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WORLD 8 AFGHAN PRESIDENT MUST GO: TALIBAN

SPORT 12 INDIAN ARCHERS BRACE UP FOR KOREAN CHALLENGE

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OTT OPENS NEW DOORS: SHERGILL 10 VIVACITY

Pegasus rocks Parl; TMC MP suspended for Session

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
The Pegasus snooping scandal continued to derail the proceedings of Parliament. Both Houses on Friday saw slogan-shouting and repeated adjournments even as the Rajya Sabha suspended TMC MP Santanu Sen who on Thursday snatched a statement read out by Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and tore it off.



Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu conducts proceedings of the House during the Monsoon Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Friday

The MP has been suspended for the remaining period of the ongoing Monsoon Session. The strong action against Sen took place after a motion moved by the Government was passed by the House soon after it met for the day. However, the TMC MP refused to leave the House and kept sitting despite repeated pleas by Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu and Deputy Chairman Harivansh. As a result, the House could not function and was adjourned repeatedly.

V Muralaedharan moved a motion for Sen's suspension. "I move that Dr Santanu Sen, AITC, be suspended from the services of the House...for his unruly behaviour, unbecoming of a member of the Rajya Sabha, yesterday..." Muralaedharan said in his motion. It was passed by a voice vote and Naidu asked Sen to leave the House.

However, the TMC members protested and raised objection to the manner in which the motion was brought without listing it in the day's business. Sukhendu Sekhar Ray (TMC) said the moving of the motion was not mentioned in the revised list of business.

Meanwhile, the Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned for the day following disruptions by Opposition parties which raised slogans on the Pegasus snooping row and the farmers' issue by gathering in the Well of the House. As soon as the House met for the day at 11 am, some Opposition members rushed to the Well but they were prevented from doing so by floor leaders of their respective parties as Speaker Om Birla wanted to make observations on the Indian squad participating in the Tokyo Olympics.

Birla extended best wishes to the Indian contingent on behalf of the House. The mega carnival of sports is on Friday. Members thumped benches in support of the Indian squad. Speaker Birla had made his observations, several members from the Congress, the Trinamool Congress and the Shivrajn Akali Dal gathered in the Well of the House raising slogans and holding placards.

The TMC shouted slogans demanding details of 'the mission' in the Well of the House. Government on Pegasus spyware. Congress members had placards demanding a Supreme Court monitored judicial probe into the Pegasus allegations.

My phones tapped, IB people tell me: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
Amid continuous mudslinging against each other by the BJP and the Congress over the Pegasus spyware phone-tapping controversy, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday sought a judicial enquiry, claiming he is not a potential target but "every single phone of his is definitely tapped". The BJP hit back and dared the Congress leader to submit his phone for investigation if he believed it was tapped.



scuttle probes, they have used it against the Supreme Court, against all the institutions. The only word for this is treason. There is no other word for this and the Home Minister should resign," Rahul said.

Addressing the media outside the Parliament complex, Rahul said, "I get phone calls from IB [Intelligence Bureau] people who tap my phone. They call me up and say beware we are tapping you. My security people tell me that they have to debrief what I say to their seniors."

Rahul quipped that only those who are 'thieves or corrupt' will get scared of Narendra Modi. "Pegasus is classified by the Israeli State as a weapon and that weapon is supposed to be used against terrorists. The Prime Minister and the Home Minister has used this weapon against the Indian State," he said.

"They have used it politically, they have used it in Karnataka, they have used to

Cong leader seeks judicial probe; BJP asks him to submit phone for enquiry



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with party leaders, DMK and other parties' MPs stage a protest near the Gandhi statue against Pegasus project during the Monsoon Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Friday

Mehbooba's kin, journalists from Kashmir, separatists snooped

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
Several political leaders, separatists and journalists from Kashmir, including then Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti's two relatives, may have been targeted for telephone snooping between 2017 and 2019. According to the report published by The Wire, even journalists working in Delhi but belonging to Kashmir were under surveillance using Pegasus spyware.

Others on the leaked database include at least two members of People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief and former Chief Minister of J&K Mehbooba Mufti's family. Their selection as potential targets of surveillance happened when Mehbooba was still Chief Minister of the erstwhile State and in a coalition with the BJP. In fact, Mufti's family members were chosen

for potential surveillance just months before the Government collapsed as the BJP pulled out of the coalition in June 2018. The Wire reported on Friday. However, Mehbooba said that surveillance, as a concept, for Kashmiris is not new. "People are used to having their thoughts, ideas not only intercepted but even being punished for them," the former J&K CM said.



Commuters move on the road amid heavy rain in Bhopal on Friday

100 killed in Maha heaviest ever rain in four decades

Over 50 dead in Raigad landslide

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

At least 100 people were killed and several others injured in the heaviest ever rain witnessed in the State during the last four decades in Maharashtra, a major landslide at Tali village in Mahad taluka of Raigad district in Konkan region claimed at least 50 lives, while several others were still being trapped under the debris. "At least 50 bodies have been recovered from the Taliye-



People watch rescue efforts after a landslide in Taliye village, Maharashtra on Friday

J&K Police shoots down Pak drone carrying IED

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A Pakistani drone fitted with an improvised explosive device (IED) was shot down by the alert cops of the J&K Police near Kanchak area of Jammu late on Thursday. The drone, which a senior police officer claimed was assembled with spare parts from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, had penetrated 6-7 km inside the Indian territory before it was shot down by the cops. After the drone attack on Air Force Station, Jammu, on June 27, the security of several vital installations was beefed up and anti-drone technology was installed to prevent the similar strike. Preliminary investigations of the drone assembly revealed that the strings used to drop the payload fitted with the drone was similar to the one recovered from the site of drone attack inside the Air Force station, Jammu, on June 27. **Detailed report on P5**

CS: Conduct vax drive for school, college staff from July 26-31

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains has directed all the Collectors and Chief Medical and Health Officers to conduct Covid-19 vaccination of teachers and employees working in all the colleges and schools coming under the Department of Higher Education and School Education from July 26 to 31. For this, vaccination campaign will be organized from 9 am to 5 pm on the appointed date by selecting the colleges with facilities in the district headquarters and development blocks. In this campaign, it will be ensured that the first and second dose of Covid-19 vaccine will be administered to the teachers and employees of all Government and non-Government colleges and schools, including the schools of the Tribal Welfare Department. It has been directed that the workplace Covid-19 vaccination session should be held in coordination with all the educational institutions.

CAPSULE

OLDEST LEARNER BHAGEERATHI NO MORE
Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala's oldest learner Bhageerathi Amma, who passed the literacy examination at the age of 105 two years ago and won the praise of PM Narendra Modi, died here, family sources said.

'NEED TO RATIONALISE AIR CANCELLATION CHARGES'
New Delhi: There is a need to rationalise and prescribe an upper limit on air cancellation charges, said a Parliamentary Standing Committee's report tabled in Rajya Sabha on Friday.

NEW GENERATION AKASH TEST-FIRED BY DRDO

Balassore: India on Friday successfully flight tested the New Generation Akash (Akash-NG) missile from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, off the Odisha coast. DRDO sources said. The test was carried out by DRDO against a high-speed unmanned aerial target which was successfully intercepted by the missile.

Coronavirus can be detected up to 10 feet in air around infected person, as per CSIR study: Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A study conducted by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) indicates that coronavirus could be detected up to 10 feet or 3.048 metres in the air around an infected individual. Parliament was told on Friday. In a written response to a question in the Lok Sabha, Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh said the results of the CSIR study have been posted on a pre-print server. "The study conducted by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) indicates that the coronavirus could be detected up to 10 feet (3.048 metres) distance in the air around an infected individual. However, with directional air flow, the possibility of virus riding on aerosols to

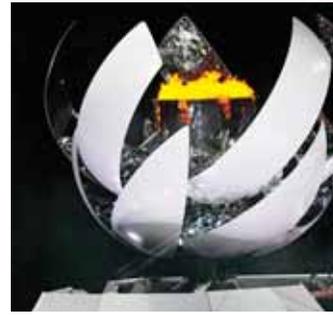


long distance cannot be denied," Singh said. As a precautionary measure, wearing mask can help in significantly reducing the risk of catching the infection through air, he cautioned. He said according to the ICMR database, there are 1,88,26,913 individuals registered as Covid-19 positive between December 20 to July 19, 2021. Fewer athletes across con-

Covid-hit Olympics open sans customary razzle dazzle

PTI ■ TOKYO

The Olympics like no other opened here on Friday sans the customary razzle-dazzle, the toned-down ceremony showcasing Japan's grandeur, rich culture and heritage while reflecting the sombre mood of a world ravaged by an unrelenting pandemic. Japanese emperor Naruhito declared the Games open, a month after voicing concerns over the possible spread of coronavirus during the Olympics, becoming the third member from his family to do the honours. It was ironic that the locals milling around the majestic National Stadium were not allowed entry due to the ban on crowds, even as visitors, including athletes and dignitaries, from across the world participated in the opening ceremony of the Games projected to cost USD 28 billion. Fewer athletes across con-



Naomi Osaka lights the Olympic flame during the opening ceremony in the Olympic Stadium Friday

tingents took part, some to stay focussed on their events on Saturday, a lot of others out of the stadium was occupied by over 10,000 indi-



Chungneungjary Mery Kom Hrang and Manpreet Singh of India carry the Olympic torch during the opening ceremony in the Olympic Stadium at the 2020 Summer Olympics on Friday

viduals performing different roles. International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach, without whose steady resolve and stubbornness the Tokyo Games wouldn't have seen the light of the day, acknowledged that it will be different from the ones in the past. "Today, the Olympic athletes are sending a resounding message of hope to our fragile world. The Opening Ceremony will highlight this Olympic message of resilience, solidarity and unity of all humankind in overcoming the pandemic," Bach said in his address.

'Administrative officers should be sensitive'

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Governor Mangubhai Patel said that the conduct of an administrative officer is very important. The communication made by keeping the heart and mind open along with a closeness with the common man is effective. The style of language should be such that there is affinity. The person before you should understand. He said that the pleasantry which can be brought with money can provide material happiness. Spiritual happiness cannot be bought. That can be attained only by serving others. He said that the public has high expectations from an administrative officer. It is very important for the officer to be sensitive. Patel was holding a discussion with the members of Madhya Pradesh cadre of Indian Administrative Service at Raj Bhavan on Friday. On this occasion, Principal Secretary to the Governor, D.P. Ahuja was also present. Governor Mangubhai Patel



Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai Patel poses for a group photograph with trainee IAS officers of MP cadre batch-2020, at Raj Bhavan in Bhopal on Friday. Pioneer photo

has said that administrative service is an opportunity to create new dimensions of happiness and development by helping others. It is a challenging and accountable

responsibility. They have to make the systems accountable and transparent for good governance and quality of public services, as well as fulfill the role of a clean and sensitive admin-

istrator with challenges. They have to work with an open heart and mind by giving top priority to the works directly related to the public. He asked the officers to work considering

it an opportunity to pass on the trust and belief of the person before you. There is a difference between training and ground experience. You will have new experiences in the field every day. Many problems and challenges have to be faced during practical work, whose solutions are not found in the guidelines. At such times, one can be successful in work by understanding the specifics of workplace environment and sensitively coordinating with subordinate employees and senior officers.

Patel said that the administrative officers have a special responsibility towards the deprived sections of the society. Despite the spread in education, there is a need of a special sensitive behaviour towards women and children.

State players have proved they can bring laurels to country: Yashodhara

Sports Min says India will bag max medals in Tokyo Olympics-21

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The world's biggest sporting event, the Maha Kumbh Mela Olympics, began on Friday. A Cheer for India Programme was organized at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in Delhi with the aim of encouraging and wishing 127 Indian players participating in Tokyo Olympics 2020. Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Thakur, Minister of State for Sports Nisith Pramanik, encouraged the Indian players by their presence and wishing them well.

The programme was telecasted live on Doordarshan. Sports and Youth Welfare Minister of the state, Yashodhara Raju Scindia also compared the players to the state has proved that if

Departmental officials, sports coaches and players, including Director Sports and Youth Welfare Pawan Jain, participated in the program and encouraged the Indian players participating in the Olympics

they get good coaches, state-of-the-art equipment and high quality sports facilities, then the talents growing up in the rural environment can also increase the pride of the country by showcasing their skills at the international level. The Sports Minister said that together we should encourage the Indian players. He expressed hope that Indian sportsmen will earn maximum medals for the country in this year's Olympics. He said that the players of the state have proved that if

from Nagar Stadium. Departmental officials, sports coaches and players, including Director Sports and Youth Welfare Pawan Jain, participated in the program and encouraged the Indian players participating in the Olympics. Many Olympians, Arjun and Anshu Kharya awardees, sports coaches, international players and dignitaries from across the country participated virtually in the Cheer for India program organized to encourage the Indian contingent.

'Guru Vandana' performed under 'Gamak'

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Under Gamak series 'Guru Vandana' was performed on Friday on YouTube channel of Madhya Pradesh State Tribal Museum. Vibha Chaturasia group, Indore performed classical music and Pawan Ritu in Hindi literature was delivered by Santosh Agnihotri, Indore. The presentation started with 'Guru Vandana' by Vibha Chaturasia and group in which they performed Meera Bhajan - Mori Lagi Lagi. It was followed with the compositions of Sant Brahmanand - Me Satguru Sant Milaye Sakhi, Dharamdas Guru Paura Lagoo, Meera Bai Milta Ja Guru Bhajan of Gnani and Sant Gorakh Das Guraji. In the presentation, Rachna Sharma gave accompaniment on tabla and Sanjay Mandoli and harmonium. The second presentation was 'Hindi Sahitya Mein Pawan Ritu' by Santosh Agnihotri, an artist approved by All India Radio and Doordarshan, six times nationally awarded for musical programs by Sugam Sangeet, Duputy Classical Singer and Music Composer, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. He performed composed Pandit Suryakant Tripathi Nirala's, Sumtra Nandan Pant, Jashankar Prasad, Mahadevi Varma and more. In the presentation, he was accompanied by Abhay Raj Rao, on guitar by Vikas Jain and on synthesizer by Abhinav Gaur.

Tilak Nagar Markets shut till July 27 for Covid norms violation in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

New Delhi: As the Covid appropriate norms continue to be flouted at markets in the national capital, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) has ordered the closure of different markets in Delhi for specific periods. According to a DDMA order on Friday, Delhi's Tilak Nagar market will remain closed till July 27. Several markets in the Tilak Nagar area have been closed, following Covid protocol violations, said DDMA officials. Jitender Singh, the Patel Nagar Sub-Divisional Magistrate, has issued an order to shut Tilak Nagar markets comprising Mall Road, Main

Market, Mangal Bazar Road, Old Market and fruit market area, following reports of shopkeepers and people not following Covid appropriate behaviour. It was reported that general public/shopkeepers of the market are not adhering to health protocols which may

accelerate the Covid positivity rate in multiple ways and the market may be the hotspot in future for spreading Covid-19, the DDMA order said. The order said a report was received from the Tilak Nagar Station House Officer that a physical inspection on July 22 revealed that, 'DDMA guide-

Capt welcomes Aditya Birla Group for investing ₹1,500 cr in Punjab

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Friday welcomed the Aditya Birla Group for making huge investment of around Rs 1000 crore in its recent foray into Punjab and another Rs 500 crore in setting up a cement unit at Rajpura. The Chief Minister, speaking on the occasion after handing over a land allotment letter for 61 acres land at a cost of Rs 147 crore in the recently developed Hi-Tech Valley Ludhiana, said that the investment would further act as a catalyst to boost industrial activity in the region.

Expressing gratitude to the Chief Minister, Aditya Birla Group chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla, who joined the meeting virtually from Mumbai, lauded the speed at which the Punjab Government moved to attract this investment to the State and also appreciated the facilitation provided by the state at every step. Birla apprised the Chief Minister that the upcoming paint manufacturing unit is likely to generate a direct employment of over 400 persons and around 1500 indirect job potentials through its operations.

Khattar extends good wishes to athletes participating in Tokyo Olympics

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Friday extended good wishes to the Indian contingent, especially the athletes from the state, participating in the Tokyo Olympics 2020. The Indian contingent of 126 athletes has 31 athletes (25 percent) from Haryana.

While watching the grand opening ceremony from here, the Chief Minister expressed confidence that the athletes will perform exceedingly well at the Tokyo Olympics 2020. He said that the athletes have worked very hard and he was looking forward to watching them perform at the International level. Khattar elaborated that Haryana has been promoting sports in the state as a part of which an amount of Rs 5 lakh was

given to the athletes for better diet, training and capacity building. Besides this, various steps were taken wherein representatives of the state visited the families of the athletes to enquire about the challenges being faced by them, he added. The Chief Minister said that the state will take care of the families so that the athletes can participate in the event with a free mind. Among the events on

Saturday, India Vs Netherlands Women Hockey match will start at 6:30 am in which two athletes from the state will participate and a Men's boxing match between India and Japan will start at 3:50 pm in which one athlete from Haryana, Vikas Krishan, is representing the country.

Business killed in Delhi over money dispute

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 36-year-old businessman and his friend were killed by three persons over a monetary dispute inside a factory in northwest Delhi's Wazirpur Industrial Area. Police said that the businessman's 35-year-old friend's body was recovered from a Toyota Fortuner car in north Delhi's Timarpur area. The deceased has been identified as Surender Gupta, who runs a chemical Godown in Bawana, and his friend Amit Goyal, both residents of Rohini area.

Police said that they have arrested the trio accused. According to a senior police official, on Thursday, the body of Goyal in a Fortuner car was found in the area of Timarpur, while the body of Gupta was found in a factory unit of the accused at Wazirpur Industrial Area, Ashok Vihar. "Gupta was the relative of one Sandeep Jain, who runs a factory of utensils in the Wazirpur Industrial Area. Sandeep Jain had borrowed Rs 20 lakh from Gupta, who was asking him to return the money," said the senior Police official.

Centre requested to sanction bulk drug park, medical devices park for the State: HP CM

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Himachal Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Friday said that the State Government has taken up the matter of sanctioning bulk drug park and medical devices park with the Central Government. Over 1400 hectare land has been identified in Una district for a bulk drug park which would attract worth Rs 8000 crore and medical devices park, once sanctioned, would be established at Narsarain Solan district, the Chief

Minister said while speaking at an event here. The Chief Minister said that the State Government in order to woo entrepreneurs, had organized Global Investors Meet on November 7 & 8, 2019 at Dharamshala and as many as 9670 MoUs worth over Rs 20000 crore were signed in the meet. He said that a ground breaking ceremony was organized within a month of this event in which Rs 13600 crore worth projects were started. Now, the State Government is ready to organize a second

ground breaking ceremony with projects worth Rs 10000 crore, he added. Thakur said that although the Covid-19 pandemic has hampered the developmental endeavours of the state, the government is committed to ensure that the developmental spirit does not dampen. He also thanked the entrepreneurs for reposing their faith in policies and programmes of the State Government and choosing Himachal Pradesh as destination for investment.

Villagers can now suggest Govt in development works: Hry CM

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Friday said that the villagers will now be able to directly submit online demands, complaints and suggestions related to development works to the State Government. The Chief Minister said this on the occasion of launching the online portal Gram Darshan for suggestions and complaints related to development works of villages. Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala was also present during the occasion.

Khattar said that the 'Gram Darshan' portal has been opened to ensure direct participation of villagers in development works. This will be an easy way to register their online demands, complaints and suggestions from anywhere, he said. He said that on the basis of the suggestions given by the villagers, a blueprint for future development plans would be prepared. He directed the officers of all the departments to fix the priorities of five works of the department so that the complaints and suggestions lodged by the villagers can be redressed on the priority basis. The Chief Minister said that the priority of the government is to redress the grievances of the people. The complaints made by the villagers on the 'Gram Darshan' portal will be linked with CM Window so that there is no duplication of complaints, he added. He also directed to link 'Gram Darshan' portal with 'Jan Sahayak' app. It was informed that an individual will be able to file a complaint or suggestion on the portal only in respect of the village of his permanent residence (which is recorded in the

Parivar Pehchan Patra). The suggestions and demands given by the villagers will be directly visible to the Sarpanch, Panchayat Samiti member, Zilla Parishad member, MLA and MP. All the public representatives will see the suggestions of their jurisdiction on the dashboard, which will be able to be taken forward with the concerned public representatives. Along with registering the suggestion or complaint on the portal, an ID will be generated which will be sent to the concerned applicant through SMS. The applicant will get updated information about the action taken on the suggestion or complaint from time to time through SMS. It was further informed that the applicant has to state his point of view in at least 50 characters while registering the complaint or suggestion on the 'Gram Darshan' portal. However, the applicant will be able to submit their suggestions to the government by uploading the photo. Only that individual who has been issued their Parivar Pehchan Patra will be able to file a complaint on this portal.

Miscreants stab cops at hosp parking in Bhopal

Bhopal: In yet another instance of lawlessness in the state capital Bhopal, nine miscreants had surrounded and stabbed two policemen in Hamidia hospital parking area in the city late evening on Thursday. Police after the incident arrested four of the miscreants while five others were at large. Taking strong exception to the incident, the administration razed down houses and shops of the goons engaged in the incident on Friday. However, this is the third such brazen attack on the policemen in the city in the recent past. Adil Singh and Mishra said that the Koh-e-Fiza police had received information that some suspected miscreants were standing at the Hamidia hospital parking lot late evening on Thursday. Head constable Vijay Yadav

and constable Vijay Bahadur reached there and tried some of the miscreants, had organized Global Investors Meet on November 7 & 8, 2019 at Dharamshala and as many as 9670 MoUs worth over Rs 20000 crore were signed in the meet. He said that a ground breaking ceremony was organized within a month of this event in which Rs 13600 crore worth projects were started. Now, the State Government is ready to organize a second

3 Cong workers enroute Sidhu's coronation killed in road mishap in Moga

Chandigarh: Three Congress workers were killed and at least 50 persons were injured in a head-on collision between a private bus and a Punjab Roadways bus on Friday, the police said. The victims, travelling in a mini bus, were enroute Chandigarh from Zira in Moga district to attend the coronation ceremony of newly-appointed Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu. Most of the injured persons were rushed to the district hospital in Moga, some 175 km from here. Some of them were referred to the Gurtej Singh Medical College and Hospital in Faridkot town. Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has directed the district administration of Moga to provide an ex-gratia of Rs 5 lakh each to the families of the deceased persons and Rs 50,000 to the seriously injured. Free treatment will be provided to all those who received minor injuries. Prima facie, the cause of the accident is said to be negligent driving by the mini bus driver, a police officer said. IANS

After Vij's surprise inspection at Gurugram MC, FIR registered against seven, two suspended

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

After Haryana Home and Urban Development Minister Anil Vij conducted a surprise inspection at the office of Municipal Corporation, Gurugram, a case has been registered against several employees while two others have been suspended. During the surprise inspection on Thursday, Vij had given instructions to suspend two assistant engineers as well as to relieve one engineer and to file a case against some officers and employees. The department took prompt action on the orders given by Vij and all the orders given by him have been implemented on Friday, said an official spokesman. He said that a case has been registered against the officials of the Municipal Corporation, including one junior engineer, two executive engineers, one assistant engineer among seven people. There were continuous complaints with regard to a big fraud and a case has been registered in this regard. On the complaint received, Vij had ordered to register an FIR and subsequently, a case has

been registered under Sections 120-B, 409, 420, 465, 467, 468, 471 and 511 of the IPC at Gurugram. Executive Engineer Sankaj Saini and Raju Kalawat, besides Dilwar Singh, Gajpal Kumar and Pawan Balhara, the spokesman said. The persons against whom the FIR has been registered include Junior Engineer Vinod Kumar, Assistant Engineer Vicky Kumar, Executive Engineer Sankaj Saini and Raju Kalawat, besides Dilwar Singh, Gajpal Kumar and Pawan Balhara, the spokesman said. Apart from this, orders have been issued to relieve Dhananveer Singh, executive engineer, who was re-employed in the Urban Local Bodies Department. The Urban Local Bodies Department has issued orders to suspend the Assistant Engineers Rakesh Sharma and Kuldpey Yadav working in the Municipal Corporation with immediate effect and under suspension, their headquarters has been fixed in Panchukla. Notably, Vij had received complaints regarding irregularities in Municipal Corporation. Gurugram and conducted a surprise inspection on Thursday to review the functioning of the civic body.

Delhi Govt to provide ex gratia to cops, defence personnels

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi government to provide an ex gratia of ₹1 crore as compensation each to families of two Delhi Police, three Air Force and 1 Civil Defence personnel who died in the 2020 Delhi riots. The Delhi government stands with the families of all paramilitary, army, police and civil defence residents residing in Delhi, Kejriwal said. This amount will be given to the families of Sanjay Kishore (ACP-Delhi Police), Vikas

Kumar (C. (Exe), Delhi Police), Pardeep Kumar (Civil Defence), Rajesh Kumar (NC (E) Air Force), Sunil Mohanty (Lieutenant, IAF), Meet Kumar (Squadron Leader, IAF). Kavitika, a native of Shastrri Nagar, Ameer in Rajasthan, was working as ACP in Delhi City. He died on the line of duty when a mini truck came at a high speed from Gurugram and hit him. He has been nominated as Samman Rashi that the revenue department proposed and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal approved. Delhi people who lost their lives in the line of duty cannot be compensated, but the family will get some help from the amount given by the government to honour their sacrifice. The Delhi government stands with the families of all paramilitary, army, police and civil defence residents residing in Delhi, Kejriwal said. This amount will be given to the families of Sanjay Kishore (ACP-Delhi Police), Vikas

J&K Police shoot down Pak drone

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A Pakistani drone fitted with a ready to be used Improvised Explosive device (IED) was shot down by the alert cops of Jammu & Kashmir police near Kanachak area of Jammu late Thursday night.



Jammu & Kashmir Police display a Hexacopter at the Police lines Jammu on Friday. The drone was shot down around 8 km inside the International Border in Jammu. PTI

The drone, which a senior police officer claimed was assembled with spare parts from China, Taiwan and Hongkong, had penetrated approximately 6-7 kms inside the Indian territory before it was shot down near Gurah Pattan village of Kanachak area in Jammu. After the drone attack on Air Force Station, Jammu on June 27, 2021 the security of several vital installations was beefed up and anti drone technology was installed to prevent the similar strike.

Preliminary investigations of the drone assembly revealed, the strings used to drop the payload fitted with the drone was similar to the one recovered by the investigation agencies from the site of drone attack inside the Air Force station, Jammu on June 27, 2021.

Additional Director General of Police Mukesh Singh reported in Jammu, "so far 25 to 30 drone sorties

have been detected and according to intelligence agencies at least sixteen AK 47 rifles, 3 M4 used rifles, 34 pistols, 15 grenades and 18 IEDs, 4 lakh currency recovered so far in the last 18 months.

Sharing details of the operation, ADGP Singh said, late Thursday night, we got specific inputs that a Pakistan based terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad was planning to drop some payload via a one drone. IEDs, 4 lakh currency. We rushed a police party to maintain

a strict vigil. At about 1 am, the drone was spotted in the Kanachak area and when it made a low flight to release the payload it was shot down by our policemen".

ADGP Mukesh Singh said the drone was carrying a payload of five-kg IED material in a semi-assembled state and only wires had to be connected to it to trigger a blast. "Preliminary analysis of the drone revealed that it was a hexacopter with six wings and a flight controller and GPS".

Singh said the drone shot down in Kanachak was assembled with parts made in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. He added these drones can travel up to 20 kilometres with a payload of 10 to 12 kg. The aerial distance between the place where the drone was shot down and the border is about six to seven kilometres. Security forces have shot down at several drones since June 27, but this is the first time that police have shot down such a flying object carrying a payload. There is a difference of a digit between the flight controller serial number of the drone shot down on Friday and that of another brought down a year ago in Kathua's Hirranagar sector.

"It establishes beyond doubt that the terror group has procured many flight controllers with similar series for the purpose of installing them in drones". Responding to a direct question whether there was any common link with the drone attack on the Air Force Station Singh said, "The preliminary investigations We have recovered the same threads and it is now confirmed that a similar drone had dropped the payload at IAF station. The National Investigation Agency is investigating the case, he added.

Two LeT terrorists gunned down in Sopore

PNS ■ JAMMU

A joint team of security forces on Friday gunned down two Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists in the Warpora area of Sopore in Baramulla district.



Security forces in Warpora area of Sopore in Baramulla district. PTI

The operation was launched late Thursday evening on the basis of a specific intelligence input about the presence of terrorists in the Warpora area of Sopore.

The slain terrorists were involved in a number of attacks on civilians including the one that killed four innocent civilians and a policeman in Sopore on 12 June 2021.

According to a police spokesman, "both the terrorists have been identified as Fayaz Ahmad War @Rukana @Umar son of Gh Mulla @Ud Din War resident of Warpora a top commander of proscribed terror outfit LeT and Shaheen Ahmad Mir @Shaheen Mohi son of Mohd Ahmad Mir resident of Chelvora Budgam".

According to a police spokesman, Fayaz Ahmad War had a long history of terror crime cases, as he was associated with terrorism since year 2008.

Although he had surrendered earlier with arms in a series of his releases he again worked as terrorist associate for proscribed ter-

ror outfit HM and was detained under PSA. However after his release, in March-2020 he again joined terrorist ranks of proscribed terror outfit LeT. Besides being part of groups involved in several terror crime cases, he was very instrumental in planning and executing terror attacks on security establishments and civilian killings and figured among the list of most wanted terrorists in North Kashmir.

As per the police records, the LeT Commander was the last active terrorist who perpetrated a series of various terror crimes and violence in North Kashmir. He was also involved in a series of grenade attacks on Police/Security establishments in Sopore.

TMC MPs choose Didi as parliamentary party chairperson

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Two days ago Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee called upon the Opposition parties to unite and act in advance to throw the BJP out of power. On Friday Banerjee's party appointed her as the chairperson of the All India Trinamool Congress parliamentary committee that the Trinamool Congress insiders called a step taken, well in advance to beat the "Congress" right to galvanise the Opposition in the 2024 general elections to say the least.

The decision takes place ahead of the Chief Minister's visit to Delhi where she is likely to meet a number of opposition leaders including NCP chief Sharad Pawar — in a bid to lay the groundwork for a greater national focus for herself and her party.

"Mamata Banerjee will become our Trinamool parlia-

mentary party chairperson. This is a reality we are formalising. Mamata Banerjee is a seven-time MP. She was already guiding the parliamentary party... there are two levels to the development... a conceptual level and a strategic level," O'Brien said.

"All the MPs who were present were consulted and those who were not were spoken to over telephone and there was a unanimous decision to appoint Mamata Banerjee who is also the Trinamool Congress national president the chairperson of the parliamentary committee... we are proud and feel empowered," Roy said.

Banerjee a former Union Minister and MP of 26 years replaces Sudip Bandopadhyay to the post and becomes one of very few such leaders apart from Congress' Sonia Gandhi to become the parliamentary committee chairperson of her party without being an MP.



Gandhi became the Congress president as also the parliamentary committee chief in 1998.

Not completely devoid of relevance senior Trinamool leader and Bengal Minister Arup Biswas had on Wednesday said "ebar Bharat Banglar meye ke cha" meaning thereby that not only Bengal but also India wanted the daughter of Bengal at the helm of affairs in Delhi.

The Friday's announcement came in the midst of stormy session in Parliament

Adhikari moves High Court against 'political vendetta'

Kolkata: Bengal Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Adhikari has filed a petition before Calcutta High Court seeking transfer of all criminal cases registered against him to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

The BJP leader who was currently in Delhi to meet Home Minister Amit Shah said that there was a politics of vendetta going on in Bengal and he was being made a prime target of that "political vendetta".

Mr Adhikari also prayed for an order of quashing of FIRs registered against him by the state police.

He said that the writ petition seeking transfer of the

criminal cases against him to the CBI for an "impartial investigation", adding, "there was no law and order and rule of law in Bengal." The CID has been planted against me to harass me... not only me but all the BJP men are being attacked and harassed", he said.

On the question of post poll violence he said whatever had been submitted before the High Court by the National Human Rights Commission was only tip of the iceberg and "there are more atrocities being perpetrated on our men... the post-poll violence has not stopped... it is still continuing."

PNS

CM Yogi distributes appointment letters to 6,696 assistant teachers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Distributing appointment letters to 6,696 assistant teachers of a total vacancy of 69,000 thereby completing the much-awaited process in Lucknow on Friday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath warned of strict action against those spreading racism against the transparent recruitment system adopted by the Uttar Pradesh government.

He asserted that Government had already vacated jails for such unscrupulous elements. Referring to the upcoming examination for PET, the chief minister said, "We are going to conduct the country's largest examination in which the number of examinees will be over 30 lakh."

At a function held at Lok Bhawan in Lucknow, Yogi personally handed over appointment letters to 10 appointees while 240 newly-appointed teachers were present on the occasion. The rest of the successful candidates will be handed over appointment letters in their respective districts. These assistant teachers were recruited in Government schools against the 69,000 vacant posts under the Basic Education Council.

Congratulating the newly-appointed assistant teachers, the chief minister said that the government and its department had completed the recruitment process with sincerity and fairness which proved to be helpful for youths in achieving their goals.

Hop-on Hop-off Service resumed over Kalka- Shimla hill route



New Delhi: Northern Railway revs up the tourist season in Shimla by re-introducing the leisure-oriented hop-on hop-off service on the 118 years old scenic kalka-shimla narrow gauge section which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This convenience will enable the tourists to see all places of interest on purchase of a single ticket. The ticket can be bought from any station on the Kalka-Shimla section.

General Manager, NR, Sh. Ashutosh Gangal elaborated the salient feature of the Hop-on

Chinese Prez makes first visit to Tibetan town bordering Arunachal

Beijing: Chinese President Xi Jinping has made a rare visit to Nyingchi, a strategically located border town close to Arunachal Pradesh, during his first visit to the politically sensitive region of Tibet where he underlined the need for "lasting stability" and "high-quality development" for the plateau region.

Xi was in Tibet from Wednesday, but his important visit was kept under wraps by China's official media till the end of the trip on Friday due to the sensitivities of the region. On Wednesday Xi flew directly to Nyingchi not far from the Indian border after visiting several places in the city. Later he travelled to Tibet's capital Lhasa by the recently commissioned high-speed bullet train.

There are state-run Xinhua news agency, Xi visited the Tibet Autonomous Region in connection with the 70th anniversary of Tibet's "peaceful liberation" the first time in the history of the Party and the country. During his visit, Xi stressed fully implementing the guidelines of the ruling Communist Party of China for "governing Tibet in a new era and writing a new chapter of lasting stability and high-quality development for the plateau region", the report said.

China is accused of suppressing cultural and religious freedom in the remote and mainly Buddhist Himalayan region. China has rejected the accusations.

Maining Airport in Nyingchi.

Chinese leaders periodically visit Tibet. But Xi, who also heads the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) and the powerful Central Military Commission — the overall high command of the Chinese military — is perhaps the first top leader in recent years to visit Tibet's border town.

He visited Tibet as Vice President in 2017. He also memorate the 60th anniversary of "The peaceful liberation of Tibet".

The last sitting Chinese President to officially visit Tibet was Jiang Zemin in 1990. During his visit to Nyingchi, Xi, visited the Nyang River Bridge to inspect the ecological preservation in the basin of the Brahmaputra river, which is called Yarlung Zangbo in the Tibetan language. PTI

Mizoram sets up Boundary Commission to deal with border dispute with Assam

New Delhi: The Mizoram Government has constituted a boundary commission to deal with demarcation of the State's border with Assam.

A Government notification issued on Thursday said the boundary commission will be chaired by Deputy Chief Minister Jawnuia and will have Home Minister Lalchamliana as vice chairman.

The boundary commission's formation came at a time when Mizoram and Assam ahead of a visit by Home Minister Amit Shah to the various border disputes. State home department secretary was made member secretary.

The commission which will have the state home department secretary as its member-secretary, will consider the various aspects of the Mizoram-Assam border imbroglio, the notification said.

The commission will also have one member each from Mizoram and Assam political parties. Joint Action Committee on Inner Line Reserve Forest Demand apart from three Ministers, chief sec-

BSP holds first sammelan in Ayodhya to woo Brahmins

Lucknow: Bahujan Samaj Party on Friday kicked off its poll campaign by holding the first of its seven Brahmin Sammelans at Ayodhya. The UP Assembly elections are due in 2022 and the BSP is struggling to win the confidence of the electorally influential Brahmin community.

BSP supreme Mayawati on July 18 had announced to hold Brahmin Sammelan to woo the Brahmin community ahead of UP Assembly elections from Ayodhya from July 23. Mayawati had entrusted the responsibility of the event on party national general secretary Satish Chandra Mishra.

Addressing the meeting, Mishra, said that his party had made a pre-poll alliance with the public rather than with any political party. The BSP leader first visited the Hanuman Garhi and Shri Ram Lalla Janambhoomi temples in Ayodhya for darshan.

He said that the BSP had made the biggest alliance with the people of the state for the 2022 Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh. Mishra said that Bhagwan Shri Ram belonged to everyone and "we have also come to seek his blessings". PNS

42 children from Assam rescued in Sikkim, 2 held

Guwahati: A total of 42 children from Assam have been rescued in Sikkim and brought back to the state on Friday, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

The parents of the children, hailing from four villages of Chirang district along the Indo-Bhutan border, were lured by two persons who assured that their education would be taken care of and they ended up as domestic helps, Sarma told reporters here.

The two accused have been arrested and during interrogation, one of them admitted that in the last two years, 80 children have been trafficked from the state, with some sent to Dubai as well, officials said.

The operation to rescue the children was initiated by Chirang Police under the guidance of Bodoland Territorial Council Chief Promod Bodo and Special DGP L B Bisnoi, while Sikkim Police provided the necessary help and cooperation. PTI

17,518 fresh Covid cases in Kerala; TPR crosses 13% mark

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala on Friday reported 17,518 fresh Covid-19 cases, pushing the tally to 32,35,533 and taking the Test Positivity Rate (TPR) past the 13 per cent mark. The TPR was 13.63 per cent, up from 12.38 per cent recorded on Thursday.

The cumulative number of specimens examined so far stood at 2,59,50,704. There are currently 4,18,496 people under observation in the State, out of whom 25,691 are in isolation wards of various hospitals.

There are 271 local self Government bodies in the state with a TPR of more than 15 per cent, the release said.

George dismissed media reports that Kerala has 10 lakh unused doses of vaccine and said the State has a stock of around 4.5 lakh doses.

"Of the new cases, 110 had come from outside the state while 16,638 contracted the disease through their contacts. The source of infection of 700 are yet to be traced. Positivity Rate (TPR) past the 13 per cent mark. The TPR was 13.63 per cent, up from 12.38 per cent recorded on Thursday.

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Covid under control in UP but threat of virus not over yet: Yogi

Lucknow: Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that due to the strategy and continuous efforts of his Government, novel coronavirus infection was under control in the state but warned that the viral infection was not over yet and therefore even a little carelessness on its prevention could be disastrous.

The Chief Minister was reviewing the Covid situation across the State at a high level meeting convened at Lok Bhawan in Lucknow on Friday. In the meeting, the Chief Minister was apprised that 61 new cases of coronavirus infection were reported across the state in the last 24 hours while in the corresponding period, 86 Covid-19 patients had recovered.

At present, the number of active coronavirus cases in the state stands at 994. Besides, the recovery rate of coronavirus infection in the State is 98.6 per cent. The hearing news is that not a single Covid-19 patient has

been reported in Aligarh, Balrampur, Basti, Etah, Mahoba, Hathras and Shravasti districts.

The chief minister said that vaccination was an important aspect in preventing the spread of coronavirus and vaccination should be done with the goal of giving jobs to more and more people of the targeted age group at the earliest. He said that the free registration facility being provided for Covid vaccination through Common Service Centres in villages should be given wide publicity.

It was informed in the meeting that till July 22, over 4.27 crore vaccine doses had been administered. The chief minister was also informed that 211 samples were tested in KGMU, Lucknow and BHU, Varanasi in the last days for the purpose of intensive study and testing regarding the new Delta variant of novel coronavirus but not a single sample confirmed the dangerous variant. PNS



Aspirants wait to enter the examination centre before appearing for the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, in Patna on Friday. PTI

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Castle in the air

The Delhi High Court has told political leaders that they must honour the promises they make

It took 89 pages of a Delhi High Court judgment to tell politicians holding high positions in Governments that they cannot go on making promises to people and not honour these. The judgment, in a case relating to a promise made by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, sends the message that it is important to bridge the gap between law and morality and let the authorities, who are either elected to public positions or who hold positions of power, realise that they "are answerable to the people, especially once they undertake or agree to do or not to do a particular thing" and that the citizens would expect that the Government would implement the promises made. The judgment, by Justice Prathiba M Singh, opens with a telling comment that reflects the mood of the society: "The saying 'Promises are meant to be broken' is well known in the social context." The judgment unambiguously says that promises made by the Government or its officials are "judicially enforceable" if these are broken.



The judgment reminds the political leaders of things enshrined in the business of governance but forgotten in the melee of politics. One is that good governance requires the said trust to be maintained between those who govern and those who are governed. Two, the sustenance of this trust coupled with the legal certainty of an assurance given, cements the relationship between the citizen and the Government.

Three, citizens repose a lot of trust in a promise made by those who hold Government positions and an assurance given is like an undertaking that is compatible with public duty. One powerful conclusion is derived from the judgment: Once a representation is made by a high-ranking official, it comes within the scope of its authority. It will have a far-reaching impact on the Indian polity which is used to most politicians in power resorting to populism as forethought and governance as an afterthought. A cursory glance through a day's newspapers will throw up scores of promises made by elected representatives of the people that are meant to remain unfulfilled. The present case relates to some poor labourers petitioning the court that Kejriwal should be asked to fulfil his promise of paying the house rent on their behalf if they were unable to pay it because of COVID-19 exigencies. Kejriwal did make that promise in March 2020 but did not pursue the matter further. The court correctly observes, in the context of the case, "that 'puffing' which may be permissible in commercial advertising, ought not to be recognisable and permissible in governance". The judgment is a serious caution to politicians for whom people are merely voters, not citizens. There are millions of political and electoral promises that remain ignored because there is no law to punish politicians, in power or seeking to be in power, who routinely evade accountability. The judgment should prod those in power to desist from playing with people's legitimate expectations.

PICTALK



Jab-seekers wait in a queue to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, at a district hospital in Noida

Glitz and guts

The Tokyo Olympics have started. Only blood, sweat and tears will lead to glory

The greatest sporting spectacle in the world has begun in Japan, even though under the scary shadow of the pernicious SARS-Cov-2 virus. Over the next two weeks, the best athletes from around the world will compete in 33 sports and 46 disciplines. As always in the 125-year modern history of the Olympics, the global audience will be wowed by the superhuman performances of the athletes, wondering how some



people — with the same number of limbs, developed more or less in the same proportion and living on the same planet as us — can achieve the seemingly unattainable or near-impossible. But, put in a nutshell, that's what the Games are about. However, never before in the history of the modern Olympics have the Games ever been organised in an odd-numbered year even though these have survived boycotts, natural calamities and man-made wars. Another first is that no spectators would be present inside stadia, thanks to the raging COVID-19 pandemic. Think about it, the world's biggest sporting stage, and not a single soul to cheer the athletes, say, the fastest woman and man on Earth? In a way, it's poignant.

Focusing on India, a total of only 20 Indian athletes from seven sports (besides six officials) participated in the opening parade on Friday evening. India is being represented by more than 125 athletes in this instalment of the Olympics, with the overall contingent size being 128 members. The parade number was deliberately thinned owing to COVID-19 concerns and the deputy chief de mission had already made it clear that the athletes who have competitions lined up on Saturday — primarily, archery, hockey, shooting and badminton — would stay away from the opening ceremony festivities. From the men's hockey team, only captain Manpreet Singh participated in the event as he was India's flag-bearer along with pugilist MC Mary Kom when Team India proudly walked out into the stadium at number 21st as per the Japanese alphabetical order. The expectations of 130 crore Indians must be weighing heavy on the Indian contingent as it tries for the first time ever to take its medals tally into double digits. So far, our best showing was in the 2012 London Olympics, where Indian athletes managed to scoop up six medals, though none of them was gold. Hopefully, things will turn better this time around. Meanwhile, let the Games begin!

The human-animal conflict on the rise



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

There's an urgent need to stop designating animals as 'vermin' as it takes the protective shield of the wildlife Act away from animals

A practice that continues despite strong and rational opposition is that of proclaiming species of wild animals as "vermin" and thus putting them out of the ambit of the protective umbrella of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the principal instrument for protecting wild animals in India. The wild boar and nilgai have been proclaimed as "vermin" in Uttarakhand, the nilgai and boar in some districts of Bihar, and the rhesus macaque in parts of Himachal Pradesh.

The Act does not define the term "vermin" in terms of what it connotes. It just states in Section 62: "The Central Government may by notification declare any wild animal other than those specified in Schedule I and Part II of Schedule II to be vermin for any area and for such period as may be specified therein and so long as such notification is in force, such wild animal shall be deemed to have been included in Schedule V." Animals included in Schedule V can be freely hunted.

The Central Government declares an animal as vermin following requests from State Governments and the ground which has been invariably cited is that it causes damage to crops and poses a danger to human life. There have no doubt been cases in which the Centre has withheld permission. The fundamental question, however, is whether there should at all be a provision for designating an animal as "vermin".

There are several reasons for asking this. For one thing, an article by Anupam Chakravarty, Rajeshwari Ganesan and Rajit Sengupta, published under the heading "Enemies of the state?" in the *DownToEarth* on June 15, 2016, cites animal rights groups as saying that the drive for killing them underway was based on popular perception rather than data. The country had no data both on the populations of animals proposed to be killed and the extent of crop damage they were supposed to be causing. The article stated that, in fact, Uttarakhand's proposal on the basis of which the Centre permitted the killing of wild boars, clearly said, "There is no scientific survey or census of the wild boar population that has



been carried out. However, since the crop damage caused by wild boar is increasing, the wild boar is estimated to be overpopulated."

Further, experience shows that once killing is permitted, villagers or designated hunters have frequently not followed the methods prescribed. An example is the case in Kerala where a pregnant cow elephant died following several days of intense agony after she had gotten on a pineapple filled with explosives. Enquiries revealed that the pineapple was intended to kill a wild boar which, as a species, had been declared "vermin". Also, such a barbaric way of killing was not permitted even in the case of wild boars.

State Governments have doubtless laid down restrictions on the methods and guidelines governing killings — such as only rifles and pistols to be used and no killing of injured animals running away to forests, and hunting only after receiving permission from the forest department concerned and the village *pradhan*. But who is to ensure compliance? The fact is, methods that are not permitted are often used. These include laying out live wires



THE LOSS OF THE VEGETATION THEY FEED ON FOLLOWING THE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR HABITATS THROUGH EXPANDING HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, ROADS AND INDUSTRIES, AS WELL AS DROUGHTS AND FOREST FIRES, HAS DRIVEN THEM TO AGRICULTURAL FIELDS FOR FOOD

for animals to be electrocuted, trapping them for murder and poisoning them. There is no guarantee that animals other than those declared as "vermin" would not come into contact with such wires or consume the poison.

The argument that State forest department personnel should watch out for the transgressors and deal harshly with them hardly holds water. It would take a very large number of people and vehicles for doing that. Given that most forest departments have to make do with numerically inadequate staff, deployment on such an errand would leave them with very few people to carry out essential functions like curbing poaching and preventing illegal felling of trees. The result may be a serious diminution of protected species like elephants (for tusks), rhinos (for their horns) and tigers for their body parts which are sought for the manufacture of so-called aphrodisiacs.

Apart from the fact that declaring an entire species of wildlife as vermin is contrary to the spirit and content of Article 51 A (g) of the Constitution which enjoins upon both the Government

and all citizens to show compassion to all living creatures, animals can hardly be blamed for damaging standing crops and attacking people. The loss of the vegetation they feed on following the destruction of their habitats through encroachment by expanding human settlements, roads and industries, as well as droughts and forest fires, has driven them to agricultural fields for food.

Humans do not realise that their own predatory exploitation of nature is increasing areas of human-animal conflict and making non-human species extinct at the rate of 3,000 a year. In this process, they are also destroying the environment and the conditions that have made human life possible. They need to realise that they are not the lords of the universe and must live in harmony with the world around them, including plants and animals.

The Greek sophist Protagoras' famous aphorism "Man is the measure of all things" needs to be amended to read, "Humans are the preservers and protectors of all things."

(The author is Consulting Editor, *The Pioneer*. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OPPN MUST PLAY ITS CARDS WELL

This has reference to your editorial on "Rallying forces" (July 23). "I will win Bengal with one leg and Delhi with two legs," claimed Didi. NCP leader Sharad Pawar has ruled out to be the consensus presidential candidate with an eye on the Prime Minister's post in case of a fractured mandate in the 2024 general election. The coming together of the Opposition leaders is a mirage. Though they have different ideologies, every State's prominent Opposition leader has an eye on the Prime Minister's chair. It is the extent of crop damage they were supposed to be causing. The article stated that, in fact, Uttarakhand's proposal on the basis of which the Centre permitted the killing of wild boars, clearly said, "There is no scientific survey or census of the wild boar population that has

Furthermore, the coalition form of Government is a failure in our country. Corruption always compromises strict and honest adherence to the coalition dharmas. To be fair to it, the BJP has no serious corruption charges against it in the past seven years of its rule. But the ruling party has failed to arrest the fuel price hike, spurt in the prices of essential commodities, handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Pegasus expose is embarrassing it now. The Opposition does not put in a strong effort to highlight the Government's shortcomings and misses. But it disrupts Parliament, thus wasting the taxpayers' money, which won't help these leaders. Moreover, even a united Opposition lacks a leader of mass appeal at the national level. Savana Ramachandran | Chennai

LESSONS FROM BHAGEERATHI AND A'S LIFE

At the age of 107 years and India's one of the first recipients of the prestigious Nari Shakti Puraskar by the Union Government for her exceptional contribution towards women's empowerment, Kerala's "oldest learner" Bhageerathi Amma is no more. Famous as Akshara Muthushi, or Literacy Grandmother, Bhageerathi Amma inspired many by passing the Level Four equivalency examinations at the age of 105, conducted by the state-run Kerala State Literacy Mission (KSLM) in 2019. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had

The Govt has only bombastic claims



More than 4,15,000 people died owing to COVID-19 (thereby leaving at least 16,00,000 family members in inconsolable grief, many of them turned orphans or lost the sole bread-earner), hundreds succumbed to the "Long March" and millions found themselves jobless with many of them compelled to kill themselves. But how disgracefully do the who's who of the BJP and the Union Government boast about their "impeccable fight" against COVID and "glorious victory" over the pandemic! So when the party's top leadership asserts that the Pegasus expose is nothing but an "international design" to "defame" the country because of the "success" it had against COVID, it is extremely hard to resist bouts of laughter.

also spoken about her during his 62nd episode of his *Mann Ki Baat* programme. In her examination at Kollam, she came out with flying colours with 205 out of a total of 275 marks and full marks in mathematics. As she went on till 107 years of age, she had recently began preparing for her Level Seven exam through digital classes, but one sorrow remains that Amma left without fulfilling the dream of passing the 10th standard equivalency exam. Bhageerathi Amma was one of the few learners in the world who taught others that age is no bar in education. Amma, you are still living in our hearts. May your soul rest in peace and may your movement find success! Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

PINARAYI MUST CLEAN UP HIS CABINET

It refers to the editorial, "A stitch in time". When Kerala Chief Minister

Equally shocking is their magnitude of shamelessness, insensitively, falsehood and rhetoric. The displacement of millions of starved, malnourished, poorest of poor migrants negotiating highways for months amid harsh conditions, serpentine queues for procuring the elusive oxygen cylinders, burning of mass pyres in parking lots and mass burials, no other country witnessed such horrors. And all these were the direct result of a series of callous decisions — Trump show, instant lockdown without notice, "Occupy Bengal", Kumbh Mela and so on.

Instead of coming up with concrete, sober answers based on logic, facts and truth, it's easier for the Government to just characterize-assassinate the questioner and invoke fatuous sentiments in the name of the nation. In the same vein, any query regarding the Centre's involvement in the Pegasus scandal is obviously nothing but a "direct attack upon India's integrity". And, unfortunately, these tactics of jingoism regularly fetch rich electoral dividends for the ruling party in our country. What a tragic state of affairs! Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

Pinarayi Vijayan can take the tough decision of not inducting former Health Minister KK Shailja in his Government (while it is to be noted that she was one of the best performing Ministers in the last five years) after creating history of sorts in the last 45 years by winning back-to-back elections and retaining power, but he should not have any issue in ousting Forest Minister AK Sasseendran. Ultimately, Pinarayi Vijayan is in the early days of his second term in succession and he should not allow the Opposition parties any issue on a platter that the latter could use to criticise him. Moreover, when he is not at the mercy of other parties for his Government's survival, then there is no reason for him to not act strictly and set a strong precedent. Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

I am an Opposition leader and I raise issues of public. This is an attack on that. This is an attack on the voice of the people.

Congress leader — Rahul Gandhi

I denounce that the (US) State Department is exercising offensive and humiliating pressures on European countries.

Cuba's Foreign Affairs Minister — Bruno Rodriguez

Kishore Kumar is not just a legend and an icon, he is an institution. He has always been a beacon of inspiration for me.

Actor-singer — Ayushmann Khurrana

During our playing days, both foreign and Indian coaches were given equal opportunities. The same can be followed now.

Former Indian football striker — I.M Vijayan

Today every (Punjab) Congress worker has become the president; no difference between leader and workers.

Punjab Congress' new president — Navjot Singh Sidhu

FIRST COLUMN
RAGHURAJPUR
PATTACHITRA

Painting murals to welcome tourists back to their village



RAKHI GHOSH

After a gap of nearly six months, Abakash Nayak, 54, a seasoned Pattachitra artist of Raghurajpur, the nationally acclaimed heritage village in Odisha's Puri district has picked up his brush, but this time to paint on the walls of his house. He is painting Lord Ganesha on one wall and Ardhanariswara (a traditional form of Lord Shiva and Parvati) on another. "I am happy like the rest of the artists of Raghurajpur village that we are being asked to paint murals to decorate the walls of our houses. Once the lockdown will ease and tourists will start returning to our village, they will witness the fresh look of the village," he said. The artists of this village have been sitting idle with no work at hand since March last year after the nationwide lockdown was announced. Recently, the State government declared financial assistance of ₹10,000 to each of the 150-odd families to decorate the walls of their houses with Patta paintings, bringing smiles to their faces. In Raghurajpur



crafts village, almost all family members are involved in Patta painting, sculpture work, and paper masks. Patta paintings are made on a piece of cloth known as Patta, or on a dried palm leaf which is first covered with a mixture of gum and chalk. Over the prepared surface, colourful and intricate pictures of gods and goddesses, and scenes from mythological scriptures are painted. The village saw no tourists after March 2020. In November, some tourists started visiting, but the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in February spread among the artists. Banamali Maharana, a Shilpiguuru awardee, recalls the times when visitors could see all the family members doing artwork, sitting on the porch of their houses. "We are artists... How are we supposed to pick up spade leveling paint and brush?"

The male members mainly do the painting work, while women prepare traditional colours, the base of the paper mask, and other additional work. Some women have also started Patta paintings. Earlier, they would earn between ₹15,000 and ₹20,000 per month. With overseas buyers, they would earn a little more. Now incomes have drastically dropped. Initially, they managed to make ends meet through loans but money lenders have now stopped giving them money. A few "kind-hearted" art lovers help them out financially. In 2019, Cyclone Fani devastated this artisans' village. All the artwork were damaged. When they began to restart their art, the coronavirus struck. Some started selling vegetables, some opened "paan" shops, or started working as daily wage labourers. But the second wave put paid to these efforts too. Villagers are at present getting vaccinated to fight the virus. "Once unlock happens, the tourists will start coming to our village again. Our vaccination will send a message of reassurance to these tourists," said villager Jitendra who believes that the government should also arrange a vaccination drive for the artists. Raghurajpur is now preparing to welcome tourists with murals on walls. The Department of Language, Literature and Culture in association with Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi has come up with an innovative idea to encourage and support the artists. Each family will receive ₹10,000 as financial assistance while the best five will be awarded after being selected by a special committee. Meanwhile, the younger generation is exploring selling the artwork online. Many have also shifted to the virtual mode to teach Pattachitra-making online. They want the government to train them and arrange for a platform to sell their products to e-commerce companies.

(The writer is an independent journalist from Odisha. The views expressed are personal.)

Cairn looking for arbitration money?

Cairn Energy has submitted a detailed series of proposals to the Indian Government for settlement of the case



SHIVAJI SARKAR

On the very same day that Prime Minister Narendra Modi effected a massive reconstitution of his council of ministers, India got in the shock in the form of a French court freezing residential properties belonging to the Indian government in Paris following a retrospective tax dispute with British power and energy giant Cairn Energy.

The decision will impact 20 properties valued at Euro 20 million (₹177 crore), as part of a guarantee of the debt owed to Cairn that exited India a few years ago. The company with a market capitalisation of ₹755 million (about ₹7,800 crore) - has filed cases in several countries to pursue the unpaid international arbitration award of \$1.7 billion (₹12,750 crore). The company also filed cases in New York, seeking judicial confirmation that Air India can be classed as the alter ego of the Indian state and thereby jointly liable for the arbitral award.

The French court decision is unfortunate as it is feared it can start a new diplomatic conflict and it also impinges on the sovereignty of the country. It might create an image that India can be taken lightly by MNCs and other private players.

And that is what exactly happened. A case similar to Cairn is that of Devas Multimedia, floated by ex-ISRO executives. It had entered into a deal with ISRO's Antrix Corp. and the National Company Law Tribunal said the 2005 spectrum lease deal was fraudulent. Deutsche Telekom later picked up its stake.

Devas moved an arbitration tribunal saying that its multi-million-dollar investments lost value because of the annulment. In 2020 the tribunal awarded Devas \$1.2 billion. It is now seeking payment from India (now stayed by Supreme Court) in a New York court, asking Air India to pay the amount or forfeit its property, including planes, cargo handling equipment, and artwork.

In both cases, the authorities in India bungled in pursuing the case. In the case of Cairn and Devas, they moved the courts in Germany and The Hague even as the Indian arguments on jurisdiction and criminality in two arbitrations under Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) under India-Mauritius and India-Germany agreements were lost.

Cairn and Devas have chosen flagship Air India planes and its prime property as a pressure tactic to force India into payment negotiations. Trying to seize planes or property to realise unpaid dues may be an extreme tactic but there are precedents. Aircraft are valuable, mobile, and relatively easy to sell. A few years ago, US hedge fund Elliott Capital Management seized an Argentine naval vessel to collect on bonds on which the country defaulted in 2001.

The Cairn matter is one of the irrational tax system. The company is in dis-



pute with the government over a 2014 retrospective tax demand. The income-tax department seized a 10 per cent stake in Indian operations that Cairn was trying to sell. After a long dispute, it went for international arbitration and Cairn won the \$1.7 billion award.

The issue of high taxation, as recently mentioned by President Ram Nath Kovind, retrospective tax, and confusion on predating taxes is an unresolved quagmire. There is an OECD move to have a global minimum tax on corporates at 15 per cent or higher. The UPA government introduced the controversial retrospective tax in March 2012. The NDA II was expected to correct it after 2014 but the bureaucratic system continued with the supposed oddity.

The Supreme Court of India on January 20, 2012 ruled in favour of Vodafone overturning a 2010 decision of the Bombay High Court which ruled that Vodafone was liable to retrospectively pay \$2 billion income-tax because Indian capital gains tax (CGT) applied on the share transfers between two non-resident entities.

But the smitten tax officials took a different route to circumvent the SC ruling with the introduction of the retrospective tax in March 2012, allowing the government to levy GGT—a move that was piloted by former finance minister Pranab Mukherjee in 2012.

In March 2018 the then finance minister, the late Arun Jaitley, said that the decision to tax Vodafone retrospectively by UPA was erroneous and also that the "present government will not be going down that path". On July 18,

2014, he had said that India would not levy any tax with a retrospective effect that creates an additional burden. But Jaitley made no move to repeal the 2011 law.

The statements of Jaitley and Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledging not to use retrospective taxation to overturn on Cairn Energy were used by a three-member tribunal at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague on December 20, 2020, to rule that the 2006 reorganisation of Cairn Energy's India business before listing on local bourses was not "unlawful tax avoidance" and ordered the tax authorities to drop the tax demand. This did not happen due to bureaucratic apathy.

Cairn has moved for implementation of the arbitration award in several jurisdictions on different continents, including the US, the UK, Canada, Singapore, Mauritius, France, and the Netherlands as the company intends to focus on high-value assets. Cairn has submitted detailed series of proposals to the Indian government for settlement of the case. The NDA government is now opposing its stand apparently under pressure of officials.

It rattles India. Would the country lose its flagship aircraft carrier and other prime assets? Technically it may be so but authorities say that they are yet to receive a notice or communication from the French court and the government would vigorously defend its case. It translates into more litigations as well as negotiations. Director of Cairn's corporate communication David Nisbet says that the company is keen on an agreed settlement with India and keep the

trust of its shareholders.

So, it has identified \$70-billion worth of Indian assets to retrieve the \$1.7 billion award. However, an international company knows that while it is important to contest governments, it also needs their goodwill to be in business.

The government is also in negotiations since January 2021, even before the present French order was flashed. It may give Cairn Energy one of the surrendered oilfields—Ratna R-series—in the Arabian Sea that was taken away from Essar-Premier Oil in 2016 instead of an arbitration payment. Cairn had spudded the biggest inland oil wells in Barmer, indicated in a survey by NGRI. It exited the country after it was given ₹10247 crore retro-tax demand. Apparently, the government wants that the biggest oil company with one of the lowest operational costs come back to India to shore up its image as also create a show window for the international investors.

It is also looking at the other option of giving it the Barmer oilfield. Vedanta, which now operates the field, has so far not agreed to the government conditions for extending its contract. Under Vedanta, Rajasthan oilfields have seen a steady decline in output. Cairn has protested against the high \$9 cesp per barrel on the oil produced.

The bureaucrats had the issues mired in a web. A political decision to annual retro-tax under Prime Minister Narendra Modi can ensure that a Cairn, Vodafone, Devas, or Vedanta is not repeated and bureaucrats do not muddy the waters.



THE FRENCH COURT'S DECISION IS UNFORTUNATE AS IT IS FEARED IT CAN START A NEW DIPLOMATIC CONFLICT AND IT ALSO IMPINGES ON THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE COUNTRY. IT MIGHT CREATE AN IMAGE THAT INDIA CAN BE TAKEN LIGHTLY BY MNCs AND OTHER PRIVATE PLAYERS

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

POINT COUNTERPOINT

NARENDRA MODI AND AMIT SHAH USED THE PEGASUS SPYWARE AGAINST INDIA AND ITS INSTITUTIONS, AND THE ONLY WORD FOR IT IS TREASON.
— FORMER CONGRESS PRESIDENT RAHUL GANDHI



THE CONGRESS IS DETERMINED TO STALL THE HOUSE FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER AFTER BEING REJECTED TWICE BY PEOPLE IN 2014 AND 2019.

— BJP SPOKESPERSON RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE

Rejuvenating agricultural marketing through cooperatives

Farmer aggregation is necessary to organise them, reduce transaction costs and enable members to share information & take collective decisions

Agricultural and allied activities continue to be the backbone of the Indian economy supporting the livelihood of 60 per cent of the population and contributing 17% of GDP. It used to account for more than half of GDP in 1951.



SUBHASH C. PANDEY

Half of the arable area continues to depend on the monsoon for irrigation. The proportion of gross irrigated area to total cropped area could increase from 31 per cent in 1984-85 to only 45 per cent, as per the agriculture census of 2010-11. The total operated area under agriculture decreased from 16 crore hectares in 2010-11 to 15.8 crore hectares in 2015-16.

With succession not based on primogeniture, population explosion has resulted in frag-

(The writer is former Special Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GOI. The views expressed are personal.)

mentation of landholdings. Total operational holdings increased from 13.8 crore in 2010-11 to 14.6 crore in 2015-16. The average size of an operational holding declined to 1.08 hectares in 2015-16 from 1.15 hectares in 2010-11.

Small and marginal farmers suffer from the absence of economies of scale, access to information, and their inability to participate in the price discovery mechanism. Their participation is restricted by poor vertical and horizontal linkages, limited access to the market, and poor information flow along the value chain. The challenge now is to optimize benefits through effective and efficient means of aggregation models.

Farmer aggregation assumes significance due to



the shift of Indian agriculture towards high-value commodities as a result of the growing importance of the agri-food market caused by liberalization, globalization, improved purchasing power, demand for safe and quality food, and expansion of niche markets.

Integrating small farmers with agricultural markets is a big challenge. Many forms of farmer producer organizations have been experimented with like cooperatives, self-help

groups, Farmer Producer Companies, and commodity interest groups to aggregate farmers to help them benefit from economies of scale and to link them to the markets.

Contract farming and direct marketing are other institutional interventions that can be undertaken by organised groups of farmers. I have come across even Whatsapp groups being used to connect farmers and consumers, bypassing middlemen and getting better prices for farmers. A Farmer Producer Company (FPC) seems to be the most useful for the aggregation of small farmers. The FPCs offer more benefits compared to other forms of aggregation. Its members are able to leverage their collective strength and bargaining power to access financial and non-

financial inputs and services and appropriate technologies leading to a reduction in transaction costs. They can tap high-value markets and enter into partnerships with private entities on equitable terms.

The performance of cooperatives has been generally poor with the exception of cooperative sugar factories and dairy cooperatives in Maharashtra and Gujarat. Amalsad cooperative Society for sapota and farming cooperative Gambhira in Gujarat, MAHAGRAPES in Maharashtra, HOPCOMS and CAMPCO in Karnataka, Mulkanoor women's cooperative in combined Andhra Pradesh, etc., have performed well. These successful models could not be emulated elsewhere in the

country. In Budget 2019-20, the government announced new central sector schemes to facilitate the formation and promotion of 10,000 new Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and handholding of each FPO for five years from its aggregation and formation.

Rainfall deficit, unseasonal rains, floods are natural and continuing risks. Agricultural production has increased but productivity is generally lower than international benchmarks. Water-use efficiency is particularly low. Some progressive farmers are de-risking themselves by diversifying their produce. However, many relatively well-off farmers continue with water-guzzling crops like rice and sugarcane in water-defi-

cient regions. How to incentivize farmers to move away from the over production of cereals (particularly rice and wheat)? How to go about agricultural diversification to boost oilseeds, protein, and fruits/vegetable production? These are policy challenges. Rejuvenation of rural agricultural sector needs appropriate diversification and value-addition and loosening of outdated controls on agricultural markets. It is hoped that protests against the farm laws misguidedly or mischievously or partly both - abate soon and a sensible farmer leadership works on connecting farmers with FPOs. Farmers' apprehensions about the entry of big corporates can be addressed if they become members of the FPOs.

SC rejects Airtel, Voda pleas against AGR dues

PNB ■ NEW DELHI

Supreme Court on Friday dismissed the petition of telecom majors Airtel and Vodafone-Idea for re-computation of dues, claiming errors in Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) calculation. Airtel owes due of ₹8,000 crore and Vodafone-Idea owes ₹58,000 crore to Department of Telecom. In the petition, Airtel claimed only ₹18,000 crore and Vodafone-Idea claimed ₹25,000 seeking re-computation.



Share with Government. The telecom companies went up to Supreme Court against CAG auditing of their revenue and lost the case.

All the miscellaneous applications are dismissed, a bench headed by Justice L. Nageswara Rao said while pronouncing the order. Shares of cash-strapped Vodafone Idea plunged as much as 10% to ₹8.10 per share post the verdict that came as a setback for the telcos, whereas that of Bharti Airtel was trading over 1% higher at ₹552 on the BSE. Under invocation of Telecom Act, the companies were caught by CAG in 2011 during their audit on 2G Scam. As per the licensing agreement on every call certain portion of the Adjusted Gross Revenue - AGR of the bill, the companies have to

Mishra's Bench allowed 10 years installment starting from March 2021. The bench had asked the Managing Directors (MDs) or Chief Executive Officer (CEOs) of the telcos concerned to furnish undertaking or personal guarantee for payment of dues.

After getting 10 year installment, biggest defaulters Airtel and Vodafone-Idea and Airtel approached Supreme Court in 2019 and ordered companies to start paying immediately, citing that this money was collected from public already per call.

Later Government informed Supreme Court that 20 year installment can be given to the companies. In September 2020, Justice

Benchmarks build on gains as banks, FMCG stocks spurt; post weekly losses

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex and Nifty mustered gains for the second straight session on Friday, propped up by banking, FMCG and pharma stocks but closed lower for the week as the surging Delta variant cases sapped risk appetite globally.

Overcoming a choppy start, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 138.29 points or 0.26 per cent higher at 52,975.80. On similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty advanced 32 points or 0.20 per cent to finish at 15,856.05.

ICICI Bank topped the Sensex gainers' chart with a jump of 3.18 per cent ahead of its results on Saturday. ITC, SBI, HCL Tech, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finserv, Tech Mahindra and Sun Pharma were among the other winners, advancing up to 2.56 per cent.

The excruciating though was not broad based, the market breadth remained negative for the day. The weekly trend too remained marginally negative as all the major market cap based broader indices closed marginally in the negative for the week.

The strong show of IT stocks continued whereas slipages in reported asset quality and expectations of rising NPA risks dragged down the banking stocks. The expected rise in

NPAs may have broader market implications as it exposes the pandemic-caused vulnerability of both household as well as corporate balance sheets, said Joseph Thomas, Head of Research at Emkay Wealth Management.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said, "Domestic indices continued to advance ahead tracking rising global risk appetite and higher domestic inflows from local investors."

Over 1.37 crore enrolled under PM skill development scheme

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Friday said that under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, 1.37 crore candidates have been enrolled and of them 1.29 crore candidates are trained or oriented as of July 10.

Skill India Mission aims to empower the Indian youth through skill development. Under this mission, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship is implementing its flagship scheme Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).

Textile Ministry in process of obtaining Cabinet nod for MITRA scheme

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Textile Ministry is in the process of obtaining approval of the Union Cabinet for the proposed Mega Investment Textiles Parks (MITRA) scheme, under which seven such parks will be set up in the country over the next three years, Parliament was informed on Friday.

Minister of State for Textiles Darshana Jadhav said the scheme was announced in Union Budget 2021-22. "Ministry of Textiles is in the process of obtaining approval of the Cabinet for the proposed scheme. Once the proposed scheme is approved and modalities are finalized, the details of location, government funding structure etc. will be decided," she said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha. In a separate reply, the minister said during the pandemic, CCI (Cotton Corporation of India) procured 20.72 lakh bales valued at ₹5,615 crore from 4 lakh cotton farmers.

Sebi consent not mandatory for compounding offences: SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Friday held that the consent of regulator Sebi is not mandatory for compounding offences under section 24A of the Sebi Act but taking views of the expert body is necessary for stability in the securities market as well as investor protection.

A bench headed by Justice D Y Chandrachud said though Sebi is not conferred with any authority to veto or act on for proceeding in trial offences, it is a regulatory and prosecuting agency and the Securities Appellate Tribunal and the courts must obtain its views since it is an expert body. The bench said it is clear that Sebi's consent cannot be mandatory before or the Court before which the proceeding is pending, for exercising the power of compounding under Section 24A. The apex court, which elucidated some guidelines that T or S courts must take into account while adjudging an application under Section 24A, said however that eliciting views of Sebi was necessary in the interest of the stability of the securities market and protection of investors.

The bench, also comprising Justice M R Shah, said the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has the authority to discharge in maintaining an orderly and stable market so as to satisfy the interests of investors. PTI

Govt approves 792 private food processing projects so far

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 792 projects out of 818 have been approved for setting up food processing industries by the private sector, with approved grants-in-aid of ₹5,792 crore so far, the Government informed Parliament on Friday.

"Government has been consistently encouraging and incentivising increased private sector investment for the overall development of the food processing sector of the country to promote value addition in agricultural and allied sectors and reduce wastage," Minister of the State for Food Processing Industries Prahlad Singh Patel said.

The minister in a written reply to a Rajya Sabha also said the Government has recently taken three major initiatives in order to further increase private sector participation in the sector. Firstly, the Government has approved a Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the food processing sector with an outlay of ₹10,900 crore to support the creation of global food manufacturing champions and support Indian brands of food products in international markets.

Yes Bank Q1 net jumps over four-fold to ₹207 cr

New Delhi: Yes Bank on Friday reported an over four-fold jump in net profit at ₹207 crore for the quarter ended July 2021. The bank said this was its highest net profit since December 2018. It had posted a net profit of ₹45 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal year. Total income during Q1 FY22, however, was down at ₹5,818.84 crore as against ₹6,106.74 crore in Q1 FY21. Yes Bank said in a regulatory filing. Compared sequentially, it was higher from ₹4,805.30 crore in the quarter ended March 2021. The private sector lender said its corporate recoveries/resolutions during the quarter at ₹1,643 crore outpaced the slippages of ₹1,258 crore. New business generation continued for the quarter with retail disbursements of ₹5,006 crore, SME disbursements of ₹3,242 crore and wholesale banking disbursements of ₹3,625 crore, it said.

On the asset quality front, the bank pared its bad loans proportion with gross non-performing assets (NPAs) falling to 15.60 per cent of the gross advances as of July 30, 2021, from 17.30 per cent in the year-ago period. PTI

Govt set to overshoot FY22 tax collection target as Q1 mop-up reaches ₹5.6 lakh crore: IcrA

PTI ■ MUMBAI

With the first quarter gross tax mop-up reaching ₹5.6 lakh crore, IcrA Ratings on Friday said the Government is set to exceed the budgeted tax collection target of ₹2.2 lakh crore in FY22-22, led by indirect taxes.

The government has budgeted a modest 9.5 per cent growth in tax collections at ₹2.2 lakh crore for FY22, over ₹2.1 collections of ₹2.02 lakh crore. However, despite the second wave of the pandemic, the April-June quarter tax collections rose to ₹5.6 lakh crore, or 39 per cent higher than Q1 of FY20. As stated differently, this is 107 per cent more than Q1 of FY21 and 25.1 per cent of the full-year target, according to analysts by IcrA.

The first quarter is traditionally moderate for tax collection, as the economic activity remains tepid. The revenue department is yet to officially release the quarterly data, but the finance ministry informed the Lok Sabha on July 19 that Q1 tax revenue mop-up reached ₹5.6 lakh crore.

Rupee pares early losses to close 6 paise up against US

Mumbai: The rupee pared its early losses to close 6 paise higher at 74.40 against the US dollar on Friday, rising for the third session in a row on the back of weak crude oil prices and gains in the domestic equities. A stronger dollar in the overseas markets however weighed on the rupee sentiment. At the interbank forex market, the rupee traded at ₹65.49 per kg in the previous trading.

"The markets today witnessed a bumper listing of one of the most awaited IPOs in recent history, Zomato. The excitement though was not broad based, the market breadth remained negative for the day. The weekly trend too remained marginally negative as all the major market cap based broader indices closed marginally in the negative for the week." "Given that tax inflows in Q1 of FY20, we expect the gross revenue to surge in Q1. FY22 budget estimate of ₹2.2 lakh crore. Growth in tax mop-up is led by indirect taxes, primarily taxes on petroleum products," IcrA chief economist Aditi Nayar said.

According to her, Q1 collections at ₹5.6 trillion is 107 per cent higher than ₹2.7 lakh crore in Q1 of FY21, when the whole country was under lockdown last year.

"But more meaningfully, this is a full 39 per cent more than the pre-COVID level in Q1 of FY21, when the whole country was under lockdown last year." "But more meaningfully, this is a full 39 per cent more than the pre-COVID level in Q1 of FY21, when the whole country was under lockdown last year."

Exports rise 45 pc during July 1-21: Comm Ministry data

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The country's exports grew 45.13 per cent to USD 22.48 billion during July 1-21 on account of healthy growth in sectors such as gems and jewellery, petroleum and engineering, according to the provisional commerce ministry data.

Imports also rose 64.82 per cent to USD 31.77 billion in the said period, leaving a trade deficit of USD 9.29 billion. Exports of gems and jewellery, petroleum and engineering during July 1-21 stood at USD 424.5 million, USD 923.3 million and USD 551.4 million, respectively, the data showed.

Imports of petroleum, crude and products rose by about 77.5 per cent to USD 1.16 billion.

BRIEFS

VODAFONE IDEA SHARES TUMBLE NEARLY 10 PC

New Delhi: Shares of Vodafone Idea on Friday tumbled nearly 10 per cent after the Supreme Court dismissed the applications filed by telecom majors seeking rectification of the alleged errors in calculation of adjusted gross revenue (AGR)-related dues payable by them. The stock plummeted 9.62 per cent to close at ₹8.36 on the BSE. During the day, it tumbled 14.91 per cent to ₹7.87. On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), it plunged 9.72 per cent to close at ₹8.35.

SEBI GIVES MORE TIME TO TOP 100 LISTED COS TO HOLD AGM

New Delhi: Escrowing compliance troubles for firms amid ongoing coronavirus pandemic, market regulator Sebi on Friday said the top 100 companies by market capitalisation can delay their annual general meetings (AGM) by a month. Such listed entities will hold their AGM within six months from the date of closing of the financial year for 2020-21, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a circular under the rules, the top 100 listed entities by market capitalisation are required to hold their AGM within five months from the date of closing of the financial year.

INDIA'S BIGGEST VITRIFIED TILES PLANT

Mumbai: With an aim to contribute to 'Make in India' and the 'Vocal for Local' initiatives, Sunheart Group entered into a JV with Ajanta Group to set up India's biggest vitrified tiles plant. "It is a proud moment for all of us and this decision is important to match up to the demand of the international markets. This collaboration is a testimony to the saying 'United we stand' and thus with this joint venture with Ajanta Group and our mammoth plant at Samakhiali, Gujarat, we are beginning our new journey to create history in the Indian tile industry," said Sunheart Group chairman Bhudrabhai. Sunheart Tiles Company Pvt Ltd owns 'Sunheart brand'.

BSES BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi. Tender Notice. Sealed tenders under two parts (Un-priced & priced) are invited for the supply of following materials from all bidders: S/N Tender No. Brief Item Description Estimated Cost of EMD (₹) Bid Date & Time (Tender Submission) Bid Due Date & Time (Tender Submission)

DELHI JAL BOARD GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SOW) VIII SEC. 16-D, PAPPANKALAN, N. DELHI, 110075. STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene. PRESS N-12. 06/06/2021 (SOW/VI/2021-22)

CANCELLATION OF SPECIAL TRAIN It is notified for the information of passengers that due to operational reasons, Railways have decided to cancel the following special train, as per the details given below: Train No. & Name Date of Cancellation (From the originating Station) 02618 Hazrat Nizamuddin - Ernakulam Jn. Mangala Lakshadweep Special Express On 26.07.2021

SEARCH FOR MISSING General Public is hereby informed that a lady namely Shivani, W/o Rajendra Kumar, R/o H.No. 5910, Gali No. 15, Sikligram, Nabi Karim, Delhi, Age: 23 years, Height: 47", Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Built: Slim, Wearing: Yellow Colour Sati-salwar has been missing since 10.07.2021 from the jurisdiction of Nabi Karim, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 19A dated 14.07.2021 has been registered at PS NABI KARIM, Shivani, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing lady but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this lady please inform us under the following details: E-mail: clic@cbl.gov.in Ph. No: 011-24368633, 24368641 PS NABI KARIM, DELHI Ph. No: 011-23521081, 23531734, 8750874028

SEARCH FOR MISSING General Public is hereby informed that a person namely Satender Mishra S/O, S. Ravinder Nath Mishra R/o E-106, New Ashok Nagar, Delhi has been missing since 09.07.2021 from the area of P.S. New Ashok Nagar, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 87A dated 09.07.2021 has been lodged at PS, New Ashok Nagar, Delhi. The description of missing person is as under: Name: Satender Mishra, Father's Name: Sh. Ravinder Nath Mishra, Age: 38 years, Height: 5'9", Face: Round, Build: Thin, Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: Red Colour Shirt and Black Pant & Brown Leather Shoes in feet. If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform the undersigned at following phone numbers. Website: http://cbl.gov.in E-mail: clic@cbl.gov.in Ph. No: 011-24368638, 24368641 PS, New Ashok Nagar, Delhi Ph. No: 011-24368638, 24368641 SHO New Ashok Nagar, Delhi Ph. No: 011-23521081, 23531734, 8750874028

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, BOOK CLOSURE AND REMOTE VOTING INFORMATION Notice is hereby given that the 54th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the members of Justide International Limited (JIL) will be held on Monday, August 2, 2021, at 10:00 AM through video conference (VC), to transact the business as set out in the Notice of AGM in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 (Act) and Rules framed thereunder and the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 (SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015) and the Companies (Remote Voting) Regulations, 2020 (SEBI (RV) Regulations, 2020) issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on July 12, 2020 and the Companies (Remote Voting) Regulations, 2020 (SEBI (RV) Regulations, 2020) issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on July 12, 2020 and the Companies (Remote Voting) Regulations, 2020 (SEBI (RV) Regulations, 2020) issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on July 12, 2020.



Bollywood
"If I don't play endearing characters, I will get bored."
—Pankaj Tripathi

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

SHORTCIRCUITS

FAWAD KHAN
Lending my voice to Rajinder Singh Dahiya's classic story... was a great experience as it is very close to my heart. There are many thoughts and feelings the audience can distill from the narrative. I tried to give the character a certain dignity that I hope the audience will appreciate.



RAIMA SEN
"I think it is unfair to blame an actor for a project's failure or success because it is a result of teamwork. Everyone is responsible, not only the actor. We read a script but we don't know how it will eventually turn out. The audiences keep evolving so it depends on the audience and their changing tastes."



JIMMY SHERGILL
"I like the digital space. Actors have got another option to consider, now. When an actor is offered a script for a commercial film, the character might be something that has been portrayed before. With OTT, there is scope of experimentation and trying something new."



GAUHAH KHAN
"When the first brief of 14 *Phere* came my way, I was asked if I would be okay with playing an older mummy ji on-screen and I was like 'let me hear the story first!' After I heard the narration, and understood all the nuances, I couldn't wait to get started working on the project."

EMILY BLUNT
"Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson comes from some hard times, and he writes it very lightly and in a very wise philosophical sense. And so I do go to him for advice because he has lived in the trenches. He has not just winged it, and it has not been just a meteoric rise to where he is now. It's been a lot of razor blades and tears."



STUDIO TALK 45 MINUTES

It takes *Chutzpah*

Actor MANJOT SINGH tells CHRISTY VARGHESE that creating reactions, in the absence of co-stars, was a challenge during the shooting of the new series

Say Manjot Singh, and most of us would be at sea. But say Lali, and the audience would perk up immediately as they recall the popular character that Manjot played in *Fukrey* and *Fukrey Returns*. He returned with *Chutzpah*, the web series, which was released on SonyLIV yesterday.

His entry in Bollywood is in itself a filmy story. Before starting in films such as *Udaan* and *Student Of The Year*, Singh made his debut as the boy who grows up to be the super-char Lucky, in *Oye Lucky! Lucky Oye!* Born in Delhi to a Sikh family, he went to audition for Dibakar Banerjee's film without having ever acted before, even in school plays. After the audition, while the casting director rejected him for the role of little Lucky, Dibakar insisted, later saying, "Even though the casting director wasn't convinced, I just put my foot down." It turned out to be an incredible call, as Singh went on to receive rave reviews for his performance in the film.



pour every ounce of your being into it. I would say shooting for *Chutzpah* was like climbing a mountain. With time, I got used to it. From the second day, I got a hang of the technicalities. I was pretty nostalgic on the last day of the shoot, I had grown attached to the house (set) that was created for me. I had made it my own. I recall lying on the bed after we were done shooting my bits. While another set alongside mine was lit up, the lights were switched off on mine and I remember feeling numb thinking that since we are done with the shoot, this will be the last time I get to lie down on this bed and this set will probably be dismantled tomorrow. I had grown extremely attached to the home that was created for me and I don't remember ever being this close to a set, before," Manjot ruminated.

When we ask him for more information about his character, Rishi, he unabashedly obliges us. "He is very naive. Humble and down to earth, he is under the misconception that just because he is a nice person, everyone else is as good and helpful as he is. As the story progresses, that perception is corrected. He realises that the world bears a stark contrast to how he pictured it and it is a coming of age experience for him to understand that no one, barring a few exceptions, will support you in this world. He wants to bare his heart to someone he likes but he lacks *chutzpah* and hence he has some trouble communicating his feelings. He goes on to meet an online caregiver, Wild Butterfly, portrayed by Elnaz

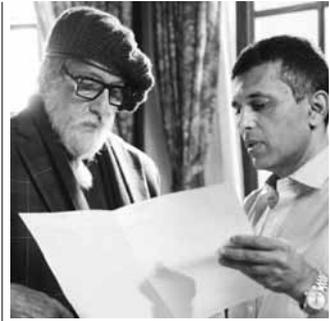
was the most challenging project that has come my way. On the first day of the shoot, I could not really understand the process that was underway; you could very well say that I was clueless. I had a tough time dealing with the fact that I did not get to interact with my co-actors for a major chunk of the production. For scenes in the series, where I am shown interacting with someone using my computer, their lines were read to me and I cannot explain how difficult it is to respond to someone else's dialogue when they are not around. The reactions that come naturally, by responding to someone else's dialogue, or before and after your own dialogue had to be consciously expressed. It was extremely challenging to create those reactions by way of imagination, and you would get tired of counting the retakes we did," he chuckled.



"All in all, production was a painstaking process. But that is a part and parcel of life. If you want something worth cherishing, you have to

Norouzi, who provides some abstract guidance, of sorts. You have to witness how he goes on to gain some *chutzpah* which changes his life," he expressed.

We ask Manjot for his take on the internet, whether it is a curse or a boon, and he said, "I think just about everything has its pros and cons. In moderation, everything is good. Frankly, I feel that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. But those disadvantages are potent and can ruin someone's life. Talking in particular about social media, we all know what trolling is and it has also been represented in the show. Now, while at face value it might be disregarded but it may result in a chain reaction of sorts which may lead to some serious consequences. I believe that is partly why people subconsciously choose to not reveal their real selves on social media. However, once again, the advantages cannot be ignored. We all have seen how the internet proved to be a lifesaver for scores of people against the backdrop of the pandemic, earlier this year."



'It would be wise to wait'

Veteran producer ANAND PANDIT says anticipated blockbusters like *Chehre* will hit the big screen only when the circumstances are conducive

Veteran producer Anand Pandit has put the release of his much-anticipated film, *Chehre*, starring Amitabh Bachchan, on hold and says most production houses would like to wait for conducive circumstances before they release potential blockbusters.

"The industry has a tremendous amount of resilience and patience and we know that a pandemic is not the right time to take unnecessary risks. I am waiting for the government's directives regarding the opening of theatres and then will take a call as to when *Chehre* will be released," he says.

Pandit, who has worked to

speed up the vaccination drive within the industry and helped create oxygen centres across Mumbai, is well aware of the dangers posed by a possible third wave of COVID-19. He voices his thoughts, "At this time, the more careful we are, the better it will be for all concerned. Yes, the industry needs to go back to work and it is already doing that to some extent but the exhibitors are an important part of the ecosystem and till they can open the theatres to full capacity, we cannot say that we have truly turned a corner. Hopefully, better times are ahead and we can go back to the movies the way we once did, sooner than later."

CELEB CHAT 15 MINUTES

The fight isn't over

Actor ÉDGAR RAMÍREZ advises everyone to be cautious, in light of the increase in cases of extremely contagious variants of COVID-19

Venezuelan actor Edgar Ramirez wants people to understand that although the world is starting to come out of the pandemic, the fight is not yet over.

"Many families, including mine, continue to be affected terribly. At this very moment I have family members dying of COVID, so it is very important that we remain alert and attentive to this global health hazard," he said in a remote interview from Los Angeles.

While he did not specify which relatives he was referring to or whether they were, he stressed the importance of avoiding fake news, trusting science and getting vaccinated.

"Remember that our grandparents and our parents defeated polio and smallpox with vaccines and that it is very important to be very careful because in times of fear there is a lot of misinformation. We need to trust science and follow the recommendations and be very responsible with the way we handle information in times of fear and uncertainty," Ramirez shared.

With White House officials stating that



vaccination drives are being ramped up, hospitals in some US states, where COVID-19 cases are soaring, are running out of space because of the delta variant, which is spreading with incredible efficiency."

Ramirez advised caution against the spread of COVID-19 while promoting Disney's upcoming film *Jungle Cruise*, in which he plays the villainous Spanish conquistador Aguirre opposite Dwayne Johnson and Emily Blunt.

Jungle Cruise, an adventure film inspired by the iconic Disneyland theme park ride of the same name, opens on July 30 in US theaters and on Disney+ with premier access.

Ramirez said that being in this film "means a lot" to him because he grew up watching Disney movies. He also hinted at the possibility of a sequel or new franchise.

"It's beautiful to be part of the Disney universe in such an iconic movie which we'll hope becomes the adventure saga of this decade," he shared.

Ranveer Brar recently joined the Clubhouse app to be a part of the *Aman ki Asha* campaign. In the series, Brar talks about how India and Pakistan share history, culture, language, and cuisine and how food has the power to blur the differences between the two.

Brar shares details of the show and how India and Pakistan have a lot in common when it comes to food culture.

- ◆ Tell us about your debut on Clubhouse and being a part of *Aman ki Asha* series?
It feels fantastic to debut on Clubhouse. I think it's a great platform. As a kid I've always been fascinated by audio media, having grown up listening to a radio. The power of audio has been a big driving force in my life and it's good to see audio coming back to the forefront again. So, yes, I am excited to be a part of it.
- ◆ Your recent video, where you posted the recipe of *Lahori malai kofee*, also spoke about the fact that food builds between two different countries/cultures, how do you connect yourself with different cultures?
I'd say it's serendipity that I put up a recipe of *Lahori malai kofee* when I did and spoke about Punjab on both sides of the border, and then *Aman ki Asha* came up. For me, as a chef, and a food explorer, it's important to connect with culture as much as with cuisine. Food doesn't stand alone. It has evolved and continues to evolve along with geo-social-political factors. Hence, when I study the food history and culture, it's an evolution of any region, it helps me connect to the dish better.
- ◆ India and Pakistan practise a similar food culture. According to you what are the similarities or differentiation?
A: With respect to similarities, both countries share similar climates, terrain and agriculture and the last one is the dominant factor behind what you eat. We've grown up on this side of Punjab, listening to stories

Mixing it up

Celebrity chef RANVEER BRAR talks about similarities in the food cultures of India and Pakistan



about the other side, more so, in terms of food. The similarities lie with the spices, spice-mixing and elaborate cooking methods that are primarily born out of similarities in climate and agriculture.

◆ Your favourite dish from Pakistan?
A: My favourite dish is *Mugh choley*, a dish I got introduced to in New York.

◆ You are one of the fastest-growing content creators in the culinary space with over 5 million followers on your social media platforms. How is the transition to digital space treating you?
Social media or digital medium, in general, helps me express myself beyond a format and showcase content unlike on television or other mediums. The volatility that social media brings with it is an advantage and allows you to start afresh each day despite making mistakes. I'd say, I'm very trend-agnostic but platform-friendly. For me, trends are relatively short-lived, you just have to



continuously say what you are saying, do what you are passionate about and keep finding newer ways of being in touch with people who want to be in touch with you.

◆ How was your experience cooking with celebs in *You Got Chef! Season 3*?
It was a fun experience, to say the least. Given the hard times over the past year, it's great to reconnect with people in the physical space, cook in a different setup. All the celebs I cooked with were super fun, especially Arjun Kapoor. And Myles Carroll's highball concoctions are the icing on the cake.

◆ How has your journey in the industry been so far?
When you are truly passionate about something, you just pursue it wholeheartedly. I am someone who started by romancing food in the lanes of Lucknow, roughing it up and Munir Ustad's kebab stall and worked my way up the ranks. All I knew through it all, was that I was doing what I love and wanted to do it for the rest of my life. And I've always believed that food is a giver. When you invest so much in it unconditionally, it will surely give back. Above all, God has been kind.

CONVERSATION 45 MINUTES

CAPTURING THE RIGHT SPIRIT

Actor MEGHNA MALIK realised that Usha Rani Nehwal is a woman of substance after playing the character in *Saina*. By AYUSHI SHARMA



If not as Farah in *Chalte Chalte* or Tulika from *Pagglait*, one would, undoubtedly, remember actor Meghna Malik as Annaji of *Na Aana Is Des Laado* and Usha Rani Nehwal from the biopic *Saina*. Before the world television premiere of the film, Malik gets candid about her preparation process, a hunger that drives her to the next role, and much more. Excerpts:

Q You must have spent a lot of time with Ushaji to get into the skin of character...

Well, the fact is that I was not able to meet Ushaji but Amolji (Gupte) met Saina and her parents. He was my guiding light here. I prepared by watching a lot of her interviews. I was shown many old pictures of Saina and Ushaji. Right from her dressing sense, aura, dialect, energy to the way she reacts to certain situations and the bond that she shares with Saina, I noticed every tiny detail about Ushaji.

Let me share one instance that I clearly remember. When I was shown her old family pictures, I noticed that Ushaji had a habit of carrying a bag with her at all times. It was because she was very cautious about Saina's needs. In the film, you would have noticed her style of carrying a bag. Just like how mothers are, Ushaji always had the best interest of Saina in her mind. She is somebody who is unburdened by the expectation of perfection.

Ushaji herself was a sports person, a district-level badminton player. I can recall another small but important detail about her; she used to always put on sports shoes on *salwar kurtas*, exuding remarkable confidence. Even without meeting her in person, I know that she is a woman of substance, comfortable in her own shoes. I have tried hard to capture all these intricacies.

There's one sequence in the film where the mother (me) slaps the child (Saina) because she made some wrong move in the tournament. This incident actually happened, and I got to know it while watching Ushaji and Saina's interview, where they discussed this episode. Ushaji told Saina 'ary maine toh halke se

mara tha.' But Saina responds by saying, 'Nahi nahi bhut zor se mara tha, apko yaad nahi hai'. And they were crazily laughing about it. From this interview, I got to know the bond that the mother-daughter share with each other. These were some of the points that I have tried bringing it out into the portrayal.

Q How was your experience of playing such a boisterous character?

The experience was super fun. It was really amazing to capture the spirit of a mother, who has been always there for her daughter. She has been there to motivate her, scold her when she's wrong, praise her for her achievements, and support her for her failures. She was there to ensure that she does not get distracted from anything. There were really beautiful dialogues in the film, which truly conveyed her spirit.

Q You have been a part of this industry for nearly two decades. What's your process of picking a film?

You are sounding as if *mere charon taraf scripts hi scripts rehti ho* (laughs). Sometimes, it's the money because, of course, you need to pay your bills; sometimes, it's the ensemble cast, production house or at times because of the director... I mean it depends on the project. For example, when I did *Pagglait*, it was a very small part and it got edited even further, but it was about the script. I had really loved it. And here, in *Saina*, the character, script, director, everything was amazing. Ushaji coming from Haryana, I could easily relate to that landscape. It was almost to the point where I made Amolji believe to cast me in the film. I said 'aap or kisi ko le hi nahi sakte, yeh toh mujhe hi karna hai'. And he said, 'yehi Usha Rani ki spirit hai jo mujhe chahiye'.

Q From *Chalte Chalte* to *Saina*. How would you describe your transition?

(After a long pause, she says...) Over the years, the journey has been great. As I said, at times you get very small parts,



'IT WAS ALMOST TO THE POINT WHERE I MADE AMOLJI BELIEVE TO CAST ME IN SAINA. I SAID 'AAP OR KISI KO LE HI NAHI SAKTE, YEH TOH MUJHE HI KARNA HAI'. AND HE SAID, 'YEHI USHA RANI KI SPIRIT HAI JO MUJHE CHAHIYE''

and other times, you get interesting roles, where you actually want to capture the soul of the character. But I feel you have to be really lucky to always get meaty roles where you can actually bite into them and relish. It's not always like this, at least with me. I consider myself a student even today. I am still learning. The more challenging role, the more confident you eventually get. You feel happy about the learning process. I strongly feel that the audience should love what you do, and you must enjoy the process while you do it. And I have always believed that the journey is often more beautiful than the destination.

I want to do so much more. I want to play different characters, and learn from them. I don't think I have accomplished anything yet. But I still feel lucky that people recognise me. God has been kind to me that way. I am this person who never gets disappointed by rejections. I learn and move on. I believe in focusing on tomorrow. It's not necessary that every time that you want something, will come your way. But what you can do is: Do your best to achieve it. I can only put in the hard work, rest is upon luck.

(The film premieres on Zee Cinema on Sunday, July 25, 12 noon.)



A full-on entertainer

Filmmaker KARAN MALHOTRA says that *Shamsher* is a visual extravaganza with complex human emotions. By TEAM VIVA

Filmmaker Karan Malhotra, who has directed the much-awaited big-screen entertainer *Shamsher*, reveals the film to be a visual spectacle for the audience.

He says, "I will be celebrating my birthday by finalising the mix of *Shamsher*, a vision I have cherished for some time now. I can't wait to share this film with you all. As a filmmaker, I have been fortunate enough to be able to tell stories that I would like to see as an audience and *Shamsher* is definitely that kind of a story. It is a visual extravaganza with complex human emotions and it deserves to be on the big screen where people have, for years, had a truly wholesome cinematic experience of watching Hindi feature films."

Malhotra feels lucky to have found the right team for this action entertainer and he highlights Ranbir Kapoor to be a 'generation-defining actor'.

He says, "I'm fortunate to have found a steadfast producer in Aditya Chopra and an all-determined cast and crew for *Shamsher* who have always been by my side right from the word go. Ranbir is a generation-defining actor and has given his best to *Shamsher*. Varun Dhawan plays her strength and compliments him beautifully in the film. As far as Sanjay (Dutt) is concerned, you are in for a surprise."

Karan believes that *Shamsher* celebrates everything that a pan-Indian Hindi film stands for and it will appeal to all audience segments who would want to watch good cinema on the big screen post-pandemic.

Karan says, "I have grown up on quintessential Hindi cinema and I wanted to create a true blue Hindi film that everyone can enjoy in theatre. I feel confident that we have achieved an entertainer that will appeal to everyone. We are all waiting eagerly for the COVID-19 situation to become better in our country and the plan of the release of the film in the grandest way possible."

IMMERSIVE 30 MINUTES

Create the future

RAHUL CHAKRABORTY shares that it is painful to see visual artists not getting royalty

Indian watercolour artist Rahul Chakraborty says that the art world is still struggling to survive the impact of lockdowns, travel bans and social distancing, one and a half years into the lockdown. Add to it the absence of artist royalties, and the challenges increase even more for the community in India.

"It brings with it such a scenario that there are no more physical exhibitions, no more physical workshops/classes, and still artists have to continue to earn enough to live. It's painful to see that the creator is not getting any royalty for their art pieces, whereas buyers and sellers earn exponential amounts of value in terms of art and money," he says.

Chakraborty, who now works as the COO of art-tech organisation, Jumbish, quit his financially stable nine-to-five job to become a full time artist, notwithstanding the financial uncertainties of an artist's life. He has also established his own art school called RahulOnkon. He says his artistic traits were considerably influenced by Fabiano InAcquarello, and has become the Asia - Continental Admin of the International Watercolor Museum platform.

"For the art domain, the lockdown presents an unprecedented challenge, but it has also brought a huge opportunity to grow as new ways to reach the audience via online can be done by the artist themselves. In the last couple of years, multitudes of online galleries, platforms, marketplaces and even social media shops have started distributing and selling artworks through the internet. A great opportunity for artists everywhere to share their art and broaden their audience. But the competition is tough, and it isn't always easy to understand how to make your art visible." "Fortuitous artists need to educate and upgrade themselves about technology and its implications. They need to open up their outlook for the NFT platform. In the coming days, NFT is going to be the gamechanger. Early adopters



can have an extra edge in this era. I believe probable art buyers would be the millennials, who are now in their twenties. We need to make our art visible to those platforms/mediums where our would-be buyers are," says the artist.

Speaking about the concept of artist royalties, he explains, "Artist re-sale rights or Droit De Suite, as known in French terminology, is both an example of an economic right as well as an extension of the personhood theory of Copyright Law, which emphasises upon a work representing the character and personality of the artist/author. It becomes an essential part of moral rights, particularly for visual artists."

"This permits the authors of artistic works to benefit from the rising value of the



work, due to the nature of an artwork being one, wherein, value appreciates with time, popularity and its varied interpretation. The art market has been argued to be too volatile to predict when or to what

extent a piece of artwork may rise in value, if it does at all, and it needs exposure and multiple sales to get to such a point. Artists may initially sell their unique, one piece, artwork for a lower cost, however, the value may appreciate upon garnering popularity, and it is imperative to not jeopardise their interest in the same."

According to Sonam Chandwani of KS Legal and Associates, information about copyright and royalties is not a widely-discussed topic in the creative world, especially the art market. The lawyer says that artists are eligible to get royalties upon the resale of their works.

"The issue of royalty for visual artists has been long overdue. Like musicians and authors, visual artists deserve to

be compensated for their intellectual property and today with blockchain technology, it seems very possible. This will undoubtedly be a positive move for the welfare of the artist community. This is a necessary disruption that requires to happen to bring in more parity for the artist in the secondary art market."

"According to me this is inevitable — if not in the immediate but definitely in the distant future. The bigger question is how it will shape the market. The general perception is that blockchain enabled royalty system will challenge the intermediaries, like galleries, curators and dealers, because it will force transparency in an industry where much of the market thrives on information asymmetry. This might not necessarily be the case. A greater system generated transparency will bring in more professionalism within all the players in the ecosystem," Lubna Sen, art curator and founder of The Art Route, shares.

How is Jumbish tackling the issue? "Piracy, no royalty and a long gestation period are very common challenges faced by an artist. We bring a solution to these through our flagship project — JDAT. This provides better and paperless provenance for our art collectors. Remember royalty and provenance are interrelated. Provenance is a record of ownership of that art work, which includes the owner's history and the painting details."

To keep track of it, Jumbish has brought a microchip called Jumbish Digital Authentication Tag (JDAT) which is a highly secured chip and it can be read by any NFC reader device. JDAT apparently looks like a thin paper, once it pastes at the back side of the painting then the painting becomes itself an authentication certificate."

With pioneering technology like JDAT, the artist can expect to get paid a predetermined percentage of the resale amount, as soon as the sale is sealed. —IANS

More than what meets the eye

Telling the story of one of the greatest revolutionaries of the Indian freedom struggle, CHANDRASHEKHAR AZAD, the biography — *Azad: The Invincible* — is a slice of history told in an anecdotal form. By TEAM VIVA

His archival photographs depict him as a La sturdy Indian man with a hand twirling his moustache. We also know him for his role in the Kakori train robbery and the Legislative Assembly Bombing of 1929. But there is more to Chandrashekar Azad (1906-1931) than most know. On his 115th birth anniversary on July 23, Garuda Prakashan launched *Azad: The Invincible*, a biographical novel translated from Kannada to English, building a comprehensive portrait of the independent revolutionary luminary through anecdotes, letters, his contemporaries' biographical references, and news sources from pre- and post-independence India.

Written by legendary Kannada author Dr. Krishnamurthy and translated by Manjula Tekal, author of *Devayani*, the book details Azad's life and times, from being born in a small name village to poverty-stricken parents, running away from home as a young boy, becoming a coolie in Mumbai, learning Sanskrit in Varanasi to his beginnings in the freedom struggle through participation in the Non-Cooperation movement and suffering flopping as a punishment.

The book's original Kannada version, titled *Ajeya*, was published several years ago and has seen numerous reprints. Now, it is coming to the readers in English. Azad later became a revolutionary and commanded a revolutionary movement in North India for around a decade. Chosen to command the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) after the death penalty of Ramprasad Bismil — quotes from whose biography is among the many rich research material in the book — Azad was responsible for the

political assassination of Saunders to avenge the death of Lala Lajpat Rai, who was beaten up brutally while he was protesting peacefully in 1928. He was also responsible for orchestrating the bombing in the legislative assembly to protest the introduction of two highly oppressive and unpopular bills designed to increase the dictatorial powers of the British in India.

The book also details the politics at that time and looks into the questions like how and why he moved from being a Gandhian to a revolutionary, choosing the path of armed revolution instead as the means of combating the British colonial rule.

"*Azad: The Invincible* is the exciting, thrilling, and ever-inspiring saga of Chandrashekar Azad, the embodiment of courage, conviction and heroism of the Indian freedom movement which is stranger than fiction. It keeps the reader on tenterhooks from the first page to the last and leaves the reader with a sense of awe," says author Dr. Babu Krishnamurthy. The young martyr, who roared "Main Azad hoon... *Azad Hae Rahoona* (I am free or I will remain free)", and lived up to his word, when he engaged with the police in the Alfred Park of Allahabad (now Prayagraj). The book chronicles the episode in every single detail and also what happened to Azad's parents.

The book is a slice of history rendered in an easy anecdotal form. In narrating the story of Chandrashekar Azad, Dr. Babu Krishnamurthy tells the story of his times, his friends and associates, their struggles, and achievements. It describes the values Azad inherited, tried to uphold, and indeed lived by throughout his young life; shares translator Manjula Tekal.

The book was launched in a virtual panel discussion by the author, translator and Garuda Prakashan co-founders Sankrant Sanu and Ankur Pathak.



The Tokyo Olympics were declared open in an eerily empty stadium on Friday after defying a year's pandemic delay and lingering coronavirus threats that will make them perhaps the most unusual Games in history.

Japan's Emperor Naruhito made the announcement against the backdrop of thousands of vacant seats at Tokyo's 68,000-capacity Olympic Stadium, after Covid-19 forced organisers to ban spectators at all but a handful of venues.

"I declare open the Games of Tokyo," said the monarch, wearing a white surgical mask.

The stripped-down ceremony, simplified to reduce coronavirus risks, unfolded in front of fewer than 1,000 VIPs and several thousand athletes.

A reduced parade of about 5,700 athletes, far lower than the usual numbers, filed into the stadium, not all of them socially distanced but all wearing masks.

International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach acknowledged the Games would be "very different from what all of us had imagined."

But "today is a moment of hope," he said in an address.

The 16-day Games, with 339 Gold medals across 33 sports, have a surreal air after the pandemic compelled organisers to make this the first Games with virtually no spectators.



INDIA'S SCHEDULE ON JULY 24 (ALL TIMES IST)

TIME	EVENTS	ATHLETES
05:00 AM IST	Shooting: 10m Air Rifle Women's Qualification	Apurvi Chandela & Elavenil Valarivan
06:00 AM IST	Archery: Mixed Team 1/8 Eliminations	Deepika Kumari & Pravin Jadhav
06:30 AM IST	Hockey: Men's Pool A	New Zealand vs India
07:15 AM IST	Shooting: 10m Air Rifle Women's Final	
07:30 AM IST	Rowing: Lightweight Men's Double Sculls Heat	Arjun Jat Lal & Arvind Singh
	Judo: Women 48 kg Elimination Round of 32	Shushila Devi Limbam
08:30 AM IST	Table Tennis: Mixed Doubles Round of 16	Sharath Kamal & Manika Batra
08:50 AM IST	Badminton: Men's Doubles Group Stage	Satwiksairaj & Chirag Shetty
09:00 AM IST	Tennis: Men's Singles First Round	Sumit Nagal
09:30 AM IST	Badminton: Men's Singles Group Stage	B Sai Praneth
	Shooting: 10m Air Pistol Men's Qualification	Abhishek Verma & Saurabh Chaudhary
10:20 AM IST	Weightlifting: Women's 49kg Final	Saikhom Mirabai Chanu
12:00 PM IST	Shooting: 10m Air Pistol Men's Final	
12:15 PM IST	Table Tennis: Women's Singles Round 1	Manika Batra
01:00 PM IST	Table Tennis: Women's Singles Round 1	Sutirtha Mukherjee
03:54 PM IST	Boxing: Men's 69kg - Round of 32	Vikas Krishan
05:15 PM IST	Hockey: Women's Pool A	Netherlands vs India

LIVE ON SONY TEN & SIX NETWORK



US' First Lady Jill Biden speaks with French President Emmanuel Macron; WHO Director-General TA Ghebreyesus arrives at the opening ceremony

After struggles, sacrifices & success, Indian shooters eye Olympic glory

Tokyo: Entering the Tokyo Olympics on the back of an unprecedented run that began sometime after the horrific meltdown in the Rio de Janeiro Games, Indian shooters begging a medal or two, or even three to four, is a tangible reality.

All of the 15 shooters are capable of winning medals, but few are seen as sure shot to secure podium finishes in the events that start on Saturday.

One among them is the highly-skilled Saurabh Chaudhary, who will have a few Olympic and world champions standing in his way to glory at sports' biggest showpiece.

Alongside Abhishek Verma, Chaudhary will be part of the first competition day action in the men's 10m air pistol event.

But before that, the fate of Apurvi Chandela and Elavenil Valarivan — in the women's 10m air rifle event — will be decided.

A good omen for either of them means India will have won their first medal in these Games. Both Chandela and Elavenil will enter the competition with plenty to look forward to, despite the occasional blips here and there.

The 21-year-old Elavenil, world number 1 and considered one of the country's finest rifle shooters after some fine performances since breaking into the senior team, will certainly fancy her chances.

On the second competition day, India will have the sensational Manu Baker and the hard-working Yashaswini Singh Deswal representing the country in the women's 10m air pistol competition.



The women's 10m pistol event has attracted maximum number of entries but that should not worry the two Indian shooters given their skills and consistency over the years.

In the men's 10m air rifle event, India will have the teenaged Divyansh Singh Panwar and the experienced Deepak Kumar, with the former especially seen as a strong contender after his superb run in the men's 10m air pistol competition.

Mirabai favourite to open India's account

Tokyo: Former world champion Mirabai Chanu will be in focus for her high medal-winning chances at the Tokyo Olympics as the Indian hopes to exorcise the ghosts of a disappointing Rio Games and write a new chapter in the country's weightlifting history.

Competing in the 49kg category, Chanu is being considered a sure shot medal prospect for India as her personal best of 205kg is only second to China's Hou Zhihui's effort of 213kg in the eight-woman field.

The hype is similar to the one five years ago in Rio, where Chanu could manage only one lift from her six attempts and thus could not get an overall total in

In the middle and towards the end of the shooting events too India have in its ranks strong contenders in the form of Ravi Karnobat, Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, Anjum Moudgil, Tejaswini Sawant and the seasoned Sanjeev Rajput, besides the two skeet shooters in Mairaj Ahmad Khan and Angad Vir Singh Bajwa.

The likes of Karnobat, who has won a Silver and Gold in the ISF World Cups in New Delhi and Oisjeik, Croatia respectively, world number one in 10m air rifle Divyansh Singh Panwar and Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar are all gunning for medals. PTI

women's 48kg event. The diminutive Manipuri will desperately hope for a different script this time round, one that involves a podium.

While Chanu will have one eye on her competitors' barbells, the 26-year-old's main battle will be with herself. In recent times, her performance in the snatch session has often proved to be her downfall in important competitions.

Chanu has managed to match Zhihui, the favourite to win the Gold, in the clean and jerk category, but her personal best of 88kg in snatch pales in comparison to the Chinese lifter's world record effort of 96kg.

Even USA's Delacruz Jourdan Elizabeth has a better personal best — 89kg — than the Indians, while Aishwary Cantika of Indonesia had managed to pip Chanu to win a Bronze in the snatch session at the Asian championship in April.

It is expected that Chanu will try to better her world record lift of 119kg in the clean and jerk category, should the competition demand it.

Interestingly, Chanu has set the highest entry weight of 210kg, which is five kilograms more than her personal best, followed by Zhihui (205kg), who had lifted 213kg (96+117kg) at the Asian championship. PTI

Indian archers brace up for Korean challenge

Tokyo: World No 1 Deepika Kumari was inconsistent but the male archers' performance was simply underwhelming in the Olympics' ranking rounds, prompting a rejig of India's mixed pair combination on a topsy-turvy day at the Yumenoshima Park on Friday.

The Koreans, who stayed away from all International competitions in the build-up to the Olympics since 2019, reigned supreme, including a top-three finish in the women's section where young sensation An San shattered a 25-year-old Olympic record.

The Indian men's team of Atanu Das, Pravin Jadhav and Tarundeep Rai, however, did not post particularly impressive scores and just about managed to sneak into top 10 in the team rankings.

Deepika slipped from fourth at the halfway mark to finish ninth with 663 points which was way below her best International ranking score of 686. "I feel my performance was good as well as bad...It was in between I would say," Deepika said.

Deepika's biggest challenge is likely to be in the last-eight where she might run into San who is making her Olympic debut. "I want to show my best performance here and I will show that in my next rounds," Deepika vowed to come back strong.



The mixed team, is the country's best bet to win an elusive Olympic medal in archery.

India had identical rankings of ninth in both men's team and mixed pair competitions.

Deepika will not partner her husband Das after the top Indian male archer slipped behind Olympic debutant Jadhav.

Jadhav was the best among the Indian trio with 656 points for a 31st place finish, three points ahead of Das, while Rai, in his third Olympics appearance, took the 37th spot among 64 archers.

India had the option to send entries of Das and Deepika, who recently won a Gold medal together at the Paris World Cup, but the federation went ahead with Jadhav based on his current form.

"Simply put, we picked Jadhav based on his current form, it's no rocket science," Archery Association of India official Virendra Sachdeva, who is accompanying the team said.

In all likelihood, the Indian mixed pair would run into top seed Korea in the quarters after overcoming eighth-ranked Chinese Taipei.

Placed in the same half as India, top seed Korea will open their main event against 16th ranked Bangladesh.

The men's trio's combined performance was just enough to finish inside top-10 as they totalled 1961 for a ninth place finish in their first Olympic appearance since London 2012.

The Indian men's team might run into top seed Korea, who got a bye into the quarters, should they beat eighth-ranked Kazakhstan in the opening round.

In individual section, Jadhav will face 34th ranked Galsan Bazarzhapov of Russia, Das will take on Deng Yu-Cheng of Chinese Taipei, while Rai's opening challenge will be against Ukrainian Oleksii Hunbin. PTI

Hockey teams start campaign

PTI ■ TOKYO

The men would be seeking to reclaim a glorious past, while the women would be aiming to script some history of their own when the two Indian hockey teams begin their Olympic campaign on Saturday with expectations from both at a high.

Men will be up against eighth-ranked New Zealand, followed by the women's clash with the Netherlands.

With a current world ranking of four, the Indian men are considered a bright medal prospect this time around in Tokyo.

ALL EYES ON VIKAS

The seasoned Vikas Krishan (69kg) will open India's boxing campaign on Saturday against local favourite Sewonres Quincy Mensah Okwazwa.

He will be the lone Indian boxer in action but the opening day of boxing competitions at the Ryogoku Kokugikan arena.

Can paddlers do the unthinkable again?



Tokyo: The Indian table tennis contingent produced an unthinkable performance at the Asian Games, considered as 'mini-Olympics' by the players. Three years down the line, can they pull off another miracle at the Tokyo Games?

Asian Games may have the presence of continental powerhouses like China, Korea and Japan but the Olympics are a different ball game altogether.

Nevertheless, India exceeded all expectations to win a men's team Bronze and mixed doubles Bronze in Jakarta, ending the country's medal drought at the Asian Games, but getting close to even one medal here would be a gargantuan task.

Before the paddlers arrived in Tokyo, the only little hope was in the mixed doubles category but an opener against the world number one duo from Chinese Taipei had made the challenge a lot tougher for A Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra.

Sharath along with G Sathyan has also been handed a tough draw in the men's singles competition.

The 20th seed is drawn to meet reigning champion Ma Long in round three provided he clears the second round (first round bye) in his fourth

Tennis players need miracle to go deep

Tokyo: Indian tennis players need no less than a miraculous performance to get close to the medal rounds as an under-prepared team of Santa Mirza and debutant Ankita Raina faces a tough Ukrainian challenge in the opener while Sumit Nagal has got a tough draw in the singles competition.

Mirza, who is making a record fourth Olympic appearance, and debutant Raina are going into the Olympics without playing a single competitive match together this year, which is far from ideal preparation. They will open their campaign against Ukraine's twin sisters Nadia and Lyudmyla Kichenok.

In the men's singles, Nagal is extremely lucky to get an entry into the Olympics but his recent performances do not inspire confidence and he faces Asian Games champion Denis Istomin in his first round.

There is a possibility of him getting past the 34-year-old Uzbek but the Indian may not face world number two and Australian opener runner-up Danil Medvedev from Russia and that could be end of the road for him. PTI

Rain break does the trick for SL

Colombo: India's young batsmen paid for their profligacy and inexperience as Sri Lanka's spinners made best use of a rain break to dismiss the visitors for a lowly 225 in 43.1 overs in the third and final ODI here on Friday.

With the series pocketed, India coach Rahul Dravid jiggled the bowling line-up along with a couple of changes in the batting order, but it was evident that the lack of game awareness became their undoing on the day.

The rain-break at the end of the 23rd over, which reduced the game to 47-overs per side, helped the home team. The pitch suddenly had a bit of freshness and the ball would both grip and skid, making life easier for the spinners, who rocked the Indian middle-order.

The latest trend of young batters not being able to cope up with slow bowlers was on show as the middle-order looked clueless against left-arm spinner Praveen Jayawickrama (3/59 in 10 overs) and off-spinner Akila Dananjaya (3/44 in 10 overs), who, in his second spell, blew away the lower middle order with turn and bounce.



However, Prithvi Shaw (49 off 49 balls) dazzled with his breathtaking array of strokes, while Sanju Samson again made batting look easy in his run-a-ball 46.

They added 74 runs in 13.2 overs and one can't fault anyone who was dreaming of something big as the duo injected life in a dead rubber. Post the break, when India resumed at 147 for three, the spinners suddenly started getting more turn and the rain had spiced up the pitch. PTI