

OPINION 6
INDIA AT THE OLYMPICS
OVER THE DECADES

WORLD 8
FIRST 6 MONTHS OF 2021,
AF'S BLOODIEST SINCE 2009

SPORT 12
NEERAJ TARGETS
90M THROW NOW

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

Late City Vol. 31 Issue 219
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

NEW DELHI, MONDAY AUGUST 9, 2021; PAGES 12-33



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



DELIGHTED TO
BE NOMINATED:
RASIKA DUGAL
10 VIVACITY

DGCA steps in to clip the wings of airlines

As prices of India-UK tickets touch the skies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi-London economy class air ticket priced at ₹4 lakh! Yes, that is the price tag for a Delhi-London British Airways flight for August 26. Following an outcry over the exorbitant hike in fares by airlines after the United Kingdom (UK) allowed Indian travellers to enter the country, with certain conditions from Sunday, the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has asked airlines to submit details of fares, they have been charging for India-UK flights in August.

A round trip between New Delhi and London by Air India in general cost somewhere between ₹55,000 to ₹70,000,



but the prices skyrocketed just before August 8, the day the UK moved India from the 'Red List' to the 'Amber List', thus allowing Indian travellers to visit London.

On Saturday, Sanjeev Gupta, Secretary, Inter-State Council Secretariat, Union Home Ministry, had complained on Twitter that an economy class ticket on British Airways' Delhi-London flight for August 26 was priced at ₹3.95 lakh. He added that the economy class ticket on the

Delhi-London flights of Vistara and Air India for August 26 was also priced between ₹1.2 lakh and ₹2.3 lakh amid the rush for college admissions in the UK. The relaxation from UK, too, has come at the time when huge traffic is expected on the Delhi-London route because of the admissions.

Officials of the DGCA said that it has asked the airlines that operate India-UK flights currently to submit details about their fares. According to officials, the data collected by the

DGCA on Sunday shows the minimum one-way economy class fares on the Delhi-London nonstop flights during August. The fares range from ₹1,05,191 to ₹1,21,356 for Vistara and ₹1,28,916 to ₹1,47,544 for British Airways on different days this month. For Air India and Virgin Atlantic the minimum fare this month is ₹1,15,936 and ₹1,28,916, respectively.

Vistara, which currently operates flights on the Delhi-London as well as the Mumbai-London route, said on Sunday: "Pricing is always a function of supply and demand. There are only 15 flights a week allowed currently on the India-UK route for Indian carriers and when there is relaxation and more capacity allowed, it will automatically bring down prices."

While there have been lower and upper limits on all domestic airlines in India since May 25 last year, no such limits have been imposed on international airlines.

Continued on Page 2

'Covid-19 vax combo' gives more protection

Mixing Covaxin, Covishield jabs results in better immunogenicity, says ICMR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has said that a study on mixing and matching of two Covid-19 vaccines — Covaxin and Covishield — showed better immunogenicity than two doses of the same vaccine.

The study was conducted on 18 people of Uttar Pradesh's Siddharth Nagar who mistakenly received doses of two separate vaccines a few months ago.

The finding of the study, which has been uploaded on medRxiv, but is yet to be peer-reviewed showed that immunisation with a combination of an adenovirus vector platform-based vaccine, followed by inactivated whole virus vaccine, was not only safe but also delivered better immunogenicity.

Covishield, manufactured by Pune's Serum Institute of India, is the adenovirus vector platform-based vaccine, while Covaxin, developed and man-

ufactured by Bharat Biotech and the ICMR, is the whole virus vaccine.

The subject expert committee of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation had in July recommended a trial of mixing Covishield and Covaxin. The trial will be conducted by the Christian Medical College in Vellore on 300 healthy volunteers.

While that will be a proper clinical trial to investigate the effectiveness of the cocktail of Covishield and Covaxin, the ICMR's study titled 'Serenidipitous Covid-19 Vaccine-Mix in Uttar Pradesh, India: Safety and Immunogenicity Assessment of a Heterologous Regime' was based on the goon-up that took place in May. There was no immediate adverse impact of the mix-up on the beneficiaries.

Now, a further study has revealed that the mix-up has actually worked in their favour

as the beneficiaries have more protection than those who have received two shots of the same vaccine.

"Though India so far has followed homologous approaches (two doses of one vaccine) with Covishield and Covaxin, eighteen individuals, under the national programme, inadvertently received Covishield as the first jab and Covaxin as the second," it said.

"To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study which reports the effects of heterologous prime-boost vaccination with an adenovirus vector vaccine followed by an inactivated whole virus vaccine," the researchers said.

The researchers compared the safety and immunogenicity profile of those people who received two doses of different vaccines, against that of individuals receiving either Covishield or Covaxin.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

ITBP INDUCTS 2 WOMEN OFFICERS IN COMBAT
Mussorie: The India-China LAC guarding Indo-Tibetan Border Police force on Sunday commissioned its first two women officers for combat after they completed their training. P2

HOPEFUL IT PANEL WILL TAKE UP PEGASUS: SHASHI
New Delhi: Chairman of the Parliamentary panel on information technology Shashi Tharoor on Sunday said BJP members disrupted the committee's meeting on July 28 as they did not want the Pegasus allegations to be discussed and the officials who were to testify "appear to have been instructed not to attend." He expressed hope the snooping issue would be taken up by panel going forward. P4

DELHI TO TAKE 1 MORE YR TO VACCINATE ITS ADULTS
New Delhi: It will take another year to vaccinate all eligible beneficiaries aged above 18 in the national Capital at the present rate of Covid-19 vaccine supply, the health department has told the DDMA.

LAST CHANCE TO GET GRIP ON CLIMATE: UK MINISTER
London: Alok Sharma, the UK Minister in charge of the COP26 climate summit talks in Glasgow in November, on Sunday warned that the meeting hosted by Britain later this year is the world's last chance to get a grip on climate change. He also defended his recent hectic travel agenda, came under some media criticism for his ministerial exemption from Covid-19 self-isolation rules. P8

2 held for making derogatory posts against judges, judiciary

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has arrested two more persons in an ongoing investigation of a case relating to making derogatory posts on social media against judges and the judiciary.

The two arrested accused, Pattapu Adarsh and Lavamuru Samba Siva Reddy, will be produced before the Competent Court, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, officials said.

Earlier on July 28, the agency had arrested two accused — Dharmi Reddy Konda Reddy (currently in judicial custody) and Pamula Sudheer (currently in police custody till August 10).



The first arrest in the case was made by the CBI on July 9. The accused Lingareddy Rajasekhar Reddy, earlier working in Kuwait, was also remanded to judicial custody by the court.

Till now, five people have been arrested by CBI in the case. The CBI had registered a case on November 11 last year against 16 people and took over

the investigation of 12 FIRs from the CID, of Andhra Pradesh. The cases were taken over by the CBI in pursuance of the orders of the Andhra Pradesh High Court in response to a writ petition.

The original FIRs were registered on the complaints from the Registrar General of the Andhra Pradesh High Court. The cases were registered under various sections of the Indian Penal Code relating to promoting enmity between various groups on grounds of religion, intentional insult and criminal intimidation besides relevant provisions of the Information Technology Act.

Continued on Page 2

NIA raids 56 places in J&K in Jel terror funding case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Sunday conducted searches at multiple locations in 14 districts of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) in connection with the Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) terror funding case.

The searches were conducted in conjunction with the Jammu & Kashmir Police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) at 56 locations in Srinagar, Budgam, Ganderbal, Baramulla, Kupwara, Bandipora, Anantnag, Shopian, Pulwama, Kulgam, Ramban, Doda, Kishtwar and Rajouri districts of the Valley.

The agency conducted the searches at the premises of office-bearers of the banned association, its members and also offices of trusts purportedly run by the JeI. During the searches, various incriminating documents and electronic devices were seized from the premises of the suspects.

The case was registered by the NIA on February 5 this year following an order from the Union Home Ministry relating to separatist and secessionist activities of the JeI, under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, even after its proscription on February 28, 2019, the agency said.

"The members of the organisation have been collecting funds domestically and abroad through donations particularly in the form of Zakat,



Fireworks at the stadium during the closing ceremony of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics on Sunday in Tokyo

Rewards rain on India's Olympians

From pizzas to free air travel, winners get it all

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

From pizzas to free air travel, rewards are raining on the Indian athletes who won medals for the country at the Tokyo Olympics. As a token of appreciation, Go First, previously known as GoAir, on Sunday announced free travel for all six Indian athletes and the men's hockey team who won medals at the Tokyo Olympics. A Bengaluru-based regional carrier Star Air, which connects



Athletes from India take a selfie during the closing ceremony in the Olympic Stadium at the 2020 Olympics on Sunday in Tokyo

13 cities in India, offered the medal winners a lifetime of free travel. IndiGo airlines had announced on Saturday that it would offer unlimited free air

travel to javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, who won the only Gold medal for India, for one year.

Continued on Page 2

TOKYO 2020 MEDAL TALLY				
Country	G	S	B	
USA	39	41	33	
China	38	32	18	
Japan	27	14	17	
GBritain	22	21	22	
ROC	20	28	23	
Australia	17	7	22	
Netherlands	10	12	14	
France	10	12	11	
Germany	10	11	16	
Italy	10	10	20	
India	1	2	4	

Your key to a bright future GUARANTEED

Plan No. 862 LIRE 812N339V01
(A Non-Linked, Non-Participating, Individual, Life Assurance Savings Plan)

Also Available Online

Get **Guaranteed Additions*** every year

- Age Eligibility: 90 days - 60 years
- Basic Sum Assured: ₹1 Lakh - No Limit
- Policy Term: 15 to 20 years
- Premium Paying Term: Policy Term minus 5 years
- Loan Available

Call Centre Services (022) 6627 6827

*Guaranteed additions @ ₹50/- per thousand Basic Sum Assured will be added at the end of each policy year till maturity/death in case of inforce policies.

For details, contact your Agent/Nearest LIC Branch/visit www.licindia.in or SMS YOUR CITY NAME to 56767474

Follow us on Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Email

REMARK: LIC SERVICES THROUGH CALL AND WEBSITE ARE AVAILABLE ONLY IN SELECTED CITIES. LIC is not involved in activities relating to insurance policies, amounting to an investment of premiums. Public hearing shall be held as required to bring a policy complaint. For more details on this fact, terms and conditions, please visit sales brochure carefully before finalising a sale.

Has Pal Anshu Santh

In a first, ITBP inducts 2 women officers in combat

Mussoorie: For the first time, two women officers joined Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) as Assistant Commandants on Sunday after they passed out from ITBP Academy in Mussoorie. The rank ceremony was held at the Academy in presence of Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami.

The ITBP started the appointment of woman combat officers as company commanders through UPSC/CAFPE exams in 2016. The two officers are Prakriti and Diksha (both officers go by their first name).

The two women combat officers who are part of 42 Assistant Commandants (GD)

and 11 Assistant Commandants (Engineer) participated in the passing-out parade conducted at the academy.

Prakriti is an electrical engineer and Diksha is the daughter of serving Inspector Kamlesh Kumar in the ITBP. During the passing-out parade, CM Dhami told the officers, "You are lucky that you have got the opportunity to serve ITBP, which is deployed on the borders of Tibet and China."

During the event, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) force released the first-ever book on its history titled "History of ITBP". The book

has been published in view of making a reference volume for factual history and knowledge of the force to officers and its troops. The paramilitary force said the book will also be useful for administrative and training purposes for in-depth details as the official history of the force, informed the ITBP.

There was no such book on the ITBP available till this publication, said ITBP Spokesperson, Vivek Kumar Pandey, adding "it contains historical achievements of the force since its inception". The book is in English and reflects different facets and facts about historical developments in the force over the years. **PTI**



Devotees offer prayers on the occasion of Anuvahya in front of the closed Koniarnam temple ahead of the third wave of Covid-19, in Coimbatore on Sunday **PTI**

Delhi: DDA asks Environ Min to allow compensatory afforestation for some projects in nearby States

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a view of a shortage of land in the Capital, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has requested the Union Environment Ministry to allow compensatory afforestation in adjoining states if forest land is acquired in the city for Central projects.

The ministry's Forest Advisory Committee discussed the issue in June-end and requested additional information from Delhi authorities to ascertain how the proposal for relaxed compensatory afforestation norms can impact the city's green cover.

"There is very limited land available in Delhi for compensatory afforestation. It had been planned that 15 percent of

Delhi's area will be set aside for green cover.

"The area is already saturated... either due to plantation or other public facilities coming up on it. So, we don't have vacant non-forest land for compensatory afforestation," a DDA official said. According to the guidelines issued under the Forest Conservation Act, compensatory afforestation is to be carried out on suitable non-forest land, equivalent to the area proposed for diversion, at the cost of the user agency.

Compensatory afforestation can also be raised in degraded land, twice in extent of the forest area diverted, in case of the projects implemented by the Central government or public sector undertakings.

The guidelines also state that

in exceptional cases where land for compensatory afforestation is not available in the same state or Union Territory, non-forest or degraded land for CA can be identified in any other state or UTs for projects of the central government or PSUs, the official said.

"So, we have requested the ministry to allow compensatory afforestation for central government projects in nearby states as we have been finding it very difficult to identify non-forest land in Delhi," he said.

In its latest meeting, the FAC observed that any relaxation in the compensatory afforestation norms will "ultimately lead to reduction in forest cover of Delhi which is not a desirable situation for residents of Delhi in the present and in the future".

Cabinet Secy warns officers of action if they fail to attend I-Day event at Red Fort

New Delhi: Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba has warned officers invited for the Independence Day function at the Red Fort that a "serious view" will be taken if they fail to attend the event.

In a communication to the secretaries of all union ministries and departments, Gauba said the Independence Day flag hoisting ceremony at the Red Fort, from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi will also address the nation, has its own significance and the officers invited for the function are expected to attend.

"It has been observed that some of the invited officers fail to attend the ceremony. This is inappropriate considering that the occasion is of great national importance. There is clearly a need to remind the officers that it is their duty to attend the Independence Day ceremony," he said.

In his letter, Gauba also said that in view of social distancing requirements due to the COVID-19 pandemic, officers of only joint secretary level and above have been invited for the ceremony this year.

"You may suitably advise all officers of your ministry/department, who are invited to the independence day ceremony, to attend the function. You may also like to caution them that a serious view can be taken of their absence on this occasion," Gauba told the secretaries. **PTI**

HC to hear CBI's plea in INX Media corruption case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court is scheduled to hear on Monday the CBI's plea in the INX Media corruption case involving Congress leader P Chidambaram and his son Karti. The CBI has challenged a trial court's order directing the agency to allow inspection of documents kept in the 'malkhana' (room where case properties are kept) by the accused and their counsel.

The plea is listed for hearing before Justice Mukta Gupta.

The high court had on May 18 stayed trial proceedings in the case involving Chidambaram and his son Karti.

It had also issued notice and sought responses of Chidambaram and others on the CBI's plea.

The CBI has sought to set aside the special judge's March 5, 2021 order to the extent that it directed the CBI to

allow inspection of documents kept in malkhana by the respondents/accused/their counsel.

Besides, the CBI has also sought setting aside the observations in the order which says that the agency is required to file or produce before the court all the documents collected by it during investigation.

The trial court had also said that the accused are also entitled to copies of such documents or inspections thereof, irrespective of the fact whether they are being relied upon by the CBI or not. The CBI had registered its case on May 15, 2017, alleging irregularities in a Foreign Investment Promotion Board clearance granted to INX Media group for receiving overseas funds of Rs 305 crore in 2007 during Chidambaram's tenure as finance minister.

Thereafter, the ED had lodged the money laundering case.

The CBI had said this case involved

high level of corruption with wide ramifications on society and while the accused have a right to a fair trial, the collective interest of the society cannot be impinged.

"A fair trial is not what the accused wants in the name of a fair trial but must soothe the ultimate justice. Although right of fair trial of the respondent/accused was not impinged, since all documents relied upon by petitioner-CBI were provided to the respondents/accused...," it has said.

It has added that it is trite that the right to fair trial is not singularly absolute, as is perceived, from the perspective of the accused and it also takes within its ambit and sweep the rights of the society at large.

The agency has contended that the very essence of trial is to unearth the truth for which the court cannot assist the accused in search of a plausible defence.

AP Govt reappoints Subba Reddy as TTD Board Chairman

Amaravat: The Andhra Pradesh Government on Sunday reappointed Y V Subba Reddy, Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy's uncle, as the Chairman of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Board, ending a lot of speculation over his future.

Subba Reddy, a former MP served as TTD Board Chairman for a two-year term till June this year.

Speculation had been rife that he would be either sent to the Rajya Sabha next year or made a member of the AP Legislative Council and inducted into the state Cabinet.

Though some other names did the rounds for the coveted TTD Chairman post, the Chief Minister relied on his uncle only, sources in the ruling YSR Congress said.

Accordingly, Principal Secretary G Vani Mohan issued a formal order constituting the TTD Board with Subba Reddy as Chairman as per the AP Charitable and Hindu Religious Institutions and Endowments Act, 1987.

The other members would be appointed shortly, the Principal Secretary said in an order. **PTI**

CIABC hails Delhi liquor licence allotments but cautions against high bid prices

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) has, while welcoming the successful allotment of retail vendis through bidding, cautioned against high prices of alcohol licences in Delhi and hoped that high auction prices are not passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices, or to manufacturers in the form of demands for undue discounts.

"Whilst we compliment Delhi Government for high revenues collection, we also urge it to ensure that such high prices are not passed on consumers in form of higher prices, or to manufacturers in form of discounts. Neither of the two will be good for long term health of the industry," CIABC Director General Vinod Giri said in a statement on Sunday.

"We hope that the bidders have made realistic estimates of the market and are able to achieve that without undue stress to themselves or to other stakeholders," Giri added.

Notably, in the auction of liquor licences in 20 out of 32 zones in the National Capital after the announcement of new liberalized excise policy, the Delhi government has earned a record Rs. 5,300 crore, while another Rs.3,000 crore are likely to be earned from the remaining areas of licences.

"There has been visible excitement and sense of anticipation around the tendering for Delhi liquor retail vendis. The outcome has opened up Delhi trade to experienced retailers, not only from the city, but also from other parts of the country. It should help bring in new ideas and innovation to uplift the quality of liquor retailing in Delhi. Distribution of licenses amongst diverse groups should also weigh in against formation of trade cartels which was and remains one of our major concerns," said Giri.

Jyotiraditya Scindia conducts aerial survey of flood-hit areas in Gwalior-Chambal region

Guna (MP): Union Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Sunday conducted an aerial survey of flood-hit areas of the Gwalior-Chambal region and directed officials to restore public services on priority.

Taking a jibe at Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath, who conducted aerial surveys of the flood-affected region on Saturday, Scindia said that such high prices are not passed on to consumers in form of higher prices, or to manufacturers in form of discounts. Neither of the two will be good for long term health of the industry," CIABC Director General Vinod Giri said in a statement on Sunday.

"We hope that the bidders have made realistic estimates of the market and are able to achieve that without undue stress to themselves or to other stakeholders," Giri added.

Notably, in the auction of liquor licences in 20 out of 32 zones in the National Capital after the announcement of new liberalized excise policy, the Delhi government has earned a record Rs. 5,300 crore, while another Rs.3,000 crore are likely to be earned from the remaining areas of licences.

"There has been visible excitement and sense of anticipation around the tendering for Delhi liquor retail vendis. The outcome has opened up Delhi trade to experienced retailers, not only from the city, but also from other parts of the country. It should help bring in new ideas and innovation to uplift the quality of liquor retailing in Delhi. Distribution of licenses amongst diverse groups should also weigh in against formation of trade cartels which was and remains one of our major concerns," said Giri.

wherever I undertake such surveys, I make it sure to visit those places on the ground as well to assess the actual problem being faced by the people. My feet are always rooted to the ground. I am always right in just aerial surveys. Anyway, this is a crisis time and the ruling party, as well as opposition members, are first the public servants, and therefore, they should serve the people with dedication," the Guna royal said.

After conducting the aerial survey, Scindia discussed the situation with ministers and officials. He asked them to restore public services on priority. Scindia also directed them to provide relief to the people in the region without delay and also the drinking water. He said transmission lines and transformers are repaired immediately and power restored. Also, he asked officials to ensure speedy distribution of food grains even in those areas where roads are damaged, and evictions are undertaken.

"People are aware of the reality of that party (Congress) and their ideology. They are not bothered about the people's lives and believe in doing cheap politics," he added. **PTI**

Khattar visits Ravi Dahiya's home in Sonipat; Vij meets Neeraj Chopra's parents in Panipat

Chandigarh: Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar met the family of wrestler Ravi Dahiya, who won silver medal at the ongoing Tokyo Olympics, while Home Minister Anurag Singh went to Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra's home in Panipat to congratulate his parents.

Dahiya's family and representatives of Nahri village in Sonipat expressed gratitude to the chief minister for his moral support and creating a harmonious environment for them to grow and perform at the international platform, according to an official statement here on Sunday.

The chief minister will be congratulating the parents of the wrestler at his native Nahri village, also resolved several issues of the area on the spot, it said. Among the family members present along with Khattar's representatives were Ravi Dahiya's father Rakesh and uncle Mukesh Dahiya, members of the Nahri Gram Panchayat and former sarpanch of the village.

At star javelin thrower Chopra's home in Panipat, Vij congratulated the family, saying he has made the country proud.

After honouring Chopra's parents with a turban and a shawl, Vij bowed down and touched their feet.

"I have come to touch the feet of the parents of the son-of-the-soil who has brought laurels to the entire nation," he told reporters later. Vij said, "The country is proud from one Olympics to the other in the hope of winning a gold in athletics. That wait is over now and Neeraj has fulfilled that dream. His performance will encourage more sports persons to achieve heights of glory."

Replying to a question, he said if Chopra wants to set up an academy to train youngsters, the government will consider. Chopra's father Satish said that the Olympic champion will be arriving in India on Monday evening. He said once he is back in the country will the family know on which day he will reach his hometown.

Meanwhile, during Khattar's visit to Dahiya's home, village representatives presented a demand letter to the chief minister in which grievances of the people of the area were listed. Khattar immediately took up the grievances and asked the officials concerned to resolve them on priority basis. Among the key issues, which the representatives shared with the chief minister, was the problem of water drainage in the area. **PTI**



A view of roads leading towards Ban Ganga Darshani Deodi Mata Vashno Devi temple in Katra on Sunday **PTI**

Rewards rain on... From Page 1

This year is being seen as India's best showing at the Olympics yet, with athletes finishing the campaign with one gold, two silvers, and four bronze medals for the country.

"A token of appreciation for those who brought us glory at #Olympics2021. We are happy to offer free travel on our network for 5 years to all medal winners," Go First said in a tweet.

The airlines also tagged the Twitter handles of the Indian athletes who won medals at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. "The seven Olympics medalists Mirabai Chanu (weight-lifting), PV Sindhu (badminton), Lovlina Borgohain (boxing), the men's hockey team, Ravi Kumar Dahiya (wrestling), Bajrang Punia (wrestling) and gold medalist Neeraj Chopra (javelin throw) will be provided free air travel for any Go First sectors for the next five years," Go First noted.

On the other hand, Star Air said it is offering a lifetime of free air travel for the Tokyo 2020 medal winners. "Star Air congratulates all the Indian Olympic Champions of Tokyo 2020," a tweet posted from the airline's Twitter handle read.

'Covid-19 vax combo... From Page 1

The study showed that the immunogenicity profile against Alpha, Beta and Delta variants in the heterologous group was superior. "We compared the safety and immunogenicity of them (18 individuals) against that of those receiving either Covishield or Covaxin. Lower and similar adverse events following immunisation in all three groups underlined the safety of the combination vaccine-regime.

"The immunogenicity profile against Alpha, Beta and Delta variants in the heterologous group was superior and the IgG antibody and neutralising antibody response of the participants was also significantly higher compared to that in the homologous groups," the study stated.

These findings have an important implication for the Covid-19 vaccination programme where heterologous immunisation will pave the way for induction of improved and better protection against the variant strains of SARS-CoV-2, the researchers underlined.

"Such mixed regimens will also help to overcome the challenges of shortages of particular vaccines and remove hesitancy around vaccines in people's mind that could have genesis in programmatic errors' especially in settings where multiple COVID-19 vaccines are being used," they said.

DGCA steps in to clip the wings... From Page 1

The UK Government had earlier placed India on its 'Red List' barring Indians from travelling to the UK in the wake of the second wave of the pandemic in the country. Now that India has been moved to the Amber List, Indians are allowed to travel to the UK but will have to follow the home quarantine guidelines even if they are fully vaccinated as neither Covishield nor Covaxin is recognised by the UK authorities. But the relaxation will now ensure that students and professionals can travel to the UK and can quarantine at home or in any place of their stay. The airlines do not have an unlimited quota of flights between the UK and India which has pushed up the demand. Scheduled international passenger flights have been suspended in India since March 23 last year amid the coronavirus pandemic. However, limited special international passenger flights have been operating since July 2020 under the air bubble arrangements formed with 28 countries, including the UK.

2 held for making derogatory posts against judges... From Page 1

"It was alleged that the accused, by intentionally targeting the judiciary, made derogatory posts on social media platforms against judges and judiciary, following some court verdicts delivered by the judges of High Court of Andhra Pradesh," the agency said.

After registration of the case, CBI traced 13 of the 16 accused named in the FIR in the case on various digital platforms. Three out of them were found to be abroad. The CBI has so far examined five out of them, it said.

To investigate the larger conspiracy, the CBI has also identified certain persons including an MP, former MLA and also continued investigation into the role of other persons who were not mentioned in the FIR. Action was also initiated by the CBI, after it had registered this case to get objectionable posts removed from the social media platforms, public domains and a lot of such posts/accounts were removed from the internet.

NIA raids 56 places in J&K in Jel... From Page 1

Mowda and Bait-ul-Mal purportedly to further charity and other welfare activities, but these funds are instead being used for violent and secessionist activities," it said in a statement.

The funds raised by Jel are also being channelised to outlawed terrorist organisations like Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LET) and others through well organised networks of Jel cadres.

Jel has also been motivating impressionable youth of Kashmir and recruiting new members (Rukuns) in Jammu and Kashmir to participate in disruptive secessionist activities.

Class X to XII students can visit schools from today

FOR ADMISSION, BOARD PRACTICALS



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Sunday allowed students of Class 10 to 12 to visit schools from today for work related to admission, practical activities for board exam. It also allowed the health checkup camps situated on school campuses to resume.

Through an order issued Sunday evening, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) also permitted the opening of weekly markets across the city from Monday with a rider that the vendors and visitors shall follow Covid-19 appropriate behaviour.

The DDMA, however,

specified that schools, coaching centres and colleges will remain closed for teaching purposes. "Students of class 10 to 12 in the city are permitted to visit their schools from August 9 (Monday) for admission-related work including counselling, guidance and practical activities for board exam."

"Health checkups and referral services situated in schools or conducted from there can resume. Children of all age may visit these centres accompanied by their parents or guardians," the DDMA order stated.

It said the Directorate of Education shall issue appropriate guidelines with respect to these permitted activities to ensure that COVID-19 protocols are followed and children safety is ensured.

The order also said, "All weekly markets are allowed subject to strict compliance of guidelines issued by the government. No unauthorised weekly market is allowed to function."

The order added that roadside weekly markets will not be allowed.

Kejriwal Govt launches free food distribution programme for homeless

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday launched a food distribution programme for the homeless living in Government shelter homes across the city.

The programme to distribute free food was launched from a shelter home complex at Sarai Kale Khan in association with the Akshaya Patra Foundation — a non-Government organisation.

Kejriwal emphasised on how the Delhi Government has completely transformed the state of these shelters and made them habitable as the duty of a sensitive and responsible government. The Urban Development Minister of Delhi Satyendar Jain and the Chairman of the Akshaya Patra Foundation Madhu Pandit Dasa were also present at the launch.

Speaking on the occasion, Jain informed the gathering that meals were being provided at the shelters since the onset of the pandemic and will now be permanently provided twice a day in collaboration with Akshaya Patra.

The chief minister said "The poorest of the poor people reside in the shelter homes operated by the Delhi Government. They are those



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal distributes food during the launch of the Night Shelter Feeding Initiative in association with the Akshaya Patra Foundation
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

shelter homes. One can understand when the CM himself inspects the shelter homes then the entire bureaucratic machinery is compelled to work on the ground and improve the projects," he added.

"At present, the condition of the shelters is very good. As many as 209 shelter homes across the city are serving 6,000 people right now and around 12,000 people reside in them in the winters. In the last 6-7 years, you would not have seen any news about the High Court governing the Delhi Government over the shelters," the CM said.

shelter homes. One can understand when the CM himself inspects the shelter homes then the entire bureaucratic machinery is compelled to work on the ground and improve the projects," he added.

"At present, the condition of the shelters is very good. As many as 209 shelter homes across the city are serving 6,000 people right now and around 12,000 people reside in them in the winters. In the last 6-7 years, you would not have seen any news about the High Court governing the Delhi Government over the shelters," the CM said.

Bomb threat email by Al Qaeda at IGI Airport non-specific: BTAC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A bomb threat email, warning of a possible attack by the terrorist outfit Al Qaeda at Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), was received by Delhi Police on Saturday evening. The police and other security forces agencies have also beefed up security as email content of an attack in the next one to three days.

However, the threat was later found to be 'non-specific' and the Bomb Threat Assessment Committee (BTAC) was terminated from the airport after a search on Saturday evening. "An extra alert has been sounded and all security measures have been enhanced," said an IGI official.

According to sources, an email was received by police at about 5:30 PM on Saturday following which police alerted the airport and the Airport Operations Control Centre (AOCC), with checks carried out on the airport premises.

"The email stated that Karanbir Suri alias Mohamad Lal and his wife Shabli Sharda alias Hasena are coming to India on Sunday from Singapore and plan to put the

Bomb on IGI in one to three days," said IGI in a statement.

On receiving the bomb threat email, the Security Operations Control Centre (SOCC) at the IGI airport also found out that a similar threat message was received in the recent past. The earlier message received in March also carried the names of the same couple and in similar language detailing the bomb threat.

"As per standard operating procedure (SOP), the airport took all security measures and informed all concerned agencies and put duty personnel on high alert. The SOCC also carried out an anti-sabotage check at all terminals of the IGI airport. Security checks at all access control points and vehicle parking points and at entry points were also intensified according to the airport authorities," stated the IGI statement.

"The BTAC was convened to examine the bomb threat. However, the threat was declared non-specific at about 7:18 PM on Saturday, following which the BTAC was terminated around 7:22 PM," the statement further added.

Mercedes-Benz inks pact with DSEU for mechatronics course

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Skill and Entrepreneurship University (DSEU) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mercedes Benz India to offer a highly specialised one year Advanced Diploma in Automotive Mechatronics (ADAM) course under the Auto Mechatronics Research Centre (AMRC) at the Okhla campus.

At the MoU Exchange ceremony organised with the senior leadership of the University and Mercedes Benz India, Shekhar Bhide, Vice President, Customer Services and Corporate Affairs while addressing the event said, "It is a pleasure for Mercedes Benz India to partner with the DSEU. The course curriculum will include training in electrical and electronic technology embedded systems, advanced automobile systems engineering which will assist a holistic development of students."

He emphasised that "The trainers will also be benefited from the course from capacity building exercises. Both students and trainers will attend guest lectures, go on field vis-

its, and be encouraged to enrol for apprenticeships."

The course will nurture future automobile engineers and provide experiential learning.

Bhide further added "It is understandable that in today's day and age, students are most concerned about placement when they complete a course, and hence, Mercedes Benz India with DSEU will extend placement support to all students. The admissions to the course are expected to be announced next month."

Vice Chancellor Prof. (Dr) Neharika Vohra said, "We are extremely glad to have collaborated with such a distinguished and experienced organisation. DSEU faculty as well as its students will greatly benefit from this highly advanced course and get insights of the field from an entirely new perspective."

Vohra further clarified, "The University has been established with the idea to provide the best opportunities to students to gain hands-on experience and inculcate industry placement support. This partnership is another step taken by the University to bridge the gaps between industries and students."



A rainy day in the national Capital
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

HC directs AAP Govt to decide as representation PIL for vaccination of street dogs

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court has directed the city Government to consider as representation a petition which seeks to 'protect the life of innocent street dogs' by ensuring their vaccination against canine distemper and parvo virus.

A Bench of Chief Justice DN Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh directed the authorities to decide the representation as per law and policy and as early as possible and practicable. The petitioner before court was lawyer Behal Mohod who claimed to have adopted several street dogs in the last five years, five of whom "could not survive due to poor medicare system in Delhi".

In his public interest litigation, Mohod said that one of his dogs died a painful death after contracting the canine distemper disease which is "dangerous like Covid-19" as it is transmitted from one victim dog to a healthy dog by air.

The petitioner got know by research that Canine Distemper Virus was/is very dangerous like Covid-19 with 100 per cent mortality rate. It was a very difficult moment for the petitioner as his beloved small-adopted dog was dying in front of him but he was helpless," the petition read.

Mohod argued that right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India was also applicable to street and stray animals who are entitled to the same protection and thus street dogs ought to be vaccinated against canine distemper and parvo virus.

45 PSA O2 plants commissioned in Govt hospitals: Health officials to DDMA

NEW DELHI: Forty-five PSA oxygen plants of 55.46 metric tonnes capacity have been commissioned in 45 government hospitals in the national capital as part of preparations for a possible third wave of Covid-19, health officials have told the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA).

According to the officials, around 160 PSA oxygen generation plants with a total capacity of 148.11 metric tonnes are being installed at

various government and private hospitals in the city.

While 66 plants are being installed in Delhi government hospitals, 10 are being set up in central government hospitals and 84 in private healthcare facilities.

Forty-five PSA plants with a capacity of 55.46 MT have already been commissioned. Eighteen such plants of 21.06 MT capacity will be commissioned by August 15, health department officials said during a meeting of the DDMA on Friday.

Ten PSA plants of 9.29 MT capacity will be commissioned in the city and 10 plants of 5.67 MT capacity will be ready by October 15, they said.

Four liquid medical oxygen (LMO) storage tanks of 221 MT capacity have already been installed in the city and another such tank of 50 MT capacity has reached the GTB hospital and will be installed by August 10, the officials said.

Rain in G'gram leads to waterlogging

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

Heavy rain across Gurugram led to flooded roads on Sunday afternoon. Several city roads and major traffic junctions witnessed waterlogging. However, due to Sunday, the traffic was normal.

Due to unprecedented rainfall, few areas and roads had got affected by water-logging on Sunday. With the support of engineering staff of civic bodies and traffic police, excess water was drained off and vehicular movement was sustained," said a civic body official.

The Delhi-Jaipur Expressway was also witnessed waterlogging. Not only highway and State highways Gurugram's major roads like Hero Honda Chowk, Signature Tower, Bansa Chowk, Huda City Centre Road and more were found to be waterlogged. "The crucial points" where the waterlogging witnessed are Hero Honda Chowk, Rajiv Chowk, Signature Tower Chowk, Bansa Chowk, Huda City Centre Road, Subhash Chowk, Sohna Road, Golf Course Extension Road, the main Sohna Chowk,



Maharana Pratap Chowk, Atul Kataria Chowk, IIT Manesar Chowk, HUDA City Centre Road, Sukhrali Road, old Delhi-Gurugram Road, Sector 30 underpass, Sector 22-23 Road, between Jawala Mill and Dundahera and service lane of the eastern side of the highway.

Many social media users shared pictures of multiple Gurugram stretches and streets waterlogged after the rain. Many residents took to Twitter and complained about waterlogging paralysing normal life in several parts of Gurugram. Pictures and videos of vehicles and people wading through ankle-deep rainwater are doing rounds on social media.

"We have improved upon our infrastructure in last three years, which kept the city running even during the heavy downpour. We will learn from our experiences and ensure that areas and junctions which experienced waterlogging, can be improved upon for the future," a civic body official added.

On the other hand, the police department has done a commendable job during and after the rainfall as 2500 police personnel including Station House Officers (SHOs) were deployed across the district to ensure the stretches remained clear.

Man firing shots in Paschim Vihar viral video held

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested a man along with his friend for firing shots during a birthday celebration in outer Delhi's east Paschim Vihar area. They were arrested after the police took cognisance of a widely circulated video showing the man firing shots in the air at the birthday celebration organised on the rooftop of a house.

The police said the purported video, posted on the social media on the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday showed the accused -- Sumit Tanwar -- firing shots in the air.

According to Parvinder Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Outer District, taking cognizance of a video on social media, a case under section 336 (act endangering life or personal safety of others) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been registered at Paschim Vihar East police station.

"During enquiry, the rooftop in the video was identified. On August 4, Tanwar, a



resident of Guru Harkishan Nagar here, was celebrating his friend's birthday at the house at Pushkar Enclave in Paschim Vihar, which is owned by another of his friend, Abhijeet Adana," said the DCP.

"In the purported video, Tanwar was seen firing a few rounds in the air from a firearm. The revolver used in the firing belongs to Tanwar's friend Adana, which is being verified. The two accused are being questioned for recovery of firearm," said the DCP.

Tanwar's father owns a factory of leather products in Jaipur and the accused is looking after the office in Delhi, while Abhijeet Adana is into the property dealing business."

BJP trying to privatise functioning of weekly markets, alleges AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and MCD in-charge Durgesh Pathak on Sunday condemned the BJP-ruled municipal corporation for allegedly planning to introduce proposal aiming to hand over the functioning of the weekly markets to the private contractors.

Pathak said that thousands of poor will lose their jobs after the system handed over to private players. "The private mafia will set up shops of its own people which will encourage corruption. The AAP will oppose this proposal in the upcoming standing committee meeting if this resolution is tabled in the house meeting. The party will also take to the streets and protest against such a move," he said.

However, Delhi BJP Spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said that the AAP was trying to mislead the shopkeepers by saying that MCDs will give contracts to private persons to organize the markets.



Kapoor said that the BJP proposal brought by the officers. "Under the leadership of Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta, all three municipal corporations are committed to ensure best livelihood for small shopkeepers of weekly markets and they will not be privatized till BJP is in power in civic bodies. These markets are operated by shopkeepers themselves and it will remain so in future too," he said.

Pathak said "On one side, Delhi's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is working for the betterment of those who are getting their daily wages by putting up shops at the footpaths of the weekly local markets as they have faced the most adversities during the Covid-19 pandemic. While on the other side, the Bharatiya Janata Party is planning to bring such proposal," he said.

The AAP leader further added that in Delhi, various weekly markets are opened in the different zones and the market operations are overlooked by the local association which is made up of people

from the local RWAs and people of the local weekly market so that there is no problem in the overall proper functioning of the weekly markets. "The BJP is bringing a proposal in order to sell the entire market operations of the weekly markets. Private contractors will be hired who will handle the functioning of the markets under this proposal," he said.

The event was presided by Madhu Pandit Dasa, Chairman, The Akshaya Patra Foundation, and Chanchalpathi Dasa, Vice-Chairman of the organisation. Delhi Urban Development Minister Satyendar Jain was also present on the occasion.

Dasa said, "Akshaya Patra is conscious of its responsibility towards society. We have always strived to assist the government's efforts to bring relief to people during emergencies. We will continue with this as long as we can."

28% of 60+ people show vaccine hesitancy: Study

Chennai: Vaccine hesitancy was prevalent among 27.6 per cent of people aged above 60 years while the same was present in 16.9 per cent between the age group of 18 and 44 years, a study by the Tamil Nadu government revealed on Sunday.

As many as 18.2 per cent of people between the age group of 45 and 59 years were also hesitant to receive the jabs, the survey conducted by the Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, in July across Tamil Nadu, said.

According to the study, vaccine hesitancy was observed in 19.7 per cent men and 18.4 per cent women, while 17.5 per cent people living in urban and

20.3 per cent in rural areas expressed 'unwillingness' to get inoculated. Some of the reasons for the vaccine hesitancy was fear of injections (48.4 per cent), fear of complications after receiving the jabs (57.6 per cent), long queue to get the jabs (22.5 per cent), no person to accompany (21 per cent).

About 59.9 per cent people faced difficulty in collecting details on where to receive the vaccines, while 24.5 per cent doubted the efficacy of the vaccines. The sample size was 1,596 people between 18-45 years, 771 between 45 and 59 years and 488 above the age of 60 years. As many as 1,401 men and 1,453 women were covered in the

survey conducted in the state. Vaccine acceptance was prevalent among 83.1 per cent people between 18-44 years, while it was 81.8 per cent between 45-59 years and 72.4 per cent above the age of 60 years. Nearly 82.5 per cent of those residing in urban areas and 79.7 per cent in rural areas were willing to get vaccinated, while 82.8 per cent people said the reason to get vaccinated was to prevent disease while 23.7 people said it prevents spread to others.

Following the results from the study, the department of public health said it would focus on awareness activities to address the misconceptions. **PTI**

Clock tower at Lal Chowk illuminated in Indian colours

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The iconic 'Clock tower' located in the heart of Srinagar at Lal Chowk, which mostly remained out of bounds especially for those interested in unfurling the national flag during Republic Day and Independence day celebrations during trouble-torn years, has now been illuminated with 'Colors of India' by the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) in the run up to the 75th Independence day celebrations.

The Mayor of Srinagar Municipal Corporation Junaid Azim Mattu was the first to post images of the illuminated clock tower on his twitter timeline. "We have illuminated the Clock Tower (Ghanta Ghar) at



Lal Chowk in colors of the Tricolour ahead of Independence Day. New clocks fitted," tweeted Mattu.

Netizens celebrated the decision to illuminate and congratulated the Mayor of Srinagar.

The same has now become the hot-spot for tourists and local visitors as they can be seen

posing for a selfie and family pic in front of the illuminated clock tower during late evening stroll in the area.

Another tourist landmark in the capital city, popularly known as 'Zero bridge', has also been lit up in the same color scheme to attract visitors during the week-long celebrations marking the 1-day celebrations.

The historic Lal Chowk has witnessed many historic events and political gatherings in the past.

Top leaders of the country including former Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru, founding president of the National Conference Sheikh Mohd Abdullah have made historic speeches in front of thousands of local residents.

Raut: Unless 50% cap relaxed, Maratha quota can't be restored

Mumbai: Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday said unless the 50 per cent cap on reservations is relaxed, the constitutional amendment on allowing states to prepare their own OBC list will not help and the Maratha quota cannot be restored.

Talking to reporters here after meeting Shiv Sena president and Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Raut said he discussed the issue and developments regarding it in Parliament with the CM. He said state Public Works Department Minister Ashok Chavan will hold a virtual meeting to inform leaders of all political parties about the status of the issue of Maratha

quota, which was quashed by the Supreme Court earlier this year.

The demand for a debate will be raised when the constitutional amendment issue comes up in Parliament, the Raja Sabha member said. "Unless the 50 per cent cap is relaxed, the Maratha quota cannot be restored," he said.

The Union Cabinet is learnt to have cleared a Constitution amendment bill that seeks to give power to states and UTs to make their own OBC lists.

The bill will now be introduced in Parliament for passage, sources said in Delhi on Wednesday. **PTI**

Fully vaccinated can travel in Mumbai trains from Aug 15

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a big relief to Mumbaikars, the Maharashtra Government on Sunday announced that fully vaccinated people could travel by suburban local trains in Mumbai from August 15, with a rider that a gap of 14 days was mandatory after taking the second dose of vaccine to board the train.

After weeks of speculation, the Maharashtra Government relaxed the norms to allow Mumbaikars and their counterparts in the satellite towns in Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) - who have taken two doses of vaccine -- to travel by suburban trains on a condition that the 14 days gap was mandatory for the people to board trains after taking the second dose of vaccine.

Interacting with the people across the state through a webcast, Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray said: "From August 15, people who have taken two doses of vaccine can travel by suburban local trains. But, the

people will have to wait for 14 days after taking the second dose of vaccine to board the train".

The chief minister said that the fully vaccinated people could get their train passes that will be available on smart phones, ward offices and suburban railway stations.

"Passengers can download train passes through the mobile app. Those who do not have smart phones can take photo passes from municipal ward offices in the city as well as suburban railway stations," Uddhav said.

The chief minister said that the state government might announce more relaxations for shops, malls, restaurants and places of religious worship after the state disaster management task force reviews the situation on Monday.

The chief minister said that the second wave of Covid-19 was still not over. "If we have to arrest the spread of virus, then the people will have to follow the pandemic protocols strictly. Though the pace of vaccination has increased, but it is not sufficient.

Maha toll dips to 151

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The daily Covid-19 deaths dropped to 151 and infections came down to 5,008 in Maharashtra on Sunday, even as 4,895 patients were discharged after full recovery from various hospitals across the state.

After the fatalities remained static at 187 for two consecutive days, the daily deaths came down to 151, while the infections came down from 6,061 on Saturday to 5,008 on Sunday.

With 151 fresh fatalities, the total number of deaths in the state increased from 1,33,845 to 1,33,996, while the infections -- with 4,895 new cases -- climbed from 63,47,820 to 63,53,328.

As 4,895 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year increased from 61,39,493 to 61,44,388. The recovery rate in the state dropped from 96.72 per cent to 96.71 per cent.

The total 'active cases' in the state increased from 71,050 to 71,510. The fatality rate in the state stood static at 2.1 per cent.

Will uproot Modi-Deb double engine Govt, says Abhishek

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Sunday launched a fierce attack on the BJP for unleashing a reign of terror in Tripura and vowed to uproot the Biplob Deb Government from the north-eastern State in 2023 Assembly elections.

The TMC's reaction came a day after alleged BJP men attacked Trinamool youth wing leaders from Bengal who were visiting Tripura's Dhalai district to attend a party programme in persistence of Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's bid to expand her party's base in the North East and elsewhere in the country.

"Tripura is a big sample of Narendra Modi's double-engine government ... where the opposition men are attacked every day ... there is no law and order in this State ... the Biplob Deb Government is running reign of terror in Tripura and the Trinamool Congress has come to liberate the local people from the BJP's oppression," Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee who rushed to the north-eastern State on Sunday said.

A cascade of TMC youth leaders including Jaya Dutta, Sudip Raha and Debangshu Bhattacharya were on Saturday attacked and their

vehicles' were damaged by BJP men, the Trinamool leadership alleged adding the police stood a silent spectator.

Subsequent to the attack 14 TMC men including the Bengal leaders were arrested by the police under National Disaster Management law. They were granted bail on Sunday by local court.

Banerjee rushed to Agartala on Sunday along with fellow MP Dola Banerjee and Bengal minister Batya Basu.

"Instead of reaching them to the hospital or providing them with basic medical help the injured leaders were arrested by the police," Banerjee who is also the nephew of the Bengal Chief Minister said wondering "is Tripura outside India? ... does the Indian laws not apply in this region? ... in every street corner the BJP men are standing armed with weapons and wherever our leaders are going they are attacking them with rods, lathis, bricks etc ... is this the sample of Modi's double-engine Government?"

Earlier Banerjee tweeted "the GOONS of BJP have shown their TRUE COLOURS! This barbaric attack on Trinamool workers reveals the 'GOONDA RAJ' in Tripura under Biplob's Govt! Your threats and attacks only prove your inhumanity. DO WHAT YOU CAN-CHECK-! Trinamool will not budge an INCH!"

Himanta to meet PM over Assam-Mizoram border dispute

New Delhi: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday to discuss the Assam-Mizoram border issue and the restoration of peace in the entire north-east.

The Chief Minister, accompanied by BJP MPs from Assam, will also meet other Union Ministers including Home Minister Amit Shah. According to sources, the ongoing unrest on the Assam-Mizoram border, as well as restoration of peace in the entire north-east will be the center of discussions during these meetings.

Sarma, who is in New Delhi since Saturday, was unable to meet Shah earlier due to some reasons.

Sources also said that the Assam Chief Minister also held one-on-one meetings with the state's BJP MPs on Sunday.

Last month, tensions heightened between Mizoram and Assam over the boundary dispute after six Assam policemen and one civilian were killed in a fierce gun battle between two states on July 26.

However, the two states in a joint statement agreed to take forward the Centre's initiative of letting neutral forces patrol the disputed areas of the inter-state border for maintaining peace. **Agencies**

PRESERVING TRIBAL LEGACIES THROUGH EMPOWERING POLICIES

Welfare measures for upliftment and empowerment of the tribals

- ◆ Chhattisgarh is one of the leading states in distribution of individual and community forest rights certificates
- ◆ 4200 acres of agricultural land acquired for steel plant in Bastar's tribal region of Lohandiguda returned to the farmers
- ◆ 718 cases registered against 944 tribals withdrawn; 218 tribals acquitted in 124 Naxal cases
- ◆ Swami Atmanand Government English Medium Schools providing equal opportunities for quality education
- ◆ Success of Malaria Mukht Abhiyan appreciated by UNDP and NITI Aayog
- ◆ Mukhyamantri Haat Bazar Clinic Yojana consistently delivering medical and healthcare services to 11 lakh tribals in remote areas
- ◆ Scope of Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana expanded to benefit tribals
- ◆ Remuneration for Tendupatta collection raised from ₹2,500 to ₹4,000 per standard bag, highest in the country
- ◆ In just 2.5 years, number of minor forest produce purchased at MSP increased from 7 to 52
- ◆ Shaheed Mahendra Karma Tendupatta Sangraha Parivar Samajik Suraksha Yojana providing social security to Tendupatta collecting families
- ◆ Promoting tribal art & culture at the international level
- ◆ Ram Van Gaman Tourism Circuit to develop new tourist centres in tribal regions

Bhupesh Baghel
Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh

“ The state of Chhattisgarh is fortunate that its population consists of indigenous people who enrich our culture, traditions and have shaped the history of the state. Jai Andivasi! Jai Chhattisgarh! ”

Pro Active - Pro People



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

Looking up

India has registered progress in the global sporting arena but there's still a long way to go

Tokyo 2020 has ended. All eyes are now on Paris 2024. The Indian contingent returns from Japan on a high with the highest ever tally of medals, including the first gold in track and field. India made a mark in new fields like golf and fencing while it found its spark in its old flame, hockey. The girls fared better, even though they came from diverse regions and classes. A greater emphasis was on individual sports that returned most of the medals. India was in news on the opening day of the Games and the eve of closing. It is now time for the questions as usual, as at the end of every Olympics. We are more than a billion of us and yet why do we get so few medals? The question is cliched. The answers are, too. However, there is some difference between now and the past. The interest taken by the Government and shown by the private sector is palpable though it is nowhere near what is expected of both. The Union Government claims to have overhauled the Sports Authority of India (SAI) after the indifferent Indian tale at the Rio Olympics of 2016. It is apparently less bureaucratized, less corrupt, more efficient and more considerate of players' interests. The complaints, however, remain, ranging from less nutritious food to inferior quality equipment, favouritism and ordinary coaching. These are systemic faults that dilute the impact of crores of rupees poured into the Authority and its various national camps.



There is an attitudinal fault in the country. It has to do with a casual approach to sports if it is not cricket. The game is the most popular in India even though hockey is said to be the national sport. Parents would not hesitate to support a child showing talent in cricket because the game is primarily seen as a means to earning money and fame, in that order. Otherwise, sports are considered a recreation. In a country where economic and social inequalities determine the contours of human existence, a talented child has to overcome four hurdles. One is that giving time to sports reduces chances of earning for the household. Two, sports can be acknowledged only after the player achieves a medal and brings in cash; else look for a well-paid job. Three, sports requiring attire that do not cover a woman's body are against the laws of some religions. Four, a lower caste person winning a sporting medal can still expect derision from the upper caste neighbours. There could be more such hurdles. The glimmer of hope is that the new generation of talented youngsters is ignoring these obstacles to fight their way out of the social quagmire and excel in their chosen fields. What they need is a structured support system, public and private, to foster them. Excise their fear of going hungry and ostracism and give them the hope they ask for. The strategising and making of championships come later.

Over the centuries, most Indians stayed aloof from war and perhaps from sport. Cricket has been an exception, in which modern facilities are available in the cities. But even these are not affordable by the poor although the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is lately rolling in wealth. I do not know whether we would pay sufficient attention in setting up an academy for the poor to provide for the vital need of diet and nourishment, currently unaffordable for many a family in our country. In this context, the Odisha Government deserves hearty congratulations for patronising hockey. On the contrary, West Bengal, which was once noted in football, allowed its clubs to recruit players from other States and even overseas. In the process, local players declined in numbers as well as quality. If other States could choose other games a la Odisha, it would be a great national service. It is also important to note that we were monopolists of the Olympic gold medal in hockey until 1960. Today, we are celebrating our men's hockey team winning the bronze at

PICTALK



Indigenous Aircraft Carrier Vikrant returns after successful maiden sea voyage, in Kochi

The protectors?

The threat to human rights and bodily integrity is the highest in police stations, says the CJI

Chief Justice of India NV Ramana has rightly pointed out that the weakest link in the legal system is the police station. At a National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) function, he said most of the human rights abuse takes place at the police stations. Indeed, a police station is the first post where an ordinary citizen has to go to get legal assistance and perhaps that is the most tedious task of all.



Often, the complainant is made to feel as if s/he is the criminal. No wonder an ordinary citizen is afraid to even step into a police station, let alone dare file a complaint. Police reforms have been on the anvil for several years. All legal luminaries agree that these reforms should take place, but that never happens. The police continue to operate as they did in the pre-independence era. Even the uniforms of police personnel remain what these were before Independence. The Chief Justice of India said that the use of third-degree and the way police behave at the thana level leaves much to be desired.

Indeed, a person's body integrity and dignity are sacrosanct and must not be meddled with, no matter how serious her/his crime may be. This is the basic premise of the rule of law and so a law officer must not and cannot stoop to the level of a street goon. Many reasons can be attributed to police atrocities and their conduct towards ordinary citizens. We have failed to transform the police system that was fashioned to operate in the colonial environment to the one for a welfare State. The lack of sensitisation and proper behavioural training does the rest. Often the personnel at the lowest rung are prejudiced. They behave in a casteist and communal manner, throwing all constitutional and legal provisions to the wind. In this scenario, not much can be expected till a complete overhaul of the police system. However, the CJI's observations are laudable; these can lead to far-reaching implications. He quoted Martin Luther King Junior in his address, "Every step towards the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering and struggle, the tireless exertion and passionate concern of dedicated individuals." We need dedicated people who care for human rights. A good start can be made by strengthening the free legal aid system and information dissemination, besides proper training to personnel to make police stations more law-abiding!

India at the Olympics over the decades

Unlike in the ancient times, sport has not been regarded as integral to Indian society, except for a few privileged families



PRAFULL GORADIA

Even as we celebrate our best ever Olympic performance this year in Tokyo, a retrospective view is in order. Much effort and money was invested by India in the 1982 Asian Games. However, at one event, the guest-in-chief was one of our cine superstars. When he approached the podium to award the medals, the audience erupted in wild applause, as if the players did not matter; the gold, silver and bronze winners were not Indian. The coach of one of the winning teams asked who this chief guest was, to which the rather chirpy reply was: "Don't you know him? He is our most famous cine star". To this, the coach's response was: "I now understand why a vast country like India is nowhere in sport".

Except for a few privileged families, sport has not been regarded as integral to Indian society. This wasn't so in ancient India; in the times of Mahabharata, proficiency in archery and other weaponry were a part of the education of the Pandava and Kaurava boys with Dronacharya as their guru. In the war that followed between the boys when they turned men, Dronacharya was a general.

Not in later times, sports did not travel or touch villages until recently. Governments seldom took any interest and most sports bodies were treated by their members as little political arenas for self-promotion. As a result, regional representation was more important than players' potential.

It is said, "The battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton". This implies how sports help make capable military officers of young men. Sports build the physique, introduce strategy and tactics in the lives of youth and teach how to outwit the opponent. While the East India Company and later the British Indian Government employed Indian soldiers, they confined their choice to what they labelled 'martial' communities, which meant a limited pool of selection in a vast country. In any case, most of those recruited were employed as sepoy, with no official exposure, a level they remained confined to.



Over the centuries, most Indians stayed aloof from war and perhaps from sport. Cricket has been an exception, in which modern facilities are available in the cities. But even these are not affordable by the poor although the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is lately rolling in wealth.



BUT IN LATER TIMES, SPORTS DID NOT TRAVEL OR TOUCH VILLAGES UNTIL RECENTLY. GOVERNMENTS SELDOM TOOK ANY INTEREST AND MOST SPORTS BODIES WERE TREATED BY THEIR MEMBERS AS LITTLE POLITICAL ARENAS FOR SELF-PROMOTION

Tokyo. Apart from the decline, hockey was an illustration of how not to be smug about one's success. As an instance, Indian players were adept at dribbling the ball while the rest of the world had adopted the technique of passing the ball from player to player as a replacement. For several players, Indian hockey could not adjust to Astroturf or mandatory wearing of shoes. Earlier, there were years when our hockey wizards won because they played barefoot.

In the 1936 Berlin Olympics, India faced Germany in the hockey final. At half-time, India led the hosts by only 1-0. Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda, who was present in the stadium, was concerned and visited the dressing room. He advised Dhyan Chand to play barefoot for the remainder of the match. The eventual score was India-5, Germany-1; Dhyan Chand scored three of the four goals. The result was not pleasing to Führer Adolf Hitler, who was also watching the contest. Nevertheless, he called Dhyan Chand later and offered him the rank of a colonel if the latter came over to Germany as his citizen.

The Olympic Games originated some 3,500 years ago in Greece as a mark of homage to God Zeus. To begin with, there were many Greek city States participating in the city of Olympia. In the early games, the events were very few but later increased. Chariot and horse racing came in. There were no medals but wreaths and garlands. When the Romans conquered Greece, the Games carried on until Emperor Theodosius I in 393 AD who disapproved of young men (there were no women participants) stripping. The Olympics were revived at the initiative of Baron Coubertin of France in 1896 at Athens.

The numbers of countries and players have been increasing, except at Moscow in 1980 because of the boycott by 60 nations led by the West to oppose the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The Olympics have also ended tragically in the form of the massacre by terrorists of a dozen Israeli athletes in the 1972 Munich Games.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PRIORITISE SPORTS AS ACADEMICS

Sir—India has cosmically performed at the Tokyo Olympics. The performance by our athletes and glories earned are appreciated wholeheartedly by the entire country. They set an extraordinary example as sons of them belong to poor families and are not as privileged as the others. If we celebrate their success, we need to stand with their struggle as well.

More priorities and better facilities should be extended to athletes. As we know, quite a many of the talented youngsters lack adequate support, which can be due to pressure from families or situations to focus more on academics than on sports. In this regard, the Governments should come forward to promote sports just like education, as Odisha did for hockey. More value should be attached to sports; it will result in a shower of glories for our country. One hopes that the performance of our athletes in the Tokyo Olympics will bring about a change in people's mindset towards sports.

Manoj Kumar Jena | Cuttack

TIME TO REOPEN MUMBAI SCHOOLS

Sir—Many principals, parents and students feel that schools in Mumbai should now be reopened as COVID-19 cases have dropped significantly. The Maharashtra Government must hold a meeting with the disaster management authorities to discuss the issue. An expert committee must be formed to examine the issue as several principals are of the opinion that schools could now be reopened as there is no danger, especially to the students. The fact of the matter is that by now frustrated, depressed, tense and anxious students are willing to come to school but their parents are against it and there is a need to convince them.

The parents and students should mentally prepare themselves as it has been over a year since the schools were shut down. Students have been taking online classes and things need to be normalised now with all precautions taken against COVID-19. At times, it gets difficult to understand what is being taught in online classes, so imparting education in a class-

Nothing to equal this glory



In winning the gold medal in javelin throw at the Tokyo Olympics, Neeraj Chopra did more than save us the embarrassment of having no gold medal; he ended the 120-year wait for a gold medal in athletics. There is nothing more coveted than that piece of shiny yellow metal that an athlete (and by extension his/her nation) receives at the Olympic podium.

We were elated by the Tricolour flying high and the National Anthem being played with an Indian standing on the Olympic victory podium in an event dating back to the ancient Greek Olympics. The maiden athletics gold conferred on Neeraj Chopra a certain immortality.

The thought that no fellow competitor should better his 87.58m mark over-

whelmed us in those anxious moments. In hindsight, these were not tantamount moments; it was an emphatic win. Neeraj was at his dazzling best during his first two throws; a human dynamo.

It is a tribute to his prodigious talent that he reached the pinnacle of his career at the young age of 23. The Olympic champion dedicated his medal to the legendary Milkha Singh and spoke of his deep indebtedness to his family, friends and coaching staff.

There were flashes of brilliance in hockey, badminton, boxing, wrestling and weightlifting, too. But India's overall performance was not quite worthy of a sporting nation. The total of seven medals fell far short of what we could have attained with greater commitment. No other country has as much untapped human resources as India. The gimmick of renaming stadia and awards won't do. It is unfortunate that the Government has recently slashed funds for sports. It must invest more in sports, a reliable barometer of a country's health and wealth.

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

SOUND BITE

The threat to human rights and bodily integrity are the highest in police stations. Custodial torture and other police atrocities are problems.

Chief Justice of India — NV Ramana

Our Government and the political parties are determined to hold the parliamentary elections as scheduled on October 10.

Iraqi Prime Minister — Mustafa al-Kadhimi

I feel she (daughter) is a better actor than me. It is so effortless, I just keep looking

Television actor — Shweta Tiwari

Neeraj is a focused athlete. He never wails under pressure and this is a very important factor in international competitions.

Former athlete — PT Usha

I humbly request our new Chief Minister to withdraw this order (according BSY the Cabinet rank).

Karnataka BJP leader — BS Yeddyurappa

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN DEALING WITH OTHERS

Every individual is different. This is what makes dealing with others a craft



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The ability to work with others is one of the basic requirements of life. It precedes things like climate change, nuclear disarmament, world peace, or indeed handling a virus. The moment a child feels hungry, it instinctively knows how to ask for a feed. This means sending a message to whoever is willing to listen. Usually, it is in the form of crying or making a sound seeking attention. If the child didn't have this capacity to deal with others, it would never get feed.

Gradually, the individual learns to communicate with gestures and movements. Sounds begin to fall in a pattern. Language competencies emerge. People learn to respond coherently and a dialogue begins. Language is embellished with an expressive and larger vocabulary. When needed, body language or facial expressions replace words to make communication subtler.

The purpose here is to reflect how dealing with others is basic to human existence. Moving beyond childhood, the infant grows into an individual with identifiable preferences. The individual enters a higher level of personality development and is conscious about how one can gain support. A person needs clothing, a place to rest, and begins to look for comfort. The person's range of relationships grows.



In teenage and adulthood, the individual recognises some people are easy to get along with and some are not. The issue is not of pick and choose. It is basic and bounded because the needs of food, shelter, clothing, and resources are limited to finding it from a bounded environment. This softens an institution such as a school or college or a social set-up like the family. The realities of society start surfacing. It becomes obvious that institutions and social groups are important. However, there is also a need to have contact with 'strangers' and the need to handle random, short-term interactive situations. One has to go out shopping and deal with a person at the billing counter for acquiring goods or fulfilling a need. One cannot risk being abrasive but one cannot also always marshal the necessary patience, attitude, or even the words to gain compliance. The art of dealing with others gets larger and bigger. Each individual has a distinct personality and expressions vary from person to person and even situation to situation. This is what makes dealing with others a craft.

Summing it up, one has to learn how to 'read' others and navigate very carefully to achieve one's goals without disrupting or annoying. However, temperament, ego, vocabulary, and above all the competency to think and talk becomes increasingly critical. One deals with others through words, gestures, eye contact. The list is long and dealing with others becomes complex. Tune and meter come in. Music and songs emerge. They get embedded in an environment of light and shade, comfort, and discomfort. The interplay of so many forces makes it challenging to stay in control.

Indeed, the only dimension one can have some control over is oneself: the choices of words, gestures, timing, voice inflection, and intonation matter. To be in total control is difficult but remains the ideal. Gradually, dealing with others becomes an interplay of reflex actions and conscious choices. Communicating slowly could help at times and communicating effectively requires a mellow personality. It requires a capability of simultaneously assessing the environment and consciously conveying what one seeks to convey. The range of excellence in doing so is often the discriminating factor between the quality of failure and the quality of success. This continuous journey is inherent in keeping life going. It requires skills of dealing with others.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant. The views expressed are personal.)



GWYNNE DYER

I first I was going to write about the 'Arab Problem', because there is not a single functioning democracy in the Arab world. The presidential coup in Tunisia has probably ended democracy in the one country that actually achieved it during the 'Arab Spring' of 2010-11.

In Syria and Yemen and Libya, attempted democratic revolutions led to dreadful civil wars - and now Lebanon, the closest thing to an Arab democracy for most of the past century (though always dysfunctional) is actually collapsing. In a once prosperous country, many people are close to starving, and desperate Syrian refugees are going back to live under Assad's regime.

I guess it was Lebanon that put me on this track. We went

there a few years ago because I wanted my wife to see the old Lebanon before ISIS came over the mountains and destroyed it, but in the end, that didn't happen. They did it to themselves instead. Why is the Arab world cursed?

But that's too melodramatic. The Arab world is an outlier, but not very far out. Consider the Philippines, the heir to not one but two non-violent democratic revolutions and a genuine democracy today - with a president who was legally elected five years ago and will soon leave office peacefully at the end of his one permitted term.

Rodrigo Duterte is also, by his own admission, a mass murderer whose death squads have killed thousands of people. Some were real drug dealers and some were 'false positives',



but as he would probably say, you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. And in all that time Duterte's public approval ratings have never fallen below 70%. There are a lot of people who will admire a strong leader, even if he is a killer. Leaving actual killers aside,

Video games: The new-age opium

The games are designed by experts trained in neurosciences, psychology, and human behaviour in order to make them addictive



GOVIND BHATTACHARJEE

A few years back, a young boy I knew intimately - a boy who excelled both in academics and outdoor sports - suddenly seemed to have lost his interest in both. The otherwise cheerful and outgoing boy abruptly turned into an introvert and his school grades started nosediving. The worried parents, both working, discovered that at the root of the problem was a video computer game the boy had become addicted to. They confiscated the CD, but the boy was too intelligent, and by then too addicted, to be deterred by such simple remedies. It took them a year of patient persuasion to motivate the boy to finally give up the gaming, but not before it had taken a toll on his physical and mental health.

This is a recurring story: countless parents have gone through similar agonies and many children have paid dearly for such addiction to video games. On August 2, pointing to the 'devastating adverse effect' of addictive online games on 'the development of children', an additional district judge in New Delhi wrote to the Prime Minister for banning two online games - Free Fire and PUBG India - on the lines of the government's earlier decision to ban one of the most popular mobile games called 'Player Unknown's Battlegrounds' (PUBG Mobile) in the country. Drawing attention to the fact that the long hours spent by children in playing such games wreak havoc on their studies and social behaviour, he pleaded that a law is framed to restrict exposure of children to such games. This suggestion merits serious consideration by the government, and not only for these two games.

India banned PUBG on September 2, 2020, along with 117 Chinese apps under Section 69A of the IT Act. PUBG was linked to Tencent, the Chinese multinational technology giant. The game is banned not only in India, but also in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Korea, Jordan, Israel, Iraq, and even its home country China, on account of its being too addictive and having serious effects on users' health without warning them about the dangers of long screen-times (as if it would have made any difference) and for propagating violence. But the effect of the ban in India was only temporary; in June this year, the app was again made available on Google's Play Store under a new avatar, 'Battlegrounds Mobile India', with some cosmetic changes like green blood instead of red (as if it reduces the effect of violent content), etc. It has been blamed not only for poor academic performance but also for violent behaviour and suicides among children, besides causing untold agony and distress to the hapless parents, prompting a Goanese minister to call it 'Demonic'. Faced with ban threats, PUBGearier tried to placate parents and the government by promising to put time limits for its use, which hardly addresses the real con-



PLAYING THESE GAMES RELEASES THE PLEASURE-GIVING NEUROCHEMICAL DOPAMINE IN THE BRAIN TELLING IT TO 'DO IT AGAIN'. STUDIES SHOW THAT GAMING CAN CHANGE THE STRUCTURE OF MANY REGIONS OF THE BRAIN INVOLVED WITH HIGHER COGNITION. THE DESIGNERS CONTROL THE PLAYERS' BEHAVIOUR BY PROVIDING SIMPLE STIMULI AND REWARD THEM AT STRATEGIC POINTS

(The writer is a former Director General of the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General of India and currently, a Professor at the Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management. The views expressed are personal.)



cerns and dangers of video gaming for children.

Numerous studies conducted all over the world have repeatedly drawn attention to the severity of their adverse effects on children, which include impeding their physical and mental development, increasing juvenile violence, and suicides. The games are designed by experts trained in neurosciences, psychology, and human behaviour in order to make them addictive. Playing them releases the pleasure-giving neurochemical dopamine in the brain telling it to 'do it again.' Studies show that gaming can change the structure of many regions of the brain involved with higher cognition. The designers control the players' behaviour by providing simple stimuli and reward them at strategic points.

Children, especially those with poor impulse control or struggling with studies and not knowing the consequences, are most vulnerable to fall prey to their evil charm. What follows is not only falling grades, but also sleep deprivation, fatigue, irritability when stopped from playing, increased anxiety, obesity, aggressive behaviour, and lack of interest in social interactions and other physical and mental activities essential for healthy growth. Video games provide an easy escape for the children from seeking more purposeful real-life relationships with friends. Studies using brain scans showed decreased activity in areas of the brain dedicated to self-control and an increase in emotional arousal while playing games that

use violence; it also desensitises them to violence in real life.

'Gaming disorder' is listed as a disease in WHO's 'International Classification of Disease' and many countries have started treating it. I know of an addicted boy who forgot how to speak and had to be treated and counselled for more than six months before relearning how to speak again. Yet governments have taken a benign stance all over the world, passing on the responsibility to parents instead, without realising the limitations of such an approach. The industry also has its proponents who forcefully argue that video games also have positive connotations in children's education, life skills, and brain functions, but these are far outweighed by their negative impacts.

Fifteen countries have banned some forms of video games. China has imposed a time limit of 90 minutes on weekdays, but they are difficult to regulate when played offline. The US Supreme Court refused to regulate the sale of violent video games in 2011, citing the First Amendment regarding freedom of speech which cannot be restricted by any law. The UK has a system of rating of games, like films, for different age groups, making it illegal to sell games rated 12, 16, or 18 to any child below that age; but these ratings are inapplicable to games bought online. India has no such system and no law to regulate video games, unlike the films for which we have the Central Board of Film Certification.

Video gaming is a multi-billion-dollar industry, more than the movies and DVDs combined. Covid-19 has been a 'tipping point' for online gaming, as the KPMG study titled 'Beyond the Tipping Point' noted. Confined to their homes for more than a year, both children and adults have sought their escape from boredom through online gaming in massive numbers. FY21 has seen a major boom in online gaming with over 433 million users, with estimated revenue of Rs 136 billion which is poised to grow to Rs 290 billion with 657 million users by FY25. India had about 400 video gaming companies, including respected names like Infosys, TCS, and Zensar. India is the number one market for video games, and domestic and foreign companies would use all their lobbying power to prevent any ban or regulation upon such lucrative business.

The Chinese government is now going all out against its own giant technology companies, the latest target being the for-profit online gaming industry. The next target could well be Tencent whose shares plummeted by 6.1 percent on August 3 after a Chinese state-owned media article called gaming the 'opium of the mind'. Already under regulatory fire, the company has lost \$400 billion in market value since February and its game may be ending in China. Before this lethal opioid enslaves all our children here, we need to act. Otherwise, it might be too before an obese and intellectually stunted generation comes of age to lead us.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE GOONS OF @BJP4TRIPURA HAVE SHOWN THEIR TRUE COLOURS! YOUR THREATS AND ATTACKS ONLY PROVE YOUR INHUMANITY. — TMC GENERAL SECRETARY ABHISHEK BANERJEE



THEY HAVE NO GROUND IN TRIPURA. SO THEY ARE DOING THESE THINGS TO HOG THE LIMELIGHT. — WEST BENGAL BJP PRESIDENT DILIP GHOSH

Dual heritage: Autocratic and egalitarian

Democracy is the default mode. We had to go autocratic for a while, because you couldn't run a group with millions of people by consensus

I first I was going to write about the 'Arab Problem', because there is not a single functioning democracy in the Arab world. The presidential coup in Tunisia has probably ended democracy in the one country that actually achieved it during the 'Arab Spring' of 2010-11. In Syria and Yemen and Libya, attempted democratic revolutions led to dreadful civil wars - and now Lebanon, the closest thing to an Arab democracy for most of the past century (though always dysfunctional) is actually collapsing. In a once prosperous country, many people are close to starving, and desperate Syrian refugees are going back to live under Assad's regime. I guess it was Lebanon that put me on this track. We went

there a few years ago because I wanted my wife to see the old Lebanon before ISIS came over the mountains and destroyed it, but in the end, that didn't happen. They did it to themselves instead. Why is the Arab world cursed? But that's too melodramatic. The Arab world is an outlier, but not very far out. Consider the Philippines, the heir to not one but two non-violent democratic revolutions and a genuine democracy today - with a president who was legally elected five years ago and will soon leave office peacefully at the end of his one permitted term. Rodrigo Duterte is also, by his own admission, a mass murderer whose death squads have killed thousands of people. Some were real drug dealers and some were 'false positives',

the 'alpha male' model of leadership is still successful in many countries that are formally democratic. Putin in Russia, Orbán in Hungary, Erdoğan in Turkey. Indeed even genuine democracies of long-standing can be seduced by a 'great' leader, like De Gaulle in France. (No, I don't know where Trump fits in this Pantheon.) And yet at the same time, we have countries that remain democratic even under great pressure, like Brazil's democracy under attack from Bolsonaro, South Africa under Zuma (and during his recent assault on the rule of law), or Indonesia ever since Suharto. The question is not why does democracy fail or why does it succeed? It's why does it do both?

The only people who have plausible answers are the people who study human nature: the psychologists and sociologists, of course, but more importantly (because they are getting at the root of the problem) the anthropologists, the primatologists, and the ethologists. And many of them would argue that the human race has a dual heritage. We are members of the primate family and particularly close to the chimpanzees, whose little societies are generally tyrannies run by an alpha male. The other members of the group have stronger submissive reflexes to protect them from his bullying (but at the same time the subordinate males are constantly making alliances and seeking to dethrone him). But our own species, homo sapiens, probably spent most of its career living in entirely egalitarian groups of fewer than one hundred people. They had no formal leaders, they made their decisions by consensus, and they shared almost everything. How do we know? Because all the hunter-gatherer bands who survived into the recent past lived that way. Two heritages: the autocratic and the egalitarian. We have them both, and we can switch between them, but the default mode is probably egalitarian (i.e. democratic), because that's the way we spent most of our human past. When we started living in mass societies around five thousand years ago ('civilisation', as we called it), we had to go autocratic for a while, because you couldn't run a group with thousands or even millions of people by consensus. There was no way for them even to include everybody in the discussion. So five thousand years of tyranny - but as soon as we got mass communications (just printing, to begin with), the egalitarian model started coming back, because we are more comfortable with it. We call it democracy now, and it certainly does not mean absolute equality. It does mean that the differences of wealth and power must not become too great, or the whole structure of consent will collapse and we're back to autocracy. Nevertheless, democracy is the default mode.

'UN climate summit in low gear last year'

Get a grip on global warming: UK Min

London: Alok Sharma, the UK Minister in charge of the COP26 climate summit talks in Glasgow in November...



Minister said he was simply throwing everything at achieving a global consensus ahead of the talks in Glasgow.

"I have every week a large number of virtual meetings, but I can tell you that having in-person meetings with individual ministers is incredibly vital and actually impactful."

"You're sitting on a daily basis what is happening across the world. Last year was the hottest on record, the last decade the hottest decade on record," he told the 'Observer' newspaper.

"I don't think we're out of time but I think we're getting dangerously close to a point where we might be out of time," he said.

UK PM threatened to demote Sunak over leaked letter: Report

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is said to have been furious over a letter being leaked to the media last week...

Maybe it's time we looked at Rishi as the next Secretary of State for Health. He could potentially do a very good job there.

The reaction followed media reports that the former origin finance minister had written to his boss, calling for a significant easing of the coronavirus travel restrictions...

While Downing Street refused to comment on private conversations, allies of Sunak insisted he remains focused on his current brief to revive the COVID-hit UK economy.

As for the leaked letter, Johnson is said to have been apologetic with anger and even suggested a demotion for Sunak from the powerful Treasury department to a lower role in Health.

He also suggested forming a committee of political parties to open a dialogue with the panics promoting vaccination, and more than a dozen officials that he had been thinking about a change.

First 6 months of 2021, Af's bloodiest since 2009

IAHS ■ NEW DELHI/KABUL

In a briefing to the UN Security Council (UNSC), Shahzad Akbar, Chairperson for the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission...



With a greater sense of urgency to the Afghan calls for civilian protection, ceasefire, an end to violence continue, I am heartbroken to note that there might be a grim new record of civilian harm by end of this year.

"This [IPCC report] is going to be a wake-up call for anyone who hasn't yet understood why this next decade has to be absolutely decisive in terms of climate action.

"This Council and its members still have the leverage to stop the bleeding of Afghans and prevent catastrophes. This is our only window of opportunity to utilise the full range of political, diplomatic, human rights and humanitarian tools and interventions to save lives and prevent further and more horrific atrocities and killings."

"We urge the Council, the UN and international human rights mechanisms to respond

and would investigate people travelling to and from Spin Boldak to prevent full documentation of these atrocities. In Malistan, Ghazni province, the commission confirmed that at least 27 civilians were murdered in targeted killings by the Taliban.

In one instance, Taliban sought the help of an unarmed guard to move the bodies of civilians and then killed the guard in an attempt to eliminate witnesses.

In Helmand, residents of the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah are stuck between Taliban attacks and government airstrikes, fearing for their lives every minute and deprived of access to their basic rights.

Afghan official: Much of Kunduz city controlled by Taliban

AP ■ KABUL

Taliban fighters on Sunday took control of much of the capital of northern Afghanistan's Kunduz province, including the Governor's office and police headquarters...

ing has raised growing concerns about civilian casualties. On Saturday, Taliban fighters entered the capital of Jawzjan province after sweeping through a line of 10 districts in the province.

Ghulam Rabani Rabani said fighting between insurgents and government forces had taken place around the Governor's office and police headquarters but that later the Taliban had taken over the two buildings.

Taleqan falls to Taliban

AP ■ KABUL

Provincial Afghan lawmakers say the Taliban have taken control of another provincial capital, the fourth to fall into insurgent hands in the north-eastern province of Takhar.

The Taliban forces overran Taleqan, the capital of the northern Takhar province on Sunday, capturing the final area of the rich province controlled after a month-long siege, the two lawmakers from the province said.

Iraqi PM says Govt determined to hold polls as scheduled

Baghdad: Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi announced that his Government and the political parties are determined to hold the Parliamentary elections as scheduled on October 10.

Al-Kadhimi's comment came during his meeting with leaders of the political parties in the presence of Parliament Speaker Mohammed al-Halbousi, head of the Supreme Judicial Council, the country's electoral commission, and the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq.

He stressed his government's insistence on holding the elections as scheduled and confirmed its ability to provide an appropriate atmosphere for them, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Al-Kadhimi and the political parties renewed the call for the political election, that boycotted the elections to reverse their decision," the statement said.

He also suggested forming a committee of political parties to open a dialogue with the panics promoting vaccination, and more than a dozen officials that he had been thinking about a change.

'54 yrs on, ASEAN succeeds in ensuring peace, development'

IAHS ■ PHNOM PENH

Fifty-four years on, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has succeeded in ensuring peace, stability, security and steady development, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said in a message to mark the ASEAN Day on Sunday.

Together, we have embarked on a long and fulfilling journey to nurture the growth of this regional organization into a closely-knit and people-oriented entity," he said.

"Through ASEAN framework, we have been able to maximize opportunities to cultivate friendly ties and cooperation with countries in the region and external partners and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region for the well-being of our peoples."

Japan's daily Covid caseload hits new record

IAHS ■ TOKYO

Amid a continued resurgence, the single-day Covid-19 cases in Japan hit a new record, while the number of people hospitalised in Tokyo also reached a fresh high, according to local media reports.

On Saturday, the country registered 15,753 new Covid cases, which increased the overall infection tally to 10,01,281, while the total death toll stood at 15,255, reports Xinhua news agency.

To curb the resurgence of the Covid-19 infections, the Olympics were mostly held with spectators absent. The state of emergency for Tokyo will not end when the Paralympics are scheduled to begin on August 24.



Concerns are growing over a potential collapse of the medical system and the further spread of the Delta variant during the Bon holiday period since people usually return to their hometowns or travel elsewhere during this period.

The Japanese government has recently expanded the state of emergency and also decided to put more prefectures under a quasi-state of emergency.

45 Houthi rebels killed in Yemen's Marib

IAHS ■ SANAA

At least 45 Houthi rebels were killed in multiple airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition and in ground clashes with the Yemeni Government forces in the rich province of Marib in the last 24 hours, military sources have confirmed.

"In the western district of Sirwah, the airstrikes targeted a rebel makeshift operational base where at least 12 of the sources in Marib told Xinhua news agency on Saturday.

"In the adjacent district of Rababah, to the south of Sirwah, the airstrikes destroyed under a tank-trail vehicle carrying rebel combatants, killing more than 20," he added.

"Thirteen rebels were killed on the ground, while dozens fled," he told Xinhua. The strategic mountain town and most of Rababah district were recaptured by the army last week.

Biden pushes harder for masks, vaccines amid virus resurgence

IAHS ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden is pushing harder on vaccines and masks as Covid-19 cases are surging across the country due to the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant.

The outlook is especially dire in the South. The States of Florida and Louisiana recently set seven-day case records, Xinhua news agency quoted reports by The New York Times as saying on Saturday.

In Louisiana, intensive care units are strained and young adults are contracting serious cases of the virus. The resurgence has prompted the CDC to issue new guidelines on mask wearing, and some areas are returning to the population refusing to wear masks for many different reasons.

In Florida, coronavirus hospitalizations are roughly equal to their previous peak last summer. In Louisiana, intensive care units are strained and young adults are contracting serious cases of the virus. The resurgence has prompted the CDC to issue new guidelines on mask wearing, and some areas are returning to the population refusing to wear masks for many different reasons.

My Client PINKI Rani Dile Late Ram Lal Gawri No-B-2226, Panchim Vihar-ND-63 has disowned her. Sisters 1. Veena Kumari Sood 2. Sharda Malhotra and brother Chandra Prakash Gauri from her movable & immovable property due to misbehavior by my client. If anybody deals with them in any manner they do so at their own risk. Sameer Oberoi Adv CA 46, Western Wing, Bhaironji Court.

The resurgence has prompted the CDC to issue new guidelines on mask wearing, and some areas are returning to the population refusing to wear masks for many different reasons. Some believe such choices are up to the individual, others believe against cur-

US averaging 11 new Covid-19 infections a day

AP ■ FORT LAUDERDALE

The Covid-19 outbreak in the United States crossed 100,000 new confirmed daily infections Saturday, a milestone last exceeded during the winter surge and driven by the highly transmissible delta variant and low vaccination rates in the South.

Health officials fear that cases, hospitalizations and deaths will continue to soar if more Americans don't embrace the vaccine. Nationwide, 50% of residents are fully vaccinated and more than 70% of adults have received at least one dose.

The President also said he believes more cities and states should institute rules like those in New York City, where customers at restaurants, gyms and other venues are required to be vaccinated.

are still below peaks seen early this year before vaccines became widely available. More than 44,000 Americans are currently hospitalized with COVID-19, according to the CDC, up 30% in a week and nearly four times the number in June. More than 120,000 were hospitalized in January.

The seven-day average for deaths rose from about 270 to nearly 500 a day of Friday according to Johns Hopkins University. Deaths peaked at 3,500 per day in January. Deaths usually lag behind hospitalizations as the disease normally takes a few weeks to kill.

The situation is particularly dire in the South, which has some of the lowest vaccination rates in the US. And has seen smaller hospitals overrun with patients.

In the Southeast, the number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients jumped 50% to a daily average of 17,600 over the last week from 11,600 the previous week, the CDC says. Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky reported 41% of the nation's new hospitalizations, the CDC says, twice their overall share of the population.

Once lagging, Europe catches up to the US in vaccinations

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Despite a sluggish start, the European Union's Covid-19 vaccination drive has caught up to that of the United States, where the slow-down of the country's once-launched campaign has contributed to the virus's deadly comeback.

In mid-February, less than 4 per cent of people living in the 27-nation EU were at least partially vaccinated against the coronavirus, compared with nearly 12 per cent in the US, according to Our World in Data, an online science publication connected to the University of Oxford.

"I said that I don't want to celebrate successes, but it must be said that Italy has inoculated more doses per 100 inhabitants than France,

Germany, the United States," he said as the country's vaccine verification program went into effect Friday.

People in Italy must now show proof they have had at least one vaccine dose, recovered from COVID-19 or recently tested negative for the virus if they want to dine indoors, use gyms or go to concerts, theaters, museums and tourist sites such as the Colosseum.

European authorities attribute success in Italy and elsewhere to nationalized health care and a history of public confidence in the safety of immunizations.

While the US and Britain issued emergency authorizations of vaccines to get shots into arms quickly, the EU went through the longer process of granting full approvals, putting it weeks behind.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly passes resolution condemning attack on Hindu temple

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

The Provincial Assembly of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has unanimously passed a resolution condemning the attack on a Hindu temple in the country's Punjab province.

Hundreds of people, carrying sticks, stones and bricks attacked the temple at Bhong City of Rahim Yar Khan district, some 590 kms from Lahore, burning parts of it and damaging the idols on Wednesday in protest against the release by a court of an eight-year-old Hindu boy, who was arrested for allegedly urinating in a local sewer.

An FIR has been registered under terrorism and other sections of the Pakistan Penal Code against over 150 people for their involvement in attacking the temple.

The resolution at the provincial assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa condemning the attack on the Hindu temple was moved by minority Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) Ravi Kumar to which the house gave a unanimous approval on Friday.

The house also passed a resolution for the establishment of the Commission for Minority Affairs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



Bollywood
 It feels good to be called a game-changer but I am just doing my job.
 —Pankaj Tripathi

https://www.dailypioneer.com/vivacity/

‘REALITY RUNS IN MY VEINS’

CHRISTY VARGHESE catches up with the reality TV star, PRINCE NARULA, and the founder of Dreamz Production House, SHARAD CHAUDHARY, as they join forces for the new web series, *Extreme Survivors*

Prince Narula is a name that has grown to be synonymous with reality television over the past five years. Prince first emerged in the limelight in 2014 when he finished as the second-runner up in PTC Punjabi's *Mr. Punjabi*. In 2015, he participated in MTV India's *Roadies X2* where he emerged as the winner and thus commenced his reign as the widely acclaimed star of reality TV. Hot on the heels of his victory at *Roadies X2*, he took part in MTV India's *Spitville 8*, winning his second reality TV crown on the trot. In October 2015, Narula entered Colors TV's *Bigg Boss 9*, winning yet again, marking a hat-trick of back-to-back wins.

In 2016, he raked in the rewards of the glory he had attained in the previous year. From 2016 to 2018, he portrayed Lohan Lucky Singh, Anand in &TV's *Badho Badhu*. Since 2016, Narula has also been a 'gang leader' in each season of MTV *Roadies*. In 2018, he played Aryan in *Laal Ishq*, following which he portrayed Shah Nawaz in Colors TV's *Naagin 3*. In 2019, Narula made his digital debut with ZEE5's *Bombers* as Bali. Next, as if on a whim, he participated in Star Plus' *Nach Baliye 9*, to win his fourth consecutive reality show.

Against the backdrop of this winning mentality comes the news that he would be hosting a new web series, *Extreme Survivors*. From a model, to a reality TV persona, to an actor and now a web series host, these are not unfamiliar grounds as he has been hosting Flipkart Video's *Khel Paheliyon Ka*, a riddle-themed interactive quiz show.

In these times when people prefer binge-watching shows and web series at their convenience from the confines of their homes, content has grown to become somewhat redundant. New times need new solutions, which is why producers and directors are leaving no stone unturned to make sure they create content which can keep people engaged and invested. This is where *Extreme Survivors*, directed by Sharad Chaudhary, holds promise a breath of fresh air in times when lukewarm reality shows and web-series are a dime a dozen.

Sharad, who happens to be a casting director and entertainment entre-



preneur working in the field for over eight years, expresses that the buzz surrounding *Extreme Survivors* is no fluke as it would be promising for audiences who love adventure and high-octane stunts and tasks.

"We have devoted a lot of time and energy to this show, and the results are out there for everyone to see. The first two episodes of *Extreme Survivors* is streaming now on the TV and Movie app named 'VIS



Entertainment. I am sure you will like it," he says with a smile.
 Sharad's Dreamz Production House, a well-known name in the modelling and fashion industry, is promoting the young talents of India through various ventures like *Mr. 6-Miss Super Model International* and *Provogue Personal Care Mr India*. As we wait for Prince to join us, Sharad tells us that Prince has a lot going on, but at the moment he has been focussing on the projects of his record label, Writing Records.

Right on cue, Prince shows up and profusely apologises, sharing that he was in the middle of a music video shoot for his label.

His judgement is impeccable as he sees out his initial question coming from a mile away and laughs it off when we ask him how *Extreme Survivors* differs from other reality TV shows which promise high octane stunts, such as *Roadies* or *Khatron Ke Khiladi*. "You might think that these shows are similar to each other, and on face value it might seem like they might seem to bear a close resemblance to each other. However, if you watch these shows you will realise that each one of the shows you mentioned is designed in a different vein altogether. The concept is implemented by the director, and after watching *Extreme Survivors*, you would have to agree that Sharad *bhai* has done a splendid job. I believe that if you really love something and work towards it to the best of your ability without worrying about the results, you will achieve it without fail. Sharad and I have poured a lot of love and passion into my reality show, after all," he shares unabashedly.

When we quiz him on the challenges he experienced while hosting the show, he is quick to retort, "*Reality toh mere khoon me hai* (Reality runs in my veins). After over six years in the industry, it comes naturally to me. Earlier this year, I was roped in by Flipkart Video to host their quiz show so it is not really uncharted territory. However, it is great fun to be a part of a show like *Extreme Survivors*, which involved a lot of stunts and action. I have to say that my time as a 'gang leader' in the *Roadies* came in handy here. However, I have developed a change in mentality. Earlier, it was all about entertaining people. Now, while that is all well and good, I have grown to realise that I would to cause some real change and help inspire people. I hope through this show I have been able to effect growth in participants and the audience, but there is always room for improvement. I have come a long way, yes, but there is a long way to go yet!"

"While *Khatron Ke Khiladi*, *Roadies* and *Extreme Survivors* may be designed differently, we ask him is there any chance of seeing him in *Khatron Ke Khiladi*, since he is well acquainted with the other two shows now?"

"Who would turn down an opportunity to work with Rohit Shetty sir? Well, I have, (laughs) It was not by design of course, I just could not commit to the show because of pre-existing commitments. But you may rest assured, you will see me on his show soon, if not on the next season, the one after that I can't wait to my first reality show, after all," he shares unabashedly.

WEBBED



WHAT IF...?
 Following the creation of the multiverse at the end of *Loki*'s first season finale, the series explores the various branching timelines of that multiverse in which major moments from the Marvel Cinematic Universe films occur differently. It releases on August 11 on Disney+ Hotstar.



EVANGELION: 3.0+1.01 THRICE UPON A TIME
 Japanese animated science fiction film written and co-directed by Hideaki Anno and produced by Studio Khara. It is the fourth and final film in the Rebuild of Evangelion film series of the Neon Genesis Evangelion franchise. It releases on August 13 on Amazon Prime Video.



BHUI: THE PRIDE OF INDIA
 The film's story is based during 1971 Indo-Pak war when the IAF airstrip at Bhuj was destroyed in combat. Subsequently, 300 local women from Gujarat, led by IAF squadron leader Vijay Karnik, heroically reconstruct the airstrip. It releases on August 13 on Disney+ Hotstar.

Passing the baton

Popular television actor SHWETA TIWARI shares some insights about her daughter PALAK, who is all set to make her debut in Bollywood

Shweta Tiwari feels her daughter Palak, who is all set to make her debut in Bollywood with the horror film *Rosie: The Saffron Chapter*, is a better actor than her.

The 40-year-old added that she would love to share screen space with Palak if she gets a chance.

Shweta shared, "I would love to work with her. At times she does these auditions and when I see her work, I feel that she is a better actor than me. She does it so easily, it seems effortless. I just keep looking and at times I can't help but get emotional when I see her perform."

Shweta has been a part of the small screen industry for over 20 years now. She gained the spotlight with her performance as Perma Sharma Bajaj in *Kasautii Zindagii Kay*, and later featured in shows such as *Farrarish* and *Begusarai*, among others.

She also revealed that she doesn't consider herself a television star.

"I am not a star, I am an actor. People know me, yes, but I won't say I am a star by any means," she shared with a laugh.



Shweta, who is a part of the 11th season of *Khatron Ke Khiladi*, hosted by filmmaker Rohit Shetty on Colors, revealed that now since her daughter has joined showbiz, there are a lot of common topics to discuss.

"Yes, at least we have common topics to talk about. There are so many things that I could learn from her and vice versa. It's a lot of fun when you have the same things to talk about," Shweta concluded. —JNS

As the COVID-19 outbreak has us spending a majority of our time at home, the sacred space where we go to relax, indulge in some self-care and pamper ourselves are no longer salons or spas but our bathrooms. This corner of our home can play a huge role in melting away the stress of the day, making us feel our best.

Against the backdrop of the pandemic, now, more than ever, ensuring that our bathroom is aesthetically pleasing is crucial. It is time to decode your bath space. Count every single thing within this area and create a sense of luxury. If you are building your sanctuary from scratch or renovating it, here are some ways in which you can elevate its overall look and feel with some minimalist changes.

Make a sustainable statement with your fittings and fixtures

In today's scenario, an ideal bathroom should not just offer a relaxing experience, but also ensure there is minimum water consumption and minimal wastage. Fortunately, new-age, futuristic brands are innovating sustainable products that create a luxury statement while also conserving water with every shower. For instance, certain cutting-edge showerheads enrich the shower water with air, making the droplets delightfully lighter and velvety soft. Not only does this guarantee more enjoyable showers, but it also enables you to reduce your water consumption and take a carefree shower every day.

Similarly, technologically advanced showers and faucets can reduce the amount of water that flows every time to give you comprehensive water and cost savings. These are available in clutter-free designs and styles where you can intuitively switch between jet modes and use only as much water as you need to get a satisfying and uplift-

Decode your bathroom space

GAURAV MALHOTRA elaborates on how you can give your washroom a touch of luxury with some minimal changes



ing showering experience. Of course, these minimalist fittings are available in eye-catching designs that you'll be proud to display in your bathrooms.

Less clutter spells elegance

Now that you know how to reduce the clutter using your sustainable and smart fittings, it is time to up the elegance quotient with everything present in your bathroom. You can start with reducing the number of products that are displayed on your bathroom counters. The lesser the clutter, the more elegant your space will feel. You can also use multipurpose products so that

fewer products are in your cupboards and drawers.

DIY can be a complete hassle so make decisions and make mindful purchases. Choose a statement shade such as grey, chrome, black or white according to the ambience you want to create. Today, brands also offer taps and other fixtures with different, appealing surface finish designs. Whether you prefer chrome or a pop of colour, you can pick and choose, and add elegance to your bathroom.

Get inspiration from nature
 A true minimalist spa-like experi-



ence can exude from nature-inspired décor for your bathroom. Go for natural surfaces and materials like pebble floors, natural stone tiles, wooden platforms to achieve an aesthetically pleasing ambience. The impression of peace and tranquillity will naturally flow from these additions, transforming your entire bathroom experience.

Finally, add a personal touch to make sure that your aura matches the one that your bathroom creates. It will then become the calming and relaxing space that your dream of. It goes without saying that bathrooms are an essential part of the home. They have gone through an immense transformation over the years, and people now put a lot of thought into setting up their bathrooms. Functional, aesthetically pleasing, luxurious, and minimalist is the way forward. So, keep it minimal and it is sure to pop!

(The author is the MD of Hangrohe India, the German sanitary fittings manufacturer's Indian wing.)

TRENDBLAZER



DELIGHTED TO BE NOMINATED: RASIKA

Actor **RASIKA DUGAL**, who bagged two nominations at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) for her work in the film *Lootcase* and web series *Mirzapur 2*, expressed her delight at being nominated.

"It is an honour to have my work noticed by a discerning jury and to be nominated alongside some of the most talented actors of our country — actors who raise the bar with each project that they do," shared an ecstatic Rasika.

fairtalk



"I have always wanted to travel the length and breadth of our beautiful country and fortunately my work is taking me to incredibly distinct destinations. I will be shooting a film for the first time in Prayagraj. Coincidentally, when I was participating in *Roadies*, I rode through this city and shot for the series. I still remember getting mesmerised by its history, heritage and architecture."

dailytalk



"I think the whole fascination with the spy genre is what makes it so popular. It has a little something for everybody so, I think that always plays like a big hook. *Bellbottom* is the kind of story that will appeal to both the younger demographic and the older generation in terms of the style as well as the gossamer narrative."

'BATHING IS NOT REALLY NECESSARY'

Hollywood actor **JAKE GYLLENHAAL** doesn't think that bathing is necessary as according to him it's helpful for 'skin maintenance' to allow the body to naturally clean itself.
 "With time, I find bathing to be increasingly less necessary. I think that there's a whole world of benefits for skin maintenance if we don't bathe and that our body is naturally self-cleansing," Gyllenhaal told *Vanity Fair* magazine.



AGAINST ALL ODDS

NEERAJ SHETYE shares the story of RAJU KENDRE, who overcame the system to pursue higher education and is paving the way for other marginalised students to do so as well

This is the story of a determined youth from one of the most marginalised sections of Indian society, paving the path for many behind him. It is also a story of how the 'system' itself creates barriers for many who do not have the privilege of accessing opportunities. It started 10 years ago, in 2011. Raju Kendre, then an 18-year-old boy, was in Pune for admission to undergraduate studies. Owing to financial constraints, he had to give up the opportunity. Today, he is transforming the education scenario in Maharashtra's rural region by helping tribal and marginalised communities access higher education.



Not only this, Raju's determination and belief in himself and his community to follow the unconventional path has won him the prestigious Chevening Scholarship offered by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Government of United Kingdom (UK) to pursue his higher education.

"I dedicate this scholarship to first-generation learners," Raju wrote to his programme officer at the Chevening Secretariat as he confirmed his opportunity to study in the UK for the next academic year. He has been asserting this during his press interviews and in his social media posts to highlight an important ground reality. "There are so many like me who have the credentials but lack mentorship to access opportunities in our system," expressed Raju. As the results of the prestigious scholarship were declared on June 29, Raju's story went viral on social media.

Raju was born to a family of farmers in Pimpri-Khandare, a small village in Maharashtra's Buldhana district in the Vidarbha region. The area is known for faring poorly on development indicators compared to the rest of the state. He studied in the local zilla parishad school until the eighth standard, scoring good grades consistently. When he turned 14, he left for Bharat Vidyalaya, Buldhana. The school is known for admitting meritorious students from nearby areas for further education.

After returning from Pune, Raju completed his bachelor's degree from Maharashtra open university. "I had no one to guide me properly. As a first-generation learner, it's important to have the right mentor on your education path," he shared. This sowed the seed

for Eklavya, a grassroots mentorship platform for first-generation learners from tribal and other marginalised communities.

While pursuing his undergraduate education, he joined Maitri — an organisation — working in Melghat, a distant region on the foothills of Satpura hills in Amravati district bordering Madhya Pradesh. This region suffers from a high death rate among children due to malnutrition and lack of adequate healthcare. Maitri organises a volunteering camp during monsoons where social workers and volunteers from across the state visit the place and work towards improving the condition of the local population. He mentions that this was a critical moment in his life when he decided to pursue this cause further.



While talking about his experience at the institute's Tuljapur campus, he revealed, "TISS helped me to structure my thoughts. It helped me to devise a plan from theory to action." His plan started taking shape when he took a break from the course in 2015 to contest the Gram Panchayat polls in his village. A local youth coalition was formed where the group addressed development concerns of the village — from education to water. To prove their commitment to the cause, Raju mentions that his panel printed their manifesto on bond papers and distributed it around the village. "People have the right to

hold their leaders accountable. We wanted to prove this commitment with actions and not just words," he remarked. They lost the polls but 21-year-old Raju set up a progressive precedent. "Today, local youth have mobilised themselves actively. They are forming independent panels and some have won these polls too," he said while describing the political situation today.

After he graduated from TISS, Raju was selected in the Chief Minister's fellowship programme commissioned by the Maharashtra State Government. During the fellowship, he witnessed the system's functioning from within. "Maharashtra was at the forefront of the progressive movement. But there were instances which made me realise that the state's commitment to implementing social justice measures was quite slow, especially for geographically distant areas generally populated by scheduled castes and tribes," he said, citing one of the learnings from the programme. Raju strongly believes that Dalits, Bahujans and Adivasi students have to access formal education to uplift themselves. Intending to set up local libraries in distant villages of Vidarbha, he started a book collection drive after the fellowship. He is encouraging more and more students to read and think.

steer you towards success. There are many organisations and government initiatives encouraging students to access primary and secondary education. But there are very few initiatives aiding these students to access higher education. Students coming from lower class-lower caste and tribal backgrounds do not have the same privileges. Many of us in the rural areas face a tough time with limited access and a grave digital divide," said Raju, while elaborating on Eklavya's philosophy. The movement has helped over 130 students from rural areas of Maharashtra access opportunities such as scholarships and placements. Students who registered in Eklavya's mentorship programme are placed in premier institutions like TISS, JNU, Azim Premji University, Delhi School of Social Work and IIT's Development Studies programs.

After his success here, he started preparing for opportunities abroad to encourage students to access conventional options. Raju received offers from 18 universities in the UK alone but there was a severe dearth of funding. Chevening Scholarships are one of the most competitive scholarships known for selecting potential leaders from over 160 countries across the world. For the 2021-22 academic calendar, they received over 63,000 applicants globally, an unprecedented figure. Over 5,000 of these candidates were shortlisted for the interview round in March-April. While the exact number is yet unknown, the cohort from India has 35-40 members. Raju is one of them and he will be joining the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), the University of London to pursue a master's degree in development studies.

While discussing his goals after changing his country, he said, "I want to establish a dedicated institution — India's first tribal university — for first-generation learners. I want to use my experience to make things better for the next generation. Eklavya, as a movement, will create 2000 such leaders in the next few years." Raju's story is a testimony to one of the gaps in our approach in ensuring social justice. Accessibility, alone, is not enough if there are no mentorship opportunities to help students from the margins enter the mainstream.

—Charkha Features



Remember our forefathers' sacrifices

RAJYOGI BRAHMMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI feels that the only way to achieve the vision of our ancestors, who fought for India's independence, is by overcoming our vices

India gained freedom from British rule, 75 years ago on August 15, as a result of sacrifices made by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Pandit Nehru, Maulana Azad and thousands of others who suffered grievously at the hands of Britishers. Many sons and daughters of India have lost their lives in India's freedom movement. All those who took part in this struggle, which devoured innumerable lives and enormous wealth, made their sacrifices because they thought that India, to be independent, would regain peace and prosperity. Our forefathers had a beautiful vision of a united India which was free from poverty, communal hatred, slavery to foreign habits and goods and had the complete liberty to build the future, styled by Mahatma Gandhi as the 'Ram Rajya'. With a dream in their eyes and zest in their heart, they fought for our freedom till their very last breath to ensure that we do not have to face what they had to. But today, when we look at the present state of our beloved country, we are unable to match it with the vision they had envisaged.



Today we proudly say that we are a free country but our behaviour suggests that we are still not free. How? Because we are full of bitterness towards other religions, traditions and always try to suppress the growth of others. We are tied in shackles of terrorism, false ideologies, corruption, communal violence, caste distinctions and so on. We tend to forget that independence is not only living freely but also allowing others to live freely. All this makes one wonder if we are really independent? Are we worthy of any praise? Most of us would agree that at this point what we have is not 'Ram Rajya' which is described as a place or a period where everyone — right from the king down to the most ordinary subject — is righteous and pure, which is the essence of true religion, is visible everywhere. But in present India, one finds, corruption not character, poverty not purity, and violence and vandalism rather than virtues that are thriving visibly. With such a scenario, if we want to have real freedom, we will have to liberate ourselves from the chains of five vices of lust, anger, greed, ego and attachment. As long as we have not secured a release from these five well-known enemies, we cannot call ourselves truly independent.

Dear Anthonia,

Why is it that octopuses are always the bad guys in films? For some reason, they seem to freak most people out, which is bad for their PR. Oh... and what is the plural of octopus (octopus, octopuses, octopi or octopodes)? That question seems to really bug the grammar Nazis.

LOL- Dr Archbeine

Hello, Dr Archbeine,

Time, like toilet paper, is a precious thing. Some hoard it, waste it even; others recognise its value and so expend it wisely, frugally, in moderation. Writing to newspaper columns about octopus oppression places you firmly in the former category, as a bane to society. So with that goo-pooing complete, let me address your question remarks... Famous for its pike, its gangly arms and its grudge with grammarians, the octopus has captured the hearts and souls of generations — which is probably why it now has three hearts itself. It graced the stage in the worst ever *Spider-Man* film, as a Bach playing organ fanatic in the pirate movie *Johnny Sins*, and just last year starred in the Oscar-winning documentary *Octosox* about how our eight-legged friends propped up the sock industry during its slump in the pandemic when everyone had zip-tied their purse strings. All of which goes to show that there's one lie to every two truths told.

The same applies to your letter — yes, octopuses make excellent evil geniuses; yes, they piss off people trying to pluralise them; but by no means is weirding people out bad for PR. Just look at America's last president. First things first — why do nasty octopi get cast? Well, let me rather ask you a question. Do you fear waterlilies, mops and

AGONY ANT VS OCTOPI

In a new monthly, frightfully fractious animal complaints column, ELLIOT CONNOR delves arm in arm into why octopi are suckers

drive through car washes? Of course, you do! And all these things have clear traits in common: they're wet and they're tentacle-y. Ergo ipso facto quid pro quo et cetera, octopi give people the creeps.

It goes beyond that, however. 'Octopus' rhymes with hippopotamus — a creature notorious for killing people, tallying 500 human fatalities each year. It also rhymes with hopeless, ignoramus, and autobus — all words with bad associations. Come to think of it, 'octopus' is only a few letters off Oedipus, the Greek hero who killed his father and married his mother. So the creature's clearly fallen in with the wrong crowd.

Other traits probably don't help either. Octopuses have blue blood, just like spiders, scorpions, vampires and the Queen. No popularity points there. The very name, 'octopus', is an anagram of itself (switch the 'o's) which surely is evidence of witchcraft. And some scientists believe that they're aliens, or rather squids mutated by DNA carried on an ancient meteorite. Pretty tenta-cool if you ask me.



But time and tide wait for no man, so whilst we've delved into octopuses' villain credentials and discovered what makes them queer as quango, one important question remains answered-to pluralise or not to pluralise? To be or not to be? Octopus, octopuses, octopodes or octopi? All of these forms are considered right by different dictionaries and warning grammar gangs. I disagree. Octopus cannot be both singular and plural because chaos would ensue. Heaven knows we have enough problems already with plurals — 'woman' and 'women' is especially cruel, besides which some words outright refuse to exist in the singular form. You can have a pair of scissors, but one sciss? I don't think so. No, the 'one octopus, two octopus' formulation is simply asking for trouble, like the nerdy kid walking into class on his first day with big spectacles labelled 'fragile: do not break'.

As for octopi, if such a word existed it would mean approximately 25.1327412 (eight times pi, and an utterly useless value all-round). Or perhaps it would be some sort of experimental, mixed cuisine. Either way, it's NOT a group of octopuses because octopus is a word derived from Greek so using the Latin pluralisation 'octopi' makes you less intelligent than Caesar AND HE'S DEAD.

That leaves us with just two forms, from which you're free to pick and choose. If perchance you are a pretentious nitwit, then octopodes would be the correct Greek plural and if you'd rather not have your head flushed down a toilet then octopuses is the safer option. Better yet, steer clear of the subject altogether. Octopodes are solitary animals after all, so whoever started the whole futile debate was as sadistic and manipulative as the inventor of English grammar.

badass. I mean, they look like mop heads that have just finished mopping up marshmallows, so you can see why they've evolved active camouflage which we've all frantically tried to use for our morning arrival. And who could forget Paul, the German octopus, who correctly predicted the results of all seven of Germany's games and the final of the 2010 FIFA World Cup?

In the end, our world is filled with ignorant people who call octopuses octopi, who think they're worth six or 10 legs and serve them up on fish menus alongside cuttlefish, starfish, crayfish, jellyfish and shellfish, none of which belong to that elite class. Octopuses are smarter than we are, so they become the de facto bad guys to heal our wounded self-esteem. In the age-old rivalry of Harry Warrumwood, I'm smart, you're dumb; I'm big, you're little; I'm right, you're wrong and there's nothing you can do about it."

The End.
(The author is a wildlife carer, naturalist, researcher, writer, scientist, host of the *Animalsense* podcast and TEDx speaker.)

When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bonds. —Patanjali

REASONS BEHIND ANTI-VACCINE MENTALITY

Vaccine deniers are mostly led by a generalised negative attitude to vaccines, according to a study. Vaccine deniers believe that vaccines lead to serious negative side effects, don't protect the individual and the society against infectious diseases, and are not sufficiently tested before introduction.

Further, they are convinced that anti-vaccination leaders are better informed about vaccines than physicians, and that it is rather the former that act in the public interest.

A team led by the Jagiellonian University and the SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Wrocław, Poland conducted a study using data from a total of 492 participants, who have self-identified as either ambiguous towards or opposing vaccination. Curiously, even though they often reported their stance to be founded in their own or observed negative experience with vaccines, when asked about their reasoning, they were rather vague in their explanations.

SAY NO TO COOKING WITH COAL/WOOD

Cooking with wood or coal can increase the risk of major eye diseases that can lead to blindness, according to a study involving nearly half a million people in China.

The study led by a team of international researchers from the University of Oxford and the Chinese Academy of Medical Science and Peking University, Beijing, showed that long-term use of solid fuels for cooking was associated with conjunctivitis (32 per cent), cataracts (17 per cent), and disorders of the sclera, cornea, iris and ciliary body (DSCIC-35 per cent), compared with those who cooked using clean fuels. Individuals who switched from using solid to clean fuels for cooking had smaller elevated risks (over those who had always used clean fuels) compared to those who did not switch. People who switched had 21 per cent, 5 per cent and 21 per cent higher risk for conjunctivitis, cataracts, and DSCIC, respectively, according to the results published in the journal *PLOS Medicine*.

SELECTIVE VULNERABILITY TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Eleven out of the 36 districts in Maharashtra have been found to be 'highly vulnerable' to extreme weather events, droughts and dwindling water security and account for almost 40 per cent of the cropped area across central Maharashtra, a new study has found.

The state's 37 per cent agricultural area spread over 14 districts is moderately vulnerable to the risk to the third-fourth of Maharashtra's cropped regions as high to moderate vulnerable to the prevailing climate crisis, the study *Socio-economic vulnerability to climate change - Index development and mapping for districts in Maharashtra* has found out, a release said here.

However, the study did not include Mumbai and suburban districts in the analysis. The study was conducted by Chaitanya Adhav from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI), Kamal, Haryana, under the guidance of R Senthil from ICAR-Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research.

LIGHTNING DEATHS SHOWING INCREASING TREND

Parts of the Indian Peninsula, particularly the northeast and east, have registered a sharp increase of lightning over the past two decades, while the spike is minimal over the central part of the country and moderate over the rest.

According to a recent study by The Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, an autonomous research and development institution under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), it was found that with 401 fatalities, Bihar topped the list of lightning deaths from April 1, 2020 till March 31, 2021, followed by Uttar Pradesh (238) and Madhya Pradesh (228). Odisha (156), Jharkhand (132), Chhattisgarh (77), Maharashtra (68), Karnataka (54), Assam (46) and Rajasthan (42) are the top 10 states to witness lightning deaths for that duration.

MANGOS TO LOWER SUGAR LEVELS

For all those who have been avoiding eating mangoes due to health issues, including diabetes, here is some good news.

The Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture, (CISH) Lucknow has developed healthier varieties of mangoes with bio-active compounds that have high medicinal benefits, including anti-cancerous properties. Shalindra Rajan, director CISH, said, "Indeed, it is a major breakthrough for us. Mango is the most favoured fruit of the many hybrid varieties of mango, the researchers found that CISH-developed *Arunka* was rich in the bio-active compounds which lower blood glucose levels by preventing glucose absorption in the intestine, whereas the mangiferin present in this variant helps to protect the body against breast and colon cancer." Rajan added that in the near future, cultivation of these special varieties of mango would yield better income to the farmers and also health benefits to the consumers.

NEERAJ TARGETS 90M THROW NOW

PTI ■ TOKYO

History-scripting Olympic Gold medal in his pocket, star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra next target is breaching the 90m mark soon in the coming events.

In fact, Chopra, who clinched the country's maiden athletics medal to become only the second Indian to win an individual Gold in the Olympics, went for it while trying for the Games record (90.57m) on Saturday but could not accomplish it.

"Javelin throw is a very technical event and a lot depends on the day's form. Anything can happen. So, my next target is to breach the 90m (mark)," Chopra said after his historic feat.

"I was just focussing on Olympics this year. Now that I have won the Gold, I will plan ahead for the upcoming competitions. After coming to India, I will again look for a foreign visa to take part in international events," he added.

After pulling out of the Gateshead Diamond League on July 13, Chopra had said that he could participate in the remaining legs of the elite one-day meeting series after the Olympics.

The Lausanne (August 26) and Paris (August 28) legs as well as the Zurich finals (September 9) will have men's javelin events. The Olympics is the grandest stage for any athlete and can be intimidating but not for 23-year-old Chopra, who said he did



Neeraj Chopra in action during men's javelin throw event

PTI

not take any pressure and was going about his job just like he does at any other international event.

"There was no pressure and I was taking it (Olympics) just like any other event. It was like I have played against these athletes before and there's no rea-

son to worry. I was able to focus on my performance. That has helped me win Gold.

"Yes, I did think about India not winning a medal in athletics but once I get hold of my javelin, all these things do not come to my mind."

He was short on prepara-

tions in the run-up to the Olympics with just three international events under his belt, and only one of them featured a top class field.

But he said he was happy to have got the chance to compete. Asked how he was able to come up with big throws in his

first two attempts, he said, "If the first throw goes well, then it releases the pressure. That happened. The second throw was also very good."

"I knew at the point of release both will go far. That must have put pressure on the other athletes."

Strong family support key to Chopra's success

Panipat: A strong determination, discipline and hardwork backed by family's unflinching support played a key role in star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra's success at his maiden Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Chopra's father Satish Chopra, who has a farming background, credited family support behind his son's achievement.

"When one's child achieves success and brings glory to the nation, there are no words to express happiness of parents and entire family. We live in a joint family and we are four brothers. Neeraj (Chopra) has been lucky in the sense that he got full support from entire family who constantly encouraged and motivated him to pursue his passion," he told the media.

The athlete's mother Saroj added: "Today, he has lived up to everyone's expectations and made India proud," she said. Chopra's uncle Bhim

Chopra, who played a key role in shaping his career, agreed with his brother.

"God has answered our prayers. It is not only a player's hard work and strong determination that counts, strong family support, constant encouragement and motivation and inculcating good values is important. Neeraj has all these which helped him pursue his aim," Bhim Chopra said.

Chopra's native Khandra village, near Panipat burst into celebratory mood after their very own child shone bright at sport's biggest stage on Saturday evening.

Even elderly women in the village and family have been dancing and singing after he had won a Gold and heaped praise on the son-of-the-soil for making India proud.

Satish said he was confident that his son would win a medal, but was not sure about the colour of the medal. **PTI**

The stars of India's best ever Olympic show

India capped off its best-ever performance in the Olympics with a haul of seven medals, including a Gold.

As the Tokyo Olympics come to a close, let's take a look at the medalists and those who came within touching distance of glory but couldn't quite make it to the podium.

NEERAJ CHOPRA: GOLD



They say save the best for last and for India it came true at the Tokyo Games. Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra became only the second Indian to win an individual Gold in the Olympics.

After romanticising stories about 'neeraj' there's for years, India finally had its first track-and-field medal winner, thanks to Chopra's throw of 87.58m.

The 23-year-old, a Subedar with 4 Rajputana Rifles in the Indian Army, has been a consistent performer since bursting into the scene with a historic Gold in the junior world championships in 2016 with an Under-20 world record of 86.48m which still stands.

His other achievements include Gold medals in the 2018 Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games, besides the top finish in the 2017 Asian Championships.

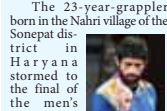
MIRABAI CHANU: SILVER



The pint-sized weightlifter from Manipuri lifted the spirits of the entire nation as she ended a 21-year wait for a medal at weightlifting when she won a Silver medal in the 49kg category to open India's account on the very first day of competitions on July 24.

The 26-year-old lifted a total of 202kg (87kg+115kg), finally exorcising the ghosts of her disastrous outing in the 2016 Rio Games where she had failed to log a single legitimate lift.

RAVI DAHIYA: SILVER



The 33-year-grappler born in the Nahrvi village of the Sonapat district in Haryana stormed to the final of the men's 57 kg freestyle event without any fuss. Although, he fetched a Silver, his immense strength and stamina along with technical prowess impressed one and all.

Dahiya is a product of the 10 league titles with the club. "I gave everything for this club from the first day that I arrived right to the last. I never imagined, in any way and bring something to help this club to be the best in the world."

'NOTHING SIGNED'

national capital's Chhatrasal Stadium, which has already given India two Olympic medalists — Sushil Kumar and Yogeshwar Dutt.

PV SINDHU: BRONZE



One of the strongest medal contenders heading to the Tokyo Olympics, PV Sindhu delivered once again. This time snatching a Bronze.

The 26-year-old etched her name among the all-time greats after winning women's singles Bronze medal to add to the Silver she won at Rio de Janeiro five years back. She ensured India's passage to the woman and second overall from the country to achieve the feat.

Such was her dominance at the Tokyo Games that she dropped only two games, both in the semifinal loss to Tai Tzu Ying, in six matches.

MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM: BRONZE



Four decades of pain and disappointment was washed away as the Indian men's hockey team clinched the Bronze, the country's 12th Olympic medal in the sport that came after a gap of 41 years.

It wasn't Gold but it was enough to spearhead the revival of the sport in a country that attaches so much sentimental value to it.

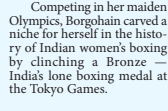
While Manpreet inspired the team with his leadership, skipper PR Sreejesh had a phenomenal tournament, standing like a wall when the opposition mounted an attack.

DEEPAK PUNIA



After an impressive campaign that saw him race to the semifinals, Deepak Punia was only 10 seconds away from a medal, but the 22-year-old debutant ended up conceding a take-down in the 86kg freestyle Bronze medal play-off.

LOVLINA BORGOHAIN: BRONZE



Competing in her maiden Olympics, Borgohain carved a niche for herself in the history of Indian women's boxing by clinching a Bronze — India's lone boxing medal at the Tokyo Games.

BAJRANG PUNIA: BRONZE



A favourite heading into the Games, Bajrang didn't quite live up to the sky-high expectations of becoming the first Indian wrestler to win the Gold, but the 27-year-old did return from Tokyo with a Bronze medal, an impressive feat in a nation starved for suc-

cess at the grandest sporting spectacle.

THOSE WHO WERE SO CLOSE YET SO FAR

WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM

From a bottom-place finish at Rio 2016, the Indian women's team capped a remarkable journey at Tokyo Olympics, finishing a credible fourth.

Although the team's dream of securing its maiden Olympic medal remained unfulfilled as it lost 3-4 to



Great Britain in the closely contested bronze medal play-off, the side recorded its best ever finish at the Games.

After three losses on the trot, everyone had written them off. But a moment of brilliance by skipper Rani Rampal that led to a late strike by Navneet Kaur in the game against Ireland kept the team's quarterfinal hopes alive.

A win against South Africa, that saw Vandana Kataria strike a hat-trick, and a favourable result helped ensure India's passage to the quarterfinal, where drag flick specialist Gurjit Kaur rose to the occasion when it mattered the most, converting a PC against the mighty Australians.

With the odds stacked firmly against them a brave and determined women's team etched its name in the history books by entering its maiden Olympic semifinals.

ADITI ASHOK



Ranked 200 in the world, the 23-year-old from Bengaluru competed to-to-



tee against the best golfers in the world. But, alas it wasn't meant to be as after coming agonisingly close, Aditi finished fourth.

Knee injury affected Bajrang's Oly prep

New Delhi: Star India wrestler Bajrang Punia on Sunday revealed that his knee injury forced him to skip mat training for nearly three weeks which severely hampered his Olympic preparations and he took the mat for the Bronze play-off without any knee protection, going against the advice of his support staff.

Bajrang had skipped the Poland Open, the last ranking event before the Tokyo Games, arguing that he needed training more than the points and headed to Russia, where he trained and also ended up injuring his right knee by choosing to compete in a local event.

He was off-colour in his first three bouts in Tokyo but played his usual tactical and aggressive game in the do-or-die Bronze medal bout and comfortably beat Daulet Niyazbekov from Kazakhstan to earn a podium finish on Olympic debut.

"I could not do mat training for nearly 25 days. I was not able to run as well after the injury. Before a tournament like Olympics even missing one day's training is not good," Bajrang said during a media interaction.

"My coaches and physio wanted me to continue to play with

taped knee in the Bronze bout. But I don't feel comfortable. It feels like someone has tied my leg, so I told them even if injury happens I can rest later but if I don't win medal now all the work will be lost, so I went all out," he said.

Asked why he chose to compete when he had skipped the Poland Open to train, the 27-year-old said he needed to assess himself.

"Injuries can happen in training also. And most of the injuries happen during training because in the tournaments you are completely focussed. In training, you do a lot of different things."

"I needed to see where I stand in terms of preparations, so I had to compete," he said defending his decision.

The 27-year-old said he will continue to compete in the 65kg category till the Paris Games.

"There is no scope to move to 74kg. Next year we have the CWG and the Asian Games. I have missed the Gold medal now but will work on my weaknesses and try to get a top finish in Paris," he said.

Bajrang said he will start rehabilitation after going home and will get ready for the World Championships, set to be held in Oslo, Norway from October 2-10. **PTI**



Artists perform during the closing ceremony of 2020 Tokyo Olympics at the Olympic Stadium on Sunday

©Tokyo2020

1st Test ends in draw as rain washes out final day

Nottingham: Persistent rain proved to be anti-climatic as India, who had a realistic shot at victory in the series-opener, were forced to share points with England after fifth day's play was washed out, here on Sunday.

India needed to score 157 runs on the final day but the rain did not allow a single ball. As part of the new World Test Championship cycle, both India and England log home four points each.

Only 250 plus overs out of a maximum 450 were possible due to the inclement weather as India, chasing a target of 209, were well-placed at 52 for 1 in 14 overs at the end of fourth day.

While cricket remains a game of glorious uncertainties, Virat Kohli and his men certainly had a better shot at full 12 points from the match.

It would have taken a special bowling effort from England to stop India from



Groundsman cover the pitch area after rain delayed start of the fifth day play of first Test between England and India at Trent Bridge in Nottingham on Sunday

AP

scoring 209 runs despite overcast conditions which would have certainly aided seam and swing bowling.

However there are a lot of takeaways for India from the opening Test of the series.

The Indian team in recent times, save the series in 2007 and the one in 2014, have always lost the opening Test in England and this was a welcome change in that respect.

The biggest positive for

Messi admits 'possibility' of PSG move after Barca exit

AFP ■ BARCELONA

Lionel Messi fought back tears on Sunday as he began a press conference at which he confirmed he is leaving Barcelona, where he has played his entire career.

The 34-year-old Argentinian superstar, six times a Ballon d'Or winner, has been out of contract since the end of June and Barca say they cannot afford to keep him, with Messi admitting that a move to Paris Saint-Germain is a 'possibility'.

"This year, my family and I were convinced we were going to stay here, at home — this is what we wanted more than anything," said Messi as he struggled to contain his emotions.

"I have still not come to terms with the reality of leaving this club now, changing my life. I love this club."



Lionel Messi cries at the start of a press conference at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on Sunday. (2nd photo) Lionel Messi shows to photo with all the trophies he won as a player with FC Barcelona



©FCBarcelona

with former clubmate Neymar at PSG.

"I would've liked to have won another Champions League," he added while stressing that "I don't regret anything. I tried to give my best and I'm ending my career here with a good number of titles."

Last month Barcelona, battling huge debts, had said they

were in agreement in principle with the player and his entourage on a new five-year deal on much reduced wages.

"The truth is I don't know what to say," said Messi, who signed for the Catalan giants as a 13-year-old.

"After 21 years I am leaving with my three Catalan Argentinian children," said Messi, who won

Parisians survive opening scare

Paris: Paris Saint-Germain might be closing in on signing Lionel Messi but another

winner on Saturday as Mauro Icardi's goal secured a 2-1 victory against newly-promoted Troyes in their opening game of the new Ligue 1 season.

Second-tier champions Troyes had gone in front inside eight minutes to the delight of their fans at the Stade de l'Aube when Moroccan defender Oualid El Hajjam headed home

at a corner.

However, PSG were back level in the 19th minute thanks to a thumping finish by their own Moroccan defender Achraf Hakimi.

Icardi then scored what proved to be the winner just two minutes later, controlling a Kylian Mbappe cutback and slotting home.

The Argentine striker is one of those who may have the most to lose with the possible arrival of Messi. **AFP**