

**OPINION 6**  
OPPOSITION MUST BE  
SERIOUS ABOUT ITS ROLE**MONEY 9**  
NO ROOM FOR CUT IN  
EXCISE DUTY ON FUEL: FM**SPORT 12**  
INDIA BEAT ENGLAND BY  
151 RUNS IN LORD'S TEST

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY AUGUST 17, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3

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I AM A MISFIT IN  
BOLLYWOOD:  
MOHAPATRA  
11 VIVACITY

# Mayhem in Kabul as Afghans flee for life

## 7 killed in Kabul airport evacuation chaos



People climb atop a plane at the airport in Kabul on Monday

AFP

AP ■ KABUL

Thousands of Afghans rushed onto the tarmac of Kabul's international airport on Monday, so desperate to escape the Taliban capture of their country that they held onto an American military jet as it took off and plunged to death

in chaos that killed at least seven people, US officials said. The crowds of people rushing the airport came as the Taliban enforced their rule over the wider capital after a lightning advance across the country that took just over a week to dethrone the country's Western-backed government.

While there were no major reports of abuses, many stayed home and remained fearful as the insurgents' advance saw prisons emptied and armories looted. The Taliban swept into Kabul on Sunday after President Ashraf Ghani fled the country, bringing an end to a

two-decade campaign in which the US and its allies had tried to transform Afghanistan. The country's Western-trained security forces collapsed or fled, ahead of the planned withdrawal of the last American troops at the end of the month.

Residents raced to Kabul's international airport, where the "civilian side" was closed until further notice, according to Afghanistan's Civil Aviation Authority. The US military and other Western forces continued to organise evacuations.

Videos circulating on social media showed hundreds of people running across the tarmac as US troops fired warning shots in the air. One showed a crowd pushing and shoving its way up a staircase, trying to board a plane, with some people hanging off the railings.

In another video, hundreds of people could be seen running alongside a US Air Force C-17 transport plane as it moved down a runway. Some clung to the side of the jet just before takeoff. Another video showed several falling through the air as the airplane rapidly gained altitude over the city.

Senior military officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the ongoing operation, told The Associated Press that the chaos left seven dead, including several who fell from the flight.

The storming of the airport, seen from space by passing satellites, raised questions about how much longer aircraft would be able to safely take off and land.

Shafi Arifi, who had a ticket to travel to Uzbekistan on Sunday, was unable to board her plane because it was packed with people who had raced across the tarmac and climbed aboard, with no police or airport staff in sight.

"There was no room for us to stand," said the 24-year-old. "Children were crying, women were shouting, young and old men were so angry and upset, no one could hear each other. There was no oxygen to breathe."

*Continued on Page 2*

## Imran hails Taliban, asserts 'shackles of slavery' broken

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD/BEIJING

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday seemed to endorse the heavily armed Taliban taking over Kabul by saying that Afghanistan has broken the "shackles of slavery" in the neighbouring war-torn country.

The longstanding war in Afghanistan reached a watershed moment on Sunday when the Taliban insurgents closed in on Kabul before entering the city and took over the presidential palace, forcing embattled President Ashraf Ghani to join fellow citizens and foreigners to flee the country.

Khan made these remarks while addressing a ceremony to launch the first phase of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) from Grade 1 to 5, which was part of the manifesto



of his ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party.

Meanwhile, China expressed hope that the Taliban will stand by its commitment of establishing an "open and inclusive" Islamic government in Afghanistan and will ensure a peaceful transition of power without violence and terrorism.

Commenting for the first time on the sudden and rapid takeover of the Afghanistan

Government by the Taliban insurgents, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying in a media briefing here expressed hope that the Taliban will abide by its commitment to ensure a peaceful transition of power, taking full responsibility for the safety of Afghan citizens and foreign diplomatic missions.

Pakistan Prime Minister, however, spoke on how the parallel education system led to the existence of "English medium" schools, resulting in the adoption of "someone else's culture" in Pakistan.

"When you adopt someone's culture you believe it to be superior and you end up becoming a slave to it," he said, adding it creates a system of mental slaves that is worse than the actual slavery.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Govt plans to evacuate Af Sikhs, Hindus

### Fleet of IAF, Air India on standby

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Monday reviewed the situation as many of its citizens, including diplomatic staff, are stuck and the airport closed for commercial operations. India is ready to facilitate the repatriation of Afghan Sikh and Hindu communities stranded there.

A fleet of IAF and Air India is on standby and two transport planes of the IAF have operated between New Delhi and Kabul during the last 24 hours to evacuate stranded Indian



Security beefed up outside the Afghanistan Embassy in New Delhi on Monday PTI

nationals.

One C-17 Globemaster transport plane of the IAF landed in Kabul on Monday and returned to New Delhi on

Monday late evening with the Indian diplomatic staff and some others, sources said. Another C-17 returned to New Delhi on Monday afternoon

carrying some diplomatic staff. However, there was no official confirmation about it. The two aircraft circumvented Pakistani airspace to land at the Kabul airport, it was learnt.

In this backdrop, Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba held detailed discussions with senior officials of various Ministries, including External Affairs and Civil Aviation, here on Monday. The focus was on bringing out the Indians as soon as possible, sources said.

"The Government is closely monitoring all developments in Afghanistan" said MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi.

*Continued on Page 2*

## We must all ensure Af can't ever, again be base for terror: US in UNSC

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

The US told the UN Security Council that the international community should ensure that Afghanistan "cannot ever, ever" again be a base for terrorism and urged the country's neighbours and others to give refuge to Afghans attempting to flee.

"Today I want to reiterate emphasise and reassert this call, civilian populations including journalists and non-

combatants, must be protected. Attacks against civilians or civilian objects must stop and the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Afghan citizens, especially women, girls and members of minority groups must be respected," said US Ambassador to the UN Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield.

The UNSC meeting was held under India's Presidency of the 15-nation body.

*Detailed report on P8*

## Afghan embassy's Twitter a/c hacked, tweets on Ghani fleeing Af posted

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Twitter handle of the Afghan embassy here was hacked and several tweets criticising President Ashraf Ghani for fleeing the country were posted from it.

Press secretary of the embassy Abdulhaq Azad tweeted that he has lost control of the mission's official Twitter handle and posted a screenshot of one of the messages criticising Ghani for leaving Afghanistan.

"I have lost access to the Twitter handle of @AfghanistanIN, a friend sent a screenshot of this tweet, (this tweet is hidden from me.) I have tried to log in but can't access it. Seems it is hacked," Azad tweeted.

## 2 stowaways on wheels fall to death from US plane in Kabul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the chaos that broke out in Kabul after its takeover by the Taliban on Monday, several heart-wrenching videos emerged showing how thousands of people rushed to the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul in a bid to flee the country.

In one such video that has since gone viral on social media, two people are seen falling off the wheels of a plane that had reportedly taken off from Kabul minutes ago.

The two men had tied themselves to the wheels of a military plane that took off from the runway minutes before it took off for the USA.

## Ready for Pegasus probe panel: Govt

### Petitioners ask Centre to file affidavit whether it used Pegasus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday expressed its willingness to constitute a "committee of eminent experts" to examine all the aspects of Pegasus snooping controversy related issues, saying the matter is a "highly technical issue" which needs expertise. However the petitioners objected to the Government's affidavit and said it has not answered the basic question whether or not the Government purchased and used Pegasus spyware.

The bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana was told by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that any discussion on these issues would involve the aspect of national security and termed the matter as sensitive.

The bench said it is not saying anything against the Government, but there are issues about areas in which the committee cannot go into. Mehta said the SC may lay down the terms and references of the committee. "We are dealing with a sensitive matter and the attempt appears to be to make it sensational," he said. The bench, also compris-



that it cannot compel anyone to file an affidavit.

Mehta said the Government will appoint neutral eminent experts from the field and they would examine it and place it before the top court. "I do not think the Government can be more transparent and fairer than this," he said, adding that response given by the Information and Technology Minister in Parliament on the issue deals with every aspect.

Sibal argued that the Centre should file an affidavit and state on oath whether the Government or its agencies have used Pegasus or not. He said the limited affidavit filed by the Centre in the matter did not answer the issues raised by them. "The matter, in my respectful submissions as an officer of the court and not as the one representing the Government, cannot be as simple that you file an affidavit whether Pegasus was used or not or whether it was purchased or not," Mehta said.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Explain why Tribunals Reforms Act 2021 brought in: SC to Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre to explain the reason for bringing in the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021, which received Presidential assent on August 13, 2021. The court also wanted to know whether any Parliamentary debates took place before the passage of the law to overcome the top court's directions.

Chief Justice of India NV Ramana observed that many

provisions of the law run contrary to the mandate of the SC judgment regarding tenures of service of tribunal members.

The Supreme Court had on July 14 struck down the newly inserted Section 184 of the Finance Act, 2017, as amended by the Tribunal Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Ordinance, 2021 (Ordinance) to the extent that it fixed the tenure of members and chairpersons of tribunals at 4 years.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Delhi seeks L-G's nod to probe deaths due to O2 shortage

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Monday resent a file to Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal seeking his approval to set up a high-level committee for a probe to find out the number of Covid-19 deaths due to the oxygen shortage.

The Delhi Government had constituted a high-level committee of medical experts to ascertain the actual number of deaths due to lack of oxygen, however, the AAP Government

has claimed the L-G had stopped the formation of this committee.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said he has also written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah and urged him to direct the L-G not to stop the formation of the panel.

Sisodia said, "To say that there was no death due to lack of oxygen in Delhi or to say that there is no need to examine the number and reason of these deaths is like rubbing salt in the wounds of the victims."

## Modi delivers on pledge of ice-cream with Oly squad

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As promised by him in his virtual interaction with the Indian players before their departure for the Tokyo Olympics, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday hosted the Indian Olympics athletes and medal winners for breakfast here at his 7 Lok Kalyan Marg residence. "Churma" and ice-cream were part of the fare on the breakfast table at Modi's home.

By far the largest Indian Olympic contingent with 126 members, it won seven medals which included first-ever Indian Gold in track & field event by javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra. It was the country's best ever show at the Olympics. As promised Modi had



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with shuttler PV Sindhu as she shows her Olympic medal at PM's Residence in New Delhi on Monday PTI

"churma" with Chopra, latter's favourite and ice-cream with badminton ace and Bronze winner PV Sindhu.

Sindhu had also brought her Silver medal won in the previous Rio Olympics along

with her.

Before Sindhu embarked upon her Olympic journey, the Prime Minister had promised her that they will have her favourite ice-cream together after she wins a medal.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Olympic Gold Medalist Neeraj Chopra PTI

Olympic players, including wrestler Bajrang Punia and others, could be seen enjoying the felicitation ceremony in the pictures.

Posing with a hockey stick, the Prime Minister could be

seen with the entire team of Men's Hockey Team which created history at Tokyo Olympics by winning a medal (Bronze) after 41 years beating Germany.

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TALIBAN RULE IN AFGHANISTAN

Fate of Af officers in IMA hangs in balance

GAJENDRA SINGH NEGI ■ DEHRADUN

With the Taliban taking control over the whole of Afghanistan after the meek surrender of the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) the fate of about 60 officers undergoing training at the prestigious Indian Military Academy (IMA) hangs in the balance. The authorities at IMA are in constant touch with the Army Headquarters on the issue. A red alert is said to have been sounded in the academy and the Foreign Gentlemen Cadets (FGCs) of Afghanistan are being kept under strict vigil. Their trainers are said to be taking good care of the FGCs of Afghanistan who are concerned with the turn of events in their country. According to reliable sources these cadets are

at present not in the academy and are undergoing training at an undisclosed location.

The dilemma of the authorities is understandable since the Indian government has not recognised the Taliban so far which has vowed to rename the country as Islamic State of Afghanistan. In such a situation the fate of these cadets in IMA remains shrouded in suspense. It is pertinent to mention here that the Taliban forces are antagonistic to the ANA and in such a situation these officers face the prospect of detention once they return to their own country.

Under the initiative to forge better relationships with friendly foreign countries, the Ministry of External Affairs undertakes the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) pro-

gramme under which the entire cost of training of foreign trainees is borne by the country. Under this programme the cadets of countries like Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Bhutan, Myanmar and others get training in the IMA.

Former commandant of IMA Lieutenant General (Retd) Gambhir Singh Negi told The Pioneer that the situation is tricky and the government of India would have to take the final decision on these officers of ANA undergoing training at IMA.

When contacted the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the IMA told this correspondent that there are about 60 cadets of Afghanistan who are undergoing training in the academy. She said that their training is going on as usual.



Women kanwaris on their way to offer holy water to God Shiva on the last Monday of the holy month of Shravana, at Behara in Birbhum district on Monday

Ex-militant's encounter death: Meghalaya Govt orders judicial probe, extends curfew

**Shillong:** The Meghalaya Government announced a judicial investigation into the encounter killing of a former militant leader whose supporters committed vandalism and arson on Independence Day, forcing the administration to clamp curfew in state capital Shillong where the situation is peaceful on Monday.

The Government will set up a peace committee headed by Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong comprising representatives of civil society organisations and others as members, Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma said after an emergent cabinet meeting.

The Government also decided to extend curfew in Shillong by another 24 hours till 5 am of August 18. Mobile internet services will also remain withdrawn for the next 24 hours, he said.

"Based on the suggestion of the members, the cabinet has

decided to institute a judicial inquiry under the Commission of Inquiry Act to look into the events that took place on August 13," Sangma said.

The chief minister, however, did not name the judge who will probe the August 13 encounter death of 54-year-old Cheristerfield Thangkiew, the former self-styled general secretary of the outlawed Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC).

The Ministry of Home Affairs has approved deployment of additional central armed paramilitary forces (CAPFs) to assist the state in containing the law and order situation in the State capital.

"I have spoken to Union Home Minister Amit Shah twice yesterday on the law and order situation. Five additional companies of CAPFs have been requisitioned and four have already arrived,"

Man given death penalty for raping, killing toddler

**Bahraich (UP):** A court here on Monday awarded the death penalty to a 30-year-old man for raping and killing a toddler, a case in which the hearing was completed and the judgment delivered in less than two months.

Additional Sessions Judge (Rape and Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences Act) Nitin Pandey awarded the punishment to Parashuram (30) for raping and killing the girl at a village in Nanpara area on June 22, Special District Government Counsel-POCSO Act, Sant Pratap Singh told PTI.

The incident took place when the one-and-a-half-year-old child was sleeping in an open

courtyard and the man picked her up and raped her at a deserted school-building nearby. According to the details of the case, when the girl's parents did not find her, they started looking for her and spotted her at the school-building, bleeding profusely.

The man was also with the victim and was caught by the villagers and handed over to the police. The girl was admitted to hospital where she died, the counsel said. A case under charges of murder and provisions of the POCSO Act was lodged against the man.

He tried to escape the police custody while being taken to a court, but was overpowered after being shot in the leg. **PTI**

Change in people's thinking visible in Kashmir; terrorism in last phase: Min

PTI ■ JAMMU

Union Minister Jitendra Singh Monday said there is a visible change in the thinking of people in Jammu & Kashmir and terrorism in its 'last phase' in Kashmir, which witnessed large-scale Independence Day celebrations on Sunday.

The Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office was in Kathua, part of his Udhampur parliamentary constituency, to inaugurate a high-efficiency oxygen generation plant at Government Medical College, established through the PM-Cares Fund.

"There is a change in the thinking of the people (in

Kashmir).

The residents of Srinagar who are moving around in lanes and bylanes want a change and be part of (Prime minister Narendra) Modi's New India like the people in other parts of the country," Singh told reporters after dedicating the oxygen plant to the public.

However, he said there is a "veil of fear" which is stopping the public from expressing themselves openly.

"I feel it is the last phase of terrorism there," the minister said, responding to a question about the large scale Independence Day celebrations in the valley.

Flag hoisting ceremonies were held at many places in the valley Sunday.

Referring to the setting up of the fourth oxygen plant at GMC Kathua within a short span during the coronavirus pandemic, the Minister said the prime minister has a special concern for Jammu and Kashmir, especially the gateway district of Kathua.

"The prime minister in his independence day speech of 90 minutes from the Red Fort deliberated in detail about J&K and northeastern states. He talked about the delimitation commission in J&K and assembly elections in the coming months," Singh said.

Process of filling vacancies begins in Uttarakhand

**Dehradun :**Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Monday said the process of filling 24,000 vacancies in the state has been started.

"Seventeen vacancies advertised on August 15 for the posts of review officers and assistant review officers are part of the exercise," Dhami said at a function in Champawat district.

Filling the 24,000 vacancies was one of the first decisions of the cabinet after Dhami took over as Chief Minister. **PTI**

Mayhem in Kabul...

From Page 1

After another woman fainted and was carried off the plane, Arifi gave up and went back home. The US Embassy has been evacuated and the American flag lowered, with diplomats relocating to the airport to aid with the evacuation. Other Western countries have also closed their missions and are flying out staff and nationals.

Afghans are also trying to leave through land border crossings, all of which are now controlled by the Taliban. Rakhmatulla Kuyash, 30, was one of the few people with a visa allowing him to cross into Uzbekistan on Sunday. He said his children and relatives had to stay behind. "I'm lost and I

don't know what to do. I left everything behind," he said.

A senior US Official said "it's heartbreaking" to see what's happening in Kabul, but that President Joe Biden "stands by" his decision to pull out because he didn't want the war there — already the longest in US history — to enter a third decade. In interviews with US television networks, National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan blamed the Afghan military for the Taliban's rapid takeover, saying it lacked the will to fight.

The ease with which the Taliban took control goes beyond military prowess, however, the Texas-based private intelligence firm Stratfor wrote. "The speed of the Taliban's final advance suggests less military dominance than effective political insurgency coupled with an

incohesive Afghan political system and security force struggling with flagging morale," it said.

The lightning Taliban offensive through the country appears to have stunned American officials. Just days before the insurgents entered Kabul with little if any resistance, a US military assessment predicted it could take months for the capital to fall.

The rout threatened to erase 20 years of Western efforts to remake Afghanistan that saw more than 3,500 US and allied troops killed as well as tens of thousands of Afghans. The initial invasion drove the Taliban from power and scattered al-Qaida, which had planned the 9/11 attacks while being sheltered in Afghanistan. Many had hoped

the Western-backed Afghan government would usher in a new era of peace and respect for human rights.

As the US lost focus on Afghanistan during the Iraq war, the Taliban eventually regrouped. The militants captured much of the Afghan countryside in recent years and then swept into cities as U.S. Forces prepared to withdraw ahead of an Aug. 31 deadline.

Under the Taliban, which ruled in accordance with a harsh interpretation of Islamic law, women were largely confined to their homes and suspected criminals faced amputation or public execution. The insurgents have sought to project greater moderation in recent years, but many Afghans remain skeptical.

Govt plans...

From Page 1

"We have been issuing periodic advisories for the safety and security of Indian nationals in that country, including calling for their immediate return to India. We had circulated emergency contact numbers and had also been extending assistance to community members. We are aware that there are still some Indian nationals in Afghanistan who wish to return and we are in touch with them."

He also said the Indian Government was in constant touch with the representatives of Afghan Sikh and Hindu communities. "We will facilitate repatriation to India of those who wish to leave Afghanistan. There are also a number of Afghans who have been our

partners in the promotion of our mutual developmental, educational and people to people endeavours. We will stand by them," he said.

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh earlier in the day appealed to the External Affairs Minister to make immediate plans to bring out more than 300 Sikhs now stranded in Kabul.

Bagchi also said "commercial operations from Kabul airport have been suspended today (Monday). This has forced a pause in our repatriation efforts. We are awaiting the resumption of flights to restart the process." Sources said two Air India aircraft along with two C-17 transport planes of the IAF were on standby to bring out the Indian diplomatic staff and Indian citizens working in

Afghanistan. There are 100-odd diplomatic staff at present in Kabul besides 1,500 Indian citizens working in various private firms and other institutions.

The spokesperson also said the situation in Afghanistan is being monitored on a "constant basis at high levels" and assured the Government will take all steps to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals and "our interests in Afghanistan."

The Government has a tough task at its hand as the Kabul airport is now closed for commercial operations and chaos prevails there. Amidst that, the Government may have to work through back channels to ensure safety and security of its diplomatic staff besides Indian citizens travelling from the embassy to the airport, they said.

Imran hails Taliban, asserts 'shackles of slavery' broken

From Page 1

In the same breath, he indirectly likened the ongoing upheaval in Afghanistan with the people of the country breaking the "shackles of slavery".

Pakistan is accused of facilitating the Taliban rebellion which ultimately resulted in the capturing of the country after being ousted about 20 years ago. Khan said becoming a mental slave was worse than being an actual slave, adding that subjugated minds can never make big decisions. He said the SNC will lead the Pakistan youth towards "one direction and rid them of the invasion of foreign cultures".

Officially Pakistan has maintained that it wanted a broad-based inclusive government in Afghanistan and was also hosting the Afghan leaders to create consensus for a peaceful transformation.

Meanwhile, Khan launched the SNC despite criticism because it put emphasis on religious teaching instead of modern national sciences.

All provinces agreed to introduce it except the Sindh province.

He said Pakistan is the "only country in the world" that is using three types of syllabuses in private schools, public schools and religious seminaries.

He said he knew that bringing a uniform curriculum will be a difficult task as the "elite system will not allow this change". Khan, however, said that the process that has been started by his Government was "irreversible".

While most of the embassies in Kabul including that of the US, India and EU countries rushed to evacuate its diplomatic staff, Hua

said the Chinese Embassy is up and running with its ambassador and some staff.

However, most of the Chinese nationals have already been evacuated from Afghanistan, she said.

"The situation in Afghanistan has experienced major changes. We respect Afghanistan's people's will and choice," Hua said.

"We noticed the statement from Afghan Taliban yesterday (Sunday) saying that the war is over and they will start consultation on establishment of an open and inclusive Islamic Government and take the responsibility of safety of Afghan citizens and foreign diplomatic corps," the spokesperson said.

"We hope this will be implemented to ensure a peaceful transition, stop violence and terrorism, and make sure people are free from war and build their new home," Hua said.

Replying to a question on when will China recognise the Taliban Government and whether any condition is attached to it, Hua said on the basis of fully respecting Afghanistan's national sovereignty and the will of all parties, Beijing has been maintaining contact and communication with Afghan Taliban and playing a constructive role in promoting a political settlement.

Recalling last month's China visit of the Taliban delegation led by its Political Commission Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and his talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Hua said, "We hope the Afghan Taliban will be united with other parties and with all nations and build a political framework in keeping with national conditions that is broadly inclusive and will lay the foundation for enduring peace."

Ready for...

From Page 1

"This is an issue where any answer, any discussion, any debate and any facts being placed would necessarily involve a kind of national security concern," he added. During the one-hour-long hearing, Mehta told the bench that petitioners have relied on reports published by a web portal. "According to us, a false narrative is created," he said, adding, "There is nothing to hide. Kindly appreciate the bona fide gesture of the Government."

Mehta said official interceptions also take place as per the law and rules provided

therein and there is a proper system in place for that.

While saying that it would continue hearing arguments in the matter on Tuesday, the bench told Mehta, "If you have any change in your mind, you tell us tomorrow". Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for one of the petitioners, said the Centre's submission that it would set up a committee of experts would not inspire confidence in the minds of people and instead, the court should appoint a panel and supervise it.

Sibal also raised objection over the affidavit filed by the Centre which has said that petitions filed in the matter are

based on "conjectures and surmises" or on other unsubstantiated media reports.

"A bare perusal of the captioned petition and other connected petitions make it clear that the same are based on conjectures and surmises or on other unsubstantiated media reports or incomplete or uncorroborated material," the affidavit said, adding that the issue has been clarified in Parliament by IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. Editors Guild of India has sought in its plea that a special investigation team be set up to conduct a probe into reported surveillance of journalists and others.

Explain why Tribunals Reforms...

From Page 1

The top court had ruled that Section 184(11) of the Finance Act, which prescribes a tenure of four years for members, was contrary to the principles of separation of powers, independence of the judiciary, rule of law, and Article 14 of the Constitution of India as well as the judgment of the apex court in the Madras Bar Association III case.

In an ongoing case, the Supreme Court expressed displeasure on non-filling of vacancies in many tribunals.

Meanwhile, Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP, Jairam Ramesh has filed a petition before the Supreme Court challenging the constitutional validity of the new Tribunals Reforms Act. The plea filed on Monday said that Section 3(1) along with Sections 3(7), 5 and 7(1) of the Tribunal Reforms Act, 2021 violate Articles 14, 21 and 50 of the Constitution. "The petitioner is aggrieved by the Act abrogating the principle of judicial independence, and its passage being a deliberate attempt to legislatively override the judgement of this Court in Madras Bar Association v. Union of India (July 2021 judgment) which set aside provisions identical to those being impugned, without removing the basis of the judgment," the petition said.

Ramesh submitted that Section 3 (1) of the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021 is flagrantly unconstitutional in so far as it violates Articles 14 and 50 of the Constitution. The provision bars appointments to tribunals of persons below fifty years of age. This, the petitioner said, undermines the length/security of tenure and violates both judicial independence and the principle of separation of powers, it was contended.

Modi delivers on...

From Page 1

The team also presented Modi with autographed hockey stick.

Apart from Chopra's gold, India won two silver medals and four bronze medals at the Tokyo Olympics. The silver medals came from weightlifter Mirabai Chanu and wrestler Ravi Kumar Dahiya. The bronze medals were won by shuttler PV Sindhu, the men's hockey team, boxer Lovlina Borgohain and wrestler Bajrang Punia.

Modi, who had applauded the Indian athletes' tremendous show during the 75th Independence Day celebration at the Red Fort on Sunday, was seen talking to Sindhu, who became only the second Indian and first woman to win two Olympic medals.

The members of the India men's hockey team talked with Modi, who was seen examining a hockey stick.

Vinesh Phogat, who has been suspended by the WFI for indiscipline, was also present along with young Anshu Malik, Seema Bisla and coach Jagminder Singh.



# Man stabs girl, her mother for rejecting his marriage proposal

# Haryana CM launches G'gram's first e-rickshaws under Parivartan project

# Gahlot flags off 32 AC low floor CNG buses

# Man, woman try self-immolation outside top court



Man stabs girl, her mother for	Man impersonating as CBI official in Kolkata	Constable shoots himself in head, critical
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# Maid murdered in Patel Nagar house

## 6 Amity l'ntl schoolgirls compete in F1 in Schools National Open Finals

# Haryana CM launches G'gram's first e-rickshaws under Parivartan project

  
 Govt. of Haryana

## Under New Vehicle Scrappage Policy Establishment of Electric Three Wheeler Eco-system at Gurugram, in Haryana

**“Haryana has taken prompt action under the new policy and has implemented it instantly in the state. In order to minimize the pollution in the cities, we took an initiative to arrange e-three wheelers in Gurugram.”**

**- Manohar Lal,** Chief Minister

**“The new scrapping policy will play a significant role in the “Waste to Wealth” campaign and circular economy. This policy will boost the self-reliance of the country in the auto and metal sector. It will eliminate pollution from the cities and protect the environment. This policy will bring new investment and generate countless employment opportunities in the country.”**

**- Narendra Modi,** Prime Minister

**All diesel autos older than 10 years to be scrapped and replaced with E-Three Wheelers**



**Subsidy of up to Rs. One lakh and the facility of easy loan for auto drivers**

**Haryana's Resolution - Environment Conservation**

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# HAL's 19-seater aircraft to boost regional air link



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major milestone in developing a civil aircraft in India, the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has successfully carried out the Ground Run and Low Speed Taxi Trials (LSTT) of the Hindustan-228 (VT-KNR) aircraft for the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Type Certification.

The test of the 19-seater aircraft was conducted on Sunday as part of 75th Anniversary of India's Independence Day celebrations at HAL's Kanpur facility, officials said here on Monday.

"This is a major milestone for the first fixed wing Made-in-India civil aircraft in India. It is a step forward towards strengthening regional air connectivity," said Sajal Prakash, CEO of HAL's Accessories Complex.

Indranil Chakraborty, Director, DGCA, said the type certification will also enable HAL to get the international certification for the aircraft.

The HAL's Transport Aircraft Division, Kanpur, has been in the business of trans-

port and trainer aircraft for defence customers. The Division has ventured into the manufacturing of Hindustan-228 aircraft to support the Regional Connectivity Scheme (UDAN).

This aircraft could be utilised successfully by civil operators and State Governments for their intra and inter-state connectivity with seamless support towards training, maintenance and logistics.

The Hindustan-228 is a 19-seat multirole utility aircraft built for various applications such as VIP transport, passenger transport, air ambulance, flight inspection roles, cloud seeding, and recreational activities like Para jumping, aerial surveillance, photography and cargo applications.

In another development to give a boost to the Indian defence and aerospace manufacturing, the defence ministry has launched the Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS) for creating state-of-the-art testing infrastructure in partnership with the private industry.

The scheme with an outlay

of ₹400 crore was launched by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in May last year. The scheme will run for the duration of five years and envisages setting up of six to eight Greenfield Defence Testing Infrastructure facilities required for defence and aerospace related production, defence ministry officials said here on Monday.

The projects under the scheme will be provided with up to 75 per cent government funding in the form of 'Grant-in-Aid'. The remaining 25 per cent of the project cost will have to be borne by the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) constituents of which will be the Indian private entities and state governments.

In this regard, Department of Defence Production and Directorate General of Quality Assurance has published eight Expression of Interest (EOIs) catering to setting up of defence test facilities in selected domains.

The request for proposal (RFP) for the defence test facility for selected air domains will be issued shortly.

# IIT-Mandi develops smart road system to reduce road accidents at blind turns

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mandi, has developed a Smart Road Monitoring System (SRMS) that would help reduce manual intervention in traffic management and prevent accidents caused at sharp or blind turns.

According to the team of researchers at IIT Mandi, the system can be used for speed detection, vehicle counts, enhanced traffic control and road usage, by employing the Micro-Electro-Mechanical Systems (MEMS) and Internet of Things (IoT) technologies. The team claimed that besides being mechanical in nature, the developed system can work in any weather including rain, snow, fog or other poor visibility conditions and the data can be encrypted and shared to only appropriate stakeholders.

"With a surge in traffic, the manual interface becomes a challenge to control and prevent road accidents, and traffic management especially in the hilly terrains. Traffic Police intervention, convex mirrors installation, and other techniques, though helpful in these situations, become difficult to manage in severe and extreme conditions like rainfall, snow, foggy weather and high number of sharp curves," said K V Uday, Assistant Professor, School of Engineering, IIT Mandi.

Uday explained that the developed system comprises two layers of detection units on each side of the turn and two signalling units to alert the drivers. When a vehicle passes through the two consecutive layers of detection units, the sensing system detects the speed, direction and type of vehicle (two/ four/multiple wheels). The technology has also acquired a patent for the innovation.

The detected direction con-



firms if the vehicle is advancing towards the turn, and a corresponding signal (light, sound or barrier) is displayed on the other side to alert the drivers of an oncoming vehicle. If the vehicle moves away from the curve, no signal is displayed.

The signals are decided based on the speed, direction, gradient of slope and type of vehicle. At a prototype development stage, the system costs less than Rs 20,000 excluding the alerting units per curve. However, the innovators are currently working on the commercial aspects and trying to bring down the overall product cost, by lowering operating and maintenance costs, and utilising other energy sources to make the system self-sustainable using solar energy.

"This technique will not only reduce the accident risk in sharp curves, but will also help in reducing human intervention on traffic counts, management and helps in decision making," he said. The devel-

oped system can also be used for vehicle counts and its advanced versions will also be able to detect the load of the vehicle.

"This data can be used for enhanced traffic management, road use, traffic flow on single line tunnels and restricted areas by employing Artificial Intelligence and machine learning tools. The prediction on traffic jams, increased flows and diversion alerts also can also be generated after sufficient data collection," he said.

"Though existing technologies are effective, their effectiveness drastically is affected during adverse weather conditions, that is where our system is robust," he added. Other members of the team included Naman Chaudhary and Shishir Asthana from Mechanical Engineering; Amudhan Muthaiah from Electrical Engineering and Nidhika Kadela from Civil Engineering departments of the institute.

# It's sin to remain silent when rights trampled upon: Sonia to Indians

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To mark the 75th year of Independence, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi on Monday urged people to introspect what freedom means and told them it is a "sin" to remain silent when fundamental rights and the Constitution are "trampled upon". In a statement, Sonia also said the country's democracy needs repairing.

"When fundamental rights of people, guaranteed by the founding fathers of our Constitution, are being trampled upon, it is a sin to stay silent," Sonia said. When the Government "attacks" Parliament and "tramples upon" its traditions, "enslaves" democracy, attempts to "violate" the Constitution and "shackles" institutional autonomy, the people of the country need to introspect what freedom means to them, she said.

The Congress chief also alleged that currently journalists do not have the freedom to write, TV channels the freedom to show the truth, and writers and thinkers the freedom to express themselves. She alleged parliamentarians don't have the freedom to express their views, people affected by the oxygen shortage crisis and GST do not have the freedom to speak and the states, in a federal structure, do not have the freedom to demand their rights.

She argued that Indian democracy is in need of repair and "We must undo the damage." She said the progress achieved in the last few decades has been reversed under the present government which indulges in "hollow slogans, event management and brand-building" at the cost of governance.

"After decades of progress

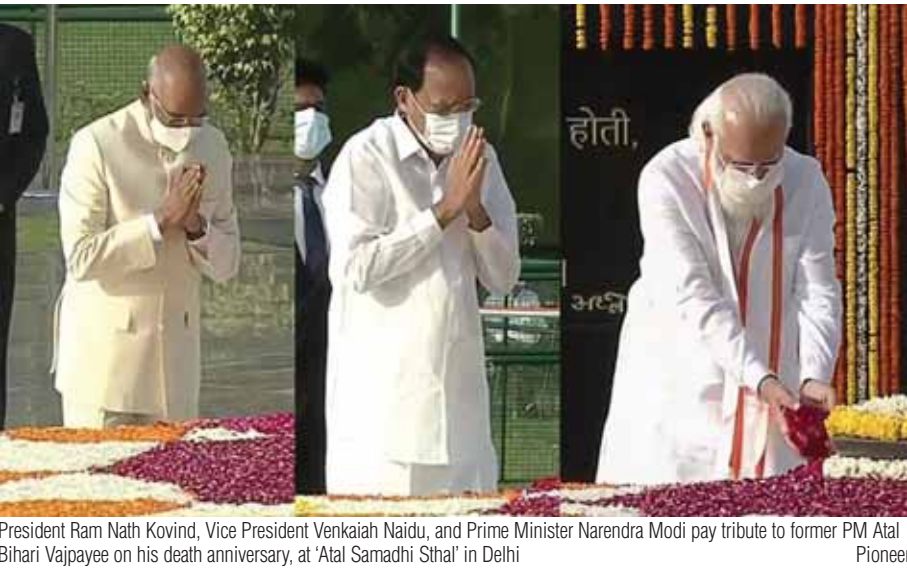


towards an India of our dreams, why is our democracy in danger? It is because tangible achievements have been substituted by hollow slogans, event management and brand-building only to benefit those in power – at the expense of governance. It is because symbolism has triumphed over meaningful action. It is because democracy is sought to be replaced by an autocracy. Today's symbolism and reality is that Parliament House is being turned into a museum," Sonia Gandhi said in the statement shared by the Congress.

"We must not be swayed by hollow attempts to appropriate our icons by those who made no contribution to our struggle for independence. They may borrow Gandhiji's eyeglasses but their vision for our country remains Godse's. Our founders rejected that divisive ideology 74 years ago, and we must reject it once again," Sonia said.

"The recently concluded Monsoon session of Parliament displayed the disdain of the present government towards parliamentary processes and building consensus," Sonia said. She claimed that the opposition was repeatedly denied an opportunity to raise issues of national importance.

"Increasingly over the past 7 years, laws have been passed without debate in the House or scrutiny by a Committee, effectively turning Parliament into a rubber stamp," she alleged.



President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi pay tribute to former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his death anniversary, at 'Atal Samadhi Sthal' in Delhi

# 'Plan afoot to provide jobs to 7.5L artisans'



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Monday said here that a target has been set to provide employment and employment opportunities to 7 lakh 50 thousand artisans, craftsmen through 75 "Hunar Haat", to be organised across the country as a part of "Amrit Mahotsav" of 75 years of India's Independence.

Naqvi said that 75 "Amrit Mahotsav Parks" will also be constructed on the vacant Waqf lands across the country under Waqf Taraqqiati Scheme" and "Pradhanmantri Jan Vikas Karyakram" of the Union Minority Affairs Ministry.

The Minister said that under the "Amrit Mahotsav", "Mera Watan, Mera Chaman" Mushairas and Kavi Sammelans will also be organized across the country till 2023, where renowned as well as emerging poets will give effective and patriotic message of "Ek Bharat-Shrestha Bharat".

The 75th "Hunar Haat" will be organised with the resolve of "Vocal for Local" in all parts of the country, where artisans, craftsmen from every region of the country will exhibit and sell their handmade indigenous products, he said.

# Scientists find BCG vaccine helpful in reducing inflammation in healthy elderly people

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine, which was first used in 1921 against the deadly TB and is on the World Health Organization's list of essential medicines, could help reduce inflammation in healthy elderly people and can protect them against Covid-19, a team of Indian scientists has found.

BCG is considered to be one of the most broadly used vaccines in the world, with around 130 million infants receiving this vaccine every year.

There is improved interest in BCG vaccination of elderly population, especially in countries with a high number of reported Covid-19 cases. Immunity produced by some already available vaccines such as BCG has been recommended to be used as a conceivable protective approach against Covid-19 to bridge the period until a specific vaccine is available.

The scientists from the ICMR-National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis and the ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology, both in Chennai said that the vaccine dampens inflammation by lowering the levels of inflammation-related marker proteins. It also checks the secretion of specific proteins discharged during lung inflammation.

These findings, the researchers say, show that the vaccine could potentially be used to protect elderly people

against COVID-19, which primarily affects the lungs. The findings are published in the journal Science Advances.

Recent studies have indicated that the BCG vaccine enhances antiviral immune responses, making it a likely candidate in the fight against Covid-19. However, it remains unknown how the vaccine generates such immune responses.

To investigate it, scientists vaccinated people between 60 and 80 years old living in Covid-19 hotspots. They then measured the levels of inflammation-related proteins such as cytokines, acute-phase proteins (APPs) and matrix metalloproteinases (MMPs) in their blood before and one month after vaccination.

The researchers found that the vaccine reduced the immune responses in all the vaccinated individuals. BCG-vaccinated individuals exhibited decreased blood levels of cytokines, APPs and MMPs compared with unvaccinated ones.

Specific small inflammation-related proteins, which have roles in Covid-19, were decreased in the vaccinated individuals. The vaccination also decreased the levels of specific inflammation-related growth factors.

The results from this study not only corroborate the immunomodulatory properties of BCG vaccination but also reveal a clear effect of (non)specific immunogenicity of BCG vaccination on systemic inflammation, the researchers said.

# ₹267.35 crore allocated to Covid-hit Kerala to spur health infrastructure

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Monday announced that the Centre has allocated ₹267.35 crore to Covid-battling Kerala to improve its health infrastructure and effectively manage the infection.

The Minister further said that an additional sum of ₹1 crore will also be provided to each district in the State for creating a medicine pool.

The announcements followed after Mandaviya met with Kerala's Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, State Health Minister Veena George and other State officials in Thiruvananthapuram. The Central minister is currently in the State to discuss the Covid-19 situation.

For the past several months, Kerala has been continually reporting a high number of daily new infections of Covid-19.

"Central Govt allocates ₹267.35 crore to Kerala under Emergency COVID Response Package- II. It will strengthen the state's health infrastructure & effectively manage #COVID19. Additionally, Rs 1



crore will be made available to each district of Kerala for creating a medicine pool," Mandaviya tweeted following the meeting.

Mandaviya said that a centre of excellence that caters to telemedicine facilities in every district would be created. Also, a paediatric intensive care unit would be established in district hospitals to prioritise the health of children, he added.

"Central Govt will ensure creation of a Centre of Excellence that caters to Telemedicine Facilities in every district in Kerala. For prioritising health of children, paediatric ICU to be established in district hospitals with 10 litre liquid oxygen storage tank facility," he said in a subsequent tweet. Further, the Union gov-

ernment has also assured all possible assistance to Kerala, including providing Covid-19 vaccines, he added.

On Sunday, 18,582 people tested positive for the disease with a high test positivity rate (TPR) of 15.11%, which accounted for more than half of the national tally of 32,937 cases.

Following the meeting, the Union minister had lauded the steps taken by the state government in preventing the disease. He had also praised the lack of vaccine wastage in the state and also assured availability of vaccines to the state. The central ministry's data showed that 24,271,938 doses of the vaccine have been administered in Kerala as of 7am on Monday.

# Bharat Biotech working on Covaxin-nasal jab combo for booster shield against Covid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech is working on a combination of Covaxin followed by nasal vaccine which if administered can act as a booster dose and protect a person from getting infected, according to its chairman and managing director Dr Krishna Ella.

The company expects significant data on the combination in the next two months which can then drive the future course of action based on regulatory approvals and policy decisions regarding booster shots.

"We are working on a combination of Covaxin followed by nasal, so that Covaxin primes the system of innate immunity and then the boost by the nasal which produces three immune responses — the IGG, the IGA and then mucosal immunity. All three immunities are powerful and can protect a person from getting infected," Ella said.

Even as Covaxin is found to be significantly effective

against the dominant Delta virus, the Government will take the final call on whether there is a need for a third dose of Covaxin to enhance the immune response for a longer time, Ella said underlining that data will be submitted to the Government.

"I think we have done a booster dose also. We are waiting for the results, but if you recommend a booster dose, there will be a shortage of vaccine. So, it's a complicated situation. We are therefore adopting an innovative method," he said.

According to Ella, if the nasal vaccine works out well, production capacity is also likely to double.

At present, Bharat Biotech is supplying around 2 — 2.5 crore doses of Covaxin per month, which is projected to increase to around 5.8 crore doses over the next few months.

On WHO approval for Covaxin getting delayed, he said that it was because the company had to do efficacy trials separately and during the second wave, which involved cases of Delta variant.

# IMD: Subdued rainfall activities across Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The southwest monsoon season has again entered a break phase over many parts of the country, with subdued rainfall activity across northwest India, including Delhi, Rajasthan and Gujarat. However, on the flip side, West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Vidarbha are expected to get heavy to moderate rainfall during the next five days.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday predicted fairly widespread to widespread rainfall activity over Gangetic West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Vidarbha during next 5 days.

The IMD said that the west-

ern end of the monsoon trough—an extended low-pressure area that drives monsoon rains—lies close to the foothills of the Himalayas. Therefore, drier conditions prevail over the northwest. On the other hand, the eastern end of the trough is near its normal position and runs across Bihar, Odisha and the west-central Bay of Bengal as on Monday morning.

According to the IMD, widespread to isolated heavy rainfall is very likely to continue over Northeast India and Sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim during next 4-5 days. Isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall is very likely over Assam and Meghalaya (16, 17 Aug); Arunachal Pradesh (17th Aug) and Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura on 16th August, the IMD said in its latest weather updates issued on Monday.

# 417 people lose battle to Covid in last 24 hours

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Monday reported 32,937 new cases, which is 8.7 per cent lower than a day ago, pushing the overall cases to 3,22,25,513. The country also reported 417 deaths in the last 24 hours, taking the cumulative death count to 4,31,642. However, there were low number of tests were conducted on Monday.

The 3,81,947 active cases, down from 3,85,336 on Sunday, comprise 1.18 per cent of the total infections in the country, the lowest since March last year. The national recovery rate stands at 97.48 per cent, the highest since March last year.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 2.79 per cent. It has remained below 3 per cent for the last 21 days. As many as 11,81,212 Covid-19 tests were conducted on

Sunday, taking the total number of tests conducted so far in the country to 49,48,05,652.

Around 54.58 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered under the nationwide vaccination drive so far with more than 55 lakh vaccine doses administered on Monday itself.

Of the total 4,31,642 deaths reported so far in the country, 1,35,039 were from Maharashtra, 36,979 from Karnataka, 34,519 from Tamil Nadu, 25,069 from Delhi, 22,784 from Uttar Pradesh, 18,601 from Kerala and 18,303 from West Bengal.

The Union Health Ministry has stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities. The country's active caseload currently is 3,81,947, the lowest in 145 days. The active cases constitute 1.18% of total cases,

lowest since March 2020.

Across the country, 3,14,11,924 in total have recovered so far, with 35,909 patients recovering during last 24 hours. The recovery rate now stands at 97.48%, the highest since March 2020, according to the health ministry. So far, 54.58 crore vaccine doses have been administered in the country, with 1743114 doses being administered during the last 24 hours, they said in today's update. The cumulative Covid vaccine doses administered in the country surpassed the 55 crore-mark on Monday, the Ministry said.

"In record-breaking progress, India administers 55 crore #COVID19 vaccines. Let's strengthen India's fight against Coronavirus. Let's get vaccinated!" Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said in a tweet Monday afternoon.



# Former Cong MP from Assam Sushmita Dev joins TMC

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA**

The Congress lost another youth leader this time to the Trinamool Congress with Mahila Congress president and former MP Susmita Dev on Monday joining the Bengal ruling outfit with a desire to begin a “new chapter in life of public services.”

The former Congress MP on Monday morning came down to Kolkata along with TMC MP Derek O’ Brien, met party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee with whom she had a “good discussion” before joining the Trinamool in his presence. Dev then met Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at State secretariat Nabanna too.

An official online statement from the TMC said “We

warmly welcome the former President of All India Mahila Congress (Susmita Deb) to our Trinamool family! ... Inspired by Mamata Banerjee, she joins us today in the presence of our National General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee & Parliamentary Party Leader, Rajiya Sabha, Derek O’Brien.”

Dev later wrote in the social media “I had the opportunity to meet Abhishek Banerjee ... it was a very good discussion with him. He has an excellent vision and clarity for the party ... I went to meet the Hon’ble Chief Minister ... at her office. It was an excellent discussion. Clearly she has laid an excellent future vision for the party and I hope to be helpful in that regard.”

Though there was no comment from Bengal Chief

Minister inside sources said that the Assam leader could immediately be deployed in the North-Eastern State where more leaders could soon join the Trinamool Congress.

The daughter of Santosh Mohan Dev the late Union Minister Susmita has been a popular name in Assam’s Barak Valley and is likely to be the face of her new party in the North-eastern State where the TMC has been trying to make a desperate attempt to set foot in, in its bid to become a nationally relevant political party.

Earlier in a letter to Congress president Sonia Gandhi she wrote “I cherish my three-decade-long association with the Indian National Congress. May I take this opportunity to thank the party, all its leaders, members and



TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee welcomes the former president of All India Mahila Congress Sushmita Dev as she joins the party in Kolkata PTI

workers who have been my memorable journey. Madam, I thank you personally for your guidance and the opportunities you gave me. I value the enriching experience.”

Senior Congress leaders

like Kapil Sibal, Manish Tewari and Assam Congress leader Ripun Bora expressed disappointment at Dev’s quitting the party. While Tewari said the decision of Dev was “most unfortunate,” Sibal wrote

“Sushmita Dev resigns from primary membership of our party. While young leaders leave we ‘oldies’ are blamed for our efforts to strengthen it. The party moves on with: eyes wide shut.”

When asked to comment on the Congress’ failure to retain youth leaders who have been quitting the party one after the other, a top TMC leader and MP said “people are coming to Trinamool because of the dynamism of our leader Mamata Banerjee ... it should generate no ill-feeling.”

On whether such “poaching” should hurt the larger interest of forming an anti-BJP front which Banerjee had been trying at the national level the MP said “if you join TMC can I stop you ... we have not poached anyone.”

## Massive rejig in TMC for ‘one man, one post’

**PNS ■ KOLKATA**

In a major development towards implementing the “one man, one post” formula the Trinamool Congress on Monday effected a major reshuffle in the party organisation removing most Ministers and MPs from organizational posts and appointing in their places leaders who were not attached to the government.

The TMC removed senior MP Sudip Bandopadhyaya as the North Kolkata district president of the party and brought in his place Tapas Roy a former

minister. Similarly other ministers like Jyotipriya Mullick, Soumen Mahapatra Swapan Debnath and many other senior men were removed from organizational posts.

The party also effected a wholesale change in its North Bengal unit removing all but one district of the region. The TMC had fared poorly in both parliamentary and Assembly elections in that region. In North Bengal all the district presidents were removed from their posts save

KL Agarwal who heads the party’s North Dinajpur district unit.

## BJP leaders protest Khela Hobey Diwas, detained

**PNS ■ KOLKATA**

A galaxy of Bengal BJP leaders including State party president Dilip Ghosh and Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari were on Monday detained under Pandemic Act after they assembled at Esplanade area to protest against the Trinamool Congress’ celebration of Khela Hobe Diwas.

Ghosh, Adhikari and state BJP Yuva Morcha president Soumitra Khan, party State general secretary Sayantan Basu, former Union Minister Debashree Chowdhury, State committee member Kalyan Chowbey were all detained

and forcibly taken to Lal Bazar police headquarters after they refused to vacate the Gandhi Statue where they were protesting.

While Mamata Banerjee earlier claimed that Khela Hobey Diwas would be celebrated every year on August 16 commemorate the football lovers who died in a clash during a soccer match four about decades ago the BJP claims the day had been intentionally fixed by the Chief Minister “to encourage a particular community by bringing back the memory of the great Calcutta killings that started on this very day leading to the death of thousands of Hindus.”

## UP House session set to be stormy

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

The Monsoon Session of the Uttar Pradesh (UP) legislature will commence from Tuesday with the supplementary Budget being tabled on August 18.

The Opposition members are set to create ruckus throughout the brief session of four sittings which will continue till August 24.

On the first day of the session, the House will be adjourned after paying condolence on the death of the sitting members of the House. Six Bharatiya Janata party legislators, including a state minister, had died when the House was not in session. They are Ramesh Chandra Diwakar (Auraiya), Suresh Kumar Srivastava (Lucknow West), Kesar Singh (Nawabganj, Bareilly), Dal Bahadur Kori (Salon, Rae Bareilly), state minister Vijay Kumar Kashyap (Charthawal, Muzaffarnagar) and Devendra Pratap Singh (Amrapur, Kasganj).

On Wednesday, the House will



take up the supplementary budget to be tabled by Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna in the first half. The grants are likely to be passed by the House on August 19.

There will be no sitting of the House on August 20, 21 and 22.

Legislative work will be taken up on August 23 and 24.

During the monsoon session, at least five bills will be tabled in the House, replacing the ordinances which were promulgated when the House was not in session.

Leader of the Opposition and Samajwadi Party member Ram Govind Chaudhary said here on Monday that the State Government

had failed to deliver, causing immense pain and suffering to the people, particularly those affected by the pandemic.

“We will raise all the people’s issues and the failure of the government, including farmers’ agitation, Covid-19 deaths, law and order situation, communal agenda of the government and other issues,” he added.

The opposition leader alleged that the Yogi Adityanath government had convened a brief session as it had lost the confidence of the people and lacked courage to face the Vidhan Sabha.

Bahujan Samaj Party and Congress members also said that they would raise the pressing issues facing the people.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna, however, said that the government was ready to discuss all the issues to be raised by the opposition for the peaceful conduct of the proceedings of the House.

## CBI arrests Rly eng, clerk in bribery case

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

The CBI on Monday arrested a divisional engineer and a clerk of the Central Railway’s Bhusawal division on charges of demanding and accepting a bribe for allegedly awarding two contracts.

Identifying two arrested persons as M L Gupta, Divisional Engineer, Central Railway, Bhusawal Division in Maharashtra and Sanjeev Rade, a clerk from the same division, the CBI said that both of them would be produced before a competent court on Tuesday.

Giving details of the case, the CBI said that a case was registered against the two arrested CR employees on a complaint alleging demand of ₹4,50,000 for issuing Letter of Acceptance in respect of two tenders awarded to the complainant.

According to the complaint, the

complainant’s firm was short listed as L-1 in the month of July, 2021 in the tender process for repairing work of staff quarters & service building in Central Zone area at Bhusawal amounting to ₹1,34,88,320 and Up-gradation of Coach Care Centre for SS-1 maintenance of LHB Coaches of Coaching Complex, Bhusawal worth ₹1,13,35,744. The accused allegedly demanded a bribe of ₹4,50,000 for issuing Work Order/Letter of Acceptance.

Acting on the complaint, the CBI laid a trap and caught both the accused while demanding and accepting part payment of bribe amount of ₹2,00,000 and ₹40,000 respectively from the complainant.

Following the arrest, the CBI conducted on the premises of both the accused and recovered ₹15 lakh cash has so far been recovered from Gupta’s premises.

## Newly-inducted Ministers in Jan Ashirvad Yatra

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

The seven newly inducted Ministers from Uttar Pradesh in the Modi Government started ‘Jan Ashirvad Yatra’ from Monday to seek the blessings of the people, which in political circles is seen as an attempt to increase the party’s reach among the masses.

Bharatiya Janata Party’s State general secretary Govind Narayan Shukla, State Minister Sanjay Rai, and other Ministers, party officials and a large number of workers gave a grand welcome to the Union Ministers when they came out for the Jan Ashirwad Yatra. Union Minister of State BL Verma started the Jan Ashirwad Yatra from Vrindavan in Mathura where he was given a grand welcome by the party workers at various places.

Boarding three different raths from Chaudhary Charan Singh Airport in Lucknow, Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary, Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Kaushal Kishore and Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra Teni went for seeking the blessings of the people in their Jan Ashirwad Yatra raths.

## Opp slams UP BJP, urges help for flood victims

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

The Opposition parties, including Bahujan Samaj Party, Samajwadi Party and Congress, slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party Government for taking out the Jan Ashirwad Yatra instead of concentrating on extending help to the flood-hit victims.

Targeting the Yogi Adityanath Government over the Jan Ashirwad Yatra, BSP supremo Mayawati said that when a large part of the State was in the grip of flood and many people were seeking help to rescue them, the BJP was active in taking out the yatra.

“It would be better if the BJP leaders concentrate on helping and rescuing the flood victims instead of making self-propaganda,” Mayawati tweeted on Monday.

The BSP chief also criticised the Government, saying that upset with the success of her party’s intellectual meetings (Prabuddh Sammelan), the government was creating obstacles before them in the name of flood control or even in the name of Covid protocol.

## Centre’s OBC amendment pure fraud: Pawar

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

Charging that the Centre’s Crecent Constitutional amendment restoring power to the States to make their own OBC lists was a “fraud” on Other Backward Castes (OBCs), NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Monday demanded that the Centre come out with

“caste-based” census, provide empirical data on OBCs to the States and relax the 50 per cent cap on reservations to ensure social justice.

Talking to media persons here, Pawar said: “The Centre’s amendment to restore the states’ power to make their own OBC lists is like tying someone’s hands first, then calling the individual for lunch and serving him or her food.”

“Recently the Centre amended the Constitution to give powers to the state to make their own OBC lists. As a result, there is a misunderstanding in the minds of the people that the Centre has

taken a landmark step on the OCB reservation front. But, the centre’s move was nothing but a fraud on the OBCs in the country,” the NCP chief said.

Alluding to the December 1992 landmark Supreme Court judgement in the Indra Sawhney v Union of India & Ors case which had put a 50 per cent on reservations, Pawar said: “Unless the 50 percent quota limit imposed by the Supreme Court in its 1992 landmark verdict is relaxed, states cannot prepare their own lists of socially and educationally backward classes (SEBCs). In other words, the Maratha quota cannot be restored unless the 50 per cent reservations cap is relaxed.”

“In reality, the Amendment will be of no use. Because, the Centre took away the rights of the states a couple of years ago to prepare and maintain their SEBC lists and that has been restored now. The government has betrayed the OBCs. Today almost all states

have more than 50 percent reservations,” Pawar said.

The NCP chief said that while the Centre later gave a 10 percent quota for Economically Weaker Sections, by then almost 90 percent states had exceeded the 50 per cent quota limits “As a result, the Centre’s amendment will be of no use now,” he said.

Pawar went on to reel out the names of the states that had more than 50 per cent of reservations. The reservations in different states were as follows: Madhya Pradesh – 63 per cent, Tamil Nadu – 69, Haryana – 57, Rajasthan – 54, Lakshadweep – 100, Nagaland – 80, Mizoram – 80, Meghalaya – 80, Arunachal – 80, Maharashtra – 65, Haryana – 67, Rajasthan – 64, Telangana – 62, Tripura – 60, Jharkhand – 60, Uttar Pradesh – 59, Himachal – 60, Gujarat – 59 and Karnataka – 50 per cent.

The NCP chief said that since the Centre was silent on the issue of relaxing the 50 percent quota limits, the

Maharashtra government would be in no position to restore the proposed 12 per cent in education and 13 per cent in government jobs for the Maratha community which was scrapped by the Supreme Court in May this year.

It may be recalled that on May 5, 2021, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on Wednesday unanimously declared a Maharashtra law which provides reservation benefits to the Maratha community, taking the quota limit in the State in excess of 50%, as “unconstitutional”.

The SC Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan found there was no “exceptional circumstances” or “extraordinary situation” in Maharashtra which required the Maharashtra government to break the 50 per cent ceiling limit to bestow quota benefits on the Maratha community.

The apex struck down the findings of the Justice N.G.

Gaikwad Commission which led to the enactment of Maratha quota law and set aside the Bombay High Court judgment which validated the Maharashtra State Reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Act of 2018.

The Bombay High Court had on June 27, 2019 reduced the the quantum of the approved reservation from 16 per cent to 12 per cent in educational institutions and 13 per cent in government jobs.

The Supreme Court concluded that even the reduced percentages of reservation granted by the High Court were ultra vires.

The apex court held that a separate reservation for the Maratha community violates Articles 14 (right to equality) and 21 (due process of law). Significantly enough, the Supreme Court declined to revisit its 1992 Indra Sawhney judgment, which fixed the reservation limit at 50%.

## ED attaches assets worth ₹6.88 crore of NSCN (IM) members

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached movable properties worth ₹6.88 crore in the form of bank balances, mutual funds and insurance products in the name of Rayilung Nsarangbe (self-styled colonel/treasurer of National Socialist Council of Nagaland-IM), Ruth Chawang (wife of Rayilung Nsarangbe) and Apam Muivah.

The ED had initiated investigation on the basis of FIR, registered on July 9, 2020 and chargesheet dated December 29 last year filed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

“It was alleged in the chargesheet of NIA, that the terrorist gang of NSCN (IM) was carrying out well organized extortion racket in Manipur and Nagaland, resulting in diversion of Government funds, that in pursuance of their conspiracy for terrorist acts, the terrorist gang of NSCN (IM) had been criminally intimidating Construction Companies, undertaking the road construction project in Manipur and collected huge sum as illegal “tax” (extortion),” the ED said in a statement.

Investigation under Prevention of Money Laundering Act revealed that the district in-charge of four administrative



districts of Manipur like Tamenglong, Senapati, Ukhrul and Chandel, were reporting to Rayilung Nsarangbe, as he was the Treasurer of “the Collective Leadership”, it said.

The District Representatives of the outfit were submitting the extorted money along with the details of collection made by them from various economic activities to Rayilung.

It is also revealed that the huge amount of extortion or the illegal “tax”, was being directly collected by Rayilung. Major part of the extortion amount was being utilised as per the direction of the Collective Leadership and part of it, was being deposited in the bank accounts maintained in the name of Rayilung and in the name of Ruth Chawang, his wife and Apam Muivah.

## 10 organisations get Ministry nod for drone use

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Civil Aviation Ministry on Monday gave conditional permission to 10 organisations, including Mahindra and Mahindra, Steel Authority of India (SAIL) and Bayer Crop Science, to use drones for various purposes.

In a statement, the ministry said the Karnataka Government is one of the 10 organisations and it has got the permission to conduct “drone based aerial survey for creating urban property ownership records in Bengaluru”.

Mahindra and Mahindra has got permission to conduct “drone-based agricultural trials” and use drones for precision spraying on paddy and hot pepper crop in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, it mentioned.

Two organisations -- Gujarat-based Blue Ray Aviation and Telangana-based Asia Pacific Flight Training Academy -- have been permitted to conduct “remote pilot training using drones”, the ministry’s statement noted.

Bayer Crop Science has got the permission to conduct “drone-based agricultural research activities” and use drones for agricultural spraying, it mentioned.

The National Health Mission in Mumbai has also got the permission to conduct experimental BVLOS (beyond visual line-of-sight) drone flights to deliver essential healthcare items in tribal areas of Jawhar in Palghar district of Maharashtra.

Gangtok Smart City Development has got the permission for drone-based aerial survey for its smart city project, the ministry’s statement mentioned. It said SAIL has got the permission to use drones to conduct “perimeter surveillance” of its steel plant in Burnpur, West Bengal.

Chennai-based Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited has got the permission to conduct “drone-based aerial spraying” to assess crop health and prevent crop disease.

## Isoflavones rich diet could help against MS

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

A diet rich in isoflavones (compounds found in soybeans) could reduce the severity of multiple sclerosis (MS), a degenerative disease, by boosting the abundance of specific isoflavone-metabolising gut microbes, a study has found.

Such a diet and the abundance of the gut microbes reduced severity of experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis (EAE) that mimics MS in mice, an international research team has found.

These findings could potentially be useful for developing dietary and gut-microbes-based therapies for MS and other diseases, the researchers said in a study published in Science Advances.

MS is the most common cause of progressive neurological disability in young adults across the world.

Patients with MS show a reduction in microbial diversity in their gut. Diet has been shown to alter and even restore gut microbial diversity. However, the effects of diet on gut microbes remain largely unexplored in MS.

To find a link between diet, gut microbes and MS, the scientists, including a researcher from the Birla Institute of Science & Technology in Goa, India, fed female

mice either an isoflavone-rich diet, an isoflavone-free diet, or a standard diet with moderate levels of isoflavones for six weeks.

They then induced EAE in these mice.

Mice fed an isoflavone-free diet showed severe disease and mice on the standard diet showed intermediate disease, while mice on the isoflavone-rich diet exhibited greatly diminished disease severity.

The researchers found that consumption of isoflavones increased the diversity of specific species of gut bacteria. These bacteria broke down isoflavones into equols that checked the infiltration of specific immune cells into the CNS of EAE-afflicted mice.

This, in turn, lowered inflammation and improved their health.

There’s no cure for multiple sclerosis.

However, treatments can help speed recovery from attacks, modify the course of the disease and manage symptoms.

Signs and symptoms of MS vary widely and depend on the amount of nerve damage and which nerves are affected. Some people with severe MS may lose the ability to walk independently or at all, while others may experience long periods of remission without any new symptoms.

## Maha deaths dip to 100, new infections down

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

The daily Covid-19 deaths dropped to 100 and infections went down to 4,145 in Maharashtra on Monday, even as 5,811 patients were discharged after full recovery from various hospitals across the State.

A day after the state logged 130 fatalities and 4,797 infections, the daily deaths dipped by 30, while fresh cases came down by 652.

With 100 fresh fatalities reported on Monday, the total number of deaths in the state increased from 1,35,039 to 1,35,139 while the infections - with 4,145 new cases - went up from 63,92,660 to 63,96,805.

As 5,811 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 61,89,933 to 61,95,744.

The recovery rate in the State dropped from 96.83 per cent to 96.86 per cent.

The total “active cases” in the state dropped from 64,219 to 62,452. The fatality rate in the state stood static at 2.11 per cent.







FIRST COLUMN

US-INDIA COOPERATION IS NOW STRONGER



PK **VASUDEVA**

Democratic values and free citizenry bind India and the US together, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in Delhi at the end of talks with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on July 29. The two sides discussed cooperation on a wide range of issues, including Afghanistan, countering Covid-19, the Indo-Pacific strategy, and the Quad. Blinken also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, members of civil society and a representative of the Dalai Lama.

Modi appreciated US President Joe Biden's "strong commitment to strengthen the India-US strategic partnership that is anchored in both countries' shared democratic values and is a force for global good".

The relationship between the two countries is important because it is a relationship between two democracies. One of the elements that Americans admire most about India is the steadfast commitment of its people to democracy, pluralism, to human rights and fundamental freedoms. Blinken pointed to the free press and independent judiciary as part of the "self-correct-

ing mechanism" that he said could repair challenges to any democracy.

Jaishankar said he had responded to the US concerns on certain issues, making it clear that the "quest" for a more perfect democracy applied to both the US and India. He said the Modi government's policies "of the last few years" had been done to "right wrongs done historically", and that while freedoms are important, they should not be "equated with the lack of governance".

In response to international criticism of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the government's moves on Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, the External Affairs Minister has in the past referred to the burden of "accumulated problems" of history, and has defended Internet restrictions as required for maintaining law and order.

On Afghanistan, Blinken and Jaishankar agreed that there was no "military solution" to the conflict, and that taking over the country by force would not help the Taliban gain the "international recognition" or "legitimacy" it desires, including the lifting of sanctions and travel bans against the Taliban leadership. In a reference to Pakistan, Jaishankar said one neighbour of Afghanistan was an "exception" to the consensus for a peaceful political settlement. An Afghanistan that did not respect the rights of its people, and an Afghanistan that committed atrocities against its own people would not be part of the global community, Blinken said.

Both the dignitaries also highlighted cooperation in the Indo-Pacific as part of the "Quad" with Japan and Australia, which Blinken said was "not a military alliance" at all. The two sides also spoke about the Quad's initiative to provide Indian-made vaccines in the Indo-Pacific region.

Unfortunately, China opposed contact between foreign officials and the Dalai Lama after Blinken met a Tibetan Buddhist monk during his India visit. Blinken met Geshe Dorji Damdul, current director of Tibet House in New Delhi, what was seen as a big political message to China. Damdul, the former interpreter of Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama, was a part of a group of civil society leaders who met US Secretary. Damdul is a director of Tibet House, which was founded in 1965 by the Dalai Lama to preserve and disseminate the unique cultural heritage of Tibet

Meanwhile, Blinken after the meeting civil society leaders, including the Tibetan monk, said that US and India share a commitment to democratic values, which is the bedrock of their relationship and reflective of India's pluralistic society and history of harmony. Civil society helps advance these values," Blinken had tweeted.

*(The writer is retired Senior Professor, International Trade and Member, Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)*

# Sun-set on LPG subsidy

The overarching focus of the Government should be on giving relief to consumers sans subsidy as that will be in sync with fiscal consolidation



UTTAM GUPTA

From June, 2020, the Union Government stopped depositing LPG subsidy in the accounts of eligible beneficiaries and the position continues till date. Even as the budget for 2021-22 has provided for Rs 14,000 crore under this head (down from Rs 36,000 crore during 2020-21), it is unlikely that any payments will be made during the current year. What has prompted this move? Was it orchestrated earlier but put into effect only now? To understand, let us reflect on some basic facts.

Since January 1, 2015, the Modi-government has been running a scheme for direct benefit transfer of LPG. Nicknamed PAHAL (Pratyaksha Hastaantartit Laabh), under it, three major oil marketing PSUs - Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited -- deliver LPG to the target beneficiaries at full cost-based price which is arrived at by adding to the refinery-gate price freight, marketing costs, marketing margin, dealers' commission and taxes and duties. They follow it up by depositing subsidy - as notified by the Union Government from time to time - in beneficiary accounts and claim reimbursement from the latter.

Even prior to this, the Union Government was giving subsidy on LPG but the manner of administration was different. For comprehension, that period can be bifurcated in two sub-periods -- prior to 2002-03 and between 2002-03 and 2014.

Prior to 2002-03, sale of LPG was subsidized under an administered pricing regime. Under the APR, oil marketing PSUs sold these products at a low price unrelated to the cost of supply which was higher. The shortfall was made up by higher prices charged on sale of products such as naphtha, ATF and fuel oil. This cross-subsidy was managed through the 'Oil Pool Account' maintained by the Oil Coordination Committee in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. The system was prone to misuse as a lot of low priced products found their way to the market using modus operandi such as fake beneficiaries or diversion of stocks straight from the godowns.

In 2002-03, the then NDA - Government dismantled the APR and along with it the OPA. Yet, it decided to continue subsidy on LPG, diesel and kerosene but on a commitment that money would be paid 'directly' from the Budget. The idea was to make these subsidies 'transparent' and to eliminate over time. Brushing aside this major reform, in 2004, the UPA-government continued with sale of these products at subsidized price sans any support from the budget.

For funding the subsidy, it resorted to disingenuous means such as ordering upstream oil PSUs such as Oil and Natural Gas Corporation and Oil India Limited to supply crude oil to the refineries of IOCL, BPCL, HPCL at discounted price and issue of oil bonds to the latter. This dispensation



THERE IS AN URGENT NEED TO TAKE MEASURES FOR INCREASING DOMESTIC PRODUCTION OF OIL AND GAS (CURRENTLY, INDIA IMPORTS 85 PER CENT OF ITS CRUDE REQUIREMENT; 55 PER CENT IN CASE OF LPG) TO REDUCE DEPENDENCE ON IMPORT, PREVENT EXPLOITATION IN INTERNATIONAL MARKET AND LOWERING THE PRICE FOR CONSUMERS

*(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)*



continued till 2014-15, in the process, inflicting huge losses on the former (for instance, ONGC gave cumulative discount of over Rs 200,000 crore) besides imposing perpetual burden on the central exchequer towards servicing of oil bonds.

Meanwhile, the government deregulated and abolished subsidy on petrol in June 2010 and diesel in November 2014 whereas in case of LPG, it initiated switched over to DBT in mid-2012, a process that was consummated in January 2015.

After running the scheme for 6 years now if the government is saying good-bye, this was not unexpected. An indication was given in the 2002-03 decision of the then NDA-regime under Vajpayee. A decade later, the Kelkar Committee also recommended removal of 25 per cent of LPG subsidy in 2012-13 and 75 per cent in the following 2 years. As per this road-map, the subsidy should have ended by March 31, 2015; instead, the exit is coming with a delay of 6 years.

At the time of launch (January, 2015), the total number of beneficiary households under the scheme was around 185 million. Since then, about 45 million fake beneficiaries were eliminated, 10 million surrendered under Modi's 'give up' campaign and 15 million rendered ineligible because of annual income > Rs 10 lakh bringing down the total to 115 million. At the same time, about 80 million households (albeit poor) were added taking the total to around 200 million.

To assess whether the Government is justified in withdraw-

ing subsidy, the Economic Survey (2015-16) offers some clues. According to it, only 0.07 per cent of LPG subsidy in rural areas went to the poorest 20 per cent households. In urban areas, the poorest 20 per cent got only 8.2 per cent of subsidies. One does not need any further proof to recognize that in rural areas, the poorest had no access to subsidy at all, whereas in urban, they got a miniscule portion of it.

True, between 2015-16 and 2019-20, there has been significant increase in the share of poor households in the beneficiary basket (savings of about Rs 70,000 crore due to elimination of fake stuff is bonus). Still, the better-off households continue to get a major portion of LPG subsidy. In this backdrop, exit from the scheme makes sense as this will help in getting rid of the non-deserving at one go. As for the poor and deserving, the government can explore some other option to support them.

At present, retailing of petroleum products is monopolized by oil PSUs. Together, they account for about 90 per cent of the total petrol pumps. A major reason behind this is routing of subsidies only through them which puts private firms to a serious disadvantage as without subsidy, they are unable to match the effective price (cost-based price minus subsidy) offered by PSUs. After subsidy is abolished, their disadvantage will go away and there will be increased competition leading to lower price.

Meanwhile, in 2019, the government had dispensed with the require-

ment of minimum investment of Rs 2,000 crore in oil or gas infrastructure -- in hydrocarbon exploration and production, refining, import terminals, and transportation to grant a retail pump license. Henceforth, "the applicant needs to have minimum net-worth of Rs 250 crore and commit to invest in the marketing of at least one new generation alternate fuel such as CNG, LNG, biofuels and open 5 per cent of total outlets in rural areas".

This was a good move to encourage private players enter the business. However, no less crucial is the need to ensure hassle free access to the supplies and infrastructure for storage, handling and distribution. To achieve this, the government should decanalize POL imports and hive off the infrastructure to an independent entity which should make it accessible to all players on 'common carrier' principle in an 'equitable' and 'non-discriminatory' manner.

Above all, there is an urgent need to take measures for increasing domestic production of oil and gas (currently, India imports 85 per cent of its crude requirement; 55 per cent in case of LPG) to reduce dependence on import, prevent exploitation in international market and lowering the price to consumers. All POL products including LPG should be brought under GST as this will help in reducing their price.

While steering various measures, the overarching focus of the Government should be on giving relief to consumers sans subsidy as that will be in sync with fiscal consolidation.

## POINTCOUNTERPOINT

TODAY, THE WORLD CAN SEE THERE IS NO DEARTH OF POLITICAL WILL IN INDIA. GOOD AND SMART GOVERNANCE IS NEEDED TO BRING REFORMS. —PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI



THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN LISTENING TO THE SAME SPEECHES BY THE PM FOR SEVEN YEARS BUT NOTHING IS BEING DONE FOR ANY AGGRIEVED SECTION, INCLUDING SMALL FARMERS. — SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER MALLIKARJUN KHARGE

# The conquest of Mexico: Some history is inevitable

The capital of the Aztec empire, Tenochtitlan, fell to the invaders after a long siege, and became Mexico City instead

Friday, 13 August, is the 500th anniversary of the Spanish conquest of Mexico. The capital of the Aztec empire, Tenochtitlan, fell to the invaders after a long siege, and became Mexico City instead. It was a major historical event, still mourned by millions and celebrated by millions more five centuries after it happened. But was it actually inevitable?

Laurent Binet doesn't think so. The French writer's novel 'Civilisations', which started winning prizes as soon as it was published in 2019, has now been translated into English and offers an alternate history in which the Incas and Aztecs conquered Europe. It's fiction, of course, but it makes you think.

Binet starts 1,000 years



GWYNNE DYER

*(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'The Shortest History of War'. The views expressed are personal.)*

ago with the Viking voyages to 'Vinland' (Newfoundland), an interesting historical fact that had no known impact on the rest of the world. But in Binet's version a single band of Vikings sails all the way down the coast and up the Amazon River, finally conquering and intermarrying with a native Amerindian group.

This is the key plot device, because this stray Viking group not only gives the locals the technique for making iron tools and weapons. It also gives the native Americans all the Eurasian quick-killer diseases: smallpox, cholera, influenza, bubonic plague, typhoid, etc.

The first generations of local victims die in swaths, but by 500 years later their descendants have all the same



immunities as Europeans. So, when Columbus shows up in the Caribbean in 1492, the local people are as well armed as his crew, they don't fall ill, and they eat the European explorers for lunch (metaphorically, of course).

Then an exiled Inca ex-monarch in Cuba has his men reverse-engineer Columbus's ships, builds some of his own, and sets out to Europe to see what he can conquer or steal. There follows a picaresque story in which a band of 300 Inca 'conquistadors' first over-

throws the King of Spain and then, modestly reinforced by other Inca adventurers, takes over Italy, Germany and the Netherlands as well.

There's plenty to amuse the casual reader. Francisco Pizarro, conqueror of Peru in fact, becomes the personal fixer of the Inca king Atahualpa, ruler of most of Europe. The Aztecs are horrified by the way that the Christians burn their human sacrifices (the heretics) alive rather than just cutting their hearts out like sensible people do. And so on.

The message seems to be that native Americans, given the opportunity, would have been slightly nicer and more enlightened imperialists than the Europeans who filled that role in the real history. Which

may be true, but is not very relevant, since the whole scenario is entirely incredible.

Not much in history is inevitable, but the conquest of the Americas was. It might have been done by the Chinese or the Muslims rather than by the Europeans, but whichever of the older Eurasian civilisations reached the Americas first was bound to supplant the local, younger civilisations.

The problem was the sheer biological vulnerability of 'New World' populations to people coming from the 'Old World', and Binet's device of having Greenland Vikings accidentally bestow immunity on the New Worlders 500 years before Columbus just doesn't work. The then new Greenland settlements were so far from

Europe, so small, and so rarely visited that they lacked lasting immunity themselves.

Moreover, their explorations in Newfoundland and around the Gulf of St. Lawrence were undertaken in the hope of finding some valuable resource that they could trade with Iceland and Norway in return for all the things they could not produce themselves.

As soon as the Greenland Vikings found something that filled the bill closer to home - walrus and narwhal ivory from Disko Bay on Greenland's north-west coast - they shut the Newfoundland base down and stopped sailing westward. The idea that they could ever have reached the Caribbean, let alone the Amazon, is preposterous.

The New World's popula-

tion in 1500 was probably around 50 million people, mostly living in the big but relatively new mass civilisations. That population fell by about 90 per cent in the following century. So many farms were abandoned that the global temperature dropped (the 'Little Ice Age') as the forests grew back and absorbed enormous amounts of carbon dioxide.

What killed those 45 million missing people? Maybe one million died at the hands of the European invaders, but the vast majority fell victim to the Eurasian quick-killer diseases. If the Chinese had crossed the Pacific and reached the Americas first, the result would have been exactly the same. Those civilisations were doomed.



# Ghani Baradar is ‘undisputed victor’ of war in Af: Report

PTI ■ LONDON

Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Taliban leader freed from a Pakistani jail on the request of the US less than three years ago, has emerged as an “undisputed victor” of the 20-year war in Afghanistan, according to a British media report.

While Haibatullah Akhundzada is the Taliban’s overall leader, Baradar is its political chief and its most public face. He was said to be on his way from his office in Doha, Qatar, to Kabul on Sunday evening.

In a televised statement on the fall of Kabul, he said the Taliban’s real test was only just beginning and that they had to serve the nation, The Guardian newspaper reported on Sunday.

Baradar’s return to power embodies Afghanistan’s inability



Abdul Ghani Baradar

to escape the bloody shackles of its past. The story of his adult life is the story of the country’s unceasing, pitiless conflict, the report said.

Born in Uruzgan province in 1968, he fought in the Afghan mujahideen against



Taliban fighters stand guard in front of the Hamid Karzai International Airport, in Kabul, Afghanistan on Monday

AP

the Soviets in the 1980s. After the Russians were driven out in 1992 and the country fell into

civil war between rival warlords, Baradar set up a madrasa in Kandahar with his former commander and reputed brother in law, Mohammad Omar.

Together, the two mullahs founded the Taliban, a movement spearheaded by young Islamic scholars dedicated to the religious purification of the country and the creation of an emirate, the report said.

Fuelled by religious fervour, widespread hatred of the

warlords and substantial support from Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, the Taliban swept to power in 1996 after a series of stunning conquests of provincial capitals that took the world by surprise, just as the movement has done in recent weeks.

Baradar, Mullah Omar’s deputy who was widely believed to be a highly effective strategist, was a key architect of those victories. Baradar played a succession of military and

administrative roles in the five-year Taliban regime, and by the time it was ousted by the US and its Afghan allies, he was deputy minister of defence.

During the Taliban’s 20-year exile, Baradar had the reputation of being a potent military leader and a subtle political operator. Western diplomats came to view him as on the wing of the Quetta Shura – the Taliban’s regrouped leadership in exile – that was most resistant to ISI control, and most amenable to political contacts with Kabul.

The Obama administration, however, was more fearful of his military expertise than it was hopeful about his supposedly moderate leanings. The CIA tracked him down to Karachi in 2010 and in February of that year persuaded ISI to arrest him, the report said.

“The capture of Baradar was predominantly instigated because of his role in the war rather than because of the likelihood that he was going to suddenly make peace,” a former official said.

“The fact is, the Pakistanis held on to him all those years in large part because the United States asked them to,” the report said.

## China hopes Taliban will establish ‘open, inclusive’ Islamic Govt as committed

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Monday expressed hope that the Taliban will stand by its commitment of establishing an “open and inclusive” Islamic government in Afghanistan and will ensure a peaceful transition of power without violence and terrorism.

Commenting for the first time on the sudden and rapid takeover of the Afghanistan government by the Taliban insurgents, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying in a media briefing here expressed hope that the Taliban will abide by its commitment to ensure a peaceful transition of power, taking full responsibility for the safety of Afghan citizens and foreign diplomatic missions.

Taliban insurgents swept Kabul on Sunday after the US-backed Afghan government collapsed and President Ashraf Ghani fled the country, bringing an unprecedented end to a two-decade campaign in which the US and its allies had tried to transform the war-ravaged nation.

While most of the embassies in Kabul including that of the US, India and EU countries rushed to evacuate

its diplomatic staff, Hua said the Chinese Embassy is up and running with its ambassador and some staff.

However, most of the Chinese nationals have already been evacuated from Afghanistan, she said.

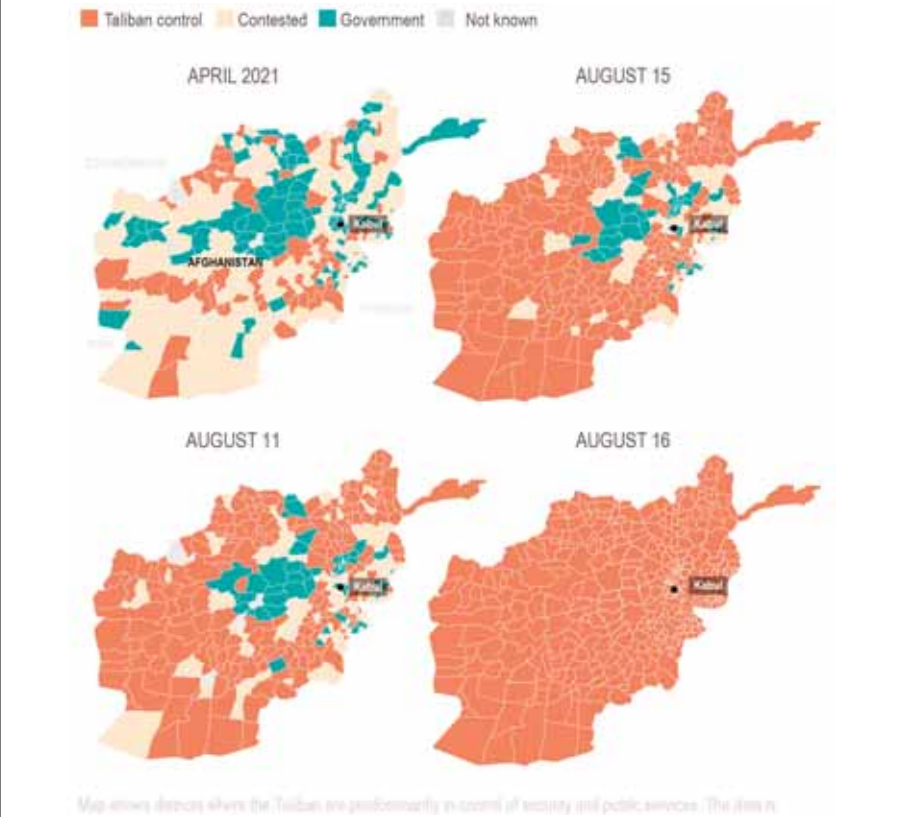
“The situation in Afghanistan has experienced major changes. We respect Afghanistan’s people’s will and choice,” Hua said.

The war in Afghanistan has lasted over 40 years. To stop the war and realise peace is the wish of the 30 million Afghan people and the aspiration of the international community and regional countries, she said.

“We noticed the statement from Afghan Taliban yesterday (Sunday) saying that the war is over and they will start consultation on establishment of an open and inclusive Islamic government and take the responsibility of safety of Afghan citizens and foreign diplomatic corps,” the spokesperson said.

“We hope this will be implemented to ensure a peaceful transition, stop violence and terrorism, and make sure people are free from war and build their new home,” Hua said.

## Biden team surprised by rapid Taliban gains in Afghanistan



AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden and other top US officials were stunned on Sunday by the pace of the Taliban’s nearly complete takeover of Afghanistan, as the planned withdrawal of American forces urgently became a mission to ensure a safe evacuation.

The speed of the Afghan government’s collapse and the ensuing chaos posed the most serious test of Biden as com-

mander in chief, and he was the subject of withering criticism from Republicans who said that he had failed.

Biden campaigned as a seasoned expert in international relations and has spent months downplaying the prospect of an ascendant Taliban while arguing that Americans of all political persuasions have tired of a 20-year war, a conflict that demonstrated the limits of money and military might to force a

Western-style democracy on a society not ready or willing to embrace it.

By Sunday, though, leading figures in the administration acknowledged they were caught off guard with the utter speed of the collapse of Afghan security forces.

The challenge of that effort became clear after reports of sporadic gunfire at the Kabul airport prompted Americans to shelter as they awaited flights to safety.

## Prez Ghani flees Kabul in copter stuffed with cash: Reports

PTI ■ MOSCOW

Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani has fled the war-torn country aboard a helicopter stuffed with money but had to leave some cash as it could not be squeezed into the chopper, according to Russian official media reports on Monday.

Taliban insurgents swept Kabul on Sunday after a sudden and unprecedented collapse of the US-backed Ghani government, prompting the president to join fellow citizens and foreigners to leave the country.

Quoting Russian embassy in Kabul, Russian official news agency TASS reported that the 72-year-old President fled Afghanistan aboard a helicopter packed with money.

“As for the reasons for the collapse of the regime, they are characterised by how Ghani fled the country. Four cars were packed with money, and they tried to cram another bag of cash into the helicopter. Not all the cash managed to squeeze in, and some of the money was left lying on the airfield,” a mission employee was quoted as saying by the report.

## We must all ensure Af cannot ever, ever again be a base for terrorism: US in UNSC

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

The US told the UN Security Council that the international community should ensure that Afghanistan “cannot ever, ever” again be a base for terrorism and urged the country’s neighbours and others in the region and beyond to give refuge to Afghans attempting to flee.

The Taliban swept into Kabul on Sunday after President Ashraf Ghani fled the country, bringing an end to a two-decade campaign in which the US and its allies had tried to transform Afghanistan. The country’s Western-trained security forces collapsed or fled, ahead of the planned withdrawal of the last American troops at the end of the month.

“Today I want to reiterate reemphasise and reassert this call, civilian populations including journalists and non-combatants, must be protected. Attacks against civilians or civilian objects must stop and the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Afghan citizens, especially women, girls and members of minority

groups must be respected,” US Ambassador to the UN Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told the UN Security Council meeting on Afghanistan, held on Monday under India’s current Presidency of the 15-nation body.

She said, “We also call on all parties to prevent terrorism and we must all ensure Afghanistan cannot ever, ever again be a base for terrorism.”

The US envoy said that over this past weekend, members of the international community joined together to state unequivocally that every Afghan should be able to live in safety, security and dignity. “We also called on all parties in Afghanistan to ensure safe departures and the protection of human life and property. We also call on the Taliban to permit humanitarian organisations to continue their valuable work in Afghanistan,” she said. She asserted that humanitarian personnel and agencies must have safe, unhindered access to provide life saving assistance to the increasing numbers of Afghans in need.



## 7 killed as people throng Kabul airport to flee Taliban rule

PTI ■ KABUL

At least seven people, including three Afghan nationals who clung to a US Air Force plane to escape Taliban rule, died on Monday in a melee at the Kabul airport, as hundreds of people scrambled to board flights in a desperate bid to get out of Afghanistan, following

the toppling of the government led by President Ashraf Ghani.

Taliban insurgents swept Kabul on Sunday after the US-backed Afghan government collapsed and President Ghani fled the country, bringing an unprecedented end to a two-decade campaign in which the US and its allies had tried to transform the war-ravaged nation.

## US to expand its security presence at Kabul airport to 6,000 troops

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US has said it would deploy 6,000 troops at the vital Kabul airport to ensure the safe departure of American citizens and its allies from Afghanistan which has been taken over by the Taliban, in a sudden and unprecedented collapse of the elected regime led by embattled President Ashraf Ghani.

The Taliban insurgents swept into Afghanistan’s capital on Sunday after the government collapsed and president Ghani joined fellow citizens and foreigners to leave the country.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken made a series of calls to his counterparts of

US’ key allies. India was not among them.

Simultaneously, more than 60 countries led by the US and the European Union issued a joint statement, urging those in positions of power and authority across Afghanistan to bear responsibility and accountability for the protection of human life and property, and for the immediate restoration of security and civil order.

“At present, we are completing a series of steps to secure Hamid Karzai International Airport to enable the safe departure of US and allied personnel from Afghanistan via civilian and military flights,” said a joint statement issued by the US Department of State and the Defence Department.

## Malaysian PM resigns after failing to get majority support

AP ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin resigned on Monday after less than 18 months in power, apologizing for his shortcomings but blaming those “hungry for power.” Muhyiddin conceded that he had lost majority support to govern, making him the country’s shortest-ruling leader.

“I have tendered my resignation as prime minister and also for the entire Cabinet ... Because I have lost the majority support of lower house members,” he said in a televised final message after meeting the king.

“I take this opportunity to seek forgiveness ... For all my mistakes and weaknesses during my tenure as prime minister. I and my Cabinet colleagues have tried our best to save and protect lives ... In this period of crisis. However, as a human being, we are bound to make mistakes so I apologize.”

He said he had hoped to stay on until the country’s coronavirus vaccination program is completed and the economy has recovered, but was thwarted by those “hungry for power.”

Muhyiddin’s departure plunges the country into a new crisis amid a worsening COVID-19 outbreak. Political leaders have already begun to jostle for the top post, with his deputy, Ismail Sabri, rallying support to succeed Muhyiddin and keep the government intact.

The palace said the king, Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, accepted Muhyiddin’s resignation and appointed him as caretaker prime minister until a successor is found, in line with the constitution.

## Detainee says China has secret jail in Dubai, holds Uyghurs

Beijing: A young Chinese woman says she was held for eight days at a Chinese-run secret detention facility in Dubai along with at least two Uyghurs, in what may be the first evidence that China is operating a so-called “black site” beyond its borders.

The woman, 26-year-old Wu Huan, was on the run to avoid extradition back to China because her fiancé was considered a Chinese dissident. Wu told The Associated Press she was abducted from a hotel in Dubai and detained by Chinese officials at a villa converted into a jail, where she saw or heard two other prisoners, both Uyghurs.

She was questioned and threatened in Chinese and forced to sign legal documents incriminating her fiancé for harassing her, she said. She was finally released on June 8 and is now seeking asylum in the Netherlands.

## Veteran Opp leader wins Zambia’s Presidency

Lusaka: Zambia’s veteran opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema has won the southern African country’s presidency after taking more than 50% of the vote. Hichilema was declared president-elect by Esau Chulu, chairman of the Electoral Commission of Zambia, early Monday after results for 155 of the country’s 156 constituencies were announced.

Hichilema, a 59-year old businessman contesting the presidency for the sixth time, got more than 2.8 million votes to President Edgar Lungu’s 1.8 million votes, achieving one of the biggest electoral wins in Zambia’s history. Hichilema garnered more than 50% of the nearly 5 million votes cast to win the presidency outright, without having to go to a runoff election.

## Pakistani model killed by stepbrother for ‘honour’

Lahore: A Pakistani fashion model, who was found dead at her house here last month, was killed by her stepbrother for “disgracing the family’s honour”, police said on Monday.

On her return from Dubai, the 29-year-old model, Nayab Nadeem, was found strangled at her house in Lahore on July 11 and a murder case was registered on the complaint of one of her two stepbrothers.

Punjab police spokesperson Rana Arif told PTI on Monday that the mystery of this blind murder has been solved as the victim’s stepbrother turned out to be her murderer.

The model’s stepbrother, Muhammad Aslam, has confessed that he first strangled her and then stripped her dead body naked to mislead the police and show that it was a rape-cum-murder case.

HIMALAYA FOOD INTERNATIONAL LIMITED					
Regd. Office: 118, 1st Floor, 12 Gagandeep Building, Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110008					
Tel. +91 11 45108609, Fax: +91 1704 225178					
E-mail id: cs@himalayainternational.com website: www.himalayafoodcompany.com					
EXTRACT OF UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 30TH JUNE, 2021					
Amount Rs. In Lakhs					
S. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended 30.06.2021 (Unaudited)	Year Ended 31.03.2021 (Audited)	Quarter Ended 30.06.2020 (Unaudited)	Year Ended 31.03.2020 (Audited)
1.	Total Income from Operations	1328.32	5823.58	960.10	
2.	Net Profit for the period (before tax & exceptional items)	64.67	122.19	-250.81	
3.	Net Profit for the period before Tax (after exceptional items)	64.67	122.19	-250.81	
4.	Net Profit for the period after Tax (after exceptional items)	64.67	252.19	-250.81	
5.	Total Comprehensive income for the period (Comprising Profit for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	64.67	252.19	-250.81	
6.	Paid-up Equity Share Capital Face Value of Rs. 10/- per share	5787.29	5787.29	5787.29	
7.	Earnings Per Share i Basic in Rs. ii Diluted in Rs.	0.11 0.11	0.44 0.44	-0.43 -0.43	

Notes:  
1. Operating expenses include raw-material consumed, packing, labour, power & fuel.  
2. No Interest has been charged on bank loans as the company is in OTS.  
3. The Mushroom operations were partially restarted in July/August and full effect will come by Dec & March 2022. Overall operations have been grossly effected due to on-going Covid pandemic.

By Order of the Board  
For HIMALAYA FOOD INTERNATIONAL LIMITED  
Sd/-  
Man Mohan Malik  
Managing Director

MY MONEY SECURITIES LIMITED					
REGD. OFF : 10-A, UNDERHILL LANE, CIVIL LINES, DELHI-110054					
CIN : L67120DL1992PLC047890;					
Website : www.mymoneyviews.com; E-mail id : mymoneyviews@outlook.com;					
Tel No.: 011-23937870;					
Extract of the Standalone Unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter Ended 30th June, 2021					
(Rs. In lacs)					
S. NO.	Particulars	Quarter Ended 30.06.2021 Unaudited	Quarter Ended 31.03.2021 Audited	Quarter Ended 30.06.2020 Unaudited	Year Ended 31.03.2021 Audited
1	Total Income from operations (net)	60.71	10.32	19.65	69.30
2	Net Profit/(Loss) from Ordinary Activities after tax	25.23	(1.95)	0.38	4.93
3	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after Tax (after Extraordinary items)	25.23	(1.95)	0.38	4.93
4	Total comprehensive income for the period (comprising profit/(loss) for the period after tax and other comprehensive income after tax	25.23	(1.95)	0.38	4.93
5	Equity Share Capital	1000.03	1000.03	1000.03	1000.03
6	Earning per share (before extraordinary items) (of Rs. 10/- each) Basic Diluted	0.252 0.252	(0.019) (0.019)	0.004 0.004	0.049 0.049
7	Earning per share (after extraordinary items) (of Rs. 10/- each) Basic Diluted	0.252 0.252	(0.019) (0.019)	0.004 0.004	0.049 0.049

Note :  
The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/Annual Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly/Annual Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites : (www.bseindia.com) and company website www.mymoneyviews.com

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors  
Sd/-  
Sanjai Seth  
Whole Time Director  
DIN : 00350518

RATHI STEEL AND POWER LTD.					
Regd. Off.: 24/1, Block A, Mohan Cooperative Industrial Estate, Mathura Road, New Delhi- 110044					
CIN:L27109DL1971PLC005905					
web:www.rathisteelandalpower.com, e-mail:investors@rathisteelandalpower.com, Tel:011- 40512426					
Extract of Unaudited Statement of Financial Results for the quarter ended 30th June 2021					
(In Laes)					
Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter ended 30.06.2021 (Unaudited)	Quarter ended 31.03.2021 (Audited)	Quarter ended 30.06.2020 (Unaudited)	Year ended 31.03.2021 (Audited)
1	Total income from operations (net)	8,483.16	17,536.48	880.97	43,746.69
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before tax, exceptional and / or extraordinary item.	(171.72)	405.11	(630.38)	(35.74)
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (before Extraordinary items)	(171.72)	405.11	(630.38)	(35.74)
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	(171.72)	405.11	(630.38)	(35.74)
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	(150.01)	421.95	(627.72)	(18.90)
6	Equity Share Capital	3,130.81	3,130.81	3,130.81	3,130.81
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve as shown in the Balance Sheet of previous year)	--	--	--	--
8	Earnings Per Share (after extraordinary items) (of Rs.10/- each)				
a) Basic :		(0.55)	1.29	(2.01)	(0.11)
b) Diluted:		(0.55)	1.29	(2.01)	(0.11)

The above is an extract of the detailed format of Statement of Audited Financial Results for the quarter ended on 30th June 2021 filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Statement Financial Results are available on the websites of the BSE Limited (www.bseindia.com).

The above financial results were reviewed by the audit committee and approved by Board of Directors of the Company at their meeting held on 14-08-2021

Date:-14-08-2021  
Place: New Delhi  
For and on behalf of Board  
Sd/- (PREM NARAIN VARSHNEY) MANAGING DIRECTOR, DIN: 00012709



# No room for cut in excise duty on petrol, diesel: FM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday ruled out a cut in excise duty on petrol and diesel to ease prices, which have touched an all-time high, saying payments in lieu of past subsidised fuel pose limitations.

Petrol and diesel as well as cooking gas and kerosene were sold at subsidised rates during the previous Congress-led UPA government. Instead of paying for the subsidy to bring parity between the artificially suppressed retail selling price and the cost that had soared because of international rates crossing USD 100 per barrel, the then government issued oil bonds totalling Rs 1.34 lakh crore to the state-fuel retailers.

These oil bonds and the interest thereon are being paid now.

"If I did not have the burden to service the oil bonds, I would have been in a position to reduce excise duty on fuel," she told reporters here. "Previous government have made our job difficult by issuing oil bonds. Even if I want to do something I am paying through my nose for the oil bonds."

Sitharaman, who had

raised excise duty on petrol and diesel to record high to shore up revenue collections last year, said the interest on oil bonds paid in the last seven years totalled Rs 70,195.72 crore.

Of the Rs 1.34 lakh crore of oil bonds, only Rs 3,500 crore of principal has been paid and the remaining Rs 1.3 lakh crore is due for repayment between this fiscal and 2025-26, she said.

The government has to repay Rs 10,000 crore this fiscal year (2021-22). Another Rs 31,150 crore is due to be repaid in 2023-24, Rs 52,860.17 crore in the following year and Rs 36,913 crore in 2025-26.

"A significant amount is going for interest payment and principal repayment. What unfair burden on me," she said.

"Opening balance in 2014-15 was about Rs 1.34 lakh crore and interest repayment was Rs 10,255 crore. Since 2015-16, interest burden each year is Rs 9,989 crore."

The collections from the hike in excise duty far exceed the amount due to be paid to oil companies.

Excise duty on petrol was hiked from Rs 19.98 per litre to Rs 32.9 last year to recoup gain arising from international oil prices plunging to multi-year

low as pandemic gulped demand.

Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Rameswar Teli had last month told Parliament that the Union government's tax collections on petrol and diesel jumped by 88 per cent to Rs 3.35 lakh crore in the year to March 31 from Rs 1.78 lakh crore a year back.

Excise collection in pre-pandemic 2018-19 was Rs 2.13 lakh crore.

The hike in taxes last year did not result in any revision in retail prices as they got adjusted against the reduction that was warranted because of fall in international oil prices.

But with the demand returning, international oil prices have soared, which have translated to record high petrol and diesel prices across the country. More than half the country has petrol at over Rs 100-a-litre mark and diesel is above that level in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha.

Sitharaman said the Centre has kept open the option of inclusion of petroleum products under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime. "Whenever states agree on this, it can be brought under the GST."

## Fuel demand recovery continues in August, diesel sales fall by 8% from that of pre-Covid-19 level

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's fuel demand recovery continued in August as sales of the nation's most used fuel, diesel, inched towards pre-Covid levels on easing of pandemic-related restrictions, preliminary sales data showed on Monday.

Petrol sales are already above pre-Covid levels and diesel is 8 per cent short.

State-owned fuel retailers sold 0.98 million tonnes of petrol in the first half of August, up 9.4 per cent from the year-earlier period. It was 3.7 per cent higher than pre-Covid petrol sales of 0.95 million tonnes in August 1-15, 2019.

Sales of diesel - the most used fuel in the country - rose 18.5 per cent to 2.11 million tonnes during August 1-15, 2021 over the previous year, but was down 7.9 per cent from August 2019.

Last month, diesel consumption was 11 per cent lower than pre-Covid levels. This is the third straight month that showed a rise in consumption since March.

Fuel demand had recovered to near-normal levels in March before the onset of the second wave of COVID-19 infections led to the re-imposition of lockdowns in different

states, stalling mobility and muting economic activity.

Consumption in May slumped to its lowest since August last year amid lockdowns and restrictions in several states. Fuel demand showed signs of resurgence in June after restrictions began to be eased and the economy gathered pace.

On July 30, S M Vaidya, Chairman of India's largest oil firm IOC, had stated that petrol consumption has risen over pre-Covid levels as people prefer personal transport over public transport.

Diesel sales, he said, were likely to return to pre-pandemic levels by Diwali in November if a third wave of Covid infections does not lead to the re-imposition of lockdown.

ATF consumption, which had seen the most severe fall as air travel was restricted beginning March 2020, is likely to return to normal by the end of the current fiscal in March, he had said.

Consumption of LPG, the only fuel which showed growth even during the first lockdown because of free supplies by the government to the poor, rose 6.5 per cent year on year to 1.06 million tonnes in August 1-15. It was however 2.5 per cent lower than August 2019.

## Inflation to be within target range in FY22: FM



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said that she expects inflation to remain in the prescribed range during the current fiscal.

The RBI has been mandated to keep inflation at 4 per cent, with tolerance level of 2 per cent on either side.

She expressed confidence that the revenue would be buoyant in the coming months. Both Goods and Services Tax (GST) and direct taxes have improved in the past few months, the minister said.

On the demand pick up, she said there is enough liquidity in the market and credit growth is expected to pick up in the coming festive season.

## Sensex, Nifty scale new peaks; RIL, HDFC duo lead rally

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty raced to new peaks on Monday on account of healthy buying in heavyweights Reliance and HDFC twins as well as IT and pharma shares.

At the closing bell, the BSE Sensex was quoted higher by 145.29 points or 0.26 per cent at a new closing high of 55,582.58. It also hit a record intra-day high of 55,680.75.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty advanced 33.95 points or 0.21 per cent to mark a fresh closing high of 16,563.05. During the day, it rose to new intra-day peak of 16,589.40.

Tata Steel was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying nearly 4 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, M&M, Bajaj Finserv and Reliance Industries.

On the other hand, Maruti, Bajaj Auto, PowerGrid and UltraTech Cement were among the major laggards.

Sectorally, BSE metal, energy, oil and gas, FMCG and finance indices rose up to 1.79 per cent, while telecom, auto, capital goods and power indices fell up to 0.99 per cent.

Broader midcap and small-

cap indices underperformed the benchmark, shedding up to 0.57 per cent.

"Markets traded lacklustre and ended marginally higher, in absence of any major trigger. The tone was muted in the beginning however healthy buying in select heavyweights like Reliance combined with stocks from the metal and financials space aided the index to inch higher as the session progressed," Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking, said.

The broader market indices continued their under-performance and ended lower in a range of 0.3-0.8 per cent, he added.

"As the results season is largely behind us, domestic factors viz. Updates on further unlocking and pace of vaccination will remain in focus. Meanwhile, performance of the global indices may induce further volatility. Since we're seeing limited participation, traders should focus on sectors which are trading in sync with the benchmark and wisely choose the stocks," Mishra said.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul ended with losses, while Shanghai was positive.

## WPI inflation eases for second straight month to 11.16% in July on cheaper food items

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The wholesale price-based inflation softened for the second straight month to 11.16 per cent in July, on cheaper food items, even though prices of manufactured goods and crude oil hardened.

However, WPI inflation remained in double digit for the fourth consecutive month in July, mainly due to a low base of last year. WPI inflation was (-) 0.25 per cent, in July 2020.

"The high rate of inflation in July 2021 is primarily due to low base effect and rise in prices of crude petroleum and natural gas; mineral oils; manufactured products like basic metals; food products; textiles; chemicals and chemical products etc as compared the corresponding month of the previous year," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in a statement.

Inflation in food articles eased for the third straight month, and was at 'zero' per cent in July, down from 3.09 per cent in June, even as onion prices spiked. Inflation in onions was high at 72.01 per cent.

Inflation in crude petroleum and natural gas was 40.28

per cent in July, against 36.34 per cent in June.

In manufactured products, inflation stood at 11.20 per cent in July, against 10.88 per cent in the previous month.

WPI inflation scaled double digit in April at 10.74 per cent, rising to a record high of 13.11 per cent in May. In June it eased to 12.07 per cent and further moderated to 11.16 per cent in July.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said the core-inflation is likely to have peaked at 10.8 per cent in July 2021.

The rapid rise in the core-WPI inflation from August 2020 onwards as well as the impact of concerns related to the Delta plus variant on commodity prices are likely to gradually soften the core print going ahead, she said.

"The headline WPI inflation is expected to remain in double-digits until October 2021, and therefore its softening over the last two months is unlikely to provide any material comfort to the monetary policy committee," Nayar added.

The RBI, which mainly takes into account retail inflation, in its monetary policy last week kept interest rates unchanged at record lows.

## Tariff hike key to sector revival; Birla, ABG, Voda committed to supporting telco: VIL CEO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid an existential struggle, Vodafone Idea on Monday said while its recent tariff tweaks are steps in the right direction, such changes are not enough to solve the industry's structural issues, and tariff hikes and floor pricing remain critical for the sector revival.

Speaking during the Q1 earnings call, Vodafone Idea CEO Ravinder Takkar said although Kumar Mangalam Birla recently stepped down as chairman of Vodafone Idea, "he as well as Aditya Birla Group (ABG) and the Vodafone group are committing to providing support and guidance to the company, in line with the stated positions of both the groups".

"We will thus continue to get the benefit of their experience and support," Takkar said. On fundraising, Takkar maintained that VIL continues to remain in active discussions with potential investors.

Citing the recent "tariff interventions" undertaken by VIL, including entry-level corporate postpaid plans and other offerings, Takkar said: "While these tariff interventions are steps in the right direction

and will help in improving ARPU, such changes are not material enough to solve the structural issues that the industry is facing".

The company continues to engage with the regulator on floor pricing, which is "critical and necessary" to improve the overall health of the industry, he observed.

"As mentioned by us, time and again, tariff hike remains a critical factor to revive the sector, and pricing structure has to change where operators have the ability to charge customers for incremental usage," he pointed out.

The VIL top honcho further said that the company was "disappointed" by the Supreme Court's move to reject pleas filed by telecom operators, including Vodafone Idea, seeking rectification of the alleged errors in the calculation of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) related dues, payable by them.

"Needless to say we were disappointed by the verdict. We have recently filed a review petition in the SC clearly indicating that the intent is not for us to challenge the judgement of the court, but to seek corrections in demand due in manifest errors," Takkar said.

## AAR: Potable water supply through mobile tankers taxable at 18%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Supply of drinking water to the public through mobile tankers or dispensers by a charitable organisation is taxable at 18 per cent under the GST, AAR has ruled.

The Andhra Pradesh bench of the Authority for Advance Ruling (AAR) has ruled -- in the case of Vijayavahini Charitable Foundation -- that since the organisation is supplying purified water, hence it is not fit for GST exemption.

Vijayavahini Charitable Foundation had sought an advance ruling on whether the supply of groundwater after undertaking purification through Reverse Osmosis to the general public either through the dispensing unit or mobile tanker at a concessional rate is exempt from Goods and Services Tax (GST).

The AAR said the principal supply undertaken by the organisation is a supply of purified water, which is taxable at 18 per cent, while the service of distribution through mobile units is an ancillary service and taxable at 18 per cent.

## SBI offers higher rate on term deposits, waiver of processing fee

IANs ■ MUMBAI

As the country is celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav -- an initiative to commemorate 75 years of Indian independence -- the country's largest bank State Bank of India (SBI) had also geared up to provide an array of offerings on its retail loans and deposits to its customers.

After announcing processing fee waiver on Home loans, the Bank has now announced a 100 per cent waiver on processing fees for its Car loan customers across all channels. The customers can further enjoy the facility of up to 90 per cent on-road financing for their Car loans.

SBI is offering a special interest concession of 25 bps for customers applying for a Car loan via YONO. The users of YONO SBI planning to bring home a new car can avail of the loan at an interest rate of as low as 7.5 per cent per annum.

For its Gold loan customers, the Bank is offering a reduction of 75bps in the interest rates. Customers can now avail of Gold loans from across all channels of the bank at 7.5 per cent per annum. The bank has further waived off the processing fee for all the customers applying for a gold loan via YONO.

## India's vehicle scrappage policy provides opportunities for new biz models: Experts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's vehicle scrappage policy provides opportunities for new business models with traditional automotive ecosystems coming together with new players, such as small and medium enterprises to set up vehicle fitness testing centers, according to industry experts.

With the Covid-19 pandemic making the industry realise the vulnerability associated with the current value chain structure at both the consumer and the supplier end, the scrappage policy can give a positive push to start a new and nascent automotive ecosystem, said consultancy firm EY India.

Commenting on the policy which was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week, Deloitte India said it is also likely to attract additional investments and generate employment through registered vehicle scrapping facilities (RVSFs), with around 50-60 such centers likely to be set up across the country.

"Automotive OEMs have an opportunity to revolutionise the recycling industry by evaluating interesting business models which would help them achieve both environmental

and economic goals," EY India Partner and Automotive Sector Leader Vinay Raghunath said in a statement.

They can potentially leverage the supply chain associated with recycled materials to reduce input material costs, impact vehicle prices positively, improve shareholder value and offer a choice to consumers, he added.

According to EY India, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are responding to the new dimensions of mobility -- connected, autonomous, shared, and electric vehicles -- new forms of ownership and an increased environmental focus across stakeholders.

"In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the industry realise the vulnerability associated with the current value chain structure at both the consumer and the supplier end," it added.

A scrappage policy can provide some obvious benefits related to a reduction in pollution, reduction in the fuel import bill, improved recycle or reuse of parts, generation of replacement related demand, and providing impetus to structuring this part of the automotive ecosystem.

### SEARCH FOR KIDNAPPED



Sajiya

General Public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Sajiya D/o Fazluddin R/o H.No. N-41, Near Unchi Masjid, Welcome Seelampur, Delhi** has been kidnapped since 25.11.2015 from her house. In this regard a **FIR No. 885/15 u/s 363 IPC** dated 25.11.2015 has been lodged at PS, Seelampur, Delhi. The description of kidnapped girl is as under :

**Name : Sajiya, Father's Name : Fazluddin, Age : 17 years, Height : 4',9" Face : Long, Complexion : Wheatish, Built : Thin, Wearing : Black Burkha and Black Sanddel in feet.**

If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform the undersigned at following phone numbers.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>  
e-mail : [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Fax : 011-24368639  
Ph. : 011-24368638, 24368641  
Extn No. : 2101  
DP/235/NE/2020

**SHO**  
**P.S., Seelampur, Delhi**  
**Ph. : 011-22562989**  
**8750870721**

### SEARCH FOR MISSING



Ajmal Ali

General Public is hereby informed that one boy **Namely: Ajmal Ali, S/o Mansoor Rehman, R/o: Dharmpal Ka Makan, Village Dhansa, New Delhi** has been missing since **20.07.2021** from the area of P.S. J.P. Kalan, Delhi. In this regard a **FIR No. 104/2021 dated 21.07.2021** has been registered at P.S. J.P. Kalan, Delhi. The description of the missing boy is as under- **Age: 17 years, Sex: Male, Height: 5'3", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Hair: Black, Wearing: Black colour T-shirt and blue colour jeans.** Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing boy but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this missing boy kindly inform to the following.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>  
E-Mail ID - [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Fax No.: 011-24368639  
Ph. Nos.: 011-24368638, 24368641  
DP/413/DW/2021

**SHO**  
**P.S. J.P. Kalan, Delhi**  
**Ph.: 011-25318081, 8750871631**

### SEARCH FOR MISSING



Poonam



Sushil



Nandani

General Public is hereby informed that a lady namely **Poonam**, alongwith her two children (**Sushil, Age 9 years, Nandani, Age 8 years**) **W/o Kalu Yadav, R/o H.No. E-103, Deepak Colony, Dilshad Garden, Delhi, Age: 38 years, Height: 165 cms, Complexion: Fair, Built: Thin, Face: Oval, Wearing: Yellow Colour Saree and Black Colour Sandals** in her feet has been missing from her home since **14.07.2021**. In this regard a vide **DD No. 84A, dated 15.07.2021** has been lodged at **PS. Seemapuri, Delhi.**

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing lady and her children but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this lady and her children please inform undersigned.

E-mail : [cic@cbi.gov.nic.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.nic.in)  
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641  
Fax : 011-24368639  
DP/538/SHD/2021

**SHO**  
**P.S. Seemapuri, Delhi**  
**Ph.: 011-22599397, 7065036030**

### APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



Meera

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the address of the above mentioned lady but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this lady please inform to the undersigned.

E-mail : [cic@cbi.gov.nic.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.nic.in)  
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641  
Fax : 011-24368639  
DP/947/CD/2021

**SHO**  
**PS Patel Nagar, Delhi**  
**Ph. : 011-225872637, 8750870434**



DOCYARD

DR PAWAN KUMAR

Senior Consultant,  
General Pediatrics

MADHUKAR RAINBOW CHILDREN'S  
HOSPITAL



# Don't let rain play spoil sport



While incessant rains during monsoon may play spoilsport to an adult's plans, going out and enjoying the showers, gorging on street food and playing in puddles is how children associate the rainy season with. However, with all of these comes the risk of exposing youngsters to a host of germs and viruses which can leave them recuperating on the bed for the rest of the season.

Monsoon diseases are one of the major concerns plaguing parents when it comes to their wards during the rainy seasons and mosquito-borne diseases like dengue, malaria and other illnesses like cholera can play havoc to a youngster's body. While protection from mosquitoes becomes an important way to keep away diseases, one also has to watch what their children eat during the rainy seasons to keep them healthy.

Rainy season illness in babies also begins to ramp up since their bodies are suddenly exposed to a huge fluctuation in the atmosphere and a considerably larger amount of microorganisms that the body has to fight against.

The monsoon season no matter how enticing, does pose as a potent threat to your child's health. Well the good news is that you no longer have to feel guilty about preventing your child from enjoying the rain and building his/her own childhood memories. All you need to do is take these simple preventive measures to protect your child's health this monsoon:

**Freshly cooked food:** Typhoid is quite rampant during monsoon. It mainly affects children and occurs due to consumption of contaminated food or water. Thus to protect your child's health this monsoon, ensure that they only eat freshly cooked food. Also, avoid street food along with meals in restaurants and hotels as there is no guarantee on how hygienic the food is.

**Follow a healthy diet:** Boost your child's immunity. Ensure that their diet is balanced and rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants as it provides a lot of protective and nutritional value to the body. Avoid raw foods like salad and raw eggs as these can get contaminated fast. Also, thoroughly wash fruits and vegetables in clean water before using and avoid feeding your child leftover food unless it is re-heated.

**Encourage your child to drink plenty of water:** A well hydrated body is better equipped to fight off flu and cold. Drinking enough water helps cleanse the system and flushes out toxins like germs and bacteria from your child's body. However, note that consuming contaminated water is one of the main reasons why children contract typhoid during monsoon. So ward off water-borne diseases by only drinking water that is clean, boiled or filtered.

**Use appropriate clothes and footwear:** Apart from raincoats and umbrellas, dress your child in loose clothes made of light cotton. This allows the skin to breathe. Since, children love jumping in every mud puddle they find. Gumboots are a must to protect their tiny feet from infections caused by rain water.

**Make your home mosquito-proof:** Monsoon brings along with it water-logging. This is the perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes that cause dengue and malaria to grow and multiply. So to protect your child's health this monsoon ensure that there is no water stagnation in and around your home by regularly draining vases and coolers. Use a mosquito net or keep all doors and windows of your home closed in the evenings. You can also apply repellents that agree with your child's skin to prevent him/her from mosquito bites.

**Vaccination:** Ask for your doctor's advice on getting your kid vaccinated against common illnesses like typhoid, hepatitis A, influenza.

## SUMMER COOLER

**TOMATO:** The tomato is the tomato plant's edible, generally red berry. Lycopen, found in tomatoes, has also been shown to inhibit the growth of cancer cells, including prostate, stomach, and colorectal cancer cells. It is also utilised in facial cleansers. You can peel the tomatoes and use the skin as a face mask in addition to eating them as salad. It refreshes and purifies the skin. Tomatoes are high in Vitamin A,

Vitamin B, and potassium, all of which can help lower cholesterol levels. It has the potential to prevent heart disease in the long run. Fresh tomato juice, which is high in Vitamin C, is an excellent way to increase immunity. It also helps your body stay energised and healthy during the hot summer months by controlling the release of stress hormones.



# DREADFUL BITES

## World Mosquito Day is on August 20. MUSBA HASHMI speaks with doctors to bring you facts about one of the most dangerous creature in the world, and also tell you the reason behind low Dengue cases this year

It is nothing short of a surprise that a tiny creature like mosquito is among the most dangerous on the earth. What makes them so? Their small size and the ability to spread vector-borne diseases in a jiffy. This is not the only interesting thing about the insect. There is, of course, more.

The vectors during a blood meal from an infected host ingest disease-producing microorganisms and transmit into a new host causing symptoms. Interestingly, more than 17 per cent of all infectious diseases are caused due to vector-borne diseases which lead to more than approximately 7,00,000 deaths annually. There is some more.

"Only female mosquitoes bite and they can lay up to 100 eggs every third night after mating only once. The lifespan is about 50 days for female mosquitoes and about 10 days for male," Dr Vineeta Singh Tandon, Consultant, Internal Medicine, PSRI Hospital, New Delhi, tells you.

For those who want to identify Dengue and Malaria causing mosquitoes, Anopheles mosquito, which is the main culprit for causing Malaria, is active during the night while the Aedes Aegypti mosquito, which is responsible for Dengue, is active during the day. "It is dark coloured and has typical white markings on the legs. It can be easily identified," Dr Col Vijay Dutta, Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, tells you.

According to World Health Organisation estimates, Malaria caused due to the Anopheles mosquito leads to almost 4,00,000 deaths per year globally. Similarly, Dengue is responsible for around 40,000 deaths per year.

"The only way to prevent this is to keep the surroundings clean, there should be stagnant water near to your place or at home, making sure the water in the cooler and plants is not stagnant. Mosquitoes generally lay eggs in the stagnant water. Using sanitiser may also help," says Dr Parinita Kaur, Consultant, Internal Medicine, Aakash Healthcare Super Specialty Hospitals.

Singh adds and tells you that personal protection from mosquito bites can be done by using repellents, in places where a higher number of mosquitoes are expected. Keeping the doors and windows of houses and cars closed is also important.

"Children and people at risk should be encouraged to wear clothing that covers their hands, arms, and legs to avoid mosquito bites," says Singh.

The earliest sign of dengue, he says, is high fever, followed by joint aches, severe headache and retro orbital pain (pain behind the eyes). "It is called as the break bone fever, because the bones ache a lot. This is all in the initial signs of dengue, now it has four stages. One, only Dengue fever. Two, dengue with Thrombocytopenia means Dengue with decrease in platelet count. Three, dengue hemorrhagic fever — in this there is hemorrhage because of the decreased platelets. The hemorrhages can be on skin or may be in the eye. The most dangerous and life threatening of all is the dengue hemorrhagic shock syndrome where the blood pressure and all the organs: the heart, kidneys, liver and lungs are involved. This is called as the multi organ dysfunction," Dr Sanjay Gupta, Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine, Paras Hospitals,



**ANOPHELES MOSQUITO, WHICH IS THE MAIN CULPRIT FOR CAUSING MALARIA, IS ACTIVE DURING THE NIGHT WHILE THE AEDES AEGYPTI MOSQUITO, WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DENGUE, IS ACTIVE DURING THE DAY**

Gurugram, tells you.

But, amidst all this hustle and bustle of the pandemic, what became a victim of oblivion is Dengue and Malaria. Surprisingly, there are very less cases and deaths reported. Now, whether the low cases this year was a result of COVID induced antibodies or not, is still a matter of question. "There can be several reasons responsible for the decline in dengue cases like staying at home and reduced outdoor exposure due to lockdown restrictions, environmental sanitation and fumigation drives. Public awareness also plays a major role. Whether COVID antibodies have played a role or not requires further research and analysis on various parameters and is still questionable," opines Singh.

Kaur agrees with Singh and says that the possible reason behind the low cases is that people have become more self-aware about hygiene and also the Government is effectively taking measures to keep the surrounding clean. "It's the awareness about one's health and making it a priority that has helped the nation to keep other diseases at bay, which is a positive thing. And like every time dengue changes species and maybe it did this time too, hence there are less cases," she says.

Gupta, too, believes that COVID antibodies are totally different from the ones which are produced by Dengue disease. Hence, the two are not related. "The cases of Dengue has drastically reduced without any doubt given that there were cases of water logging in Delhi recently, but it can be attributed to the greater awareness about the disease, and not COVID immunity," he says.

## SAY NO TO OXIDATIVE STRESS

Oxidative stress can lead to cell and tissue damage and plays a role in the ageing process. **GEORGE P. JOBY** lists ways to strike a balance and increase the level of antioxidants in the body



High fat diet, poor lifestyle and exposure to pollution and radiation are the leading factors of oxidative stress in our body. Oxidative stress primarily occurs when there is an imbalance between the activities of antioxidants and free radicals in our body. It can lead to cell and tissue damage and plays a role in the ageing process.

When our body goes through oxidative stress, the number of free radicals increases than antioxidants and free radicals start damaging the fatty tissue, DNA makeup and proteins in the body. This leads to many chronic lifestyle disorders including diabetes, atherosclerosis, or the hardening of the blood vessels, inflammatory conditions, high blood pressure, heart disease and neurodegenerative diseases, such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

Uncontrolled oxidative stress can accelerate the aging process, affect immune system and may contribute to the development of a number of conditions. However, squalene, a natural component present in human body by birth, and it is the strongest natural antioxidant is going to be the path to a healthy body in a natural way. Squalene readily releases hydrogen to free radicals and abstract hydrogen from water in cells, thereby releasing oxygen to cells. It supplements human body with several health-benefiting properties such as anti-oxidation, generation of immunity, balance of cholesterol levels and also acts as an anti-cancer agent and prevent heart diseases.

But the level of squalene in the body reduces as we age. This reduction leads to low oxygen levels in the body which results in poor sleep, early ageing and lifestyle diseases. Thus, it is advisable to daily consume squalene based supplements as it leads to counter the viruses, pathogens and free radicals that attack the healthy cells in our body on a daily basis.

Here are some of the ways one can increase the level of antioxidants in the body: **Take diet rich of antioxidants:** Including at least five servings of fruits and vegetables in your diet is the best way through which our body produces antioxidants. Berries, cherries, citrus fruits, prunes, dark leafy greens, broccoli, carrots, tomatoes and olives are the best ones.

**Exercise regularly:** There are many scientific studies that have stated that performing regular and mild exercise lead to the reduction of oxidative stress. Exercise gives rise to natural antioxidants in the body and decreases the damage caused by the oxidative stress. Even a regular meditation practice can reduce oxidative stress.

**Say no to smoking:** There are chances that smoking may enhance oxidative stress not only through the production of reactive free radicals but also through weakening of the antioxidant defense systems. One should also stay away from second-hand smoking.

**Take adequate sleep:** Having a sound sleep is essential for striking a balance among all of your body systems. If we are sleep deprived then it will impact our brain function, hormone production, antioxidant and free radical balance, and a host of other things.

The writer is Director, TheLifekart.in

## 'Make mental health counselling accessible'

DR NEERJA AGGARWAL, a rehabilitation and adolescent psychologist, talks about how parents can help adolescent deal with this sensitive period of their life

**How has the pandemic affected the mental health of adolescents?**

Adolescence is a sensitive period of life, it is an age of transition when the body and brain go through critical developmental stages. This process lasts till they are in their 20s. In this phase our socio-emotional brain matures earlier than our rational brain. So, during the adolescence period, a child is emotionally vulnerable. During these times adolescents can be more aggressive, more anxious, more enthusiastic and more euphoric.

COVID-19 has added to their anxieties, which cannot find an outlet because of the restrictions and confinement it has imposed. They are uncertain about their education and career. It can increase their anxieties, they can experience signs of OCD, depression, eating disorders and self-harm.

**How can we minimise this impact? What do you think can be done at the family, community, and Government levels?**

This is the age when one should be actively involved in various activities — academic, games and extracurricular. We need to channelise their energy into constructive work. At home, parents or caregivers can help them in structuring their routine, involving them in family activities and discussions.

If we can make them aware and involve them in mental health counselling, it will help them understand various issues related to the pandemic, finances and mental health better. Besides, we need to make mental health counselling accessible to adolescents through various online mediums so that they can share their issues and seek help as and when required.

It is also important to create awareness about the National Mental Health Programme that was launched in 2014 so that people affected by mental illness and their families can get benefits of the programme that ensures socio-economic inclusion of persons affected by mental illness by providing accessible,



Dr Neerja Aggarwal

ble, affordable and quality health and social care.

**The pandemic has increased the technology usage, which was of concern before COVID-19 too. What is your advice to parents and caregivers?**

Yes, it is true that during the pandemic, technology is the only medium for their education, entertainment, and social interaction. So, we cannot control and block technological usage completely. We can help

them in structuring their routine, making room for other activities, such as playing board games with the family.

To limit the use, parents can set some rules. But then parents, too, should adhere to the rules.

At this age, there is a delay in the release of the circadian hormone melatonin which delays their sleep. Exposure to screen at bedtime can further affect their sleep pattern. So, parents need to communicate it to them in a subtle way.

**Parenting an adolescent has become even more challenging during the pandemic. How should parents keep calm?**

Patience is the key. So parents need to practise everything they are going to preach to their adolescents themselves. While dealing with an adolescent or young adult, you should be friendly, include them in decisions so that they feel involved. Convey your point to them in a non-confrontational manner without comparing them with anyone or criticising them or their friends.

## INBRIEF

Life saving surgery at SRM MCH&RC

At SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre (SRM MCH&RC), Kattankulathur, a 76-year-old male came with a huge intra-abdominal tumour. On examination, doctors found a mass over the right side of his abdomen, associated with pain and distension.

A huge mass of about 20 cm by 15 cm was noted occupying almost the entire right hemi-abdomen. A CT scan showed a retroperitoneal tumour which was pushing the intestines to the left and compressing on other abdominal organs including the kidney and the ureter. "Managing large intra-abdominal masses through surgery can be challenging as these people have associated cardiac and respiratory issues as well, and need intensive and optimised care," said Dr R Balamurugan, Deputy Medical Superintendent, SRM MCH&RC.

The patient developed intestinal obstruction due to the compressive effect, he



was taken up for emergency surgery, and a retroperitoneal tumour weighing almost 5kg was resected meticulously. The tumour contained about 1.5 litre of fluid as well.

Postoperatively the patient was closely monitored and he recovered well. Pathological examination confirmed the diagnosis of a retroperitoneal sarcoma. They are rare tumours, comprising about one per cent to two per cent of all malignancies, and can grow up to significantly large sizes before diagnosis.

Pro Vice Chancellor of Medical and Health Sciences, Lt Col Dr A Ravikumar congratulated the team for their successful effort.







▶ shortpasses

NO FANS FOR SPARTA'S HOME GAME

**PRAGUE:** Sparta Prague will host its opening group-stage game in the Europa League behind closed doors due to racial abuse of a player by fans. Sparta said on Monday it won't appeal the punishment by UEFA. The incidents took place during the first leg of the Champions League third qualifying round match at home to Monaco on August 3.

BALIYAN, DEEPAK MOVE TO SEMIS

**UFA:** Wrestlers Gourav Balian (79kg) and Deepak (97kg) were on Monday outplayed in their respective semifinals of the junior world championship and will fight for Bronze medals. Shubham (57kg) and Rohit (65kg) are also in contention for Bronze as they have got repechage rounds.

ADITI QUALIFIES FOR BRITISH OPEN

**CARNOUTIE:** Indian golfer Aditi Ashok qualified for the AIG Women's British Open after carding a superb two-under 68 to grab the second place at the 18-hole Qualifiers at Panmure Golf Club. The 23-year-old was one of the two Indians vying for one of the 15 spots on offer for the Major which will be played from August 19 to 22.

KUSAL PERERA TESTS COVID +VE

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka's wicketkeeper-batsman Kusal Perera has tested positive for Covid-19, its cricket board said on Monday.

NO FANS FOR TOKYO PARALYMPICS

**TOKYO:** Spectators will be barred from the Tokyo Paralympics over coronavirus fears, organisers said Monday, as Japan battles record infections despite emergency measures in several parts of the country.

AFI INKS COOPERATION AGREEMENT

**NEW DELHI:** The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) has signed an agreement with its Iranian counterparts to "formalise one another's support" towards achieving success in track and field events.

SAJAN TO UNDERGO TREATMENT

**NEW DELHI:** Ace Indian swimmer Sajjan Prakash will take some time off from the swimming pool to undergo a two-week Ayurvedic treatment in Kerala for a long-standing neck issue.

SHAMS TO LEAD MUMBAI IN OMAN

**MUMBAI:** Slow left-arm orthodox bowler Shams Mulani will lead a 14-member Mumbai team on a tour of Oman during which it is scheduled to play three T20 and as many 50-over games against the hosts.

ANIRBAN LAHIRI RETAINS PGA CARD

**GREENSBORO:** Anirban Lahiri survived some tense moments on the final day to end the Wyndham C'Ship with an even par 70, which was enough to ensure a full PGA Tour card for the upcoming season.

Agencies

## Bordeaux fight back to draw Marseille

AFP ■ MARSEILLE

Bordeaux came from two goals down to claim a 2-2 draw at Marseille on Sunday.

The hosts led at half-time thanks to goals from in-form Dimitri Payet and Cengiz Under before 18-year-old defender Timothee Pembele and Remi Oudin scored for the visitors.

Home coach Jorge Sampaoli kept faith in the 11 which started last weekend's 3-2 win at Montpellier.

The visitors' Yacine Adli was named on Vladimir Petkovic's bench due to the 21-year-old attacking midfielder's expected move to AC Milan.

There was a worrying sight after six minutes as Bordeaux's Samuel Kalu collapsed outside the home penalty box without any contact with an opposition player. Less than 90

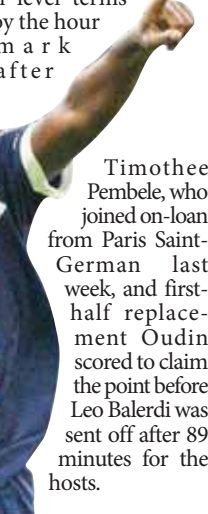
seconds later Nigeria winger Kalu was back on his feet after treatment, he played on for five minutes before being substituted by Remi Oudin.

Under claimed his second goal in as many games after the half hour mark after Brazilian midfielder Gerson's cut-back.

Payet added his third of the campaign four minutes before the interval with a sublime effort which started near the half-way line and finished with his low shot into bottom corner. Petkovic's men were

on level terms by the hour mark after

Timothee Pembele, who joined on-loan from Paris Saint-Germain last week, and first-half replacement Oudin scored to claim the point before Leo Balerdi was sent off after 89 minutes for the hosts.



## Nuno impatient for transfer window to shut

**London:** Harry Kane is in Tottenham's squad for their Europa Conference League tie this week as Nuno Espirito Santo admits he cannot wait for the transfer window to close and end speculation over the striker's future who's on Manchester City's radar.

"We have our squad, we have our Spurs players," Nuno told the *BBC* on Monday.

"We have to commit them but we have to know that 31st of August is sometimes not in your hands.

"All the managers in the Premier League have the same feeling that I have — trying to finish the window and settle down."

Nuno said he expected Kane to remain at the north London club, though he added he has enough experience to know Tottenham should keep their options open regarding a move for a replacement.

AFP

## Medvedev wins Toronto Masters

AFP ■ TORONTO

Daniil Medvedev neutralized the attack of American serving giant Reilly Opelka on Sunday, dominating 6-4, 6-3 to win the ATP Toronto Masters.

The world number two Russian needed just 87 minutes, limiting his 2.11m opponent to just eight aces and breaking him three times while saving all four break points he faced.

Medvedev, aided by 34 unforced errors from Opelka, became the first Russian to win a Canadian trophy since Marat Safin 21 years ago.

The winner was playing a fifth career final at the Masters 1000 level.

"When I was starting I could barely have dreamed of a Masters final," he said. "Now I've played five of them and won four."

"I'm just happy," he added. "I want to achieve more, I want

## Barca start new era with victory

AFP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona started life without Lionel Messi by defeating Real Sociedad 4-2 in their La Liga opener at the Camp Nou on Sunday even if fans admitted it felt like "a leap into the unknown".

Captain Gerard Pique gave them a 19th minute lead with his 50th goal for the club.

Martin Braithwaite found the net in first half injury time and in the 59th minute. Sergi Roberto added a fourth in the last minute of the game.

Just over 20,000 fans were in attendance as crowds returned for the first time since the pandemic.

However, they had to hold their breath at one stage when Sociedad came back from 3-0 down to get to 3-2 thanks to goals from 20-year-old Julen Lobete in the 82nd minute and a 30-metre free-kick from skipper Mikel Oyarzabal three minutes later.

Inside the Camp Nou, fans made the most of their return after 18 months, chanting "Messi! Messi!".

Banners expressed their "eternal gratitude".

"The supporters are with us, they want to see football," said Pique.



"We knew they were going to react that way. We all know what Leo represents, but everything changes and we have to keep going.

"We will be very competitive and we will fight for titles to the end. We will not have his talent, but we have proven that we can all play together."

'PREFER TO HAVE MESSI'

Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman admitted after the game that he would "prefer to still have Lionel Messi" in his team.

"Hey, if I had to choose, I would still prefer to have Leo Messi in my team," said Koeman.

"We no longer have a play-

INDIA'S HIGHEST 9TH WICKET STAND (VS ENG)			
Runs	Partners	Venue	Season
104	Madan Lal/Ravi Shastri	Delhi	1981-82
89*	Mohd Shami/Jasprit Bumrah	Lord's	2021
66	Kapil Dev/Madan Lal	Lord's	1982
61	Harbhajan Singh/Zaheer Khan	Nottingham	2002
60	Roger Binny/Dilip Vengsarkar	Leeds	1986
60	Rahul Dravid/Venkatesh Prasad	Nottingham	1996
Faisal Features			

had forced Rory Burns (0) to close his bat for a catch at short mid-off.

It could have been six down soon had Virat Kohli held onto the catch provided by Jos Buttler at first slip but it evaded his reverse cupped palms and Moeen Ali's edge didn't matter as Ravindra Jadeja over-stepped.

But then Siraj bowled couple of superb successive outgoing deliveries to get Moeen (13) and Sam Curran (0) to make it 90 for

7 before picking up the final wicket of James Anderson.

Earlier, from a situation where a defeat looked imminent after Rishabh Pant's (22) early dismissal, Shami and Bumrah displayed never before seen resolve in a record stand with Ishant (16) also making a nice little contribution.

The tail-enders between themselves accumulated 106 runs, something that India have been missing before the start of the

series.

At the beginning of the fifth day, Pant charged down the track to smash James Anderson through the covers but Ollie Robinson bowled a beautifully delivery that moved late to induce an outside edge into the keeper's gloves.

However once Nos 9 and 10 were at the crease, Root decided to spread the field anticipating a lot of aerial shots from the duo but to his horror and Indian dressing room's surprise, both were ready to put their heads down and play proper cricketing shots.

With Mark Wood bowling with deep point and deep mid-wicket, the singles came easily and both of them showed copybook forward defence to Moeen, someone who has troubled the top-order regularly.

They were peppered with a few short balls and Bumrah also got hit on the helmet by Wood but he manfully carried on concentrating even more.

Their 50-run stand was applauded generously by the Lord's crowd, mostly Indians but it was their change room that gave them a standing ovation.

Once they had added 30-odd runs, Root understood that the aerial shot strategy had backfired and got back to the traditional two-slip and gully field.

But by then, Bumrah's defence and Shami's attack had piled on England frustrations which led to some on-field altercation between the two Indians and rival skipper Root and his premier pacer Anderson.

Robinson also had a lot to say to Indian batsmen and when it was his turn to bat, the Indian captain was at his ears giving him a mouthful, calling him a 'big mouth' and someone who is 'only fit to play in England'.

Finally Bumrah got him with a straight delivery and Siraj came back to wrap up a Test that would be remembered in times to come.

## Taliban love, support cricket; don't see game suffering: ACB CEO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Cricket will not be a casualty in the wake of drastic political change in Afghanistan, assured country's cricket board CEO Hamid Shinwari, saying the Taliban "love" and "support" the game.

Speaking to *PTI* from Kabul, Shinwari also assured that the members of the national team and their families are safe as the Taliban took over the reins of the country.

Star players including Rashid Khan, Mohammad Nabi and Mujeeb Zadran are playing in the UK in 'The Hundred' tournament.

"Taliban loves cricket. They have supported us since the beginning. They did not interfere in our activities," said Shinwari.

"I don't see any interference and expect support so that our cricket can move forward. We have got an active chairman, I remain CEO until further notice," added the top Afghanistan Cricket Board official.

Cricket's rise in the country coincided with Taliban's rule between 1996 and 2001 with many Afghan refugees in neighbouring Pakistan picking up the sport.

"It can be said that cricket flourished during the Taliban era. It is also a fact that many of our players practised in Peshawar and they made the sport mainstream in Afghanistan.

"The good thing is that we are heading towards normalcy. The people have started working. We will resume our office from tomorrow and the national camp which was underway ahead of the Pakistan series in Sri Lanka will also resume after a two-day break with the change in regime," said Shinwari.

Talking about the players safety, he said: "Other than four or five players who are playing overseas the rest are all in Kabul. Like I said, they are safe and doing fine."

The BCCI is also keeping an eye on the developments and is hoping to see participation of Afghan players in the India Premier League.

"It is too early to comment but we are keeping a watch. For us, nothing changes and we expect Rashid and other Afghan players would be part of IPL," a BCCI source said.

Afghanistan are scheduled to play a three-match ODI series against Pakistan in Colombo from September 1.

Shinwari said all their scheduled bilateral series remain on track and all three IPL bound players — Rashid, Nabi and Mujeeb — have got NOCs from the board to take part in the cash-rich event ahead of the T20 World Cup.



## WI clinch one-wicket win

AFP ■ KINGSTON

West Indies scrambled a pulsating one-wicket victory over Pakistan on Sunday as the visitors self-destructed in the final session of the fourth day when on course to take the first Test of the two-match series at Sabina Park.

Defending a modest target of 168 after they were dismissed in the morning session for 103, Shaheen Shah Afridi led the attack with figures of four for 50 in reducing the home side to 114 for seven at tea with only wicketkeeper-batsman Joshua da Silva and the tailenders left.

However, in scenes reminiscent of a similar one-wicket loss in the deciding Test of the 2000 series in Antigua, the Pakistanis lost the discipline in their bowling and composure in the field.

Three catches were missed to allow Kemar Roach and last man Jayden Seales to take their team to the target with a last-wicket partnership of 17.

Roach, who was dropped twice, hit the winning runs off Hasan Ali to finish unbeaten on 30.

Ironically, it was Hasan who missed a straightforward catch at deep square-leg off Shaheen which allowed Roach to eventually complete the job at the end alongside a jubilant Seales.

Seales was named man of the match for his match haul of eight for 125 which included five for 55 in the second innings.

For the fast bowler, who is less than a month away from his 20th birthday, it was an historic achievement when he mopped up the Pakistan tail with the last three wickets to become the youngest-ever to take five wickets in a Test innings for the West Indies.

Nadal remains a doubt for the US Open where he is a four-time champion.

The 35-year-old Spaniard suffered a foot injury in his semi-final loss to Djokovic at the French Open in June.

The Spaniard skipped Wimbledon and the Olympics and played just one match in Washington earlier this month before withdrawing from the Toronto and Cincinnati Masters events.

## Federer to undergo knee surgery

AFP ■ PARIS

Roger Federer on Sunday said he will undergo further knee surgery and admitted he "will be out for many months", a decision which casts further doubt on his future in tennis at the age of 40.

"I will be on crutches for many weeks and out of the game for many months," 20-time Grand Slam title winner Federer said in a video posted on his Instagram account.

The decision immediately rules him out of the US Open, where he has been champion five times and which starts in two weeks' time.

"I want to give myself a glimmer of hope to return to the tour in some shape or form," added Federer.

"I am realistic, don't get me wrong. I know how difficult it is at my age to go through another surgery. I will try it. I want to be healthy, I want to be running



around." Federer, who has played just 13 matches in 2021, underwent two knee surgeries in 2020 when he played only six times.

He had already pulled out of the Tokyo Olympics to rest his knee.

Federer withdrew from this year's French Open after reaching the fourth round and was knocked out in the quarter-finals of Wimbledon.

"I've been doing a lot of checks with the doctors on my

### Giorgi topples Pliskova for WTA Montreal title

AFP ■ MONTREAL

Italian underdog Camila Giorgi upset fourth seed Karolina Pliskova 6-3, 7-5 on Sunday to win the biggest title of her career with victory at the WTA hardcourt event in Montreal.

The world number 71 completed a 2021 hat-trick of victories over the sixth-ranked, Czech who has now lost three finals this season.

Wimbledon finalist and Rome runner-up Pliskova had no answer for the inspired shotmaking of Giorgi, who also defeated Pliskova in the first round at Eastbourne and in the third round at the Tokyo Olympics.



Daniil Medvedev poses with the trophy after defeating Reilly Opelka in final

to play better."

Medvedev, who will be the top seed at next week's Cincinnati Masters, the final major tuneup for the US Open that starts August 30, had praise for Opelka, the US number one who is ranked 32nd in the world.

"It was a great week for him,

he fought to the end," Medvedev said.

While Opelka said he was outplayed from the start by the top seed.

"Daniil played great, as expected. He was flawless. I had one chance to break early and I don't think that would have changed much."