

OPINION 6
POLITICS AND THE
MILITARY DON'T GEL

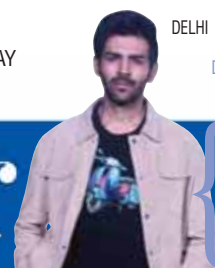
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5% IN FY21: FM

SPORT 12
INDIA TO FACE
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RANCHI, TUESDAY AUGUST 3 2021; PAGES 12 13



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TO EXPLORE:
KARTIK ARYAN
11 VIVACITY

Chak De India moment in Tokyo

Women's Hockey team scripts history with maiden entry in Olympic semis

PTI ■ TOKYO

They seemed courage and tenacity personified as India's women hockey players stunned three-time champions Australia to enter their maiden Olympic semifinals, while debutant discus thrower Kamalpreet Kaur held her own against a world-class field to give the country a lot to be proud of on day 10 of the Games here on Monday.

Rani Rampal and her resolute team brought their 'A' game and lots of determination to the field and the Australians did not know what to do.

It was a case of real imitating the reel as blockbuster 'Chak De India', which told the tale of an underdog Indian women's hockey team guided by a discredited coach winning the World Cup, trended all across. The pinnacle is still some distance away for the real bunch but it has already surpassed all expectations and redeemed itself for the 12th place finish back in the 2016 Rio Games.

This was a day after the Indian men's team entered the Olympic semifinals following a 49-year gap, a phenomenally gritty run for both the teams. Drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur



Indian players celebrate their victory against Australia during women's field hockey quarterfinal match at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo on Monday

PTI

rose to the occasion when it mattered and converted India's lone penalty corner in the 22nd minute to surprise the Australians on the day, who cried in disbelief even as the Indians shed tears of joy and let out ear-splitting screams to celebrate.

"I don't know what to say because emotions are too high at the moment, and we all are very happy because it was not an easy game to win from Australia," an elated skipper Rani Rampal said after the upset win.

India will play Argentina in the semifinal on Wednesday. "I think that belief like we can work really hard through out the game... And this is only 60 minutes, just focus on the 60 minutes. Don't think further what will happen, just focus on 60 minutes, and give everything that you have got. And I think everyone did that, so yeah, I am super proud," Rani said, a reminder of the "70 minute speech" that had galvanised the reel team in Chak De India.

SC orders inclusion of Paralympian shooter Naresh

New Delhi: In a major victory before firing a shot in the upcoming Tokyo Paralympics, the Supreme Court on Monday ordered the PCI immediately include Arjuna awardee and five-time Paralympian shooter Naresh Kumar Sharma as an additional participant for the sporting mega-event in Japan.

TOKYO 2020 MEDAL TALLY				
Country	G	S	B	
China	29	17	16	
USA	22	25	17	
Japan	17	6	10	
Australia	14	4	15	
ROC	12	21	17	
GB	11	12	12	
France	5	10	7	
India	0	1	1	

CAPSULE

PM LAUNCHES E-RUPI NEW PAYMENT SYSTEM

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday launched e-RUPI, a person and purpose specific digital payment solution that is aimed at improving transparency and targeted delivery of benefits. Over the years, several programmes have been launched to ensure that the benefits reach its intended beneficiaries in a targeted and leakproof manner, with limited touch points between the Government and the beneficiary.

INDIA, CHINA AGREE TO RESOLVE LAC ISSUES

New Delhi: The Indian and Chinese Armies have agreed to resolve the remaining issues in eastern Ladakh in an "expedient manner" and described their 12th round of military talks as "constructive", according to a joint statement on Monday.

DON'T DESERVE MEDIA TRIAL: SHILPA SHETTY

Mumbai: Actor Shilpa Shetty in a statement on Monday requested people to respect the family's privacy, especially that of her children, and let law take its course. "People have put their faith in me and I've never let anyone down. So, most importantly, I request you to respect my family's and my right to privacy in these times. We don't deserve a media trial," Shilpa Jayate, she added.

Almost 65K residents get vaccinated in State

PNS ■ RANCHI

Jharkhand on Monday administered the first dose of vaccine against Covid-19 to at least 43,888 residents, while the second dose was administered to 21,652 beneficiaries, data released by the National Health Mission (NHM) highlighted. At least 45,000 residents who got the jab on the day were below the age of 45 years, a provisional report from NHM stated.

It also distributed at least 60,000 Covaxin doses among the 24 districts on Monday. As per vaccine allotment figures of the health department, Ranchi received the highest share of 5,000 vaccines, while 4,000 doses were sent to East Singhbhum as well as Dumka. Palamu received 3,900 doses of Covaxin, while 3,200 doses were sent to Dhanbad.

Covaxin has fast become the desired vaccine against Covid-19 for residents, primarily due to the shorter gap between the two doses as compared to Covishield. However, its limited supply has not only left the beneficiaries of second dose waiting, but also forced many first dose beneficiaries to

delay their jab, officials said. The fresh allotment on Monday may help ease the pressure.

The state, as per data shared by the health department on Monday evening, has received over 1 crore doses of vaccines from the Centre and utilized 97,22,066 of them. The state had about 4.4 lakh doses of vaccines in stock to continue the immunisation drive until fresh supplies arrive from the Centre.

Meanwhile, Covid cases continued to drop in the state on Monday. As per a bulletin released by the NHM, Jharkhand on Monday reported 23 fresh cases of infection against 38 Covid recoveries, which brought the active caseload down to 239 in the state.

While none of the 24 districts reported a double-digit spike, Bokaro, Lohardaga and Deoghar reported four cases each - the highest among the districts. At least five Covid recoveries against three cases brought the active caseload in Ranchi down to 46, while the active caseload in East Singhbhum dropped further

down to 12 as the district reported zero cases against four recoveries, NHM data highlighted.

At least 16 Jharkhand districts did not report fresh cases of SARS-CoV-2 infection on the day. No casualties caused by the viral infection were reported in the state on Monday. So far, the deadly virus has claimed at least 5129 lives in the state.

The state on Monday tested swab samples of 41,744 residents and 0.05 per cent of them were found infected by coronavirus. Of the 3.47 lakh people infected by the virus in the state, at least 98.45 per cent patients have recovered, while 1.47 per cent of the patients could not survive.

Jharkhand did not report fresh cases of Covid-induced mucormycosis on the day, while the fungal bug total remained 31. So far, at least 104 confirmed and 58 suspected cases of the fungal infection have surfaced in Jharkhand. At least 108 patients have been discharged from hospitals after being treated for either suspected or confirmed mucormycosis.

3rd Covid wave this month, say experts

Cases may soar to 1.5L/day with peak in October

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Experts from IIT Hyderabad and Kanpur have set off an alarm saying that a third Covid-19 wave could hit India in the coming weeks of August itself with 1 lakh daily cases in the best of scenario, or nearly 1.50,000 in the worst scenario. The peak could come about in October.

However, it would not be as brutal as the second wave, where cases rose to 4 lakh on a daily basis before slumping down again, they said.

For the record, 17 States and Union Territories showed a rise in coronavirus cases on Sunday with a total 40,134 new Covid-19 cases and 422 deaths registered as the tally of positive cases reached 3,16,95,958. The Covid-19 cases saw an uptick on a week-on-week basis for the first time since mid-May after the decline in the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic. Kerala has reported the maximum surge during the past week.

Talking to a news agency, the researchers whose prediction is based on a mathematical model said that States



People line up to get inoculated against the coronavirus at a Covid-19 vaccination camp in Mumbai on Monday

AP

reporting a high number of Covid cases like Kerala and Maharashtra may play a significant role in skewing the case count during the third wave.

Earlier in May, Mathukumalli Vidyasagar, a professor at IIT Hyderabad, had predicted that India's coronavirus outbreak could peak in the coming days based on the mathematical model. However, their prediction that the wave would peak by the middle of last month was incorrect. Talking to Twitter, the team of researchers had then justified that it was because of incorrect parameters as "the pandemic was changing rapidly, even wildly, until about a week ago."

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES:	3,17,23,560
	(+28,190)
DEATHS:	4,25,203 (+395)
RECOVERED:	3,08,86,221 (+36,539)
ACTIVE:	3,99,577
MAHA:	63,15,063 (+4,869)
KERALA:	34,25,473 (+13,984)
K'TAKA:	29,08,284 (+1,285)
TN:	25,63,544 (+1,957)
UP:	17,08,500 (+24)



Chief Minister Hemant Soren gifts a Mango sapling to Governor Ramesh Bais on the occasion of the latter's birthday at Raj Bhawan in Ranchi on Monday

Pioneer photo

J&J takes back plea for vax nod in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bad news for those waiting for the US pharma giant Johnson & Johnson's single-shot Covid-19 vaccine 'Janssen' in India. The top drug regulator, Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), said on Monday that the pharma major had withdrawn its proposal seeking accelerated approval of its in the country. It didn't give additional details.

So far, four vaccines have been given Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) in India - Covishield, Covaxin, Sputnik V and Moderna.

Rahul invites Opp leaders to plan strategy on Pegasus row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the ongoing stalemate in Parliament, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi has invited leaders of Opposition parties to a break-fast meeting at the Constitution Club on Tuesday to chalk out a joint strategy on the Pegasus snooping issue. All Opposition MPs and floor leaders of vari-

ous parties have been invited for the meeting, sources said.

AICC sources added an invite has also been sent to the Trinamool Congress, which has been skipping all meetings convened by Rahul so far. Rahul met with TMC chief Mamata Banerjee when she called on Congress chief Sonia Gandhi last week.

After a meeting with the

floor leaders of Opposition parties last week, Rahul said the Opposition has only one question: whether the Government had bought Israeli spyware Pegasus to use it as a "weapon against its own people".

While the Opposition has been insisting on a full-fledged debate on the Pegasus issue, the Government's stand has been that it is ready to discuss any-

thing but the tapping scandal.

The meeting is being held to forge unity among the opposition ranks on the issue. Asserting that "the voice of the Opposition is being suppressed in Parliament", Rahul Gandhi has accused PM Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah of tarnishing India's democracy by "using Pegasus against India, its institutions".

WOMEN'S HOCKEY FEAT AT OLYMPICS

Natives at Nikki Pradhan, Salima Tete's villages rejoice after win in Tokyo

MRITUNJAY KUMAR ■ RANCHI

Tripped Khunti and Simdega districts in Jharkhand when the daughters of the State, Nikki Pradhan and Salima Tete's team created history by defeating Australia 1-0 on Sunday. The team has made it to the semi-finals after being successful for the first time in the quarter-final match. Gurjit Kaur scored the only goal for India. The team dominated the Australian team throughout the match and continued the attacking game continuously.

The parents of Pradhan, the lone defender of Jharkhand's Khunti district, have expressed happiness. Nikki's father said that his



Family members, relatives, villagers and children at Nikki Pradhan's village celebrate after Indian Women's hockey team's win against Australia in the quarterfinals of Tokyo Olympics, in Khunti on Monday

Pioneer photo



Fans of hockey player Salima Tete celebrate after Indian Women's hockey team won against Australia in the quarterfinal match at Tokyo Olympics, in Simdega on Monday

Pioneer photo

daughter would definitely bring gold, while Nikki's mother Jeetan Devi became emotional after watching the entire match on the TV screen. She

said that when my daughter falls while playing, it hurts a lot but what to do, it keeps on falling in the game. My daughter Nikki will definitely bring

gold, she added. Pradhan's Coach Dharshath Mahto has also congratulated the entire team. He said that Nikki was trained in difficult

situations, "Nikki is hard working from the beginning, as a result of which Nikki is known in the whole Country and Nikki will definitely bring gold

for the Country," he added. Mahato believes that if the youth of this Nazal-affected Khunti district is to be connected with the mainstream,

then the Government and system will have to promote the youths towards the game so that the youth who have strayed here will join the mainstream after seeing players like Nikki.

Talking to the Pioneer, he said that it was a big challenge to connect the youth here with sports. "According to the time, people changed and got associated with the game. If the name of the district is to be illuminated, then sports will have to be promoted here. A playground will have to be built in the villages of the remote areas, so that if people join, then they will be saved from going on the wrong path," he added.

Meanwhile, in Simdega, there was a wave of happiness and an atmosphere of cele-

bration in the village of Salima Tete, Badkhabhapur. After the spectacular performance in the Tokyo Olympics, when the family members of Salima came out of the house to celebrate, they did not even have slippers on their feet, the children took out a rally and congratulated Salima and the Indian team for victory.

Salima Tete's younger sister Mahima Tete said that she was constantly talking to her sister Salima. She was disappointed after losing the first three matches in a row. The whole team was also under pressure but today the whole team along with her sister did wonders. She said that they are all happy and want the team to return with a gold medal.

5 arrested in Ranchi lawyer murder case

Raids continue to nab kingpin Afsar Alam

PNS ■ RANCHI

Ranchi police on Monday claimed to have solved murder case of Ranchi Civil Court lawyer Manoj Jha as the police disclosed that five criminals have been arrested along with weapons used in the murder.

The arrested accused were identified as Sonu prasad over 9 lakh Imdad Ansari and Rizwan Ansari, who are natives under Tamar police station of Ranchi, whereas other two arrested accused Sanjit Majhi and Shakil Ansari are the



SSP Ranchi Surendra Kumar Jha with other officials during a press conference in Ranchi on Monday

natives of Sarakela-Kharsawan district and Parulla of West Bengal respectively. They have been arrested from Baghmundi locality of West Bengal.

According to police Afsar Alam alias Langda alias Chotu, a local land mafia mastermind of the crime and raids are going on to arrest him.

Ranchi SSP Surendra Kumar Jha who addressed a press conference said that on July 26 these criminals shot dead the lawyer at Ragaon under Tamar police station where he was supervising construction works of St Xavier's College.

The college administration had purchased 14 acres of land for construction of the

college building. A local land mafia and criminal Afsar Alam alias Langda alias Chotu was trying to grab college land. The College administration had approached the court for a peaceful and legal occupation of the land after the accused tried to create a legal dispute on the land. The court had ruled in the favour of the college. Deceased lawyer was supervising construction of the building And boundary wall of the college. Afsar Alam is the main accused of the case as a conspiracy with other criminals to eliminate the lawyer to grab college land.

Local resident of Tamar said that accused Afsar Alam was a police informer.

Claiming police protection he was also illegally capturing land and was involved in criminal activities also. Last year he was arrested for threatening and manhandling revenue circle officer Kamal Kishor Singh to grab someone's land.

Ranchi police was under tremendous pressure to solve this case as lawyers across Jharkhand had observed token protest whereas the Jharkhand High Court had expressed deep concern over the Murder of the lawyer.

Ranchi SSP swiftly formed a special investigation team to solve the case and carried raids on whereabouts of criminals in West Bengal, Odisha, besides Jharkhand.

INBRIEF

ECR GM HOLDS MEETING WITH TOP OFFICIALS

General Manager of East Central Railway, Anupam Sharma held a review meeting with major Heads of Departments of ECR at the Headquarters, Hajipur. In this meeting, all the important topics were discussed in detail. This was his first meeting with the higher officials after taking over as the General Manager of ECR. Addressing the officials, the GM said that it will be our priority to complete the goods loading, passenger convenience, safety and construction projects within the stipulated time-frame. In this sequence, all the major heads of departments apprised the GM about the achievements of their respective departments and the work being done and the target set. DRMs of Sonpur, Samastipur, Danapur, Dhanbad and Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay divisions of ECR also attended the meeting through video conferencing. The GM said that we have to pay special attention to further increase in freight traffic. In this sequence, he stressed upon the Vinash Development Unit (VDU) to make rapid efforts in this direction for further increase in freight traffic.



GM SER HOLDS HIGH LEVEL MEETING

General Manager SER Archana Joshi chaired a high level meeting on Monday with the heads of all the departments of SER at Garden Reach, Kolkata. DRMs of Agra, Chakradharpur, Kharagpur and Ranchi also attended the meeting through video conference. During the introductory meeting, the GM said, "All steps should be taken to ensure the safety of the passengers and to achieve the target of loading of goods as set by the Railway Board". She stressed upon optimum utilization of resources and close monitoring of complex infrastructure projects like new line, double line, electrification etc. She also stressed on running the passenger trains at the maximum permissible speed. The GM directed the senior officers to make all-round efforts to increase the revenue. In this regard, the General Manager also emphasised on generation of non-fare revenue sources.



XISS HOLDS ONLINE INAUGURAL SESSION OF NEW BATCH

Xavier Institute of Social Service (XISSL) Ranchi welcomed its new batch of PGDM 2021-2023 students in an online inaugural ceremony of the new academic session on Monday August 02, 2020. Students have joined XISSL across its four programmes namely Human Resources Management, Rural Management, Finance Management, and Marketing Management. Fr. Xavier Soreng, Superior, Dr. Joseph Marianus Kujur, Director, Provincial and Governing Body Chairman, Fr. Ajit Xess, Chief Guest of the inaugural ceremony, Dr. Pawan Kumar Singh, Director IIM Trichurapalli, interacted with the students on the occasion. The session was attended by all Faculty members, Staff members, Alumni members, and students of the new batch. The vote of thanks was given by Dr. Pradeep Kerketta, Assistant Director XISSL, while the session was coordinated by Dr. Pinaki Ghosh, HOD Marketing Management Programme and the session was smoothly conducted by Dr. Arana Kausar.

SON KILLS FATHER IN A MINOR DISPUTE

In a bizarre incident, Ramakant Choubey (58), a resident of Sopodera under Parsudi police station, was assaulted by his drug addict son Sumit Choubey on Sunday night. The family members rushed Ramakant Choubey to MGM Hospital for treatment. However, the victim died during treatment. The accused son had also reached MGM Hospital sensing trouble. However, till the filing of the report, a written complaint has not been lodged at the police station. Meanwhile, the wife of the deceased has demanded strict punishment for her son. Police station in-charge Vinay Kando said the family members of the deceased have informed about the incident verbally. In relation to the incident, Meena Devi, the wife of the deceased, said her son is addicted to drugs. Because of this there used to be fights between father and son.

ALL NOBILIAN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION'S PLANTATION DRIVE

All Nobilean Alumni Association launched plantation drive with an aim to make their city greener. Mayank Singh, founder member said, during the four day drive Gulmohar and Neem saplings have been planted at different branches of De Nobili schools located at different locations. Gulmohar is known for its beauty and Neem for its purity, he said. He said Father Michael Fernandes Director of all De Nobili Schools in Dhanbad besides principals of De Nobili Sindri, Koradi, CMRI, Maithon, Mugma, CTPS and Bhuli have appreciated the move of the former students. The drive would conclude with plantation drive at CMRI campus of the schools, he said.



Chief Minister Hemant Soren interacts with Jharkhand Andolanik Sangathan Morcha members in Ranchi on Monday. The CM assured to hold a meeting with the delegation on the question of respect, identity, pension and employment of Jharkhand agitators soon. On the occasion, the State in-charge president of Sangharsh Morcha, German Baski, Pratul Taiba, Shival Marandi, Sushil Murmu, Rishi Lal Soren, Chhotka Marandi, Raska Murmu, Niranjana Soren, Pushkar Mahto and others were present

CM nod to action against accused in 'blanket scam'

PNS ■ RANCHI

Chief Minister Hemant Soren has ordered departmental and penal action against officials suspected to be involved in the alleged blanket procurement scam worth crores of rupees in 2017-18. A Press statement by the Governmentsaid that the Chief Minister has given his nod to the proposal for departmental and penal action against officials involved in the blanket procurement in Jharcraft after taking the latest update from the anti-corruption bureau in the matter. The CM has approved the Managing Director of Jharcraft to initiate action against the erring officials in the case.

The scam involves diversion of crores of rupees meant to procure 9 lakh blankets for distribution among the poor and alleged discrepancies in procurement and transport of related goods from Haryana by officials in Jharkhand Silk Textile and Handicraft Development Corporation Limited, popularly known as Jharcraft.

As per the case details, the Jharcraft Ranchi and certain committees had purchased blankets from Panipat in Haryana. In 2018, the then Chief Secretary after detecting irregularities in blanket purchase and supply malpractices had asked for a probe in the case. The departmental secretary was then ordered by the then development commissioner to look into the facts. Accountant General Jharkhand conducted an audit on irregularities. Irregularities in blanket supply ranging from blanket production were highlighted by the then Chief Secretary's Office. The matter was then investigated jointly. The inquiry report was then



The Jharcraft submitted a detailed investigation report on 23 February 2018. The report suspected the involvement of NHD officials; threat supply officer, transporter Naseem Akhtar, then deputy general manager Jharcraft Ashok Thakur, chief finance officials Jharcraft and Renu Gopinath Panikkar, Chief Executive Officer Jharkhand in irregularities.

The CAG report, on what came to be known as the "blanket scam", said that Jharcraft officials had made fraudulent payment of Rs 18.41 crore against fictitious records relating to cost of woollen yarn, wages and finishing and transportation of 8.89 lakh blankets between November 2016 and May 2017.

Jharcraft was buying the blankets, worth Rs 29.48 crore, for the state labour department for distribution among people living below poverty line. Accordingly, it had placed orders with NAN Woollen Mills and Unnati International, both in Panipat (Haryana), for supplying 21.58 lakh kg of yarn for distribution among 62 self-help groups and primary weavers

Independence Day celebrations under Covid guidelines

No entry for senior citizens and kids below 10 years

PNS ■ RANCHI

During a meeting with senior officials on Monday, Deputy Commissioner Chhavi Ranjan said that the Independence Day would be organised as per the Covid-19 guidelines. He directed officials to comply with the rules of Covid-19 even during the seating arrangement on the occasion. During the ceremony, a maximum seating arrangement of 3,000 people was directed. Entry of persons below 10 years of age and above 60 years of age will be prohibited at the venue.

It was decided that there will be a complete ban on organising cultural programmes. Prabhat Pheri will also not be organised. No procession or cultural programme will be organised by any Government or private school or institution. Necessary guidelines were given to all the station in-charges in this regard.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the Municipal Corporation to clean all the squares. The road leading from Shaheed Chowk to Morhabadi was also directed to be done. Ranjan directed to make arrangements for sanitizers among the audience.

The formal rehearsal of the Independence Day Parade will start



Ranchi DC Chhavi Ranjan holds a meeting with officials in Ranchi on Monday

from 7th August. Full dress rehearsal will be organized on 13th August. All the police officers were directed to complete the parade rehearsal preparations in time. During the Independence Day State function, instructions were also given to issue traffic advisory for better operation of the traffic system.

Deputy Development Commissioner, SSP, ADM Law and Order, Additional Collector, all senior officers of the district and officials of CISE, CRPF, ZAP were present in the meeting.

Another meeting related to the Chief Minister's incentive scheme was organized under the chairmanship of DC Chhavi Ranjan. In the meeting organized on Zoom App, Employment Officer, District Skill Officer, Principal of Government Polytechnic and various training providers under skill development

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Increase in top scorers to raise cut-off marks

PNS ■ RANCHI

The cut-offs marks for various merit based undergraduate courses are likely to go up this year due to higher number of students scoring good marks. A record 2.70 lakh students have secured first class in the matriculation examination this year which is much more than previous year. Last year 2.89 lakh students passed the matriculation examination, while this year the number is around four lakh.

Experts claim that getting admission to undergraduate courses at premier colleges will be tough this time due to the large number of students scoring good marks. A teacher



at Dr Shyma Prasad Mookerjee University requesting anonymity said, "Last year around 2.80 lakh students had cleared matriculation examination, while this year the number of students getting

leges as more students have secured first divisions. The college will be left with no other alternative but to raise cut-off marks or go for other ways for admission of students at undergraduate streams," added the teacher.

Also this year around 1.20 lakh students have secured first division marks in matriculation examination. In the last ten years, around 4 lakh students have cleared matriculation examinations. Prior to this year's results, in 2014 a record 3.60 lakh students had cleared matriculation examinations.

It is not that the percentage of matriculation results has increased for the first time in

the state. If we look at the result of the year 2020 itself, then 16 percent more students were successful in the examination compared to the year 2018. Even after the increase of 16 percent in the result, the number of students who passed matriculation in 2020 had increased by only 35 thousand. This year there has been an increase of 20% in the result as compared to the previous year, but the number of passing students is 1.26 lakh more.

Experts claim that though there will be a big rush of students in getting admission at premier undergraduate courses and colleges, but contrary to this, the intermediate seats at +2 schools, affiliated colleges

and intermediate colleges will be full this year.

Intermediate studies in the State are conducted at four different levels. There are 98304 intermediate seats in constituent colleges. There are 195840 seats in 510 plus schools. Apart from this, intermediate studies are also done in affiliated and inter colleges in the State. In these two there are about two lakh seats. There are about five lakh seats in intermediate, but the number of students passing matriculation in State used to be around three lakh plus now. Due to this, two lakh seats used to remain vacant every year. But this year, it is hopeful that colleges' vacant seats will be full.

Focus on Tier 2 cities: Direct flights to Lucknow, Bhubaneswar

Indigo, Alliance Air to start new flights

PNS ■ RANCHI

As a part of Jharkhand's initiative of improving air connectivity with tier two cities, Ranchi will get direct flights to Lucknow and Bhubaneswar this month - the first to both the cities. Indigo Airlines is set to launch direct passenger flight service to Lucknow four days a week in the first week of August, while Alliance Air will start flights connecting Kolkata, Ranchi and Bhubaneswar from August 11, officials from the Birs Munda Airport said on Monday.

The Indigo flight to Lucknow will be the first direct flight to any of the cities in Uttar Pradesh from Ranchi, the only city with an operational airport in the State. As per



details shared by the airline company, the flight will take off from Lucknow at 10.55am and land in Ranchi at 12.05pm. It will again take off from Ranchi with about 70 passengers at 12.45 pm and land in Lucknow at 1.40pm. "Direct flights to Lucknow will begin in the first week of August. The dates have not been announced by the airlines yet. We will also have direct

arrive in Ranchi at 0940 hrs further departing from Ranchi at 1010 hrs and arrive in Bhubaneswar at 1115hrs," a communication from the airline company stated. "Flight 91719 will depart from Bhubaneswar at 1145 hrs and arrive in Ranchi at 1250 hrs further departing from Ranchi at 1315 hrs & arrive in Kolkata at 1450 hrs," it further stated.

The business community in Jharkhand had a long-pending demand of starting direct flights to Lucknow, sources said. The Airport Advisory Committee (AAC), which also includes Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha members, had stressed on starting flights to tier two cities from Ranchi, and the new flights have been launched as a part of the initiative.

The Federation of Jharkhand Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FJCCI) has been pressing for new flight services from Ranchi, while the transport

department has held several meetings in the past with the focus on connecting Ranchi to tier two cities like Guwahati, Bhubaneswar, Bhubaneswar and Chandigarh by air. The Airport Authority of India (AAI) stated that the passenger traffic at the Ranchi airport had dropped down to 57,749 in the month of June last year, when travel restrictions were relaxed after strict lockdown since March. The passenger traffic shot up to 1,41,268 in November when more flights were allowed to ply, the AAI stated, lauding the airport staff here for their dedication. The State capital was likely to get more flights earlier this year, but the second wave of Covid-19 caused a delay in the process, officials said.

At present, at least 20 flights connect Ranchi to New Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad.

HC seeks response from CM in SC, ST case

PNS ■ RANCHI

The Jharkhand High Court on Monday issued a notice to Chief Minister Hemant Soren in response to a bail petition filed by Rishikesh Kumar of Garbha district who was arrested under provisions of SC ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 for allegedly making casteist slur on Chief Minister on social sites.

While passing the order the Court of Justice Rajesh Kumar said that as per the provisions of SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act the court cannot pass any order without hearing the defendant. Hence in the light of the above the notice has been issued.

The petitioner requested the court to grant regular bail stating that there is no prima



facie evidence against him. During virtual hearing the court had also directed Gadwaha SP to appear before the court.

In another development the court expressed displeasure over Jharkhand information commission remaining defunct from such a long time due to the lack of appointments. The court of Justice Rajesh Kumar directed chief secretary Sukhdeo Singh to file an affidavit in six week to inform the court of how long the information commission is defunct.

Additional advocate general of Jharkhand Sachin Kumar who appeared on behalf of the government said that the case is under investigation and the complainant wants to continue this case.

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Navy fleet to set sail to ensure peace, order in high seas

India, China agree to continue dialogue to ensure LAC disengagement



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With China flexing its maritime muscle in the Indo-Pacific and South China Sea, a task force of the Indian Navy comprising warships will proceed for deployment in these zones. The duration of the overseas deployment will be for more than two months.

Besides, the Indian Navy will also take part in the Malabar series of exercise in the Western Pacific with the other Quad nations including the US, Japan and Australia. China is against the Quad and has repeatedly claimed that this grouping will lead to militarisation of the region.

Giving details of the deployment, the Navy said here on Monday that it will enhance military cooperation

with friendly countries, a Task Force of Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet is scheduled to proceed on an Overseas Deployment to South East Asia, the South China Sea and Western Pacific from early August.

The deployment of the Indian Navy ships seeks to underscore the operational reach, peaceful presence and solidarity with friendly countries towards ensuring good order in the maritime domain and to strengthen existing bonds between India and countries of the Indo Pacific.

The Indian Naval task force comprises Guided Missile destroyer Ranvijay, Guided Missile Frigate Shivalik, Anti-Submarine Corvette Kadmat and Guided Missile Corvete Kora. The latter three ships are indigenous designs and are equipped with a versatile array of weapons and sensors, and

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and China have agreed to sustain the dialogue process to ensure disengagement of troops from the friction points at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh. The two sides also reiterated their resolve to maintain peace in the interim at the border.

These two main points emerged from the Corps Commander level talks between India and China on Saturday last and the two countries on Monday issued a joint statement.

The statement issued here said, "The 12th round of India-China Corps Commander Level Meeting was held at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Indian side.

are Made in India by Defence Shipyard.

During the deployment in the Indo Pacific, the ships are scheduled to participate in bilateral exercises with Royal Malaysian Navy (Samudra Laxmana), Vietnamese



This round of meeting was held following the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of India and People's Republic of China on July 14 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan and the 22nd meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) held

on June 25.

The two sides had a candid and in-depth exchange of views on resolution of remaining areas related to disengagement along the LAC in the Western Sector of India-China border areas. The two sides noted that this round of meeting was constructive, which

further enhanced mutual understanding.

They agreed to resolve these remaining issues in an expeditious manner in accordance with the existing agreements and protocols and maintain the momentum of dialogue and negotiations.

The two sides also agreed that in the interim they will continue their effective efforts in ensuring stability along the LAC in the Western Sector and jointly maintain peace and tranquility."

The 12 rounds of talks were held nearly four months after the last round in early April. The talks covered three friction points including Hot Springs, Gogra and the Depsang valley for the last more than a year.

A breakthrough was not

expected in the latest round as China wants the involvement of local military commanders of both the sides in the talks. However, the Indian security establishment is wary of the proposal.

Moreover, India has all along maintained that disengagement and withdrawal from all the stand-off sites is the prerequisite for restoring normal ties between the two countries. China is in favour of keeping this issue aside and get on relations. Also, India has insisted that status quo ante has to be restored at the LAC as was in April 2020.

The first stand-off began in the first week of May last year at the Pangong Tso (lake) and snowballed into face-offs at many other places along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh.

After several rounds of talks the military and diplomatic levels, armies of both the countries withdrew from the southern and northern banks of the Pangong Tso in February this year.

Since then, no progress took place in terms of disengagement from the three friction points despite military and diplomatic level talks in the last few months.

Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi held bilateral talks on the issue on July 14 on the sidelines of the foreign ministers' conclave of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). This interaction at the high political level saw both the sides reiterating their commitment to continue dialogue for early resolution of the disputes.

Indian missions' talks with States/UTs to secure border

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

To bolster better assessment of the security situation emerging from the neighbourhood, the Indian missions in the countries adjoining the frontiers will hold meetings on half yearly/basis with officials of the bordering States/Union Territories and border guarding forces to have a better sensitisation and assessment of security concerns.

"The Union Home Ministry in coordination with the External Affairs Ministry, Research and Analysis Wing, Intelligence Bureau and Directors General of border guarding forces will initiate action for holding such meetings with officials of the concerned States and Union Territories on six monthly or yearly basis," a senior security official said.

In addition to this, the border guarding forces like the Border Security Force (BSF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) have been directed to organise problem-specific hackathons in collaboration with premier educational institutions and start-ups in the country to evolve cost-effective indigenous solutions for border arrangement. The



Assam Rifles, deployed on the border with Myanmar, will also be in such an exercise, officials said.

They said all issues concerning construction of roads along the Indo-China border under the India-China Border Roads-II scheme are being resolved in top priority.

In order to keep the border population synced with the security apparatus, the police forces of the bordering States have been advised to hold "vikas utsavs" in their respective border frontiers by involving the local community, public representatives, local administration and all stakeholder agencies.

The developments come in the backdrop of border row with China in Eastern Ladakh and the continuing threats from the Pakistan army and its terror cohorts along the frontiers in Punjab and Jammu

and Kashmir.

Officials said these mechanisms will lead to a better assessment of the ground situation in the bordering areas and simultaneously tweaking the emerging threats by putting in place relevant counter-measures in relation to their respective counter to challenges emanating from foreign forces and agencies.

The comprehensive mechanisms in place on the ground are also expected to lead to better synergy between the stakeholder agencies and an effective counter to challenges emanating from foreign forces and agencies.

While the ITBP secures the frontiers along China, the BSF is deployed on the border with Pakistan and Bangladesh. The SSB is the designated paramilitary force for the frontiers with Nepal and Bhutan.

BJP MPs from Northeast meet PM over Assam-Mizoram dispute

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP MPs from North East on Monday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and submitted a memorandum, apprising him of the developments in the region against the backdrop of the ongoing border dispute between Assam and Mizoram. The BJP MPs accused a section of politicians led by the Congress for politicizing the issue.

"Through 2018, they tried to make CAA and NRC political issues but the people of North East gave them a befitting reply. Now, they are stoking tempers between Assam and Mizoram," the BJP MPs said.

The memorandum also praised the Modi-led NDA Government's "development work in the Northeast", calling it "historic and unparalleled". In a related development, Mizoram Governor K Hari Babu met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday, saying the Centre is trying to find a solution to the border issue.

In the memorandum, the BJP MPs highlighted various issues pertaining to the region, including the border row. "A major confidence-building measure has been taken over last few days by both Assam and Mizoram governments, yet actions of Congress

The memorandum also praised the Modi-led NDA Government's "development work in the Northeast", calling it "historic and unparalleled"

remain devious and mischievous," they said.

The BJP MPs said that they want to convey to all those elements who view the Assam-Mizoram issue as a means of "spreading chaos in India that their shenanigans will not work". The MPs further alleged that during the tenure of the previous Congress governments, chief ministers of Northeastern states had to wait for hours before they could get an appointment from Congress leaders and if they managed to get the appointment "they would play with their pets".

"Today North-East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) is looking after the inclusive development of Northeastern states. Unable to digest this, Congress and its ecosystem is trying many dirty tricks. In 2018 they tried to make CAA and NRC a political issue but the people of the Northeast gave

them a befitting reply. Today they are trying to stoke tempers between Assam and Mizoram," said BJP MPs in the memorandum to the Prime Minister.

Speaking to the media post the meeting, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju accused "elements from outside our country" of "fueling violence by making inciting statements". Former Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi were not sensitive to the aspirations of Mizo and Naga communities," they said.

The MPs from Northeast further said, "The Nagaland, Bodo accord, Bru Reang moved towards peaceful resolutions. Northeast is home to infrastructures like Bogibel Bridge and Dhola Sadiya bridge. Insurgency and violence have been reduced. Protests and terrorism have no regard for the culture of the Northeast."

Earlier, the PM met Mizoram Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati to discuss the border situation and ways to get the appointment "they would play with their pets".

Meanwhile, Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday said he has directed state police to withdraw FIR against Rajya Sabha MP K Vanlalyn as a "goodwill gesture". However, he further said that cases against the other police officers will be pursued.

Crisis in Rajasthan Congress deepens once again

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

The crisis within the Ashok Gehlot Government and the ruling Congress is getting murkier. With Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot seemingly not to seek a truce in the political

betwixt him and former deputy Sachin Pilot's demands, sources said party chief Sonia Gandhi rushed senior Congress leader and Haryana Congress chief Kumar Selja to hold another and perhaps the last round of meeting with Gehlot.

Selja reached Jaipur on Sunday night and returned Delhi on Monday after a long meeting with Gehlot. Selja was sent after AICC General Secretary K C Venugopal, Ajay Maken, Randeep Surjewala conducted a series of meeting with party members, legislators, rebels and the Chief Minister during the last one month.

AICC sources said that Selja returned with Gehlot's query for the central party leadership whether the party will keep repeating Punjab if there are differences within.

"Should we repeat Punjab in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh? This is the last resort to run a party and government," Gehlot is understood to have conveyed and asked, according to the sources.

The sudden trip had added to the speculation over the expected reshuffle, amid demands by Pilot that he and his loyalists should get a bigger share. Selja enjoys the confi-

dence of Congress president and is also considered close to Gehlot.

She was the chairperson of the screening committee formed to decide the Congress candidates in the last assembly elections in Rajasthan.

Selja expressed resentment over just a day after Maken returned and briefed his three days of meeting with MLAs and CM last week. In a clear indication that some members of the Gehlot cabinet may be dropped, Maken had told the media that a few ministers have expressed willingness to quit the state government to work for the organisation.

The Gehlot government, which had been in power in December 2018, has completed half of its tenure. The demand for a cabinet reshuffle and political appointments to other posts gained momentum in June after some MLAs close to Gehlot expressed their saying promises made by the party high command to him last year had not been fulfilled but similar issues were met in Punjab within a few weeks of trouble there.

As of now there are 21 cabinet members including the CM in Rajasthan and after a reshuffle nine will be added taking the tally to 30 members in the Gehlot government. A three-member AICC committee had been formed to look into the grievances of Pilot and his MLAs and both the time the central leadership took the step to pacify Pilot.

JD(U) delegation meets Shah, seeks caste-based census

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A delegation of Janata Dal (United) MPs, led by the new party president Lalan Singh, met Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday with the demand for a caste-based census.

Speaking to reporters, Singh said the Bihar assembly had passed unanimous resolutions in 2019 and 2020 for having census on the caste lines, and added that it is now for the central government to take a final decision. He said, Shah assured them that the matter will be discussed.

The JD(U) had also passed a resolution in support of the caste-based counting of population, a move with potentially wide political ramifications, in its national executive meeting on Saturday where Singh was elected its president. Its rival RJD too has been pressing for a caste-based census and even suggested that the State should do on its own, if the Centre isn't willing.

The Central government had recently again made it clear that it will not include caste wise data on population

other than Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in the national Census. The Ministry of Home Affairs said this decision has been taken as a "matter of policy".

Responding in the Lok Sabha, the MHA noted that a request for the collection of caste data in the Census had been made by some state governments.

"The State governments of Maharashtra and Odisha have requested to collect caste details in the forthcoming Census. The Government of India decided as a matter of policy not to enumerate caste wise population other than SCs and STs in Census," the MHA said in the Lok Sabha.

In March this year too, the Government had informed Parliament that it was not planning to release the data on caste Census collected as part of the 2011 exercise.

To a question that some Bihar BJP leaders have expressed reservation against such a move, Singh claimed that he was unaware of their stand but noted that the saffron party had also backed the resolutions in the Assembly.

Covaxin effective against Delta Plus, says ICMR study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, India's first indigenous vaccine to fight Covid-19, is effective against the Delta Plus (AY.1) variant of SARS-CoV2 virus, a new study by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has said. Despite a slight reduction in neutralisation of antibody titres, Covaxin is effective against Delta, AY.1 (Delta Plus) and B.1.617.3 variants, the study added.

Covaxin cases had been developed by the Hyderabad-based pharma major, in collaboration with ICMR. As per the website, when the vaccination was launched on January 16, just a little over 5 crore doses of Covaxin have been administered in the overall 45 crore immunisation so far. Majority has been contributed by Serum Institute of India, a Pune based vaccine manufacturer which is making Covishield.

So far 70 cases of the Delta variant, first discovered in India. It is characterised by increased transmissibility.

"Our research showed that Covaxin could still neutralise Delta, AY.1 and B.1.617.3 vari-

ants," Dr Samiran Panda, head of epidemiology and communicable diseases, ICMR, according to reports.

The new ICMR-National Institute of Virology study — "Comparable neutralization of SARS-CoV-2 Delta AY.1 and Delta in individuals sera vaccinated with BBV152" — published as a pre-print on bioRxiv, said that Sera of vaccines among Covid naive, recovered cases with full vaccination and breakthrough cases demonstrated 1.3, 2.5 and 1.9-fold reduction against Delta variant in comparison to B.1 variant respectively.

Lead author of the study, Dr Pragna Yadav said a minor reduction was observed in the neutralising antibody titer in Covid-19 recovered cases, fully vaccinated and post immunised infected cases as compared to Covid-19 naive vaccinated

individuals.

However, with the observed high titers, the sera of individuals belonging to all the groups in the study would still neutralise the Delta, Delta AY.1 and B.1.617.3 variants effectively," Dr Yadav said.

In July, the Hyderabad-based company released data from the final analysis of Covaxin and said that it demonstrated overall efficacy of 77.8 per cent against symptomatic infection. It also said that Covaxin has now received emergency use authorisations (EUAs) in 16 countries including, India, Philippines, Iran, Mexico, with EUAs in process in 50 countries worldwide.

In another development, Bharat Biotech said that Rotavac 5D, a variant of its Rotavac vaccine, has received "Prequalification" from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Parl passes Inland Vessels Bill, 2021



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Parliament on Monday passed the Inland Vessels Bill, 2021, with the Rajya Sabha passing it by voice vote amidst protests and sloganeering by the Opposition. The Lok Sabha had already passed the Bill on July 29, 2021.

Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal moved the Bill in the Rajya Sabha for consideration and passing. The Bill aims to bring uniformity in the application of the law relating to inland waterways and navigation within the country.

The Minister of Tribal Affairs also introduced the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2021 in Rajya Sabha amid the din.

During the debate on the Inland Vessels Bill, certain Opposition members, who were in the well of the House, yet again tore papers and flung those in the air just like they did a couple of days ago.

Apex court nixes rape survivor's plea to marry accused

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed the plea of a rape survivor from Kottiyoor, Kerala, who moved the Supreme Court seeking permission to marry her assailant — a defrocked Catholic priest who is undergoing 20-year imprisonment. The apex court also dismissed a separate plea of the defrocked Priest Romen Vadakkumcherry seeking bail on the ground that he wanted to marry the survivor, who was a minor at the time of rape had given birth to a child.

A bench of Justices Vineet Saran and Dinesh Maheshwari told the former priest, "The High Court has taken a decision consciously and we would not like to interfere with its finding."

The apex court told the victim that she may knock on the door of court with her plea to marry the former priest. During the hearing, advocate Amit George, appearing for the former priest, said the High

Court had passed sweeping directions in the case with regard to the marriage, which is a fundamental right. The bench asked George what is the age of the victim and the former priest to which he replied that his client is 49, while the rape victim is aged 25. The top court then told George, "You yourself have invited sweeping directions from the High Court and it would not like to interfere."

At the outset, senior advocate Kiren Suri, appearing for the woman, said that she has sought interim bail for the accused for two months, so that he can marry her and give some legitimacy to the four-year-old child. The bench said that it is up to the two adults to decide on the marriage and bail can't be given. Marriage can be conducted at jail premises but no bail can be allowed, said the Kerala State's prosecutor.

Breather in Kerala, Covid storm abates

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Kerala, which has been reeling under unabated increase in the number of Covid-19 cases and fatalities, got a small relief on Monday as the cases came down slightly to the comfort of Health Minister Veena George, who is leading the operation to fight the pandemic from the front line.

The Minister's plea to the members of the State Assembly to not to crowd anywhere had its impact as the number of persons diagnosed with the pandemic came down to 13,984 on Monday from the daily average of more than 20,000 new cases.

The Test Positivity Rate too came down from the average figure of 13 to 10.93 per cent on Monday though the fatalities recorded during the last 24 hours showed 118 persons succumbing to the disease. The death toll till date reached 16,955 (excluding the 7,000+ under reported cases).

George said 1,27,903 samples were tested during the last 24 hours. Thrissur topped the number of the State with the highest number of positive cases (2350). Malappuram which was the district with the highest number of patients till Sunday (the district had 3,770 cases) diagnosed 1,925 new patients on Monday.

The Health Minister said

that as on Monday, the State had 1.65 lakh patients undergoing treatment for Covid-19. Idukki district diagnosed 196 new cases while Wayanadu (represented in the Lok Sabha by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi) had 263 patients.

Dr Rajiv B Pillai, senior Ayurvedic physician, was of the view that Idukki and Wayanadu were ideal districts to study about the immunity capability of the population. "Both these districts are known for people who work hard to earn their livelihood and have not changed their lifestyle to what we see in cities which are full of fast food joints and Arab foods," said Dr Pillai while glancing through the day's figures.

TMC condemns attack on Abhishek's convoy in Tripura

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress has strongly condemned the Monday's attack on the convoy of its MP — and the party's second-in-command — Abhishek Banerjee.

Hours after his cavalcade was attacked by alleged BJP supporters the Bengal ruling outfit took to Twitter saying "Shocking display of absolute hooliganism by the Tripura (BJP) government! When it comes to BJP, ruthlessness and DISRESPECT FOR DEMOCRACY seems to be running the show. You can keep trying but you cannot erase us from the hearts of the people of Tripura! Shameful attempt!"

The car of Banerjee who was on a day-long visit of Tripura was attacked with a flag stick by some alleged BJP men while he was proceeding to the temple. The Tripureshwari Kali Temple, party sources said.

Alleging that the Tripura BJP and its Chief Minister Biplob Deb was "taking the state to new heights," Banerjee later tweeted "Democracy in Tripura under BJP... We are protesting against the state's heights." He further said "They (BJP) say



'Athithi Devo Bhava' (guest is God) ... but now they are attacking (the visitors). The people of Tripura will judge."

The TMC also accused the BJP of damaging and tearing off posters of Banerjee. The plan of creating trouble for Banerjee was hatched in advance, the party claimed even as its Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien called upon Home Minister Amit Shah to look into the matter and act against the miscreants.

He wrote "Raised the issue in Rajya Sabha of Lok Sabha MP Abhishek Banerjee being attacked today in Tripura. Amit Shah

please come to Parliament and answers the hard questions. Democracy?"

While officials on duty at the Agartala police headquarters claimed "no information on any attack" on the Trinamool Congress leader who is also the nephew of Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Bengal BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said "the BJP does not such an act ... though it is peanuts in comparison to what they have been doing here in Bengal."

He said "I have heard there was a small commotion as people were spontaneously protesting against his party's attempt to vitiate Tripura's political atmosphere when Abhishek Banerjee's vehicle reached there ... the entire cavalcade had crossed the BJP procession and only at the tail end of the BJP rally some youth hurled a stick at his car which is not desirable."

The Bengal BJP later wrote in its social media handle, "While this has been a routine affair in Bengal for any opposition leader, seems you have now dispatched violent TMC cadres to Tripura... Wait till the people of Bengal take this to TMC leaders in West Bengal too."

Akhilesh remark on ropeway baseless: Min

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Responding to tweets posted by Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on the inauguration of a ropeway by Union Home Minister Amit Shah at Vindhyachal Dham in Mirzapur on Sunday, UP Minister and Government spokesman Sidharth Nath Singh played the SP chief for making irresponsible statements.

In his tweet, Akhilesh had attributed the credit for ropeway to the government, capitalising and planning the ropeway in Vindhyachal Dham to the previous Government headed by him.

"Akhilesh Yadav has no future left in 2022 UP Assembly elections and is perpetuating and planning the ropeway in Vindhyachal Dham to the previous Government headed by him. In fact, this time Akhilesh and his party will be wiped out of Uttar Pradesh. People are waiting for the elections to kick them out. Akhilesh knows this too well and for this reason, he is making baseless and non-sensical statements on every issue," Singh said in Lucknow on Monday.

Hitting out at the SP chief, the Government spokesman further said that the Samajwadi Party was just making false claims and taking the credit for whatever work the Bharatiya Janata Party had done in the state.

"In regard to the development work of Vindhyachal Dham, the SP chief is making fabricated statements. Akhilesh is a frustrated person, perpetually engaged in misleading the people of the state through fallacious claims. The SP chief is merely reaping the fruits of what he has sown during his chief ministership," he said.

IN SHORT

PMO ADVISER AMARJEET SINHA RESIGNS

New Delhi: Amarjeet Sinha, an Adviser in the PMO and handling projects related to the social sector, has resigned from his post. A Bihar-cadre IAS officer of 1983 batch, Sinha had superannuated as the Rural Development secretary in 2019 and was then appointed to the PMO. He is the second top officer to quit the PMO in recent months after former Cabinet Secretary P K Sinha, who worked there as Principal Adviser, resigned in March. In December 2019, PM's Principal Secretary Nirpendra Mishra resigned.

EAM TO REPRESENT INDIA AT IRAN PREZ OATH TAKING

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is likely to represent India at the swearing-in ceremony of newly elected Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in Tehran on August 5, people, Raisi, a hardliner and known to be close to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, won the presidential election in June by a landslide.

SC SUGGESTS MEDIATION TO AP, T FOR KRISHNA WATER

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday suggested "mediation" to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana for settling their dispute over sharing of Krishna river water, saying it did not want to interfere. "Unnecessarily," a bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana was hearing the plea of Andhra Pradesh which has alleged that Telangana has deprived it of its legitimate share of drinking and irrigation water.

NIA RE-REGISTERS ISRAEL EMBASSY BLAST CASE

New Delhi: The NIA on Monday took over and re-registered the case pertaining to the blast that took place outside the Israel Embassy in Delhi on January 29 this year.

DELAY IN LAYING OF 378 NOTIFICATIONS

New Delhi: The Committee on Subordinate Legislation, headed by Parthap Singh Bajwa, in its report tabled in the Rajya Sabha on Monday said that there had been a delay in laying of 378 notifications and 141 notifications (26.5 per cent of total delayed Notifications) were delayed by more than 11 months while some others by more than four years.

BJP attacks Mamata Govt for identifying convicts by religion

PNS ■ KOLKATA

To a "bizarre presentation" of statistics for the number of alleged "life convicts" being released from Bengal jails the Trinamool Congress Government on Monday disclosed their caste and religious identities apart from mentioning their age and sex leading the BJP to come down heavily on the ruling Trinamool Congress saying "this list of convicts being released is the greatest example of the kind of 'secularism' being practiced by the TMC Government."

Speaking on the issue State BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya on Monday said that "we have always known that the criminals have no caste, creed or political affiliation ... they are only criminals ... but here the TMC

Government has prepared a list in which they have claimed that out of those being released 5 are SCs, 3 are STs, 2 are OBCs, 53 are General caste, 51 are Hindus and 12 are Muslims ..."

He added, "by classifying the convicts according to their religion the TMC is only pursuing its divide-and-rule politics ... based on communal and caste lines. Nowhere in India the convicts have been released by identifying them by their castes or religion ... It is nothing but a way to show that 'look in Bengal more number of Hindus are criminals than the Muslims ... and when we will raise this issue they will call us names.'"

The Mamata Banerjee government on Monday said that it had ordered the release of 63 life

convicts from Bengal prisons so that the prisons could be decongested ahead of the third wave of the corona pandemic.

A senior official said that "there was a need to decongest the prisons because of the prevailing Covid-19 situation. Section 432 of the CrPC (Code of Criminal Procedure) empowers the state government to consider the premature release of life convicts who have already served 14 years in jail."

The release of the convicts serving life sentence was recommended on humanitarian grounds by the state sentence review board. Accordingly 61 male convicts above 60 years and two female convicts aged above 55 years would be released before the Independence Day.

Cong to observe Dalit Swabhiman Diwas in UP today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To woo the Dalit community ahead of the 2022 Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, the Congress has decided to organise 'Dalit Swabhiman Diwas' today.

Desperately trying to find its lost political foothold in the state, the Congress had earlier organised conferences of various castes which could play important role in the State politics, like Nishad-Kavat-Mallah conference, Maurya-Shishya-Saini-Kushwaha conference and Pal-Gaderia-Dhangar conference.

Formerly with Congress, Jitin Prasada too had started a Brahmin Sabha to woo the community, alleging harassment by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party across the State before recently switching allegiance to the saffron outfit. The Dalit cell of UP Congress will be celebrating 'Dalit Swabhiman Diwas' across the state on August 3 and will also take out a Dalit Swabhiman Yatra in all 75 districts of the state.

"After Independence in 1947, first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet had passed a resolution to make Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar the Law Minister on August 3 and the UP Dalit Congress will celebrate the day as Swabhiman Diwas," said state chief of Dalit cell of UP Congress, Alok Prasad, in Lucknow on Monday.

ATS arrests hawala trader funding terror module

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The sleuths of the Anti-Terrorism Squad claimed to have made a breakthrough in terror racket when they arrested a man from Gorakhpur district for his alleged involvement in sending money through the hawala route to Pakistani handlers, officials said on Monday.

The accused, Dinesh Kumar Singh alias Ajay Kumar Singh alias AK Singh (46) of Gorakhpur, was arrested on Sunday. He was evading arrest for the past three years and carried a reward of ₹50,000 on his arrest, the officials said.

In a statement issued here, the ATS said, "Information was received that on the instructions of Pakistani handlers, some people were using fake documents to open accounts in different banks, duping people to deposit money and withdrawing the deposited money and sending it to the Pakistani handlers through the hawala route."

Pondy Min: Decision on reopening of schools only after Aug 15

Puducherry: Minister A Namassivayam on Monday said the Puducherry Government would decide on re-opening of schools and colleges in the Union Territory after consulting the Lieutenant Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan and Chief Minister N Rangasamy after August 15. The Home and Education Minister, in a press statement, said he held a meeting with educational officials to discuss about Covid-19 and its third wave.

He said the government has decided not to re-open the schools and colleges for now. PTI

Kerala HC: A stray dog is made ferocious by its circumstances

Kochi: A dog is made ferocious by the circumstances and it is a myth that a stray canine is dangerous by nature, the Kerala High Court said on Monday while dealing with the issue of poisoning of street dogs in Thrissurkara municipality area of Ernakulam district.

A Bench of Justices A K Jayasankar Nambiar and P Gopinath said killing or maiming the street dogs was not the way to make people safer and the better option was to capture the canines and rehabilitate them at animal shelters. It also said, "This kind of dog catching using hammers cannot be done."

The court said a balance has to be maintained between the interests of the residents of the area who feel threatened by the street dogs and the welfare of the animals. It was also skeptical with regard to the municipality's claims that one of its junior health inspectors paid for the poisoning of the canines from his own pocket.

The court directed the municipality to identify in its area any animal shelters run by private organisations who would be able to capture the street dogs and shelter them in their premises. It issued the direction while

observing that it understands that presently the municipality would not be able to spend funds for setting up such shelters.

The Kerala Government was asked to give details of the animal shelters -- run by the state and private ones -- in all the districts. With these directions the court listed the matter for hearing on August 6.

The court had taken up the issue of the poisoning of the dogs after a video on the same was brought to its attention. While seeking the stand of the municipality over its role in the entire matter, the bench had also directed the civic body to ensure no such incident takes place within its territorial limits in future and to put in place suitable machinery to ensure the same.

On Monday, the municipality told the court that it had no role in the matter.

Last week, the junior health inspector -- arrayed as an accused in the case with regard to killing of the canines -- moved the High Court, seeking anticipatory bail and claimed that he was being falsely implicated in the case to divert the probe from the Chairperson and of the municipality and the chairperson of its standing committee on health.

Sena workers damage 'Adani Airport' signboard in Mumbai

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

An irate group of Shiv Sainiks vandalised a brand new "Adani Airport" signboard erected by Adani Airport Holding Ltd. (AAHL) outside the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) here on Monday, in protest against the AAHL's move to rename the city airport christened after the Maratha warrior which they dubbed as "an insult" to the people of Maharashtra.

Still fresh from jubilation of taking over the management of CSMIA from the Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL), the Adani group tasted anger of the Shiv Sainiks over the renaming of CSMIA, as the Shiv Sainiks went on a rampage and tore down a brand new "Adani Airport" signboard erected by the AAHL. Raising slogans like 'Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj ki jai ho', Shiv Sainiks climbed up the landscaped garden outside the city airport where the controversial boardings had been erected, uprooted AAHL sign boards in English and Marathi languages and planted saffron flags there.

Monday's protests by the Shiv Sainiks were in line with the serious reservations expressed by Sena MP and party spokesperson Sanjay Raut over the renaming over the CSMIA as Adani Airport Holding Ltd. (AAHL). "It is Chhatrapati Shivaji



Police officials inspect the site after Shiv Sena workers damaged an Adani group signboard near the Shivaji Maharaj statue in Mumbai on Monday

Maharaj International Airport. We do not undertake on agitation and had the city named as CSMIA. We do not accept if the airport is named after any industrialist. It will remain as CSMIA," Raut said.

"The AAHL employees have been given T-shirts with Adani Airport written on them. You have to use binoculars to see the name of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj written in such small letter. This is an insult to the great Maratha warrior. When the Adani group ignores our reservations about the renaming of the airport, you can expect the kind of angry reaction from the Shiv Sainiks as the one you witnessed in the afternoon," Shiv Sena MP Arvind Sawant said.

"The name of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj has been used in the entire country. Earlier we had a big company GVK group that was managing the Airport. But, it did not name the airport after the group. Has Industrialist bought the entire Airport? Why is the industrialist trying to destabilise Mumbai and Maharashtra by resorting to this kind of acts? And for what?" Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar asked.

Meanwhile, reacting to the Shiv Sena's protests, an AAHL spokesperson said: "In light of the incidents around Adani Airports branding at the Mumbai International Airport, we firmly assure that Adani Airports Holding Limited (AAHL) has merely replaced the previous branding

with Adani Airports branding and that no change has been made to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport's branding or positioning at the terminus."

The branding at CSMIA is in compliance with the norms and guidelines of Airport Authority of India (AAI). AAHL will continue to adhere to all the guidelines laid out by the government in the interest of the aviation community at large," the spokesperson added.

The AAHL's move to erect a new sign board came nearly three weeks after AAHL a wholly owned subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Ltd, took over the management control of Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) from the GVK Group. It may be recalled that on July 13, the AAHL had taken over the management control of Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) from the GVK Group. The development had followed approvals received from the Government of India, the City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) of Maharashtra, and the Government of Maharashtra.

MIAL is India's second busiest airport by both passenger and cargo traffic. With eight airports in its management and development portfolio, AAHL is now India's largest airport infrastructure company, accounting for 25% airport footfalls.



Tourists visit the historic Taj Mahal during a cloudy day in Agra on Monday

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Power play

Ignoring Indian protests, Pakistan is trying to legitimise its occupation of Gilgit-Baltistan

In what India claims is a violation of its natural right over Pakistan-occupied Gilgit-Baltistan, the Imran Khan Government gives shape to a law to award the region the status of a 'provisional' province. Khan had made that promise last November. This is an attempt by Islamabad to legitimise its illegal occupation by applying the provisions of Pakistani law and the election commission to the region. India has lodged a strong protest over the decision, asserting once again that Gilgit-Baltistan, along with the entire Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, is an integral part of India by virtue of its legal accession. The region, or the provisional province which it may soon be, is of immense strategic importance to India, Pakistan and China. It is Pakistan's only territorial frontier with China. It meets China's Xinjiang autonomous region at that point. It is also a land route between the two provinces. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) passes through it. Its neighbours also give Gilgit-Baltistan a vantage location: Afghanistan to its west, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to its south, and Jammu and Kashmir to the east. Till a decade ago, it was a nameless region — merely called Northern Areas — and administered from Islamabad, unlike Pakistan-occupied Kashmir with its own Constitution and Assembly. That changed with the Gilgit-Baltistan (Empowerment and Self-Governance) Order of 2009 that introduced the legislative Assembly in the region in place of the Northern Areas Legislative Council.

The reason why Pakistan never annexed the region is because it did not want to weaken its international case for a plebiscite in Kashmir by annexing Gilgit-Baltistan or, for that matter, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. It hopes that if ever a plebiscite is held, the votes in Gilgit-Baltistan would become vital to influencing the result. This explains why the region's provincial status is 'provisional'. India has begun to assert afresh its right over the region since Prime Minister Narendra Modi referred to it in his Independence Day speech in 2016. Previously, Indian Parliament passed a resolution in 1994 re-affirming its right over the region. In 2017, the British Parliament also asserted that Gilgit-Baltistan, under Pakistan's control, belongs to India. Gilgit is crucial to China's expansion of its land trade routes across the Himalayas. Without the control of Gilgit, the Gwadar port that establishes a direct access to the Indian Ocean via the CPEC is of little value to China. The whole idea of China's \$46 billion CPEC is to have surface transport and pipeline connectivity between Gwadar and Xinjiang via Gilgit, extending China's sphere of influence to Gilgit-Baltistan and right up to Hormuz Strait. Even as Pakistan makes the region a province, it cannot deny that it ceded control over the region to China and the Chinese Army. The latest development poses a challenge to India's claim to the whole of Jammu and Kashmir and brings closer home the threat of China's presence in Gilgit. Pakistan has made its move and the ball is in India's court now.

PICTALK



People bathe at Prabhathpuri Ka Khola waterfall after monsoon rains in Jaipur

PTI

The Kerala crisis

After the distinction of being the first COVID-free State, Kerala is now caught deep in the quagmire

Kerala wakes up every morning to an eerie silence. The State was the first to declare itself free of COVID-19 on the 100th day of diagnosing the first pandemic case in the country. But the last week saw Kerala diagnosing 20,000 new cases per day with an average Test Positivity Rate of 13. The death toll is surging at an unprecedented rate. When Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan declared on May 8, 2020, that the State was COVID-free, Kerala rejoiced and sang paeans to former (and then) Health Minister KK Shailaja. But it did not take long for the façade of the success of the "Kerala model" to collapse. "Kerala was known for its good healthcare system at low cost. The colonial masters and the Royal Family of Travancore, who were the rulers till 1947, have to be feted for this. The State's good climate and availability of pure water and air had laid a strong foundation for an excellent public health infrastructure," says Dr SS Lal, an internationally renowned expert on contagious diseases. He has been alerting the authorities about the danger which they were going to face. But the doctor says that the policymakers had become prisoners of their own image.

The Government failed to co-opt the services of private hospitals, where 80 per cent of the State's doctors are employed. The Kerala Government Medical Officers Association's plea to appoint 1,000 doctors on a war footing fell on deaf ears. The unscientific lockdown rules and the failure to operationalise the existing infrastructure worsened the situation. The RTI probes have revealed that the authorities suppressed details about 7,000 COVID-19 related deaths. There were instances of COVID patients committing suicide in these hospitals because of the failure of the authorities to attend to them. An interesting point is the fewer number of cases being reported from Idukki and Wayanad, the districts atop the Western Ghats, apparently because of the hardworking lifestyle of the people there. Vijayan's decision to bring in personalities like filmmaker Adoor Gopalakrishnan and a bishop as members of a committee to advise the Government on how to tackle the COVID menace evoked laughter. No wonder, the State is adding 50 per cent of the new patients to the daily national tally. It once again underlines the fact that we should have the right people for the right job even during the pandemic.

Politics and the military don't gel

It would be in the interest of the political establishment to desist from politicising the military, lest it creates an uncontrollable monster

The former President of the United States, Donald Trump, has always had the reputation of being a man of questionable moral and ethical integrity with close connections to the radical right. Yet, there were those who voted for him in 2016 because they genuinely believed that he was the lesser of the two evils, and strongly felt that only an "outsider" like him was capable of draining the "Washington Swamp", a phrase alluding to the seemingly all-pervasive corruption surrounding the Washington power elite. They would certainly have been disappointed by his insipid performance as President, especially the extent of his chicanery and selfishness. These have been laid bare in a recent book by two Pulitzer Prize-winning Washington Post journalists, investigative staff writer Carol Leonnig and former White House Bureau Chief Philip Rucker, on Trump's final year in power, titled "I Alone Can Fix It". A fitting sequel, and as perceptive and illuminating, is "A Very Stable Gentleman".

One of the most fascinating aspects of their latest book pertains to the manner in which the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark Milley, responded to President Trump's brazen attempts to overturn the election results by peddling his "Big Lie" that the elections had been "stolen" by the Democrats resorting to widespread fraud. Despite his legal challenges being summarily dismissed, he continues to peddle these allegations to this day. There can be little doubt that his incitement of his supporters culminated in a violent but abortive attempt on January 6 to disrupt proceedings at Capitol Hill to formalise the election results.

Prior to this, one may recall, General Milley had been excoriated by military veterans, politicians and the media for having unwittingly dragged the military into politics by being present, in uniform, at Trump's infamous "Bible photo op" at the St John's Church, immediately after peaceful protesters had been forcefully evicted while demonstrating for racial equality. Indeed, that he then went on to tender a public apology for his error of judgement speaks volumes of his forthrightness, integrity and



strength of character.

He then initiated action to ensure that the military was not dragged into the political sphere, despite Trump having appointed his own lackeys to key positions within the Pentagon. If the authors are to be believed, he went so far as to compare Trump to Hitler and refer to the January 6 insurrection as the "Reichstag Moment" for the US. On Trump's attempts to cling to power through force, he reportedly told his colleagues in the Joint Chiefs: "They may try, but they're not going to [sic] #TrumpSucceed... You can't do this without the military. You can't do this without the CIA and the FBI. We're the ones with the guns."

His actions have lessons that our military leadership would do well to imbibes. It is inconceivable that our senior military hierarchy can, or ever will, adopt such a confrontational attitude towards the leadership of a democratically elected Government, whatever be the provocation, or however unconstitutional be their actions. The aloofness displayed by the military during the 1977 Emergency is a case in point. True, there have been the likes of General Thimmayya, Field

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Marshal Manekshaw and a few more of that vintage who have displayed spine and opposed Government directions, but these have been few and far between, and restricted only to professional matters within their purview. Moreover, till recently, the military's senior leadership has been quite circumspect in ensuring that its actions were completely unbiased, apolitical, secular and within constitutional parameters. In fact, it was their adherence to such behaviour that made the military the most popular and respected institution within the country.

Unfortunately, while the bulk of our military remains apolitical and secular, the actions and public statements of the Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat, have created perceptions that the military's senior leadership has become excessively politicised. Then there is the fact that some very senior officers have taken the plunge into active politics immediately on shedding their uniform.

While some within the ruling elite may see this turn of events as advantageous to their ideological cause, and in fact encourage this shift within the military hierarchy

through the process of "deep selection", as some allege, they may well be biting off more than they can chew. If there is anything to learn from history, it is that once the military gets sucked into politics, it will not be satisfied acting as a mere handmaiden of those in power. As General Milley so eloquently put it, they are the ones with the guns! We just need to look closely at our own neighbourhood for examples.

It would be in the interest of the political establishment to desist from politicising the military. Creating an uncontrollable monster, that will go on to bite the hand that feeds it, is nothing but sheer stupidity. The Government and the legislature would do well to put rules in place that prevent members of the military and even the Civil Services from joining politics without an appropriate cooling-off period. That would go a long way in insulating them, especially the military, from politics.

(The writer is a military veteran, who is a Visiting Fellow with the Observer Research Foundation and Senior Visiting Fellow with The Peninsula Foundation, Chennai. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HAS DELHI LOST ITS WARMTH AND DIL?

Sir — Nowadays, we often hear about the northeastern people being harassed in the national Capital. These unfortunate incidents pain me somewhere because I have always regarded Delhi as my second home. I was there for the most part of my early childhood, from 1994 to 1999. Since my father used to travel frequently, my mother and I were in a quarter which we can term "Mini India" as there were people from various States.

We used to exchange our local food with their delicacies. The aunts would 'kidnap' me to take me along on their evening walks and sometimes to mandirs, gurdwaras and mosques. My mother, who would go to the bazaars alone, never faced any untoward incident; in fact she was helped by people with her bags. What has happened to the Capital now? Has it been hijacked by hoodlams? Delhi earned the title of "Dhivalo Ki Dilli" for a reason but such incidents are bringing shame to it and to the real "Dhivalas" of Delhi. I urge the Government to be more strict on this front so that our northeastern people keep feeling safe and loved, like my family did in the national Capital.

Noopur Baruah | Tezpur

BEWARE OF THE THIRD COVID-19 WAVE

Sir — India will witness another alarming rise in COVID-19 cases in the middle of August with the third wave peaking, and nearly 1,50,000 infections a day is the worst scenario. A study by a group of researchers led by Mathukamali Vidyasagar and Manindra Agrawal at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Hyderabad and Kanpur predicts that if the third wave occurs, it will hit us sometime around the middle or end of August and continue increasing till October.

This peak can be of two types. If the variant is more infectious, the peak can be more like the first wave. If it is not that infectious, the cases will not be that high. India reported 40,134 new cases of COVID-19 and 422 deaths in the last 24

Kerala must not be vilified



The State of Kerala continues to detect over 20,000 COVID-19 cases daily through more than 1.5 lakh tests. There seems to be no let-up in the furious spread of the Delta variant of the virus in the State. Yet, the campaign against the State Government's COVID management using the pretext of the latest surge needed to be contested. Though Kerala's overall tally of 34.11 lakh cases accounts for 10.76 per cent of the total cases reported in the country, the death toll of 16,837 is 3.96 per cent of the total number. Against the country's fatality rate of 1.34 per cent, Kerala's is

0.49 per cent, indicative of its success in saving lives. The State has succeeded in keeping the fatalities low through early detection, timely hospital admission and better medical care. Lives do matter more in God's Own Country.

A new study conducted by the researchers in India, Canada and the United States has put India's real death count between 31 and 34 lakh. The studies have also found that the actual death toll in Kerala is 1.4 times the official figure. Computed on the estimate of the uncounted deaths, the national fatality rate would be 9.78 per cent of the total cases reported and Kerala's would come to 0.69 per cent. The shortage of oxygen or non-availability of a hospital bed or ventilator, or shortage of a life-saving drug has never been the cause for any death in the State until now. Pampa, the holy river, has been flowing serenely; it never had to bear the sorrow of carrying bloated, abandoned dead bodies. The Kerala model of COVID-19 management has been successful in saving countless lives.

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

hours, as per the Government on Monday. The total number of cases currently stands at 3,16,95,958 and the death toll at 4,24,773. The number of active cases in the country is 4,13,718. Less than 50,000 daily new cases have been reported in 36 days, which is the result of sustained and collaborative efforts by the Centre, the States and UTs.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

CAST IN HAPPY BRONZE

Sir — After missing the glorious chance of bagging the gold, Pusarla Venkata Sindhu settled for the bronze medal with a clinical performance at Tokyo Olympics 2020. PV Sindhu fixed her hair, shuffled her feet three times, leaned forward and muttered "come on" as she took up the challenge and settled for a bronze. She took a deep breath before letting the shuttle sail over the net. The point ended with a thunderous cross-court smash, and she let out a scream.

She had scaled the mountain of expectations, beating China's He Bingjiao 21-13, 21-15 to clinch the Olympic bronze medal. She is now the first Indian woman to clinch back-to-back medals at the Olympics. Sindhu had her Chinese opponent scrambling around the court and a couple of authoritative shots put the Indian 11-8 ahead and she never looked back.

In the end, Sindhu's power and guile proved just too much. Bingjiao began to engage Sindhu in longer rallies in the second game to control the tempo of the game, but the Indian was prepared. She finished points early and derived great success from her ferocious forehand cross-court smashes. Thus, Sindhu cast her name in bronze in a fierce battle for supremacy.

CK Subramanian | Navi Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

I have directed the Assam Police to withdraw the FIR against K Vanlalvera, Hon'ble MP, Rajya Sabha, from Mizoram.

Assam Chief Minister — Himanta Biswa Sarma

What is their (Taliban militants') change? They have become more cruel, more oppressive, more non-Muslim.

Afghanistan President — Ashraf Ghani

When it comes to trolling, it is at times scary how a nameless, faceless individual could say anything about anybody without getting caught!

Actor — Tiger Shroff

I showed the team a movie about staying in the moment and I think that made a big difference in this match against Australia.

Indian women's hockey coach — Sjoerd Marjine

The BJP's end is near and those who cast an evil eye on the party headquarters, will be found floating in the Worli gutters.

Shiv Sena president — Uddhav Thackeray



FIRST COLUMN EDUCATION IS NEXT CALAMITY IN MAKING

The current learning gap and reduced social skills can lead to a widening knowledge gap



SHUBHANG RATHI

There is a calamity in the making in the field of education, especially school education, in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has affected every stakeholder, be it the parents, teachers, students, and school administrators. Innovative ways and technical tools are being developed to make students come close to get the feel of classroom teaching. According to *Azim Premji Foundation*, more than 60 per cent of children cannot access online education and around 90 per cent of students with disabilities are unable to participate in online classes. Delhi-based NGO, Child Fund India, says as many as 64 per cent of children in rural India are facing the prospect of being dropped out of school. For students, the biggest challenge is the absence of physical interaction with peers and teachers. Primary school students cannot even comprehend what is happening to them. Not only are learning standards affected, physiological pressure on senior students is becoming immense. There



is little physical activity because local parks and school playgrounds are also shut. Students in X, XI and XII are irritated about the new methodology of exam evaluation. For parents, it is challenging to teach different concepts and methods to their children every day. Parents are juggling between house chores, office work, and handling the education needs of their children. One parent of my school said: "If this year it is online classes, I am shifting back to my village as I am here in the city only for my children's studies." Parents who have suffered financially due to COVID-19 are taking extreme steps to cut down on education expenses. Unfortunately, it is also their first response, resulting in a heavy blow to the child's future. For teachers, the biggest challenge is teaching by using technology and understanding students' body language. Old and experienced teachers face issues related to online teaching. Teachers are dissatisfied with learning outcomes after putting in extra effort.

I see a calamity coming: Many students have left any formal form of studying in 2020-21. Something needs to be done to rectify the situation. For instance, when we return to work after a gap of 10 days, we feel we have to start work from scratch even though we have been doing the same work for the past several years. Imagine how will a child in the 5-10 age group cope with a break of over 18 months and still attain previous academic levels? Even though we have the infrastructure to teach children, what we lack is continuity. It might become difficult for students to remember the past concepts and relate them to the new ones. It is a challenging task to bring the students back to their previous academic levels. There is already a fear of many small schools closing down because of the spiraling running costs. The administrators are bogged down by unpaid fees in spite of the Supreme Court's verdict. The current learning gap, reduced social skills, and poor handling by educators can lead to a widening knowledge gap of students when offline classes commence again. This can create an educated but unskilled and incapable workforce in the future. We are also looking at an education divide between the rich and the poor and urban and rural. We require the government's intervention to come up with a plan to allow students to visit their schools once or twice a week while continuing their online classes. A hybrid model to clear doubts and reduce the physiological pressure of the students will be most welcomed by schools.

About (ii), considering that the entire distribution network—transmission lines, feeder lines, transformers (that cater to households), industries, etc.—is owned and controlled by discoms, any talk of letting in private entities is a misnomer. As for 'open access', a provision was made even under the amended Electricity Act (2003). Under this policy, to be implemented within five years of its enactment, i.e., by 2008, the choice was given to the bulk consumers (having consumption more than 1 megawatt) to choose their supplier. But another provision in the Act required such customers to pay an 'open access surcharge (OAC)' to the concerned SEB they wanted to leave.

State governments used this lacuna to the hilt to shield the SEBs who are prone to charging exorbitant tariffs from farmers' leaders on its inclusion under the Electricity (Amendment) Act, 2020, it has even promised that the status quo will continue. If the existing system of supplies at heavily subsidized tariff or even without charge to farmers has to continue, then, logically, the same should apply on supplies to households as you cannot have two different methods of delivering subsidy to different sections of the society. So, there is no hope of the DBT ever seeing light of the day.

As for (iv), discoms can recover only up to 15 per cent of under-recovered power supply cost from other consumers. Simply put, if their under-recovery from supplies to farmers/households is say, 'X', then they will be allowed to recover only 0.15X by hiking tariff on supplies to industries and businesses. This will end up further bloating the losses of discoms (though industries will face a modest hike in tariff vis-à-vis the existing scenario of no cap). But this will not prompt them to set their house in order at all the more when they know that eventually, the Government will bail them out.

As for (v), under the LC arrangement, the banks guarantee that a buyer's payment to a seller will be received on time and for the correct amount. If the buyer is unable to pay, the bank will be required to cover the full or remaining amount, which, in turn, it will recover from the buyer using all available legal means. Here, the buyer being the discom—owned by the State—it will be a daunting challenge for the bank. As for (vi), denial of loan to loss-making discoms will not make them feel the heat as experience shows that help reaches them by hook or crook.

To conclude, measures such as those mentioned under (iv), (v), and (vi) are merely cosmetic while the political brass does not have the gumption to act on other measures—as discussed under (i), (ii), and (iii)—which are real reforms. This is because it will require the unshackling of discoms and that will take away the leverage that all parties currently enjoy to serve their populist goal of giving cheap/free electricity to the people who matter at election time. No wonder that we hear proclamations about reforms only to justify mammoth capital infusion whenever discoms need salvaging.

Under UDAY (2015), discoms were given a package worth ₹400,000 crore but are still saddled with under-recovery of ₹0.42 on every unit of electricity sold and a debt of about ₹450,000 crore as on March 31, 2021. Under RLRBSD, the government will be spending another ₹300,000 crore but with no hope of trimming under-recovery. The vicious cycle will continue.

SHIVAJI SARKAR

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

Power reforms — a distant dream

Unshackling of discoms will take away the leverage parties enjoy to serve their populist goal of giving cheap/free power to people at election time



UTTAM GUPTA

Since last year, there have been several announcements regarding the reform of power distribution companies (discoms). They include the Electricity (Amendment) Act, 2020, Reforms-Linked, Result-Based Scheme for Distribution (RLRBSD), and a special loan of ₹390,000 crore (subsequently raised to ₹130,000 crore) to discoms in 2020, and the new draft National Electricity Policy, 2021.

The key reform measures included (i) developing an efficient market for electricity distribution; (ii) de-license the distribution business, bring in competition, and give the consumer power to choose supplier (or 'open access'); (iii) direct benefit transfer (DBT) of subsidy; (iv) putting a cap on the hike in power tariff; (v) linking payments by discoms to letter of credit (LoC); (vi) denying grants or loan to loss-making discoms, etc.

An overwhelming share of power generated by PSUs such as the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), etc., independent power producers (IPPs), besides generating stations of State electricity boards (SEBs) is procured by discoms (these are mostly owned and controlled by State governments) under power purchase agreements (PPA). Most of these PPAs are long-term contracts up to 25 years. A mere five per cent of the electricity is traded.

The State governments order discoms to sell electricity to some preferred consumers, viz., poor households and farmers, either at a fraction of the cost of purchase, transmission, and distribution, or even free. On the units sold to these groups, they incur colossal under-recovery. This is aggravated by aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses—most of it is plain theft. In flatted tariff allowed to IPPs/PSUs under a cost-plus formula (under the PPAs) adds to the revenue shortfall.

A deadly cocktail of these three factors contributes to persistent and increasing losses of discoms. In 2015-16 it was ₹52,000 crore, Rs. 17,000 in 2017-18 (this reduction has to do with a massive bail-out given in November 2015 under Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana), ₹30,000 crore in 2019-20, and ₹58,000 crore in 2020-21.

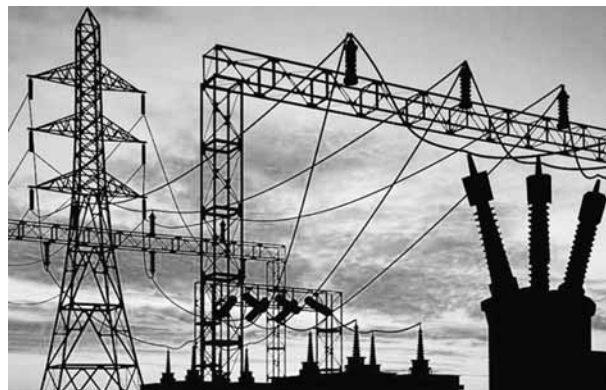
In this backdrop, let us analyze the reform measures: (i) A pre-requisite for the development of an efficient market for electricity distribution is that a major chunk of power should be available for sale in the open market. But, with 95 per cent of electricity tied to PPAs, that too long-term, this is unthinkable.

Coming to (iii), under DBT, the State Government gives subsidies directly to the target beneficiaries, even as discoms fix tariff in a manner as to fully recover their cost of purchase, wheeling, and distribution, thereby avoiding any under-recovery on such sale. They also need not charge more from industries and businesses which they have



BY FIXING THE SURCHARGE AT A HIGH LEVEL AND NOT BOTHERING TO REDUCE IT (AS MANDATED UNDER THE ACT), THE STATE GOVERNMENTS ENSURED THAT POST-SWITCH, THE EFFECTIVE COST OF POWER TO THE CONSUMER — TARIFF CHARGED BY THE NEW SUPPLIER PLUS OAC — IS HIGHER THAN WHAT THEY PAY TO SEBs. THAT RENDERED THE SWITCH UNECONOMICAL

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



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Under UDAY (2015), discoms were given a package worth ₹400,000 crore but are still saddled with under-recovery of ₹0.42 on every unit of electricity sold and a debt of about ₹450,000 crore as on March 31, 2021. Under RLRBSD, the government will be spending another ₹300,000 crore but with no hope of trimming under-recovery. The vicious cycle will continue.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

THESE PEOPLE (CONGRESS) WERE THE JAMES BOND OF SPYING (WHEN IN POWER). THEY SPIN A WEB OF SPYING WHEN IN GOVERNMENT. — UNION MINISTER MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI



NO GOVERNMENT ALLOWS OTHERS TO SNOOP ON ITS PEOPLE, BUT THIS WAS ALLOWED TO AN ISRAELI COMPANY. IS SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY SAFE? — CONGRESS LEADER MALLIKARJUN KHARGE

Thirty years later, 'reform' yet to happen

Liberalisation was not voluntary but was egged on by global lenders who would not lend without a firm Indian commitment on 'reforms'

Thirty years and India is still waiting for the dream to become real. The liberalization of the economy in 1991 is erroneously taken as being limited to divesting government assets and holdings in industry.

Liberalisation was not a voluntary decision but was nudged by major lenders, the IMF and World Bank, who threatened to stop lending without a firm commitment to "reforms". The country went through a foreign exchange crisis in the late 1980s and 1990s and family jewels were pawned because forex reserves plunged to unexpected lows. In July 1991, the RBI pledged 46.91 tonnes of gold with the Bank of England and Bank of Japan to raise \$400 million to meet its international obligations. The



SHIVAJI SARKAR

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

reforms that meant losing government assets to the private sector started with a 'bang' but did not bring the private sector to par with the government. The reforms initiated by the then finance minister, Manmohan Singh, were not a roaring success but a piece of confusing policy that has dumped subsequent governments into a policy quagmire.

While liberalizing the society from licence-permit raj was welcomed, the process of doing so gradually became complicated. Changes were made in industrial policy, monopolies law was annulled, import licensing was abolished, India joined WTO and TRIPS, quantitative restrictions on import of manufactured goods and farm products were removed, and current



account convertibility was introduced, business processes were eased, and the GST was introduced.

But divestment of public assets caught all attention. Every government took pride in selling assets or being seen doing that. Still, the private sector is suspect in the eyes of the bureaucracy.

It is still a mystery why a partial opening up was considered revolutionary. India is still not free of its socialist

mindset and a preference for government control on the pretext of 'concern for people's welfare'.

The "reforms" worked a bit. But the pandemic impoverished 80 crore people. Growing joblessness during the lockdown pushed the middle class to the edge of poverty. This is reflected in the slow growth of the GDP. In 2020-21, India's economic growth slowed and contracted by 7.3 per cent, the NCAER says.

Liberalisation in 1991 was followed by a series of ₹7 lakh crore scams—Harshad Mehta to Ketan Parekh, UTI, LIC (about ₹2 lakh crore), and a series of banks, leading to a JPC probe. The top scams are coal allocation (₹1.86 trillion), 2G spectrum (₹1.76

lakh crore), Waqf Board land (₹1.5 lakh crore), Commonwealth Games (₹70,000 crore), Telgi stamp (₹20,000 crore), Satyam (₹14,000 crore), and Hawala scandal (₹100 crore).

Scams of such magnitude had never happened since Independence. Every divestment deal was also questioned. While the large private houses acquired these assets with loans from public sector banks, it also opened up an era of high bank losses (NPAs) particularly after the Lehman meltdown in 2007-08. The RBI Financial Stability Report (FSR) says despite banks writing off ₹23,786 crore loans in 2019-20, enabling the PSU banks to show lower NPAs, banks could go into severe stress as it fears the NPAs may

escalate to 16.2 per cent by September 2021 as borrowers are saddled with unpaid dues. Repeated reorganization and mergers of banks have not boosted confidence. The latest move to sell four major banks and LIC is not being seen as a happy event. Many buyers could be from the list of 50 major defaulters.

Since 1991, government assets worth ₹3.63 lakh crore were divested. During 2014-19, ₹2.79 lakh crore worth assets were divested. The target set for 2020-21 is ₹2.1 lakh crore. The money received is adjusted in budgetary expenditure and is not known to have been used for building assets.

In 2016, demonetization shook the economy. The cash flow was severely hit, affecting

sales of goods and commodities. People's purchasing power collapsed, delaying the post-pandemic industrial, real estate, and market recovery. It might lead to years of moderate to slow post-pandemic growth and that means a severe resource crunch. Thirty years since the reforms, the power sector is in a mess again and agriculture remains the mainstay of the economy.

Have we made progress? Prime Minister Narendra Modi says his government is working for a targeted \$5-trillion economy. But former PM Manmohan Singh says that the future economic path is tougher than in 1991. Either way, the country must bite the reforms bullet and recast its policies keeping in mind growth in the next 30 years.

Af Prez seeks defence of cities as Taliban advance

Kabul: The Afghan President on Monday blamed the American troops' speedy pull-out for the worsening violence in his country and said that his administration would now focus on protecting provincial capitals and major urban areas in the face of the rapidly advancing Taliban.

Ashraf Ghani also urged lawmakers to back a national mobilisation drive against the

Taliban amid an intensifying war between the Taliban and Afghan government forces over the past few months as US and NATO troops complete their pullout from the war-torn country. An imported, hasty peace process a reference to Washington's push for negotiations between Kabul and the Taliban not only failed to bring peace but created doubt and ambiguity among Afghans, Ghani said in his address to Parliament.

The Afghan President arrived by helicopter for the extraordinary session of the house, called because of the dire situation on the ground. Ghani touched down at the Darul Aman Palace in Kabul

and inspected an honor guard before heading inside.

The Taliban are now trying to seize provincial capitals as US and NATO troops complete their pullout from the war-torn country. An imported, hasty peace process a reference to Washington's push for negotiations between Kabul and the Taliban not only failed to bring peace but created doubt and ambiguity among Afghans, Ghani said in his address to Parliament.

The Taliban do not believe in lasting or just peace, Ghani said. He predicted a sea change on the battlefield in the next six months that would push the Taliban back, without elaborating. He claimed that Afghan forces are up to the task and have the capacity to defeat the insurgents. But in past weeks, Afghan forces have struggled against the Taliban onslaught, and have often been left with-

out reinforcements and resupply. On Sunday, the Afghan armed forces spokesman, Gen. Ajmal Omar, said that three provinces in southern and western Afghanistan face critical security situations.

Southern Kandahar the birthplace of the Taliban as well as Helmand and Herat provinces have witnessed several attacks.

Helmand provincial council chief Attullah Ghani said the Taliban are also advancing in the provincial capital of Lashar Gah, and now have control over the city's seventh district. On Monday, elite Afghan commando units were dispatched to Lashar Gah to help

defend the city.

There has been relentless gunfire, air strikes and mortars in densely populated areas. Houses are being bombed, and many people are suffering severe injuries, said Sarah Leahy, Helmand coordinator for Doctors Without Borders.

The group, also known as the Medecins Sans Frontieres or MSF, said in a statement Monday that life in Lashar Gah was at a standstill as residents hunkered down inside their homes, afraid to venture out.

Some of our colleagues are staying overnight in the hospital as it's safer, but also so they can keep on treating patients, the organization said. The situation has been dire for

months but now it is even worse.

Faizullah, who like many other Afghans goes by one name, told The Associated Press over the phone that he fled Lashar Gah with his family and was now following the Helmand River to safety.

Clashes between the Taliban and Afghan forces have intensified, he said, and Afghan security forces are out of supplies and food in the city.

Back in Kabul, Ghani claimed his government has the financial and political support of the United States and the international community to turn the tide even as he urged the insurgents to rein in peace talks. **AP**

Millions under Covid lockdown; China battles Delta Variant outbreak

Beijing: Millions of people were confined to their homes in China on Monday as the country tried to contain its largest coronavirus outbreak in months, including seven positive tests found in Wuhan, where the virus first emerged in late 2019.

China reported 55 new locally transmitted cases on Monday as an outbreak of the fast-spreading Delta variant reached over 20 cities in more than a dozen provinces.

The Wuhan cluster came after the official daily tally was released, but it was confirmed by state media which said the infections had been traced to a train.

"The seven were identified as migrant workers," Xinhua reported, citing Covid-19 prevention and control officials.

Major cities including Beijing have now tested millions of residents while conducting of residential compounds and placing close contacts under quarantine.

Authorities in the capital

met and agreed on the need to "raise vigilance, take strict precautions and defend (the city) to the death, sparing no expense," in comments put up by the Beijing Government.

Elsewhere, over 1.2 million residents were placed under strict lockdown for the next three days in the central city of Zhuzhou in Hunan province Monday, as authorities roll out a citywide testing and vaccination campaign, according to an official statement.

"The situation is still grim and complicated," the Zhuzhou government said. China had previously boasted of its success in bringing domestic cases down to virtually zero after the coronavirus first emerged in Wuhan, allowing the economy to rebound. But the latest outbreak, linked to a cluster in the city of Nanjing where nine

cleaners at an international airport tested positive on July 20, is threatening that success with more than 360 domestic cases reported in the past two weeks. **AFP**

Citing Taliban violence, US expands Afghan refugee program

Washington: The Biden administration on Monday expanded its efforts to evacuate at-risk Afghan citizens from Afghanistan as Taliban violence increases ahead of the US military pullout at the end of the month.

The State Department said it is widening the scope of Afghans eligible for refugee status in United States to include current and former employees of US-based news organizations, US-based aid and development agencies and other relief groups that receive US funding. Current and former employees of the US Government and the NATO military operation who don't meet the criteria for a dedicated program for such workers are also covered. **AP**

Malaysia lawmakers protest Parliament closure as ploy by PM

Kuala Lumpur: Police blocked Opposition lawmakers from marching on Monday to protest a two-week lockdown of Malaysia's Parliament, which they consider another ploy for the embattled Prime Minister to dodge a no-confidence vote.

With a crucial parliamentary session due, Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin instead postponed it and Parliament will be shut for two weeks. The health ministry said Parliament was deemed a high-risk venue because four of 11 COVID-19 cases detected among staff and others were

suspected to be the fast-spreading delta variant.

Lawmakers and activists questioned the timing of the announcement of Parliament's closure, which came after the risk rebuked Muhyiddin's government on Thursday for misleading Parliament on the status of ordinances it issued during the seven-month coronavirus state of emergency. The opposition immediately filed a motion of no-confidence against Muhyiddin that was expected to have been raised Monday.

Florida breaks record for Covid hospitalisations

Orlando: A day after it recorded the most new daily cases since the start of the pandemic, Florida has broken a previous record for current hospitalisations set more than a year ago when the state reported 10,170 hospitalisations, according to the Florida Hospital Association.

Florida is now leading the

according to data reported to the US Department of Health & Human Services.

The previous record was from July 23, 2020, more than a half-year before vaccinations began to take hold.

In the past week, Florida has averaged 1,525 adult hospitalisations a day, and 35 daily pediatric hospitalisations. **AP**

Iran records highest number of daily Covid cases

Tehran: Iran on Monday reported more than 37,000 new coronavirus infections, the country's single-day record so far in the pandemic, state media reported.

State TV said health workers registered 37,189 new Covid-19 cases since Sunday - surpassing the previous daily record of 34,951 infections reported on Tuesday. Also,

there were 411 deaths, bringing the country's total death toll in the pandemic to 91,407 - the highest in the Middle East.

The new surge has been fuelled by the contagious delta variant, and Iranian authorities say less than 40% of the population follows measures such as wearing face masks and social distancing. Iranian health officials have regularly warned

that hospitals in the capital, Tehran, and other major cities are overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients.

On Sunday, Health Minister Saeeed Namaki in a letter to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei asked a two-week shutdown of the country, something the minister said the military would help enforce. **AP**

Australia city extends lockdown as clusters grow

Brisbane: A lockdown of Australia's third-largest city Brisbane was extended until Sunday because of a growing Covid outbreak.

Brisbane and several sur-

rounding municipalities in Queensland state were due to end a three-day lockdown on Sunday. But the Queensland government on Monday announced the extension after 13 locally acquired infections of the highly contagious delta variant were detected in the latest 24-hour period. **AP**

UK calls Iranian ambassador over oil tanker attack

London: Britain summoned Iran's ambassador to the Foreign Office on Monday after an attack on a merchant vessel off the coast of Oman.

James Cleverly, the minis-

ter for the Middle East, summed up the attack as a "clear and deliberate" act of aggression.

"The Iranian government's response to the attack on MV Mercer Street on Thursday, which killed a British national and a Roman.

Development Office said in a statement.

The United States, the UK and Israel have alleged that Iran carried out the fatal drone strike on the oil tanker, though Tehran denied involvement in the attack. **AP**

UK eases travel curbs as industry lobbies for more

London: Britain opened its borders to vaccinated travellers from the US and European Union on Monday as travel industry leaders urged the Government to further ease restrictions and allow people to enjoy the benefits of a Covid inoculation programme.

The new rules came into effect amid reports that Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government may add a new category to Britain's traffic light system of travel restrictions, a move industry officials said would make many people decide to stay home. As of Monday, fully vaccinated travellers from destinations on Britain's "amber list" are allowed to enter the country without self-isolating for up to 10 days. **AP**

Skipper: Documents show no coverup in submarine sinking

Portland: The release of about 3,000 pages of documents delving into the deadliest submarine disaster in US history has not yielded any sinister effort to hide the truth, a retired Navy skipper says.

Instead, documents show the Navy's policies and procedures failed to keep pace with fast-moving technological advances during the Cold War, allowing a series of failures that led to the sinking of the USS Thresher on April 10, 1963, said retired Capt. James Bryant, who sued for release of the documents under the Freedom of Information Act.

"This is a coverup. No smoking gun," he said.

That doesn't make it any less tragic, though. The loss of the nuclear-powered submarine and all 129 sailors and civilians aboard during a test dive in the Atlantic Ocean was both a tragedy for the families and a blow to national pride during the Cold War. **AP**

UK calls Iranian ambassador over oil tanker attack

London: Britain summoned Iran's ambassador to the Foreign Office on Monday after an attack on a merchant vessel off the coast of Oman.

James Cleverly, the minis-

Pelosi, Democrats call on Biden to extend eviction ban

AP ■ WASHINGTON
House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the House Democratic leaders on Sunday called on the Biden administration to immediately extend the nation's eviction moratorium, calling it a "moral imperative" to prevent Americans from being put out of their homes during a COVID-19 surge.

An estimated 3.6 billion Americans are at risk of eviction, some as soon as Monday.

Congress was unable to pass legislation swiftly to extend the ban, which expired at midnight Saturday, and the Democratic leaders said in a statement that it was now up to President Joe Biden's administration to act.

Death toll from floods in China's Henan reach 302

Beijing: The death toll from floods triggered by torrential rains in China's Henan province has increased to 302 as of Monday, according to the information office of the local Government.

Another 50 people remain missing, Xinhua news agency quoted the office as saying.

A total of 292 people were confirmed dead and 47 missing in Zhengzhou, the provincial capital.

There were seven fatalities and three missing in Xinxiang city, while Pingdingshan and Luobe reported two and one death, respectively. **IANS**

RE-TENDER NOTICE
No.SSA/CWB/KGBV-VI to X/254/2020/ 7042 Dated -26/07/2021
The Mission Director [C], SSA, Assam, invites fresh bids for the following work from registered contractors (Class-I [A, B & C]) under A.P.W.D. (Building) Assam, having experience of similar nature of work.
Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e. www.assamenders.gov.in and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours from 02/08/2021 (04.30 PM) to 12/08/2021 (2.00 PM)
The bidders must be enrolled in www.assamenders.gov.in

Name of Work	Package No	Place	Approx. Value of Work	Time of completion	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	E.M.D. to be drawn in favour of	Tender Cost
CONSTRUCTION OF KASTURBA GANDHI BALIKA VIDYALAYA (CLASS VI TO X) (ACADEMIC BLOCK ASSAM TYPE WITH RCC HOSTEL BUILDING (3-2) (KGBV TYPE II), SSA, ASSAM	1S	SOUTH SALMA RA, S.S. MANKA CHAR	Rs.1,91,28,90 0.00 (Per site)	12 (twelve months)	Rs.3,82,57,00 (for General) Rs.1,91,28,90 (for reserved Category) (PER SITE)	The Mission Director, SSA, Assam, Guwahati-19	Rs.5000.00

Janasanyog No. CF/813/21
Sd/- Mission Director I/c, SSA, Assam, Kailashpura, Guwahati-19

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SW-I)
OVER HEAD TANK: OPP. BHARTI COLLEGE
JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI-58.
e-mail: eesw1janakpuri@gmail.com

"STOP CORONA; Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"
Press N.I.T. NO. 16 SW-I (2021-22)
S. No. Name of work Estimated Cost (In Rs.) Date of release of tender in E-procurement solution Last deadline of receipt of tender through E-procurement solution
1. Replacement of sewerage system by Providing Laying 550 mm dia sewer line from Tax Factory road to Sankh Chowk, Vishwas Park in Pitham Corridor (AC-37 under E&S&B)
Further details in this regard can be seen at (https://e-procurement.delhi.gov.in)
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 238/2021-22

JASCH INDUSTRIES LIMITED
Regd. Off. : 502, Block C, NDM-2, NSP, Pitampura, Delhi 110034 CIN : L24302DL1985PLC383771
Website : www.jaschindustries.com, Email : accounts@jasch.biz

Extract of Unaudited Ind AS Financial Results for the Quarter ended on 30th June 2021 (Standalone & Consolidated Financial Results under Regulation 47(1)(B) of Listing Regulations) (₹ in Lakh)

Sl No	Particulars	Standalone				Consolidated*			
		Quarter Ended		Year Ended		Quarter Ended		Year Ended*	
		30.06.21	31.03.21	30.06.20	31.03.21	30.06.21	31.03.21	30.06.21	31.03.21
		Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited	N.A.
1	Total Income from Operations.	3704.21	4984.58	1488.66	13567.63	13077.64	3704.21	-	-
2	Profit before interest, Depreciation & Taxes (EBITDA)	512.70	754.17	181.40	1909.27	1154.72	512.70	-	-
3	Net Profit for the Period (before Tax and Exceptional Items)	430.37	669.93	85.37	1561.97	620.02	430.37	-	-
4	Net Profit for the Period before Tax (after Exceptional Items)	430.37	669.93	85.37	1561.97	620.02	430.37	-	-
5	Net Profit for the period after Tax (after Exceptional Items)	310.37	493.37	63.88	1135.20	453.72	310.37	-	-
6	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)	310.37	493.37	63.88	1135.20	453.72	310.37	-	-
7	Equity Share Capital	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	-	-
8	Reserves	6129.21	5818.84	4720.45	5818.84	4656.57	6129.21	-	-
9	Earnings Per Share (of ₹10/- each) Basic & Diluted:	2.74	4.35	0.56	10.02	4.00	2.74	-	-

Notes:
1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosures Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Financial Results are available on the website of Stock Exchanges at www.bseindia.com and also on Company's website at www.jaschindustries.com.
2. The financial results of the Company have been prepared in accordance with Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS).
3. Figures for the previous periods have been regrouped, wherever necessary, to conform to the current period's classification.
4. * The Financial Results of Jasch Industries Ltd ("JIL") have been consolidated with that of Jasch Gauging Technologies Ltd ("JGTL" - a wholly owned subsidiary of JIL) which was incorporated only on 25-05-2021 and received approval to commence business on 06-07-2021. Therefore, standalone and consolidated figures as at 30-06-2021 are the same. Since JGTL was not in existence on 31-03-2021, a dash "-" appears in the relevant column of consolidated data as on 31-03-2021.

Sonipat, 24th July 2021 **sd/- (J. K. GARG) CHAIRMAN & MANAGING DIRECTOR**

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

NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that the meeting on 03/2021-22 of the Board of Directors of the Company will be held on 12th August, 2021 (Thursday) at the registered office of the Company at Omaxe Square, Plot No. 14, 5th Floor, Jasola District Centre, Jasola, New Delhi-110025 at 3.30 P.M. to discuss the following agenda items:
i. To take on record the Unaudited Financial Results of the Company for the Quarter ended on 30th June, 2021 in terms of Regulation 33 of SEBI (Listing Obligation and Disclosure Requirement) Regulation, 2015.
ii. To discuss and approve the Director's Report along with Corporate Governance Report for the Financial Year ended on 31.03.2021.
iii. To fix the date of the next Annual General Meeting of the Company.
iv. To consider and decide the period of closure of register of members for record purpose.
v. To avail services of Electronic Voting Platform from National Securities Depository Limited.
vi. To consider appointment of Scrutinizer for the purpose of e-voting at ensuing Annual General Meeting.
vii. To table and approve the draft of the Notice convening the next Annual General Meeting.
viii. To discuss any other business with the permission of Chair.
By Order of the Board
For Premium Merchants Limited
Place: New Delhi Sd/-
Date: 02.08.2021 (Balbir Singh)
DIN:00027438 Director

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION
Large scale riots occurred in February-2020 in North East District, Delhi. The rioters had indulged in violence and arson to public and private properties and inflicted injuries upon a number of public persons and police personnel.
In this regard, criminal cases are being investigated in various police stations. General public is hereby requested to help identify the culprits who indulged in these riotous activities. Any information leading to arrest of rioters, the identity of the informant will be kept secret. Delhi Police reserves the right to decide actual information and its decision will be final.
Following persons were seen in Video Footage during the riots which took place near Sharmshah Ghat, Kabil Nagar, Delhi on 25.02.2020.

The information can be given in person to the SHO/IO of the respective police station or can be communicated on phone number 011-22822746, 011-22826608, 011-22829335 or on email id: dcpnortheast-dl@nic.in and adcp1-northeast-dl@nic.in S.H.O. P.S. Welcome, North East, Delhi

DP/938/NE/2021



CovaxinWorks

Covaxin is effective against the Delta plus variant of COVID-19, claims Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in its study released on Monday. Covaxin is developed by the Bharat Biotech in collaboration with ICMR and National Institute of Pune. The study states that individuals who were fully immunised (with two doses) didn't show significant fold-reduction in the NAb titer against Delta, Delta AY.1 and B.1.617.3.*



DOCYARD

DR SHAILESH JAIN

Principal Consultant,
Neurosciences

NEW DELHI



It's complicated



COVID in the last 18 months has shown a devastating effect on human life. Apart from affecting the lung, it also affected different parts of the body. However, it mainly affects the lung and increases level of ferritin, D-Dimer, CRP and cytokines eg IL-6. High levels of all these chemicals may have catastrophic effect on vital organs.

Neurological involvement is a spectrum of loss of olfactory senses to necrotising encephalitis and involving almost every aspect of central (CNS) and peripheral nervous system (PNS). Prevalence is around 0.1-1 per cent of COVID infections. Most complications are seen by second to fourth week of COVID infection. CNS-related events were more common than PNS manifestations. Common CNS manifestations are headache, disturbance in consciousness, dizziness, acute cerebrovascular disease, ataxia, and seizures. PNS symptoms are impairment in taste, smell, and vision. Musculoskeletal symptoms were observed in form of myalgia and nonspecific pain.

Stroke comprises of 60-70 per cent, encephalopathy 30-40 per cent and neuropathy around 6 per cent and all other neurological complications in 0.1 per cent cases of neurological cases related to COVID.

Neurological involvement is mainly categorised into CNS and PNS involvement. CNS involvements are in form of stroke, encephalopathy, delirium, psychosis, necrotising encephalitis and fungal infections eg. Fungal abscess or rhinocerebral mucormycosis. PNS involvements are facial palsy, acute inflammatory demyelinating neuropathy (AIDP) and paraesthesia in all limbs and myalgia.

Strokes are ischemic type usually due to large vessel occlusion with high degree of morbidity or mortality and it is more prevalent with diabetic, hypertensive and Coronary artery disease. It is also associated with large coronary occlusion or sudden cardiac death upto six-eight weeks after COVID.

Encephalopathy or delirium or psychoses were seen by third to fourth week of COVID. It is a non-specific term used to describe the acute impairment of brain function which presents clinically as alteration in the level of consciousness and triggered by viral infections. It is completely reversible with appropriate medications. Neuropathy may be in form of facial palsy or severe weakness of all limbs in form of G B Syndrome. Both are completely reversible with medications. Headache, myalgia and paraesthesia and fatigue are minor symptoms and it disturbs sleep but doesn't cause any disability. These recover with time and medications.

Some unusual complications are necrotising encephalitis and myelitis. They have high level of morbidity and mortality. Encephalitis is a serious condition with significant impact and burden. About 20-50 per cent of encephalitis cases are caused by viruses, and half of the cases have no known etiology. The disease causes a variety of neurological abnormalities, such as altered consciousness, hallucination, confusion, abnormal movement, and aphasia.

Smoking accelerates the process of atherosclerosis all over body and leads to endothelial dysfunction, thrombus formation and hypercoagulable state. It also aggravates dyslipidemia. It increases chances of cardiovascular disease in all forms eg CAD, CVA, PVD. It locally affects the lung parenchyma and makes it vulnerable to COVID related lung damage and oxygenation of body. Coexistence of smoking related atherosclerosis and COVID induced hypercoagulable state increases chances of large vessel stroke.

COVIDCARE

COCOA: Cocoa is considered to be one of the best medicinal foods. It is full of flavonoids. It helps control diabetes and cocoa based products are advised to be included in the daily diet to improve the insulin resistance and level of glucose in the body.

Cocoa powder is good for the heart and prevents fatal blood clots. Hence, avoiding severe cardiac problems.

The flavonoid and anti-oxidants in cocoa beans lowers blood pressure and improves the elasticity of veins and blood vessels. Cocoa is great for the skin. It is also considered to cure cancer—used particularly in the cure of prostate and colon cancer. It has anti-depressant properties that can help prevent mental exertion and facilitate certain physiological processes and elevate the mood.



MONSOON MALADY

With rains come plethora of diseases including leptospirosis, DR TRUPTI GILADA tells SHALINI SAKSENA

Even though the monsoon brings with it the much-needed relief from the scorching heat, it does have a down side as well. Dengue and malaria are some of the diseases that are common during this season. Then there are diseases that come due to flooding and water-logging of low-lying areas. One such disease is leptospirosis.

WHAT IS IT

It is mainly a monsoon associated infection associated with exposure to water, soil or mud contaminated with the urine from infected animals. It is caused by a bacteria called Leptospira. It is carried by many animals. It lives in their kidneys and is found in the urine and faeces.

WHO IS AT RISK?

Anyone who wades through flooded water is at risk. When there is water-logging, the water gets contaminated by bacteria because of the mixing of the stool or urine. The bacteria then enters the body through skin cuts or abrasions when a person wades through this contaminated water, and occasionally through the lining of the mouth, nose and eyes. Farmers are also at high risk as they may get exposed to the urine and excreta of field rats while working.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms usually develop after five to 14 days following exposure. The most common initial symptoms of this disease include either few or all of these symptoms: Fever, severe headache, sore muscles, chills, vomiting, and red eyes. Since these mimic other monsoon-related illnesses like malaria and dengue, clinical diagnosis can sometimes be difficult.

Few people with leptospirosis can develop severe disease and may need hospitalisation. This can include kidney failure, jaundice, liver failure, bleeding and respiratory complications. Lesser common complications include menin-



ANYONE WHO WADES THROUGH FLOODED WATER IS AT RISK. WHEN THERE IS WATER-LOGGING, THE WATER GETS CONTAMINATED BY BACTERIA BECAUSE OF THE MIXING OF THE STOOL OR URINE. THE BACTERIA THEN ENTERS THE BODY THROUGH SKIN CUTS OR ABRASIONS

gitis where the lining of the brain and spinal cord gets involved and causes altered sensorium.

TREATMENT

This disease is commonly treated with antibiotics. Treatment is thought to be most effective when detected early. The testing can take some time and the disease may be severe in some patients. A doctor may therefore sometimes choose to start antibiotics prior to confirming the diagnosis with tests. However, some people recover spontaneously without antibiotics.

LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Most individuals recover from leptospirosis without further sequelae. But in some individuals who were undiagnosed and untreated in the early or acute illness, there can be long-term effects. People can have a chronic-fatigue-like illness that lasts for months. Others can have persistent headaches, depression or other neurological complaints. Occasionally the bacteria can persist in the eyes and cause chronic eye complaints.

PREVENTION

As far as possible, avoid wading through puddles and water-logged areas. Wear well covered footwear in monsoon. Cover any cuts and abrasions with waterproof dressings. Wash hands and legs with soap, as leptospira bacteria are quickly killed by soap, disinfectants and drying. Rodent control is of paramount importance and requires efforts both at individual and government level. Prompt cleaning up of garbage dumps and removing food sources that are close to housing is essential. Appropriate personal protective gear for those who work with animals or on the farms (like waterproof boots).

Those who may have been exposed to the bacteria because they waded through floods must contact their doctor immediately. The doctor may prescribe certain antibiotics (like Doxycycline) that can be taken to prevent the disease.

A DOSE FOR YOUR CLOTHES

MUSBA HASHMI speaks with SASHA BOSE, Director & CEO of Nanochemiqs Pvt Ltd, about the nano tech application that allows garments to not only be protective in nature but also makes it long lasting

■ What was the idea behind the inception of Faibr-x?

Faibr-x was conceptualised on the idea of safe space for every human and child. Clothes are the biggest carrier of virus and bacteria and we strongly believe that clothes can also be the biggest protector against both. Faibr-x was conceptualised to add an element of protection, certified protection in this case, to our daily wear clothes to protect us against virus, bacteria and insects including mosquitoes. And to be honest, this was called for by the situation caused by the COVID pandemic. Now we may have started to move out of our houses but it is still not safe, the pandemic isn't entirely over yet and we do need an extra line of defence against this virus.

■ How is it different from already treated antiviral clothes?

Faibr-x uses nanotechnology to impart protective nature to garments against virus and bacteria. The protective finish as added to garments is done on a nano level (1 nanometre is 10⁻⁹ metre) wherein the protective finish is applied on the fibre of the cloth. This nano level application allows the garment to not only be completely protective in nature but also makes it long lasting. A once treated garment would remain protective even after 10 washes. Here we are not fighting a specific virus, we are taking down all kinds of viruses and disease causing bacteria. Along with the bacteria that cause odour. This is what sets the clothes treated with Faibr-x apart from already treated antiviral clothes.

■ What are the challenges that you face?

Biggest challenge is to make the end consumer understand and acknowledge our solution. We realise Faibr-x is a first of its kind solution and therefore many people may not be aware of our vision and the impact of our solution. With that said, we are making a constant stride forward, towards brand awareness and making people realise how significant can Faibr-x prove to be during this pandemic.

■ How safe are Faibr-x treatments for various individuals?

Faibr-x nanotechnology and its ingredients are certified by Oeko-Tex Class 1 and have been evaluated by CDSCO, ISO, and NABL labs human and environment safety. Non metal, non silver, not itching technology is safest not only for various individuals but even for newborn and young toddlers.

■ How can one get their clothes Faibr-x treated?

As mentioned above, we have tied up with grocery stores, medical stores, dry cleaners, and departmental stores that act as collection points for us. People can drop their clothes with these stores, from where they would be picked up and sent for Faibr-x treatment. And then returned.

■ How does the people's response to such treated clothes?

People's response to the treated clothes has been positive so far. Our services have been perceived by our customer base as a unique concept of protection. People do feel donning Faibr-x treated clothes acts as a defence mechanism against virus and bacteria. Customers have been happy with the affordability and the accessibility of our services, given we have collaborated with local grocery stores and dry cleaners, we are easily accessible.

Only 0.01 per cent Indians consent to donate

Organ donation in India is only just beginning to take off — reason for the delay being lack of awareness, spiritual belief of life after death, and generally negative attitudes towards organ donation, says RAGHAV KHANNA

Thousands of lives can be improved through organ and tissue transplants, enabling people to live better, and in many cases, survive. So, why are only 0.01 per cent of Indians consenting to donate their organs after their death?

Organ donation is the process of retrieving or procuring an organ legally with the intention of being used to medically help someone in need. Consent is given either by the donor while they're still alive, or after death by their Next of Kin. First the organ is recovered, or harvested, before being transplanted into the recipient in need. Organ donation in India is regulated by the 1994 Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act. The act aims to control the removal, storage, and transplantation of organs and prevents any commercial dealings, while the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation facilitates procurement, allotment, and distribution of organs within India. With a budget of ₹149.5 crore, the Government implemented the

National Organ Transplant Programme for promoting organ donation.

Despite the Government identifying need for organ donation, there is a disparity between demand and low supply. Organ donation in India is only just beginning to take off — reason for the delay being lack of awareness, spiritual belief of life after death, and generally negative attitudes towards organ donation. Donation is encouraged as a charitable act that saves or enhances life; therefore, it requires no action on the part of the religious group.

India's Statistical Data as of 2015 shows that in response to the demand for 1.75 lakhs of kidney transplants, only 5000 transplants were completed. With 50,000 people dying of terminal liver disease, only 1000 got transplants. These statistics are even more distressing in organs like hearts and lungs. About 0.5 million people in India die every year from causes that could have been prevented by organ transplants that were not available to them.

Government should undertake the responsibility for establishing proper infrastructure to facilitate speedy transport and harvesting of organs

Organ donation rates in India sit at 0.01 percent, a miniscule figure in comparison to countries like Croatia's which sits at 36.5 per cent and Spain's at 35.3 per cent.

One donation from a deceased whose brain gave way before their heart can save lives of up to eight people who are suffering from end stage organ failures. If India's donation rates were to be improved to one donation per million deaths, it would satisfy the country's organ requirement completely.

The process of pledging is simple. A donor card is provided to a person who is willing to donate the organs after death. Donor cards are not a legally binding document — it is only an expression of a person's willingness to be a donor. At the time of organ donation, the family of the patient will make the final decision on whether to donate organs or not. Any person willing to donate his/her organs can do so by filling out the donor consent form available on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India website.

Government of India should undertake the responsibility for establishing proper infrastructure — it is only an expression of a person's willingness to be a donor. At the time of organ donation, the family of the patient will make the final decision on whether to donate organs or not. Any person willing to donate his/her organs can do so by filling out the donor consent form available on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India website.

The writer is a final year student of Shri Ram College of Commerce, University of Delhi

INBRIEF

SIGN OF ENDOMETRIOSIS

Endometriosis is an often painful disorder in which tissue similar to the tissue that normally lines the inside of your uterus — the endometrial — grows outside your uterus. Endometriosis most commonly involves your ovaries, fallopian tubes and the tissue lining your pelvis. Rarely, endometrial tissue may spread beyond pelvic organs.

Dr. G. S. professor and HOD of Obstetrics and gynaecology department, Sharda Hospital, said at the time of endometriosis "complaints of painful menstruation, cramping, painful sex, constipation, back pain, leg pain, pain while urinating, and rectal bleeding. It can affect women of any age. It's a long-term condition that can have a significant impact on one woman's life and also the main cause of ovarian cancer."

Foods rich in Omega-3 fatty acids, fresh fruits and vegetables, avoiding intake of alcohol and caffeine, avoid stress and fatty foods add regular exercise and yoga in your routine that helps in to resolve the problem and if it is not treated on time it leads to infertility or heavy bleeding during the time of menstruation and having pregnancy at an older age. "Primary treatment of this disease and if it is not diagnosed at an early stage then surgical treatment is the option. Usually, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are used to relieve pain. If symptoms are severe and women do not plan to become pregnant, for most women with moderate to severe endometriosis, the most effective treatment is removing endometrial tissue and endometriosis," says Dr. Goel.



ONE STEP AT A TIME

PRATIK SUD advises caution against exerting yourself too much after recovering from COVID-19



Exercise is an important part of recovery after falling prey to COVID-19. As the number of COVID-positive cases is on the rise, remember that irrespective of how restless you may feel after being restricted to your home, if you were stricken by the disease, you should take it easy and remember that acting only natural to take some time to achieve the fitness level you possessed before you got infected.

Generally, doctors recommend a break of three-six months, even after the symptoms subside, depending on the severity of the infection in the patient. Provided below are some guidelines to ease your transition to the active lifestyle you once led.

- Always warm up before and cool down after exercising. Begin with breathing exercises and mild walking. You will be shocked to see how you gasp for breath even after walking for 100 metres.
- Wear comfortable clothes that



circulate air to help you breathe normally. Also, wear comfortable shoes for free movement.

■ Eat healthy and nutritious food in sufficient quantities an hour before the exercise. Forget about dieting post-COVID-19 illness.

■ Staying hydrated while recovering from the illness is imperative. Ensure that you drink ample water before and after exercising.

■ Don't exhaust yourself by exercising in hot weather. Try working out early in the morning or in the evening. If by chance you can't work out in the morning, then meditate during the afternoon, but don't indulge in rough workout sessions.

■ At the same time, avoid exercising indoors with the air conditioner on. Extreme cold weather can leave you breathless which can lead to an uneven flow of blood in the vessels and stressed muscles.

Doctors claim that weakness can last up to six months after recovering, depending on a person's immune system and energy levels. If your friend can run 20-25 laps of the field post-recovery, doesn't mean that your body can also tolerate the same.

Immediately stop working out if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Nausea
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Breathlessness is common while exercising. However, stop if the breathlessness worsens and doesn't subside even after resting
- Excessive sweating

- Tightness in the chest area
- Increased pain especially in the arms and jaw

The moment you experience any uncommon symptoms, you should stop exercising and contact your doctor immediately. There is no harm in discussing the symptoms with your fitness expert as well. Remember, medical staff and doctors are there for our assistance.

The best way to start exercising is by warming up. Mild exercises can loosen the muscles and increase blood flow. This will help in exercising properly without any room for injuries, soreness or uneasiness in the body.

Few exercising tips that can loosen muscle and increase strength

■ Warm-up exercise

Roll your shoulders slowly to loosen the muscles and increase blood flow. You need to roll them clockwise and anticlockwise five times consecutively. Continue this motion for five minutes.

■ Fitness exercise

We all have marched during the school graduation ceremony, so it will not be difficult to march on one spot for 10 minutes. You can also walk/run up and down the staircase for 10 minutes. It helps in improving breathlessness.

Stand facing the wall and raise both hands and place your palms on it. Now push yourself towards the wall, against the force and then return to your position. This exercise helps in building strength in arms and joints.

Start with mild exercises. Gradually, increase the frequency, intensity and duration of your workout at your ease. This is the best way of challenging yourself by increasing one level further. Breathlessness is normal while exercising, but too much of it can be harmful and should be addressed immediately. Increase the intensity of your workouts according to your tolerance. Fatigue and extreme pain can be signs of over-exertion. It is advised to work out with a fitness expert so that if you feel breathless or are in extreme pain, s/he can provide you with emergency assistance.

(The author is co-founder of Synqfit, a one-stop solution for your home workouts.)

Back in the game

Actor KARTIK AARYAN is all set to star in the forthcoming romantic thriller, *Freddy*. By TEAM VIVA

Who is Freddy, you might ask? This introduction needs a drum roll or rather some suspenseful staccato played at a steadily increasing pace.

Producer Ekta Kapoor, in collaboration with Jay Shevakramani, is all set to kickstart their next production, *Freddy*. The film, directed by Shashanka Ghosh, is a romantic thriller starring Kartik Aaryan in the titular role.

Incidentally, Shashanka's last outing *Veere Di Wedding* with Balaji Telefilms was a super-hit and now they're teaming up again. Full of unpredictable twists and sharp turns, characters in this movie are set to take us on a dark and chilling roller coaster ride, where the lines between love and obsession blur! *Freddy* is jointly produced by Balaji Telefilms and Northern Lights Films.

Ekta, who's known for genre-bending content is excited as the movie is all set to go on floors. "I'm thrilled to have Kartik on board. His choices of the subject have always been unique and this one is no different and collaborating with Jay makes it even more special," she says.

Jay adds, "It is the first time I am collaborating with Ekta and Kartik on a film and for it to be on a script like this, makes it all the more exciting! *Freddy* is a script we worked on incessantly. I couldn't wait for Shashanka to bring to life these crazy characters!"

Speaking about the movie, an ecstatic Kartik shares, "As an actor, I crave to explore different facets of entertainment and with *Freddy*, I'm venturing into an uncharted territory which is both exciting and intriguing in equal measure. I look forward to marking my presence in Freddy's world and bring alive this dark romantic thriller. This will be my first collaboration with a visionary like Ekta Kapoor and creative forces such as Jay and Shashanka. Couldn't have asked for a better team on this journey."

The director, Shashanka, further adds, "As a filmmaker, there is a lot to play with the genre, like a thriller. I am more than excited to work with an incredible team on a project as inspiring as *Freddy*. I am sure that the film is going to be one of the best thrilling cinematic experiences for the audience across the nation."



The fight for inclusion

SONU SOOD joins Special Olympics Bharat as brand ambassador

Bollywood actor Sonu Sood has been named as the brand ambassador of Special Olympics Bharat. At a virtual event attended by over 500 athletes, coaches, families, officials and volunteers, Sonu interacted with the special athletes responding to their queries while addressing and appreciating their sporting achievements.

The inaugural session introduced him to the #WalkForInclusion, an initiative of the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Region, demonstrated by the athletes, marking his entry into the Inclusion Revolution of the Special Olympics movement.

Speaking about his role as the ambassador, Sonu said, "Today is a very special day for me and I am delighted to join this journey of inclusion with Special Olympics Bharat. Through their sporting achievements, each athlete redefines the human spirit that stands tall in the face of every challenge. I wish luck to all of them to do their best and showcase their abilities with confidence which in itself would send a strong message to the world that they deserve to be mainstreamed. I feel privileged to join the Special Olympics Bharat family and vouch to make this platform even bigger and resonate with people all over the country."

Not to be confused with the Paralympics, the Special Olympics is for individuals with intellectual disabilities, whereas the Paralympics is

generally for athletes with any disability, including physical, and only at an elite level. Sonu will lead the team of Special Olympics Bharat Athletes who will travel to Kazan to participate in the Special Olympics World Winter Games in January 2022.

He went on to express his gratitude, "I feel honoured to have this opportunity to be with our team in Russia for the Special Olympics World Winter Games. We will together encourage our athletes to give their best and cheer them on with such enthusiasm that the roar of support will echo back home in India as well."

Speaking on the occasion, Mallika Nadda, chairperson of Special Olympics Bharat, remarked, "I wish to convey my gratitude to Sonu Sood for accepting our invitation to join the Special Olympics family. We are certain that he will play a major role in giving a new direction to the Special Olympics movement in India and help the cause of persons with intellectual disabilities all over the world. Sonu Sood has offered his support to Special Olympics Bharat on several occasions in the past, and we are thrilled that he is now going to lead the Special Olympics movement. We look forward to working together with Sonu Sood in our effort to provide an equal opportunity and the dignity of life for persons with intellectual disabilities." —IANS



Gauhar Khan has managed to find her fan base in every section of the audience.

From featuring in TV reality shows like *Bigg Boss*, *Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa*, *Fear Factor: Khattron Ke Khladi*, to sharing screen space with Bollywood stars like Ranbir Kapoor, Saif Ali Khan and Vidya Balan in films like *Rocket Singh: Salesman of the Year*, *Begum Jaan* and recently in the web series *Tandav* and her latest film *14 Phere*, Gauhar has done it all.

Even though she is mostly grabbing headlines for her social and personal life on social media, in a recent interview, the actress shares that with time, her parameters on choosing projects, especially films, has changed because she is looking to explore her acting skills now.

"Honestly speaking, I do not look at anything with regret. I do not regret what I could not have the role of the female protagonist opposite Ranbir in a Bollywood film or why directors, producers are not considering me for lead roles. For films, the footage did not mat-

Currently, most of the prominent social media platforms have become vehicles that proliferate negativity, drive divisiveness, and enable cyberbullying. While they each have standards for behaviour outlined for all to see, they are at best inconsistently applied, and at worst completely ignored. The sites have become so toxic that not a day goes by where many regular users are not exposed to some level of negativity. People regularly report the loss of interactions with friends, family and colleagues online.

The call for reform has been side-stepped by these companies. The likes of key social media platforms have held up the freedom of expression flag in their defense, though many believe this is just a way to justify a business model that is lucrative to them and their shareholders. There is little doubt that extreme societal damage has been done from these platforms' unwillingness to make meaningful changes to address these issues. To date, the conversation has largely been about the issues with these platforms. However, now is the time for solutions. It is time to bring about a more positive way to interact online where members can connect in a safe and secure environment openly and freely.

Various new-age networking

Basking in the glory

Model-turned-actress GAUHAH KHAN looks back on how she has thrived in the entertainment industry for 19 years



ter to me, the character did. If you look at my character in *Ishaqzaade* and *Begum Jaan*, those scenes and moments in the story were important. For me, it is always about creating something on-screen that resonates with the audience, and it did," expresses Gauhar.

"Initially, for me, I would try to use every opportunity to the best of my ability because I started from zero. It has been around 19 years for me in the entertainment business and I have seen so much change... Especially with OTT platforms, actors like myself are getting the opportunity to showcase their skills, earlier in

cinema chances were limited," she adds.

Gauhar, who began her journey as a model and was one of the participants in 2002 for the Femina Miss India beauty pageant. She went on gaining popularity with many non-fiction TV shows like *The Khan Sisters*, *Ticket to Bollywood*, *India's Raw Star*, *I Can Do That* and different seasons of *Bigg Boss*. She was the winner of *Bigg Boss 10*.

"The web-series space is interesting for me and I am getting good offers from OTT platforms. *Tandav* was an important show for me that was released on Amazon Prime Video. I have a couple of things lined up for OTT and again, all of them are very versatile and interesting. Now my parameter of choosing a project is to collaborate with directors and storytellers who will use my potential; I want to be challenged with new and exciting roles," shares Gauhar who also appeared in the Hotstar special sitcom show *The Office*.

—IANS

No to negativity

MARC KAPLAN shares how new-age social media platforms are providing users with a revamped experience



platforms are focussing on improving online forums while making concerted efforts to mitigate negativity and cyberbullying. Their sole

unknowingly supported by major social media platforms today.

These modern social networking platforms enable people to give and receive guidance for free and the members help each other in achieving their respective goals. These targets could be related to fitness, career, health, parenting, hobbies, personality development, or any other topic.

These platforms are a community where like-minded people and those who share common interests and goals come together to support each other and render a helping hand to each other. The members in such a scenario can interact and engage one-on-one amongst like-minded individuals or other communities across the globe instantly and seamlessly. They are devoid of ads, negativity, fake news, trolling, and cyberbullying and work beyond the popularity contest approach of garnering maximum likes and shares.

New-age networking platforms leverage the power of content moderation, identity verification, and technology mix to come up with state-of-the-art community-enabled solutions that help resolve all the associated issues. People with real identities facilitate an increased level of trust, credibility, and safety amongst the members and prefer

platforms that provide a safe and protected environment where their privacy is secured.

Trust, respect and genuine connections form the core of these social networking platforms and they are leaving no stone unturned to ensure that their community is free from negativity and toxicity. All they want is to leave a positive impact on the members' lives.

These new-age networking platforms don't function as the usual social media platforms but rather lend a helping hand to solve the problems faced by people in the social space. They aim to come up with a new social contract so that people can interact quickly, easily, and instantly with each other. They are aware that negativity, divisiveness, polarisation and fake news rule the social media space today. However, they wish to take a bold stance and bet on the goodness of the people. They desire to uplift each other rather than tearing each other down.

The broader vision of these new-age platforms is to normalise a different online experience and provide an alternative way to spend your time online which is positive, interactive, engaging, and fosters connections!

(The author is co-founder & CEO of ChokkMar, a social platform that enables impactful one-on-one connections.)

TRENDBLAZER

'WE DON'T DESERVE A MEDIA TRIAL'

Actor SHILPA SHETTY KUNDRA took to social media on Monday to issue a statement, saying she and her family do not deserve a media trial.

"All I will say is, as it's an ongoing investigation, I have full faith in the Mumbai Police and the Indian judiciary. I request everyone to respect my family's and my right to privacy in these times. We don't deserve a media trial. Please let the law take its course. *Satyamev Jayate!*" she said via a post on Instagram.



fairtalk

TIGER SHROFF



"From the time my first film was released people said 'ye ladka hai ya ladki', people commented on my face and said I look like a girl. When it comes to trolling, it is at times scary how a nameless, faceless individual could say anything about anybody without getting caught! As long as love is coming in for me from my fans, I am okay."

dailytalk

ONIR



"I think modern-day slavery is one of the themes prevalent in our society that we do not address as much as we should. It is one of the worst forms of human depravity and since cinema is a powerful medium, we need to take the opportunity to address the matter and provoke the thought in the minds of people."

WHAT A BIG JOB: KIT HARINGTON

Game Of Thrones star KIT HARINGTON and his wife Rose Leslie welcomed their first child, a baby boy, five months ago. The actor admits he wasn't prepared for just how 'big' a job raising a family is.

"Everyone goes, 'look, it's big what you're about to go through.' You have no way of knowing that until it happens. What surprises you is that you go, 'Oh, this goes on forever.' Like, you don't get a break from it." Harington told Access Hollywood.





MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Hockey:** India beat Australia 1-0 in women's quarterfinal.
- **Athletics:** Dutee Chand 7th and last in women's 200m Heat 4; fails to qualify for semifinals.
- **Shooting:** Kamalpreet Kaur sixth in women's discus final with a best throw of 63.70m.
- **Shooting:** Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar 21st and Sanjeev Rajput 32nd in men's 50m rifle 3 positions qualification; fail to qualify for final.
- **Equestrian:** Fouaad Mirza 25th in eventing jumping individual qualifier; 23rd in final.

IN ACTION TODAY

- **Athletics:** Annu Rani in women's javelin throw Qualification Group A. (5:50am)
- **Tajinderpal Singh Toor** in men's shot put Qualification Group A. (3:45am)
- **Hockey:** India vs Belgium in men's semifinal. (7:00am)
- **Wrestling:** Sonam Malik vs Boltortuya Khurelkhuu (Mongolia) in women's 62kg. (8:30am onwards)

Live on SONY TEN & SIX Network

PTI ■ TOKYO

A brave and determined Indian women's hockey team etched its name in the history books by entering the Olympic Games semifinals for the first time, stunning three-time champions and world No 2 Australia 1-0 in an intense last-eight tie here on Monday.

A day after the Indian men's team entered the Olympic semifinals following a 49-year gap, the world No 9 women's side also produced a phenomenally gritty performance to make it way into the last four.

Drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur rose to the occasion when it mattered and converted India's lone penalty corner in the 22nd minute to surprise the Australians.

"We are so happy, it is the result of hard work that we put in for several, several days. In 1980, we qualified for the Games but this time, we made the semifinals. It is a proud moment for us," Gurjit said after the match.

"This team is like a family, we have supported each other and found support from the country as well. We are very happy," she added.

But the Indians, determined to prove a point, produced a strong and brave performance to eke out the narrow win over the Hockeyroos.

How much it meant for the team and Indian hockey in general could be gauged from the

HISTORYMAKERS

In a first, Indian women's hockey team enter Olympic semifinals with a stunning 1-0 win over Hockeyroos



Indian players celebrate after Gurjit Kaur (jersey No 2) scores India's only goal against Australia during women's hockey quarterfinal match

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A movie on self-belief & staying in the moment did trick: Marijne

Tokyo: Watching a movie on self belief after three consecutive losses rebuilt the Indian women's hockey team's shattered morale and helped it to 'aim for the clouds', the side's Dutch coach Sjoerd Marijne revealed on Monday after Rani Rampal and Co entered their maiden Olympic semifinals here.

"The Indian team bounced back tremendously in the tournament after successive losses and Marijne said the movie helped psychologically ahead of the must-win pool game against Ireland but did not reveal its name.

"The difference is believing in ourselves and believing in their dreams and then it's about going back to reality focussing on your past. I think that is the main thing and that's what we did," Marijne said after upsetting Australia in the quarterfinals.

"If you lose you don't stop emotions that were on display after the final hooter went off. The players screamed, hugged each other, and got into a huddle with their Dutch coach Sjoerd Marijne with tears of joy rolling down their faces.

India's best performance in the Olympics came way back in the 1980 Moscow Games where they finished fourth out of six teams. In that edition, women's hockey made its debut in the Olympics and the sport was played in a round-robin format. The Rani Rampal-led side will play Argentina in the semifinal on Wednesday.

believing and that's what I told the girls. The most important thing is to stay in the moment. I showed them a movie and that movie is about being in the moment and I think that was really helpful. Against Ireland we kept on referring to that movie," he said.

He said he asked the team to do was to aim for the highest.

"In India you must think big and that's what I said to the girls. If you aim for the highest, for the clouds, you will fall on the highest mountain. If you aim for the mountain you will fall on the ground," he explained.

"We went for the clouds and I said whatever happens after it doesn't matter, but that's where we have to aim for."

India captain Rani Rampal too credited the movie for the turnaround of fortunes.

PTI

Kamalpreet finishes 6th in discus final

Tokyo: Discus thrower Kamalpreet Kaur finished a creditable sixth in her first Olympics in a rain-interrupted final while sprinter Dutee Chand ended her campaign on a disappointing note by failing to qualify for the 200m semifinals here on Monday.

The 25-year-old Kaur, who has qualified for the final as second best on Saturday, was never in the running for a medal in the eight rounds of competition which was interrupted by rain for more than an hour.

Her best throw of 63.70m in the third round saw her finish at sixth and equal 2010 Commonwealth Games Gold medalist Krishna Poomal performance in the 2012 London Olympics.

Throughout the competition, Kaur looked nervous and short of confidence as she lacked international exposure. She has taken part in World University Games in 2017, her lone international competition.

It was a tough competition for all the participants as rain started pouring down towards the end of the second round and a few throwers took to the field in the rain. Kaur finished last in her heat race. The 25-year-old clocked 23.85 seconds to finish seventh and last in Heat 4 and 38th overall out of 41 competitors.

Rain stopped after an hour but the humidity seemed to have affected the throwers' performance and they have to be cautious as the approach area to the circle was wet.

With her right

shoulder heavily strapped, Kaur began with a 61.62m effort before fouling her next attempt. That put her under pressure and on the verge of being eliminated as she was ninth just before her third throw.

But she gave her best and came up with a 63.70m, that saved her and put her in the sixth position as the bottom four out of the 12 finalists were eliminated after three rounds.

Not much changed in the position of the throwers in the final three rounds. Kaur fouled the fourth throw and then had a 61.37m in her penultimate attempt before sending the discus out of sector in the final one.

American Valarie Allman took the Gold with a first round throw of 68.98m while Kristin Pudenz (66.86m) of Germany and reigning world champion Yaimé Pérez (65.72m) of Cuba won the Silver and Bronze respectively.

In the morning session, sprinter Dutee ran her season's best in 200m but that was not enough for a semifinals berth as she made a disappointing exit from the Olympics after finishing last in her heat race.

The 25-year-old clocked 23.85 seconds to finish seventh and last in Heat 4 and 38th overall out of 41 competitors.

Mirza and his equine Seigneur Medicot sneaked into the top-25 in the morning to make the jumping finals and become the first Indian to do so. In the final, Mirza incurred

Tokyo: Handling the immense burden of expectations would perhaps be the key when the Indian men's hockey team takes on world champion Belgium, aiming to secure a place in the Olympic finals and with it, a medal for the first time in 41 years here on Tuesday.

With 11 Olympic medals, eight of them Gold, in its kitty, India has a rich history in the Games and the Manpreet Singh-led side seems on course to resurrect that glorious past.

The Indians achieved the semifinal slot by beating Great Britain 3-1 in the quarterfinals on Sunday, and are now in touching distance of a medal.

The Graham Reid-coached current side knows very well that another good outing against Belgium on Tuesday would etch its name in the history books in golden words no matter the colour of the medal.

The Indians are on a four-match winning streak after the 1-7 drubbing against Australia

Belgium stand b/w India & final



in their second pool match and come Tuesday, Manpreet and his teammates would look to continue the momentum. But it would be easier said than done as in Belgium, India face a tough opponent, which has improved leaps and bounds in the last few years.

Besides being current world champions and world No 2 side, Belgium are also the reigning European champions. Going by rankings, however, there is hardly anything to separate between the two sides as India are currently

ranked third in the world. The recent head-to-head record also favours India. India and the Red Lions played each other three times in 2019 during their tour of the European nation and the Asian side came out victorious in all the matches. India

defeated Belgium 2-0, 3-1 and 5-1 in the three games during the tour.

In the most recent outing in March this year, India beat Belgium 3-2 during their Europe tour. In fact, in their last five matches against Belgium, the Indians have registered four wins.

However, the last time both the sides met each other in the Olympics, Belgium came out 3-1 winners in Rio.

PTI

While Reid expressed that he was happy with the 3-1 victory against Great Britain in the quarterfinal on Sunday, he highlighted that getting two green cards and one yellow card in the game is something they must avoid against Belgium.

"The things we can learn from last night (Sunday) is that there is a difference between passion and emotion. Sometimes, we let our emotions take over."

"We need to keep 11 players on the pitch. The problem is that we played a lot of our game against Great Britain with 10 men on the pitch. We can't do that against Belgium and think that we can be victorious," asserted Reid.

PTI

Khurelkhuu is more experienced than Sonam and has stood on the podium on both the occasions she took the title this season but the Indian is not intimidated.

PTI

Mirza 23rd in individual eventing



Tokyo: Equestrian Fouaad Mirza on Monday finished a creditable 23rd in eventing after he became the first Indian to reach the final of the event here on Monday.

Mirza and his equine Seigneur Medicot sneaked into the top-25 in the morning to make the jumping finals and become the first Indian to do so. In the final, Mirza incurred

12.40 penalty points for an overall 59.60 that included the points from the three rounds of qualifying events — dressage, cross country and jumping.

It was a creditable performance for the 29-year-old Bengaluru rider Mirza, who was the first equestrian to qualify for the Olympics since Intiaz Anees in Sydney 2000. Mirza started off the three

qualifying eventing rounds with a spectacular dressage round by taking the ninth place on Saturday.

On Sunday, Mirza picked up 11.20 penalty points in the challenging Sea Forest Cross Country Course to be placed 22nd.

Mirza and Seigneur finished the cross country run in just over eight minutes after starting a bit late owing to a technical issue.

In the final qualifying event, Mirza knocked two fences in the jumping round to incur eight penalty points en route to finishing 25th with an overall 47.2 penalty points.

The final was once again a jumping round where the top 25 competed.

Germany's Julia Krajewski won the Gold in the event, making her the first female Olympic champion in eventing's history.

PTI

Shooters finish without medal

Tokyo: Indian shooters Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar and Sanjeev Rajput failed to qualify for the finals of the men's 50m rifle 3 positions event at the Tokyo Olympics here on Monday.

Tomar finished 21st in the qualification while Rajput was placed in 32nd position at the Asaka Shooting Range as the Indian shooting team returned without a medal for the second straight time at the Olympics.

Only the top 8 athletes qualify for the final. Tomar shot a total of 1167 with 63 inner 10s in the qualification over the stages of kneeling, prone and standing, while Rajput, appearing in his third Olympics, aggregated 1157 with 55 inner 10s.

The cut was made at 1176.

With this, Indian shooters failed to win a medal for a second successive Olympics.

Sonam to begin India's wrestling campaign

Tokyo: Young Indian wrestler Sonam Malik was on Monday placed in the challenging bottom half of the women's 62kg grade, where she will open her Olympics campaign against Asian Silver medalist Boltortuya Khurelkhuu from Mongolia.

The 19-year-old will be the sole Indian wrestler in action on Tuesday. Relatively new to the big stage, every single bout will be a test of character for Sonam, who qualified for the Tokyo Games by making the final at the Asian Qualifier in April in Almaty.

Khurelkhuu is more experienced than Sonam and has stood on the podium on both the occasions she took the title this season but the Indian is not intimidated.

PTI

I was blank, my coach was in tears: Sindhu

Tokyo: Reigning world champion P V Sindhu on Monday said she was completely blank after winning a second successive Olympic medal and it took her a while to realise the enormity of her historic achievement in the ongoing Games.

The 26-year-old Indian on Sunday etched her name among the all-time greats after winning badminton's women's singles Bronze medal to add to the Silver she won at Rio de Janeiro five years back.

"...I was blank, my coach was literally in tears, it was a big moment. I hugged him and said 'Thank you'. I didn't know what to do for 5-6 seconds, I shouted, so all emotions came together at that moment," she said during a virtual press conference.

In the third-place play-off, Sindhu beat China's He Bingjiao. The win came after a painful loss in the semifinals to world No 1 Tai Tzu Ying. Sindhu said coach Park Tae-sang's encouragement helped her to recover from the



semifinal loss and claim the Bronze for the country. "After semis, I was really sad. I was in tears but my coach said it is not over yet. There were mixed emotions, if I should be sad or happy but

Park told one thing. He said there is a lot of difference between a fourth position and a Bronze' and that really hit me," she said.

"I went with the mindset that I have to give my 100 per-

cent and get that medal."

A lot of questions were raised when Sindhu decided to move out of the Pullula Gopichand Academy and train at the Gachibowli indoor stadium which had bigger halls similar to the venue in Tokyo.

Sindhu said it was one of the best decisions, especially since drift played a role during the Games at the Musashino Forest Plaza.

"Yeah, from the beginning there was no controversy, I mean, we had this opportunity to play in conditions similar to Olympics, so from February we have been playing there, it has really helped us because drift played a big role and I learned a lot in Gachibowli, I learnt to control the shuttle better."

It had international standard courts with air conditioners, which was important. So I feel it was the best decision..."

'FELT PRESSURE'

His phone hasn't stopped buzzing ever since P V Sindhu

claimed the Bronze medal at Tokyo Olympics but India's foreign badminton coach Park Tae-sang says he did feel 'little pressure' after being suddenly asked to train the star shuttler for the Games.

The 42-year-old from South Korea was initially hired to train the men's singles players but started working with Sindhu after the abrupt departure of Kim Ji Hyun, following the World Championship in 2019.

"I'm really happy because this is the first time my player has got a medal in my coaching career," Park, who competed at the 2004 Athens Olympics before taking up coaching the national Korean team, said during a virtual press conference.

"When I first started teaching Sindhu, she was already a big Olympic star. I felt little pressure but I tried. My Korean players also didn't get an Olympic medal, so I thought I can try to get her a Gold. We failed but Beijing is also a very big medal."

UNIVERSITY LAW COLLEGE
VINOBA BHAVE UNIVERSITY, HAZARIBAG
Admission Notice-2021-2022

Courses	Eligibility & Minimum Marks	Age Limitations
5 Years Integrated B.A.L.L.B. Course	10+2 in any discipline. The candidate needs to score a minimum of 45% for Gen. & 42% for OBC and 40% for SC & ST categories or Differently abled (Physically Challenged) marks in aggregate of all the subjects studied at 1011 to be eligible to fill 5 Yr. B.A. L.L.B. application form	No Age Bar
3 Years L.L.B. Course	10+2+3 (Graduate) in any discipline. The candidate needs to score a minimum of 45% for Gm & E.W.S.. 42% for OBC and 40% for SC & ST categories or Differently abled (Physically Challenged) marks in aggregate of all the subjects studied at graduation to be eligible to fill 3 Yr. L.L.R. application form.	No Age Bar

Events	Date
Application form release	4 th August, 2021
Application form end	26 th August, 2021
Entrance Exam (Tentative)	11 th September, 2021 (10:00 AM to 12:00AM)
Result of Entrance Exam (Tentative)	26 th September, 2021
Last date of Admission	30 th September, 2021
Commencement of Classes	1 st October, 2021

As per the direction of Govt. of India and Govt. of Jharkhand we are taking admission on the basis of merit since epidemic Covid-19 is infested in the entire country but when the situation will be normal regarding interstate transportation and communication then entrance test may be taken as per the convenience.

Prescribed forms can be purchased from the College Office on any working day on payment of Rs. 750/- in cash or through D/D of Rs. 850/- by post in favour of Principal, University Law College, VBU, Hazaribag payable at Hazaribag along with self Addressed envelope.

By order of the Vice Chancellor

Sd/-
Prof. (Dr.) M.K. Singh
Registrar
VBU, Hazaribag

Memo No. VBU/ULCR/1407/2021, Date : 02.08.2021