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STOKES, BUTTLER, SAM  
BACK FOR INDIA TESTS

BHUBANESWAR, THURSDAY JULY 22 2021; PAGES 12 ₹4



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## Lack of O<sub>2</sub>: Row over Govt claim of zero casualties

Opp targets Centre; Cong embarrassed by own States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A massive controversy has erupted over the Centre's claim in the Rajya Sabha that no one died due to lack of oxygen during the second Covid-19 wave. While the Opposition targeted the Centre, the Congress was left red-faced as three of the States where it has stakes, towed the Centre's line.

Chhattisgarh where the Congress is in full majority Government, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra where the party is part of the coalition Government also claimed that no one died of oxygen shortage.

While former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said the Government's response reflected lack of sensitivity, Chhattisgarh



Health Minister TS Singh Deo said it's true that no one died in the State due to lack of oxygen as "we are an oxygen-surplus State."

Similarly Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut said the people who lost their loved ones due to oxygen shortage should "take the Union Government to court", while it's coalition partner NCP in Maharashtra represented by Health Minister Rajesh Tope, too, clarified that there was no record in the State of any death due to shortage of

oxygen during the two waves of the pandemic. "We have never said that because of shortage of oxygen a Covid-19 patient has died in any

hospital in the State. There is no record of any such case, nor have I made any statement to this effect. The fatalities that have occurred were due to co-morbidities or other medical ailments," Tope said, causing embarrassment to its major alliance partners Shiv Sena and the Congress which have been taking on the Narendra Modi Government over deaths due to lack of medical oxygen.

The Congress has accused Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar of misleading Parliament by giving "false information" that there were no deaths due to lack of oxygen during the second wave.

## Six officials of Monsanto on snooping list: Report

Names of ULFA, AASU leaders also crop up in tapping scandal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More names have tumbled out from Pegasus snoop gate of those who may have been victims of telephone tapping between 2018 and 2019. As per the reports, the phone numbers of six senior officials from Mahyco Monsanto Biotech (India) Pvt. Ltd and Monsanto India were under surveillance in 2018. The



ULFA leaders, AASU's leaders, and Assam's ultra outfit leaders' names have also cropped up in the phone tapping list along with names of many Ambedkarites, Dalit activists, and JNU student leaders involved in the Anti-CAA protests.

Meanwhile, international publications like *Le Monde* and The Washington Post reported President

of many countries, including French President Emmanuel Macron and the Moroccan King, were also targeted by the Israeli spyware snooping.

The Wire portal's report on Wednesday suggested that Monsanto was placed on the snooping list around the time the BJP-Shiv Sena Government in Maharashtra set up a special investigation team (SIT) to probe companies that were allegedly selling or releasing unapproved herbicide-tolerant (HT) transgenic cotton, or Bt cotton, seeds in the State. A few months prior to the formation of the SIT, in October 2017, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) had also set up the Field Inspection and Scientific Evaluation Committee (FISEC), under the Department of Biotechnology, to probe the proliferation of unlawful seeds, said the report.

## 'No State sent data on toll due to dearth of O<sub>2</sub>'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of the controversy over the Centre's reply in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday that no death had occurred on account of oxygen shortage in the country, the BJP on Wednesday sought to defend the Government's conclusion saying "no State sent any data about patients dying due to oxygen shortage."

BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra accused Opposition leaders, including Congress scion Rahul Gandhi and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, of doing politics on the matter, and said the States where these parties are in power have claimed that no one died there due to lack of oxygen.

The BJP leader said Opposition-ruled States claimed in courts that there was no death due to shortage of oxygen during the second

Covid-19 IN INDIA	
TOTAL CASES:	3,12,56,793 (+41,637)
DEATHS:	4,19,021 (+510)
RECOVERED:	3,04,21,762 (+38,742)
ACTIVE:	4,03,610
MAHA:	62,37,755 (+8,159)
KERALA:	32,05,197 (+17,481)
K'TAKA:	28,88,341 (+1,639)
TN:	25,41,168 (+1,891)
DELHI:	14,35,671 (+62)

Covid-19 wave and made similar assertions in their response to the Centre.

## CGD: Fatalities 10 times more than Govt figures

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The number of excess deaths in India during the Covid-19 pandemic could be as high as 49 lakh (4.9 million). A report titled "Three new estimates of India's all-cause excess mortality during the Covid-19 pandemic", said India's coronavirus death toll is ten times higher than the actual figure reported by the Union Health Ministry. As per the Health Ministry, India's

cumulative death toll stands at 414,482 — the world's third-highest after the US' 6,09,000 fatalities and Brazil's 5,42,000 casualties. The report has been prepared by the Washington-based think tank Center for Global Development (CGD) and is co-authored by India's former Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian, Abhishek Anand, from the Harvard University and Justin Sandefur, from the CGD.

## 369 new infections in BBSR

17 die; 235 recover

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Bhubaneswar on Tuesday registered 369 new Covid-19 positive cases. With this, the total positives' tally in the city surged to 96,791. Out of the new cases, 304 were local contacts and 65 quarantine cases.

The local contacts included 30 cases in Patia, 23 in Nayapalli, 17 each in Chandrasekharpur and Old Town, 14 in Khandagiri, 10 in Laxmisagar and nine in Baramunda.

The active cases stood at 1,611 in the city. Meanwhile, 17 more patients succumbed to the disease in the city, pushing the total death toll to 683. However, 253 persons recovered on the day, increasing the total recoveries to 94,476.



Following Covid norms: Jama Masjid wears a deserted look on Eid al-Adha during the ongoing pandemic in New Delhi on Wednesday Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

## Odisha's plea for coal royalty hike rejected

No mandatory provision in MMDR Act to revise rates every 3 years: Coal Min

PNS NEW DELHI: The Union Government once again made it clear that it is not going to increase the coal royalty, for which the Odisha Government has been fighting for a long period. Union Coal and Mines Minister Prahlad Joshi has informed this in the Rajya Sabha on Monday in a reply to a question raised by senior BJD MP Prasanna Acharya.

For the revision of the rates of royalty on coal and lignite, the Centre had constituted a Study Group on July 21, 2014 for the purpose of examining the issue of revision of present royalty rates on coal and lignite, Joshi said. "The Study Group decides the formula after considering various factors. The Study Group had submitted its report suggesting no change in the rates of royalty. The suggestion was accepted by the Government," the Union Minister said. The Odisha Government has received Rs 1,855.11 crore from coal royalty during Financial Year 2020-21, he informed. Presently, the rate of royalty on

coal is 14% (except the State of West Bengal). In case of West Bengal Royalty rates are fixed in the range from Rs 7 to Rs 2.5 per tonne. The royalty was last revised on May 10, 2012.

The Union Minister also informed Acharya that there is no mandatory provision in the Act to revise the rates of royalty every three years. "The proviso of Section 9(3) of the Mines and Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, provides that the Central Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, amend the second schedule (which specifies rates of royalty) so as to enhance or reduce the rate at which royalty shall be payable in respect of any mineral with effect from such date as may be specified in the notification, provided that the Central Government shall not enhance the rate of royalty in respect of any mineral more than once during any period of three year," he said quoting the provision of existing Act. The BJD Government has been fighting for revision of coal royalty since the Modi Government came to power. However, now it is yet again rejected by the Centre.

## State reports record 69 Covid deaths

TOTAL TOLL MOUNTS TO 5,241

1,927 NEW +VE CASES DETECTED; TPR 2.6%

MAX 498 CASELOAD IN KHORDDHA

1,943 PATIENTS RECOVER

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State on Tuesday registered 1,927 Covid-19 positive cases reported in last 24 hours in the 30 districts and the State pool, with which the total tally rose to 9,59,986.

A total of 72,061 samples were tested in the last 24 hours and the test positivity rate (TPR) was 2.6 per cent. Out of the new cases, 1,115 were from quarantine and 812 local contacts. Khordha district reported the day's highest 498 cases followed by Cuttack with 248, Jajpur and Puri 123 each and Baleswar 111. The districts which reported below 100 cases were: Jagatsinghpur 91,

Mayurbhanj 90, Dhenkanal 75, Kendrapada 73, Nayagarh 64, Angul 55, Sambalpur 33, Keonjhar 32, Bargarh 27, Rayagada 22, Bhadrak 19, Kandhamal 18, Nabarangpur 15, Balangir 11, Ganjam 10, Jharsuguda, Subarnapur and Koraput eight each, Boudh and Kalahandi seven each, Deogarh six, Nuapada five and Gajapati four.

Besides, 110 cases were reported from the State pool. Meanwhile, an all-time single-day high of 69 patients succumbed to the disease in the last 24 hours, surging the total death toll in the State to 5,241, the Health and Family Welfare Department said.

The maximum 22 deaths were reported from Khordha district followed by Sundargarh with 10, Bargarh seven, Angul six, Keonjhar five, Kendrapada four, Baleswar three, Bhadrak, Boudh, Ganjam, Nayagarh and Puri two each and Koraput and Subarnapur one each. However, another 1,943 patients recovered on the day, increasing the total recoveries to 9,36,950.

Suna Besha

## Trinity adorned with dazzling gold in Puri

SAROJ KUMAR MISHRA ■ PURI

Decorated in a huge quantum of gold ornaments, apart from beautiful costumes on their bodies, Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra displayed them to public sitting on their chariots during the Suna Besha ritual on Wednesday evening. However, public was prohibited to view the Suna Besha due to Covid restrictions.

As a result, the devotees could watch the attire live on their television only. For security of the gold attire, curfew was in force around the temple periphery with barricades in all passages to the Lions' Gate area so that nobody could enter unauthorised.

Although it was not made public about the varieties of invaluable and the exact weight used in the decorations due to security reasons, however, sources informed that many as 30 designs weighing around 150 kg of ornaments were used to decorate the deities. The



Lord Jagannath Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra displayed to public sitting on their chariots during Suna Besha ritual on Wednesday evening Ranjan ganguly | Pioneer

Suna Besha began late, almost an hour after the scheduled time of 4 pm. A limited number of servitors besides security forces and administrative officials were present near the deities. The fascinating attire of the Lords is also called Rajadhiraj or Raja Rajeswar Besha (king of kings). Among the five attires of Lords

observed in a year, this is the only decoration which is observed outside the temple with rest four within the shrine premises. Among designs used in the decoration, there were hands, feet, crowns, peacocks, forehead costume, ear rings, half square-shaped decorative necklaces etc. Besides, the third-eye on palate, conch,

Ritual held amid tight security; public darshan banned

wheel, lotus and mace in the hands were among the designs. There were also Padma, Sevati, Agasti, Kadamba, Kante and Champa made up of gold and jewels which symbolize the flowers that the deities are mostly fond of. In the past, deities used to wear 208 kg of 138 designs of ornaments. However, due to security reasons, few designs with less weight are used in the attire at present.

Earlier, the servitors carried the ornaments from Ratna Bhandar (Treasure trove) of Shreemandir to the Lions Gate, where chariots were parked. The Besha continued till 9 pm against the scheduled time of 5.30 pm. According to history, Suna Besha had begun during the period of monarch Kapilendra Dev in 1460 AD. He had brought with him a huge bounty of invaluable on 16 carts to Puri while returning triumphant after winning over some southern provinces. He later donated them to the Jagannath Temple for adorning the deities during Rath Yatra.



# Pegasus: Cong demands SC-monitored probe

## Submits memo to Governor

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) on Wednesday submitted a memorandum to Governor Prof Ganeshi Lal demanding a Supreme Court-monitored judicial enquiry into the spyware Pegasus phone hacking scandal.

The party said that while the Constitution of India protects the fundamental rights of every citizen of the country, it was adversely affected by the illegal and unconstitutional hacking of cell phones of the Constitutional authorities like Union Ministers, present and former heads of India's security forces, lawyers, journalists, social and political activists and senior leaders of Opposition. This is revealed through the exposure of the



unconstitutional utilisation of spyware Pegasus. "It is very much shocking as per the latest revelation that telephones of former Congress president Rahul Gandhi and his office staffs were also hacked and it was further reported that the spyware Pegasus was also being used to hack cell phones in the run-up to the general elections to Parliament of India in 2019," said PCC president Niranjan Patnaik, one of the signatories

of the memorandum, at a Press conference here. The senior leaders of the party who signed the memorandum demanded resignation of Union Home Minister Amit Shah over the issue and an SC-monitored enquiry into the scam. Rama Chandra Khuntia, Pradeep Majhi, Ganeswar Behera, Sarat Pattanayak and Sashmita Behera were among others who signed the memorandum.

## CSpur DAVians shine in NTSE

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In the prestigious National Talent Search Examination (NTSE) conducted by the Union Ministry of Education, 15 students from the DAV Public School, Chandrasekharpur here have qualified in the final round for the session 2019-20.

The performance registered is the highest for any individual school in Odisha. The SCERT and the NCERT conducted the exams in two rounds every year.

The achievers are Ambarish, Aryan, Bismit, Biswajeet, Om Prakash, Pratham Pratik, Seetal, Shubhangi, Srutija, Srijita, Stithi, Swastik Mohapatra, Swastik Pradhan, Swayam and Tathagat.

The students qualified in the NTSE are eligible for admission into prestigious institutions of the nation with attractive scholarships. The school authorities congratulated the meritorious students and their guide teacher Dr SD Singh for the remarkable feat.

# In Jaipur BJP leader held for killing husband

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Police detained a 38-year-old woman, who is a BJP leader, on Wednesday on the charge of killing her husband in Jaipur district. The accused was identified as Mamata Kuar of Ismailpur village under the Mangalpur police station.

She and her husband are BJP leaders of the district. A preliminary investigation revealed that asphyxiation is suspected to be the cause of death that occurred on Tuesday night, said Mangalpur police station IIC Inamulla Haque.

The younger sister and mother-in-law of the accused were sleeping in another room in their rented house. They suddenly were awake after hearing the screams of the deceased. They found the deceased in an unconscious state for which they rushed him



to the Community Health Centre (CHC) at Mangalpur where doctors declared him dead, added the police officer. The couple has a 12-year-old son. The accused unsuccessfully contested from the Zilla Parishad Zone-6 as BJP candidate in 2017. The motive behind the killing could not be ascertained immediately, said IIC Haque.

# Bijili delivers 3 cubs at Nandankanan

## First-delivered cub is stillborn

**BHUBANESWAR:** After five days of labour pain, lioness Bijili delivered three cubs at the Nandankanan Zoological Park near here in the wee hours on Wednesday. However, one cub was stillborn. Bijili first gave birth to the stillborn at 2.43 am. The second cub was born at 3.12 am and third at 3.38 am, informed Nandankanan Deputy Director Sanjeet Kumar. The two live cubs are healthy and both the lioness

and her babies have been kept under observation, the official said. Bijili impregnated with lion Samrat was suffering from labour pain for past five days. The zoo authorities had kept her under surveillance in the safari for delivery. Usually, a lioness gives birth within 104 days of conception. Sources said that the authorities had been eagerly waiting for Bijili's delivery as she had crossed due date. Bijili had been brought from the Indore Zoo in Madhya Pradesh on December 20, 2020 to increase lion population at Nandankanan.



# Odisha has got a new identity with Naveen's vision

## Says Badri Narayan Patra

SURAJ KUMAR MISHRA ■ BHUBANESWAR



would not allow this type of mismanagement to happen ever. He stressed upon disaster management and the motto being not a single life would be allowed to be lost in disaster.

Utmost care is being taken to prevent loss of life in any disaster. "His strong will has become fruitful in several disasters like Fani, Phailin, Titli, Amphan and floods or droughts alike. His strategy has emerged as a model and applauded by the world several times," Patra said.

Due to strong willpower and best management, all this could be possible. The Opposition's voice has been shut. This is the reason for which we are proud of our CM. Odisha has got a new identity with his long good deeds.

People are astonished when everywhere there is slowdown in economy and resources have crumbled, Odisha Government taking up developmental activities at a greater scale irrespective of huge expenses made in Covid management and dwindling taxable incomes. "This is magic of Naveen Patnaik," remarked Patra.

# Stone laid for community centre at city mosque

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A ceremony of foundation-stone laying for a community centre in the premises of the Capital Mosque at Unit-4 here was held last week. The programme was inaugurated by Rajya Sabha BJD member Amar Pattnaik. Muslim pilgrims would be benefitted by this community centre by availing all facilities free of cost.

Among others, Rajya Sabha BJD members Sujit Kumar, Muna Khan and Subash Singh, Bhubaneswar Central MLA Ananta Narayan Jena, for Kantabanjhi MLA Ayub Khan and Unit-4 Jama



Mosque president Sheikh Sakilur Rahman. Sheikh Abdul Kalam coordinated the event. On occasion, Chairman of Jazba Trust and famous social worker Safdar Hashim, Saha Nawaj and Samsur Rahman Khan were felicitated. Muslim community members of Jadupur, Sundarpada and Satya Vihar along with Corporators of Bhubaneswar, senior citizens and social workers joined the meeting.

## Rotary BBSR Central

# Jnanendra takes charge as president

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The installation ceremony of Dr Aryakumar Jnanendra, the new president of the Rotary Club of Bhubaneswar Central, was held in a spiritual atmosphere virtually here on Monday.

Eminent Rotarian and OPCC president Niranjan Patnaik graced the occasion as chief guest and extolled the members to serve the marginalised class of society in right earnest. Chief speaker and eminent Sanskrit ideologue and former Vice-Chancellor of Tirupati and KISS Universities expressed his con-

fidence that under the leadership of Jnanendra, the Rotary Club would be able to achieve a mission of serving the downtrodden. Guests of honour Swami Jagannathananda Saraswati of Dibya Jivan Sangha and former Vice-Chancellor and PDG of Rotary District 3262 Narendra Kumar Mishra blessed the new president and extended their moral support for any service activities of the club. The installation meeting was presided by the outgoing charter president and chairman of the XCET group of educational institutions Badrinath Patnaik, who handed over presidency to

## City housewife's murder

# Accused grilled by cops after release from hosp

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The accused in the murder of housewife Priyanka Priyadarshini on July 6 at Bhimatangi here was interrogated by the Airfield police after he was discharged from hospital on Wednesday.

The cops are likely to produce the accused Jagannath Pradhan in a local court after his grilling in connection with the incident, reports said.

Pradhan, a resident of Mangalpur in Jaipur district, was admitted to Capital Hospital as he allegedly attempted to end his life after killing Priyanka. As he had severe injuries, he was later referred to te AIIMS-



Bhubaneswar for plastic surgery. He was discharged on the day after his recovery. Jagannath had killed Priyanka by slitting her throat at a rented house at Bhimatangi where she was staying with

her husband and three-year-old son. The crime is believed to be the fallout of a past love affair. The accused had planned to eliminate Priyanka and her minor son. However, the three-year-old escaped

unhurt as he was not present during the incident. Jagannath had reportedly a relationship with Priyanka before her marriage. Later, Jagannath had cut off all relations with her and left for Bengaluru for a job. However, he had returned back to his village due to the lockdown for the pandemic in 2020.

In the meantime, their relationship developed once again after Priyanka had allegedly contacted him through Facebook. Family members of the accused said that Jagannath had posted a message on a family Whatsapp group on the fateful day that Priyanka had ruined his life.

# KISS K'jhar branch Bhoomi Pujan held

## Admission from Classes-I to X from next year

**KEONJHAR:** A Bhoomi Pujan ceremony of Keonjhar branch of Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), named as SN Mohanty-KISS, was held on Wednesday. The KISS had purchased 20 acres of land in Ghutukeshari village under Naranpur panchayat in 2008 for institute, which will ensure quality education for tribal children of Keonjhar district. The SN Mohanty Group, which was founded by an eminent Odia and kind-hearted entrepreneur, has extended all financial support to establishment of institute, said KIIT and KISS founder Dr



Achyuta Samanta. In first phase, students of Keonjhar district will be enrolled from Standards-I to X from July 2022. It has been decided by KISS that only candidates from Kendujhar district will get employment in SN Mohanty-KISS, said Dr Samanta. Chairman, SN Mohanty Group Pradipta Mohanty was present among others.

# HITTING THE BULL'S EYE Vaccine alone not enough; safe behaviour a must



■ BISWARAJ PATNAIK

Coronavirus has not been contained or tamed as yet. This undeniable truth has to be hammered into the heads of the unruly creatures that have added horrifically to the Covid misery. Corona is a relatively new virus, which is characteristically much more virulent primarily because it is an RNA virus, not a DNA one that can be tamed. Once in decades, such viruses do appear and cause havoc to different species differently. The RNA virus has

only a single strand of the genetic material which is capable of mutating much faster. The virus alone doesn't do all damage itself. It essentially creates an environment for many opportunistic pathogens, including bacteria and fungus, to do grave damage by creating diseases of many kinds. So, black fungus sets in; so does pneumonia and more, including ailments in the digestive system.

The first wave all over the world brought in panic. The second wave failed to frighten most people and Governments as it was erroneously believed that the virus had fled for good. But the second wave was ten times more severe. The scientific community knew that fairly well but could not transmit the message that the second wave of every pandemic is frighteningly more dangerous.

Now that the devastation is nearly over, the human species is repentant and has got on guard only because the third wave's arrival bells have been rung. Most fortunately, vac-

cines have come up meanwhile and there is full effort to bring in herd immunity by vaccinating a majority of the human population around the globe.

All nations have come together at least for once to fight a common enemy, which is invisible and also fragile. Every nation knows that even the bitterest enemy has to be vaccinated for remaining safe because leaving others unsafe means grooming spreaders. All vaccines are good. Perhaps, as top scientists share secretly to avoid ire of the multi-billionaire drug barons, the original Indian jab called Covaxin is being ignored on purpose with a view to safeguarding the interests of a few vaccine makers.

Their highly-influential lobby has so far ensured Covaxin is not recognised for long. They keep reaping incalculable profits as once the uniqueness of Covaxin is made public, most of the other vaccines may have to close shop. It is rumoured that much

money is spent in defaming Covaxin as not fit enough to be declared a safe vaccine. But the truth has ultimately been out: Covaxin is one jab that can encounter 600 variants of the novel coronavirus. Not surprisingly, the Bharat Biotech's US collaborator has been put to big trouble for long, during which the Western vaccines are left free to scoop as much profit as possible.

Incidentally, Covaxin is a full virus-based jab that would recognise any variant as enemy and kill or cripple it instantly. The Western vaccines are only spike protein-based that can be rendered impotent if the virus mutates furiously from inside. Even Western media carry stories about Covaxin as suspect on quality and most Indian media outfits copy verbatim and report damagingly without going into details. Because Covaxin is a fantastic vaccine, Odisha is setting up a jab plant in Bhubaneswar.

That has happened only because Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's guiding officials

tipped him correctly right in time. Governments must look before leaping for any reason or purpose because a tiny wrong move can cause big damage on several fronts including money and lifesaving critical healthcare. The Government of India kept beating drum for quite some time about a wonder drug called 2 DG. No one knows where and how it vanished in thin air before seeing the light of day.

All the same, good-enough research is on and pinpointed inferences have led to great medical decisions on treatment protocols. When the virus first came, chloroquine was the drug of choice. US President Trump scooped the ent4Indian stuff in one go. Then, it was discovered that the virus was causing blood clots and similar other problems. They bombarded anticoagulants and managed patients' woes. Delay in getting medical support remains a big problem even today. Pneumonia caused by lungs infection is the obvious symptom as the virus even-

tually settles in pulmonary zone of the body. The medical scientific community also realised that oxygen and steroids were critically required to keep oxygenating patients by having blood vessels dilated and pushing oxygen from machines for the lungs were failing.

Anti-virals that came by were all experimental drugs. Actually, steroids prevented cytokine storms which mean the battling soldiers of the body suddenly multiply and turn furious causing more self-damage than killing the pathogen.

By now, the ultimate protocol is quite in place. The vaccines have begun alerting and sensitising the antibodies to grow in number and swoop in on the target fast enough saving lives of the hosts. A third wave may or may not happen depending upon how alert and cautious the people are. Children have robust immune systems gifted by God. So, there is no reason why a panic scream should be made. Even

if the third wave comes, it will be mild provided a majority of the people have taken at least one of the two doses and are following strictly the recommended Covid prevention behaviour.

What has not been made crystal clear is that one has to remain extra-careful for 90 days after full vaccination. The booster dose may be pushed after 28 or 84 days, but 90 days after vaccination is the antibody developing period.

So, when the second dose is through, people jump out of houses in gay abandon believing the virus would get destroyed if it ever entered the jabbed body. Besides, all bodies are not equally fit to fight. Co-morbidities apart, each individual is uniquely weak or strong against pathogenic invasion.

Most of the vaccinated people have been afflicted due to a phenomenon called 'break-through infection', which occurs because the antibodies have not been grown or made to the optimum level. Ninety

days of Covid-appropriate behaviour will ensure 95 safety. And by 95 experts do not say 5 out of 100 would catch the virus. The vaccinated people are 95% safe from being severely sick from infection.

All vaccinated people have to keep wearing masks, maintaining social distance and hand-hygiene and avoiding crowds, sleeping well for at least eight hours avoiding closed, poorly-ventilated interiors, exercising to sweat or doing yoga, eating fresh fruits and vegetables and keeping in cheers, which boost immunity beyond limits.

Unfortunately, smart countries like Israel, the USA and Britain threw off the masks, merrily hugged one another and declared the people safe from the pathogen to eventually witness the second wave and currently the third only due to lack of guidance by super-brain medico scientists. India has done remarkably well on the vaccination front despite the huge population. God is of course taking care!



ACF death case  
CB team to expedite probe



PNS ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

A four-member team of the Crime Branch (CB) which arrived here, held discussions with Gajapati SP Tapan Kumar Patnaik on Wednesday regarding the mysterious death of local Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) Soumya Ranjan Mohapatra.

The CB team led by DSP Bijay Kumar Malik would help the Gajapati police in expediting the probe into the case, which has grabbed headlines in the State and created a sensation. The Gajapati SP assured all help to the CB officials in their investigation. Initially, the CB team would visit the crime scene and scrutinise all the documents and evidence which are in the possession of the

Paralakhemundi cops. The CB DSP said they can't reveal any details regarding the investigations at this stage, as this would hamper investigations.

The Paralakhemundi police have already questioned Soumya's wife Bidyabharati Panda at her parents' house at Kaptipada in Mayurbhanj district and have also seized her mobile phone.

A technical team would scrutinise the mobile phone and look for clues. Police are confident that they would crack the case soon and ascertain what actually happened in the incident.

Presently, allegations and counter allegations are flying thick and fast, from both the sides and it is difficult to ascertain what the truth is.

Odisha misses Centre's solar power benefit

TATHYA ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha has again been deprived of getting benefit from a Central scheme on rooftop solar power generation. Union Minister for New & Renewable Energy and Power RK Singh has informed this in a reply in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. So far, 14 States have got the benefits from the rooftop solar power scheme. However, the name of Odisha is not there in the list.

The Centre has, so far, released Rs 489.82 crore to the 14 States for installation of 768.23-MW rooftop solar plants.

Singh said his Ministry circulated a concept note for stakeholders' consultation on SRISTI to promote rooftop solar power in the country in December 2017.

The SRISTI (Sustainable Rooftop Implementation for Solar Transfiguration of India is not the official name of the rooftop solar scheme, he said. The Ministry is implementing the Phase-II of the Grid Connected Rooftop Solar Programme, under which a subsidy is being provided only for rooftop solar (RTS) installation in the residential sector, he added.

R'gada farmer feted at Nabard fest



**RAYAGADA:** A State level function of the Nabard on its 40th Foundation Day was attended by Collector Saroj Kumar Mishra at Rayagada as the chief guest. The function which was held from the Raj Bhavan premises connected with all district Collectors online. Amongst the other dignitaries present were LDM Dharendra Bihari and DDM, Nabard Santosh Kumar Samal. On the occasion, Nilakantha Bania, a farmer who had played a significant role in Nabard's watershed programme, was felicitated by Collector Mishra. Bania was among 30 such individuals who were facilitated from each of the district of Odisha. During the programme, Mishra also appreciated the efforts made by Nabard in various areas of the district, like strengthening the rural infrastructure, providing sustainable livelihood for the SHG members, potable water for irrigation, promotion of Farmers Producers Companies to name a few. He expressed his good wishes to Nabard on the journey of 40 years and hoped that the bank would achieve many more milestones in coming years.

35L bungled from GP a/c in Jaleswar Congress points finger at BJD leader

UBACHAK MOHANTY ■ BALESWAR

The district Congress here, alleging that large scale financial irregularities have taken place in Kalama gram panchayat under Jaleswar block, demanded a Vigilance probe into the scam. The Congress also pointed finger at a local BJD leader alleging he is involved in the fund bungling.

The Congress leaders claimed that they had documentary proofs against the accused and threatened to take to streets if no action was initiated within a week. "Today we will be submitting a memorandum to the district Collector as well as SP Vigilance, and if no action was taken within a week, we would be resorting to agitation," warned Odisha State Pradesh Committee spokesperson Sudarshan Das. Das alleged that money to the tune of about Rs 35 lakh has been with-

drawn from a bank account of the GP between 2017 and 2020 in the name of two persons, Laxminarayan Behera who is husband of the incumbent Sarpanch and Gour Charan Hui, a peon in the neighbouring Baradiha panchayat.

In the name of Hui while about Rs 21 lakh was withdrawn, in the name of Behera over Rs 13 lakh was withdrawn from the accounts through cheques. The cash book didn't in, several cases, reflect the purpose of withdrawal and in several cases, the signatures of the Sarpanch were forged, Das alleged further alleging that the bungling has been committed at the behest of a ruling BJD leader. The Kalama panchayat is a tribal-dominated area and most of the inhabitants are poor and illiterate, he maintained.

Das further said that the ruling BJD under CM Naveen Patnaik's leadership while was making propaganda of bringing transparency in the system and fixing accountability through 5T, the scam has exposed the hollowness of the claims. Congress district president Sanjiv Giri and block president, Jaleswar, Rajib Parida were present.

INBRIEF

**POLICE SI CAUGHT WITH RS 2-LAKH BRIBE MONEY**  
**Bhawanipatna:** A Sub-Inspector, Ugrasen Putel, of the Golamunda police station in Kalahandi district was arrested by Vigilance sleuths on Wednesday while he was carrying Rs 2 lakh on his bike. Vigilance DSP Satyaban Mahanand said the SI was intercepted near the bus-stop of Golamunda after he had received bribe from the complainant. Vigilance teams of Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, Malkangiri and Nuapada districts simultaneously raided the SI's house under the Saintala PS of Balangir district. Further investigation was on. The SI would be forwarded to court on Thursday, the DSP informed.



**BJP GHERAOES K'JHAR TATA POWER OFFICE OVER TARIFF HIKE**  
**Keonjhar:** The BJP on Tuesday gheraoed the office of the Tata Power, Nesco (TPNODL) here in protest against excess tariff hike, frequent power cuts and low voltage. The agitation was led by Keonjhar Sadar MLA Mohan Charan Majhi along with party district general secretary Anubrata Behera, vice-president Ganeshwar Mahanta and executive member Kiranbala Nayak and town president Bishwajeet Tripathy, Akshay Mahanta, Vivekananda Mahanta and Saroj Sahu.

**KIDNAPPER HELD; MINOR GIRL RESCUED IN JSPUR**  
**Jagatsinghpur:** A youth was arrested by police on the charge of kidnapping a minor girl from here a week ago. The alleged abductor was identified as Bijay Bhoi, a resident of Gopalpur under Raghunathpur block. Acting on a complaint lodged by the girl's parents, police had raided Bijay's house on Tuesday and rescued the girl. Both were produced in court after their medical examinations. The court ordered sending the accused to jail and handing over the victim to her parents.



**SMILE DISTRIBUTED FOOD AMONG VILLAGERS**  
**Sunabeda:** Members of social organisation SMILE distributed dried foods, clothing and fruits to children and elderly persons of Kondra village near Semiliguda. The team led by SMILE director Sanjeev Mohanty assured the villagers that the organisation would apprise Government officials regarding the problems of the village.

'Startup India Platform' features 2 from Odisha  
As most promising budding startups

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Two of the total 104 startups from different sectors currently boarded on the Startup India Showcase Platform, belong to Odisha. They are Grozip.com by AKM Technologies Private Limited and Negotrip Private Limited.

Ananda Kumar Mishra is the founder of Grozip.com, which is a technology-focused, app-based, on-demand local delivery company, facilitating B2B and B2C delivery in major cities of India. They focus on creating a value proposition for

small and medium vendors and customers to solve their delivery hassles using technology. The startup operates as a marketplace model and onboard small and medium businesses/EPOs which use the technology platform to increase their sales and help them reach more customers.

They help connect families together across geographic areas, sources said. Similarly, Negotrip, founded by Kamakshya Prasad Nayak, is an online holiday marketplace which facilitates travellers in selecting, comparing and booking holiday packages from different tour service providers. The platform also facilitates collaboration (as per their choice), among different same

interest travel groups, which can lead to cutting down per head cost of the traveller for the same tour.

A traveller can book only car package, only hotel package and complete tour package from different tour service providers on Negotrip platform, the sources informed.

The Startup India Showcase is an online discovery platform where most promising budding startups, chosen through various programmes, are exhibited in the form of virtual profiles.

These innovations span across various cutting-edge sectors such as Fintech, EnterpriseTech, Social Impact, HealthTech, EdTech, among others, sources said. These

startups are solving critical problems and have shown exceptional innovation in their respective sectors, the Commerce and Industry Ministry said.

On the platform, each startup has a profile page with a detailed pitch about their product, innovation, and USP in the form of videos and PDF links. This provides unique visibility to them in front of the entire startup ecosystem. The startups act as the flag bearers of good quality of Indian startups.

All DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade)-recognised startups under Startup India are eligible to apply for the showcase platform.

In Keonjhar  
Stepfather kills girl for speaking over phone

PNS ■ KEONJHAR

In a deeply shocking incident, a 15-year-old girl was beaten to death allegedly by her stepfather at Raghuala Sahi under the Champua police limits in Keonjhar district on Tuesday night. After killing the girl, accused Kailash Oram attempted suicide by hanging self. However, he was rescued

by his wife and admitted to the Champua Community Health Centre (CHC) for treatment. Sources said the stepfather went on beating the girl as she was speaking over mobile phone at night.

However, the exact reason behind the incident was yet to be ascertained. Meanwhile, police began an investigation into the incident.

First in State  
'Monsoon Classic Carp Derby' held

PNS ■ NUAPADA

The Odisha Angling Club, a group of angling enthusiasts from all over Odisha, organised an angling competition called "Monsoon Classic Carp Derby": Season 1, 2021 on Monday from 8 am to 4 pm. This was first of its kind in Odisha with support from the AIGFA (All India Game Fishing Association).

The rules and regulation were as per international angling standard. It was a catch-and-release tournament. No fishes were caught to be killed. The entire tournament was organised adhering to Covid-19 protocols.

The team consisted of 23, out of whom 19 were participants and two referees and two support staffs. The participants came from Keonjhar, Khordha, Cuttack and Nayagarh districts. Abhijeet Das, head, Odisha chapter, AIGFA, was chief referee.

The winners were judged in two categories. Ramakrusha

Dash from Bhubaneswar was winner in Category A-most number of fish caught by weight; and Arunav Ray also from Bhubaneswar, was winner in Category B-most number of fish species caught. Prizes were sponsored by the Angling & Adventure company.

"Odisha has huge potential in angling as a sport. We are born in a State endowed with water bodies and many species

of fishes. Mostly, we catch fish for eating. The Odisha Angling Club aims at promoting angling as a sport. We are on a mission to ensure that every angler associated with us has the ability and knowhow to play the sport at the highest competitive level possible regardless of their family backgrounds, ethnicity, colour, castes and genders," said the organisers.



Man Portable Anti Tank Guided Missile tested



PNS ■ BALESWAR

In a major boost towards Aatma Nirbhar Bharat and strengthening of Indian Army, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight-tested indigenously-developed low-weight, fire-and-forget Man Portable Anti Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM) on Wednesday, said a DRDO Press release.

The missile was launched from a man portable launcher integrated with a thermal site and the target was mimicking a tank. The missile hit the target in direct attack mode and destroyed it with precision. The test validated

the minimum range successfully. All the mission objectives were met. The missile has already been successfully flight-tested for the maximum range.

The missile is incorporated with state-of-the-art Miniaturized Infrared Imaging Seeker along with advanced avionics. The test brings the development of indigenous third generation man portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile close to completion.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Defence R&D Secretary and DRDO Chairman Dr G Satheesh Reddy congratulated the DRDO and the industry for the successful test.

Memorial meet held for young Paradip bizman

**PARADIP:** Janaki Ballabh Sahu, a member of the executive committee of the Paradip Port Banik Sangha and a popular young businessman, died prematurely on May 28 due to Covid. A memorial meeting for him was held at the Sangha's office on Monday.

The meeting, presided over by Sangha president Santosh Kumar Patnaik, was attended by many businessmen who paid tributes to Sahu by offering incense lamps and holding two-minute silent prayers. President Patnaik expressed his deep grief over Sahu's demise and said he was a simple, friendly, philanthropic and organisation-loving young

man. Sahu hailed from Pathuria village in Kujang block of Jagatsinghpur district. He has left behind his wife and two children. Patnaik said the Sangha would always provide assistance to his family. Patnaik personally promised to extend all assistance to his children. On the occasion, the Sangha provided a grant of ₹1,20,000 to his family. Sangha secretary Debabrata Sahu, Kshirod Kumar Swain, Chandra Shekhar Mohapatra, Anadi Parida, Pramod Kumar Mohapatra, Suryakant Sahu, Sarat Chandra Sahu, Vijay Nayak, Rajendra Bal, Chaitanya Sahu and Golak Chandra Sahu attended the meeting.



G'jam farmer awarded by Nabard



**PNS BRAHMAPUR:** The 40th foundation day of the Nabard was celebrated on Tuesday at Raj Bhavan in Bhubaneswar in virtual mode. The Ganjam district was represented by ADM Nalini Kumari Xess, LDM Ashok Kumar Panda and Nabard DDM Dr Sanjiv Mishra. D Narayan, a progressive farmer from Hinjilicut block, was awarded for his efforts in leading a group of farmers on promoting commercial lac cultivation under the Nabard Farm Sector Development Programme.

The ADM appreciated the efforts of Nabard in strengthening the rural infrastructure in Ganjam with a contribution of Rs 2.813 crore through 4,281 projects since 1995. Governor Prof Ganeshi Lal graced the event as chief guest along with Development Commissioner, the Principal Secretary (Finance) and the Nabard CGM.

Puri Rath Yatra: Rly renders crucial job

Every year ECoR team assists in smooth run of chariots

KAUSHALENDRA K KHADANGA

The Indian Railways renders a very essential service in facilitating smooth running of the three chariots on the Badadanda during the Rath Yatra in Puri. Every year a team of East Coast Railway accompanies the chariots with equipment to assist in removing any obstacle from their forward path. A team of 40 devoted staff of the mechanical depart-

ment are assigned with the task. Legend has it that in the early 1960s, one of the chariots got entangled with an electric pole resulting in damage to its axle. Senior officials became clueless and confused on what was to be done. Incidentally, a Railway officer was present to witness the Car Festival.

He found an analogy with that of restoration during coach derailment. He suggested doing it by using screw jacks and offered help voluntarily from the Railways. It is since then that the East Coast Railway has been rendering the service every year. An experienced team of 40 staff from Railways actively participate to place the chariots side by side by lifting

ing and shifting to its position using traversing jacks.

All the jacks are placed at different places under the axle and operated simultaneously for lifting and shifting of the chariots. About 30 traversing screw jacks (12 for "Nandighosh", 10 for "Taladhawa" and 8 for "Debadalana") are used for the purpose.

On the day of Car Festival, the team escorts the chariots during its journey from Shreemandir to Shree Gundicha Temple covering 3 km to attend any breakdown. On the 5th day of the ceremony (Hera Panchami), all the three chariots are reversed and placed at Nakchana Dwar (exit

gate of Shree Gundicha Temple) for the preparation of the return journey. On the day of Bahuda, the team escorts the chariots during its journey from Shree Gundicha Temple to Shreemandir.

On arrival at the Lions Gate, the chariots are placed side by side in proper position for "Suna Beshha". Each chariot is shifted for 6 to 8 ft to position them properly. This is entirely done by this team from Railway led by a Senior Section Engineer of the Mechanical department of the Puri Coaching Depot.

(The writer is Chief Public Relations Officer, East Coast Railway)

Revive Neelachal Ispat soon, demands union

'by engaging any Central steel PSU'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Kalinganagar-based Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited's (NINL) production has been stopped since mid-June 2019. More than two years' shutdown of the plant is severely affecting health of plant, equipment and machineries, said Neelachal Executive Association (NEA), urging the authorities to resume operation of the unit soon. The NEA sought intervention and support from the Union Ministry of Commerce

and Union Ministry of Steel, besides the Government of Odisha to save the unit, by engaging any steel PSU under the Steel Ministry like SAIL/RINL/NMDC to run the plant.

Notably, the PSU with its captive iron ore mines (110 Million ton reserve) is under disinvestment by the DIPAM with the approval of CCEA on January 8 2020 but the process is delayed for several reasons. Four deadlines of completion of disinvestment already have crossed. Meanwhile, Expression of Interest was invited afresh on January 25. Bidders have been shortlisted by DIPAM for further process. Till now completion of disinvestment process is

unpredictable and uncertain, said NEA, further narrating that the employees of the NINL are passing through a very pathetic situation.

The NEA on July 6 communicated to Union Steel Ministry and Union Commerce Ministry that when joblessness and sluggish economic growth is a worry now in Indian economy, almost 3,500 contractual employees have lost their job in NINL in Covid-19 pandemic period. "The employees are unpaid for last 1 year i.e. due from March 2020; more than 10,000 people are directly and indirectly affected. 17 NINL employees have died due to nonpayment of salary and want of medical

facility," said general secretary (NEA) Ajit Kumar Pradhan. He further informed that a meeting co-chaired by Union Ministers of Commerce and Industry, Railways, Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel, on November 10 last year had decided to create a corpus to pay arrear salaries to the employees, but the same has not happened yet.

On March 9 2021 NINL has got permission to sell 50% of annual capacity of iron ore mines to sell in open market to meet employees' salary and arrear with other legitimate dues. Even if MDO has been selected but production from mines will take time, said Pradhan.

# CBSE extends deadline for Board results to July 25



**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Wednesday extended the deadline for schools to prepare the Class 12th results to July 25. Earlier, the deadline was July 22.

This means, now both the Class 10th and 12th Board results, would be delayed as the time for declaration of Class 10th results by early this week has already passed.

Without indicating that there could be delay in declaration of the Board results, the CBSE said that along with University Grants Commission (UGC), it is looking into the interest of all the students and hence, the university regulator would be synchronising admis-

sion schedule based on the result of these students as it was done by the UGC in the last academic session.

CBSE examination controller Sanyam Bhardwaj noted that the teachers involved in the result preparation process are under stress and getting panicky.

“With the last date for finalising the results approaching fast, the teachers are panicky and committing mistakes and sending requests to CBSE to rectify these. CBSE is well aware about the constraints and problems faced by the schools and teachers,” Bhardwaj said in an official order.

“Accordingly, CBSE has decided to extend the last date from July 22 to 25.

Schools may continue to work towards compiling the result to avoid any last minute rush. In case, any school is left to complete the moderation of marks, the result of such schools will be declared separately,” he added.

With the board exams being cancelled in view of the aggressive second wave of Covid-19, schools have been tasked with tabulation of results using a separate alternative assessment policy announced by the CBSE for the two classes.

The CBSE, however, did not clarify whether extending the deadline for schools will cause a delay in declaration of results which are due to be declared latest by July 31.

The CBSE also announced that it will conduct exams for private category of candidates between August 16 and September 15 as per the policy framed by the Supreme Court and the conduct of examinations of this category has been necessitated because the students are enrolled directly with the Board for which no evaluation can be conducted as compared to school or open based system.

The delay would also be due to certain logistical problems as some of the States have cited problems arising out of floods and heavy rains.

# Scindia forms three panels to revive Covid-hit aviation sector



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia during a meeting in New Delhi.

Agency

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The new Civil Aviation Scindia on Wednesday formed three committees comprising airlines, airport operators, cargo carriers, ground handling companies, flying training organisations and maintenance, repair and overhaul companies to advise him on critical issues of the sector.

Scindia will himself chair the committees, which will meet once every month to sort out regulatory, financial or other issues. The committees comprise top officials from the Ministry and organisations like Airport Authority of India (AAI), Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (AERA)

and key representatives from the private sector.

Taking to Twitter, the Ministry of Civil Aviation said: “Under the chairmanship of the Honourable Minister of Civil Aviation, Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has formed three advisory groups comprising airlines, airport operators and MRO, cargo carriers, FTOs and ground handling companies.”

The groups shall meet regularly to deliberate upon issues and resolve challenges facing each sector. Orders have been issued for the same,” it added.

According to the ministry, the airline group has among its members three promoters — IndiGo’s Rahul Bhatia, SpiceJet’s Ajay Singh and GoAir’s Ness Wadia;

CEO/CMDs — AirAsia India’s Sunil Bhaskaran, Vistara’s Bhaskar Bhat, Air India’s Rajiv Bansal and Alliance Air CEO. This group will advise on issues like how to enhance domestic and international connectivity, improve passenger experience and financial viability of airlines and on regulatory matters.

According to the Aviation Ministry’s order on July 20, the first group would advise the government on issues such as safeguarding the viability of airlines, enhancing the domestic and international connectivity, promotion of passenger and cargo services, manpower skilling in the aviation sector and development of India as a hub for passenger travel, cargo and MRO services.

The second group comprises top officials of major

# CAA-NRC doesn’t stand to divide Hindus, Muslims: Mohan Bhagwat



RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat along with Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma and author Nani Gopal Mahanta, during the launch of Nanis book on NRC & CAA debate, in Guwahati on Wednesday

PTI

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Stating that after partition India took care of minorities but Pakistan did not do so, RSS head Mohan Bhagwat on Wednesday said the CAA-NRC (Citizenship Amendment Act-National Register of Citizens) Is not against anyone and has nothing to do with Muslim citizens of India.

Bhagwat said "secularism" is a concept practised by Indian civilisation long before it was born in the modern sense of the term. He said some communities always want others to be like them whereas India from time immemorial respected diversity.

He said no one in India need to fear from the CAA-NRC .

“The CAA-NRC is not a law made against any Indian citizen. Muslim citizens of

India will not be harmed by the CAA. Some people have made it a Hindu-Muslim issue to take political benefits. For political gains, both subjects [CAA-NRC] have been made the subject of Hindu-Muslim. It is not the subject of Hindu-Muslim,” Bhagwat said.

The RSS leader was speak-

ing at the launch of a book titled, “Citizenship Debate over NRC and CAA, Assam and the Politics of History” authored by Nani Gopal Mahanta in Guwahati. The event was also attended by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. Bhagwat said that after the partition of India, the new nations had promised to take care of their respective minority communities.

“We are following it till today. But Pakistan did not. All the people fought against the British with the dream that there would be an independent country.

Consent of [Indian] people was not taken at the time of partition of the country. If consensus had been sought at that time, the country would not have been partitioned. But the leaders took the decision and the public accepted it,” he said.

**Muslims will not face any loss due to the citizenship law: RSS**

“A large number of people had to be evicted [from their homes] after the partition decision. Even today, these people are getting evicted. What is their fault? Who will think about them? It’s our moral duty to help those people,” Mohan Bhagwat said.

“We don’t have any problems with any religion, language or creed. The problem starts when someone with the intent of domination tries to impose uniformity,” said the RSS leader.

“The NRC is a method to know that who is the citizen of our country. It is not against any particular religion. In the politics of the country, it will be considered only according to the political mileage. Some people will bring this on communal lines. They make this a Hindu-Muslim issue, but this is not a Hindu-Muslim issue,” he said.

# BJP appoints Shazia Ilmi, Prem Shukla as party’s national spokesperson

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

BJP president JP Nadda on Wednesday appointed Prem Shukla and Shazia Ilmi as its national spokespersons. Both BJP members have been speaking for the party and defending it on various issues

in the media. Shukla is from Mumbai while Ilmi belongs to Delhi. The party currently has 25 national spokespersons, including its media department head and chief spokesperson Anil Baluni. Ilmi has been a former Aam Aadmi Party leader and an ex-

television anchor.

More changes and appointments are expected to be effected in the party following the July seven major rejig in the council of ministers and exit of Ravi Shankar Prasad and Prakash Javadekar from the cabinet.

# DRDO successfully tests missile

**Fire and forget, anti-tank guided missile developed indigenously**



DRDO successfully flight-tests indigenously-developed MPATGM for minimum range

Agency

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Giving a boost to the prowess of the mechanised infantry soldiers in the battlefield, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Wednesday successfully test fired an indigenously developed man-portable anti-tank guided missile.

The fire and forget missile can destroy enemy tank at a range of more three-four kms and just weighs 15-16 kilos. Giving details of the test, Defence Ministry officials said here the DRDO successfully flight-tested indigenously missile. It was launched from a man portable launcher integrated with thermal site and the target was mimicking a tank.

The missile hit the target in direct attack mode and destroyed it with precision.

Officials said the test has validated the minimum range successfully. All the mission objectives were met. The missile has already been successfully flight tested for the maximum range.

The missile is incorporated with state-of-the-art Miniaturised Infrared Imaging Seeker along with advanced avionics. The test brings the development of indigenous third generation man portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile close to completion. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the DRDO and the industry for the successful test.

In another test, the DRDO scientists successfully flight-



Agency

tested the New Generation Akash Missile (Akash-NG), a surface-to-air Missile from Integrated Test Range (ITR) off the coast of Odisha on Wednesday. The Akash missile can take down a hostile incoming target at a range of 25 to 30 km. The flight trial was conducted at around 12:45 PM from a land-based platform with all weapon system elements such as Multifunction Radar, Command, Control & Communication System and launcher participating in deployment configuration.

The missile system has been developed by Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories. The launch was witnessed by

the representatives of the IAF.

In order to capture flight data, ITR deployed a number of Range stations like, Electro Optical Tracking System, Radar and Telemetry. The flawless performance of the entire weapon system has been confirmed by complete flight data captured by these systems. During the test, the missile demonstrated high manoeuvrability required for neutralising fast and agile aerial threats.

Once deployed, the Akash-NG weapon system will prove to be a force multiplier for the air defence capability of the IAF. Production agencies Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) also participated in the trials.

# SJM seeks changes in consumer protection e-commerce rules

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) on Wednesday suggested a host of amendments to the proposed consumer protection e-commerce rules and said the Government must also make provisions for the protection of the traders and service providers associated with the e-commerce giants.

In its suggestions to the Department of Consumer Affairs, the SJM said there is a general impression that the rules are applicable to all the parties involved in e-commerce, “which is not true”, as the Consumer Protection Act does not apply to the traders and service providers.

“It is, therefore, suggested that this aspect must be clarified by way of clarification by the (consumer affairs) ministry, and the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) must make suitable rules for the protection of traders and service providers who avail services through e-commerce for commercial purposes,” the outfit said.

“Small traders on Amazon, Flipkart-Walmart; drivers on Uber, Ola etc.; small restaurants involved in Zomato etc.; hairdressers, carpenters, electricians and others on Urban Clap etc.; and many other workers are subject to severe hardships by these e-commerce giants, having no protection at all against exploitation,” it said. The SJM said there are many traders and service providers, which are not getting any protection under the law, due to the “inadequate or non-existent” e-commerce laws.

The SJM termed the provision for compulsory registration of e-commerce entities under the proposed rules as “a welcome step”, saying it will go a long way to regulate the e-commerce giants “for any wrongdoings by them.” “However, it is suggested, to avoid any hardship to e-commerce entities with a very small consumer base in India, a threshold may be prescribed for compulsory registration,” it said.

This would save the small e-commerce players from “avoidable compliances”, it said and suggested that the definition of

micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) “may be adopted” to define small e-commerce players in the proposed rules.

It also sought changes in the wordings of the rules for the registration of e-companies to bring under its ambit even those e-commerce entities that do not set up offices in India but still have “lots of revenue” being generated from the consumers located in the country.

The SJM suggested that the rules should provide for capacity building for inspection and enforcement of e-commerce transactions, unfair trade practices, manipulation of prices, search algorithm and other technical aspects of digital transactions with a consumer protection perspective. “E-courts may be established for the consumers’ grievances redressal,” it said.

The SJM noted that e-commerce companies under the proposed rules are required to appoint those as chief compliance officers, nodal contact persons and resident grievance officers who are residents and citizens of the country.

# Covid Delta variant found in 124 countries: WHO

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The World Health Organization (WHO) said on Wednesday the highly contagious Delta variant of Sars-Cov-2 has been identified in 124 countries and is expected to become the dominant strain worldwide within months. The rapid transmission of the ‘variant of concern’ first detected in India appears to be driven by multiple factors, including relaxation of social distancing measures and inequitable vaccine distribution around the world, the WHO said.

“It is expected that it will rapidly out-compete other variants and become the dominant circulating lineage over the coming months,” the UN health agency said in its weekly epidemiological update.

Of the three other coronavirus variants of concern (VOCs), Alpha, first detected in Britain, has been reported in 180 territories (up six from last week), Beta, first detected in South Africa, in 130 (up seven) and Gamma, first detected in Brazil, in 78 (up three).



According to SARS-CoV-2 sequences submitted to the GISAID global science initiative over the four weeks to July 20, the Delta variant is wreaking havoc across the globe and now accounts for more than 75 per cent of coronavirus disease (Covid-19) cases in several countries including India, Bangladesh, Australia, South Africa, Britain, Singapore, Indonesia, Russia, and China among others, as per the report.

The US health officials said on Tuesday that the variant of concern accounts for

about 83 per cent of cases in the United States, threatening the gains made through the massive vaccination drive.

“Growing evidence supports the increased transmissibility of the Delta variant as compared to non-VOCs. However, the exact mechanism for the increase in transmissibility remains unclear,” said the WHO.

The Geneva-based organisation said overall, 3.4 million new Covid-19 cases were reported in the week to July 18 -- up 12 per cent on the week before.

“At this rate, it is expected that the cumulative number of cases reported globally could exceed 200 million in the next three weeks,” said the WHO.

Over the past week, Indonesia reported the highest number of new Covid-19 cases, followed by Britain, Brazil, India, and the US. Despite a worrying rise in coronavirus cases per capita, the UK has removed virtually all restrictions, prompting experts to warn the country about the impending threat.

# Now, refresher course for CRPF medical officers to fight Covid pandemic

**RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI**

The CRPF has accorded approval for two months’ refresher course for its medical officers in 10 departments at the Safdarjung Hospital here in order to be upgraded and better equipped to handle various medical complications, including post-Covid complications, of its personnel.

The proposal of the Medical Directorate of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) for imparting refresher course to the doctors has been approved by the parliamentary chief Kuldip Singh, officials said, adding the Safdarjung Hospital has also approved the course of the paramilitary doctors. CRPF doctors to be imparted the refresher course will cover the departments of medicine, orthopedics, nephrology, neurology, respiratory medicine, surgery, ophthalmology, radiology, cardiology and sports medicine.

The Inspector General (Medical) has invited nominations of two doctors each from various departments latest by July 26 for the fourth batch.

Three batches have already completed the refresher course, they said. “Refresher courses help the doctors in updating any advancement in their respective discipline. Safdarjung Hospital being a big medical establishment handles a large number of patients and also has elaborate departments in various subjects and the refresher course to the CRPF doctors will help in enriching and updating the subject knowledge,” a medical official of the paramilitary said.

As on July 18, the CRPF led the pack among various paramilitary forces with most number of coronavirus infections having a tally of 25,067 Covid-19-hit personnel out of which 24,732 patients have been cured and 127 personnel died due to viral disease, which the highest casualty figure for any paramilitary due to the pandemic.

As on July 18, the Force has 208 active cases. In addition to these serving personnel, a number of their dependents have also been said to be either infected with the disease or undergoing post-Covid treatment.



# Sexual assault plaint row shakes Kerala Govt

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The CPI(M)-led Kerala Government has come under attack from a young woman in Kollam alleging that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan was helping a member of his council of Ministers who mis-used his official position to hush up a sexual assault case.

A K Saseendran, Minister of forests and the lone representative of the NCP in the Kerala Government has been accused by the lady and her father of threatening them from going ahead with a sexual assault case against the former's friend, a business man.

The audio clip featuring the Minister's telephonic conversation with the lady and her father has been in circulation in the vernacular media for the

last two days. Saseendran is no stranger to such allegations because during the previous tenure of the Pinarayi Vijayan Government, he had to resign following charges of seeking sexual favours from another lady.

Saseendran was re-admitted to the council of Ministers following a settlement reached with the complainant. But this time, the charges are more serious as the minister's voice is discernible in the audio clip.

Though he dismissed the allegations, Saseendran admitted that he had tried to broker peace with both the parties as they were members of the NCP. P C Chacko, president of Kerala NCP, pooh poohed the opposition UDF's demand to oust Saseendran from the cabinet. "I held discussion with Saseendran about the incident

and I am fully convinced of his innocence in the case," Chacko, who had joined the NCP days before the April 6 Assembly election, told media persons.

Saseendran drove down to Chief Minister Vijayan's official bungalow on Wednesday morning and the duo was closeted for more than an hour. Later, speaking to reporters, Saseendran said that he had told whatever transpired during the telephonic conversation.

A Vijayaraghavan, acting secretary of the Kerala CPI(M), who also heads the liaison committee of the Left Democratic Front, said at Thiruvananthapuram that the full facts associated with the case are yet to reach the CPI(M). "We cannot take any action without studying the full details associated with the case," said Vijayaraghavan.

## EID ON LOC IN KASHMIR

# Indian, Pak troops exchange sweets

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

As the National Investigation Agency (NIA) is still probing the recent terror attack using drone bombers on the Air Force Station, Jammu, the soldiers of the Indian Army and Border Security Force (BSF) on Wednesday exchanged sweets with their Pakistani counterparts at multiple locations on the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu & Kashmir on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha celebrations.

The ceremonial exchange of sweets was put on hold amid escalating tensions between the two neighbouring countries after the Abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019. Ahead of the festival of Eid, the troops deployed along the LoC have been directed to remain in a state of high alert to foil fresh infiltration bids from across the border with Pakistan.

Intelligence agencies have



Indian, Pakistani armies exchange sweets along LoC in Kashmir on Eid-ul-Adha

also issued warnings following unusual movement of heavily armed terrorists camping across different launching pads inside Pakistan Occupied Jammu & Kashmir. According to a Srinagar based Defence Spokesman, "On the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha and as a gesture for promoting Peace, Harmony & Compassion in the true spirit of the festival, India and Pakistan armies held a flag meeting and exchanged sweets at Kaman Aman Setu, Uri &

Tithwal crossing on Kishanganga River in Tangdhar, Kupwara". "The event has been held when both the Armies have been strictly following the Ceasefire Agreement on the Line of Control". Similarly, sweets were exchanged between the troops of India and Pakistan at two locations in Poonch and Mendhar.

In Jammu, troops of BSF and Pakistan Rangers greeted each other and exchanged

sweets in Hira nager, Samba, Ramgarh, R S Pura, Arnia, Pargwal Sectors of the International Border of Jammu.

BSF spokesman said, "this is the first exchange of sweets between the two border guarding forces after the Pulwama incident. There was no Cross Border Shelling since long and farmers on both sides of the border have been able to carry out their farming activities peacefully".

## Assam orders probe into death of scores of birds in Barpeta

**Guwahati:** The Assam Forest Department has ordered a probe into the death of a large number of birds after consuming crops, which were allegedly sprayed with poison, in Barpeta district, an official said on Wednesday.

Scores of birds, including sparrows and cuckoos, died at Bohori Silgaon village on Monday after consuming crops in a paddy field, the PRO to the forest Minister said in a statement. "Environment and Forest Minister Parimal Suklabaidya has asked the chief wildlife warden and the principal chief conservator of forests (wildlife) to institute a probe into the incident and to submit the action taken report immediately," he said. The dead birds have been sent for post-mortem examinations and results are awaited to ascertain the exact cause of death, but forest officials visiting the place said it is a suspected case of poisoning. **PTI**

## Thampis from MRC Wellington add firepower to India's Olympics squad

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ NILGIRIS

Monsoon rain makes Wellington in the Nilgiris chilly. But Monsoon rain in 2021 has brought with it a fever, popularly known as Olympics fever.

Though soldiers in the Madras Regimental Centre here and the local population like sports and games, they are not obsessed with it. This time it is different because two sons of MRC Wellington, the oldest regiment of Indian Army, are in Tokyo donning the country's colours in the track and field events of the 2021 Summer Olympics.

It is after a long time jawans from MRC Wellington, popularly known as Thampis, have made it to the Indian contingent. Arokyia Rajiv (30), a subedar hailing from Thiruvaprappalli district and Kolothum Thudi Irfan (31), a naib subedar are the representatives of MRC who are expected to add power and strength to the Indian challenge in Tokyo.



Both the challengers from MRC are not just pushovers but seasoned athletes who have won many national and international titles, according to Hemand Raj, the Army coach who oversaw the training of the two Thampis. Rajiv is an Arjuna Awardee who has excelled in 400 meters race. He is a bronze medalist in the 2014 Asian Games held at South Korea. He will be contributing his might to the 4X400 meter relay team

Irfan has set the track in the iconic Thangaraj Stadium in Wellington ablaze, if coach Hemand Raj is to be believed. The Malappuram youth has become a cynosure in the high ranges with his scintillating style in the 20 km walk.



Hemand Raj and commander of the camp Brig Rajeswar Singh are hoping that the jawans would do India proud at Tokyo.

Age may not be on their side as the quality of Indian athletes would start showing a downward trend once they cross the age of 30.

"We are confident that the duo, laced with grit, determination and hard work would not let us down," said Brig Singh.

Peter Thangaraj, after whom the stadium has been named, was Asia's best goal keeper during the 1950s and 1960s. He was the member of the Indian team that narrowly

lost the bronze in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

This is the third time Thampis are featuring in the Olympics squad since 1960, according to the official spokesman of the MRC. Naib Subedar K Ganapathi had taken part in the 2016 Rio Olympics Games.

When Rajiv and Irfan take to the tracks in Japan, Nigiris would get reverberated with "Thampi Kaisa? Tiger Jaisa!" and "Veera Vell Vetri Vell!" (the Centre's centuries old war cry) would reverberate across the Hills. Special Poojas would be held in the names of the Thampis on the days they compete in the Olympics.



A pair of Asiatic lions at the Sarthana Nature Park, in Surat on Wednesday

PTI

## Man marries minor girl, arrested for abduction and rape

**Ballia (UP):** A 23-year-old man was arrested on Wednesday in connection with a three-year-old case of abduction and rape, police said.

For the last three years, the accused and the girl had been living together after marriage. Station House Officer (SHO) Yogesh Yadav said, adding they have two children.

The man, a resident of Mau district, was arrested from Ibrahimipatti Nahar crossing on Wednesday following a tip-off.

On June 26, 2018, a case was registered at Bheempura police station against him under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act for abduction and rape of the 15-year-old girl on the complaint of her father. In the course of investigation, police attached his property and announced a cash reward of ₹25,000 for information leading to his arrest. **PTI**

## ‘Centre’s no Covid deaths due to lack of O2 claim akin to no one killed Jessica template’

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after the Centre told the Parliament that no Covid-19 deaths due to lack of Oxygen were specifically reported, The Organised Medicine Academic Guild (OMAG) on Wednesday dubbed Minister of State for Health Dr Bharti Pawar's statement in this regard was akin to the film 'No One Killed Jessica' template.

"The statement by the Minister is factually not incorrect. But her statement is akin to the movie 'No One Killed Jessica' OMAG secretary general Dr I S Gilada and president Dr Suneela Garg said in a joint press statement here.

They said that the global medical community was disillusioned by the minister's statement.

The OMAG, which is the federation of medical organisations, has appealed to the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR), which has been at the helm of the affair since the pandemic began, "to clear the air so that the blame game stops and ensure that the blame is not shifted

to the medical community".

Dr Gilada said that there was no denying that "Detailed guidelines for reporting of deaths have been issued by the Union Health Ministry to all states/UTs" but what has been actually sent, was an eye-opener.

The ICMR's-National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research (NCDIR) document "Guidance for appropriate recording of Covid-19 related deaths in India" at page 6 categorically mentions that Asphyxia, Respiratory arrest/Failure and Respiratory Failure among others cannot be mentioned as cause of death.

"The minister's statement that, "...no deaths due to lack of oxygen have been specifically reported by states/UTs" isn't incorrect either," Dr Gilada said. Following the national guidelines and state SOPs, no doctor will or can mention 'Hypoxia' or 'Respiratory Arrest' or 'Respiratory Failure' as cause of death. As doctors, we have been always told to avoid mentioning Mode of Dying as Cause of Death. Mode of dying merely tells you that death

has occurred and is not specifically related to the disease process.

"Doctors have to record the underlying cause of death in the Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCD) Form 4 (institutional deaths) / 4A (non-institutional deaths) which is submitted to the Office of Registrar General, India (ORGI). The ORGI records and collates data but cannot change it," he said.

"In any case, cause of death is never given as the patient died of 'fever due to lack of paracetamol' or 'respiratory failure due to lack of steroid' and similarly 'patient died due to lack of oxygen!'," Dr Gilada said.

The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) doesn't have code for lack of Oxygen or Hypoxia.

"Autopsy or post-mortem can help in cases when cause of death cannot be ascertained. However in Covid-19 hardly any autopsies are done due to the fear instilled since the pandemic began, once again due to ICMR guidelines on how dead bodies of Covid-19 patients should be disposed of," Dr Gilada averred.

## AIADMK slams K'taka for stand against Cauvery-Gundar scheme

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The Opposition AIADMK on Wednesday slammed Karnataka for reportedly moving the Supreme Court against Tamil Nadu's Cauvery-Gundar interlinking scheme, alleging it was done in the context of the state's opposition to Mekedatu dam and was an expression of its "jealousy".

AIADMK Coordinator O Panneerselvam said the Cauvery-Gundar interlinking initiated by the previous party-led Government only entails diverting excess water to drier regions in Tamil Nadu and would not affect Karnataka.

The ₹14,400 crore, 262 km project is aimed at diverting 6,300 cubic ft of surplus water during flood times to drier areas in the state's southern districts and the then Chief Minister K Palaniswami had

laid the foundation stone for the first of the three-phase initiative in February this year.

Cauvery, South Vellar, Vaigai and Gundar rivers will be interlinked in this major intra-state water project.

Panneerselvam, citing reports of Karnataka moving the apex court against the project, said it came in the wake of Tamil Nadu's "stiff opposition" to that state's proposal to construct a balancing reservoir on river Cauvery at Mekedatu there to meet the twin objectives of meeting drinking water requirements and power generation.

Tamil Nadu was opposed to Karnataka's proposal to construct the dam since it was against the final award of a Cauvery tribunal, even as the matter was pending before the country's top court.

"It is unfair on part of Karnataka to have moved the Supreme Court against Tamil Nadu's irrigation schemes just because it did not give approval to the Mekedatu project," Panneerselvam said in a statement.

Karnataka had nothing to do with Tamil Nadu's intra-state project, he said.

Tamil Nadu was opposed to the Mekedatu dam only over fears of the reduction in its quantum of water from the inter-state Cauvery river and the state's delta region turning into a 'desert' should the project take shape, he added.

At the same time, the Cauvery-Gundar interlinking and related projects including construction of shutter dams would only help in utilising surplus water and "would not impact Karnataka," he added.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Still opaque

Are the immunity of a fully vaccinated person and the antibodies in a recovered person equal?

The COVID-19 situation in India continues to be enigmatic as ever. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) says that two-thirds of the Indian population above six years has had SARS-CoV-2 infection and developed antibodies against the virus. The highest sero prevalence of 77.6 per cent has been found in the age group of 45-60 years. The lowest prevalence has been in the six- to nine-year category, of 57.2 per cent. The ICMR has said the results offer a ray of hope amid gnawing fears of a third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Adding to the hope, the country is yet to report a spike in daily positive cases. The latest daily case figure stands at 41,279, of which a whopping 26,000 come from Kerala and Maharashtra. Leaving aside these two States, the overall situation is not yet alarming. Thirdly, India is going through a graded easing of lockdown restrictions. There is a general complaint of the casual approach of people and the States to respecting the safety protocols. Yet, there is also growing awareness among the States and the courts to prevent assembly of large crowds at tourist spots and religious events. Thousands of tourists have been turned away from hill stations while potential super-spreader events like the Char Dham Yatra and the Kanwar Yatra have been deferred. Do all these factors mean that the third wave need not be inevitable?



If the ICMR survey says over 66 per cent of the people have antibodies, should we be rushing to the conclusion that the country is at the threshold of herd

immunity? Is it a scientific, rational assumption that the immunity of a fully vaccinated person and the antibodies present in a recovered person have the same potency to ward off future infections? Answers to these questions are necessary before either the States or the people jump to wrong conclusions and embrace complacency. The ICMR should have clarified this while revealing the sero survey details. At no point should there be a doubt in the mind of anyone that the antibodies can be a substitute for the vaccine. The vaccination drive, which has reportedly slowed down for want of doses, should not be allowed to slacken. In fact, a national campaign is necessary to drive home the point repeatedly that there is no alternative to full vaccination. There are reports coming from the United States that the new round of infection is being reported from the poorly vaccinated regions. The Indian COVID task force officials have named four things that can lead to a possible third wave; namely, lowered levels of immunity acquired in the first two waves, the possibility of a new variant that can bypass the acquired immunity, faster transmissibility of a new variant among the population and premature easing of COVID-19 restrictions. It is important to remember that 400 million Indians without antibodies are vulnerable while only 6.3 per cent of the population is fully vaccinated.

## PICTALK



Devotees offer prayers on the occasion of Eid al-Adha at the Badi Masjid in Chennai

PTI

## Spoke in wheel

The Supreme Court has rightly pulled up the Kerala Govt over relaxing COVID restrictions for Eid

After ticking off the Uttar Pradesh Government over its reluctance to cancel the Kanwar Yatra this year, the Supreme Court has taken another similar, welcome step and castigated the Kerala Government over its ostensible appeasement policy in granting a three-day relaxation from COVID-19 restrictions ahead of the Eid al-Adha (Bakrid) festival. Hinting that its pliable stand emanated from the vote bank and



economic concerns, the court stated that the State Government bowing to traders' pressure by granting the relaxations shows a "sorry state of affairs" and was "wholly uncalled for". Observing that the "pressure groups in the market" can't be allowed to affect the general public's right to health, the apex court lamented: "Can't quash the Kerala Government's notification. The horse has already bolted." However, the court didn't let the matter pass based on the time elapsed since the notification and, rightly pointing to its recent order passed in the Kanwar Yatra case, warned the State Government that it would invite strict

penal action if the relaxations so granted lead to another spurt in the cases of COVID-19 pandemic. It also stated categorically that pressure groups of all kinds, religious or otherwise, cannot in any manner interfere with the most precious "Right to life".

Hearing the UP Kanwar Yatra matter on July 16, the top court had observed that all sentiments, including religious, were subservient to the right to life. For its part, the UP Government fully deserved the rap on the knuckles as it kept insisting that the restrictions be eased for the Kanwar Yatra, which had all the potential of turning into a super-spreader. Its neighbour, Uttarakhand, had prudently ordered against allowing the Kanwar Yatra and even halted the Char Dham Yatra this year, too, as it feared that the pilgrims and tourists arriving from other States could cause the number of COVID-19 positive cases in the hill State to shoot up. However, Uttar Pradesh, also ruled by the BJP, tried to cajole it into allowing its pilgrims to enter Uttarakhand for collecting holy water from the Ganga at Haridwar. Its exigency can be attributed to the fact that the State is headed for Assembly elections next year, so rather than jeopardising its chances at the hustings, it wanted to give these a boost. However, the Supreme Court has taken a sensible stand in both the cases and sided with the right to life.

# Fresh challenges await Deuba in the hot seat

It's as much about providing political stability and shoring up economy in Nepal as it is about undoing Oli's wrongs and repairing relations with India



RISHI GUPTA

After a series of thunderbolts hit Nepalese politics, Nepali Congress president Sher Bahadur Deuba was appointed the 13th Prime Minister of the democracy on July 13. The Supreme Court had the previous day overturned the dissolution of the House of Representatives by former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on May 21 and ordered the appointment of Opposition leader Deuba within 24 hours under Article 76 (5) of the Constitution. Deuba managed to poll 165 votes in the 275-member House and secure clear majority. With Maoists and the Janata Samajbadi Party supporting the Government, a total of 22 members of the Nepal-Khanal faction of Oli's UML party voted in favour of Deuba, including eight Oli loyalists. It was another eye-opener for the arrogant Oli, who had been misusing the Constitution and the Office of the President to cling to power.

**Ensuring stability:** During his one-and-a-half-year term, Deuba will have to ensure political stability and address the challenges of economy and employment amidst COVID-19. Although a no-confidence motion can be moved against the Deuba Government for two years under the Constitution, he will also need to put his own house in order as three major parties are supporting the Government. While a five-member Cabinet has been appointed and significant portfolios awaiting a Minister, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deuba will have a tough time keeping the Maoists calm, especially Prachanda, who continues to aim for the top post. Noteworthy, Maoists had aligned with the UML for the 2017 parliamentary and local body elections despite being in the Government with the Nepali Congress. Therefore, power-sharing with Prachanda will be an important element to look for in the months to come.

**Rejuvenating ties with Delhi:** Soon after Deuba won the vote of confidence on July 19, a congratulatory message was tweeted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Modi added: "I look forward to working with you to enhance our unique partnership in all sectors further, and strengthen our deep-rooted peo-



ple-to-people ties." The tweet was followed by a telephonic conversation. For many in India, it is a good start for India to engage with Nepal as bilateral ties have seen the lowest point under Oli. In the last one year, Oli had used anti-India manoeuvring to his political benefit, including unilaterally adding sovereign territories of India in the Kalapani region into the official political map of Nepal. Even though Oli was claiming that issues with India have been resolved, the border dispute remains a contention, whether Deuba wishes or not.

The Nepali Congress had supported the constitutional amendment moved by Oli to include Indian territories into Nepal's political map. Therefore, India will have to make its diplomatic endeavours in Nepal carefully as on the border row, the Nepali Congress does not differ from what Oli had stood for. Also, with anti-India ultra-nationalistic elements working as catalyst in influencing the political mandate in Nepalese politics, Deuba might be seen taking that road. Meanwhile, with Oli gone, India has every reason to celebrate. However, India's policy towards Nepal will need a more proactive

INDIA'S POLICY TOWARDS NEPAL WILL NEED A MORE PROACTIVE INSTANCE THAN MERELY NOTING THE EVENTS THERE. THE EXISTING TRADE DEFICIT HAS OFTEN WORKED AGAINST INDIA'S GOODWILL, AND A COMPETITIVE INVESTMENT ON A PAR OR MORE THAN CHINA WILL BE NEEDED

instance than merely noting the events there. The existing trade deficit has often worked against India's goodwill, and a competitive investment on a par or more than China will be needed.

Interestingly, Modi has promised to provide COVID-19 vaccines to Nepal during the telephonic conversation with Deuba. India had halted the vaccine supplies to Nepal after the second wave hit India in April. Thus, it should be seen as a welcome shift in India's policy towards Nepal during such challenging times.

**Overcoming coalition compulsions:** Further, Deuba has a better chance to shed Chinese heavy-handedness into Nepal's political and foreign affairs and mend ties with India. Against the popular image of Oli befriending China to serve Beijing's interests in matters related to Tibet and India, Deuba does not come with the baggage of communist ideology. Therefore, he can work with India on the path to cooperation and development in Nepal. Meanwhile, his alliance partner Prachanda is known for his China leaning.

It was a similar coalition in 2017 with Nepali Congress

when he persuaded Deuba to sign the Belt and Road Initiative, much to India's unhappiness. On July 6, Prachanda was seen making overtures to Xi Jinping and the Communist Party of China during the Communist Party of China and World Political Parties Summit to mark the 100 years of its establishment. Prachanda had given a clean chit to China, claiming it as the most generous nation in "contributing to global prosperity and peace as well" and an advocate of "rule-based international order, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and global equity and justice are highly commended by developing countries, including Nepal".

Hence, Prime Minister Deuba has a challenging tenure to ensure political stability, keep Prachanda in confidence, mend bilateral ties with New Delhi, ensure a smooth arrival of vaccines from India and wither away Chinese elements in Nepal's internal politics.

(The author is an ICSSR Doctoral Fellow at the JNU and Visiting Fellow at the Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs, Kathmandu. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### PEGASUS AS AN ALBATROSS FOR THE GOVT

Sir — An Israeli cyber surveillance company, NSO, whose Pegasus spyware enables the remote surveillance of smart phones, has come under heightened scrutiny after an international alliance of news outlets reported that the Indian Government used the software to target journalists, dissidents and Opposition politicians. No Indian is surprised to read the Modi Government's hand in the sordid affair.

Don't forget, spying is an ancient concept in India; only the technology keeps changing. If we read Chanakya's *Mudra Manjusha*, we come across a number of plots and spying for installing Chandragupta. Moreover, phone tapping is an established "custom" the world over.

As per the BJP's tradition, to help Modi save face, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar targeted the Congress and *The Wire* for trying to derail the ongoing monsoon session of Parliament. But who knows, with the help of the judicial system, it is likely that the Pegasus taint too will not stick to the Modi Government.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

### PREPARE BEFORE OPENING PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Sir — The suggestion made by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) that children can handle viral infections much better than adults though the antibody exposure is similar and, therefore, primary schools must be opened before secondary schools, can be done only after the teaching and non-teaching staffers are vaccinated as well as depending on the public health situation in any particular district. It has been seen that young children have fewer ACE2 receptors in their lung cells.

However, the antibody exposure we have been seen in this sero survey among children is very similar to adults. According to the findings of the fourth national sero survey, over half the kids in 6-17 age group shows the presence of antibodies. The sero positivity was 57.2 per cent in the 6-9 age group, whereas 61.6 per cent in the 10-17 age group showed presence of antibodies.

## No deaths by oxygen shortage?



We were reminded of the Tamil saying "*Muzhu pusanikkaiye chottil maraithal pole*" (It is like trying to conceal a full pumpkin in rice on a plate) when the Union Government denied any COVID-19 death due to the lack of medical oxygen during the second wave of the pandemic. The claim that the Government took steps to enhance oxygen supply is not the same as the claim that nobody died for want of oxygen. The question for the Government to answer is whether it made available sufficient quantities of oxygen to save the lives of all those who needed oxygen for clinical treatment. And, it cannot answer in the affirmative. Anyone who kept his eyes open would bear witness to the frantic attempts of the fam-

ily members and friends of COVID-19 patients for oxygen in a desperate bid to save their loved ones. We saw with our own eyes how people were driven from pillar to post trying to arrange medical oxygen. The disturbing visuals of those days must be shown to the death deniers. Hospitals treating COVID-19 patients ran out of oxygen and doctors broke down when they had no oxygen to treat their gasping patients. In this context, it is worth mentioning that many COVID-19 deaths occurred in non-hospital settings where clinical care by using medical oxygen was simply non-existent.

The only plausible explanation for the Government's denial of deaths due to oxygen shortage is its preoccupation with protecting its image, if need be by being economical with truth. Rubbing salt into the wounds of families that lost their loved ones by providing misleading information does the Government no great credit. Great leaders own up to their mistakes and make amends. But in Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we have a leader who whitewashes his reputation and there lies the rub.

G David Milton | Kanyakumari

On the other hand, the overall prevalence of 67.6 per cent with 66.7 per cent showing presence of antibodies in the age group of 18-44 and over 75 per cent in the higher age brackets.

Since the situation may differ from State to State, the decision to start schools needs to be taken at the district level depending on their positivity rate, vaccination status and public health situation.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

### NOT THAT EASY TO TOPPLE A GOVT

Sir — The allegations that spyware used to topple the Karnataka Government for installing a BJP-led Government is highly ridiculous. Had it been so easy to topple Governments, both Rajasthan and Maharashtra Governments would have been toppled long back. The Pegasus spyware controversy has snowballed without substance. The ruling party could easily

have compromised the fortunes of other Governments too in this manner to usurp power. Allegations and counter-allegations of this nature are very common without any proof and people need not take it seriously.

After a few days, the matter will automatically die down. After all, the Opposition is only trying its best to upset the applecart at the Centre with such allegations. Previously, it was claimed that money power was used for horse-trading after complaining about EVMs and now it takes an altogether different turn. The Opposition is trying to buy time and make news only to gain the upper hand but the BJP Government is firmly saddled at the Centre and it's hardly possible to shake it away.

MR Jayanthi | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUNDBITE

Everything is recorded in the tears of those who lost their loved ones (farmers who died during agitation). #Farmersprotest



Former Congress president

— Rahul Gandhi



Pakistan Prime Minister

— Imran Khan

I can't even WT\* this man was really luring people. We literally thought it was spam when he sent that DM to me.



YouTube

— Puneet Kaur



Skateboarding teaches you to get up again after you have failed. It teaches you determination and perseverance.

Germany's 14-year-old Olympian

— Lily Stoepphasius

West Bengal has a tradition that when the ruling party fails to govern, it starts trying to become a national party.



West Bengal BJP chief

— Dilip Ghosh





## FIRST COLUMN ECI AND PANDEMIC POLL BLAME

Is ECI alone to blame for holding elections during the pandemic?



ABHINAV NARAYAN JHA



ABHINAV K SHUKLA

It is over two months since the results for assembly elections in West Bengal, Assam, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala were declared. The polls were conducted amidst the second wave of COVID-19. The Election Commission faced much criticism for holding the polls when the pandemic was at its peak. The Commission faced the worst criticism when the Madras High Court in course of the hearing on a writ on the elections orally observed that “the EC is the institution that is singularly responsible for the second wave of COVID-19” and that the EC “should be put up for murder charges”. These remarks, though not part of the order of the High Court, were reported in all media. Aggrieved by these observations of the Madras High Court, the Election Commission approached the Supreme Court through a Special Leave Petition seeking a gag on media reportage on the court’s oral observations. It is not against the law to hold elections during a pandemic. However, it cannot be the justification for thousands of people to gather and assemble at



rallies or other political functions like road shows, without wearing masks and violating social distancing protocols.

The Madras High Court observed that the EC was “the most irresponsible over the last few months in not stopping political parties from wanton abuse of the COVID-19 protocol” and, to quote the media, said: “You should be put up on murder charges probably.” The court did not mean to charge the constitutional body with the offence of murder. According to section 300 of the Indian Penal Code, the offence of murder is committed if the act by which the death is caused is done to cause death or such bodily injury as the offender knows to be likely to cause the death or an act which is so imminently dangerous that it must, in all probability, cause death. In the given circumstance, the EC cannot be said to have committed any such intentional act which caused the death(s). The High Court made the comments metaphorically to make the EC realise the gravity of the situation and also to express its displeasure with its actions. The Supreme Court termed the High Court’s “murder charge” remarks against the Election Commission as “harsh” and the “metaphor inappropriate”. The Constitution of India and the Representation of Peoples Act empower the ECI to conduct free and fair elections for which the latter issues instructions under the Model Code of Conduct for political parties to follow. To its constitutional duty, the EC cannot become a ‘Super-Government’ by taking over the administration of law and order in a poll-bound state amid the pandemic. The commission is liable for issues related to the Model Code or the Prevention of Defacement of Properties but not for every remote mishap. Moreover, the current approach of the EC to conduct the assembly elections has to be analysed in consonance with the Disaster Management Act, 2005. The responsibility to handle the pandemic and ensure compliance with safety protocols lies with national and state Disaster Management Authorities and their associated departments and not solely on the Election Commission. Furthermore, in August 2020, the Government of India in consultation with also the EC had issued guidelines for the conduct of elections in COVID times. Moreover, the blame for the second wave’s severity lies not just with the government but the people as well. In current times when all news is magnified by the media, the high court judges may perhaps need to be extra cautious while making their observations concerning constitutional authorities in order also to preserve the sanctity of such authorities.

(Abhinav Narayan Jha is a Law Scholar & Political Analyst. Abhinav Shukla is Assistant Professor of Law in HNLU, Raipur. The views expressed are personal.)

# Indian black money in western white banks

India’s financial fraudsters find a safe haven for their loot and sanctuary for themselves in Britain as its regime skilfully breaks international laws



PRASHANT TEWARI

Despite its traumatic past, India is the only country in the East that rejoices in having a “special relationship” with Britain. But the British have never adequately responded to the gesture.

British governments continue to traumatize India by offering a safe haven to the latter’s economic offenders. These fugitives have looted huge public money from Indian banks, siphoned off the funds to overseas destinations, and when the law enforcement agencies nailed them to get back the ill-begotten money, they ended up going to Britain to safely enjoy their looted wealth.

Fugitive billionaire Vijay Mallya of Kingfisher Airlines fame is a glaring instance. He remains on bail in Britain until and unless UK Home Secretary Priti Patel orders his extradition to India to face charges of fraud and money laundering. Mallya has applied to Secretary Patel for considering “another route” to be able to stay in the UK. This has raised widespread speculation that Mallya plans to seek asylum in that country.

Priti Patel has, however, done something big for India: She has approved the extradition of Nirav Modi, the billionaire diamondaire accused of bank fraud in India. Modi is being investigated by India’s Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for laundering money in the region of \$2 billion and involving loans from public sector Punjab National Bank (PNB). On February 25, Westminster Magistrates’ Court said there was prima facie evidence against Modi, and that there was no reason to suggest that the jeweller would not get justice in India if he was extradited. The judge said there were links between Modi and others conspirators, including PNB officials and top ruling elites in India.

There is another side to this story. It is that many in the present Indian Government and several Indian banks seeking to bring back the looters and prosecute them may be chasing a mirage because of the complexities in the UK legal system. The UK Government trumpets its human rights laws, but how fair is the British justice system? What about human rights and fair justice for Julian Assange? Why is he not out on bail and why does he not have the right legal team to represent his case against his extradition to the USA? The UK has over the years become the most preferred tax haven destination for economic offenders like Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi, Lalit Modi, murder-accused Indian music director Nadeem, Sanjay Bhandari, the Rana Kapoor family, the Sandesara family, just to name a few.

The Hinduja Brothers, one of India’s richest families and their Hinduja Group of Companies remain the most preferred Indian family in the UK, aided and promoted by various British governments in the past. The Hinduja Group is right now fac-



THE UK IS OFTEN CITED AS ‘THE MONEY LAUNDERING CAPITAL OF THE WORLD’, WITH AN ESTIMATED £100BILLION CLAIMED TO BE LAUNDERED THROUGH THE CITY OF LONDON EVERY YEAR, ACCORDING TO FIGURES FROM THE UK’S NATIONAL CRIME AGENCY. LONDON HAS NOT BECOME THE ‘GLOBAL CAPITAL OF MONEY LAUNDERING’ BY ACCIDENT

(The writer is Editor-in-Chief, Opinion Express. (Inputs from Jo Birring, head of World Homeland Security based in London.) The views expressed are personal.)



ing major legal problems in Switzerland in connection with a charge of forging a document at a bank. The Swiss authorities believed that there were enough grounds to proceed with their prosecution. The names of the three Hinduja brothers originally cropped up in the Bofors scam as the main middlemen but they managed to get British citizenship in the nick of time. It became a scandal in the UK at that time and a senior British minister had to resign over rumours he helped one of the brothers, Srichand Hinduja, acquire British citizenship.

Back in India, Aikant Bhatti, a minority shareholder in the Chennai-based Ashok Leyland company and in Hinduja Global Solutions, where Ashok P Hinduja is the Chairman Emeritus, claims that billions of rupees in company funds were used to benefit the promoters. Bhatti has already filed a complaint with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to intervene and probe the controversial activities in the Hinduja Group of Companies. Still, the British government continues to prefer to accord them preferential status.

The case of India’s biggest financial debtor, Anil Ambani’s Reliance Group, is not much different. The entire business has collapsed and the hard-earned taxpayer’s money has scandalously evaporated into thin air. A few months ago, Anil Ambani deposed before a UK court, in connection with a case filed by a Chinese banking consortium, that he has no money left. The UK Court had

earlier asked Anil Ambani to pay \$770 million to some Chinese banks for non-payment of loans. It is learned that after the London court’s order, Anil Ambani has limited his foreign travels fearing Chinese banks might seek the help of Interpol to issue red alerts for him in foreign airports.

The UK is often cited as “the money laundering capital of the world,” with an estimated £100billion claimed to be laundered through the City of London every year, according to figures from the UK’s National Crime Agency. London has not become the ‘global capital of money laundering’ by accident. Money launderers and those financing terrorist activities have two main requirements. The first, in a city crowded with financial transactions their wheelingdealings will easily go unnoticed. The second, it’s a country where the antecedents of businessmen offering to invest by setting up businesses and opening bank accounts are blissfully ignored. Maintaining the secrecy of the ownership of beneficial companies is the main criterion of money laundering. Contrary to what one might think, it is many times harder to obtain an untraceable shell company in tax havens than in rich, developed countries.

At the moment, the UK is a member of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which routinely publishes the list of countries considered a “danger to the international financial system” as well as a “high risk” where money launder-

ing is concerned. The UK, the US, and Switzerland have never been blacklisted. Instead, the usual pariahs of the west-Cuba, North Korea, Iran, and so on, regularly appear on that list along with small states such as Antigua, St Kitts, and Nevis.

These smaller countries are powerless to fight their inclusion on the blacklist. The Caribbean nations have, in the meantime, lost ties with many international banks. We prefer to think that the financial standing of the City of London owes its success to the skills of market wizards honed at the ancient British universities and not the banking brains of nouveau riche criminals.

The politicisation of the black-listed small islands has enabled London to become the global centre of money laundering. Clever British lawyers and corrupt bankers twist the truth to save criminals across the globe. The British offshore banking tax evasion is negating the infrastructural growth and prosperity of the countries in the East by facilitating the flight of illegal capital from East to West. Today, India is an emerging global superpower while the United Kingdom is a glorious story of the past. The Narendra Modi government must tell its British counterpart in clear terms that the human rights cover over financial deception will not be tolerated by India and shelter offered to fugitives who have looted billions of Indian taxpayer money will have serious consequences for bilateral relations between the two friendly countries.

## POINTCOUNTERPOINT

NO STATE SENT ANY DATA ABOUT PATIENTS DYING DUE TO OXYGEN SHORTAGE. THE CENTRE’S REPLY WAS BASED ON FIGURES SENT BY STATES AND UTs.  
— BJP SPOKESPERSON  
SAMBIT PATRA



THERE WERE FLOODS OF COMPLAINTS FROM HOSPITALS, PATIENTS’ FAMILIES... REGARDING OXYGEN SHORTAGE.  
— DELHI DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER  
MANISH SISODIA

# Coming out of the shadows

Adolescents across socio-economic groups are struggling to adjust to a life without the familiar environment that a traditional school day provides

Emerging from the waves of COVID-19, more than ever, we must prioritize the mental health of children and adolescents. Their well-being should be at the forefront of the preparations for dealing with future pandemic waves.

Generation Z is quietly perceiving the layers of changes in people’s lives since the virus encroached on their spaces in early 2020. Now, while the much-awaited return to school is exciting for many, there would be children anxious or even frightened to go back to regular school.

This is a time of the year when adolescents would have spent days at schools and colleges in the company of hundreds of others, but in the last one and a half years they have got used to a dreary, new nor-



SURAVI SHARMA KUMAR

(The writer is a regular columnist with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal.)

mal of being home alone. The virus brought in many stressors to the psychological environment, the impact of which is yet to be played out in statistical data charts and graphs to analyze the repercussions on society and the upcoming generation. The pandemic control measures have definitely contributed to new mental health issues or a worsening of existing ones in all, but the impact ripples are far and wide or even beyond immediate comprehension.

Some children or youth may be grieving the loss of a parent or a loved one, others may be living in fear of the disease or losing a job. There are millions in our country who have actually dropped out of school for want of a digital device or internet connectivity.



Adolescents across all socio-economic groups are struggling to adjust to a life without the familiar environment that a traditional school day provides. Amid social isolation and lack of peer support, the need for personal or real-world connections is growing. The absence of the demands of school life and regular examinations to keep the learning minds occupied are affecting the psychological environment of every

child. The children of essential workers and homeless children are at an increased risk: the former confined to their homes without adult supervision and the latter lacking in basic amenities and security.

Across socio-economic situations, there are children trapped in dysfunctional homes suffering all types of abuse, even sexual, or resorting to substance abuse to escape the wrath of stressed-out adults. Growing cyber dependency is alarmingly on the rise.

With increasing stress comes an increased risk of developing mental health problems or re-emergence of dormant diseases at a time when fewer options to relieve stress are available. Early experience of such problems increases their risk of mortality or lifelong

morbidity. When schools begin to reopen, we will need to implement more formal structures for mental health screening. We must take precautionary measures against stigma and superstitions affecting care giving, and there should now be social laws in place to minimize the stigma around mental health conditions.

We all know the law is the most efficient tool for blunting the effects of prejudice and stigma by protecting the diseased person from the negative impact of societal ignorance. The authorities must propagate strong messages to create an inclusive environment for those needing psychiatric help. India’s mental healthcare system needs strengthening. The authorities should proactively implement the Mental Healthcare Act,

2017. This is also the time for an integrated mental healthcare policy covering all aspects of helping a sick mind.

We also need to enhance mental health awareness and stigma-busting programs in local dialects or languages through government and private sector initiatives. We should expand social-emotional learning programs to help build resilience in the growing minds. Capacity building for mental health management is an immediate must to meet a looming calamity, and suicide prevention programs should be revamped in preparation for a possible epidemic. There is a serious shortage of mental healthcare workers in India and it needs to be addressed. Tele-psychiatry may possibly be an immediate solution for the

patients living in less efficient conditions.

Authorities must support schools and behavioral health care agencies in working together to ensure that when schools reopen, students will have necessary mental health services on the campuses to provide screenings, interventions, and referrals.

Our young people are the future of our country. We must remember that the period between ages 10 to 25 is a critical time for brain development and maturation. Both the experiences our young people face today and the support they receive from us in coping with and navigating the challenges will have a profound impact on their ability to be successful adults, parents, and citizens in the years to come.

# Unprecedented floods hit China

## 25 killed, over 1m affected; President Xi calls in PLA

PTI ■ BEIJING

At least 25 people, including 12 subway passengers, were killed when the heaviest rainfall in 1,000 years hit China's central Henan province, prompting President Xi Jinping on Wednesday to deploy the Army to rescue those trapped in inundated subways, hotels and public places.

A total of 1.24 million (12.4 lakh) people were affected and 1,60,000 evacuated, state-run Global Times reported. The official media quoted local officials as saying that 25 people were killed and seven others listed missing in the massive floods.

Twelve people were killed and five others injured when subway stations were hit by the floods, the report said.

They died when their subway train was hit with rapidly rising floodwaters on Tuesday night, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported. Two people were also killed when a wall collapsed.

The massive floods, described by meteorologists as a once-in-a-lifetime event, has resulted in apocalyptic scenes in the provincial capital Zhengzhou, a metropolis of 12.6 million, with its public avenues and subway tunnels getting submerged with surging waters. Videos posted on the Chinese social media showed petrified passengers trapped in subway trains clinging on to handlebars desperately waiting for help as floodwaters raised up to their necks.

Official media released videos of rescue workers helping people stuck in subway tunnels to safety.

Videos showed people trying to wade through floods in the downtown of the city while scores of cars and other vehicles washed away. Some videos also showed people falling into the massive cave-ins of the roads. Rainwater poured into the subway tunnel of the city's Line Five, trapping an unknown number of passengers aboard a subway train.

Xi ordered the deployment of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and said that authorities at all levels must give top priority to ensuring people's safety and property as massive floods ravaged the province and Zhengzhou city.

The PLA Central Theatre Command urgently dispatched troops to a county in rain-hit Henan where a dam is under threat of collapse due to serious damage caused by the rains, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The PLA, on its social media account on Sina Weibo, China's Twitter-like social media platform, said that a 20-meter-long crevasse had appeared in the dam in Yichuan county of Henan province, and could collapse any time.

The downtown area of Zhengzhou received an average precipitation of 457.5 mm within 24 hours on Tuesday, the highest daily rainfall since the weather record began, Xinhua reported. Henan is home to many cultural sites and a major base for industry and agriculture. Reports said that Shaolin Temple, known for its Buddhist monks' mastery of martial arts, was also severely hit by floods.

Heavy waterlogging has led to the virtual paralysis of the city's road traffic.



A man rides a bicycle through a flooded intersection in Zhengzhou in central China's Henan Province on Tuesday

AP

# China blasts dam to divert massive floods

AP ■ BEIJING

China's military has blasted a dam to release floodwaters threatening one of its most heavily populated provinces, as the death toll in widespread flooding rose to at least 25.

The dam operation was carried out late Tuesday night in the city of Luoyang, just as severe flooding overwhelmed the Henan provincial capital of

Zhengzhou, trapping residents in the subway system and stranding them at schools, apartments and offices.

Another seven people were reported missing, provincial officials said at a news conference.

A video posted on Twitter by news site The Paper showed subway passengers standing in chest-high muddy brown water as torrents raged in the tunnel

outside. Transport and work have been disrupted throughout the province, with rain turning streets into rapidly flowing rivers, washing away cars and rising into people's homes.

At least 10 trains carrying about 10,000 passengers were halted, including three for more than 40 hours, according to Caixin, a business news magazine.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Unit No. 921, 9th Floor, Tower-B, Advant IT Park Pvt. Ltd, Plot No. - 007 Sec. - 142, Noida whose original allottee Alibin Tariq Soleja, S/o Sh. Mohd. Tariq Suleja, R/o 40/177, Manwama Bazar, Prad Kanpur, UP has executed a GPA (General Power of Attorney) on 19/6/2021 in favor of Mohd. Imran Ayub, S/o Late Mohammad Ayub Shamshi, Resident of 501 Gokul Apartment, Civil Line, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh which is duly certified in the office of Embassy Records of India and after that the said GPA (General Power of Attorney) has been registered in the office of Assistant Commissioner of Stamp, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, on dated 29/06/2021 by paying a stamp duty of Rs.100/- The Original Allottee of the above said Unit No. 921, 9th Floor, Tower-B Advant IT Park Pvt. Ltd. has not registered or unregistered any Agreement to Sale in the name of anyone. The Original Allottee has allowed the GPA holder to execute/sign the transfer/transfer deed/ document and other documents and the original allottee himself has given the said unit to Mrs. Payal Agarwal. It is informed through this notice that the transfer application has been submitted in favor of Mrs. Payal Agarwal, W/o Sh. Sudhanshu Agarwal on the basis of Unit No. 921 Tower-B Advant IT-Park Pvt Ltd, Plot No-007, Sector-142 Noida, U.P. through GPA. If any person has any objection in this regard, then please file your objection with all the evidence in the Institutional Department of Noida Authority within 30 days from the date of publication of this information, otherwise the said unit will be sent to Mrs. Payal Agarwal After that the Noida Authority will transfer as per its rules.

Imran Ayub

पंचायतीराज निदेशालय, उत्तराखण्ड, देहरादून  
संख्या 608 / 40-2 / लेख / विभाग / 2020-21 दिनांक: 20 जुलाई, 2021

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा आमंत्रण

पंचायतीराज निदेशालय, उत्तराखण्ड द्वारा ग्राम मजाहिदपुर सतीवाला खालसा, हरिद्वार में कॉमन वेस्ट प्लास्टिक रिसाइकलिंग प्लांट में LT Panel, Cabling and related Electrical Equipments हेतु ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। ई-निविदा दिनांक 20 जुलाई, 2021 से वेबसाइट <https://uktenders.gov.in/> पर उपलब्ध होगी।

महिष से इस निविदा से सम्बन्धित कोई भी विवरण/शुद्धि पत्र मात्र उक्त वेबसाइट पर ही प्रसारित किया जायेगा।

निदेशक,  
पंचायतीराज



### IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of all concerned that railways have decided to revised the timings of the following special trains :-

04046 Anand Vihar (T) - Madhupur Jn. Humsafar Superfast Express Special w.e.f. 22.07.2021
04045 Madhupur Jn. - Anand Vihar (T) Humsafar Superfast Express Special w.e.f. 23.07.2021
04050 Anand Vihar (T) - Ballia Superfast Express Special with effect from 24.07.2021
04057 Jaynagar - Anand Vihar (T) Garibrath Express Special with effect from 26.07.2021
04038 New Delhi - Silchar Express Special with effect from 22.07.2021
04037 Silchar - New Delhi Express Special with effect from 26.07.2021
04032 New Delhi - Guwahati Superfast Express Special with effect from 25.07.2021
04031 Guwahati - New Delhi Superfast Express Special with effect from 28.07.2021
02191 Jabalpur Jn. - Haridwar Express Special with immediate effect
02192 Haridwar - Jabalpur Jn. Express Special with effect from 22.07.2021

Passengers are therefore, advised to please check the detailed Time-Table of above trains through RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or the NTES App.

Passengers are advised to follow Covid-19 appropriate behaviour at Railway Premises and in the running trains.

1643/21

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# WHO: 3.4m global Covid cases last week, up 12%

AP ■ GENEVA

The World Health Organisation says there were more than 3.4 million new global cases of the coronavirus last week, a 12% increase from the previous week.

The UN health agency says the number of deaths is continuing to decline, with about 57,000 in the last week.

"At this rate, it is expected that the cumulative number of cases reported globally could exceed 200 million in the next three weeks," WHO says. It notes the highest increases in COVID-19 cases were in the Western Pacific and European regions. In the past week,

WHO says the highest coronavirus infections were in Indonesia, Britain, Brazil, India and the US.

It says the increased transmission of the virus is driven by new variants, the relaxation of Covid-19 protocols and the large number of people still susceptible to the coronavirus, despite rising vaccination rates in some countries.

WHO has urged countries to commit to vaccinating at least 40% of every country's population by the end of the year. Of the more than 3 billion vaccine doses administered globally, only about 1% have gone to people in poorer nations.

# Myanmar's military again seeks to replace its UN Ambassador

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Myanmar's military rulers are again seeking to replace the country's ambassador to the United Nations, who opposed their February 1 ouster of civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi and takeover of the government.

Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin says in a letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres that he has appointed Aung Thurein, who left the military this year after 26 years, as Myanmar's UN ambassador. A copy of the letter was obtained on Tuesday by The Associated Press.

Lwin said in an accompanying letter that Kyaw Moe Tun, Myanmar's currently recognised UN ambassador, "has been terminated on February 27, 2021, due to abuses of his assigned duty and mandate". In a dramatic speech to a General Assembly meeting on Myanmar on February 26 — weeks after the military takeover — Tun appealed for



Protesters burn Myanmar Armed Forces' flags during a flash mob protest at Mingalar Taung Nyunt township in Yangon, Myanmar

File photo AP

"the strongest possible action from the international community" to restore democracy to the country. He also urged all countries to strongly condemn the coup, refuse to recognise the military regime, and ask the military leaders to respect the November 2020 elections won by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party. "We will continue to fight

for a government which is of the people, by the people, for the people," Tun said in a speech that drew loud applause from diplomats in the assembly chamber who called it "powerful", "brave" and "courageous".

The military's previous attempt to oust Tun failed and there has been no reported action on the foreign minister's letter, which is dated May 12.

# UK irks EU with call to change post-Brexit trade rules

AP ■ LONDON

The British Government said Wednesday that post-Brexit trade rules it negotiated with the European Union "cannot go on" and need a major rewrite, straining already tense U.K.-EU relations. The Government said Britain would be justified in unilaterally suspending the legally binding Brexit agreement but had decided not to do so just yet.

Since the U.K. Left the EU's economic embrace at the end of 2020, relations have soured over trade arrangements for Northern Ireland, the only part of the U.K. That has a land border with the 27-nation bloc.

The divorce deal the two sides agreed to before Britain's departure means customs and border checks must be conducted on some goods moving between Northern Ireland and the rest of the U.K. The regulations are intended to keep an

open border between Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland, a key pillar of Northern Ireland's peace process.

But they have angered Northern Ireland's British unionists, who say amount to a border in the Irish Sea and weaken ties with the rest of the U.K. Britain accuses the EU of taking a "purist" approach to the rules that is causing unnecessary red tape for businesses, and has called for the bloc to show "pragmatism."

# Haiti installs new leader as country mourns slain Prez

AP ■ PORT-AU-PRINCE (HAITI)

Haiti's government installed a new Prime Minister, while officials mourned assassinated President Jovenel Moise and arrested at least three police officers implicated in his killing.

Designated Prime Minister Ariel Henry was sworn in on Tuesday to replace interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph, who assumed leadership of Haiti with the backing of police and the military after the July 7 attack at Moise's private home, which also badly injured his wife and stunned the nation of more than 11 million people.



"The task that awaits us is complex and difficult," Henry said as he called for unity and promised to meet with various sectors in the upcoming days to build consensus. "I'm from a school that believes in dialogue." He also thanked "sister nations" that he didn't identify for their solidarity and expertise in the ongoing investigation as he demanded that all

those responsible be brought to justice.

Henry, a neurosurgeon and former Cabinet minister, has promised to form a provisional consensus government to lead Haiti until elections are held. He said he has already met with various unidentified actors as well as civil society and the private sector. He pledged to re-establish order and security and confidence in the government as well as fight corruption, make Covid-19 vaccines available to all, restart the economy and create a credible and transparent elections system.

# Biden's 3rd trip to reddish Ohio pushes his economic agenda

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden just can't quit Ohio — even if it rejected him in last year's election.

The Democrat travels to Cincinnati on Wednesday to push his economic policies. It's the third visit of his presidency to Ohio, the only state he lost that he has visited multiple times.

Ohio was once an electoral prize that could decide who occupied the White House, but its embrace of Republicans

has tightened over the past decade. The visit is a testament to Biden's belief that going straight to voters will help cross a barbed political divide.

"Half of life is showing up, and Joe Biden shows up," said John Anzalone, Biden's presidential campaign pollster. "He's going to be a president for people who voted for him and people who voted against him."

Ohio Republicans, for their part, see the presidential attention as a chance to make the case against Democrats.

# US condemns Kabul attack

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The United States has condemned the firing of rockets near the presidential palace in Kabul and called for an accelerated path to a political settlement in Afghanistan to pave the way for the lasting peace that its people desire.

Addressing reporters at his daily news conference on Tuesday, State Department Spokesperson Ned Price said Afghans have been suffering from "senseless violence" for far too long.

### S AFRICAN FIRM TO MAKE PFIZER VACCINE

**Johannesburg:** A South African firm will begin producing the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine, the first time that the shot will be produced in Africa, Pfizer announced Wednesday. The Biovac Institute based in Cape Town will manufacture the vaccine for distribution across Africa, in a move that should help address the continent's desperate need for more vaccine doses amid a recent surge of cases.

### RUSSIA LAUNCHES LAB MODULE TO ISS

**Moscow:** Russia has successfully launched a long-delayed lab module for the International Space Station that is intended to provide more room for scientific experiments and space for the crew.

# Hong Kong police arrest former Apple Daily editor

AP ■ HONG KONG

Hong Kong national security police on Wednesday arrested a former editor at the now-defunct *Apple Daily* pro-democracy newspaper, weeks after it was forced to close after authorities froze its assets.

Lam Man-chung, who was the executive editor-in-chief of *Apple Daily*, was arrested on suspicion of conspiring to collude with foreign forces to endanger national security, according to the South China Morning Post newspaper, which cited an unnamed source. He is the eighth person from the newspaper who has been arrested in recent weeks.

# Japan, US, South Korea reaffirm cooperation on North Korea

AP ■ TOKYO

The United States, Japan and South Korea on Wednesday reaffirmed their commitment to work together on North Korea's denuclearization and other regional threats but made no progress in bringing closer together the two U.S. Allies.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, who held talks in Tokyo with her counterparts, Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Takeo Mori and South Korea's Choi Jong-kun, said their alliance remains a "lynchpin of peace, security and prosperity."

The officials reaffirmed the importance of respecting international law, including

maintaining freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea, and opposed any unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the East China Sea and in the Taiwan Strait.

"When countries take actions that run counter to the United States' interests or that threaten our partners and allies, we will not let those challenges go unanswered," Sherman said.

The United States and Japan have raised concern about China pressing its claims to contested areas in the South China Sea and the Japanese-controlled Senkaku islands, which China also claims and calls Diaoyu.



# IBBI amends regulations for insolvency process

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Seeking to enhance transparency in insolvency process, IBBI has amended regulations for corporate insolvency proceedings wherein a resolution professional will be required to provide details about his or her opinion about avoidance transactions pertaining to a corporate debtor.

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has amended the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations.

An official release on Wednesday said the amendments to the regulations are aimed at enhancing "the discipline, transparency, and accountability in corporate insolvency proceedings".

A resolution professional is duty-bound to find out if a Corporate Debtor (CD) has been subject to avoidance transactions, namely, preferential transactions, undervalued transactions, extortionate credit transactions, fraudulent trading and wrongful trading, and file applications with the adjudicating authority seeking appropriate relief.

This not only claws back the value lost in such transactions increasing the possibility of reorganisation of the CD through a resolution plan, but also disincentivises such transactions preventing stress to the CD.

"For effective monitoring, the amendment requires the RP to file Form CIRP 8 on the electronic platform of the Board, intimating details of his opinion and determination in respect of avoidance transactions," the release said.

The IBBI has put out the format of form CIRP 8 and it needs to be filed in respect of every CIRP ongoing or commencing on or after July 14.

With the amended regulations, an insolvency professional conducting CIRP will also have to disclose all former names and registered office address(es) so changed in the two years preceding the commencement of insolvency along with the current name and registered office address of the CD, in all its communications and records.

CIRP refers to the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process.

The amendment takes into account the possibility where a CD may have changed its name

or registered office address prior to commencement of insolvency process. In such cases, the stakeholders may find it difficult to relate to the new name or registered office address and consequently fail to participate in the CIRP.

Under the insolvency regulations, an interim resolution professional or a resolution professional may appoint any professional, including registered valuers, to assist him in discharge of his duties in conduct of the CIRP.

"The amendment provides that the IRP/RP may appoint a professional, other than registered valuers, if he is of the opinion that the services of such professional are required and such services are not available with the CD.

"Such appointments shall be made on an arm's length basis following an objective and transparent process. The invoice for fee shall be raised in the name of the professional and be paid into his bank account," the release said.

The amendments have come into effect from July 14.

The IBBI is a key institution in implementing the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

## CBIC: SC order on timeline limitation restricted only to filing of appeals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The CBIC has clarified that the extension of time limit for tax-related matters granted by the Supreme Court is restricted only to filing of appeals by taxpayers and would not apply to any other compliance or assessment under the GST Act.

In a letter to all Principal Chief Commissioners and Director Generals, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said it had sought legal opinion on the applicability of the Supreme Court order dated April 27, 2021, regarding limitations of timeline under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) law.

"The extension granted by Hon'ble Supreme Court order applies only to quasi-judicial and judicial matters relating to petitions/ applications/ suits/ appeals/ all other proceedings. Hon'ble Supreme Court has stepped in to grant extensions only with reference to judicial and quasi-judicial proceedings in the nature of appeals/ suits/ petitions etc. And has not extended it to every action or proceeding under the CGST Act," the CBIC said.

Various orders and extensions passed by the Supreme Court would apply only to acts and actions which are in



the nature of judicial, including quasi-judicial exercise of power and discretion, the CBIC added.

In cases where proceedings need to be initiated or compliances need to be done by the taxpayers, such actions would continue to be governed only by the statutory mechanism and the time limit provided/ extensions granted under the statute itself.

"Various orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court would not apply to the said proceedings/ compliances on part of the taxpayers," the CBIC added.

Similarly, tax authorities can continue to hear and dispose off proceedings like application for refund, application for revocation of cancellation of registration, adjudication proceedings of demand notices, etc, where they are performing the functions as quasi-judicial authority.

Similarly, appeals which are filed and are pending, can continue to be heard and disposed off and the same will be governed by those extensions of time granted by the statutes or notifications, the CBIC

added.

However, in cases where any appeal is required to be filed before Joint/ Additional Commissioner (Appeals), Appellate Authority for Advance Ruling, Tribunal and various courts against any quasi-judicial order or where a proceeding for revision of any order is required to be undertaken, the timeline for the same would stand extended as per the Supreme Court's order.

Extension of timelines granted by the Supreme Court "is applicable in respect of any appeal which is required to be filed before Joint/ Additional Commissioner (Appeals), Commissioner (Appeals), Appellate Authority for Advance Ruling, Tribunal and various courts against any quasi-judicial order or where proceeding for revision or rectification of any order is required to be undertaken, and is not applicable to any other proceedings under GST law," the CBIC added.

AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said "this clarification will restrict the blanket extension given by the apex court due to the pandemic, and tax authorities may soon accelerate the disposal of pending cases at hand."

## Fuel price cut relief may come soon as global oil softens

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

Consumer's bearing the brunt of rising fuel prices for more than a couple of months may expect some relief over the next few days as Oil marketing companies (OMC) have begun evaluating the fall in global oil prices and its resultant impact on fuel prices in the country.

The benchmark Brent crude that had risen to \$77 a barrel late last month has shed more than 10 per cent in the last fortnight to reach a level of \$68.85 a barrel now. If the price line remains below \$70 a barrel for a few more days, petrol and diesel prices could see a cut in the coming days.

Already the impact of softening of prices in the oil market is being seen in the fuel price movement in the country. On Wednesday, the OMCs kept the retail price of petrol and diesel unchanged. This is the fourth consecutive day, the longest period in weeks, when fuel prices have remained steady.

With Wednesday's pause, petrol continues to be sold for Rs 101.84 per litre, while diesel is also being sold at the



unchanged price of Rs 89.87 a litre.

The pump price of fuel has been static since Sunday. It rose on Saturday with petrol being revised upwards by 30 paise per litre while diesel price remained unchanged.

In the city of Mumbai, where petrol price crossed the Rs 100-mark for the first time ever on May 29, the fuel price is at Rs 107.83 per litre. Diesel price in the city is also at Rs 97.45, the highest among metros.

Petrol price in all metros have now crossed Rs 100 per litre-mark. But they have remained static the past four days.

Under daily price revision, OMCs revise petrol and diesel prices every morning, benchmarking retail fuel prices to a 15-day rolling average of global refined products' prices and dollar exchange rate. Once this 15 day cycle returns, petrol and diesel prices may fall.

## Majority of online consumers do not want Govt to ban heavy discounts by e-tailers: Survey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

About 72 per cent of online consumers do not want the Government to ban or intervene in sales offered on e-commerce platforms, according to a survey.

Online purchasing has become mainstream in India with 49 per cent of consumers taking to this channel in the last 12 months, according to the survey conducted by community social media platform LocalCircles.

The survey received over 82,000 responses from consumers in 394 districts of India. Of which, 62 per cent of the participants were men, while the rest were women.

A sizable number of consumers have been using this channel increasingly because they have found it to be safe and convenient and it offers competitive prices with the ease of return, it added.

"The survey also brings clarity to the issue of sales, where 72 per cent of consumers do not want the government to ban or restrict or intervene in sales on e-commerce platforms," the survey said.

The reason being is that these sales make purchasing more affordable and allow them to save more, which is of

great importance during these difficult times, it noted.

The survey comes amid consumer concerns that the government's proposed amendments to the Consumer Protection (eCommerce) rules 2020 may restrict sales on online sites.

On June 21, the government had released draft e-commerce rules under which it banned the fraudulent flash sale and mis-selling of goods and services on e-commerce platforms, and also made registration of these entities mandatory with the Department for Promotion of Industry.

Among other findings, the survey said about 47 per cent of consumers expect COVID-19 uncertainty to last 6-12 months and it may have an impact on their household budget planning and therefore seek maximum value from every penny they spend.

The survey also found that about 43 per cent of consumers sought the 'country of origin' details while shopping online in the last six months.

However, consumers are split on whether 'country of origin' information must be displayed in text or image format on e-commerce platforms, it added.

## AAI committees find Adani in violation of branding, logo pacts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Three committees of the Centre-run Airports Authority of India (AAI) in January found the Adani group to be in violation of branding norms, prescribed in the concession agreements, at the airports in Ahmedabad, Mangaluru and Lucknow that the conglomerate took over last year.

Consequently, the Adani group companies -- which are operating these three airports -- have started making changes in brandings and displays in order to bring them in accordance with the concession agreements that they had signed with the AAI.

As on June 29, the changes in brandings and displays were in process at Lucknow and Mangaluru airports and had been completed at the Ahmedabad airport, the AAI stated.

PTI has accessed various documents related to this matter, including details received in response to RTI queries.

The Adani group won the bids to run the aforementioned three airports in February 2019. Its companies -- Adani Lucknow International Airport Limited (ALIAL), Adani Mangaluru International Airport Limited (AMIAL) and Adani Ahmedabad International Airport Limited (AAIAL) -- signed the concession agreements with the AAI

in February 2020. These companies then took charge of airports in October and November 2020.

The AAI in December 2020 found the brandings and displays at the three airports not in accordance with the concession agreements. Therefore, it wrote letters to ALIAL, AMIAL and AAIAL, asking them to take "corrective measures". However, these companies in late December responded that they have not violated the branding norms of the agreements.

A month later, the AAI formed three separate committees to carry out "joint survey" of all hoardings and displays at the three airports and check if they are in compliance with the concession agreements.

Each committee had four members: one executive of the Adani group company that is operating the airport, one official of the Centre-run Engineering Projects (India) Limited and two officials of the AAI.

In late January, the committee formed on the Lucknow airport submitted its report. It said, "The joint inspection committee found that airport name hoardings displayed by concessionaire (ALIAL) at the airport entrance and exit roads has also got Adani Airports written on both sides of Lucknow International Airport hoardings, which is in violation of concession agreement no.

5.15.2."

The committee also found that the name and logo of the AAI was not equally and prominently displayed in other displays where the concessionaire intends to display its own name, which was again violation of the Article 5.15.2 of the concession agreement.

Clause 5.15.2 of the three concession agreements stated that the airports will be known, promoted, displayed, advertised and branded by their name only such as "Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport", "Lucknow International Airport" and "Mangaluru International Airport".

The clause also stated that if the concessionaire intends to display its own name or its shareholders at the spots where other public notices are displayed for the users, the same will be preceded by the AAI's name.

In late January, the committee formed on the Mangaluru airport found similar violations of clause 5.15.2 by the concessionaire (AMIAL), as were observed by the Lucknow airport's committee.

At the same time, the committee formed on the Ahmedabad airport submitted its report. It also stated that the clause has been violated by the concessionaire (AAIAL) as the AAI's logo is not displayed before the logo of AAIAL and additionally, the size is not uniform.

## Airtel, Intel announce collaboration to accelerate 5G in India

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

Bharti Airtel is collaborating with Intel for 5G network development by leveraging vRAN/O-RAN technologies.

The collaboration is part of Airtel's 5G roadmap for India as it transforms its networks to allow its customers to reap the full possibilities of the hyper-connected world where Industry 4.0 to cloud gaming and virtual/augmented reality become an everyday experience.

Airtel is the first telecom operator in India to demonstrate 5G over a LIVE network and is conducting 5G trials in major cities.

Airtel will deploy Intel's latest third generation Xeon Scalable processors, FPGAs and eASICs, and Ethernet 800 series across its network to build a solid foundation for rolling out wide-scale 5G, mobile edge computing and network slicing.

As members of the O-RAN Alliance, Airtel and Intel will work closely for developing a range of Make in India 5G solutions and enabling world-class telecom infrastructure in India through local partners.

Open radio access network (O-RAN) will be an area of innovation and creativity in the coming years. These O-RAN platforms will leverage

Intel FlexRAN, a reference architecture with both software and hardware components, and enable software-based radio base stations that can run-on general-purpose servers located at the network edge.

Randeep Sekhon, CTO - Bharti Airtel said, "Airtel is delighted to have Intel as a part of its rapidly expanding partner ecosystem for 5G. Intel's cutting-edge technologies and experience will contribute immensely to Airtel's mission of serving India with world-class 5G services. We also look forward to working with Intel and home-grown companies to unlock India's potential as a global 5G hub."

Dan Rodriguez, Intel corporate vice president, Network Platforms Group said, "Being able to digitally power the vibrant population of India's connected users requires scalable and agile networks that can evolve to address the growing demands of its users. Airtel is delivering their next-generation enhanced network with a breadth of Intel technology".

PTI

**National High Speed Rail Corporation Ltd.**  
(A Joint Venture of Government of India and Participating State Governments)  
2nd Floor, Asia Bhawan, Road No. 205, Sector-9, Dwarka, New Delhi - 110077

**Public Consultation for Environmental and Social Considerations for Delhi- Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Corridor (DAHSRC)**

NHSRCL is in process of conducting Detail Project Report (DPR) for the development of proposed High Speed Rail Corridor (HSRC) of approx. 872.682 kms from Delhi-Ahmedabad project. This includes Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) & Social Impact Assessment (SIA) of the proposed corridor and is organizing a public consultation to take valuable feedback from the local stakeholders/public on the proposed project.

Interested peoples of Gurugramin Environmental and Social considerations for the proposed DAHSRC are invited to participate in the public consultation meeting as proposed at following venue:-

**Venue:** Conference Hall, First Floor, Mini Secretariat, Gurugram, Haryana. (DC Office)  
**Date:** 30July, 2021  
**Time:** 11:00 AM

**NHSRCL, New Delhi**

## Property mkt to touch \$1 trillion by 2030: Housing secy

**New Delhi:** The Indian real estate market is estimated to touch \$ 1 trillion by 2030 driven by rising demand and various reforms in the past seven years like new realty law RERA, Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary Durga Shanker Mishra said on Wednesday.

The number of people employed in the sector is also expected to rise to 7 crore in coming years, from 5.5 crore in 2019, he said while addressing a CII event on the real estate sector. The secretary further said that the states have been asked to soon implement the Model Tenancy Act, which was passed by the Union Cabinet in June this year.

Mishra also clarified that the law once implemented by the States will be prospective in nature and all disputes related to rent agreements will be dealt under the old laws of respective states.

He pointed out that the real estate sector suffered a "setback" during the first and second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic but said the housing demand has revived. **PTI**

## India's textile sector needs more support to arrest shrinking market share

IANIS ■ MUMBAI

India's share in global exports of cotton yarn shrunk 600 basis points to 23 per cent in calendar year 2020 (CY2020) from 29 per cent in CY2015, while in readymade garments (RMG), its share has stagnated at 3-4 per cent over the past decade.

Lack of free trade agreements (FTAs) and significant improvement in peer competitiveness are the main reasons for this fall.

Textiles is important to India's \$313 billion merchandise exports as it accounts for 11 per cent of the pie. The sector is also a significant employment generator.

Given its economic importance, the sector has seen a slew of measures from the government of late, including the textile parks announced in Union Budget 2021-22 and inclusion of the sector for allocations under the Production-linked Incentive (PLI) scheme.

While these are steps in the right direction, a CRISIL Research's analysis indicates more is needed to address the issues and spur a revival.

In cotton yarn, India has lost market share over the past

decade to Vietnam and China because of high cost and lack of FTAs amid intensifying competition.

In RMG, India has done well to maintain its share even as global trade in the segment contracted. But competitors such as Vietnam and Bangladesh have done much better - they capitalised on China's falling share in the past five fiscals, while India could not.

Further, Indian textiles players were pushed to the brink in 2020 as the Government of India reduced export incentives in line with guidelines of the World Trade Organization.

CRISIL Research does not expect any significant improvement in incentives with the launch of the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export Products (RoDTEP) scheme, which aims to reduce tax burden of exporting entities. However, to revive the textile value chain, the government has announced additional structural reforms whose impact needs to be evaluated.

The recently announced PLI scheme for man-made fibres (MMF) and technical textiles is expected to improve

the potential of MMF-based RMG exports where India's share has been weak.

**Corrigendum No. Sr.DEE/GH/01 of 2021-22 dtd. 12-07-2021**

Corrigendum has been issued against the **Tender No.:** EL/GH/869, Dated: 08-07-2021 circulated vide **TENDER NOTICE No. Sr.DEE/GH/05 of 2021-22, Dt. 08-07-2021** in IREPS portal on technical ground. Details of corrigendum is available in IREPS portal [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in).

**Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer, Guwahati**

**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is informed to all concern that Sh. Dhirendravir Rastogi S/o Sh. V.V. Rastogi R/o 9/3 Sarvprya Vihar New Delhi-16 is the Owner of Plot No. D-34, Sector-55, Noida G.B. Nagar. He has executed Registered Agreement to sell and WILL in favour of Sh. Bindhy Basin Rai S/o Sh. B.N. Rai R/o Village & Post Deoria Dist. Ghazipur U.P. dated 03/08/2001 in Book No. I volume No. 86 on page no. 1049 to 1060, Document No. 2832 at Sub. Registrar (III), Noida and Registered G P A in favour of Smt. Geeta Rai W/o Sh. R.K. Rai R/o Village & Post. Deoria Dist. Ghazipur UP dated 3-8-2001 in Book No. V Volume No. 161 on page No. 737 to 746, Document no. 766 at Sub. Registrar (III), Noida. Sh. Bindhy Basin Rai has expired in January 2013.

Now the said above Plot is going to be transferred through the said above registered G P A in favour of Sh. Rajesh Kumar Rai S/o Late Sh. B.B. Rai R/o A-98, II Floor, Madhuban, Delhi-110092. If anyone has/have any objection, he/she may file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Residential Plot Department of Noida Authority, Sector-8, Noida within the 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. **Rajesh Kumar Rai**

**KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LTD**  
(A Government of India Undertaking)

Belapur Bhavan, Plot No.6, Sector-11, CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai - 400 614.

**WALK-IN-INTERVIEW NOTIFICATION No.CO/P-R/04C/2021**

Konkan Railway Corporation Limited requires candidates for the following posts in various construction projects for its works in connection with construction of Road, Tunnel & New Railway Line etc. on fixed term contract basis.

POST	VACANCY	DATE OF WALK-IN-INTERVIEW	VENUE
PROJECT ENGINEER	01	27.07.2021	KR Vihar, Konkan Railway Executive Club, Sector-40, Seawoods-West, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra - 400706.
SENIOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANT	05	29.07.2021	Reporting Time: 09.00 Hrs. to 12.00 Hrs.
JUNIOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANT	01		

Candidates may see the details of notification, eligibility criteria etc. on the KRCL website [www.konkanrailway.com](http://www.konkanrailway.com) at the link **Recruitment -----> Current Notification** and may report directly for walk-in-interview at the above mentioned venue.

**Chief Personnel Officer**

**Simran**

General Public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Simran**, D/o Phool Chand, R/o B-436, JJ Colony, Khyala, Delhi, **Age:** 15 years, **Height:** 5'1", **Built:** Normal, **Face:** Round, **Complexion:** Fair, **Wearing:** Yellow Colour Top, Black Jeans Pant and chappal in her feet has been missing from her home since **08.05.2021**. In this regard a **FIR No. 420/21, u/s 363 IPC** dated **09.05.2021** has been registered at **PS. Khyala, Delhi**.

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

**E-mail : [cic@cbi.gov.nic.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.nic.in)**  
**Ph.: 011-24368638,24368641****SHO**  
**Fax : 011-24368639****P.S. Khyala, Delhi**  
**DP/483/WD/2021****Ph.: 011-28335686, 8750871132**

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified male dead body namely **Unknown**, S/o: **Unknown**, R/o: **Unknown** was found on **07.07.2021** at **Opposite Church, Main Market, Chandni Chowk, Delhi**. In this regard **DD No. 27A** dated **07.07.2021** has been lodged at **Police Station Kotwali, Delhi**. Dead Body preserved for 72 Hrs. in Subzi Mandi Mortuary. Identification of unidentified dead body is as under:

**Name: Unknown, Age: 60-62 Yrs., Height: 5'6", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Long, Built: Thin, Wearing: Black & White Linedar Shirt and Grey pant.**

If anyone has any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly be inform undersigned.

**SHO**  
**Police Station, Kotwali, Delhi**  
**DP/1354/N/2021** **Ph: 011-23953442, 875087121, 8743934160**





# FIND HIS FUNNY BONE

CHRISTY VARGHESE catches up with actor MEEZAAN JAFFREY, ahead of the release of his new film, *Hungama 2*

Meezaan Jaffrey, son of the versatile Javed Jaffrey, who made his Bollywood debut in 2019 with *Malaal*, exudes a quiet confidence as he goes about things in a matter-of-fact sort of way. Before our interview, we witnessed him politely declining to comment, with subtle laughter, on a somewhat controversial query by a mediaperson. While we did not know what to expect when our turn came, he appeared to be at ease with himself and was quite frank with every question we posed.

He shares his thoughts on *Hungama 2*, ahead of its release on July 23 on Disney+ Hotstar.

♦From a romantic drama by Sanjay Leela Bhansali in *Malaal* to a comedy directed by Priyadarshan, how vastly different were the preparations for these two projects?

When we were working for *Malaal*, I had to strenuously prepare for my role. It would be safe to say that I was on the edge, to a certain extent. However, for *Hungama 2*, there was no preparation at all. That came as a total surprise going by the fact that I was working on a film by Priyadarshan, alongside Paresh Rawal and Shilpa Shetty. When I asked Priyan sir how would he like me to prepare for the character and the film, he simply said, ‘I don’t want you to prepare at all. I just want you to come on set, listen to what I have to say and then just try to have fun.’ That’s exactly what I did and it was something different from what I had expected. Not many people have this way of working, but Priyan sir does, and I must say it works in his favour and that of *Hungama 2*. The spontaneity and the improvisation that comes along with it, bring so many nuances to the screen that would have been missed if we turned up prepared.

♦How does one prepare for a comedy flick? Is that even a thing, preparing for a comedy role?

I don’t think so. But to be honest, I can’t really say; it’s not like I have done a lot of comedy films, I am still learning and exploring my interests. I regard comedy as a very difficult genre and I suppose the amount of preparation for such projects depends on the kind of comedy it is, how the filmmaker has envisioned it and their style of working. Personally, I think it is very difficult to make people laugh.

♦Did working with a veteran of comedy roles, such as Paresh Rawal, provide you any input with respect to preparation?

Paresh ji improvises on the spot and improvises a lot. That is something he is incredibly good at. I think we all know without me mentioning it that he is extraordinary at his job. His performance causes a chain reaction of sorts as his improvisation coaxes better performances from us, the actors around him. Your reactions are bound to be different and original when someone like him throws something fresh at you, with every take of each shot. He is very

reserved otherwise, but the moment the camera is focussed on him, he transforms into something else. His experience is out there for everyone to see, with each one of his performances. Some time in the beginning I remember thinking, ‘why is he not preparing his lines?’ But the truth is he does not need to. He has honed his craft to such an extent, that he does not prepare for a role the way, I think, I would.

♦Your thoughts when you were filming for *Chura Ke Dil Mera 2.0*?

I don’t think I am much of a dancer. While I do enjoy dancing, I think that dad’s genes probably played a huge role. I was extremely nervous filming that song because it was a big deal. Showing my moves for the remake of a prominent song which was filmed over 25 years ago, with Shilpa ma’am of all people, the leading lady from the original song, a lot of things were going on in my mind. I followed Priyan sir’s mantra and tried to enjoy the process. As soon as the camera comes on, I have to get into the zone. I am glad that song blew up across the globe with people making reels on it and I am grateful for the love that has come my way because of the song.

♦Did you watch *Minnaram*, the Malayalam film by Priyadarshan, on which *Hungama 2* is said to be based?

Priyan sir specifically told me to not watch *Minnaram*. He felt that if I watch it, I might subconsciously end up copying what Mohanlal did in the film. However, when I sat down to watch *Minnaram* after we wrapped up shooting, I was surprised because it is poles apart from what we had made. And when I expressed this over a phone call with Priyan sir, he shared that he thought it would be wise to not reveal anything so that I could focus on my character. I would say that only 20 per cent of *Hungama 2* bears a resemblance to *Minnaram*.

♦Working alongside stalwarts such as Priyadarshan, Paresh and Shilpa was surely an incredible learning experience. Is there anything, in particular, that you think was of vital importance?

Seeing Paresh ji at work I have understood the significance of completely letting yourself go, without any inhibitions, in this industry. That, I would say, was the most important lesson — staying true to the character assigned to you. That is something I won’t forget and will hopefully shape me as an actor in the years to come. Additionally, while an actor is a director’s puppet, with them trying to mould us the way they think works best for the film, an actor must give them a considerable range of nuanced skillset to work with. This is something I have learnt with Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Priyan sir. It is just the beginning of my journey, but something I have learnt is that every time I set foot on the set, I have to give it a little more than just my 100 per cent.

♦Would you say your father had a big role in helping you in Bollywood?

Well, I did not plan on making it big in this industry and my father knew this. As a kid, I have witnessed my father at work multiple times. There were instances when my mum asked me to drop dad’s lunch on the set and when I would get there he would always welcome my presence and I think it helped him relax as he would ask me to sit with him for a bit. I used to watch, without any interest or intention of becoming an actor. Back then I was into music and sports and was interested in pursuing some sort of business related to sports. I had applied to Loughborough University in London, which is considered to be among the finest universities for sports, and I managed to get in as well, but I don’t know what happened, call it fate or whatever you want, I got into filmmaking. I started learning direction and editing. I met Sanjay sir who expressed his interest in launching me in *Malaal* and I took the opportunity. You know how they say that opportunity does not come knocking twice... Later on, during the time I was shooting for *Malaal*, I realised how much those impromptu visits to my father’s set had helped me. Apart from that, my father has always encouraged me to pursue my interests.

♦What are you up to, now that you are done with *Hungama 2*?

There are more films in the works, I believe you would be hearing about them soon. The production has its way of announcing, I will respect their call and wait for them to put it out there. What I can tell you is that I have two-three projects in the making and I can’t wait to start filming. Currently, I am busy with all the promotions and *hungama* for *Hungama 2*. Trying to take it one step at a time. (smiles)

## Extreme dedication

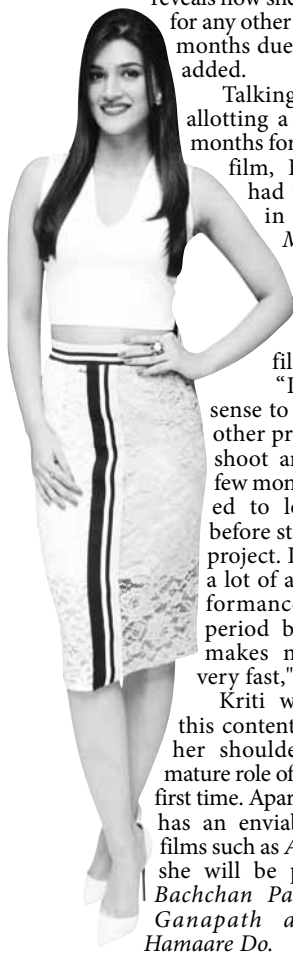
Actor KRITI SANON opens up about her drastic transformation in *Mimi*. By TEAM VIVA

Kriti Sanon recently shared her transformation journey for her forthcoming film, *Mimi*, where she had to put on weight for the role of a surrogate mother. The actress now reveals how she could not shoot for any other project for some months due to the kilos she added.

Talking about setting allotting a chunk of some months for the shoot of the film, Kriti shared, “I had to put on 15 kg in 2 months for *Mimi*, which I could start losing only once I had completed shooting for the film.”

“It made more sense to not take up any other project during the shoot and even after a few months since I needed to lose the weight before starting any other project. I had to let go of a lot of award show performances too in that period because dancing makes me lose weight very fast,” she added.

Kriti will be carrying this content-driven film on her shoulders playing the mature role of a mother for the first time. Apart from *Mimi*, she has an enviable lineup with films such as *Adipurush*, where she will be portraying Sita, *Bachchan Pandey*, *Bhediya*, *Ganapath* and *Hum Do Hamaare Do*.



## Adapting to the changing tides

KEERTHIVASAN SUBRAMANIAN shares how artistes are getting new opportunities in the digital horizon

India’s cultural diversity has created a variety in music, dance and other performing arts. Folklore is known to enrich the country’s vibrancy, encourage the folk artistes to work, and gives them employment opportunities and recognition. This is also understood to attract many audiences, both local and foreign, and provide a glimpse of India’s incredible roots.

However, things are not as lucrative as they were a couple of decades back. Folk artistes have suffered a significant downfall in employment due to western dominance and foray of new-age platforms. The early reports of 2020 reflected the slow decline of contemporary arts due to the rise of urbanisation, among other things. The new-age fusion trends have taken over traditional art forms. As a result, the audience is attracted to new-age music and s up ignoring local artistes. In addition, many art forms of the country are diminishing due to new sources of entertainment and global trends. Reports suggest that 70 per cent of the music created or composed in India is folk music. But, only two per cent of the total revenue generated by all types of Indian music is put into the production of folk music.

However, lost art has been observing some recognition on the digital media. Digitisation is now a voice of folk artistes to increase their visibility and reach across the nation. Many people have set up studios for the folk music community, which has helped these artistes keep their art alive. Listed below are ways in which folk artistes have started having obtained a second chance in this digital age.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Folk artistes are now quite well-versed with digitisation and have started showcasing their talent on social



media platforms. This has earned them global recognition. The country’s youth is now more aware of the rich culture and art of the country. The state governments are now identifying the scope in social media, and they have started seeking methods to preserve the gradually diminishing art. The authorities at Kochi, Kerala began a campaign called ‘Folk On’, which is aimed at promoting folk art through social media platforms.

### SETTING UP ONLINE PAID CONCERTS

In these times, setting up online

shows is easy. Folk artistes have started to showcase their talent, irrespective of the boundaries, thanks to the internet. Additionally, due to the pandemic, offline concerts and functions are either postponed or cancelled with most people restricted to their homes who spend more time online, giving way to the rise of previously unexplored digital activities. People staying on the web is leading to more traffic for these artistes. The rising number of viewers online has benefitted the folk artistes to stay afloat. Performers have gained ample profits through digital concerts.

### ONLINE REALITY SHOWS

Many talent hunt competitions and reality shows in India have offered great opportunities to people with talents in various fields. The shows and competitions have helped local artistes to gain popularity and recognition globally. Online reality shows have helped struggling folk artistes in boosting their confidence and also getting a break in the industry. These shows have endowed them with plenty of exposure to industry veterans entities that are otherwise hard to reach as a commoner. Online reality shows have even provided financial support to folk artistes.

### CONDUCTING ONLINE WORKSHOPS

At both national and metropolitan levels, many people are unaware of the traditional art forms. Folk artistes have started conducting online workshops to share the rich art forms existing in the country with them. Through online workshops, many people have started learning about these skills. This has encouraged more people in the country to indulge in folk art. With the rising awareness, folk artistes have an excellent opportunity to showcase their skills and survive in the market.

Digitisation has offered the folk artistes of our country another chance to revive the lost art forms. Young folk artistes are slowly adapting to the digital space to keep their culture and art form alive. These art forms are gaining popularity with each passing day.

Digitisation has reiterated that art is evergreen. Art does not know boundaries and will find its way to the ones seeking it.

(The author is founder and CEO of Playtoome, an online on demand live performance destination.)



Actors Ashnoor Kaur and Saanand Verma captured during shooting of the short film *Swad*, in New Delhi.

Photos by Pankaj Kumar

## TRENDBLAZER



### ADVICE FOR BUDDING ACTORS: ANUPAM

Veteran actor **ANUPAM KHER** says there are no shortcuts to becoming a good actor, and one has to work hard and keep practising.

Offering a piece of advice for budding actors, Kher shared, “Acting has no syllabus, that’s why people come up with best performances even at the age of 80 or later. My advice to budding actors would be to keep working hard and develop a keen interest in people and their varying emotions.”

### fairtalk

TANYA MANIKTALA



‘Over time, I have realised that there is no absolute way of dealing with trolls. I, personally ignore trolls. You have to gradually learn to take it in good humour and not take it too personally. Social media comes with a bad reputation but during the Covid situation, I’ve realised that in the right hands it can be a powerful, brilliant tool.’

### dailytalk

AMIT SHARMA



‘What was most fascinating about Surekha Sikri was her dedication. It is only natural that when you are working on something for years, you tend to go easy or feel relaxed with your work. We all are prone to thinking that we will manage. Never have I ever seen that attitude in Surekha ji.’

### JULIA ROBERTS’ TIMELESS MESSAGE

An old video of Hollywood actor **JULIA ROBERTS** on environment conservation has resurfaced as it started trending on social media (again).

In the video, she says, “Some call me nature, others call me mother nature. I have been here for over four and a half billion years — 22,500 times longer than you. I don’t really need people but people need me. Yes, your future depends on me. When I thrive, you thrive. When I falter, you falter, or worse.”





# TRIFED TO LEVERAGE 45,000 VAN DHAN VIKAS KENDRAS FOR VACCINATION

The Minister of Tribal Affairs, Arjun Munda, virtually launched 'COVID Teeka Sang Surakshit Van Dhan aur Uddyam' campaign to accelerate the pace of COVID vaccination among tribals in India. The campaign will leverage 45,000 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVK) of the Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED), a national level cooperative body under the administrative control of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India.

The campaign will highlight the three key Js:

- ♦ **Jeevan** (life): Every life is precious so vaccination is the key.
- ♦ **Jeevika** (livelihood): You can continue with your Van Dhan Vikas Kendra and livelihood activities without any fear of contracting the virus if you are vaccinated. It also saves you from hospitalisation and other costs.
- ♦ **Jaagrookta** (awareness): Simplification of the process of registration for vaccination, place, accessibility to different audience and age groups, especially women and elderly population. Van Dhan Vikas Kendras collaborate and work with other stakeholders with service as a motto and with dedication and commitment that they have a key role to make panchayats and villages Covid-free.

Munda launched the campaign through video conferencing link-up with field camps in



Mandla in Madhya Pradesh and Bastar in Chhattisgarh. The Minister of State for Steel, Faggan Singh Kulaste, the Ministers of State for Tribal Affairs, Bishweswar Tudu and Renuka Singh, were also present virtually during the launch. Other dignitaries present during the launch were Pravir Krishna, MD, TRIFED; WHO representative Dr Roderico Ofrin; UNICEF India Representative Dr Yasmin Ali Haque; and Anupam Trivedi, ED, TRIFED.

On the occasion, Munda also launched the newly-prepared Digital Directory under TRIFED's Digital Connect Programme. TRIFED started a Digital Connect programme under which a two-way communication process is proposed to be established with all tribal beneficiaries associated with Van

Dhan Vikas Yojana and retail operations of TRIFED. Besides these, several other stakeholders interested in TRIFED activities are also being included to expand awareness about the schemes of TRIFED, and motivate them to be a part of these initiatives.

Launching the campaign, Munda said, "We have been able to overcome two challenging waves, gained experience and are determined to stop the third wave. We have a role to play in rebuilding a new society, free of COVID virus. The campaign hopes to make our Van Dhan Vikas Kendras and villages to be the first in respective states to be declared Covid-free."

Giving details about the vaccination progress in tribal areas, he said that majority of

the tribal districts are performing well in terms of vaccination coverage. "However, there is still hesitancy among certain groups due to fake news, myths, and rumours. Our campaign focusses on reassurance, pride and self-efficacy," Munda added.

UNICEF India Representative, Dr Yasmin Haque said, "COVID-19 has exacerbated issues of access to sanitation, nutrition and health services in the tribal areas, making the people more vulnerable. This campaign is aligned with UNICEF's equity approach to survival, growth and development of children. We are proud to be associated with this campaign, which focusses on vaccine equity and engages with communities that risk being left behind."



## ESIC felicitation ceremony held

The felicitation ceremony to acknowledge the support of various organisations, NGOs, and private citizens to ESIC Hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic was held at Shram Shakti Bhawan, New Delhi. Bhopender Yadav, Union Minister for Labour & Employment, Environment, Forest & Climate Change; and Rameswar Teli, Minister of State for Labour & Employment and Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India, felicitated the representatives of organisation, who contributed oxygen plants, oxygen cylinders, disposable kits, et al, to ESIC Hospitals. More than 100 donors across India have made donations of equipment, kits, disposables and more.

In his address, Yadav appreciated and conveyed his gratitude to the organisations, NGOs, private citizens, who worked for the society during the pandemic. He said that through coordinated efforts of the government, the country overcame the crisis caused by the second wave of Coronavirus.

He mentioned that the government is working on a three-tier approach — Tracking, Testing and Treatment — to stop the menace of Covid-19. He informed, "India is now among leading manufacturers of PPE kits and masks. Around 40,000 ventilators and 1,00,000 oxygen cylinders had been made available to treat the Covid-19 patients. Around 39 crore vaccinations have been done till date and by the end of this year, around 257 crore vaccinations will be completed." He also lauded the work



done by ESIC Hospitals during the second wave of Covid-19.

Yadav said that the government is dedicated to the welfare of poor and deprived people. Multiple measures including free treatment under PMJAY and Rural Electrification programme have been started for the betterment of the underprivileged ones. In the same line, code on social security has been enacted. Through this code, the workers from the unorganised sector and gig economy will now be able to get the social security cover under ESI Scheme.

Teli also addressed the gathering. While extending his greetings to the contributors, he spoke about the service delivery mechanism of ESI Corporation across the country and the workforce of the entire country being benefited out of it.

He praised the latest initiative of the ESI Corporation, the ESIC Covid-19 relief scheme, where periodic payment at 90 per cent of average wages of deceased insured workers is paid to the eligible dependents of the insured worker, who died due to the virus. To date, the periodic payments were payable only against the death of insured workers due to employment injury, but now death caused by Covid-19 has also been included.

Apurva Chandra, Secretary, Labour & Employment, Government of India and Mukhmeet S Bhatia, director-general, ESIC, welcomed the gathering. Chandra lauded the humanitarian approach and efforts of young entrepreneurs in serving society during the pandemic.

## NTPC achieves over 100 BUs

NTPC Group has achieved over 100 Billion Units (BUs) of cumulative generation in the current financial year, reinforcing the group's commitment towards excellence in operation. The group generation had crossed 100 BUs on August 7, 2020, indicating improved performance and an increase in demand for power in the current year. This is the fastest 100 BUs generated by NTPC.

NTPC recorded a generation of 85.8 BU in the first quarter from April to June 2021, registering an increase of 26.3 per cent from 67.9 BU generated in the corresponding quarter last year. On a standalone basis,

NTPC generation increased by 19.1 per cent to 71.7 BU in the first quarter from April to June 2021, compared to the 60.2 BU generated in the corresponding quarter last year.

NTPC Korba (2,600 MW) in Chattisgarh is the top-performing thermal power plant in India with 97.61 per cent Plant Load Factor (PLF) between April to June 2021, as per the data published by Central Electricity Authority (CEA). Further, NTPC Singrauli Unit 4 (200 MW) in Uttar Pradesh commissioned way back in January 1984 achieved 102.08 per cent PLF, the highest in the country, from April to June 2021. This demonstrates the

expertise of NTPC in the operation and maintenance of the power plants and the high levels of operational excellence.

With a total installed capacity of 66,085 MW, NTPC has 71 power stations including 29 renewable projects. NTPC has set a target to install 60 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy (RE) capacity by 2032.

The group has over 20 GW of capacity under construction, including five GW of renewable energy projects. Uninterrupted supply of electricity through environment-friendly energy projects at affordable prices has been the hallmark of NTPC.



Kavach Natural was launched in the presence of luminaries such as Padma Vibhushan Dr Sonal Mansingh, MP, Rajya Sabha and singer-songwriter Daler Mehndi.

## PNB adjudged best public sector bank

In a major achievement, Punjab National Bank (PNB) has been adjudged the best Public Sector Bank (PSB) in the country for its outstanding performance in the field of agriculture credit, microfinance, financial inclusion and technology adoption. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) honoured PNB for its remarkable contribution to rural customers with a 'Special Commemorative Award'.

Speaking on the occasion, S S Mallikarjuna Rao, MD and CEO of PNB, said, "Despite the impact of the pandemic, PNB has been at the forefront of developing India's agriculture and MSME sectors. Last year, the bank ran the Village Contact Programme, a campaign that covered more than 30,000 villages across the country, thereby, identifying significant opportunities in agriculture and MSME credit. Further, the bank improved access to social security schemes like Pradhan Mantri

Jeevan Jyoti Yojna, Suraksha Bima Yojna and Atal Pension Yojna. One of the campaign objectives was to enhance digitisation to the last mile for financial inclusion, such as issuance of debit cards and bringing rural communities under the PNB One Mobile App, which has yielded great results. However, more work will be done in the coming months. Thus, this recognition will go a long way in motivating our entire workforce in the rural lending segment, which is critical for the country's GDP growth."

Celebrating the 40th Foundation Day, NABARD announced the awards on the sidelines of a webinar on 'Resilience of Indian Agriculture Amid The Pandemic'. The programme was graced by the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Narendra Singh Thumar, chief economic advisor, Dr Krishnamurthy V Subramanian and NABARD chairman, GR Chinchala.

## Kolkata metro organises mobile vax camps

Kolkata metro has taken an initiative to inoculate all its staff and their beneficiaries at the earliest in the wake of the pandemic. As a part of this initiative, a mobile vaccination camp was organised by the Medical Department at Belgachia Railway Auditorium.

In this campaign, 109 people have been vaccinated including 17 employees, 89 railway beneficiaries and three contractual staff.

Manoj Joshi, GM of Kolkata metro, has expressed his satisfaction for organising the camp.



## LIC LAUNCHES NEW HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN



Life Insurance Corporation of India has introduced a new health insurance plan — Arogya Rakshak — which is a non-linked, non-participating, regular premium, individual, health insurance plan.

This plan provides fixed benefit insurance cover against certain specified health risks and provides timely support in case of medical emergencies. It helps the insured and his family to remain financially independent in difficult times.

An individual can insure himself/herself (as Principal Insured), his/her spouse, all the

children and parents under one policy. The plan is available for people between the ages of 18 to 65. The cover period is available for PI/spouse/parents up to age 80 years and for children up to 25 years.

It gives the following benefits under one policy:

- Flexible benefit limit to choose from.
- Flexible premium payment options.
- Valuable financial protection in case of hospitalisation, surgery et al.
- Lump-sum benefit irrespective of actual medical costs.

□ Auto step-up benefit and no claim benefit.

□ If more than one member is covered under a policy, a premium waiver for other insured(s) in case of unfortunate death of the original principal insured i.e. the policyholder at the inception of the policy.

□ Premium waiver benefit for one year in the event of any insured undergoing surgery falling under Category I or Category II for certain major surgical benefits.

□ Ambulance benefit.



## STF, DDA reviews progress of complaints

The 69th meeting of the Special Task Force, DDA, was attended by officers from all the local bodies and other concerned agencies. The progress of the complaints received up to June 30 was reviewed.

In total, 86,386 complaints have been received in STF till June 30, and action on 82,068 complaints has been initiated. Since the constitution of STF in 2018, 3,647 unauthorised constructions have been demolished and more than 2,454 properties have been sealed. The chairman of STF directed the ULBs to take the matter of pendency seriously and expedite the action on the pending cases.

The 'Encroachment Removal Action' was undertaken by NDMC at areas including Connaught Place, Palika Bazar, Gole Market, Janpath, Shankar Market, LBN, Sarojini Nagar and Chanakyaapuri, VIP area.

The drive was undertaken by SDMC at Bandh Road, Sangam Vihar, PVR Saket, Pramod Mahajan Road, Press Enclave Road, and Malviya Nagar Market, Hospital Road, School Road, Gol Chakkar.

DDA removed 23 illegal/unauthorised borewells behind Smritivan at Sarai Kale Khan to stop water extraction from Yamuna flood plains. Two joint demolition programmes were undertaken by North DMC and Revenue department in Burari. The area of land reclaimed is 7,500 sq m.



## Rotary honours SRM Group Chairman

The Rotary International-RI District 3231, The Rotary Club of Maraimalai Nagar, awarded the LifeTime Achievement Award to Ravi Pachmoorthy, chairman of SRM Group, pro chancellor (Administration), SRM Institute of Science and

Technology.

The award was presented by Rotarian Babu Peram, Rotary District Governor (2018-2019) 3232 in the presence of Rotarian P A Elango, president of Rotary club Maraimalai Nagar, 3231.

The club has been showing its goodwill during this pandemic. It recognised and appreciated people in the field of education, hospitality and dedicated medical service. The programme was conducted in the SIMS Conference Hall in Vadapalani, Chennai.



# ‘India responded like champions’

PTI ■ COLOMBO

With its back to the wall, Team India responded like champions, said coach Rahul Dravid in an inspiring dressing room speech after his young side registered a series-clinching win in the second ODI against Sri Lanka here.

Chasing 276 for victory on Tuesday, India were reduced to 193 for seven in 36th over but Deepak Chahar (69) and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (19) shared an unbroken 84-run stand to take the visitors home with three wickets in hand and five balls to spare.

“Obviously we finished on the right side of the result, which is incredible and fantastic but even if we didn’t finish on the right side of the result, it is the fight all the way through was absolutely brilliant, so well done to all of you,” Dravid said in a video posted on *bcci.tv*.

“We said they were going to respond, we knew we had to respect the opposition. The opposition was going to respond, they’re also an international team. They responded, and we responded back like a champion team.

“With our back to the wall, we found a way to break them. So really well done to all of you. Fantastic job.”



Bhuvneshwar (3/54) and Yuzvendra Chahal (3/50) snared three wickets each, while Chahar claimed two to restrict Sri Lanka to 275 for nine.

India found the going tough with Suryakumar Yadav anchoring the chase with a 44-ball 53 but once he was gone, the visitors slipped to 193 for seven.

However, Chahar smashed his maiden ODI fifty and in the company of Bhuvneshwar took the team home.

“It is not the right time to talk about individuals at this point, obviously there were some fantastic individual performances, especially towards the end,” said Dravid.

“We had talked about that,

we acknowledge and recognise every player’s contribution in this game. If you look at the whole game, there were some very good team performances.

“So many good performances in our bowling, batting, even at the start, fantastic team performances from all of you.”

The video also featured Suryakumar, Bhuvneshwar, and Chahar talking about their experience about the match.

“I don’t have words, I think it is one of the best games which I have been part of, I have seen Live... It is an unbelievable victory,” Suryakumar said.

“*Bhuv*, our vintage man and DC, we have been talking about his batting, and today he has proved himself, it was a

## Dravid sir’s belief in my batting pushed me to perform: Chahar

Colombo: India pacer Deepak Chahar, who was an unexpected hero with the bat in the second ODI against Sri Lanka, said coach Rahul Dravid’s belief in his batting inspired him to produce a match-winning knock for his team.

“No better way to win the match for the country. Rahul sir told me to play all the balls. I’ve played a few innings with India A (when Dravid was coach) and I think he has belief in me.

“He told me he thinks I’m good enough to be a No 7 (but he batted at 8). He has belief in me. Hopefully in the coming matches I don’t have to bat. When we came under 50 that’s when I believed we can win. Before that it was ball by ball. I took some risks after,” said Chahar at the post match presentation.

Prior to this game, his highest scored in international cricket was 12.

“Only one thing that was going on in my mind: this is the kind of innings I’ve been dreaming of. No better way to win the match for the country,”



he said talking about his mind-set in the middle.

### ‘JUSTIFIED PROMOTION’

India vice-captain Bhuvneshwar Kumar said it was coach Rahul Dravid’s decision to send Deepak Chahar up the order and he justified it with an “amazing” knock.

“...Our aim was to play till the last ball, last over, so we wanted to take it as deep as possible, so we can score runs. The only plan was to play till the last, and the way Deepak batted was amazing,”

Bhuvneshwar said at the post-match virtual press conference.

“He has played under coach Rahul Dravid before in India A or some series and he had scored there as well. So, Dravid knew that he can bat and he can hit a few balls, so that was his Dravid’s call.

“And the way he batted, Chahar proved it right. We all know that he can bat, he has batted in Ranji Trophy many times, so it wasn’t a tough call but it is good to see the way he scored the runs.”

“The only chat and plan was to play till the end. We never said to each other that from here on, we can win. Even when we needed 1 run (3 runs), we were taking one ball at a time. Deepak never let the run rate go above six,” Bhuvneshwar said.

“He almost played risk-free shots, where he got few boundaries and brought the required rate to under six. At no stage did we think that we are going to win or lose. We were playing according to the situation and taking it ball by ball.”

## Injured Avesh all but out of Eng tour



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Young fast bowler Avesh Khan’s tour of England is set to end abruptly after being ruled out of India’s warm-up First-Class game against County XI due to a left-thumb fracture he sustained on the opening day of the match in Durham.

Khan, the right-arm fast bowler represented the County XI side after a few of their players went on mandatory isolation for coming in contact with Covid-19 positive people.

A senior BCCI official informed that Khan, who was a stand-by player, could be out for a considerable period of time due to the injury and the Indian team management will have at least one net bowler short going into the Test series, starting August 4 at Trent Bridge in

Nottingham.

“Avesh is not likely to take any further part in the series leave alone this game. It’s a thumb fracture. He will not be bowling for at least a month and after that rehabilitation is likely to start. In another three days, the picture is supposed to get clearer,” the BCCI source said.

The BCCI on Wednesday didn’t elaborate on the exact nature of the injury but stated: “Fast bowler Avesh Khan remains under observation of the Medical Team. He will not be taking any further part on Day 2 and Day 3 of the warm-up game.”

### VIRAT BACK IN NETS

India captain Virat Kohli, who skipped the First-Class warm up game due to a slight back niggle was back to the nets and enjoyed a full-fledged batting session on the day.

### GILL BACK HOME

Young opener Shubman Gill, who was earlier ruled out of the five-Test series with shin splints, has returned home after enjoying a break in the UK.

Shubman is back home in Mohali and after spending some time with his family, the cricketer will be off to National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru for an intensive rehabilitation programme.

## Stokes, Buttler, Bairstow, Sam back for India Tests

London: Star all-rounder Ben Stokes on Wednesday returned to the 17-member England squad for the first two Tests against India, along with pacer Ollie Robinson, who was earlier suspended for his seven-year-old racist tweets.

Opener Haseeb Hameed, whose last Test was against India in 2016, was also named in the squad.

The first Test starts in Nottingham on August 4 while the second match will be played at the Lord’s from August 12-16.

Jofra Archer, recuperating



from elbow surgery, and Chris Woakes, suffering from bruised heel, are still not match-fit to be

included.

Pacers Mark Wood and Sam Curran are the other fast bowlers in the line-up, apart from the veteran duo of James Anderson and Stuart Broad.

The seasoned keeper-batsmen Jonny Bairstow and Jos Buttler are back in the Joe rooted team after being rested for the Test series against New Zealand. The team also has Rory Burns, Ollie Pope, Zak Crawley, Dom Sibley and Dan Lawrence in the batting unit.

However, one of the notable comebacks is certainly that of 24-year-old

Lancashire opener Hameed, who is currently playing against India in the warm-up game at Durham.

Hameed was termed as ‘Baby Boys’ during his teenage years for his defensive game resembling Geoffrey Boycott’s dogged defence.

**Squad:** Joe Root (captain), James Anderson, Ben Stokes, Jonny Bairstow, Dom Bess, Stuart Broad, Rory Burns, Jos Buttler, Zak Crawley, Sam Curran, Haseeb Hameed, Dan Lawrence, Jack Leach, Ollie Pope, Ollie Robinson, Dom Sibley, Mark Wood.

## Sindhu will be among favourites for Gold in Tokyo: Gopichand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chief national badminton coach Pullela Gopichand expects Indian athletes to claim an unparalleled double digit medal haul at the Olympics and has declared world champion P V Sindhu as one of the favourites to win a Gold.

“I do believe that this time around, we would have, hopefully, India’s biggest medal tally till now. We could surpass what the Indian team did in London which is six medals and hopefully get to double digit is what I am hoping for,” Gopichand said.

“Whether it is shooting, wrestling, boxing or Mirabai Chanu in weightlifting, I think they have a lot of chances,” he said.

Gopichand, who had guided Saina Nehwal and Sindhu to a Bronze and Silver respectively in the last two Olympics, believes Indian badminton

players have a good opportunity to better their performance.

“In badminton, we have chances, definitely to better what we did in Rio and London. So I am hoping that Sindhu can pull off, she is definitely going to be one of the favourites in the Olympics

with the venue as well,” he said.

“And also Chirag and Satwik, although, have a tough draw but I do see them as potential hopefuls for a medal. For Sai Praneth, it is going to be tough. But he has done well at the World Championships and I hope he can repeat that performance.



## Starc Carey Oz to win

AFF ■ BARBADOS

Australia’s pacers demolished the West Indies batting line-up to claim a comprehensive 133-run victory by the DLS method in the rain-affected first ODI of the three-match series at Kensington Oval on Tuesday.

After stand-in captain Alex Carey led from the front with a topscore of 67 to lift his side to 252/9 batting first, only his Caribbean counterpart Kieron Pollard (56) stood firm against the tourists’ pacers as the home side were routed for 123 off 26.2 overs in reply.

Set a revised target of 257 in a match reduced to 49 overs per side, West Indies were reduced to 27/6 with opening bowlers Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood sharing the wickets. It took Mitchell Marsh to end a 67-run stand between Pollard and Alzarri Joseph.

That breakthrough opened the door for Starc to finish the job with a haul of 5/48 which earned him the Player of the Match award. Hazlewood had the impressive returns of three for 11 in his opening burst and was not required to return for a second spell.

## Indian paddlers handed tough draws

PTI ■ TOKYO

India paddlers were on Wednesday handed tough draws at the Tokyo Olympics with the mixed doubles pairing of Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra pitted against third seeds Lin Yun-ju and Cheng I-Ching of Chinese Taipei on Saturday.

Batra, ranked 62, though got an easy women’s singles first round where she will face Great Britain’s Ho Tin-Tin, ranked 32 places below the

Indian.

Should she win the opening round, Batra will lock horns with Ukraine’s Margaryta Pesotska, world No 36, in the next round followed by Sofia Polcanova of Austria, who is ranked 17.

In the men’s draw, Sharath and Sathiyan Gnanasekaran seeded 20th and 26th respectively, received first round byes. Their opponents for the second round will depend on the winners from first round matches.

## Brisbane picked to host 2032 Olympics

Brisbane was awarded the 2032 Olympics on Wednesday, triggering celebratory fireworks as it became the third Australian city to host the Summer Games after Melbourne and Sydney.

International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach confirmed the widely expected result after a vote at the IOC session in Tokyo.

“The International Olympic Committee has the honour to announce that the Games of the 35th Olympiad are awarded to Brisbane, Australia,” Bach said.

The announcement was greeted by cheers from the Brisbane delegates in Tokyo, while fireworks lit up the skies above the Australian city thousands of miles away.

Brisbane’s victory looked a certainty after it was unanimously proposed as the single candidate for 2032 by the IOC’s 15-strong executive board in June.

“It’s a historic day not just for Brisbane and Queensland,



but for the entire country,” said Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

“Only global cities can secure the Olympic Games, so this is fitting recognition for Brisbane’s standing across our region and the world.”

Australia has already hosted the Olympics twice, in Melbourne in 1956 and Sydney in 2000, widely considered one of the most successful Games in recent history.

Venues will be spread across Brisbane and nearby towns in Queensland state, including the Gold Coast which hosted the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

## Indian athletes’ participation in opening ceremony to be bare minimum

PTI ■ TOKYO

The participation of Indian athletes in the Olympic Games opening ceremony will be kept to a “bare minimum” in view of the Covid-19 threat, while only six officials from the contingent will be allowed to take part in the event on Friday.

The athletes who have competitions lined up the next day will be discouraged from attending the event, the country’s deputy chef-de-mission Prem Kumar Verma said on Wednesday.

Indian Olympic Association secretary general Rajeev Mehta, who is in the city, said not many will be there keeping in mind the risk of infection.

“We will try to have a bare minimum group out there. *Kam se kam athletes ko utara jaega*. The chef de mission and the deputy chef de mission will decide on the numbers tomorrow but our view is that the bare minimum should attend to ensure their safety in this crucial period,” Mehta said.



India is being represented by more than 120 athletes in the Games with the overall contingent size being 228, including officials, coaches, other support staff an alternate athletes in view of the Covid-19.

“Six officials (from every country) are allowed at the ceremony but there is no cap on athletes. However, we have advised the athletes who have events the next day to skip the ceremony and focus on their game,” Verma said after a meeting of the chef-de-missions here but did not specify which officials from India will be there at the event.

“The ceremony is likely to last till midnight so it is better

that they rest for their events the following day,” he added.

The likes of 10m air pistol shooters Saurabh Chaudhary, Abhishek Verma, Apurvi Chandela and Elavenil Valarivan, who have events on the first competition day, will skip the ceremony along with Manu Bhaker, Yashaswini Singh Deswal, Deepak Kumar and Divyansh Singh Panwar will be shooting on the second day.

Chef-de-mission B P Baishya said a call on the number of Indian athletes who will participate will be taken on Thursday.

Boxers, archers and the men’s and women’s hockey teams are also scheduled to

## World leaders from 15 nations to attend Games opening

PTI ■ TOKYO

Leaders from around 15 countries are expected to attend Friday’s opening ceremony of the Covid-hit Tokyo Olympics.

Reports in Japan have suggested that those attending the ceremony in person could be as low as 1,000 due to the pandemic.

Around 70 cabinet-level officials are also set to visit

Japan, adding that there is still uncertainty over the number of VIPs attending the opening ceremony.

World leaders who have already promised their attendance in the opening ceremony are French President Emmanuel Macron, Mongolian Prime Minister Luvsannamsrai Oyun-Erdene and US first lady Jill Biden among others.

While Mary Kom is not scheduled to compete the next day, Manpreet will be leading the side out for the first Pool A game against New Zealand

on Saturday.

“Those who are quarantining are also not allowed,” Verma said about the athletes and officials, who have recently landed in the Japanese city.

On Wednesday, media reports came in that Britain will have no more than 30 athletes taking part in the ceremony due to Covid-19 fears. Great Britain has 376 athletes in fray at the Games.

## shortpasses

### BOXERS TRAINING AT VILLAGE

TOKYO: With the Olympics boxing venue ‘quite far’, Indian pugilists have decided to train at the facilities available at the Games Village to avoid exertion and Covid-19 risk.

### AUS EQUESTRIAN BANNED

TOKYO: Australian showjumper Jamie Kermond was provisionally suspended from the Tokyo Olympics on Wednesday after testing positive for cocaine.

### 3 +VES OUT OF OLYMPICS

TOKYO: Chilean Taekwondo player Fernanda Aguirre, Dutch skateboarder Candy Jacobs & Czech TT player Pavel Srnec were ruled out of the Olympics after testing Covid +ve.

### DD SPORTS TO BROADCAST

NEW DELHI: DD Sports will broadcast the Tokyo Olympics Live daily while other channels of Doordarshan and the All India Radio (AIR) will air special programmes.

### JHINGAN WINS TOP PRIZE

NEW DELHI: Defender Sandesh Jhingana on Wednesday was named the AIFF men’s Footballer of the Year, while midfielder Suresh Singh Wangmayi was picked as the Emerging Player for 2020-21 season.

### SWEDEN STUN US

DUBAI: Stina Blackstenius scored a brace and Sweden once again stunned the US at the Olympics with a 3-0 victory Wednesday in the women’s football tourney. **Agencies**