umbrella over his head.

Asked by the courtiers as to why was the kingdom given to the *sanaysi* when the idea was to punish him, Ram directed them to the dog, who said, "Under a curse by Lord Shiva, death does not alter the king's destiny to be

reborn as a dog...I was the king in the previous birth and now I have been reborn as a dog and suffered much. But having seen you, I will now escape from my torment." While everybody said that the *sanaysi*'s worldly possessions have now increased, the dog said, "Have no doubt, whoever becomes the king of Kalinjari becomes a dog in his next birth." He then did *namaskar* to Ram and walked slowly to Varanasi where he fasted to death and attained heaven because he had seen Ram.

Ram's statement that a "terrible hell is the punishment for a cruel and malevolent *sanaysi*" has an echo in a passage in Skanda V, chapter 26 of *Srimad Bhagavata: The Holy Book of God*. It reads, "God has given different forms of livelihood to creatures. Some of these may go against the interests of man. But man should not retaliate against these creatures for two reasons. They are not endowed with the capacity to know that they are doing injury to man; and next, man knows that they will be injured if he retaliates. A person who injures lower creations for selfish purposes goes to a purgatory called *Andhakupa* and there he will have to live in a low type of body, attacked by the creatures he had injured. In darkness, without sleep, and restless, he will have to drag on a wretched existence."

(Translated by Swami Tapasyananda).

The passage quoted from *The Srimad Bhagavata: The Holy Book of God* applies especially to those who inveigh ceaselessly

about the "menace" posed by stray dogs. They can neither see the role the latter play as sentinels, whose barking alerts people against the arrival of thieves, robbers and terrorists/insurgents. Precisely for this reason, terrorists in some areas of Jammu & Kashmir and Maoists in parts of central India have asked villagers to kill all dogs in their areas.

In the present situation, how many of India's stray dog haters have tried to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has turned the lives of these canines completely upside down? It has been said often enough to become common place knowledge that the closure of hotels, *dhabas* and restaurants have deprived vast numbers of them of their food. It is not just the left-overs thrown into garbage bins that they miss. Many of them, who had been fed regularly by the staff and owners of these eating places, have now to fend for themselves — something to which they have grown unused.

Finally, how many haters of stray dogs have any idea of the love and loyalty that most dogs unconditionally lavish on people? Not surprisingly, Konrad Lorenz writes in *Man Meets Dog*, "The whole charm of the dog lies in the depth of friendship and the strength of spiritual ties with which he has tied himself to man." Author of the landmark book *On Aggression* and perhaps the best-known authority on animal behaviour, he should know.

(The writer is Consultant Editor, *The Pioneer*, and author)

SOUNDBITE

I would have wanted more opportunities to play Test cricket. In those days, it was important to get a spin bowler, star players like Sachin and Rahul who started opening.



Former cricketer —Yuvraj Singh

From what I can tell you is that the equation of the industry has not changed. It's an equal playing field. You still have a huge amount of luck and then things will fall in place.



Actor —Chunky Panday

What China did is a terrible thing. Whether it was incompetence or on purpose, it was a terrible thing that they did... not only to the US, but to the world.



US President —Donald Trump

PM Modi congratulated 130 crore Indians during the *bhoo mi pujan* but India's population of 138 crore people is missing of 8 crore people is congress leader CAA/NRC.



Congress leader —Shashi Tharoor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stand firm

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Now Pak in map war" (August 6). Close on the heels of Nepal's issuance of a map showing Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura under its territory, Pakistan has released a territorial map of its own, which includes the former princely state of Junagadh (Gujarat) and Kashmir. This prompted a quick response from India's Ministry of External Affairs, which termed it "an exercise in political absurdity."

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan claimed that the map represented the aspirations of the whole nation and all its political parties. It is likely that Pakistan has China's blessings in producing the map given similar border claims by Nepal recently. Pakistan has expressed its frustration through a series of steps that coincided with the first anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370. It had announced that August 5 would be observed as "day of exploitation" even as the Khan Government again failed to persuade the UN Security Council to come up

Gold smuggling gets murkier

It is common knowledge that gold is smuggled into the country by land, sea and air. The Department of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized 4,000 kilograms of gold worth ₹1,300 crore that was illegally brought into Gujarat. In February, DRI officials found about 15 kg of gold valued at over ₹6 crore on the sea bed at Mandrapudi on the Tamil Nadu coast. There are ample such instances. More recently, an influential gang smuggled nearly 230 kg of gold into Kerala. Tucked stealthily in the diplomatic parcel bags couriered from Dubai to the Consulate General of the UAE in Thiruvananthapuram. On July 5, Customs officials intercepted the passage of a diplomatic bag, stated to be the 21st in line, which led to the seizure of 30 kg gold. The probe was assigned to the IIA as suspicion of illegal money being used for nefarious activities gained strength. However, the Opposition chose to focus on the association of M Sivasankar (IAS), the Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Kerala, with the accused, Swapna Suresh, and underplayed the issue through the diplomatic channel. In fact, it chose to hamper the Chief Minister. Even after days of interrogation by both the Customs officials and the IIA, it remains unclear if the officer was a victim of misjudg-



ment or had even the remotest role in the murky affair.

And the role of the consulate in the gold smuggling, particularly the attaché, is still shrouded in mystery. An argument doing the rounds is that the attaché is not bound to reveal his travel itinerary to the Government, he being a diplomat. The question here is: Can a diplomat aid terrorism and still leave the country quietly under the cover of diplomatic immunity from prosecution? Politically, the Opposition efforts to besmirch Vijayan's reputation have not registered much success. Meanwhile, the sleuths are preparing to travel abroad for investigations.

Haridasan Rajan Kozhikode

with a resolution on Kashmir despite having China on its side. The FATF has decided to keep Pakistan on the grey list as it failed to check the flow of money to terrorist groups. If it fails to fulfil the FATF's requirements, it

could be downgraded to the blacklist. India must firmly disprove the ridiculous claims made by its neighbours and reassert its territorial sovereignty.

Venu GS Kollam

Tough questions

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "After Ayodhya" (August 6). The pomp and show displayed at a simple event such as the *bhoo-*

mi pujan at Ayodhya was avoidable. The event has raised several questions. Was it correct for the PM to lay the foundation of the temple, one which remained embroiled in a long history of disputes? In a secular democracy, the PM is not expected to represent any particular religion or organisation. For a head of the state, religious affiliations should remain confined within the four walls of his home.

Ritama Via email

Crisis within crisis

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Monumental apathy" (August 7). The massive explosion in Beirut, Lebanon couldn't have come at a worse time for Lebanon when the country has been battling one crisis after another. Nations across the world as well as international institutions must offer help to Lebanon so that it can overcome the catastrophe.

Prathna Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Transparency is long overdue

The Centre has rolled out a robust and much-desired architecture for the online audit of Panchayati Raj Institutions



DEVENDER SINGH ASWAL

Transparency and accountability in the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have been hanging fire for long. After much reflection, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has launched an AuditOnline application for scrutinising the accounts of over 2.50 lakh gram panchayats (GPs). To begin with, the accounts of at least 20 per cent or 50,000 GPs would be audited online for 2019-20. This was long overdue as the GPs have been endowed with substantial powers, authority and responsibilities with the enactment of the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act. Following the recommendation of the 14th Finance Commission (FC), ₹2,00,292 crore was transferred to the PRIs during 2015-16 to 2019-20. The 14th FC, and many others before it, had underlined the need for auditing panchayat accounts as the wisdom, faithfulness and propriety of expenditure were a matter of nagging concern. Guidelines were issued by the Finance Ministry in 2015 to the effect that the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) would examine the release and transfer of the grants-in-aid and expenditure in Panchayats and municipalities.

The 15th FC, while recommending allocation of ₹60,750 crore for 2020-21 to the three tiers of the PRIs, comprising the district panchayats, block panchayats and GPs, laid emphasis on ensuring timely availability of audited accounts online so as to strengthen their financial management. Hence, AuditOnline facilitates online and offline checking of accounts of the PRIs with a view to improving transparency and accountability in the utilisation of public money. The accounts of 20 per cent GPs would be audited on a pilot basis and scaled up to 100 per cent in the financial year 2021-22. Owing to the online digital payment mechanism, now integrated with eGramSwara, the GPs were able to make online payments out of the 14th FC grants. In fact, 1.52 lakh GPs were on the platform and 1.04 lakh GPs made online payments during 2019-20.

Notably, AuditOnline will ease up access to records which can be monitored at the district, State and Union level. It can enable uploading of photos of the work done and geo-tagging of projects to facilitate physical inspection and remote verification of the assets. This will help reduce costs, ensure quicker reviews and sound documentation and enhance environmental sustainability. The timely availability of records was a major issue in the offline system but in the online audit system, the auditors will be able to see all documents related to work approval and payments.

AuditOnline also facilitates online and offline scrutiny of accounts and maintains the past records of the auditee. Plus, the information would be available in public domain. Fully configurable, it is capable of depicting any type of workflow and mapping seamlessly the auditor/auditee engagement and interaction and audit observation tags. Further, its Dynamic Form Designer allows drawing of the forms for case record and fact sheet easily and generation and download of various graphical reports for analysis and monitoring, based on customisable report templates. Another and yet more significant advantage is the fact that the monitoring authorities would get notified instantaneously via e-mail/SMS/System-based alerts at various trigger points, enabling concurrent analysis, mid-course correction and better monitoring. A greater responsibility has been given to the State Accountant General (AG) under AuditOnline rules. The AG, representative of the CAG, shall identify the District Local Fund Auditor (DLFO) for each area. The entire audit process — starting with the identification of the DLFO, audit planning, recording of entry and exit meetings by the auditor, concurrence and approval of the meetings, communication of the draft audit to the auditee, generation of audit report, review of the response and action taken there on, by the auditee with clear timelines — are all unambiguously outlined. The audit report shall be provided to the GP by December 31 every year for consideration and corrective action.

Despite numerous accruable benefits, there are apparent hurdles and technical glitches. How will the online audit take off if the books of accounts are not complete, leaving aside the issue of high-speed internet and uninterrupted connectivity? It's only when the money is spent, brought on account and the accounts closed, a prerequisite for any audit, that the online audit can be undertaken.

However, the Union Government has rolled out a robust and much-desired architecture for the audit of PRIs. In fact, 11 States (Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Telangana, Tripura, and Uttarakhand) have already provided their configuration details and others will follow suit. Extensive online training and hands-on sessions are being carried out with the States. With the successful operation of AuditOnline, hopefully, the image of PRIs will improve with the expanded reach of accountability, encompassing all the three tiers of India's multi-layered and now expanding digital democracy.

(The writer is former Additional Secretary Lok Sabha and an author)

MOBILE APPLICATIONS DEVELOPED AND OWNED BY COMPANIES IN CHINA CONTINUE TO THREATEN OUR NATIONAL SECURITY, FOREIGN POLICY AND ECONOMY.

—US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



CHINA URGES THE US TO CORRECT ITS WRONGDOINGS, STOP POLITICISING ECONOMIC ISSUES AND CRACKING DOWN ON RELATED FIRMS.

—CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON WANG WENBIN

Embrace the circular economy

As nations move towards a post-pandemic fiscal recovery, they must adopt strategies for long-term sustainable development and create resilient economies



SHILPI KAPUR BAKSHI PRAHLAD TEWARI

The pandemic and the response to it by various governments around the world have posed unprecedented challenges, the effect of which would be felt for decades to come. People and economies are suffering not only due to the huge loss of lives but also from the slowdown of economic activities during the lockdown. According to the Union Minister of Road Transport and Inland Waterways, the containment is expected to cause a loss of over ₹10 lakh crore to India's economy. The World Bank, too, estimates that 12 million people in India could be pushed into poverty. While initially, the most visible impact of the crisis was on the healthcare sector due to shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE), ventilators, critical medical supplies and healthcare professionals trained in the handling of a contagion, its impact is now being felt on the free movement of people, goods and services, too.

A circular economy is based on the principles of reducing our waste and pollution throughout the lifecycle stages, keeping products and materials in use for long and regenerating natural systems. Circular economy-based concepts, such as cascaded reuse of resources to design reusable masks to substitute single-use masks, supported by Government-formulated guidelines and awareness about the same, are steps in the right direction.

The global market for refurbished medical devices is also predicted to witness significant growth. Recently, fuel cell manufacturer Bloom Energy started to refurbish ventilators to meet the supply gap in hospitals in the US. Due to COVID-19, organisations preferred work from home (WFH) and educational institutes preferred to learn from home using virtual platforms for meetings and online classes, which led to an unprecedented surge in demand for refurbished laptops. This cascaded use of refurbished laptops would also be critical in filling the void that has emerged in supporting online education to rural and urban poor students. Measures like these will create new market opportunities, increase the use of existing assets and reduce the pressure on the environment created by the demand for virgin raw materials.

Integrating circularity in various government's recovery agenda and strategies thus assumes importance. In April, the City of Amsterdam launched its Circular 2020-2025 strategy, which outlines the actions it would take to cut down the use of new raw materials to half by 2030. The local government also considers this strategy to be the basis for economic recovery from the effects of COVID-19. Similarly, the European Union (EU) and South Korea have both adopted 'Green Deals' as central pillars to their economic recoveries, both leveraging regenerative models and circular economy principles. The deployment of idle railway coaches by Indian Railways as isolation wards during the surge of Coronavirus infections, and adding the approach to use existing infrastructure to an extent possible. This provides an opportunity for other governments to integrate resilience, low carbon and sustainable growth thinking into their recoveries by avoiding short-term emission-intensive projects.

The key to use digital technology to regain control and give themselves a degree of autonomy over their life. This is critical as having control promotes emotional well-being. So, people must think about ways in which they can use digital technology to help them do it. It can be something as simple as using the technology at their disposal to make plans, manage their schedule, organise activities with others and even do online shopping at websites where they get to exert greater choice.

The key is to use digital technology actively instead of letting themselves get passively guided by algorithms. People must think of digital technology as a tool that allows them to extend their autonomy and makes it possible for them to develop strategies to cope better. For instance, people can consider limiting passive screen time and balance passive viewing with more interactive screen time — playing educational games, making

“THE TIME IS RIPE FOR US TO RETHINK OUR CONSUMPTION PATTERNS, TO BUILD IN RESILIENCE, CIRCULARITY AND AN EFFICIENT RURAL-URBAN CONNECTION TO REDUCE THE VULNERABILITY OF OUR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND MOVE TOWARDS AN ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT”



sumers, we can ensure a continuous supply of essential goods in vital sectors and help improve resilience through stock availability and competitiveness while not giving up the commitment to achieving the UN-set Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In order to support the Atmanirbhar Bharat (AIBH), newer ecosystems need to be envisaged that are based on local, shorter and more distributed supply chains via localised material sourcing. At the start of the pandemic in India, the availability of PPEs was critically low, owing to non-availability of local manufacturers, long gestation period to import their machines and the high cost. In line with the spirit of 'Vocal for Local' and with various Government initiatives, India is today the second-largest manufacturer of PPE body overalls within a short span of four months. There is also a need to engage in collaborative consumption to share resources by replacing traditional ownership of products with lending, borrowing and the availability of repair services to facilitate reuse. This would help reduce panic buying. For instance, the assurance of the Delhi Government to provide 'Pulse Oximeters' for monitoring oxygen levels of patients undergoing home isolation is a positive step in this direction. Acceptance of such 'pay for service' rather than 'owning facility options' would gain momentum if hygiene is ensured. Local waste sites can be turned into resource centres that undertake recovery and recycling of plastics.

Circular innovations can address manufacturing and supply chain shortages within the health sector too, where circular, knitted fabric (washable and reusable) can be used to produce non-medical protective face masks. The need for investment in technology for designing responsible packaging solutions that maintain food safety and quality standards and prevent contamination can enhance the sustainability of the home delivery ser-

vices that people are increasingly relying upon. Such solutions could also help continue efforts to reduce the usage of plastics and styrofoam. Several initiatives by various Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies and collaborations involving various stakeholders have been done across the globe to minimise single-use plastics.

In addition, enhancing material productivity also plays a significant role in addressing the diminishing cost competitiveness of industries (such as the Indian automobile sector in comparison to China, Singapore, Indonesia, and Bangladesh) due to high material cost. The circular economy emphasises reuse, and through this has the potential to generate not only environmental benefits but cost benefits, too, and create new revenue opportunities. For example, the focus on manufacturing durable goods would help them to generate income from rentals, repairs and refurbishment while reducing the environmental footprint.

In the COVID-19 crisis, digital solutions have promoted virtual workspaces, a mobile Government and a multitude of platforms to monitor and trace infections. Digitalisation has not only been limited to medical solutions or WFH set-ups but has been an instrument in supporting online education modes, too. Digital technology can play a role in creating city and village systems that are regenerative and restorative by offering dematerialisation opportunities, increasing our knowledge and understanding of data on the lifecycle of materials, people and external conditions, allowing for more informed decisions based on accurate data. This would help close the loop of material cycles and contribute to keeping products/materials in use for a longer period of time.

For example, digital technology can help aggregate local marketplaces dealing in secondary and alternative materials and formalise the informal sector waste-pick-

ers. Real-time tracking technologies provide information on where a product ends up and how it will be reused or recycled.

However, despite the many opportunities that circular thinking presents, ongoing efforts in this direction have been hit due to the pandemic. For example, in the waste management sector where significant work was done to manage plastic waste, many efforts have been halted during the lockdown, particularly in the private recycling space.

Recycling plants are mostly shut or are operating at limited capacity with a lot of the informal sector workers, who played the role of aggregators (such as the junk collectors) leaving urban centres for their native places. Procurement of recyclable waste has also become a challenge. Among plastics, virgin plastic may become even cheaper than secondary raw material plastic due to falling prices of hydrocarbon fuels resulting from the current low demand. This will also affect the economic viability of many plastic recyclers. Efforts would be required to stimulate the demand for recycled materials and close the price gap between virgin and recycled plastics.

As countries step towards economic recovery after COVID-19, they should undertake circular economy strategies for long-term sustainable development and for creating resilient economies. The BRICS nations recently acknowledged the heightening of social vulnerabilities and job losses due to the pandemic and have emphasised on the need for improving the environment and promoting the circular economy in national plans as steps towards recovery. The time is ripe for us to rethink our consumption patterns, to build in resilience, circularity and an efficient rural-urban connection to reduce the vulnerability of our economic and social systems and move towards an Atmanirbhar Bharat.

(Bakshi is Senior Fellow and Tewari is Fellow and Area Convener, TERI)

Maintain a healthy digital diet

During this period of social distancing, we should use technology to increase our independence and harness our inner potential



PRAKRITI PODDAR

The Coronavirus pandemic has made social distancing the new normal and the majority of us are becoming increasingly dependent on digital technology. Pushed into an uncertain future, we are spending more time to digitally connect with people, work, shop, keep ourselves informed and even entertained. While a digitally-mediated daily life can keep us safe from the risk of infection, too much exposure to it can harm our mental health. There has been a lot of awareness raised about the impact of exposing oneself to negative influences on social media and the news. The more information we receive

the more insufferable the pandemic becomes. We have seen people feel fearful, freeze or fold up. If you are one of the fighters, the information on digital feeds will help you take action in serving others, hence, limiting your online time.

You may also minimise the understanding of the situation and label all those people, who err at the side of precaution, as hysterical and not abide by the safety rules. This, putting yourself and others in danger. If you freeze, then you will lock yourself down and if you fold, you will need support to uplift your mental health. At all costs, people must keep their digital activity healthy during the outbreak. Let us take a look at three evidence-based tips for a healthy digital diet during the outbreak.

Take control: It is natural to feel powerless and scared in the face of a pandemic but people can use digital technology to regain control and give themselves a degree of autonomy over their life.

This is critical as having control promotes emotional well-being. So, people must think about ways in which they can use digital technology to help them do it. It can be something as simple as using the technology at their disposal to make plans, manage their schedule, organise activities with others and even do online shopping at websites where they get to exert greater choice.

The key is to use digital technology actively instead of letting themselves get passively guided by algorithms. People must think of digital technology as a tool that allows them to extend their autonomy and makes it possible for them to develop strategies to cope better. For instance, people can consider limiting passive screen time and balance passive viewing with more interactive screen time — playing educational games, making

YouTube videos, coding a website — where they are in control. **Nurture relationships:** While social distancing is good for our physical health, isolation is not good for our mental health. So, we must use this opportunity to digitally connect with old friends, family members or acquaintances that we somehow lost touch with. We must also nurture our existing relationships by scheduling regular chats online and using digital devices to spread positive news, express gratitude to the people serving us and helping others.

For instance, people can order food and groceries online for friends, family members and neighbours who are not digitally-enabled. Helping others can give life more purpose and allay anxieties. Organise group chats and regular virtual meet-ups — seeing a familiar face, even on a phone screen, can be reassuring. People must use this time as an opportunity to rebuild affiliations with those who matter.

Be smarter: Our well-being is also influenced by our competence, ability to rise above challenges, take smart decisions and experience a sense of control and success. Hence, people must use this opportunity to take online courses, learn new skills and do things that engage them. People must consider using digital technology to look after their body and mind during this period of confinement. They may not be able to hit the gym but they can use digital reminders and prompts to move and exercise more — even if they are confined inside a restricted environment. People can consider downloading a nutrition app, exercise, mindfulness or relaxation app. They must think about how they can use digital technology to improve exercise, sleep and diet regimes.

People can use digital technology to be smarter about their information diet, too. Use fact-checking services to counter conspiracy theories, unfounded rumours, urban legends and misinformation. Reduce information intake to one or two trustworthy sources. Most importantly, get infor-

mation from reputable sources instead of regurgitating what they read on social media.

The way towards digital well-being: Our increased digital dependency can be of benefit to our well-being instead of a hazard. We need to use our screens positively and promote greater autonomy, relatedness and competence. To be balanced, people must schedule their downtime, off-screen time, exercise time and fun time. This will form the core of their emotional well-being and hold them in good stead.

People must remember not to reach for their phone as soon as they wake up. They must give themselves the time to get ready, eat and then get to their device. We should use technology to increase our independence, further our well-being and harness our inner potential. Doing so will not only help us get through the pandemic but will also ensure that we emerge stronger from it.

(The writer is Director of a Wellness company and heads a foundation)



FOREIGN EYE



YETI A BOON TO TOURISM

Taunting anthropologists and researchers, the elusive Yeti continues to confound science. Ecologist Daniel Taylor found a trail of footprints during a 1983 search of the Barun but eventually concluded that it is more likely to be a bear. Yetis still court controversy as we saw recently with the aborted Visit Nepal Year 2020 sculptures, but they also boost tourism. (Nepali Times editorial)

LANKA PARLIAMENTARY POLLS

Rajapaksa registers landslide victory

Gets two-thirds majority

Colombo: Mahinda Rajapaksa will be sworn in as Sri Lanka's Prime Minister for the fourth time on Sunday after his party registered a landslide victory in the general election, securing two-thirds majority in Parliament...



Sri Lanka Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa greets Buddhist monks following his election victory in the general election at his residence in Tangalle Sri Lanka on Friday

The Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP), led by prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, won in 145 constituencies, bagging a total of 150 seats with its allies, a two-thirds majority in the 225-member parliament...

Sri Lankans for placing their trust in President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, myself and the Podujana Party and voting for the Saubhagye 'Dakkama' election manifesto in overwhelming numbers...

Mahinda will be sworn in as the new prime minister for the fourth time on Sunday at a ceremony at the historic Buddhist temple of Kelaniya, a north Colombo suburb...

preference votes, the highest ever recorded by a candidate in the history of elections. In the parliamentary election, he was seeking 150 seats mandatory to execute constitutional changes...

cooperation and to take their special ties to ever newer heights.

"Thank you PM @narendramodi for your congratulatory phone call. With the strong support of the people of #SriLanka, I look forward to working with you closely to further enhance the long-standing cooperation between our two countries...

The Rajapaksa family has dominated Sri Lankan politics for two decades. Mahinda was previously president from 2005 to 2015. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had won the November presidential election on the SLPP ticket.

In the parliamentary election, he was seeking 150 seats mandatory to execute constitutional changes, including to repeal the 19th Amendment to the Constitution which had curbed the presidential powers...

Activists, already alarmed by the diminishing space for dissent and criticism in the island nation, fear such a move could lead to authoritarianism.

POWER TUSSLE WITH OLI INTENSIFYING

Nepal: Prachanda tells party workers to prepare for worst

Kathmandu: Nepal Communist Party's executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has asked the party workers to prepare for the 'worst' as the ongoing power tussle between him and Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli has intensified with no solution in sight.

"Our main concern is not about gaining power, what we want is to follow the proper procedure while running the NCP. We are not focusing on getting any position, but our fight is against the wrong trend developing in the party," Prachanda told a select group of journalists during a special briefing on Wednesday.

Oli a new party was registered under the name of a lesser-known person at the Election Commission with the intention to split the ruling party.

Oli and Prachanda have held at least ten meetings in recent weeks to sort out the differences between them. But, as the Prime Minister did not accept the condition of a one-man-one-post, the talks failed. Oli has refused to give up his post as prime minister as well as the post of chairman of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP).

The dissident group accused Oli of trying to damage the image of other senior leaders of the party, the daily reported.

Prachanda and Nepal have claimed that the majority of the powerful Central Working Committee members have supported them while raising voice against Oli.

A bitter internal feud has been brewing in the ruling NCP since the last few weeks after top party leaders, including Prachanda, demanded Oli's resignation. Prachanda's anti-India remarks were 'neither politically correct nor diplomatically appropriate'.

Prachanda also alleged that while the Standing Committee meeting was in progress, at the initiative of Prime Minister Oli he had dragged the party towards anarchism by calling separate gatherings, Prachanda said.

TikTok threatens legal action in US over Trump order



Washington: Video-sharing app TikTok on Friday threatened to take legal action in US courts against Donald Trump's executive order banning anyone under US jurisdiction from doing business with the company's owner ByteDance.

Negligence or missile may have caused blast: Lebanon President

Beirut: Lebanese President Michel Aoun says there are two possibilities behind Tuesday's blast - either negligence or a missile attack or a bomb.

He said the investigation is concentrating on 20 persons. He rejected an international investigation into the blast, saying that it will make us 'lose the truth'.

He was responding to claims that his group may have stored explosives at the port. Still, Nasrallah didn't rule out a missile attack or an act of sabotage. He said that storing explosive materials like ammonium nitrate at the port for so long means "it is partially an issue of negligence, corruption, nepotism" that should not be ignored.

Belgian court rejects move to extradite ex-Catalan Minister

AP ■ BRUSSELS

A Belgian court on Friday rejected Spain's demand to have a former high-ranking politician from the region of Catalonia extradited, in yet another set back for the country's efforts to try several officials in exile over their alleged roles in an independence referendum that Madrid branded as illegal.

Kabul opens traditional council on release of 400 Taliban

AP ■ KABUL

A traditional council met on Friday in Afghanistan's capital to decide whether to release a final 400 Taliban prisoners, the last hurdle to starting negotiations between Kabul's political leadership and the Taliban under a peace deal with the US.

The negotiations are a critical step toward lasting peace in Afghanistan. The talks will decide what a peaceful Afghanistan might look like, what constitutional changes will be made, how the rights of women and minorities will be protected and the fate of the tens of thousands of heavily armed men on both sides of the conflict.

The Taliban in a statement on Friday rejected the Kabul gathering, saying it had no legal status. A statement by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo issued late Thursday made it clear that the 400 prisoners had to be released if peace talks with the Taliban were to move forward.

China sentences 4th Canadian to death on drug charges

Beijing: China has sentenced a fourth Canadian citizen to death on drug charges in less than two years following a sharp downturn in ties over the arrest of an executive of Chinese tech giant Huawei.

manufacturing and transporting drugs, the court said in a brief statement. Another suspect in the case was also given the death penalty and four others sentenced to between seven years and life in prison.

late 2018 arrest of Meng Wanzhou, a company executive and the daughter of Huawei's founder, at Vancouver's airport in at the request of the US, which wants her extradited to face fraud charges over the company's dealings with Iran.

He said the investigation is concentrating on 20 persons. He rejected an international investigation into the blast, saying that it will make us 'lose the truth'.

Malaysia's Mahathir forms new party in fightback attempt

AP ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Malaysia is looking for a country except for Zakir Naik, but not many countries are willing to accept the controversial preacher, former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad has said.

Naik, a 54-year-old radical Islamic preacher wanted by the Indian authorities for alleged money laundering and inciting extremism through hate speeches, left India in 2016 and subsequently moved to the largely Muslim Malaysia, where he was granted permanent residency when Mahathir was the prime minister.

When asked whether he would extradite Naik if he becomes the Prime Minister of Malaysia again, Mahathir said, "Well, we would like to send him to some country where we feel he will be safe."

He once again refused to send Naik to India, saying "at this moment we feel that he would not be safe from the Indian public."

KAVYAM AFFORDABLE GROUP HOUSING. Developed by Agreant Realty Ltd. listing license No. 101 of 2017 dated 30.11.2017. HAREK's RC/REPH/HA/AGM/2018/23 dated 21.11.2018. TYPE-1 2BHK 512.50 Sq.ft. TYPE-2 2BHK 488.30 Sq.ft. TYPE-3 2BHK 488.30 Sq.ft.

PUTRAJAYA (MALAYSIA): Two-time former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad announced on Friday that he is forming a new party in Malaysia. He said the party will be named 'BERSATU' and will have Mahathir as its leader.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED. General Public is hereby informed that one girl named Suneha D/o Late Nandu R/Jhuggi No. 320, J.J. Camp, Ayurvedic Hospital, Haiderpur, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped from the area of P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi since 20.07.2020.

Table with 10 columns of numbers for KAVYAM housing project. Includes rows for TYPE-1, TYPE-2, and TYPE-3 units.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED. General Public is hereby informed that one person named Hemchand, S/o. Sh. Lal Chand, R/o: H.No. T-452A, Street No. 21, Baljeet Nagar, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since 08.11.2019 at 11:00 am.

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SUPERIOR FINLEASE LIMITED. Regd. Office: NS-82, Kharsa No-3321, Ramaji Enclave, New Delhi. Email: info@superiorfinlease.com. Website: http://www.superiorfinlease.com.

Sensex, Nifty end flat on negative global cues

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Domestic equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty ended flat on Friday as negative cues from global markets and spiking COVID-19 cases in the country kept investors on the edge.

After touching a low of 37,787.38 during the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex clawed back lost ground to end 15.12 points or 0.04 per cent higher at 38,040.57.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty rose 13.90 points or 0.12 per cent to finish at 11,214.05.

During the week, the Sensex advanced 433.68 points or 1.15 per cent, while the Nifty rose 140.60 points or 1.26 per cent.

Asian Paints was the top gainer in the Sensex pack on Friday, rising 4.41 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finserv and Maruti.

On the other hand, Titan, HCL Tech, Infosys, M&M and Sun Pharma were among the laggards, skidding up to 2.65 per cent.

Mahindra & Mahindra on Friday reported a 94 per cent decline in consolidated profit at Rs 54.64 crore for the June quarter, adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Global markets tumbled

after US President Donald Trump signed an order prohibiting American residents from transacting with Chinese apps WeChat and TikTok, ratcheting up US-China tensions.

China has vowed to retaliate against the executive order, which comes into force in 45 days.

According to traders, negative cues regarding cases and mounting COVID-19 cases in the country kept investors jittery.

Registering over 60,000 cases in 24 hours for the first time, India's COVID-19 tally galloped past 20 lakh on Friday, while the number of recoveries surged to 13.78 lakh, according to Union Health Ministry data.

The number of cases around the world linked to the disease has crossed 1.9 crore.

"The unrelenting pace of virus infections and other uncertainties led to the benchmark indices ending flat today with volatile trades. Global cues were also mostly negative, with guidelines pertaining to losses following US actions on popular Chinese apps, and anticipating retaliatory action from China."

"However on a weekly basis, Indian benchmark indices ended up by around 1 per cent, following gains in the

Wall Street stalls; S&P 500 dips after 5-day winning streak

AP ■ NEW YORK

Wall Street is stalling on Friday, as a whirlwind of worries about rising US-China tensions and whether Congress can deliver more aid for the economy threaten to halt its big run.

The S&P 500 was edging 0.1% lower in early trading, after a five-day winning streak had brought it back within 1.1% of its record for the first time since February. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 73 points, or 0.3%, at 27,317, as a whirlwind of worries about rising US-China tensions and whether Congress can deliver more aid for the economy threaten to halt its big run.

It's a busy day for markets, with investors' eyes focused on Capitol Hill, where Congress and White House officials have been negotiating on a hoped-for deal on more aid for the economy. A marathon meeting Thursday left both sides still far apart on key issues, and they both said the future of talks is uncertain.

Investors say it's crucial that Washington pump more

money into the economy, which has shown signs of improvements since the spring but is still hobbling amid worries about a resurgence in coronavirus cases.

Even though Friday's jobs report was healthier than the market expected, it also showed that hiring is already slowing, leaving economists of acceleration and remains far below where it was before the pandemic.

Trump is considering executive orders to address some of the issues if Congress does not pass a deal on aid, such as evictions and unemployment insurance, but they appear unlikely to have much impact.

Stock exchanges in Europe were trading on a negative note in early days.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.86 per cent lower at USD 44.70 per barrel. On the currency front, the rupee ended almost flat at 74.93 against the US dollar.

consumer durables, IT, tech and healthcare closed with losses. Broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices rallied up to 1.44 per cent. In rest of Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tokyo ended in the red, while Seoul finished with gains.

latter half of this week, on expectations of RBI policy easing, said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. BSE power, telecom, utilities, industrials and basic materials indices rose as much as 1.21 per cent, while con-

sumer durables, IT, tech and healthcare closed with losses. Broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices rallied up to 1.44 per cent. In rest of Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tokyo ended in the red, while Seoul finished with gains.

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Increase in gold loan LTV will heighten credit risks for banks: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The increase in loan-to-value (LTV) ratio for gold loans, or the quantum of borrowing against a given quantity of the precious metal, will heighten credit risks for banks, a ratings agency said on Friday.

The RBI had on Thursday increased the LTV ratio for gold loans by banks to 90 per cent from the earlier 75 per cent, in a bid to make loans available to people affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

"An increase in the LTV ratio to 90 per cent increases the credit risk for banks as the collateral available in the form of gold ornaments or jewellery may not be sufficient to fully cover both principal and interest components on these loans," Brickworks Ratings said.

Its Director for Ratings, Vydyanath Ramaswamy, said, in a "negative carry" for banks as the total exposure will exceed the value of the pledged gold.

"It could adversely impact the recoverability and asset quality of banks in the case of a weakening in the borrower

credit risk profile and/or sharp decline in gold prices, which have seen a strong rally over the last few months," he added.

However, given that the higher LTV is only till March 31 next year, the risk on the portfolio is for a limited period, the agency said in a note.

Also, gold loans are mostly short-term loans of anywhere between 3 to 24 months, it said.

The agency said given that the RBI's announcement on higher LTV gold loans is limited to the banking sector, banks are bound to garner a larger market share vis-a-vis their non-bank peers in loans against the pledge of gold in fiscal 2021.

At present, non-bank financiers and unorganised lenders like local pawn brokers with a wider network enjoy a large market share in loans against gold ornaments and jewellery.

They also charge high rates on these loans, which can range anywhere between 20 per cent to 50 per cent, whereas banks charge much lower interest rates, it said.

Gold, silver prices continue to climb; touch record levels

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices surged for the 16th straight session on Friday and touched an all-time high of ₹57,008 per 10 grams in the national capital, according to HDFC Securities.

Silver too continued its upward movement, with the price touching a record-high of ₹77,840 per kilogram. Silver price jumped by ₹576 compared to the closing level of ₹77,264 per kg on Thursday.

In the previous trade, gold had closed at ₹57,002 per 10 grams. On Friday, the price increased by ₹6 to ₹57,008 per 10 grams. Friday was the 16th straight session in which the metals recorded all-time high prices, HDFC Securities said.

"Spot gold prices for 24 carat in Delhi continued to scale new highs by gaining ₹6. Gold prices are trading higher than the previous trade, as the metals recorded all-time high prices, HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said. In the international market, both gold and silver were trading marginally lower at USD 2,061 per ounce and USD 28.36 per ounce, respectively.

Sebi revises eligibility, shareholding limit for clearing corp at IFSC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Friday amended international financial services centre (IFSC) guidelines pertaining to eligibility criteria and shareholding limit for clearing corporations that wish to operate in such centres.

The decision, aimed at streamlining the operations of IFSCs, has been taken after consultation with stakeholders, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a circular.

Under the norms, any Indian recognised stock exchange company applying for foreign jurisdiction have been allowed to acquire 15 per cent stake in such clearing corporation operating in an IFSC.

Among others, public financial institutions of Indian jurisdiction, foreign commodity derivatives exchange and bilateral or multilateral financial institutions approved by central government "may acquire or hold, either directly or indirectly, either individually or together with persons acting in concert, up to 15 per cent of the paid up equity capital of the clearing corporation with prior approval of the board."

To give effect to this, Sebi has amended IFSC guidelines. Last month, the regulator had revised eligibility criteria for clearing corporations at stock exchanges desirous of operating in IFSC. The country's only IFSC is in GIFT City near Ahmedabad in Gujarat.

Sebi further said any other stock exchange, depository, bank, insurance company, Indian or foreign jurisdiction have been allowed to acquire 15 per cent stake in such clearing corporation operating in an IFSC.

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India's power transmission segment may attract ₹1.8 lakh cr investment by FY25: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The domestic power transmission segment is expected to attract investments worth ₹1.8 lakh crore in the next five years, according to a report by rating agency ICRA.

It said evacuation infrastructure for renewable energy (RE) projects will drive investment in the power transmission segment, with ₹1.8 lakh crore in the next five years, according to a report by rating agency ICRA.

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a shift in policy focus from conventional sources (coal and gas) to renewable power sources (wind and solar), the focus of the transmission segment is on evacuation infrastructure for evacuation of power generated by RE projects.

Sabyasachi Majumdar, group head and senior vice president (corporate ratings) of ICRA, said the segment is lined up 14 transmission projects under the tariff-based competitive bidding (RBCB) route for evacuating power from 25-gigawatt RE projects.

The government has also lined up 14 transmission projects under the tariff-based competitive bidding (RBCB) route for evacuating power from 25-gigawatt RE projects.

a slowdown in electricity demand and investments in the sector in 2020-21 amid the Covid-19-induced disruption but recovery is expected from 2021 onwards. ICRA said the private sector's share is expected to witness a healthy growth over the next four-five years, while Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd (PGCIL) and other state transmission utilities are likely to remain major players in the power transmission segment.

On the issues in the segment, the agency said, "The key challenge for the winning bidder under the TBCC route has been the delay in the start-up by because of delays in securing right of way, forest clearances and re-routing requirements in some cases."

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Govt aims to develop 10 Craft and Handloom Villages in India: Irani

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Smriti Irani on Friday said the government is aiming to develop 10 Craft and Handloom Villages in the country, spreading the benefits across the globe can visit them and learn the rich legacy of Indian weavers and lend support to the Make in India initiative.

Irani shared the Textiles Ministry's vision while addressing a function through video conferencing to mark the National Handloom Day. Almost 95 per cent of the handwoven fabrics used globally are produced in India.

The Minister said the National Handloom Awards, which are presented on the occasion of the Handloom Day, are being deferred upon the request of weavers who wish to celebrate the honour instead of receiving it digitally due to the prevailing circumstances posed by COVID-19. "It is our goal to develop ten Craft and Handloom Villages across the country so that our Handloom products are not limited to clothes or home furnishing alone."

We want that tourists from India and across the world visit these special Craft and Handloom Villages to not only learn about the weavers but also contribute to our pledge of Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Self Reliant nation)," said the minister for Textiles and Women and Child Development.

Irani shared that students from the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) are contributing to the upgrade of 9 out of 28 Weavers' Service Centres across the country in terms of design, marketing and research.

These centres are located in Delhi, Srinagar, Jaipur, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Varanasi, Guwahati, Kanchipuram and

Bhubaneswar. She said it is the government's endeavour to ensure upgradation of all weavers' service centres through NIFT students to strengthen the rich legacy of handloom in India.

Irani said the 'My Handloom' portal launched on the occasion will help in connecting state government undertakings, agencies and co-operation societies with the weavers. The app is available on the Textiles Ministry's website for weavers to know about their status and benefits.

Highlighting the importance of the country's handloom, Textiles Secretary Ravi Capoor said 95 per cent of the handwoven fabrics used globally are produced in India. Observing that weavers do not get remunerative prices for their products, he said plans are afoot to ensure they get higher returns by eliminating middlemen and linking them directly to the market.

After deducting the marketing fee from the amount received towards the sale of a product, the remaining amount can be transferred to the weaver's account through a direct benefit transfer, Capoor suggested. Irani also launched a mobile app and backend website for Handloom Mark Scheme. The minister said the Handloom Mark is being promoted to provide collective identity to the authentic handloom products. Textiles Committee Mumbai has developed the mobile app with a backend web portal to completely digitise the process of registration. The app is available in English and 10 Indian languages and will enable the weavers of the country to apply for Handloom Mark registration from the comfort of their homes.

It helps ascertain the genuineness and originality of the product through unique and dynamic QR code labels affixed on each handloom product.

RAJ CM TAKES IMPORTANT DECISIONS

Tax exemption for vehicles deprived of permits during lockdown

Jaipur: The State Government has decided to exempt the tax on vehicles tax (motor vehicle tax) payable for the Omni Bus category of spared transport vehicles sold during the period of nationwide lockdown in the event of COVID-19 epidemic. The CM has taken a sensitive decision after approving the request received from Finance Dept and Transport Dept. According to the proposal, in the motor vehicle tax payable for the period of April 1 to June 30, 2020 for Omni Bus category vehicles of 8 and above seating capacity not listed in any permit category due to non-issuance of permits during lockdown in the state. Full exemption will be given. Also, 75 per cent exemption will be given to these vehicles for the tax payable for July 2020. It is known that in the context, such tax exemption was given on 24 June 2020 in the past for 5 permit-free buses.

CM approves 400 more in new veterinary sub-centres

588 new posts will be created in subdivision offices

Jaipur: Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has approved the creation of a total of 400 new posts of 200 livestock assistants and 200 jaladhari in 200 new veterinary sub-centres to be opened in 2020-21. Each veterinary sub-center will get the post of a livestock assistant and a water holder.

Gehlot has also approved an additional budget provision of ₹20.72 crore by creating a total of 588 new posts for strengthening 294 subdivision offices in the state. Each subdivision office will get an information assistant and a junior assistant.

Approval to fill 83 vacant posts: The Chief Minister has approved to fill 83 vacant posts in Agricultural University, Jodhpur and its constituent colleges.

These include 65 academic, 15 non-academic and 3 deputation posts.

PREMIUM MERCHANTS LIMITED

Registered office: Omaxe Square, Plot No. 14, 5th Floor, Jasola District Centre, Jasola, New Delhi-110025
CIN: L51909DL1985PLC021077.Tel: +91 11 61119658
Email: info@premiummerchants123@gmail.com, website: www.pmltd.in

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE is hereby given that the 35th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Company will be held on Monday, 31st August, 2020 at the registered office of the Company at Omaxe Square, Plot No. 14, 5th Floor, Jasola District Centre, Jasola, New Delhi-110025 at 3:00 PM to transact the business mentioned in the Notice of Annual General Meeting. The notice of AGM along with Annual Report, Proxy Form and Attendance Slip have been sent in electronic form to those shareholders whose email address are registered with the Company's Registrar and Share Transfer Agent/Depository Participants, unless the Members have requested in writing to the Company that they should be dispatched through permitted mode to all other members. The Company has completed all dispatches through e-mail and other permitted modes on Friday 7th August, 2020. Members may note that the Annual Report, AGM Notice inter alia indicating the process and manner of e-voting process, Proxy Form and Attendance Slip are available on Company's website "www.pmltd.in" (due to some technical reasons, the website of the Company is being repaired and the same will get functional shortly) and can also be obtained from registered shareholders and members of the Company. The provisions of Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the Companies (Management and Administration) Amendments Rules, 2015 and Regulation 44 of the SEBI (Listing Obligation and Disclosure Requirement) Regulation, 2015. The Company is pleased to provide its member the facility to exercise their right to vote by electronic means and business may be transacted through remote e-voting facility provided by National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL). The remote e-voting period commences from Thursday 27th August, 2020 at 9:00 A.M and ends on Friday 30th August, 2020 at 5:00 P.M. The remote e-voting shall be disabled thereafter and no e-voting will be allowed thereafter. The Board has appointed Mr. Surinder Kishore Kapahi, Proprietor Kapahi and Associates, Company Secretaries as Scrutinizer for conducting the e-voting process in accordance with the law and in a fair and transparent manner. The voting rights of members shall be in proportion to their share in the paid up equity share capital of the Company as on the cut-off date of 24th August, 2020. Members holding shares either in physical or dematerialized form, on the said cut-off date, are eligible to avail the facility of remote e-voting. Any person, who acquires shares of the Company after dispatch of AGM Notice and holds such shares as of the cut-off date i.e. 24th August, 2020, may obtain the login ID and password by sending a request at evoting@nsdl.co.in. At the AGM, facility for voting through ballot paper shall be provided and only the Members as on the "cut-off date" i.e. 24th August, 2020, who have not cast their votes by remote e-voting, shall be entitled to exercise their rights to vote at the AGM through ballot paper. The members who have cast their votes through electronic means prior to the AGM may still attend the AGM but shall not be entitled to cast their votes again. The notice of AGM containing inter-alia, the procedure of e-voting is available on the Company's website "www.pmltd.in" and on NSDL's website <https://www.evoting.nsdl.com> in case of any queries, Members may refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and e-voting user manual available at Downloads section of <https://www.evoting.nsdl.com> or contact NSDL at the toll free no. 1800-222-990 or write a mail to info@nsdl.com. Notice is also hereby given that that pursuant to section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 10 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 and Regulation 42 of SEBI (Listing Obligation and Disclosure Requirement) Regulation, 2015, the Register of Members and Share Transfer books of the Company will remain closed from Tuesday, August 25, 2020 to Tuesday, August 31, 2020 (both days inclusive) for the purpose of taking record of the shareholders at the Annual General Meeting.

Thanking You For Premium Merchants Limited
Balbir Singh
Director
DIN: 00227438
Date: 06.08.2020
Place: New Delhi

₹ settles nearly flat at 74.93 against US\$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee ended almost flat at 74.93 against the US dollar on Friday due to a cautious market view in the face of mounting coronavirus cases and US-China trade tensions.

Starting off on a tepid note, the rupee fell to a low of 75.04, but recovered slightly before ending the day in a narrow band throughout the session.

It finally settled at 74.93, gaining 1 paise over its previous close. On Thursday too, the rupee had closed steady after the Reserve Bank maintained its status quo in its policy rates.

Meanwhile, the US dol-

lar index, which gauges the value of the greenback against a basket of key global currencies, rose 0.32 per cent to 93.08. Analysts said forex market sentiment was mainly guided by growing US-China trade tensions and mounting coronavirus cases in the country.

Rahul Gupta, Head of Research- Currency, Emkay Global Financial Services, said the market was mainly guided by growing US-China trade tensions and mounting coronavirus cases in the country. Rahul Gupta, Head of Research- Currency, Emkay Global Financial Services, said the market was mainly guided by growing US-China trade tensions and mounting coronavirus cases in the country.

Also, it is respecting the immediate resistance of 75.20, only sustained till selling from status quo in its policy rates. Meanwhile, the US dol-

UJVN LIMITED
(An Undertaking of Government of India)

Tender No.488 Date: 07.08.2020

TENDER NOTICE

Office of the Executive Engineer (Maint.), Chibro Power Station, Dakpathar (Dehradun), invites sealed tenders for following works
Tender No. CH(Maint.): 11/2020-21 Cleaning of pits, clean water tank, and miscellaneous work
Tender No. CH(Maint.): 12/2020-21 Annual up-keeping and maint. of Chibro field house
Estimated cost: (1) ₹ 2,45,590/- GST extra (2) ₹ 79,048/- GST extra
Date of availability of bid on website: 08.08.2020, 11:00 hrs
Last date for submission of tender: 31.08.2020 upto 13:00 hrs
For further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website "www.ujvn.com".
(Executive Engineer, Maint., Chibro)
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified deadbody of male Age : 40-45 years, Height: 5'2", Build: Thin, Complexion : Sallow, Face : Oval, was found on 03.08.2020 at Ahinsa Dairy, in front of back diwar, Fatehpur, Delhi-06. In this regard a DD No. 23-A dated 03.08.2020 u/s 174 Cr.P.C. has been lodged at P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi. The dead body has been preserved for identification for 72 hours in the mortuary of Subzi Mandi, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this found person may kindly inform to the following:-

SHO : P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi
Tel. No. 011-23953776

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a lady namely Kamlesh, W/o: Shree Chotu Ram, R/o: H. No. A-9 in front of Dispensary missing since 01.08.2020 from H. No. A-9 in front of Dispensary. In this regard DD No. 52A, dated 01.08.2020 has been registered at P.S. Mahendra Park, Delhi. The description of missing lady is as under:

Name: Kamlesh, Age: 55 Years, Height: 5'3", Face: Round, Complexion: Wheatish, Build: Medium, Wearing: Blue suit, red salwar and slipper in feet.

If anyone have any information about this missing lady please inform P.S. Mahendra Park, Delhi.

Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: clc@cbi.gov.in
Ph: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639
SHO
Police Station, Mahendra Park, Delhi
Ph: 011-27632501, 27632501, 8750870227

SHORT CIRCUITS



BHUMI PEDNEKAR

What Mumbai saw in the last two days was devastating amount of rain. There were some places that were badly affected. The videos and articles are so scary and heart-breaking. This year has been a wake-up call. Development is important but there has to be a balance. Small changes make a huge difference.



MAHESH BABU

A kind request to my dear fans. I feel blessed and thankful to have all of you. I truly appreciate all the good deeds you do to make my special day worth remembering. Since we are battling a global pandemic this year, safety is indispensable. I request all my fans to avoid any social gatherings on my birthday. Please stay safe.



SHALMALI KHOLGADE

I keep away from controversies because I'm rather focussed on making music, writing songs, finding various avenues to channelise my creativity. What else should I do? Pointing fingers on people will not do any good to music. I am not just here for making music in Bollywood. I look beyond that.



RAJA KUMARI

We shot *Peace's* video in the middle of quarantine. Although I'm used to having a big crew on set to handle everything from location scouting to glam and make-up, all I had in LA was me and Shawn Thomas (long-time director and collaborator) and the help of my manager and assistant. I definitely was a challenge.

VAANI KAPOOR

Ajushmann is one of the most talented actors of our generation and I am only thrilled about our first film together to be this beautiful love story. I have always wanted to work with Abhishek Kapoor, being so inspired by his films. This feels like an amazing opportunity to be part of his vision.



CONVERSATION 45 MINUTES



BEYOND THE DARK WHIMS

Pakistani filmmaker ASIM ABBASI talks to SAKSHI SHARMA about how his leading women have given a positive spin to the term 'churail' in his eponymous web series and the need to share stories about the under-represented

The term 'Churail' has been used to refer to witches or to a woman who practises dark magic. You might have heard women being called as *churail*, *dayan*, *bhootni*, spellcaster and other such names for their "wrong" actions. But how often have you heard them being used to question the patriarchal status quo and represent strong-willed women? Pakistani filmmaker Asim Abbasi, who is now foraying into the web series space with his series, *Churails*, believes that the term rightly represents his lead protagonists as it has nothing to do with dark magic. Says he, "The term has historically been used to label women negatively for their courage, aggression, ambition — all the qualities that I associate with a strong woman, were deemed negative. She is the uncanny outsider who comes to shake up the patriarchy. And it is the fear that she elicits in the guardians of the status quo

(often men), that drives men to label them in a derogatory way. So our characters are taking this term, ripe with symbolic value, to give it a positive spin. Every woman, according to me, should aspire to be a *churail*." Set in Karachi, it is a story of four women from different walks of life who come together to open a covert detective agency to expose cheating husbands amongst the city's elite. These self-proclaimed women run their operations under the guise of a fashion store named 'Halal Designs' that specialise in conservative women's attire. As their operations expand, they come to be the saviours of abused, mistreated and harassed women, and their search for a missing girl brings them face to face with the exploitative world of talent agencies, escort services, and cosmetic companies. It features Pakistani actors Sarwat Gilani, Nimra



Bucha, Yasra Rizvi and Mehar Bano. Excerpts:

The series stars four women reeling from personal miseries who further

open a detective agency under the pretext of a burqa shop. How did you conceptualise it? The themes of gender politics, particularly power dynamics, between a man and



a woman, and the resultant misogyny are topics that I wanted to address in my writing for a while. But I did not want the starting point of the series to be heavy-handed. I wanted the darkness to slowly creep in. So my natural, perhaps humorous inclination, was to first make my characters colourful spies, who gradually turn vigilantes. I was interested in talking about the lack of autonomy that a woman has over her body. Often in patriarchal societies, women are dressed and undressed at the whims of the society, and are being told what is appropriate and what is not. Hence, the store specialises in modest-wear for women to showcase this irony.

The poster of the project has a caption: 'Hojayein layaar, khwateen aur hazraat. Especially hazraat, Jald urahi hain kuch rangerein churailien, napki deep-rooted misogyny ki band bujaanay.' Another scene showed a sign at a store: 'Pets and men not allowed.' How do such strong statements establish the idea of the series?

The store titled 'Halal Designs' is a safe space for women and has been surrounded by them all my life. So I tend to gravitate towards their experiences. As a filmmaker, it is my duty to tell stories about those who are under-represented or the ones I believe are not represented fairly in the mainstream media. Female-centric stories on Pakistani television usually regurgitate the same trope about a damsel in distress who needs rescuing by a prince. Those stories are not a representative of the women I know. And those are not the stories I believe our daughters should grow up with.

In one of your interviews you mentioned, "It's not message per se, I prefer to raise questions." What do you aim to achieve through your work?

Well, apart from entertaining audience by providing a thrilling, edge-of-your-seat experience, I hope that the show stays with them long after the 10 hours of viewing experience is over. They should be able to reflect on the questions the series raises. I wish them, particularly men, to become

more open to working towards a more equitable society, where women are respected and treated fairly.

There has been a surge of grey roles in online content now. Filmmakers and actors don't like putting characters in a box. Do you think the same can be said about your four leads?

Absolutely. I deliberately set out to tell a tale of four very flawed individuals. They are not always going to do the right thing. They are going to make mistakes and may not even apologise for them but these traits are all very human to have. All good content, which seeks to create empathetic characters that the audience can root for, should be moving away from the binaries of black and white.

You had earlier said, "It's very difficult to put *Churails* into a genre. It's discussing serious issues, but the show itself doesn't take itself too seriously." What did you mean?

In terms of genres, I would say the series has elements of drama and thriller but I tend to find the whimsy in the darkness of women and men. I feel my work reflects that. The themes that the series addresses are posed as questions rather than preachy messages. My characters find something to smile about even when everything around them is falling apart.

Your artistic front, are you ready to nurture cross-boundary collaborations, irrespective of the political environment?

Yes, because art has nothing to do with institutional politics. Its sole purpose is to provide a cathartic experience for the public by emphasising our shared humanity and it aims to do that by bridging the differences.

Do you think the audience for the series might get affected from the Pakistan-India rivalry?

I don't think so. People on both sides of the border are well aware that they have similar life realities and are eager to have a dialogue and cultural exchange.

Can we call this an opportunity for the country to attract other global platforms and entertain the idea of producing Pakistani content?

Absolutely. We have not had web content come out of Pakistan that could compete in the global market before. This is a small but important step in getting our stories out to the world. I am hopeful that it will attract more investment into Pakistani talent and filmmakers. (The series will stream from August 11 on Zee5.)

STUDIO CHAT 15 MINUTES

Celebs go vocal for local



On the occasion of National Handloom Day, Bollywood actresses including Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Kangana Ranaut, Vidya Balan, Dia Mirza, Taapsee Pannu and Janhvi Kapoor urge people to support Indian weavers and Indian organic fabric industries. The handloom sector is one of the major symbols of the cultural heritage of India. "Most of us have more than we can consume. Fashion industry has become one of the most damaging industries for our environment. New challenges call for new resolves. Let's promote our own Indian organic fabric industries and preserve the planet. When we choose hand-

loom, we choose to elevate our poor weavers out of poverty, we choose vocal for local, we choose our mother earth, we choose love for every single being on this planet," said Kangana via a tweet. Vidya posted a few pictures in mustard silk saree on Instagram and wrote, "Let us all resolve to support our weavers across the country in these difficult times by buying and wearing their beautiful creations in our everyday life and also keep #IndiasHandloomLegacy alive. Appreciate the labour of love." Priyanka posted a picture in a green saree and wrote on Instagram stories, "Indian handlooms are known to be unique and a work of craftsmanship. Let's show our support to the weavers and artisans of the textile industry." Janhvi shared an image of her most favourite handloom saree. "The weavers and artisans in our country are truly unmatched in skill and creativity. The best in the world," she wrote. Dia Mirza said she is proud of Indian heritage. "Our weavers need all our support and love. This National Handloom Day, let's celebrate the rich legacy of our Indian weaves and textiles. There is nothing like a handloom saree," she wrote along with an image. —With inputs from agencies

Open to new ideas: Anushka

Actor Anushka Sharma became the youngest female producer in Bollywood when she produced the thriller *NH10* and she has since then only shown her passion to tell remarkably new stories. From experimenting with genres to backing fellow outsiders to shine bright in Bollywood, Anushka, through Clean Slate Filmz, has been an entrepreneur who at her core is a diverse storyteller. Anushka feels her Army background has shaped her content choices majorly. "Being Army kids, we are always open to new ideas and all that travelling really helped us understand local stories. Such experiences has not only helped us in storytelling, but it also makes you look at things in different ways rather than a set societal perspective," says Anushka, who runs the business with her brother Karanesh. She adds, "Watching films doesn't always help you understand movies better. Our life experiences have helped us in this business. We have approached everything with a fresh mind. If we have taken the less travelled path, it is because we have followed our instincts." Anushka is riding on back to back suc-



cesses as a producer with both *Paatal Lok* and *Bulbbul* doing incredibly well. She reveals that there is no formula for success when it comes to content production. "The business of production is very tricky and even the most experienced can't say that they have figured it out. You just learn from your mistakes. Even when things don't work the way you wanted, they give us learnings," says she.



India to host 2021 T20 World Cup

Australia gets 2022; Women's 50-over WC now in 2022

PTI ■ DUBAI
 India on Friday retained the right to host the 2021 T20 World Cup while Australia will conduct this year's postponed edition in 2022, the ICC announced on Friday after its board meeting, straightening out a schedule that went topsy-turvy due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
 This year's edition had to be postponed because of the raging pandemic, which has severely impacted all sports calendars globally.
 "The International Cricket Council (ICC) today (on Friday)

confirmed that the T20 World Cup 2020 that was postponed due to Covid-19 will be held in Australia in 2022. India will host the T20 World Cup 2021 as planned," the ICC stated in a press release.
 The global body also confirmed that next year's women's ODI World Cup in New Zealand was postponed until February-March 2022 because of the impact the pandemic has had on cricket globally.
 ICC Chief Executive Manu Sawhney said: "We now have absolute clarity on the future of ICC events enabling all of our Members to focus on the resched-

uling of lost international and domestic cricket.
 "We will now proceed as planned with the Men's T20 World Cup 2021 in India and host the 2022 edition in Australia."
 The format of the 2021 T20 World Cup will remain as it was for 2020 and all teams that qualified for that event will now participate in India in 2021.
 A new qualification process will be started for the 2022 edition in Australia.
 "BCCI were never keen to host the 2022 event which would have meant that they had to host back to back ICC events including the

50-over World Cup in 2023. That wasn't a viable option," an ICC Board member told PTI.
 However, it was a big setback for the women's game with the much-awaited World Cup being pushed by a year.
 Sawhney said the decision would "give players from every competing nation, the best opportunity to be ready for the world's biggest stage and there is still a global qualifier to complete to decide the final three teams."
 An ICC Board member said that due to various countries facing different situations with regards to the Covid case load, it would



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and ICC Chief Executive Manu Sawhney pose with the Women's World Cup trophy @cricketworldcup/Twitter

have been difficult to hold the qualifiers in time.
 The postponement also raises doubts about the future of India legends such as Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami, who probably would have played their last ICC tournament in 2021.
 The decisions were taken by the IBC (the commercial subsidiary of the ICC) following an extensive contingency planning exercise which took into account the health, cricket and commercial impact of Covid-19 around the world.
 The format of the postponed World Cup will remain as it was for 2021. Five teams have already qualified for the event and that will stand for 2022.
 The original global qualification event to determine the final three teams to contest the event was scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka in July this year, but was postponed due to Covid-19.
 The qualification event will now be held in 2021.
 "There has been no women's international cricket played since the conclusion of the women's T20 World Cup earlier this year and due to the varying impact of Covid-19 globally that is likely to remain the situation for a number of the teams," Sawhney spoke

Eng tour of India postponed until early 2021

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's white-ball series against England, scheduled at home in September-October, was on Friday postponed to early 2021 with both the boards citing the Covid-19 pandemic, which wrecked the international calendar and created space for the IPL during this window.
 Both teams were scheduled to play three ODIs and as many T20s and the matches could now be held after the Test series between the two in India early next year.
 The series was to be a preparatory one ahead of the T20 World Cup, which was originally scheduled from October 18 to November 5 in Australia, but has now been postponed.
 "BCCI and ECB are in consultation with a view to confirming the 2021 schedules for all-formats England men's tour to India to run from late January to late March and for India's Test tour to England to start in early 2021," the BCCI said in a statement.
 BCCI secretary Jay Shah added: "The BCCI and ECB are working closely to finalise the day-wise schedule as we move towards the resumption of cricket."
 The five Test series to be hosted by India could be trimmed to four to accommodate the white-ball games next year.



Wolverhampton Wanderers' Connor Coady embraces Olympiakos' Omar Elabdellattou after the Europa League match

Wolves send Olympiacos packing

AFP ■ WOLVERHAMPTON

Wolves battled into the quarter-finals of the Europa League on Thursday (while Sevilla, Bayer Leverkusen and Basel enjoyed far more comfortable victories in the matches that brought the Europa League round of 16 to a belated close).
 Raul Jimenez scored the only goal for the ninth minute and Wolves survived a series of scares to edge Olympiakos 1-0 at Molineux for a 2-1 aggregate win in a tie that began in Athens on March 13.
 At Molineux, Bobby Allain, the visitors' Franco-Scottish goalkeeper, failed to control a back pass in the seventh minute.
 Daniel Podence, who scored for Olympiakos at Tottenham in September but moved to Wolves in January, darted in and stole the ball.
 Allain clumsily bundled his former clubmate over and Jimenez converted the penalty.
 The Greek champions created a string of chances but were thwarted by good saves by Rui Patrício, a tight offside decision and their inaccurate finishing.
 Wolves, who began their Europa League campaign on July 25 last year against Crusaders in the second qualifying round, will next face Sevilla at Duisburg on August 11.
 Sevilla were also in Duisburg on Thursday where they took the lead against Roma after 22 minutes. Captain and right back Jesus Navas switched play with a cross and pass to left back Sergio Reguilón that caught Roma flat-footed.
 Reguilón surged past two defenders and into the box before sliding a low shot past Spanish goalkeeper Pau Lopez's foot.
 Sevilla added a second on the counter-attack in the 43rd minute.
 Lucas Ocampos burst down the right and after Lopez failed to cut out the low cross, Youssif En-Nesyri finished into an empty net from close range.
 Sevilla, coached by former Spain boss Julen Lopetegui, dominated as they stretched their unbeaten run to 18 games in all competitions and kept on course to add to their record five Europa League titles.
 In Basel, defender Fabien Frei scored the only goal in the 88th minute as the home team won 1-0 to complete an aggregate 4-0 victory over Eintracht Frankfurt.
 In Leverkusen, Moussa Diaby scored the only goal after 51 minutes to complete a comfortable victory for Bayer, who won 3-1 in Glasgow in March.
 In the quarter-finals, Bayer will make the short trip to Dusseldorf to face Inter Milan on August 10, Basel will play Shakhtar Donetsk in Gelsenkirchen the next night.

Pak opens 127-run lead

AP ■ MANCHESTER

England was bowled out for 219, a 107-run first innings deficit, after losing six wickets to Pakistan's leg-spinners on the third day of the first Test at Old Trafford on Friday.
 In tea Pakistan stretched its lead by another 20 runs on the third day despite Shan Masood's duck.
 Ollie Pope's 62 was as good as it got for the England batsmen, with the majority of those runs scored on day two, with Yasir Shah claiming 4-66 and Shadab Khan taking the last two wickets.
 England resumed the day on 92-4 with Pope and Jos Buttler hoping to continue the rescue mission they had started the previous evening.
 Pope had 46 to his name when he walked out but almost fell short of his half-century, deflecting Shaheen Afridi over the top of the stumps in an early scare. He got there soon after, off 81 balls, but the first hour was little more than a trial for the home side.
 Just nine runs came off the bat in that time, outscored by the 10 extras Pakistan contributed, with the three-pronged pace attack of Shaheen, Mohammad Abbas and Naseem Shah working up a head of steam.
 Buttler edged the third ball of Naseem's spell just short of second slip but after that it was a string of plays and misses. Somehow the duo reached the drinks break without any crucial nicks and when both hit their first boundaries of the day there was a small hope they had weathered the storm.
 Tentatively, the fifth-wick-



England batsman Chris Woakes, right, is bowled out by Pakistan's Yasir Shah during the third day of 1st Test at Old Trafford on Friday

stand crept up to 65, every run hard-earned, before Naseem produced a memorable delivery to claim his deserved reward.
 Pope was hardly to blame, reeling back and fending to gully after the teenager got one to kick viciously off the surface. Barring an early blow to the helmet for new man Chris Woakes, the remainder of the session was better for England as they eased the score out to 159-5.
 Buttler had scrapped his way through to 38 but fell to his second ball after lunch, leaving a gap between bat and pad that allowed Yasir enough room to part the stumps.
 The experienced spinner was buoyed by the success and made short work of Dom Bess, producing the turn and bounce that left Asad Shafiq with a diving catch at slip. He claimed his

Barca may need youth to get past Napoli

AP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona coach Luis Enrique said that he is ready to count on youngsters Ansu Fati and Riqui Puig to eliminate Napoli and advance to the Champions League final eight in Portugal.
 Barcelona will be without midfielders Sergio Busquets, Arturo Vidal and Arthur for Saturday's second leg of their round-of-16 tie. The match will be played five months after the Spanish side earned a 1-1 draw at Napoli before the pandemic brought most sports to a halt.
 "Both Riqui and Ansu are ready to play," Setien said on Friday. "They have performed and played pretty well and could perfectly well start



Barcelona fans of Xavi Hernandez and Andrés Iniesta, and rewarded him with a bigger role during the final stretch of the La Liga. Fati, 17, made a huge splash in Hyderabad, didn't train on Friday, while the others, who had gone to their respective homes in March, and are yet to return to the city.

(against Napoli). And if they do start, I am sure they will be guaranteed to play well!"
 The 20-year-old Puig has a good chance to earn his debut in Europe's top-tier club competition and Setien values Puig's passing and ball-control skills, which remind some Barca fans of Xavi Hernandez and Andrés Iniesta, and rewarded him with a bigger role during the final stretch of the La Liga. Fati, 17, made a huge splash in Hyderabad, didn't train on Friday, while the others, who had gone to their respective homes in March, and are yet to return to the city.
 On Friday, Sindhu was the first one to train with Gopi and former coach Park Te-Sang separately.
 "Sindhu trained today from 6:30am to 8:30am. Gopi and Park were also present. She will be training everyday at the same time this week. In the evening, she will have fitness training at Suchitra academy for agility and endurance," the Rio Olympics Silver-medallist's father, P V Ramana said.
 "She has been training at home so physically she is in

Sindhu, Praneeth & Sikki resume training

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

World champion PV Sindhu, along with B Sai Praneeth and N Sri Reddy, hit the courts for training on Friday under strict safety protocols at the SAI Pulella Gopichand Badminton Academy in Hyderabad, ending a four-month-long coronavirus-forced hiatus.
 This was after the Sports Authority of India (SAI) decided to resume the national badminton camp for the eight Olympic hopefuls following Telangana Government's approval on August 1.
 "I am very happy to have our elite shuttlers back for on-field training after this long break. We are fully equipped to resume training in a safe environment," Chief national coach



PV Sindhu poses for photograph after resuming practice at Pulella Gopichand Academy in Hyderabad on Friday

women's doubles player Ashwini Ponnappa and men's doubles pairing of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj, Saina, who is based in Hyderabad, didn't train on Friday, while the others, who had gone to their respective homes in March, and are yet to return to the city.
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Chirag-Satwik to wait for 2 weeks before deciding on attending camp

NEW DELHI: Wary of the Covid-19 threat, Olympic hopefuls Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy will wait for another couple of weeks before deciding on joining the national badminton camp, which resumed in Hyderabad on Friday.
 The men's doubles pair is currently apart with Shetty at his home in Mumbai and Rankireddy lodged at his base in Amalapuram in Andhra Pradesh.
 "It is great to hear that the training camp has resumed but we will have to wait for a couple of weeks before we take a call on joining the camp," the 23-year-old Shetty, who along with Rankireddy won the French Open and finished runners-up at the French Open last year, told PTI.
 Shetty said the coronavirus threat is real and he would not feel safe travelling at this point. Rankireddy is based closer to Hyderabad, which is just over 450km from his home town. PTI

Svitolina, Bertens withdraw from US Open

AGENCIES ■ NEW YORK

Women's world number five Elna Svitolina and Kiki Bertens, ranked seventh, on Friday joined a growing list of players withdrawing from this month's US Open due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
 "I understand and respect all the efforts they are putting to make it happen in a safe environment, but I still don't feel comfortable to travel to US without putting my team and myself at high risk," Ukrainian Svitolina, who reached last year's semi-finals in New York, said on Twitter.
 The United States has close to 5 million cases of Covid-19 and almost 160,000 people have died.
 "The situation around Covid-19 is still worrying and



Murray, Clijsters get wild cards

WASHINGTON: Former champions Andy Murray and Kim Clijsters were on Thursday both handed wild cards for the US Open.
 "Former world No 1 Murray, currently ranked 129 after a lengthy period battling a hip injury, narrowly missed direct entry.
 The 33-year-old won the first of his three Grand Slam titles at the 2012 US Open, becoming the first British male to win a major since Fred Perry in 1936.
 While Clijsters will be upon returning home from the US Open.
 "Our prime minister indicated yesterday that we should be quarantined for 14 days after coming back from the States,"

NSW offers to host 2021 Aus Open

SYDNEY: The Australian state of New South Wales (NSW) has offered to host the 2021 edition of the Australian Open along with other sporting events that are usually held in neighbouring Victoria.
 The Australian Open is first of the four Grand Slams during the season and usually starts in late January. Victoria's capital Melbourne has been the host venue since 1972. However, the state is currently under a second lockdown and has nearly 8,000 active Covid-19 cases, while NSW has about 800.
 "Some of these events down in Victoria are national events hosted in Victoria," NSW deputy premier John Barilaro told ZSW radio. "It's important for the economy, important for the Australian psyche when it comes to sport."
 "Absolutely we should be able to work with Victorians to find ways to make sure these all happen, these events are far too important in this crisis to not have."
IANS

Manpreet, 4 other players test corona +ve

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian men's hockey team captain Manpreet Singh and four other players have tested positive for Covid-19 but the national camp will resume in Bengaluru as scheduled with the four Grand Slams during the season and usually starts in late January. Victoria's capital Melbourne has been the host venue since 1972. However, the state is currently under a second lockdown and has nearly 8,000 active Covid-19 cases, while NSW has about 800.
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IANS



According to the SAI source all the players who have tested positive were part of a 10-member group who have travelled together and there are chances of more positive results come out.
 The SAI further said that all the five players initially tested negative in the rapid test.
 But when Manpreet and Surender Kumar to show some Covid-19 symptoms, they along with 10 other players, who had travelled together, were made to undergo the Quantitative RT-PCR test on Thursday.
 "...And the five have been found to be Covid positive. Though the test results have still not been handed over to SAI, but the state Government has informed the test results to the SAI authorities," the SAI said.