

OPINION 6 THE REFORMS OF 2015 ARE FRUCTIFYING NOW

WORLD 8 TUNISIA ON EDGE AS PREZ SUSPENDS PARL, FIRES PM

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YAMI'S LOST GOES ON FLOORS 11 VIVACITY

CAPSULE

FIRST UNCREWED MISSION NOT POSSIBLE IN DEC: ISRO
Bengaluru: The launch of the first uncrewed mission planned in December, as part of the human spaceflight programme 'Gaganyaan', will be delayed due to the Covid-19-induced disruption in delivery of hardware elements for the ambitious venture, ISRO confirmed on Monday.

DELHI ZOO TO REOPEN FROM AUGUST 1
New Delhi: The Delhi zoo will reopen for visitors from August 1, over three months after it was shut due to a surge in coronavirus cases during the second wave of the pandemic, officials said on Monday. The zoo was earlier closed for more than a year due to the first wave of coronavirus and bird flu. It was reopened for visitors on April 1, only to be closed again on April 15 due to the resurgence of the coronavirus pandemic.

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE TO COME UP IN N-E
New Delhi: The Ministry of Science and Technology is setting up a first-of-its-kind Centre of Excellence in the Northeast, according to an official statement on Monday.

JEE-ADVANCED TO BE CONDUCTED ON OCT 3
New Delhi: The Joint Entrance Examination (JEE)-Advanced will be conducted on October 3, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan announced on Monday. The exam, earlier scheduled on July 3, was postponed in view of the Covid-19 situation.

Assam-Mizo border war escalates, 6 cops killed

PNS/PTI ■ GUWAHATI/AIZAWL

In a major flare-up at the Mizoram-Assam border, at least six Assam Police officials were killed and 50 others, including an SP, were injured in a sudden escalation of the simmering border dispute between the two States.

The two Chief Ministers blamed each other's police for the violence and sought the Centre's intervention. Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to the Chief Ministers of Assam and Mizoram, Himanta Biswa Sarma and Zoramthanga respectively, and urged them to ensure peace along the disputed border and find an amicable settlement.

Assam's Barak Valley districts of Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi share a 164 km long border with Mizoram's three districts of Aizawl, Kolasib and Mamit.

This is third time in less than two years that violence has erupted following the territorial dispute. There inter-State border dispute saw violence in August 2020 and February this year also. The Assam Chief Minister announced on Twitter that six personnel of the Assam Police were killed in firing by "miscreants" from Mizoram along the inter-State border in



Locals during a clash with police personnel at Assam-Mizoram border at Lailapur in Cachar district on Monday PTI

the Cachar district.

"I am deeply pained to inform that six brave jawans of @assampolice have sacrificed their lives while defending the constitutional boundary of our State at the Assam-Mizoram border. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families," Sarma tweeted.

While the Assam CM put the blame on miscreants, Mizoram Home Minister Lalchamliana, in a statement, said Mizoram Police respond-

ed "spontaneously by firing back" at Assam Police after its 200 personnel forcibly crossed a duty post manned by the CRPF personnel and indulged in arson, assault on unarmed persons and firing.

A senior Assam Police officer, who is still inside the forest amid continuous firing from across the State border, told PTI that at least 50 personnel, including Cachar Superintendent of Police Nimbalkar Vaibhav

Chandrakant, were injured in firing and stone-pelting.

The senior police officer said miscreants from across the State border suddenly started firing when civil officials of both sides were trying to sort out the differences.

"I immediately cannot say how many people have been injured, but my guess is at least 50 personnel. Our SP was also injured in the firing and a bullet hit his leg," he said over phone.

BSY makes 'honourable' exit, hopes for sons' rise

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

It's the end of the road for four-time Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa. BSY, as he is popularly known, resigned on Monday after "negotiating" his exit with the BJP central leadership. The party is yet to take a decision on naming a successor to the 78-year-old "Lingayat" strongman.

BSY, who submitted his resignation to Governor Thaaarchand Gehlot at Raj Bhawan, will continue as caretaker Chief Minister. Karnataka BJP Legislative Party will meet soon to "elect" a new leader.

The BJP is pushing younger leadership across other States, but the choice for the successor in Karnataka would also be influenced by the consideration of 2023 State Assembly polls, sources said.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president JP Nadda and Union Minister Pralhad Joshi engaged in discussion in the Parliament house soon after Yediyurappa submitted his letter of resignation to the Governor.

BJP General Secretary and Karnataka-in-charge Arun Singh and Union HRD Minister Dharmendra Pradhan are expected to reach the State Capital as central observers to oversee the election of a new leader.



Karnataka CM BS Yediyurappa during a programme commemorating two years of the BJP Government in Karnataka at Vidhanasoudha in Bengaluru on Monday PTI

Ending days of speculation over his departure, Yediyurappa announced his resignation after holding days of negotiations with beseeching right political slots for his sons BY Vijayendra, already a State BJP vice-president, and B Y Raghvendra, MP, and also a "safe passage" for himself against several pending court cases.

His lobbying with "Lingayat" seems did not find favour with the top BJP leaders who asked him to make an "honourable exit".

"Not out of grief, but with happiness. I thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi and home minister Amit Shah for allowing me to continue even after 75 years of age. I will be involved in party building

activities in future," said an emotional Yediyurappa after submitting his letter of resignation in Raj Bhawan.

"Nobody pressured me to resign. I did it on my own so that someone else can take over as CM after the completion of two years of Government. I'll work to bring BJP back in power in the next election. I've not suggested the name of my successor," he said.

Karnataka Health and Education Minister K Sudhakar, who had moved to the BJP from the Congress in 2019 at the behest of Yediyurappa, termed his stepping out as "surprising", stating that the latter had told him that he may receive a favourable decision from the high command by July 26.

Pegasus row, farmers' issue rock Parliament

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Parliament could not function once again on Monday amid noisy protests by Opposition members who raised slogans and showed placards on the Pegasus snooping row and farmers' issue.

The Rajya Sabha witnessed several adjournments and carried no business where as the Lok Sabha was adjourned for the day after passage of two bills without discussion. The pre-lunch session in the Rajya Sabha saw two adjournments and it was the same in the afternoon session also.

The Upper House assembled at 2 pm and adjourned within minutes to reassemble at 3 pm which too got adjourned to meet again at 4 pm after which a Bill on Indecent Representation of Women by Union Minister Smriti Irani was taken and discussed amid the din.

The agitated Opposition was in no mood to relent and the upper house was finally adjourned for the day within 15 minutes of function.

The protesting members did not pay heed to repeated appeals made by Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu and some members could not be raised in the House displaying plac-



ards and yet others raised slogans forcing two adjournments in the post-lunch session.

The unruly scenes saw Naidu saying it was a "helpless" situation and members were unable to flag issues of public concern. When Naidu called for the members to raise their issues in the Zero Hour, the Opposition created a ruckus. The Chairman lamented that several important issues could not be raised.

He expressed concern over about 90 members of the House being denied opportunities to raise issues due to persistent disruption of proceedings of the House.

A total of 69 Zero Hour Mentions including 12 admitted for Monday and 23 Special Mentions by as many members could not be raised in the House during the last week.

Proceedings washed out as Opp members create bedlam

BSF ex-chief, ED Jt Dir, Kejriwal's former aide, 2 colonels snooped

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The phone numbers of then BSF chief KK Sharma, Joint Director of the Enforcement Directorate Rajeshwar Singh and his family members, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's former chief consultant VK Jain, two Army Colonels and one RAW officer, and one under secretary from PMO too were targets of snooping done through the use of Pegasus spyware.

Bihar Cricket Association Secretary and BJP leader Rakesh Tiwary too has found a place in the snooping list, said a report by The Wire portal.

The leaked database also shows that a BSF Inspector General of Police, Jagdish Maithani, was selected as a potential target for surveillance around the same time along with then BSF chief KK Sharma. ED officer Rajeshwar Singh, who investigated many



key cases like 2G Scam and Aircel-Maxis, had troubles with then Finance Secretary Hasmukh Adhia. Rajeshwar Singh was considered in the camp of CBI Director Alok Verma during his tussle with Special Director Rakesh Asthana during 2017-2018. The phones of Singh's wife and two sisters also figured in the tapped list.

Kejriwal's former chief consultant Jain was handling key files and was a witness in the case of assault on then Delhi Chief Secretary Anshu Prakash by AAP MLAs.

Hyder snatched gun, said 'Goli Maar Dunga'

- We fired back in self-defence: police
- Escort team inspector lodges FIR

PNS ■ BALESWAR

Cuttack UPD Police Inspector Gadgadhara Saseeni, who had led the escort team for shifting Shiekh Hyder to Baripada Circle Jail from Choudwar Circle Jail on Saturday, lodged an FIR at the Simulia police station in Baleswar district on Monday regarding the details of the encounter, in which the gangster was shot dead.

The FIR stated that Hyder had snatched an AK-47 rifle from a Havildar and threatened the policemen of the escort party to kill them before being shot.

Since he was a hardcore criminal and previously had escaped from police custody from the SCB Medical College Hospital, he was handcuffed as a precautionary measure to prevent any attempt to escape, stated Saseeni in the FIR.

"But we stopped the vehicle near a Hanuman temple at Simulia. Hyder requested to unlock his handcuffs as he had to attend nature's call and wash his hands. As soon as a policeman unlocked one side of the handcuff, he immediately snatched an AK-47 from Havildar Surya Kumar Rout and ran to a distance," said the FIR.



Pointing the gun towards the escort party, Hyder started hurling abuses at them in Hindi and said "Ek baar main far hua tha, tum police wale mujhe Hyderabad se pakad liye. Iss baar main far hunge, koi police mujhe pakadne ke

liye aage badhega toh goli maar dunga," the FIR stated.

Though Saseeni and SI Asit Ranjan Jena warned him repeatedly to surrender before the police, he refused and threatened to open fire at them, the FIR stated.

"In such a dangerous situation of life and death and in exercise of the right to self-defence, and to save the life of police personnel from imminent danger, ASI Jena fired three rounds from his service pistol to prevent any attack. He took all precautions to resort to controlled fire to hit in the lower part of the body below

the waist of the convict with a view to immobilise him and to prevent him from opening fire, which endangered the lives of all police personnel," Saseeni mentioned in the FIR.

Saseeni further mentioned that if the escort would not have retaliated, Hyder would have killed the escort party members with the automatic rifle that he snatched from Havildar Surya Kumar Rout.

Though the escort team immediately shifted Hyder to the Baleswar District Headquarters Hospital, he died while undergoing treatment, Saseeni mentioned in the FIR.

HYDER DEATH: OHRC seeks report from police

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR/CUTTACK

The Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has taken suo-moto cognisance of the media reports on the death of gangster Shiekh Hyder Ali after a police encounter and sought report from the Odisha Police within four weeks.

The commission has issued notice to Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department, Odisha DGP, Director General of Prisons &

DCS and Twin City Police Commissioner seeking reports from them.

The matter would come up for hearing on September 6.

The commission's move obviously followed reservations in some quarters about the justification of the police encounter with Hyder.

Besides, a complaint was filed on Monday before the OHRC seeking a due enquiry into the police encounter. Orissa High Court advocate Amrit Mishra filed it stating

- Gives 4-week deadline
- Lawyer also files plaint with rights body

discrepancies in the police statements regarding the circumstances that led the police to open fire on the gangster.

Annexing media clippings, Mishra pointed out that the facts reported in newspapers and television channels quoting some policemen do not tally with those made by some other policemen.

Schools reopen for X, XII students in State

Online classes also to continue

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

After being closed for almost three months due to the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic, schools and higher secondary schools across the State reopened for Classes-X and XII students from Monday.

However, this classroom learning will go in tandem with online learning as some students are unable to attend schools for different reasons. The classes will now continue to be held from 10 am to

1.30 pm without recess hour. The schools will remain closed on all Government holidays.

Meanwhile, the State Government is also planning to reopen the schools for Classes-IX and XI students from August 16 and September 15, respectively.

The following guidelines have been issued by the School and Mass Education Department regarding reopening of schools.

a) Online/distance learning shall continue to be the preferred mode of teaching and shall be encouraged. Where schools are conducting online classes and some students prefer to attend online classes rather than physically attend school, they may be permitted

to do so.

b) Online and classroom learning will go in tandem with each other and should continue to share timelines and daily schedules to ensure

synchronisation.

c) Students may attend schools/institutions in consultation with their parents or guardians. Attendance must not be enforced.



State reports 1,637 new Covid cases

- TPR 2.19%
- Max 350 cases in Khordha
- 62 more die; toll mounts to 5,574
- 2,204 recover

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State on Monday reported 1,637 new Covid-19 positive cases in the 30 districts and the State pool that increased the total tally to 9,69,185.

A total of 74,553 samples were tested in the last 24 hours and the test positivity rate (TPR) was 2.19 per cent.

Out of the new cases, 949 were from quarantine and 688 local contacts. Khordha district reported the day's highest 350 cases followed by Cuttack with

250 and Angul 100. The districts which reported below-100 cases were Jagatsinghpur with 85, Jajpur 80, Puri 78, Kendrapada 76, Mayurbhanj 75, Bhadrak 71, Sundergarh 61, Baleswar 57, Dhenkanal 50, Nayagarh 39, Kandhamal 36, Keonjhar 18, Ganjam 16, Nuapada and Rayagada 14 each, Sambalpur 13, Subarnapur 11, Nabarangpur, Boudh, Koraput and Malkangiri nine each, Balangir eight, Kalahandi seven, Jharsuguda six and Deogarh four. Besides, 71 cases were reported from the State pool.

Meanwhile, another 62 patients succumbed to the disease in the last 24 hours, mounting the total death toll to 5,574 in the State, the Health

and Family Welfare Department said.

The maximum 42 deaths were reported from Khordha district followed by Sundargarh with 10, Keonjhar four, Jajpur

two and Ganjam, Jagatsinghpur, Kandhamal and Puri one each. However, another 2,204 patients recovered on the day, increasing the total recoveries to 9,47,381.

BBSR has 286 new infections

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Bhubaneswar on Monday registered 286 new Covid-19 positive cases, with which the total tally in the city rose to 98,352. Out of the new cases, 222 were local contacts and 64 quarantine cases.

The local contacts included 13 cases each in Nayapalli and Patia, followed by 11 in Laxmi

Sagar, 10 in Khandagiri, nine each in Sailashree Vihar and Pokhariput and eight each in Old Town, Rasulgah and ICR Village. The active cases stood at 2,015 in the city.

Meanwhile, 25 more patients died of disease in the city, surging the total death toll to 776. However, 234 persons recovered on the day, increasing the total recoveries to 95,540.

'No sign of an impending 3rd wave'

Decision on unlocking depends on situation: Govt

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

While speculations are rife about the possibility of a third Covid-19 wave, there is

no sign of an impending crisis in the country yet, said State Director of Medical Education and Training (DMET) Dr CBK Mohanty here on Monday.

"The possibility of a third wave is lurking. But its timing and impact cannot be predicted now," said he.

Speaking about the single-day Covid caseloads in Odisha,

which is now between 1,600 and 2,000, he said a similar trend is also seen in some other States.

"Even as the TPR (test positivity rate) is still higher in a few districts of Odisha, it has declined significantly as compared to previous days," Dr Mohanty said.

On the increasing number

of daily Covid deaths in the State, he said, "As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), treatment should be given the top priority and the number of deaths is counted at the end of the pandemic. Different States, including Odisha, have also adopted this method."

He said that the State

Government may start an unlocking process after reviewing the existing situation.

"We will oversee the present Covid situation from all angles. A decision will be taken keeping in view the infection rate, patients' number and observance of Covid-19 guidelines by people," Dr Mohanty stated.

GROWING COW SLAUGHTER, TRAFFICKING

Gau Gyan Foundation decries police inaction

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Gau Gyan Foundation has decried the apathy by the administration against no-holds-barred cow trafficking and slaughter in the State.

It stated that hundreds of cattle, including healthy cows, young bulls and calves, were hoarded for illegal slaughter in Kesharpur around Mahamaya UP School under Mangalabag police limits in Cuttack on the eve of Bakrid. The cattle were tied outside houses, with no food or water, to be cut in the neighbourhood and on roads, while the Cuttack Municipal Corporation and Commissionerate Police were mum.

The Foundation said for any animal to be slaughtered, a fit for slaughter certificate has to be obtained from a competent authority. Needless to say, no laws including the Odisha Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act 1960, were adhered to in the Kesharpur area.

Though the Odisha Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act 1960 makes it illegal to slaughter a cow and its proge-



ny, the police and traffickers are undeterred, it said.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960 and the Slaughterhouse Rules 2000 make it illegal to slaughter animals anywhere outside premises authorised as legal slaughterhouses, but hundreds and thousands of animals are butchered unchecked. If lawkeepers turn deaf ears, who will protect those highly revered animals in our country, asked the foundation.

"Thousands of crores of black money is generated out of cow trafficking and slaughter. Where goes the money? No Income Tax (IT) is paid.

Anybody can guess what activities are promoted by the funds. Then why our Government, administration and police are aiding it by looking the other way?" questioned the foundation.

A complaint was lodged by the foundation at the Mangalabag police station on July 16 and the complaint was also mailed to the Commissioner of Police and Deputy Commissioner of Police. The Assistant Commissioner of Police, Cuttack was approached in this regard. However, no action was taken by them, alleged the foundation.



Landmark owners celebrate Green Day

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Landmark Phase-II Flat Owners' Association celebrated a 'Green Day' on Sunday with the motto "Little sweat, little rain and some pain for our environment".

The event was coordinated by association president Surajit Patnaik and conducted by person-in-charge of the garden Chanda Singh and secretary Anand Tiwari.

A resident, Ahin Panigrahi, suggested that a fund for the purpose same should be created. Members participated in

planting of saplings and hanging flower pots in and around the premises.

Singh said the present condition of the garden and the greenery drive became possible due to the hard work of some dedicated members.

The members contributed both plants and cash from others.

"We should also create a green budget for our society so that it could be a model venture for other residential societies to emulate and make the city greener and beautiful," said secretary Tiwari

Drink-from-tap water to every Puri house

PNS ■ PURI

Puri became the first city in the country to provide 24x7 drink-from-tap quality water (ISO: 10500) to every household as Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the water supply system on Monday.

With this, Puri also joined

the league of cities like London, New York and Singapore. The move will benefit around 2.5 lakh residents of Puri as they now have access to 'Drink-From-Tap' water round the clock.

The move is expected to eliminate the usage of three crore plastic bottles preventing 400 metric tonnes of plastic

waste. To discourage the use of plastic water bottles, drinking water fountains would be installed at public places.

Jalsathis from women Self-Help Groups will carry out the quality surveillance of water supply. The project has been implemented under the 5T initiative of the State Government.



₹15-CR CHIT FUND FRAUD

Main accused Biswal nabbed from Kolkata

UBACHAK MOHANTY ■ BALESWAR

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Crime Branch on Sunday arrested the main accused in a multi-crore fraud from the posh New Ghana locality in Kolkata. The accused is Pratap Kumar Biswal, chairman and managing director (CMD) of the Mass Infra-realty Limited.

Later, he was produced in the designated court at Baleswar under the OPID Act on Monday after he was brought here on a transit remand from Kolkata.

Biswal had allegedly duped investors of more than Rs 15 cr on the pretext of providing them lucrative returns. Sources said that Biswal was arrested based on the complaint filed by one Sukadev Hota of Baleswar.

The complainant had alleged that Biswal, CMD of Mass Infra Realty Ltd and Human Welfare Credit and Thrift Cooperative Society Limited, and its other six directors had duped him and sever-

al other depositors on the pretext of providing high rates of interest on their deposits under different schemes floated by their companies.

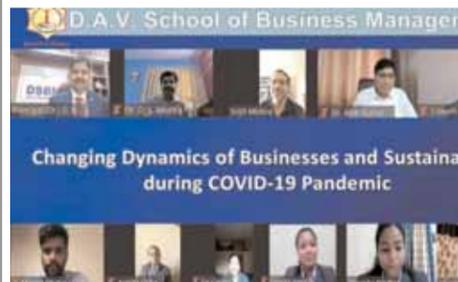
Preliminary investigation revealed that Mass Infra Realty Ltd was registered in Kolkata during September 2010 under the Companies Act 1956 having its registered office under the Barasat police station in 24 Praganas of West Bengal.

The accused Pratap Kumar Biswal was CMD along with six other Directors. In 2012, the company changed its name to Human Welfare Credit and Thrift Cooperative Society Ltd registered under Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2012 having its registered office at Laxmi Nagar in New Delhi.

The company, promising high returns, sought deposits from various investors under different schemes of the company and illegally collected huge amounts of money from several investors and absconded from the locality, the EOW said.

IN CONTEXT OF COVID

DSBM holds meet on changing biz dynamics



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

An insightful and analytical webinar based on a contemporary theme "Changing Dynamics of Businesses and Sustainability during Covid-19 Pandemic" was organised by the DAV School of Business Management (DSBM) here on Saturday.

Prof Srijit Mishra from the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai was chief guest. Prof Alok Kumar Mishra, School of Economics, University of Hyderabad, and Dr Dukhishyam Mishra, Deputy General Manager, SIDBI, Ahmedabad, were keynote speakers.

Prof Srijit Mishra discussed on the relative risk reduction scenario of the pandemic and initial impact of Covid-19 on Indian economy. He also deliberated about various solutions and strategies to cope with the present situation.

Prof Alok Mishra opined

about the various structural changes like GST, demonetisation, world GDP and global financial crisis. He specifically pointed out the unemployment situation, hyperinflation and labour force in India. Dr Dukhishyam Mishra discussed about regional imbalances and equilibrium condition created due to the pandemic.

With an objective of empowering the students to meet the expectations of the corporate sector, under the mentorship of Jayashree Swain, four students gave their presentations in the webinar. Manish Mishra and Ankita Ojha of BCom 4th semester presented on the sub-topic "Emerging Trends in Trade - An Analysis of Pre & During COVID-19" while Geetika Patra and Sai Gayatri of BBA 6th semester put forth their presentations on the sub-topic "Emerging Opportunities & Challenges of Trade in India".

Covid distress: Sena distributes relief to needy at Old Town

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Members of the Lingaraj Sena provided rice, dal and other dry foods to the poor and downtrodden, besides giving special relief to the lower middleclass people who are hit by the Covid crisis at Old Town area.

The expenditures incurred towards the noble endeavour were met from the corpus fund created by the donation of the Sena members.

The programme of relief distribution was inaugurated jointly by Lingaraj Sena president



Rajendra Samarth and Ekamra Nagari Senior Citizens' Forum president Hrusikesh Tripathy on July 24 at Sashan Padia, Old Town.

The relief distribution shall continue consecutively for two days. The distinctive feature of

Samartha told, "We have extended relief to the lower middle class people as they are unable to speak about their stories of starvation and suffering owing to their social prestige. It took some time for us to convince them for accepting the relief materials to enable them to sustain themselves for a few days."

Among others present were Brahman Niyog president Samiti Shyamsundar Mahapatra, Narendra Samarth, Haladhara Malia, Dhiren Pattnaik, Sena secretary Biranchi Pati, Anchala Batu, Benudhar Patra and Kamalant Batu.

Seva Dal to spread Gandhi, Gopabandhu thoughts

To train 6,500 youths on Gandhian ideology

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR:

Newly-appointed Congress Seva Dal State coordinator Aryakumar Jnanendra on Monday said ideologies and thoughts of Gandhi and Gopabandhu would be spread among the people in every panchayat across the State.

Jnanendra told reporters that 100 years back it was Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das who had formed and led a language-based Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee based on a resolution adopted in the Congress Nagpur Session.

The first session of Congress Sevadals was held in Puri in 1932 under the leader-

ship of Acharya Hraiha Das and the first chief organiser was Dr Harekrushna Mahtab, he said.

The Seva Dal has decided that 6,500 youths would be trained to take the messages of Gandhi and Gopabandhu to the panchayat level.

"Unfortunately, youths of the State have been frustrated by the 21-year-long BJD rule and are suffering from the dual crises of unemployment and mental tension," said Jnanendra



Congress stages stir against Pegasus scam

Burns effigies of Modi, Shah

BHUBANESWAR: The Congress on Monday staged a demonstration here protesting against Pegasus spyware scandal and burnt effigies of Prime Minister Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Members of the party led by district president Biswajit Das shouted slogans against the Modi Government for spying on prominent Opposition leaders, mediapersons, retired

judges, social activists, industrialists and eminent persons, including former AICC president Rahul Gandhi.

The party leaders alleged that the BJP Government is trying to snoop Rahul Gandhi as he has constantly been questioning the Modi Government on its misdeeds.

Among the leaders who participated in the demonstration were PCC president Niranjan Patniak, former president Sarat Pattanayak, Sivanada Ray, Manoranjan Das and Yasir Nawaj. PNS



How Constituent Assembly debated on Civil Code

■ GOURANG CHARAN PARIDA

Once again, the demand for enactment of legislation on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is intensely in debate now. The debate has arisen when very recently the Delhi High Court hearing a marriage petition had urged the Centre to take step to bring in a UCC reportedly saying that the modern Indian society has been 'gradually becoming homogenous and the traditional barriers of religions, communities and castes are slowly dissipating'. The court further observed that the youth belonging to various communities, tribes, castes or religions who solemnise their marriages ought not be forced to struggle with issues arising due to conflicts in various personal laws, especially in relation to marriage and divorce. The Centre was to fulfil the hope expressed in the

Constitution of India, the Court urged.

Article 44 in the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Constitution says that the State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a UCC throughout the territory of India. The objective of the article is to introduce a common personal law for the purpose of national consolidation. It stands for one nation, one law. It proceeds on the assumption that there is no necessary connection between religion and personal law in a civilised society. And therefore, it is to form a uniform law governing marriage, divorce, succession, inheritance just as it has been done in the Muslim countries like Turkey or Egypt or many countries in Europe.

There are different personal laws in India for different communities relating to marriage, divorce, adoption,

inheritance and succession. All these laws are primarily based on the rites, customs and traditions prevalent in the respective communities. For Hindus including Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains there are Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, Hindu Succession Act, 1955, Hindu Marriage Act and for the Muslims there are Shariat law, 1937 and the Triple Talak Act, 2019 to regulate their marriage and divorce. There is specific personal law for the Christians as well to govern their marriages and divorce.

But the question is why despite a provision in Constitution of India to make a common civil law, such a law has not been possible to be enacted so far. The reason is whenever there is any attempt to make this law, there surfaces a hue and cry in different communities that the law is aimed to encroach upon their religious liberties. Sometimes

the debates on uniform personal law become extremely unpleasant.

The Constituent Assembly of India also had witnessed a similar debate on uniform civil code when the draft Article 35, now 44 in the Constitution of India was placed on November 23, 1948 for discussion and approval. As many as 12 members of the Assembly took part in the debate. The most prominent among them who spoke extensively about a common civil law were Mohamad Ismail, Naziruddin Ahmad, Mahboob Ali Baig, Hussain Imam, KM Munshi, Alladi Krishnaswamy Ayyar and Dr BR Ambedkar. While all Muslim speakers did not favour such a law, all the Hindu members defended the necessity of a UCC for national integration. Dr H C Mookharjee, the Vice President, was then in the Chair.

Moving an amendment, at the outset of the debate, Mohamad Ismail said, community of the people would not be obliged to give up its own personal law in case it had such a law. 'Why they follow their personal law,' he asked, adding, 'right to follow personal law is a part of the way of life of these people. It is a part of their religion and part of their culture. If anything is done affecting the personal law, it will be tantamount to interference with the way of life of those people who have been observing these laws for generation and ages. Therefore, the secular State, we are trying to create, should not do anything to interfere with the way of life and religion of people.'

Mohamad Ismail, interestingly, called the uniform civil law a regimentation of laws. 'If idea of the common law is to maintain a secular harmony

through uniformity, it is not necessary to regiment the civil laws of the people and such regimentation will bring discontent and disharmony,' Ismail explained.

Members like Naziruddin Ahmad, Mahboob Ali Baig and Hussain Imam spoke their different viewpoints. During the last 175 years of the British rule when the British rulers enacted the common laws like Indian Penal Code, Civil Procedure Code, Criminal Procedure Code, Evidence Act and Registration Act, they did not interfere with certain fundamental personal laws possibly with the fear that it was difficult to ask the people to give up their ideas of marriage which are associated with religious institutions for years and it will be equally difficult to impose forcibly the tenets and practices of one community on another without societal back-

lash, they said.

Among all Hindu members who participated in the debate in the Constituent Assembly, KM Munshi was very forceful in presenting his opinion. "When you consolidate a community," Munshi retorted, "you have to take into consideration the benefits which may accrue to the whole community. Munshi concluded, "We have reached a point when we must put our foot down and say that these matters of personal practices like marriage and divorce etc are not religion; they are instead, purely matters for secular legislation."

The debates in the Constituent Assembly on UCC were all intellectual and thought absorbing. Dr Ambedkar in the end softened the tone of the critics when he emphasised that a common civil law was a settled provision in the Constitution of India.

And when it was to be legislated, it should be 'voluntary' at its initial stage like Shariat law of 1937.

But the Husain Imam speech received around applause when he said that it was desirable to have a uniform civil law. And for that matter, it should be wiser for us to wait till the whole of India got educated; mass illiteracy eradicated and economic conditions of the common people improved.

Meanwhile, the Delhi HC has asked, "Is it right time now to have a UCC as the Indian society has become homogenous and advanced?"

But the UCC, if framed, ought to be based on consensus and consent of the different communities to avoid further communal conflict and discontents

(The writer is Gandhian author and a lawyer, Puri, Ph: 9861469328)

₹862 cr for State's Covid response package

Action plan chalked out

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

While funds of over Rs 861.96 crore would be available under an Emergency Covid Response Package (ECRP) for Odisha, the State Government has chalked out an action plan to implement the package in a time-bound manner.

The Government of India has announced the ECRP of Rs 23,123 crore for the country. This is a Central programme funded at the ratio of 60:40 per cent between and the Centre and the States.

So, out of the Rs 861.96 crore for Odisha, the Central share will be Rs 517.18 crore

and the State share Rs 344.78 crore.

ACS Health & FW, PK Mohapatra has chalked out the action plan for ECRP implementation, which involves infrastructure development and Covid management provisions.

Infrastructure development includes one RTPCR laboratory at a public health facility in each district. At all District Headquarters Hospital (DHHs), liquid medical oxygen (LMO) facility with a medical gas pipeline system will be in place.

Each DHH will be provided with two Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulances while one each for a Sub-Division Hospital and for a block will be made available.

Covid Care Centres will be set up at selected Primary

Health Centres (PHCs) and Community Health Centres (CHCs).

Steps will be taken for strengthening the telemedicine hubs at the DHHs. There will be Paediatric Intensive Care Units (ICUs) at selected DHHs looking at the requirement.

A Hospital Management Information System (MIS) will be functionalised at all DHHs. Additional ICU Beds would be made available in existing ICUs as and when required, said sources.

For Covid management, essential drugs management will be taken up in a time-bound manner.

Management of Dedicated Covid Hospitals and Covid Healthcare Centres would be done out of the funds available in ECRP, said sources.

BAY OF BENGAL REGION

Community role key to mitigate climate impact

University of York int'l webinar held

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Looking at the issues of population health vulnerabilities in climate hotspot locations bordering the Bay of Bengal, an international webinar on "Environmental linkages to population health and wellbeing in coastal areas in the Bay of Bengal" was held on July 20.

It aimed to highlight the opportunities in the region to

It aimed to highlight the opportunities in the region to reduce population health vulnerabilities emerging from increasing climate-related risks.

reduce population health vulnerabilities emerging from increasing climate-related risks. It involved a group of researchers based at multiple institutions from the UK, Thailand, India and Bangladesh.

The webinar was the third in the series and the first in India steered by development consultant and research manager, India, Amalin Patnaik to seek remote consultations with important stakeholders with focus on key parts of the coastal Bay of Bengal.

Discussion was held on various related issues pertaining to the coastal regions of Odisha and exploring untapped potentials to mitigate some of the current challenges and vulnerabil-

ities. Prof Sugata Hazra from the Jadavpur University and Dr Papiya Mazumdar from the University of York are the principal investigators of the project.

Additional Director Health, Odisha, Dr PKB Patnaik explained the environmental linkage to health in the coastal areas with the most important health determinant of population by citing the Panch Tatva and stated that increased vector, food, and water-borne diseases remain a persistent concern.

SOA University Professor Dr E Venkata Rao stressed on mass media campaigns for action among Governments and international agencies.

"Climate-induced disasters

pose a significant challenge to health; and the Government should design health policies accordingly," said SCB Medical College Associate Professor Dr Sikata Nanda,

Journalist and climate researcher Sudarshan Chhotaray elucidated the role of civil society in responding to climate change impacts in the coastal areas of Bay of Bengal.

Among others, Oxfam India regional manager Akshaya Biswal, Sambalpur University Environmental Science Professor Malay Mahananda and public health specialist Rudra Prasad Pradhan strongly advocated for community engagement in the planning process.

Jajpur lad eyes world record for tiny idols



PNS ■ JAJPUR

Rakesh, a young painter from Jajpur, recently created half-centimeter-tall idols of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra out of lemon wood. Earlier, he had made a 2-inch-tall Shiva statue and currently is building a 3.5-cm-tall Buddha statue. He expects to earn a world record for his miniature art.

Rakesh is son of Chakradhar Patra of Nathsahi village under Nathsahi panchayat in Jajpur block. He was interested in painting since childhood. He wanted to make all sorts of tiny images afterwards.

Koraput: ₹1-cr ganja seized; one arrested

PNS ■ JEYPORE

The Jeypore Sadar police seized a huge quantity of ganja from a ginger laden pick up van in Koraput district on Sunday. The estimated market value of the seized contraband is around Rs 1 crore.

Getting intelligence inputs that ganja was loaded in a pick-up van near Pottangi and likely to pass through Jeypore Ghat for loading in a truck, a police team set a trap and intercepted the vehicle. They took into custody one occupant of the vehicle.

However, six others, including the driver, managed to give a slip to police.

During the search, police recovered 1053 kg ganja that would have been transported to outside the State.

The cops also seized Rs 1.80 lakh cash and two mobile phones from the accused identified as Sanjaya Khora (22), a resident of RK Maliguda under the Semliguda police station in the district. Police are interrogating the accused to unearth more information about the racket and have launched a hunt.

--ACF death-- Gajapati cops return after probe in Balangir

PNS ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

The Paralakhemundi police team which had gone to Balangir to collect evidence about ACF Saumya Ranjan Mohapatra has returned to the district after collecting the necessary information.

Paralakhemundi police station IIC Vivekananda Swain said they visited the Livestock Inspector Training Institute where Saumya's wife Bidyabharati Panda was studying.

The Deputy Director, Clerk and other officials were questioned and their statements were recorded. Police have seized from the institute and further investigations are on from all angles, Swain said.

Meanwhile, the Gajapati branch of the International Human Rights Council has alleged that the investigation into the death of the deceased forest officer is not being conducted in a proper manner by the police and Crime Branch officials.

Council president Alok Kumar Bose and secretary Pranaj Kumar Patnaik in a Press conference alleged that the ACF's death occurred in very suspicious circumstances.

Though substantial information about the ACF and his wife have come to the limelight they haven't been thoroughly investigated by the local police and Crime Branch officials. Otherwise the culprits would have been exposed and brought to book.

INBRIEF

BOY DROWNS IN SUBARNAREKHA IN BALESWAR

Baleswar: A 12-year-old boy was feared to have drowned in the river Subarnarekha under the Balapala police limits in Baleswar district on Monday as he couldn't be traced by a fire brigade. The boy, identified as Subham of Dharmadwara village, had along with his younger brother gone to fetch river water after a holy dip at the Siadi Ghat on the occasion of the first Monday of holy Shrawan month.

PROF PALITA ACTS AS VC OF CUO

Koraput: Noted academic and scientist Prof Sharat Kumar Palita now holds the charge of Vice-Chancellor of the Central University of Odisha (CUO), Koraput. Consequent upon the appointment of Prof Kshiti Bhusan Das, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the university as Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Jharkhand, senior-most professor Palita has been given this responsibility. Prof Palita has a teaching career spanning 38 years.



SABUJA BAHINI HOLDS VAN MOHASTAV IN B'PUR

Brahmapur: The Brahmapur Sabuja Bahini and the Bhajaram Vihar Development Council of Brahmapur celebrated the 72th Van Mohastav on Sunday at Bhajaram Vihar Road. As many as 100 saplings and fruit-bearing trees were planted. The programme was coordinated by Sibaram Panigrahi,



Banamali Pradhan and SK Ravi Kumar.

'Allow bar, banquet, restaurants'

Jharsuguda hoteliers urge Govt

PNS ■ JHARSUGUDA

The Hotels and Restaurants Association of Jharsuguda (HRAJ) has urged the State Government to permit reopening of restaurants, bar and banquet halls from August 1 with strict Covid guidelines.

The Covid-19 pandemic has done a huge financial setback to hotel business such as marriage and banquet bookings and the hoteliers have

suffered immense loss due to closure of hotels, said association president Ashish Palit at a Press meet.

HRAJ general secretary Abhishek Lath said that while the roadside eateries and dhabas have been permitted for takeaway of food parcels and all shops in Category A are now allowed to operate with full staffs from 6 am to 8 pm, besides train and flight services are fully operational then why not hotel and restaurants?

The association has brought the issue to the notice of the Chief Secretary.



CISF-KRTC holds plantation drives



PNS ■ ATHAGARH

The Central Industrial Security Force, Kharavel Regional Training Centre (CISF-KRTC) based at Mundali in Cuttack held a plantation drive in and around the campus on Sunday.

The CISF-KRTC in associ-

ation with the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Sangathan at Mundali also conducted a mass tree plantation programme in the school premises. Both the programmes were organised under the leadership of DIG Santhi G Jaidev and JNV Principal Ram Raj Singh. Among others, CISF officers,

Tripathy asks for K'handi action plan

PNS ■ BHAWANIPATNA

Principal Advisor to Chief Minister and WODC Chairman Asit Tripathy on Sunday directed senior officials of Kalahandi to work out an action plan for elevating the district's development to next higher phase.

He emphasised on promotion of local entrepreneurship and private-sector investment in cash crops, sericulture, fishery, animal husbandry, horticulture, food processing and other ag-based industries. He also stressed on crop diversifica-

tion and fullest use of the irrigation potential created.

Tripathy along with Minister Dibya Sankar Mishra and officials visited different places in the district and reviewed the developmental scenario.

The team visited the under-construction town hall, Government medical college at Bhangadari, goat breeding centre at Jaring, Biju Patnaik Sports Complex at Junagarh, renovation of Netra Chikichalaya, art village of Chhoriagarh and the under-construction Biju Express Highway.

M'bhanj students shine in ICSE Class-X results

PNS ■ BARIPADA

In the ICSE Class-X results, the examinees of Mayurbhanj district have done exceedingly well.

While all the 106 students of Saint Anne Convent School, Baripada, all the 70 students of Kerala Public School, Rairangpur, and all the 42 students of Loyla School, Baripada have passed, 37 of Baripada's St Anne Convent School and 19 of Rairangpur's Kerala Public School have secured more than 90% marks.

While among the students of St Anne Convent School, Bhumii Khandelwal, Archana Panda and Anjali Sharma, have secured first, second and third positions securing 98.6%, 98.4% and 98%, respectively, among the Kerala Public School students, Kumar Shubham Barik, Aniska Otta and Pragati Prajnan have got first, second and third positions securing 95.60%, 95.20% and 95%, respectively. As all the examinees of Kerala Public School have passed being placed in First Division. School Principal Geetanjali Tripathy has congratulated the students.

'Continue weekend shutdown'

B'pur body submits memo for PM

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

Socio-cultural organisation Sanskarbadi led by its founding president Trinath Maharana, submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister through RDC (Southern Range) here on Friday.

The organization suggested implementing a few measures till complete control over the corona pandemic, like continuation of weekend shutdown throughout the country; wide

publicity of Covid protocols and SoPs, stringent punishment to the violators. Besides, it urged for stringent auditing of relief funds or any such fiscal assistance pro-



vided in the name of corona relief to the States and making them public.

The organisation sent copies of the memorandum to CMs and Chief Secretaries of

all the States for consideration, Maharana said.

Among others, Sanskarbadi secretary Lalit Mohan Sahu signed the memorandum.

Ganjam wonder kid displays remarkable talent

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

Arav Patnaik Das, a child of 4.5 years and a native of Banapur, received appreciation from many quarters across the State for his remarkable intellect.

Patnaik demonstrated his skill and strong intellectual acumen reportedly by answering all the questions given under fill in the blanks format; answering the spellings of many difficult and complex words; solving basic mathe-



maties; reciting the English alphabet in correct order as well as in reverse order with

words. Das also successfully recited more than 30 rhymes; num-

bers from 1-100 and 100-1 in reverse direction flawlessly; answered thirty GK questions that surprised many.

Das, who stays with his parents in Nilachal Nagar, could place his name in the India Book of Records for his marvelous achievements. He reads several English books clearly at a faster pace. He is the son of Sidhartha Das and Banya Patnaik and currently studying in LKG at DePaul English Medium School at Brahmampur.

JDCI to hold State's first Journalists' Cong

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Journalists' Development Council of India (JDCI) held a plantation drive in collaboration with the Rotary Club, Royal at the Vani Vihar campus. Participating in the programme, JDCI national chairman World Odisha Society chairman Kishore Dwivedi urged all working journalists to join the JDCI.

OUIJ vice-president Rajani Kant Samantray informed that the main aim and objective of JDCI is to finalise the logo and convene the first-ever Indian Journalists' Congress in Odisha.

JDCI State chief Gopal Krushna Mohapatra lauded the role of the forum. Utkal Journalists' Association president Bibhuti Bhushan Kar expressed his anguish that

though the media fraternity has been branded as the fourth pillar of democracy, so far there

is no Constitutional or legal sanctity about their status. President of Rotary Club

Royal Ajay Kumar Patnaik extended his all-out support and cooperation to the JDCI.

Organises plantation drive in city



Improving border infra highest priority: Govt



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In view of China ramping up its infrastructure including roads and rail network near the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the Government on Monday assured the Rajya Sabha that required measures were undertaken to improve border infrastructure.

Making this assertion, Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt said 73 critical roads have been designated as Indo-China Border Roads of 4,203 kilometers length and are being accorded highest priority with dedicated funding.

Further, to ensure all weather connectivity to far flung areas, construction of tunnels has also been undertaken across passes. Currently, construction of four tunnels is underway, he said in a written reply.

Infrastructure development in Uttarakhand is being holistically executed with bud-



getary support from the Ministry of Defence, Home Ministry, State Public Works Department (PWD) and Central projects like Bharatmala and Chardham. As on date, 21 roads with a length of approximately 800 kilometers are being constructed and upgraded by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) over and above certain roads being constructed by State PWD.

He said the Government is fully seized of the security needs of the country and reviews the same from time to time. Required measures including development of infrastructure like construction of roads, tunnels and strategic railway lines are taken to safeguard the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of India.

As per the operational requirement of Armed Forces and the need for development along border areas, road construction is taken up by Border Roads Organisation (BRO).

His assurance comes in the backdrop of the ongoing stand-offs at three friction points between Indian and Chinese troops in Eastern Ladakh for the last more than one year.

China has vastly improved its road and rail network in the Tibetan plateau all along the 4,000 km long LAC from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh.

It has a high speed rail network to ensure all-weather logistical back-up for its troops guarding the LAC.

Similarly, it has developed a network of road and rail of more than 10,000 km in the Tibet region.

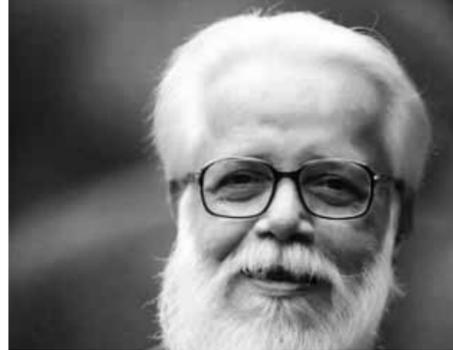
SC gives CBI free hand to probe into Narayanan's framing in espionage case

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday gave a free hand to the CBI to probe the alleged conspiracy to frame ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan in an espionage case in 1994 as the agency, in a status report, informed the top court that it has registered an FIR against former Kerala DGP Siby Mathews and others in the matter.

A bench headed by Justice AM Khanwilkar said: "It is mentioned in the report after examining relevant aspect, the FIR has been registered. Now the law has to take its course."

Advocate Amit Sharma, counsel for Mathews, and advocate Kaleeswaram Raj, counsel for another accused, submitted that the Justice DK Jain Committee report has not been shared with the accused, and argued that the CBI's refusal to do so is causing prejudice to the accused in availing their statutory remedies. They also contended that the central probe agency is relying on the report in the FIR.

The bench, also comprising Justice Sanjiv Khanna, noted that the CBI cannot proceed on the basis of the report of a panel headed by former top court judge Jain, formed in September 2018, to examine the matter, and the agency will have to collect material in the case independently.



"The report by itself cannot be the basis to proceed against the respondents or persons named as accused in the FIR registered by the CBI," said the bench.

"The CBI has decided to proceed in the matter and further steps should follow as per law."

It further added: "We make it clear that our earlier order only required that Justice D.K. Jain report shall not be made public and not the FIR."

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, then informed the top court that the FIR will be uploaded during the course of the day.

The apex court said the panel's report has been acted

upon, therefore the Jain committee may cease to function.

On April 15, the top court had ordered the CBI to probe the role of Kerala Police officers in framing of Narayanan in the 1994 espionage case. Accepting the report submitted by panel headed by Justice Jain (retd), the top court said the matter is very serious and it requires CBI probe.

The bench had asked the then acting CBI Director to take charge of the case and treat the inquiry report given by Justice Jain panel as a preliminary inquiry report to conduct further investigation into the matter. The CBI was asked to file status report on its investigation in three months. IANS

CBI books AP-based firm for cheating bank



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has booked an Andhra Pradesh-based private company for alleged loan fraud to the tune of ₹20 crore.

The agency conducted searches at three locations on Monday at the premises of the accused entity and individuals in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

The agency has named Ind Tob International Pvt. Ltd., Guntur (Andhra Pradesh), its Managing Director, Promoter and Guarantor Tadisetty Venkata Rao, Director and Promoter Tadisetty Murali Mohan besides unknown public servants.

It was alleged that the private company was engaged in trading of tobacco. It was further alleged that the said private

company availed credit facilities aggregating to ₹45 crore from SBI, Specialised Commercial Branch, Guntur, the CBI said in a statement.

These credit facilities were inter alia secured against hypothecation of movable assets, mortgage of immovable properties and personal guarantees.

The account became non-performing asset (NPA) on February 27, 2019 due to lower sales coupled with lower margins and cash losses in addition to submission of inflated/manipulated stock statements and transfer of funds to the personal accounts of Directors. An alleged loss to the tune of ₹19.28 crore (approx) was caused to lending bank SBI, it added.

ED attaches ₹7 cr assets in money laundering case



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday said it has attached assets worth over ₹7 crore of a company in connection with a case of money laundering through alleged diversion of duty-free imported gold.

The agency said a provisional order for attachment of seized cash, gold jewellery and silver worth ₹7.47 crore has been issued under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) against the firm — Shri Lal Mahal, it said.

The ED case against the accused company and its promoters followed an earlier

complaint filed by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) in Noida near here, under sections of the Customs Act for "diversion of 586 kg of duty-free imported gold in the domestic market and evading of Customs duty."

The ED probe revealed that Shri Lal Mahal Ltd. and its related entity Bindra Sales Pvt Ltd, its beneficial owners Prem Chand Garg, Anita Garg and others were involved in criminal offences and had acquired proceeds of crime by diverting the duty-free imported gold in the domestic market and evading Customs duty to the tune of ₹17.54 crore, the agency said in a statement.

Showing solidarity with farmers, Rahul drives tractor to Parliament



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Extending support to farmers protesting against the Centre's three farm laws, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday drove a tractor to Parliament along with other party MPs and demanded that the agricultural laws be repealed.

Rahul, along with party MPs Pratap Singh Bajwa, Raveet Singh Bittu, Deepinder Singh Hooda, Gurjit Singh Aujla, Jasbir Singh Gill and other leaders like Randeep Surjewala, also carried banners and raised slogans. Rahul said

he has brought the message of farmers to Parliament.

"We have brought the message of farmers to Parliament. Their issue is not being allowed to be discussed in Parliament and farmers all over the country are being suppressed and that is why we are here. These black laws should be withdrawn," Rahul said, talking to the media. He claimed that these farm laws are aimed to help only two-three industrialists.

"The entire country knows for whom these laws have been brought. These laws are not for the benefit of

farmers and that is why they have to be withdrawn," he added.

Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala and Youth Congress chief BV Srinivas, along with a number of party leaders, were detained by the Delhi Police outside Parliament and taken to Mandir marg police station.

The police said 10 people have been detained.

The tractor driven by Rahul has also been impounded by the Delhi Police. The detained Congress leaders raised slogans demanding the withdrawal of farm laws.

Rajnath pays tribute to Kargil martyrs

New Delhi: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and senior Indian military officers paid homage to the fallen heroes on the 22nd anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas at the National War Memorial in New Delhi.

Singh laid a wreath in the honour of the bravehearts who made the supreme sacrifice in the service of the nation during India's victory in 'Operation Vijay' in 1999, also known as Kargil conflict.

Singh recalled the valour of the bravehearts of the Kargil conflict, saying that nation will never forget the sacrifice made by the gallant heroes of Indian Armed Forces.

He added that the grateful nation will always be indebted to their courage and continue to follow their ideals.

In a tweet, Singh said the supreme sacrifice of the brave soldiers will inspire the generations to come.

Minister of State (Defence) Ajay Bhatt, Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhaduria, Chief of the Army Staff General M.M. Naravane, Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar and Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC) Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain also paid homage to the fallen heroes at the National War Memorial. ANI

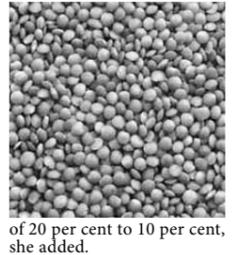
Govt cuts import duty on masoor dal to zero to boost domestic supply

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to boost domestic supply and check rising prices, the Government on Monday reduced the import duty on masoor dal to zero and also halved the Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess on the lentil to 10 per cent. Retail price of masoor dal has increased by 30 per cent to ₹100 per kg now from ₹70 per kg on April 1, this year, as per the data maintained by the consumer affairs ministry.

A notification in this regard was tabled in the Rajya Sabha by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The Minister said that the basic customs duty has been reduced from 10 per cent to nil on lentils (masoor dal) originated in or exported from countries other than the US.

Also, the basic customs duty has been reduced from 30 per cent to 20 per cent on lentils (masoor dal) originated in or exported from the US, she said. Further, the Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess on lentils (masoor dal) has been reduced from the present rate



of 20 per cent to 10 per cent, she added.

India Grains and Pulses Association (IGPA) Vice Chairman Bimal Kothari had early this month said, "India annually needs 25 million tonnes of pulses. But this year, we are expecting a shortage."

The government had introduced the Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess (AIDC) on certain items, including petrol, diesel, gold and some imported agricultural products, this fiscal in a bid to boost agriculture infrastructure.

Farmers leader Binod Pandey said that farmers of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Bihar will be hugely affected as these four States produce almost 85 per cent of Lentil (Masur).

333 pvt companies into defence production in India, says Centre



New Delhi: A total 333 private companies have been issued 539 industrial licences for defence production in India and out of these, 110 companies have started production.

In a written reply to Vijay Pal Singh Tomar in the Rajya Sabha on Monday, Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt said that the defence industry sector, which was hitherto reserved for the public sector, was opened up to 100 per cent for Indian private sector participation in May, 2001. Thereafter, many measures have been taken by the government to promote private sector participation.

Out of the total capital acquisition budget for the year 2021-22, 64.09 per cent has been earmarked for domestic capital procurement, while the defence capital outlay has been increased by 18.75 per cent in the Budget for FY 2021-22, the minister informed.

The Defence Procurement Procedure-2016 has been revised as

Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP)-2020, which is driven by the tenets of the defence reforms announced as part of the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' (self-reliant India campaign), Bhatt said.

In order to promote indigenous design and development of defence equipment, the 'Buy' (Indian-IDD or Indigenous Designed, Developed and Manufactured) category has been accorded top most priority for procurement of capital equipment, he said.

The ministry has notified a 'Positive indigenisation list' of 209 items for which there would be an embargo on the import beyond the timeline indicated against them. This would offer a great opportunity to the Indian defence industry to manufacture these items using their own design and development capabilities to meet the requirements of the armed forces in the coming years, Bhatt said. IANS

House Panel seeks incentives for pvt owners of historic buildings

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Parliamentary standing committee on transport, tourism and culture in its report on "Development and Conservations of Museums and Archaeological sites-Challenges and Opportunities" has recommended that private owners of listed historic buildings should be given certain compensations or incentives to encourage them in conservation and protection of the historical sites.

The Committee has asked the Ministry to set up a mechanism to collect feedback from domestic as well as foreign tourists visiting museums or archaeological sites.

"Private owners of listed historic buildings as well as people having residential property properties within prohibited/ regulated/ buffer areas should be provided with certain compensation/ incentives to encourage their participation in the conservation and protection of the historical sites," the committee, headed by MP TG Venkatesh, said in its report, tabled in the Parliament on Monday. The Committee, therefore, recommended that wherever feasible, the Ministry may act on the suggestions made by INTACH in this regard.

"Technology may be utilized to permit the tourists to easily leave their feedback from domestic as well as foreign tourists who visit a Museum or archaeological site/monument regarding the experience they had in their visit to a Museum/ archaeological monument. Working on first hand feedback from the visitors will lead the Ministry into improving tourist experience in the future, while also leaving a positive imprint about Indian culture and heritage among those who visit," it said.

The Committee found that the development and preservation of archaeological sites and Museums often does not run high in the priorities of State Governments. "This often leads to neglect, and thus irreparable damage is caused to the State protected archaeological monuments as well as Museum artefacts," it said.

The Committee recommended that the Ministry should have a mechanism in place to identify instances of gross neglect of maintenance and preservation of important archaeological sites and Museums and prod the State Government Department concerned to take action to rectify the same.

In cases of exigent needs, ASI may proactively provide technical assistance to such monuments and Museums. The Committee suggested that the Ministry may, from time to time, consider the inclusion of the State protected archaeological monuments and Museums which are more than 100 years old, in the list of Centrally protected monuments and National Museums.

The Committee further recommended that the Ministry may lend assistance to State Governments to enable introduction of online ticketing to archaeological sites and Museums under their purview.

Tharoor seeks SC-monitored probe into Pegasus snooping case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister and Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Monday demanded a Supreme Court judge-monitored probe into the Pegasus snooping allegations and indicated that Opposition parties would continue to disrupt Parliament's proceedings until the Government agrees to a debate on it.

Tharoor's party colleague and Home Minister in UPA Government, P Chidambaram too attacked the Centre, saying the only Government that is "unconcerned" over the issue is that of India. He referred to the reports that French President Emmanuel Macron spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on the Pegasus snooping allegations. Chidambaram alleged Indian government was fully aware of the snooping and does not need any more information from Israel or the NSO Group.

Tharoor, who is also the Chairman of Parliamentary Panel on IT, alleged that it appears that the government used public money for snooping for its "selfish political



interests". Speaking to reporters in the Parliament complex Tharoor said, "We want the government to agree to a debate on the issue, but it is not ready. What we are saying is that if you (government) do not agree to this and answer our questions, then why should we allow you to transact your business?"

He said other issues like price rise and contentious farm laws are also important for the opposition but the Pegasus row is a priority. Tharoor also made light of IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw's statement on the issue in both Houses, saying he just shared his "Mann Ki Baat" without listening to the oppo-

sition. Vaishnaw had termed the snooping stories a bid to malign India, claiming that there is "no substance" to this sensationalism.

The parliamentary panel, led by Tharoor, is likely to question top government officials, including from the home ministry, later this week on Pegasus snooping allegations, according to sources. The 32-member Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information and Technology is scheduled to meet on July 28. The agenda of the meeting is "Citizens data security and privacy", according to a notification issued by Lok Sabha Secretariat.

Maharashtra rain-flood toll mounts to 192

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The rain-flood toll in Maharashtra climbed to 192 on Monday, even as 25 more persons were not traceable till the evening and the authorities pegged the total number of people evacuated to safer places at 3,75,178.

A day after the authorities said that 149 people were killed, the rescue and relief teams working in the various affected areas recovered 43 more bodies, taking the total number of people killed in the rain-flood ravaged areas in the State.

Raigad, where the district authorities called off the rescue operation and landslide-locked Taliye, accounted for a maximum of 95 deaths, while there were 45 deaths in Satara district of western Maharashtra. The death tally in other places comprised: Ratnagiri-21, Thane-12, Kolhapur-7, Mumbai-4, Sindhudurg, Pune, Wardha and Akola-2 each.

The authorities pegged the number of

injured persons at 48, while 25 persons were reported missing from various rain-flood affected areas of the State.

Calling off the rescue operation at Taliye where more than 50 persons were killed in a massive landslide on July 23, the Raigad district administration said: "Rescue Operation officially ended. We have withdrawn our rescue teams from Taliye. 31 missing to be declared dead following due process. All relatives of missing people demanded for close of operations since yesterday." After seeking opinion of NDRF/SDRF/TDRF & in respect of sentiments of survivors and relatives of missing people, rescue operation of missing 31 people called off officially, a senior Raigad district official said.

Apart from 131 boats that have been pressed into service, as many as 33 NDRF teams and 3 Indian Army columns are still undertaking rescue and relief operations in various parts of the state.

Meanwhile, seven flood rescue teams



NDRF team during a rescue operation in a flooded area after rain at Shirol village in Kolhapur PTI

from the the Indian Navy to continued with their efforts to provide assistance to the flood affected local population in Ratnagiri and Raigarh districts.

"More than 200 families have been provided with packaged 'ready to eat' meals in the last two days. Emergency first aid and basic medicines were also provided to the people in need. The teams also assisted citizens in clearing up the debris left by the receding flood waters in the areas," a senior

Navy official said.

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari will go on a tour of the Raigad-Ratnagiri districts for a spot-assessment of the situation on Tuesday.

State Energy Minister Dr. Nitin Raut bnegan his tour of Raigad and announced that efforts were underway to restore power supply in the affected districts.

A day after Union Minister for MSME Narayan Rane said that the Centre would extend flood relief to Maharashtra, Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly Devendra Fadnis of the BJP asked the MVA government to extend assistance to all the flood-hit and also come out with a special package for the Konkarn region.

With a majority of the big and small rivers, reservoirs, lakes overflowing, villages, many towns and cities remained inundated, while scores of roads in the regions are still closed for inter-district and inter-state vehicular movement, especially hitting fuel and food supplies.

ONGC, ICG prevent tanker from crashing into Mumbai High Fields

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a joint operation carried out off the Mumbai coast, the Oil and Natural Gas Commission Limited and Indian Coast Guard (ICG) averted a possible disaster after an empty gas tanker of Dubai started drifting dangerously towards the sensitive Mumbai High Fields following an engine failure.

After 36-hour-long operation, 'MV Gas Yodla', which was on a voyage from Bangladesh to UAE, was towed away to safety on Monday.

The ONGC and ICG undertook the operation when 'MV Gas Yodla', owned by Sheild Marine, Dubai, developed a major snag in its engine on Saturday evening and it started drifting in the high seas, 37 kilometers from the ONGC's D1 field.

At that time, there was crew of 17 men -- comprising 8 Indians and 9

Ukrainians -- when its engine failed. It sent out a distress call to Offshore Defence Advisory Group (ODAG) in Mumbai.

Acting on the call, the ONGC immediately rushed its offshore supply vessel 'Sagar Pride', diverted a multi-supply vessel 'Seamec-3' and tugboat 'Saroja Blessing', while the ODAG Mumbai mobilized its vessel 'P.R. Nayak'. Another tugboat 'Water Lily' also joined the operation launched to help out 'MV Gas Yodla'.

The path of the vessel was closely monitored and by 10 pm on Saturday night, it was found that drifting 'MV Gas Yodla' was located around 28 kms from the D1 field.

The vessel was drifting at around 3.4 km/hour as all the agencies made attempts to ensure it remained at a safe distance from the Mumbai High Fields.

Kerala bank scam: Crime Branch arrests 4

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The ruling CPI(M) on Monday cracked the whip on persons associated with the financial embezzlement reported from Karuvannur Cooperative Bank in Thiruvananthapuram. Crime Branch wing of Kerala Police on Sunday had arrested Biju Kareem, a CPI(M) local leader who is also the former manager of the Bank, T R Sunil Kumar, former secretary of the Bank, A K Bijoy and C K Jills (former accountant) in connection with the irregularities in the Bank that led to the last week suicide of a customer T M Mukundan who was a Congress leader.

A Vijayaraghavan, state secretary of the CPI(M) told reporters that strict action would be taken against persons who were associated with the misappropriation of Bank funds. The Thiruvananthapuram District Committee of the party would meet on Monday and Tuesday to take stock of the situation and recommend to the party leadership the decisions to be taken against those involved in the scandal," said Vijayaraghavan.

According to Crime Branch officials probing the Karuvannur Bank scandal, some of the Bank staff members misused the documents pawned in the Bank by those who availed loans.

"These documents were used by the Staff as security to avail loan from other sources when they could not mobilise enough funds for their business deals. We suspect many Banks of committing such irregularities," said an investigating officer.

Meanwhile, officials of the Enforcement Directorate based in Kochi have started collecting details from primary cooperative banks in the State which have accepted deposits and issued loans. "To begin with, details of per-



sons who have deposited ₹10 lakh and above with these primary cooperative Banks are being collected," said an official involved in the probe.

The Primary Cooperative Societies are exempted from collecting details about the customers and the ED officials suspect that this clause could have been misused for money laundering operations.

The Kerala Government on its part had appointed a nine-member committee of officials to go into the details of the irregularities associated with the Karuvannur Cooperative Bank. One of the officials told The Pioneer that too much politics in the management of the cooperative banks was killing the system.

"Though there is a recruitment board to appoint employees to these banks, it is usually the party in power that decides who should be appointed to the Banks. So, capabilities and professionalism take back seat while party writs run all over," said the official.

AISPLB asks UP Govt to reconsider proposed population control law

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

All India Shia Personal Law Board urged the Yogi Adityanath Government to reconsider the proposed law on population control after a meeting in Lucknow on Monday, maintaining that a campaign had been launched to malign Muslims on the issue of religious conversion by vested interests.

Presiding over the meeting, Maulana Saayam Mehdi said that the aim of these cases of religious conversion by Muslims was purely to malign the Muslims as it was not possible to forcibly convert any person to Islam.

The Shia Personal Law Board meeting also demanded action against UP Shia Waqf Board chairperson Wasim Rizvi, for his attempts to malign Islam and Quran. The Shia cleric asked the government to pay attention on the maintenance of the dilapidated building of Hussainabad Trust and other monuments of the Nawabi era.

SP, BSP's attempts to woo Brahmins confuse their caste-based vote banks

VIRENDRA NATH BHATT ■ LUCKNOW

Desperate attempts to woo Brahmin voters by Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party in the run-up to the 2022 UP Assembly elections has bewildered respective caste-based vote banks of the two parties. Political pundits are also at their wits' end to decipher as to what galvanised the two parties to not only desert their core agenda but also their respective core vote banks.

Analysts found it intriguing that the two parties, instead of formulating a comprehensive poll strategy to further consolidate their vote banks and bring to their fold new voters, were engaged in chasing the mirage of "Parshuram" and one of the two promising to build a grand Ram temple in Ayodhya. The SP and BSP had forged an electoral alliance ahead of 1993 UP Assembly elections and their popular slogan was 'Mile Mulayam Kansiram, Hawa ho gaye Jai Sri Ram'.

Political analysts rubbished the narrative built by the detractors of the Yogi Adityanath Government in Uttar Pradesh that the Brahmin community, particularly in Central UP, was sore with the Bharatiya Janata Party Government over the killing of Kanpur gangster Vikas Dubey in a police encounter in July last year.

"Resentment against certain policies of the government and its transformation into vote against the ruling party are two entirely different issues. It is a flawed assumption and over simplification of the political process obtaining at the ground level that Brahmins of Kanpur will vote against the BJP. Vikas Dubey was a dreaded mafia and a terror in the district and most of his victims were none other than Brahmins," said Kanpur-based political analyst Dr AK Verma.

"The SP and BSP treated the political model of exclusive politics based on caste-based identity as final politics and never contemplated expanding their vote base and making it more inclusive.

Their failure to expand created the opportunity for the BJP and it was quick to grab it, which has been proved by the three successive elections results in 2014, 2017 and 2019 and is likely to be repeated in 2022. In fact, it was the BJP which sincerely implemented the slogan of BSP founder Kanshiram demanding relative share in power structure as per population of the caste and communities," Dr Verma said.

Another analyst opined: "Identity politics is not a bad thing as this politics has immensely contributed in social, political, economic empowerment of the Dalits and OBCs in UP. During the four decades of dominance of the Congress in UP and national politics, there was no place for identity politics at all levels including power, institutional and social structure. Identity politics of SP and BSP was a game changer as voters of these parties became a substantive participant in the democratic politics process rather than a formal participant during the Congress era," the analyst said.

Kerala: Dip in Covid-19 cases post 3-day lockdown

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The three-day long total lockdown in Kerala that concluded on Sunday late night has helped in bringing down the number of new instances of Covid-19 and the Test Positivity Rate. Health Minister Veena George who addressed the media on Monday evening said that 11,586 new cases were logged on Monday while the TPR came down to 10.59.

The death toll in the State reached 16, 170 as the pandemic claimed 135 deaths on Monday. The Minister blamed the Union government for not heeding to the requests from the State for more vaccines. "Kerala is facing severe shortage of vaccine despite the Chief Minister and me making number of appeals to the Prime Minister and the Union Health Minister," said George.

The Health Department tested 1.09 lakh samples on Monday compared to 1.42 lakh samples tested on Sunday. On Sunday, the State had recorded 17,466 new cases of Covid-19 and a TPR of 12.3 per cent.

A senior physician working in Government Hospital in the State said the reduction in the number of new Covid-19 cases does not bring any relief. "The number of samples tested, the number of antigen and RT-PCR tests should be analysed to figure out whether there has been any reduction in the transmission of the pandemic. The antigen tests are not fool-proof while the final results of RT-PCR tests would be known only after two to three days," said the physician.

There are 271 regions in the State where TPR showed more than 17 per cent. The new policy of the Government is the slapping of total lock down and isolation of areas showing high TPR rates.

Maha first State to give both Covid doses to over 1cr people

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra achieved a record of sorts on the Covid-19 vaccination front on Monday, as it became the first State in the country where more than one crore people have been administered the two doses of the vaccine.

Till 4 pm on Monday, as many as 4.75 lakh people were administered vaccines in various parts of the state.

Of the total people vaccinated so far, 1,00,64,308 people have received both the doses of vaccine.

Maharashtra stands first in terms of vaccination across the country. "We have so far given the first dose of vaccine to as many as 3,16,9,227 people in the State. After today's vaccination, the number of people getting both the jabs has crossed more than one crore people," Maharashtra's Additional Chief Secretary (health) Dr Pradeep Vyas said.

There are 4,100 vaccination centres in the state. "Till 4 pm, as many as 4,75,974 were vaccinated in various vaccinated on Monday. Since the vaccination will continue late in the evening, the number of vaccinations that took place on Monday will go up further," Vyas said.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Tope complimented the Public Health Department of achieving the milestone of administering two doses to more than one crore people.

Till Sunday evening, as many as 1,04,16,614



people in the age group of 18 to 44 years have been vaccinated, while 4, 59,927 in the same age group have been given the second of vaccine.

Similarly, 1,76,09, 232 people in the age group of 45 years and above have been given the first dose of vaccine, while 74,28,097 people have been administered second dose of the Covid-19 vaccine.

In all, 4,13,19,131 doses have been to people across the State so far.

There are at least ten districts in the state where authorities have vaccinated more 10 lakh people. While Mumbai accounts for a maximum of 69,66,066 were vaccinated till the evening of Sunday, Pune comes close second with 59,12,418 vaccinations, followed by Thane (32,31,731), Nagpur (12,52,489), Nashik (17,55,420), Latur (17,10,074), Satara (11,81,304), Ahmednagar (11,75,030) Aurangabad (11,15,549) and Kolhapur (17,10,074).

Steepest decline in fresh Covid cases in UP, 33 test +ve

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh witnessed the steepest decline in the number of fresh coronavirus positive cases with only 33 people testing positive across the state during the last 24 hours, making it the lowest daily case count since the second wave struck in March- April this year.

In a sharp contrast to other states significantly lesser in terms of population such as Kerala, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh has been successfully taming the raging disease. Where other states have been witnessing a greater surge of fresh Covid-19 cases (daily cases in the range of 17,000-2,000), the daily case count in UP has been below 50 for three consecutive days.

In another significant achievement, Uttar Pradesh, continuing the downward trend, dropped the daily Covid Test Positivity Rate (TPR) -- the number of positive cases against the total tests done -- and it stood at

0.01 per cent, the lowest in the country. This rate was at its highest at 16.84 per cent on April 24 and now remains even lower than the lowest post-first wave of Covid-19.

With eleven districts -- Aligarh, Budaun, Basti, Bahraich, Etah, Fatehpur, Hamirpur, Hathras, Kasganj, Mahoba and Shravasti -- becoming free of the deadly coronavirus and reporting no cases, the State's success story in combating Covid-19 has been strengthened further.

Emerging as a leader in conducting maximum Covid tests, Uttar Pradesh has tested as many as 6.42 crore samples for the coronavirus infection so far.

The number of active cases in the country's most populous state has also reduced to just 857, which is now equal to the tally which the state had in April 2020. Active Covid cases have been brought down by over 99 per cent from its peak capped at 3.10 lakh on April 30, while the percentage of active cases as against the total confirmed cases is 0.01 points.

UP emerges as largest ethanol producing State

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the largest ethanol producing state in the country by producing a total of 58 crore litres of ethanol in 54 distilleries established across the State.

A Government spokesman said that the State manufactured 58 crore litres of ethanol, a solvent that is essentially mixed with petrol for environmental purposes, in 2020-21. He said in a major relief to farmers, an additional payment of Rs 864 crore was credited to the accounts of sugarcane farmers from the sale of ethanol.

By mixing ethanol in petrol, the Uttar Pradesh government has been able to contribute to saving a total of 75.58 million dollars of India's foreign exchange reserve, thereby boosting the economy in these testing times. Ethanol is a type of alcohol that is mixed with petrol and is used as fuel in vehicles.

According to environmental experts, ethanol mixed with petrol may reduce carbon monoxide pollution by 35 per cent. It may be recalled that the distilleries of sugar mills and other units produced a record 1.77 crore litres of sanitiser which was not only supplied within the State but also exported to other States.

Man held for raping mentally challenged minor in Assam



Karimganj (Assam): A 43-year-old man has been arrested in Assam's Karimganj district for allegedly raping a mentally challenged minor girl, police said on Monday.

The man had allegedly raped his 17-year-old neighbour on Saturday, officer-in-charge of Badarpur Police Station Dipak Saikia said.

The girl was alone in the house and was strolling in the backyard when the accused dragged her into a room and allegedly raped her.

"We have arrested the man and a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act has been registered against him. PTI

Child trafficking racket busted in Aligarh, 6 kids rescued in overnight op

Noida/Aligarh: Uttar Pradesh police has busted a child trafficking racket with the arrest of 16 persons, officials said on Monday, adding six kidnapped kids were rescued in the operation.

The children were rescued during an overnight operation conducted in Aligarh and surrounding areas as part of the special anti-human trafficking 'Operation Khushi', they said.

Acting on a tip-off, police nabbed three persons near a crossing at village Borna near Mahuakheda police station area on Sunday evening, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kalamidhi Naithani said.

They told police that four kidnapped children were being held in a house in Ganga Nagar colony under Gandhi park police station area, he said.

Police immediately raided the premises and rescued them, the SSP said, adding two more kidnapped children were freed from the clutches of other members of the gang at another house in an area that falls

under the Delhi gate police station area. Two of these children had gone missing from Ghaziabad and four from Aligarh, Naithani said, dubbing the overnight action as "unprecedented".

"Sixteen people who mediated the sale and purchase of infants and toddlers have been arrested. These include nine women," he said.

The male members of the gang with a nexus across the state would kidnap children and hand them over to the women, who would then sell them off to childless couples for Rs 50,000 each and sometimes even in lakhs of rupees, Naithani said.

The police teams that carried out the rescue operation under the supervision of Superintendent of Police (SP) Kuldeep Singh Gunawat have been rewarded, he said.

The children have been handed over to their families and further legal proceedings against the gang members are underway, he added. PTI



Rajasthan Unemployed United Federation activists stage a demonstration against the State Government at Shahid Smarak in Jaipur on Monday

PTI



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Healing touch

Amid fierce competition, Olympics is about the message of inclusivity to all humankind

The Olympic Games have sent out a message for the second time running, first from Rio in 2016 and now from Tokyo, that it is not all about winning, it is also about belonging. The message comes from just 29 sportspeople who represent 82 million people currently Stateless or displaced from their homes and living as refugees across the world. They now have a voice and a platform after the International Olympics Committee (IOC) decided that refugees should get the opportunity to pick up their lives' threads through sport. The IOC invited 10 refugee athletes to the Rio Olympics representing the Refugee Olympic Team. The figure went up by nearly three times to 29 in Tokyo, a telling reminder that the number of refugees is growing at a similar pace. If these athletes are able to take part in the Olympics, it is because they are no longer worried about persecution or hunger.



They have homes though far away from home, are safe and secure, and enjoy all rights and freedom. However, the frustration of a refugee status hurts them. "One day, one time, if my country settles down, maybe I will go back and represent my country." That is the dream of refugee Paulo Amotun Lokoro, who is competing in 1500 metres in Tokyo. The South Sudanese former cattle herder fled to Kenya to escape a civil war.

Afghan Nigara Shaheen left for Pakistan as an infant and has encountered abuses and life threats from both countries but refuses to allow her past to destroy her dreams of a medal in judo. Syrian swimmer Yusra Mardini became a world headline in 2015 when she and her sister decided to flee Syria and both had to swim for their lives in the Mediterranean when the dinghy in which they were escaping took water. Swimming saved her life then and is now the sport she banks her dreams on. Between 2015 and the present day, the rallying call of the IOC has not translated into the world relaxing their policies on refugees. Japan, for instance, where the current Games are being held, is said to have granted asylum to less than one per cent of the refugees and asylum-seekers who applied in 2019, despite having the third-largest economy in the world. In contrast, Germany, which ranks fourth among top economies, accepted nearly 53 per cent of the refugees in the same year. Syrians, Afghans, Rohingyas and Africans contribute the maximum number of refugees in the world today. However, very few countries have kept their borders open. In some countries where they managed to arrive, they face discrimination or are considered as threats to national security. Refugee Olympian Angelina Nadai Lohalith has the last word: "We hope others see we are just normal people like them." The Games seek to convince the world community that the refugee problem cannot be wished away by donating dollars but resolved by first recognising it as a human issue.

PICTALK



A man feeds birds by the lake at Sefton Park as the warm weather continues, in Liverpool, England

PTI

Taking stock

India's sporting fortunes in the global arena have taken a severe dip since the golden days of yore

Sunday's 7-1 drubbing of the Indian hockey team at the hands of Australia in Tokyo Olympics proves that the country is miles behind in the race for a medal in the global arena, Mirabai Chanu's silver medal in weightlifting notwithstanding. If Indian athletes manage to win a medal in the track and field events at Tokyo, it would be a miracle. Our hopes and dreams are chiefly centred on badminton and tennis players, besides boxer Mary Kom. The country which finished fourth in 1956 Melbourne Olympics football does not figure in the first six even in Asia. The Indian Soccer League has not only failed to revive the game, it has destroyed whatever interest remained among the fans. There are no prestigious football tournaments or teams anymore. Till the 1980s, we had a few reputed football teams and annual fixtures. A State like Kerala hosted seven all-India tournaments and outstation teams used to set the ground ablaze with quality games. Delhi was the venue of the world's second oldest football tournament, the Durand Cup, and the DCM Trophy drew teams from abroad, too. Who can forget Shimla Youngs, a local team that beat the Calcutta giants?



There were no 24x7 news channels; fans across Kerala and Tamil Nadu would ring up the offices of All India Radio and newspapers late evening to know the match results. Similarly, Bombay had Rovers Cup and all street hawkers would pack their belongings by 3 pm to rush to the Cooperage Ground to catch the action. Ironically, the fall of India's hockey started the day the country won the 1975 World Cup in Kuala Lumpur. Though India bagged the gold medal in the 1980 Moscow Olympics, it was no achievement since the US and its allies did not send their teams to the USSR. India pocketed the gold medal by beating Poland, a country which had no prowess in the game of hockey. Take a look at the number of medals won by India in the last 12 Olympic Games before bidding to host the 2036 Games. The event is hardly 15 years away and there is no possibility of the country graduating to the big league by then. Sporting events should never be held for the contractors and event managers to amass money. Sporting events are serene and sacred and not money-spinners.

The reforms of 2015 are fructifying now



BINDU DALMIA

Three Big Bang reforms Prime Minister Narendra Modi had envisaged in 2015, which were scoffed at then, have registered exponential growth

While Modi 1.0 achieved an 80 per cent plus last-mile delivery rate in welfare and social sector schemes monitored through the skilful use of technology, in this article I want to specifically assess the turnaround of three mega financial inclusion and employment-generating goals that were set during Modi 1.0, which are beginning to fructify and gather momentum in 2021. All three were scoffed at by critics, whether it was weeding out a parallel economy through demonetisation, or Modi's propagation of becoming a self-creator of jobs through 'Startup India', or giving a push to 'Skill India' in mission mode.

The PM had prioritised a trifold vision in 2015: To target the elimination of a parallel economy by transitioning to digital payments, which has accelerated the booming fintech services sector; creating a facilitatory ecosystem to propel 'Startup India' which is now witnessing a frenzied boom in the IPO space; thirdly, to 'Skill India' in order to be future-ready with the pace of innovations. By mid-2021, all three reforms have witnessed exponential growth, particularly the first two, which got a fillip due to digitisation post-COVID.

Universalising digital banking leading to financial inclusion: Targeting a \$5trillion economy and a New India is not achievable without the financial inclusion of the urban and rural poor. Hence, it was imperative to include the unbanked population so that they had easier access to formal credit, savings and insurance. "The basic tenets of financial inclusion were to bank the unbanked, secure the unsecured, and fund the unfunded." The pandemic has accelerated the push towards digital payments, which is a means of achieving financial inclusion.

Tech-based lending was also not feasible without access to credit history of consumers, as the underbanked lacked a borrowing track record. Nor was extending loans to MSMEs possible for those who lacked collaterals. The JAM trinity of Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and the mobile ecosystem that was set in place in 2015 has facilitated the scale, volume and deliv-



ery of digital financial services to the extent that by June 2021, India's payments systems are now processing more than 150 million transactions that amount to ₹4.5 lakh crores each day on an average. The efficiency of digital payments in direct benefit transfer (DBT) is also evident, with ₹53 lakh crores being paid out digitally across 319 Government schemes in FY'21.

Today, as banks partner with fintechs, they draw in more 'new-to-credit' micro enterprises into the formal banking system, being able to approve loans in seven minutes as compared to seven days to the rural consumer. Prior to these interventions, extending financial services to rural India was an unviable proposition for banks because of the high cost of servicing remote locations, poor credit demand and the small-ticket size of financial transactions.

'Skill India Mission': Skill India was a smart initiative launched by the Government in 2015 to provide market and industry-relevant skills for the workforce so that they are job-ready by 2022. In order to become globally competitive and raise per capita productivity and per capita incomes, we needed to create opportunities for well-paying jobs for the



THE YEAR 2021 HAS BEEN A BLOCKBUSTER ONE FOR THE STARTUP INDUSTRY IN INDIA, WITH 16 MEMBERS JOINING THE UNICORN CLUB IN JUST SIX MONTHS AND BROWSERSTACK, ZETA AND MOGLIX BEING AMONG THE RECENT ENTRANTS

millions of under-skilled workers keen to transition from farming to the services or the manufacturing sector.

By June 2021, it is encouraging that more than 1.25 crore people are being skilled, re-skilled and up-skilled annually under the PM's flagship scheme of 'Pradhanmantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana'. As the PM said, "Only a skilled person will grow in today's world, as no longer can learning stop with earning."

The exponential growth of the Startups universe: The PM in 2015 had said that "India should be known as a nation of job creators and not job seekers", thereafter setting in motion an enabling environment by improving on the Ease of Doing Business parameters and providing easier access to credit in order to encourage entrepreneurship and startups. Just as demonetisation triggered the growth of fintech startups like Paytm in 2017, similarly the pandemic accelerated the adaptation of diverse tech-based startups ranging from sectors like education, beauty, retail, food delivery aggregators, e-commerce, e-healthcare, and so on.

These innovative entrepreneurs had gained a first-mover-advantage by mastering the art of navigating through

a VUCA world (of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) by being resilient to the changing dynamics in the marketplace as they went on to alter existing business models and design product offerings that addressed altered consumer needs that provided ease-of-living solutions. Today, startups are creating 1.3 times more jobs than the Old Economy, having paid almost twice the amount of taxes compared to non-funded companies.

The year 2021 has been a blockbuster one for the startup industry in India, with 16 members joining the unicorn club in just six months and BrowserStack, Zeta and Moglix being among the recent entrants, while the league of deacons valued at over ₹10 billion comprises the likes of Byjus, Zomato and Paytm.

Tech-startups are expected to further expand to 150 unicorns over the next three years. Meanwhile, the global investor community remains buoyant on the startups space as India emerges as the third largest and fastest growing unicorn hub of the world.

(The writer is an author, columnist and Chairperson, NCFIL, at NITI Aayog. The views expressed are personal).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

YEDIYURAPPA'S EXIT A SETBACK

Sir — While Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa's resignation at this stage was uncalled for, the interference by the Lingayat Swamis has also vastly damaged his continuation. The credit for opening the BJP Government's account in South India goes to Yediyurappa. He proved that he could make or mar the BJP's prospects when he formed the Karnataka Janata Party (KJP) and came in the way of the BJP taking power ahead of the 2013 Karnataka Assembly election. The BJP's vote share was divided, consequent to which the Congress Government headed by Siddaramaiah came to power.

But realising that he has no future with the KJP, he disbanded it and crawled back to the BJP grabbing power by dislodging the Karnataka Congress Government. Yediyurappa was implicated in a denotification case and lost ground to Sadananda Gowda to succeed him, followed by Jagadeesh Shettar. The party recently put pressure on Yediyurappa to submit his resignation. Yediyurappa has to be remembered for increasing the superannuation age of Government employees from 58 years to 60 years.

KV Seetharamaiah | Hassan

MANOJ JHA HAS A VALID POINT

Sir — The Rajya Sabha's RJD member Manoj Jha has aptly highlighted the irony of India following the indirect tax regime in a country where a large number of people live in poverty. He should be congratulated for underscoring a fact that has been kept hidden from public knowledge. He said: "This is a welfare State, isn't it? When a poor man buys a bar of soap, he is as much a taxpayer as are Adani and Ambani." Indeed, indirect taxes are insensitive to inequality. This is the reason why in most modern welfare States, unlike India, direct taxes constitute the lion's share of the total tax collections.

In India, the poorest of the poor have to pay the same amount of indirect tax as their creamy counterparts when they buy anything from salt to slippers and from food to medicine. If we calculate the per-

Monsoon fury and flooding



The monsoon rainfall provides the "elixir of life" free of cost; it commingles with the regenerative powers of nature, and it is a boon to farmers. But, of late, it has tended to become an extreme weather event and turn into a disaster. The flooding has become alarmingly frequent over the years. It is not entirely natural; it is partly natural and partly man-made.

Visuals of submerged houses, inundated roads and crops, collapsed buildings and bridges across the country give an idea of the scale of the flood havoc. Despite the NDRF's best efforts to rescue as many people as possible, the floods have claimed over 200 precious lives. Many persons categorised as "missing" may also

have lost their lives. Human factors accentuate vulnerability to disasters. Impoverished people are especially vulnerable to disasters like floods. Most of the deaths were due to the precarious structures used as dwellings in areas prone to landslides and other flood-related mishaps. Increasing extreme weather conditions cannot be looked at in isolation from human mismanagement of resources and the wide disparity in consumption between the rich and the poor. Ill-considered and unsustainable economic development and concomitant or consequent carbon emissions, deforestation, soil erosion, failure to preserve natural water bodies and construction of big dams destroy nature's delicate checks and balances which, in turn, result in extreme weather events like flooding.

Studies show that global warming is a major factor in the occurrence of heavy rainfall, resulting in uncontrollable flooding. Steps should urgently be taken to achieve the goals of protecting lives from extreme weather events and reducing the carbon footprint to stabilise the earth's temperature.

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

SOUNDBITE

The Government says our farmers are happy with the farm laws and those who are sitting on protest are terrorists.



Congress leader — Rahul Gandhi

The Treasurer and I and the rest of the Cabinet are very open to consider how we deal with the (COVID-19) situation as it further evolves.

Australian Prime Minister — Scott Morrison

I have got my first shot of the vaccine and once I get my second shot, travelling will be much easier.



TV actor-performer — Shefali Jarwal

My job is to control the middle overs and I was very happy I did that and I just backed myself. There has been nothing on my mind.

Indian leg-spinner — Yuzvendra Chahal

I will not suggest any names. It is the prerogative of the BJP high command to choose the new Chief Minister.



Karnataka ex-Chief Minister — BS Yediyurappa

IRU KODUGAL JAYANTHI NO MORE

Sir — Actor Jayanthi, who predominantly worked in Kannada films for over three decades, has passed away at the age of 76. She was suffering from multiple illnesses. Fondly known as Abhinaya Sharade, Jayanthi worked in over 500 films, which include Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Malayalam and Kannada movies. She was popular for her performances in films between the

Sujit De | Kolkata

1970s and 1990s. Jayanthi was honoured with the Best Actor award by the Karnataka State four times. She has also been a recipient of the Karnataka State Awards for Best Supporting Actor (Female) thrice.

Jayanthi received the President's Medal for Best Actress. The actor starred in 36 films with legendary actor Dr Rajkumar. She made her debut in 1963 with the Kannada film *Jenu Goodu*. The actress also worked in Tamil films in the 1970s, alongside legendary actors like MG Ramachandran and Gemini Ganesan. *IRU Kodugal*, made by Dadasaheb Phalke award winner K Balachander, was an outstanding success as she paired alongside Sowcar Janaki in this film as Gemini Ganesan's second wife. RIP, Jayanthi!

MR Jayanthi | Coimbatore

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN
THE MICROPLASTIC POLLUTION IN GANGA

Microplastics are now the prime pollution content at Varanasi, Kanpur and Haridwar



KOTA SRIRAJ

The Ganges, the most revered river in India, is fast becoming a tragic casualty of callous anthropogenic pollution. In the last decade, pollution levels, especially faecal coliform bacteria, in the Ganges have been mounting- the impact of 400 million people living on its banks. Samples collected at Varanasi have repeatedly shown coliform levels 100 times more than the prescribed limit. The pilgrim city with one million population releases 200 million litres of untreated human sewage into the Ganges every day. The Ganga Action Plan was a ray of hope that promised to help clean up the river but that proved to be a mirage. The Plan launched by the government amid much fanfare failed to rein in the pollution thanks to widespread corruption, lack of required technical expertise, and the poor government will. These issues were further exacerbated by the absence of support from the native, religious bodies, and environmental planning. The result was the failure of yet another attempt to cleanse the river



that was overburdened with the sins of human pollution. The World Bank report on the state of water resources in India estimates that the health costs of water pollution in India would amount to three per cent of India's GDP and nearly 80 per cent of the nation's illnesses and one-third of the deaths would be attributable to water-borne diseases. The Ganges is precisely confirming the predictions. Even as the people, the government, and the river itself battle with the overbearing levels of pollution, a new study by an NGO, Toxic Links, has found that the microplastic levels in the Ganges have zoomed and according to the report's findings, the Ganges now has the dubious distinction of having the world's highest concentration of microplastic pollution for a major river. Microplastics are less than 5 mm in size and now occupy the prime pollution content in the Ganges at Varanasi, Kanpur, and Haridwar. The report has found the extreme use of plastics in religious offerings to the river to be behind this mega spike in microplastic content in the river water. This rise in plastics has serious implications for the environment and humans alike.

The presence of ethylenevinyl, polyacetylene, and polyamide in microplastics have dangerous implications for human health and can cause toxicity through oxidative stress, inflammatory lesions, and increased uptake or translocation. Several studies have also demonstrated the potentiality of metabolic disturbances, neurotoxicity, and increased cancer risk in humans due to sustained exposure to or ingestion of microplastics. As rivers are essential lifelines for humans and a source of irrigation for agriculture, there is a need to stop our rivers from becoming "microplastic hotspots". This will protect not only river water biodiversity but also human health. Given the seriousness of the microplastic pollution affecting the Ganges, the government must undertake immediate remedial measures to curb this form of pollution. It is critical to study and adopt the best practices currently being followed across the world to control microplastic spread in water bodies. The first step is to ban single-use plastics and secondly, there is a need to adopt cutting-edge technologies such as the membrane bioreactor technology whereby fibres are used to treat wastewater to filter out microplastics. Similarly, nanocellulose membrane filters are being developed to take the battle against microplastics in water to the next level. With these exciting developments already taking place in the world, India cannot afford to be left behind and must take the initiative and adopt these technologies on the home front and save the precious river and water bodies from the menace of microplastics.

(The writer is an environmental journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

Missing the woods for the trees

The thrust of the proposed pesticides Bill should be on incentivising innovators to invest in R&D and bring new crop protection solutions



UTTAM GUPTA

A major factor that could make or mar the Modi government's mission of doubling farmers' income has to do with the loss of anywhere between 10 and 30 per cent damage to crop production due to pests and disease. The use of pesticides is the most effective way of stemming these losses.

The manufacture, import, distribution, and use of pesticides is regulated under the Insecticides Act, 1968, its main objective being 'to prevent risk to human beings or animals and for matters connected therewith'. The government wants to replace this with a new law. The Pesticides Management Bill, introduced last year, was referred to a Standing Committee on June 3, 2021.

The key provisions are (i) regulation of pesticide prices; (ii) prescription-based purchase of pesticides; (iii) ensure manufacturers' accountability for pesticide 'safety' and 'quality' in the entire supply chain including use and disposal; (iv) compensation to farmers for any loss caused by pesticide use; (v) review of pesticides' safety and their ban if risky; (vi) pesticide export not permitted if banned in India; (vii) punitive provisions include heavy penalties and imprisonment.

The Registration Committee set up under the Act registers every pesticide after scrutinizing the formula, chemistry, claims of efficacy, safety to human beings and animals, specifying the precautions against poisoning, and any other functions.

An applicant wanting to register a new product for the first time in India is required to generate data to demonstrate its safety and efficacy in Indian conditions in addition to the millions of dollars spent globally on toxicity and chemistry studies. At present, there are over 250,000 registrations corresponding to only 280 registered pesticide molecules, i.e., close to 900 per molecule.

A manufacturing license from the state, the notified authority under the Act, is not difficult as it is by and large given without checking for basic facilities, including quality control.

The result is an unmanageably large number of pesticide manufacturing units, currently over 1,400. This has made way for the entry of non-serious players who have little regard for quality and standards and the result is a proliferation of spurious and sub-standard products which could be nearly a third of the total quantity - worth ₹20,000 crore - in the domestic market.

This sort of regulatory architecture is a losing proposition for all stakeholders. The 'Me-too' registrants neither have any knowledge nor interest in 'stewardship', that is, educating farmers about proper and scientific use of new crop protection technologies. As a result, the farmers are unable to utilize their full potential. Worse still, the use of spurious products inflict huge crop losses and damage the soil. The above maladies ought to have attracted the



THE ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPENSATION PROPOSALS ARE FAR-FETCHED. NO DOUBT, THE MANUFACTURER HAS TO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY COMPROMISE ON QUALITY OR THINGS GOING WRONG AT THE PRODUCTION, PACKAGING, TRANSPORTATION, STORAGE OR DISTRIBUTION STAGES BUT ONCE THE SALE HAS TAKEN PLACE, THE BALL SHIFTS TO THE FARMER'S COURT

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



attention of our lawmakers and solutions found. Instead, the PMB has provisions that will make the system more unwieldy.

With reference to price regulation, as it is, the innovator or originator of the new technology suffers heavy losses with so many manufacturers (up to 100 in some cases) selling the product to the same set of farmers. They are unable to recoup the huge investments made in developing, conducting studies (to seek registration), and 'stewardship'. On top of it, if the government also starts controlling the MRP, as contemplated under the PMB, it will further erode their incentives to invest in R&D.

Requiring farmers to buy pesticides only after obtaining a prescription, say, from an agriculture expert shows little understanding of the dynamics of pesticide use. When large swathes of fields are attacked by pests (like a locust attack that happened last year), if a farmer has to wait for a prescription, the pests would have devastated the crop before the pesticide was procured.

The accountability and compensation proposals are far-fetched. No doubt, the manufacturer has to be held responsible for any compromise on quality or things going wrong at the production, packaging, transportation, storage, and distribution stages but once the sale has taken place, the ball shifts to the

farmer's court. If the farmer has not properly followed the instructions clearly written on the packets and accompanying leaflets, it would be unfair to hold the manufacturer accountable.

Referring to the review of pesticides' safety clause, the provision for a periodic review of the safety and efficacy of pesticides in use already exists in the Insecticides Act.

In 2013, an expert committee was set up to study the continued use of a total of 66 pesticides. Based on its recommendations (the report submitted in 2015), the government banned 18 pesticides in 2018. For another 27 pesticides, the Ministry for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare issued a draft order in May 2020 to ban their manufacture, usage, and storage. It is now past the middle of 2021 but that order is yet to be implemented.

The proposal for disallowing the export of a pesticide banned in India is illogical. Whether to allow the use of a product in the importing country (exports from India are meant for use in that jurisdiction only), has to be based on an assessment of its 'safety' and 'efficacy' in that territory. For this purpose, the fact whether it is registered or used in India or banned is irrelevant.

Finally, the bill provides for penalties and a jail term for violating provisions of the Act. Such

criminalization of an offence could put genuine manufacturers to great risk particularly when the existing system of sample collection is "faulty".

Instead of trying to micro-manage the industry (this is what the bill seeks to do), the thrust of the law should be on (a) incentivizing innovators to invest in R&D, bring new crop protection solutions, and fast-track their registration; (b) rein in "Me too" registrations by granting a period of exclusivity to the original registrant during which further registrations would not be allowed; (c) enforce strict quality control at all levels in the supply chain; (d) end the scourge of spurious pesticides.

The law should clearly specify time lines in all critical areas such as grant of registration, license for manufacturing, distribution and sale, analysis of the sample, review of pesticides for deciding whether to continue their use, etc. It should enforce accountability on all stakeholders including enforcement agencies such as license officers, sample analysts as well as farmers.

The process of enacting the law also needs to be time-bound. Work on the PMB started over two decades back - an earlier version of the Bill was introduced by the UPA regime in 2008 and it languished till 2015 when the Modi government took it on board. Now, we have a fresh draft - PMB (2020).

POINT COUNTERPOINT

I HAVE DECIDED TO RESIGN. NOBODY PRESSURED ME TO RESIGN. I DID IT ON MY OWN SO THAT SOMEONE ELSE CAN TAKE OVER AS CHIEF MINISTER.

— KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER BS YEDIYURAPPA



THE BJP DOESN'T HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO RULE THE STATE; THIS GOVERNMENT HAS COMPLETELY FAILED. COME, LET'S GO FOR POLLS.

— KARNATAKA CONGRESS CHIEF DK SHIVAKUMAR

Nipun Bharat: Laying the foundation for a learning society

The Mission is expected to lay the foundation of an Atmanirbhar Bharat through a learning society, where kids are able to realise their potential

The NIPUN (National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy) Bharat Mission launched by the Ministry of Education on July 5, 2021, marks an important landmark in the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020. The NEP signalled a paradigm shift by basing the edifice of the education system on foundational learning. It asserts that the policy would become infructuous if children do not acquire the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy by Grade 3 in mission mode.



MANEESH GARG

This is the key for them to progress to 'Read to Learn' and then, 'Learn How to Learn'. Such empowered individuals become lifelong learners and will help lay the foundation for

(The writer is Joint Secretary, Ministry for Education, Government of India. The views expressed are personal.)

a knowledge-based learning society. The foundational years in school are crucial for providing a firm and reliable foundation for learning and nurturing young people to develop competencies so that they can adapt to different situations in the real world.

The vision of the Mission is to create an enabling environment to ensure the universal acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy so that by 2026-27, every child achieves the desired learning competencies in reading, writing, and numeracy at the end of Grade 3. The mission will cover the learning needs of children in the 3-9 age group. The key components of foundational language and literacy are oral language development, phonological awareness, print aware-



ness, decoding, vocabulary, reading comprehension and fluency, writing, and engaging with a wide variety of books and other reading materials.

Foundational numeracy means the ability to reason and to apply simple numerical concepts in daily life problem-solving. The major aspects of foundational numeracy are pre-number concepts, awareness of the numeration system, conventions needed for mastery of mathematical techniques such as the use of a base 10 system to represent numbers, measure-

ment, using standard algorithms to perform operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division on numbers and apply these to their day-to-day activities in different contexts, understanding of shapes, spaces, and patterns.

The framework for NIPUN Bharat has been evolved through extensive consultations with expert bodies, national and international studies, and with the states and UTs. It covers key technical aspects of foundational literacy and numeracy as well as the administrative aspects for setting up an effective implementation mechanism at the national, state, district, block, and school levels.

The NEP 2020 focuses on the holistic development of the child. There are different

domains of development. Hence, three developmental goals have been identified— Children maintain good health and well-being (HW), Children become effective communicators (EC), and Children become involved learners and connect with their immediate environment (IL).

The NIPUN Bharat also marks another paradigm shift in education insofar as it lays down, for the first time, the national learning targets and aims at the universal achievement of those. The targets make for easy understanding and measurement by all stakeholders as to what the children are supposed to achieve starting from Balvatika (age 5-6 years) to Class 3, in the areas of oral language, reading, writing, and numeracy.

For example, a child in the age group of 5-6 years is expected to be able to read simple words comprising at 2-3 alphabets, while a child in class 1 (age 6-7 years) should read small sentences consisting of at least 4-5 simple words. A child of class 2 (age 7-8 years) should read 8-10 sentences with simple words with appropriate speed (approximately 45 to 60 words per minute correctly), comprehension, and clarity. Similarly, a child of class-3 (age 8-9 years) is expected to read at least 60 words per minute.

The Mission will focus on providing access to foundational years of schooling, teacher

capacity building, development of high quality and diversified student and teacher resource/learning material, and tracking the progress of each child in achieving learning outcomes. A child able to achieve these basic language and numeracy skills by Grade 3 can better follow class room transactions, which will help in improving learning outcomes in later grades, reduce drop-out, and higher school completion rates, leading to a more productive contribution from them towards the society.

Thus, the NIPUN Bharat mission is expected to lay the foundation of an Atmanirbhar Bharat, through a learning society, where children are able to realize their full potential as future citizens, leaders, workers, innovators, and entrepreneurs.

46 Af jawans take refuge in Pakistan

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

At least 46 Afghan soldiers crossed over and took refuge in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province after losing control of a border post to the Taliban militants along the international border, according to media reports on Monday.

The Pakistan Army said the incident occurred late on Sunday night in Arundul sector in the country's Chitral district when an Afghan National Army (ANA) local Commander requested the Pakistan Army for refuge and safe passage.

According to a statement by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), 46 soldiers, including five officers, belong to the ANA and Border Police as "they were unable to hold their military posts along Pak-

Afghan International Border due to the evolving security situation in Afghanistan."

The Pakistan Army contacted the Afghan authorities for information and necessary formalities.

"After contact with Afghan authorities and necessary military procedures, 46 soldiers including 5 officers have been given refuge/safe passage into Pakistan," the Army said, adding that the Afghan soldiers have been provided food, shelter and necessary medical care as per established military norms.

It said that these soldiers will be returned to the Afghan government authorities in a dignified manner after due process, Dawn newspaper reported.

Ever since the US announced to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by

September, the Taliban has stepped-up its offensive against Afghan security forces, forcing hundreds of soldiers and other officials to seek refuge in the neighbouring Pakistan, Iran and Tajikistan.

In a similar incident on July 1, at least 35 Afghan soldiers had requested the Pakistan Army for refuge/safe passage due to inability to hold their military post along Pak-Afghanistan International Border. They were also given a safe passage into Pakistan and handed over to the Afghan government authorities after due procedure, according to the Army.

The Afghan troops have lately come under a lot of pressure from the Taliban. Earlier in July, more than 1,000 Afghan security personnel fled across the border into Tajikistan following the Taliban attacks.

China goes on offensive against US at talks

Hands over list of demands to revive ties

PTI ■ BEIJING/TIANJIN

Striking an aggressive stance at the face-to-face talks with the US, China on Monday for the first time handed down to Washington a list of demands and remedial actions to be taken by the Biden administration to end the "stalemate" in bilateral ties.

Talks between Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Xie Feng and US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman to improve the relations got off on a rough note at the northeastern Chinese port city of Tianjin, with Xie launching a blistering attack on Washington, accusing it of being the "owner of coercive diplomacy".

Sherman, the No. 2 diplomat of the US, is the highest-ranking American official to visit China since President Joe Biden took office six months ago. She started her meetings with Xie, who is in-charge of the US-China relations, and

held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at a resort hotel in Tianjin.

Besides launching a well-publicised scathing attack on the US, accusing it of "bullying" other countries with "might is right" coercive diplomacy by imposing sanctions, Xie also handed down a "List of US Wrongsdoings that Must Stop" and a "List of Key Individual Cases that China Has Concerns".

The list included removal of US sanctions imposed on the Chinese officials and their families and revocation of the Washington's judicial request to Canada to extradite Meng Wanzhou, CFO of Huawei and daughter of its founder Ren Zhengfei, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing in Beijing.

Meng, who was arrested in Vancouver in 2018 on a bank fraud warrant issued by the previous Trump administration, is still facing trial.

In the list of wrongdoings, China urged the US to revoke the visa restrictions on members of the ruling Communist Party of China and their families unconditionally, revoke the sanctions on Chinese leaders, officials and government agencies, cancel visa restrictions on Chinese students and stop harassing them, stop suppressing Chinese companies and "oppression" Confucius institutes, he said.

In the second list, China has expressed concern over rejection of visas for Chinese students, the unfair treatment of Chinese citizens and harassment of the Chinese consulates and Embassy in the US and racial attacks on Chinese and Asians. Sherman arrived in China on Sunday evening from Mongolia. The meeting was held in Tianjin as Beijing is not hosting any foreign dignitaries due to Covid-19 protocols.

On her arrival, she tweeted, "heartfelt condolences (from the United States) to

those who have lost loved ones" in severe storms and flooding last week in China's Henan province resulting in the deaths of 69 people.

In Washington, State Department spokesperson Ned Price termed the Sherman's meeting with Wang as a "frank and open discussion about a range of issues, demonstrating the importance of maintaining open lines of communication between our two countries."

Price said Sherman raised concerns about human rights, including in Hong Kong and Tibet, and what he called the "ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang."

She also raised issues of media access and freedom of the press, Beijing's conduct in cyberspace and actions toward Taiwan and in the East and South China Seas besides discussing cases of American and Canadian citizens detained in China and Beijing's unwillingness to cooperate with the World Health Organization and allow a second-phase investigation inside China into COVID-19's origins, Price said.

Monday's pattern of the US-China talks followed the highly contentious first meeting in March in Anchorage, Alaska where Wang and top Chinese diplomat Yang Jiechi exchanged barbs with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan.

China also came under immense pressure mounted by the US and allies over the allegations of genocide in Xinjiang over mass detention camps holding thousands of Uyghur Muslims.

The Biden administration's special envoy on climate John Kerry visited Shanghai in April this year for meetings with his Chinese counterpart.

The China-US relationship turned adversarial under former US President Donald Trump who besides imposing trade sanctions also squarely blamed

China for the spread of the coronavirus, which had first emerged in Wuhan in December 2019 and the possibility of it leaking from a bio-lab in the city.

China, Pak agree to launch 'joint actions' in Af to drive out terrorist forces: Chinese FM

PTI ■ BEIJING

China and Pakistan have decided to launch "joint actions" in Afghanistan to stop the war-torn country from becoming a "hotbed for terrorism" and drive out terrorist forces from there, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said on Monday.

The decision was taken during a meeting between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the southwestern Chinese city of Chengdu on Saturday.

During the meeting, Wang and Qureshi "decided to launch joint actions on Afghan issue,"

Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here.

Also, a press release posted on the website of the Chinese Foreign Ministry said Wang in his talks with Qureshi "emphasised that as Afghanistan's neighbours, China and Pakistan are directly impacted by the Afghan sit-

The decision taken during meeting between Chinese FM Wang Yi and his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi

uation. It is necessary for the two countries to strengthen cooperation and respond to changes."

This was "one important agenda during Qureshi's visit to China," said the press release titled 'China and Pakistan Decide to Launch Joint Actions on Afghan Issue'.

Lebanon: Najib Mikati named new PM-designate

AP ■ BEIRUT

Lebanon's President appointed a billionaire businessman and former prime minister as the next premier-designate Monday, after Saad Hariri earlier this month gave up attempts to form a Cabinet amid an unprecedented financial meltdown roiling the country.

Najib Mikati's appointment came after he secured the majority of lawmakers' votes in binding consultations President Michel Aoun held with members of parliament.

One of the richest men in Lebanon, Mikati became a favourite for the post after he was endorsed by most of Lebanon's political parties including the powerful, Iran-backed militant Hezbollah group and the other major Shiite party, Amal, led by Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri.

Mikati was also endorsed by former Sunni prime ministers including Hariri, who abandoned efforts to form a government after failing to agree with Aoun on the Cabinet's makeup.

Tunisia on edge as Prez suspends Parl, fires PM

AP ■ TUNIS (TUNISIA)

Troops surrounded Tunisia's parliament and blocked its speaker from entering Monday after the president suspended the legislature and fired the prime minister following nationwide protests over the country's economic troubles and the government's handling of the coronavirus crisis.

Protesters celebrated President Kais Saied's decision late Sunday night with shouts of joy, honking of horns and waving Tunisian flags. But his critics accused him of a power grab, and the North African country's overseas allies expressed concern that its young democracy might be descending again into autocracy.

In a move sure to fuel those worries, police raided the offices of broadcaster Al Jazeera and ordered it to shut down.

Tunisia, which ignited the Arab Spring in 2011 when protests led to the overthrow of its longtime autocratic leader, is often regarded as the only success story of those uprisings.

But democracy did not bring prosperity; Tunisia's economy was already flailing before the pandemic hit, with



Tunisian soldiers guard the main entrance of the parliament as demonstrators gather outside the the gate in Tunis, Tunisia on Monday

18% unemployment, and young people demanding jobs and an end to police brutality protested in large numbers earlier this year.

The government recently announced cuts to food and fuel subsidies as it sought its fourth loan from the International Monetary Fund in a decade, fuelling anger in impoverished regions.

The pandemic has only compounded those problems, and the government recently reimposed lockdowns and

other virus restrictions in the face of one of Africa's worst outbreaks.

Angry at the economic malaise and the poor handling of the pandemic, thousands of protesters defied virus restrictions and scorching heat in the capital, Tunis, and other cities Sunday to demand the dissolution of parliament. The large young crowds shouted "Get out!" and slogans calling for early elections, and also pushed for economic reforms. Clashes erupted in many places.

Iraq PM says doesn't need US combat troops

AP ■ BAGHDAD

Iraq's prime minister says his country no longer requires American combat troops to fight the Islamic State group, but a formal time frame for their redeployment will depend on the outcome of talks with US officials this week.

Mustafa al-Kadhimi said Iraq will still ask for US training and military intelligence gathering. His comments came in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press ahead of a planned trip to Washington, where he's slated to meet with President Joe Biden on Monday for a fourth round of strategic talks.

"There is no need for any foreign combat forces on Iraqi soil," said al-Kadhimi, falling short of announcing a deadline for a US troop departure. Iraq's security forces and army are capable of defending the country without US-led coalition troops, he said.

But al-Kadhimi said any withdrawal schedule would be based on the needs of Iraqi forces, who have shown themselves capable in the last year of conducting independent anti-IS missions.

"The war against IS and the readiness of our forces requires a special timetable, and this depends on the negotiations that we will conduct in Washington," he said.

The US and Iraq agreed in April that the US transition to a train-and-advise mission meant the US combat role would end but they didn't settle on a timetable for completing that transition.

In Monday's meeting at the White House, the two leaders are expected to specify a timeline, possibly by the end of this year.

The US troop presence has stood at about 2,500 since late last year when former President Donald Trump ordered a reduction from 3,000.

Biden, Iraqi PM to announce end of US combat mission in Iraq

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden and Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi are expected to announce on Monday that they've come to an agreement to end the US military's combat mission in Iraq by the end of the year, according to a senior Biden administration official.

The plan to shift the American military mission, whose stated purpose is to help Iraq defeat the Islamic State group, to a strictly advisory and training role by year's end — with no US troops in a combat role — will be spelled out in a broader communique to be issued by the two leaders following their White House meeting on Monday afternoon, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the yet to be announced plan.

The official said the Iraqi security forces are "battle tested" and have proved themselves "capable" of protecting their country. Still, the Biden administration recognizes that IS remains a considerable threat, the official said.

Indeed, the IS terror organization is a shell of its former self since it was largely routed on the battlefield in 2017. Still, it has shown it can still carry out high-casualty attacks. Last week, the group claimed responsibility for a roadside bombing that killed at least 30 people and wounded dozens in a busy suburban Baghdad market.

New Zealand to accept alleged Islamic State terrorist, 2 kids

Wellington: New Zealand on Monday agreed to repatriate an alleged Islamic State militant and her two young children, who have been detained in Turkey since February.

The decision follows a bitter dispute with Australia over which country needed to shoulder responsibility for the woman, who had been a dual citizen of both countries until Australia stripped her citizenship under its anti-terrorism laws. The woman and her children were arrested when they tried to illegally cross from Syria into Turkey, according to Turkey's Defense Ministry.

Turkey identified her only by her initials, S.A., while New Zealand media say she is Suhayra Aden, who was 26 at the time of her arrest.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said New Zealand had taken into account its international responsibilities and could not remove citizenship from anybody if it left them stateless.

"I made very strong representations to Australia that she should be permitted to return there. Her family moved to Australia when she was 6 and she grew up there before departing for Syria in 2014 on an Australian passport," Ardern said in a statement. "Unfortunately, Australia would not reverse the cancellation of citizenship," Ardern said the safety and wellbeing of New Zealanders was the government's paramount concern.

GOVERNMENT OF NCT OF DELHI
DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT
CHILD PROTECTION UNIT
1st FLOOR, ISBT BUILDING, KASHMERE GATE
DELHI-110006

INVITATION FOR ONLINE APPLICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT AS CHAIRPERSONS AND MEMBERS OF CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEES AND MEMBERS SOCIAL WORKER OF JUVENILE JUSTICE BOARDS IN NCT OF DELHI.

Online Applications are invited for the Honorary posts of Chairpersons and Members of Child Welfare Committees as per Section 27 of Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 and Rules 15 (3) & Member Social Workers of Juvenile Justice Boards as per Section 4 of Juvenile Justice Act and Rule 4, 5 & Rule 88 of Juvenile Justice Model Rules, 2016 in NCT of Delhi.

The applications shall be accepted w.e.f 29.07.2021 to 13.08.2021. After scrutiny of applications the list of eligible shortlisted candidates shall be displayed on the website of the Department. The eligible applicants are advised to refer to the web portal www.wcdcl.in for term of reference of the appointment and eligible criteria and refer link <http://www.wcdcl.in> for applying online. Candidates are also advised to see the Department's Website/ Notice Board for any update in this regard while the process is on.

Note: No other mode of applications except online shall be entertained by the Department. The Department also reserves the right to increase or decrease the number of vacancies at any point of time

sd/
DIRECTOR

DIP/Shabdarth/0180/21-22 (DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT)

BANARAS LOCOMOTIVE WORKS, VARANASI-221004
Bid No. E-15/2021-22 E-TENDERS Dated: 14.07.2021

E-Tenders are invited for & on behalf of the president of India for the supply of following items. Only E-offer will be accepted for which vendors must have class III Digital Signature and registration on IREPS. The details of tenders are in the following sequence S.No., Tender No.(Due Date), Description and Quantity. (1) 05211030 (04.08.2021), Special Socket, Part No. 15620013, 04 Nos. (15) 08211187 Advertise TENDER, (09.08.2021) Bolt 12-13 DR HEX AS PER DRG NO.8358580 ALT-Ba SPECN.AS.PER.DRG, QTY-135 NOS. (PL No. 19014314), (16) 08191057C Advertise TENDER, (09.08.2021), KIT SANDER CONTROL VALVE (RECON MAKE) DRG.NO.17660105 ALT- NIL, QTY- 55 NOS. (PL No. 17660105). Note: For Complete details of EMD and downloading of tender documents and Hindi Version also available at website www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in and www.ireps.gov.in Corrigendum Notice- Dated- 19.07.2021, Sl No.-1, Tender No.-: 052017125, Bid Inv. No.-13, Existing due date: 29.07.2021, Revised due date: 09.08.2021. Note: All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

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Afghanistan could see highest civilian casualties in 2021: UN

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

The UN has warned that without a "significant de-escalation" in violence in Afghanistan, the year 2021 is on course to witness the highest number of documented civilian casualties in over a decade in the war-torn country.

The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan's (UNAMA) Afghanistan Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Midyear Update 2021 documents 5,183 civilian casualties (1,659 killed and 3,524 injured), a 47 per cent increase compared with the same period in 2020.

In the report, the United Nations warns that without a "significant de-escalation in violence Afghanistan is on course for 2021 to witness the

highest ever number of documented civilian casualties in a single year since UNAMA records began" in 2009.

The report said that of serious concern is the acute rise in the number of civilians killed and injured in the period from May 1, as international military forces began their withdrawal and the fighting intensified following the Taliban's offensive. Almost as many civilian casualties in the May-June period were recorded as in the entire preceding four months.

The number of civilian casualties during May and June — 2,392 in total (783 killed and 1,609 injured) — was the highest for those months since UNAMA began its systematic documentation in 2009. The period January-April 2021 saw

2,791 civilian casualties (876 killed and 1,915 injured), it said, amid withdrawal of US forces and the Taliban offensive.

"I implore the Taliban and Afghan leaders to take heed of the conflict's grim and chilling trajectory and its devastating impact on civilians. The report provides a clear warning that unprecedented numbers of Afghan civilians will perish and be maimed this year if the increasing violence is not stemmed," Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan Deborah Lyons said.

The UN envoy, who is also the head of UNAMA, called on the Taliban and Afghan leaders to intensify efforts at the negotiating table, stop the Afghan against Afghan fighting.

Hindu woman returns to parents' custody after forced marriage, torture in Pakistan

PTI ■ KARACHI

A Hindu woman in Pakistan, who was allegedly tortured and forced to marry a man on forged documents to show her as Muslim, was handed back to her parents on Monday on the directions of a local court after her video seeking justice went viral on social media.

Reena Meghwar was kidnapped on February 13 by one Qasim Kashkeli from the area of Keriogjar in Badin district in the Southern Sindh province.

A video of Meghwar went viral on social media a couple of days ago in which she can be heard saying: "please send me to my parents, I was forcibly taken away. I have been warned of dire consequences with a threat that my parents and brothers will be killed."

However, she stopped short of naming anyone who was making the threats in the video.

The Sindh government taking notice of the video ordered a police inquiry following which Badin SSP Shabeer Ahmed Sethar led a team and recovered the Hindu girl from the house of Kashkeli.

She was produced in a local sessions court in Badin on Monday where she said in a statement that she had not converted to Islam and the accused had prepared false documents to marry her forcibly as a Muslim woman.

After recording her statement, the court ordered police to register a case against the accused. Meghwar was then handed over to her parents in the presence of law enforcement personnel.

900 EVACUATED IN SARDINIA WILDFIRES

Milan: Raging forest fires in central Sardinia have forced the evacuation of 900 people as flames threatened some residential areas and others were engulfed by dense smoke, firefighters said Monday. No deaths or injuries have been reported. France and Greece dispatched aircraft to help put out wildfires, which have consumed around 20,000 hectares (nearly 50,000 acres) in the province of Oristano.

"We will focus on bringing the ppl out of poverty through our Ehsaas & Kamyab Pakistan prog; & establish accountability & transparency in govt," he tweeted.

SAUDI FM TO VISIT ISLAMABAD FOR TALKS
Islamabad: Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud will visit Islamabad on Tuesday to hold talks with the Pakistani leadership on bilateral and global issues, it was announced here on Monday, amidst efforts to repair the relations that faced some stress in recent times.

DUTRTE THREATENS TO KILL DRUG DEALERS
Manila: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte unabashedly renewed his threat to kill drug dealers in his final state of the nation speech on Monday, while defending his nonconfrontational approach in the country's territorial dispute with China in the South China Sea.

8 KILLED IN 22-CAR PILEUP DURING SANDSTORM
Kanosh (US): Sandstorm caused a huge 22-vehicle pileup on a Utah highway that left eight people dead, including children. The Sunday afternoon crashes on Interstate 15 near the town of Kanosh came at the end of a holiday weekend for the state that often leads to increased highway traffic. At least 10 people were taken to hospitals.



Health & Wealth

What is the connection of your net worth with a longer, healthier life? A lot, say researchers. In a first such wealth and longevity study, a team of US researchers have claimed that Americans with higher net worth at midlife tend to live longer. Incorporating siblings and twin pair data, researchers from Northwestern University analysed the midlife net worth of adults and their mortality rates 24 years later. They discovered those with greater wealth tended to live longer



WORLD HEPATITIS DAY
JULY 28, 2021

DOCYARD
DR RAJIV LOCHAN

Lead Consultant — HPB
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ASTER RV HOSPITAL



A liver issue



The severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) — caused Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has arisen as a major global burden, posing serious public health challenges. HBV infection is another extensively disseminated virus that affects roughly 257 million people on a long-term basis. COVID-19 is highly contagious and has a wide range of clinical presentations; it can damage a variety of organs other than the lungs, and liver harm is possible. Through systemic inflammatory response syndrome, cytokine storms, ischemia-reperfusion injury, and therapeutic drug side effects, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 can induce liver harm. COVID-19 patients' liver injury is primarily manifested by aberrant liver biochemical indicators, but there have been no instances of liver failure due to this condition.

People with underlying liver cirrhosis, including viral hepatitis, may be at a higher risk of developing severe COVID-19 illness and/or more problems from their existing liver disease if infected with COVID-19, with prolonged hospitalisation and increased mortality. In order to counter this, it is important for people with liver injury or suffering from hepatitis to receive their COVID vaccination shots and consider taking booster jabs. People with autoimmune hepatitis must speak with their doctors if they are worried about any side-effects from taking the vaccine.

COVID-19 recommendations for people with hepatitis
■ If you suspect you or someone in your family has COVID-19, contact your doctor or seek medical assistance right away. Inform your doctor that you have chronic viral hepatitis, as this may affect your treatment options.

■ Seek medical help right away if you're having trouble breathing, chest pain or pressure, confusion, inability to wake up or stay awake, pale lips, face, or toes, or any other severe or alarming symptoms.

■ Unless your health care professional recommends it, do not discontinue or change your prescribed drugs.

■ Stopping or modifying your medications could worsen your liver condition or cause other health issues.

■ Make sure your prescriptions are up to date and that you have enough medication to last several months.

■ Alcohol should be avoided at all costs because it can worsen any underlying liver disease, regardless of the cause.

While we are fighting a raging pandemic, we must also not forget that India contributes to a significant portion of the worldwide burden of Hepatitis B and C. Known as a silent killer, many patients do not even realise that they are infected until the disease progresses severely to liver cirrhosis or liver cancer which then requires a transplant.

As the pandemic has introduced several restrictions, the spread of Hepatitis is likely to have reduced, however we are still lagging behind in terms of completely eradicating the disease from our country. Reports suggest that about 1 lakh people succumb to liver failure caused by hepatitis without realising that they have the virus. While not everyone with the virus will develop serious liver disease, carriers of it can transmit it to others and with appropriate treatment hepatitis can be controlled or cured. Severe liver disease consequently also increases the risk of suffering from severe COVID illness and vice versa. Symptoms such as jaundice, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting often begin to appear when the liver is already severely damaged and liver-related complications begin to develop. In order to detect Hepatitis early, it is important to go for regular check-ups. A blood check-up where the liver profile is tested, will give you a better understanding of your liver health.

Severe liver disease increases the risk of suffering from severe COVID illness and vice versa. Symptoms such as jaundice, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting often begin to appear when the liver is already severely damaged and liver-related complications begin to develop. In order to detect Hepatitis early, it is important to go for regular check-ups. A blood check-up where the liver profile is tested, will give you a better understanding of your liver health.

SUMMER COOLER

LYCHEE: Lychee is a tiny, sweet-smelling fruit. It also has a sweet flavour. Lychee is an anti-cancer fruit. The pulp of this fruit contains flavonoids, which aid in the battle against severe and devastating diseases such

as cancer. It contains flavones, quercetin, and kaempferol, which are potent inhibitors of cancer cell proliferation.

Lychees nourish the skin's oils, which helps to prevent acne. It also refines the skin and reduces the appearance of spots. It is also beneficial to people who are trying to reduce weight due to the lack of fats and cholesterol.

Lychees are a great summertime fruit because of their high water content, which helps to keep you hydrated.



UNDER THE WEATHER

It is raining diseases this monsoon. MUSBA HASHMI talks to DR SHALENDRA GOEL about how one can stay safe from viral fever

Catching a fever these days is nothing less than a nightmare for many. And, if its accompanied by a cough, we often declare it COVID ourselves.

However, with the monsoon season settling in, viral fever is on a high. That doesn't mean, one should self-diagnose and declare a fever as viral without undergoing a test.

The monsoon season also brings along several diseases like viral fevers, stomach infections, malaria, dengue and typhoid, among others. Many of these monsoon diseases remain undiagnosed until they progress to undesirable complications," Dr Shalendra Goel, Associate Director, Department of Respiratory & Critical Care Medicine, Jaypee Hospital, tells you.

In order to avoid catching a viral infection and the mini panic attacks because falling ill is a big no-no during COVID, it is advisable that one should avoid eating foods from outside or drinking water that has a risk of being contaminated.

"Apart from this, one should also maintain good toilet hygiene; wash hands well before and after using the toilet. Wear proper footwear in the rains and wash the feet after coming back home. Ensure your hands are thoroughly cleaned before cooking and drink only filtered or boiled water," advises Goel.

While both COVID-19 and influenza (flu) have almost the same symptoms, the differentiating factor between the two is loss of smell.

"A COVID-19 patient will experience loss of smell while a person with flu will have a continuous runny nose. The flu is more likely to appear with rapid onset of illness, high fever and severe headache and body aches. In contrast, COVID-19 may present with slower onset of illness, mild headache and body ache, mild/absent

A COVID-19 PATIENT WILL EXPERIENCE LOSS OF SMELL WHILE A PERSON WITH FLU WILL HAVE A CONTINUOUS RUNNY NOSE. THE FLU IS MORE LIKELY TO APPEAR WITH RAPID ONSET OF ILLNESS, HIGH FEVER AND SEVERE HEADACHE AND BODY ACHES. IN CONTRAST, COVID-19 MAY PRESENT WITH SLOWER ONSET OF ILLNESS, MILD HEADACHE AND BODY ACHE, MILD OR ABSENT FEVER AND LOSS OF SMELL

fever and loss of smell," explains Goel. The pace of transmission is a crucial point of difference between the two pathogens. Influenza has a shorter incubation period, which refers to the time from contracting the virus to the emergence of symptoms.

"It also has a shorter serial interval (time between successive cases). The serial interval of influenza is three days, whereas COVID-19

is from five to six days. The incubation period for COVID-19 is five-six days on average, however can be up to 14 days. Some infected persons can be contagious during this period which is also known as the "pre-symptomatic" period. Hence, it is recommended to self isolate with the first sign of COVID-19 symptoms," says Goel.

The treatment of viral fever is solely symptomatic. Medicines are given to reduce temperature and relieve body aches. "Bed rest and adequate fluid intake is recommended. Staying hydrated is crucial for treating a viral fever. Drink enough water to prevent the urine from turning dark in color which indicates dehydration. Nasal decongestants may be beneficial for some patients," Goel tells you.

Mostly, a viral fever isn't anything to worry about. "But if the fever reaches 103°F or higher, it's best to check with a doctor. Consult a doctor if you have a baby with a rectal temperature of 100.4°F or higher," he advises.

Apart from the viral fever, mosquito borne diseases like Malaria and Dengue are also prominent in monsoon. "Dengue fever can at times be very painful and life-threatening. Although this disease is caused by the dengue virus, the carrier is the mosquito and hence keeping the body protected from any form of mosquito bite can ensure safety," says Goel.

If one has any symptoms of viral fever, it is best to get all the tests done including COVID and typhoid. Because after all, no one would like to go by guess work.

"Typhoid is caused due to the consumption of contaminated food and water. This is another bacterial infection caused by Salmonella typhi. Maintaining proper hygiene and sanitation and at the same time using clean water is highly recommended," says Goel.

RECOVER WITH YOGA

Amid the ongoing crisis, staying healthy is a task. More so, if you have recently recovered from an illness. ABHISHEK OTWAL tells you how practicing yoga can help regain the lost strength and health

As written in the holy Bhagavad Gita, yoga is a practice to improve oneself physically and mentally both. In the recent times of this on-going health crisis wherein COVID-19 has taken a toll, nothing holds more value than a healthy lifestyle and a healthy well-being. Even after recovering from any disease, people find it difficult to get back on their routine because of slow healing process. Besides proper food and ample of sleep, adding yoga to daily routine is highly recommended by the healthcare professionals and experts for speedy recovery after suffering any a disease.

Yoga offers numerous rewards that improve our healthiness and secures our peace of mind. It improves our performance at workplace, has a positive impact on our personal relationships and helps us to maintain harmony with the surroundings in which we live. Today, millions of human beings who have fortunately recovered from several health crises especially Covid-19, which primarily attacks the respiratory system, must be thinking on how to regain their strength. The answer to this question is that performing yoga for recovery is an excellent aid during the convalescence period/process, as it helps to boost energy instantly. For anyone recovering from a dreaded disease, it is important that they slowly aim to regain their fitness through adapting different ways such as therapies, breathing exercises, meditation etc apart from medicinal support.



With the evolving practices of yoga, Therapeutic yoga and Ayurveda can be a true healer for recovering patients. It refers to the application of techniques and practices to support people facing physical and mental health challenges.

Here are some benefits of yoga through which one can gradually improve their overall health and well-being:

- Transition from one asana to another, increases blood flow and circulation throughout the body leading to improved oxygen supply to the brain and other organs, promoting a healthy skin and cell growth.
- When people exercise, their natural immunity gets a boost. According to yoga experts, naturopathic therapeutics like yoga encourage bringing the body back into balance.
- Encouraging relaxation by way of yoga has the potential to help people sleep better, especially those who are coping up with any disease.
- Therapeutic meditation: Relaxation and mindfulness are the focus of meditation when it is combined with yoga poses. The yoga therapist attempts to calm the body and mind by providing a guided visualisation intended to bring inner peace.
- Yoga offers people a holistic way to unwind and relax. By practicing a simple sequence daily, the mind and body will naturally produce endorphins and release tension, therefore relaxing the mind.

The writer is a yoga expert

'Patients want to be engaged and informed'

The reality is that patients no longer rely solely on their doctors for information about their health. In such a scenario, it becomes important to ensure that the sources they use are credible, says PROF DR DG SAPLE

Technology is significantly reshaping the relationship between patients, healthcare practitioners and the health ecosystem. With digitisation making inroads into various facets of healthcare delivery, mobile is playing a crucial role and has become a constant companion of consumers. As patients and healthcare providers are connected, improved treatments have become a possibility due to round-the-clock real-time data available.

By acquiring access to such precise information, healthcare professionals are able to take immediate action when necessary. This prevents patients' conditions from worsening and thereby improves the quality and longevity of life. The revolutionary changes in healthcare have occurred only because digital tools have enormously empowered patients on every step of their medical journey.

A significant rise in chronic diseases, changes in demographic and economic trends, and the

recent outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated a shift towards a patient-centred healthcare paradigm. As a result, consumers now demand personalised services which transform healthcare into a consumer-centric tailored approach, discarding the erstwhile one-size-fits-all approach. Rising digital technologies are helping the medical care system move from episodic to longitudinal & collaborative care.

Patients' needs and expectations from healthcare organisations are continuously changing. They now want to be engaged, informed and connected with all the stakeholders in the healthcare ecosystem so that they can become an expert in the course of their treatment.

The reality is that patients no more rely solely on their doctors for information about their own health. In such a scenario, it becomes all the more important to ensure that the sources they use are credible. Technology is helping in a big way here.

AI-based medical apps, meant to educate patients about diseases, drugs, first-aid, treatments, and testing services or clinical trials, are multiplying every day. Medical practitioners must ensure that they recommend apps which contain accurate information, lay down clear objectives, and have user-friendly interface. These are important guidelines basis which medical practitioners can advise which apps their patients should opt for.

3D printing is another major technology making headway in patient education. Visualisation through 3D Printing can help patients acquire a better overview of their physical condition so that accordingly they can make informed choices when it comes to deciding in favour of or against specific treatment paths. For example, nurses responsible for explaining to their patients the medical procedures and critical aftercare will find that 3D printers lend them access to tools that make the entire process smooth and seamless.

Despite the challenges involved, technology has been instrumental in maximising productivity and changing how healthcare services are delivered. Patients today expect innovative and easy-to-use health solutions. There is a rising demand from patients for monitoring devices which do not interrupt their daily activities. Besides, it's important that patient education materials are highly interactive.

Whether it's video, audio or digital, content must be engaging for patients. Online quizzes, video vignettes, puzzles etc are all good ideas but if they aren't interactive, they won't be able to capture patient attention and enhance comprehension of information. With technologies like AR and VR, patients can get in-the-moment reminders so that they are directed towards making the right lifestyle and behavioural changes that will improve their overall health.

The writer is a Dermatologist

IN BRIEF

Creating awareness about Sarcoma, a rare kind of cancer, experts at Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute & Research Centre (RGCIRC) pointed to the challenge of its incorrect diagnosis and the impact of wrong procedures on the treatment outcome. Sarcoma is a cancer of Bone & Soft tissues. July is celebrated as Sarcoma awareness month worldwide.

"Unfortunately the sarcoma tumor goes undiagnosed in limbs or an inappropriate surgery is done. In such cases this leads to damage and major risk of losing the limb, which affects the life of young children/adults. RGCIRC has been making general orthopedic surgeons aware about right ways to evaluate Sarcoma, its diagnosis and the treatment options available," said Dr Himanshu Rohela, Consultant — Orthopaedic Oncology RGCIRC.

Though the sarcoma account for 3 per cent of all cancers in adults and 10-15 per cent in pediatric age group, the disease needs attention that it deserves to save life as well as limbs.

"In a high volume Sarcoma centre such as RGCIRC, a large number of cases are being reported late which leads to less than desired outcomes including risk of losing limb in children," added Dr Rohela.

Dr Rohela says prevention doesn't play a role here, as there is no risk factor, what's important is early diagnosis. One should not ignore the persistent pain or increasing swelling in limbs, which is not responding to conservative treatment. It's not that every tumor/lump is cancerous, it could be an infection or a benign tumor. Sarcoma is a rare condition to have.



Bollywood
 'The tag of *Fukrey* just gets carried along if I and Manjot (Singh) are working together.'
 —Varun Sharma

MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE

ASHISH FERNANDO shares how Artificial Intelligence is empowering students to get into better colleges and companies

With a sea of options to choose from — course, city, country, duration, opportunity and future career prospects — finding the right college and job takes time, intense research and endless hours of work. Artificial Intelligence (AI) can help students get past this overwhelming and time-consuming process by providing informed decisions at a lightning-fast speed.

While the Indian education community is slowly moving towards automation, AI has already begun to bridge the gap by helping students find the right institutions and jobs. Technologies like virtual assistants, smart text messaging, personalised curriculum, and immersive classroom teaching make applying and studying at institutes easier for students. There are various online applications providing services that also help job seekers improve their resumes, target relevant jobs, and perform better during interviews.

Several Indian start-ups are offering AI technologies to provide students and graduates with a better experience from the comfort of their homes, especially during the pandemic. Here are a few popular AI tools that are transforming the future of higher education in more ways than one.

Smart query bots and chat-integrated platforms

When applying to institutions abroad, every student has questions they want to be answered. Like 'How much does it cost to study abroad?'



'Which universities should I apply to?'

or even 'Which tests should I appear for?' Intelligent automated assistance chatbots are making their way into the admissions ecosystem with the rapid adoption of tools that assist students with easy onboarding and guiding them through the application process.

AI is also used to automate administrative activities during the admission process, including visa process, student accommodation, and course registration, providing a unique experience to students.

AI-based recommendation tools

AI-powered recommendation engines for college application platforms are the new favourite. Tech platforms provide personalised recommendations and suggestions powered by machine learning algorithms. This allows students to understand and analyse their course specifications and outcomes in a better way, helping them make the right choice and creating an engaging and insightful student experience.

Some AI platforms can match

scholarships and grants with deserving students and provide alerts to more than two million users. They also help corporations, NGOs, government agencies, public sector undertakings, and individuals to design, launch, manage and track their scholarship programmes.

Video tools

Currently, travel restrictions are still in place across several countries. And educational institutes are employing video tools to connect with prospective students worldwide through interactive webinars and panel discussions.

Some start-ups also provide video interview analysing tools to help students prepare for various aspects of their visa interview. The Video Interview Analyser (VIA) is one such tool that studies facial movements, emotions, and behavioural characteristics. It provides the student with an instant analysis of the mock interview. This helps the student understand which aspects they can improve on to ace their interview.

Virtual and augmented reality

Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are increasingly being used to create an experiential digital admissions process. They provide virtual open days and campus tours, allowing prospective students to experience the campus from the comfort of their homes and picking the university of their choice.

Apply for a job application using AI

While organisations have been using AI to hire better talent, the technology can also be used to benefit the talent.

Chatbots

Conversation chatbots offering automated replies and 24x7 support have proved to be helpful for those looking for a new job. They help employees find the right businesses and land new gigs. These bots also manage candidates' applications to help improve their chances of getting a job.

AI assistants

Some AI assistants help job-seekers find employment by interacting with them through a messaging interface, continuously scouring the web, and sending them position recommendations. Based on the individual's reply, these assistants utilise AI to fine-tune their knowledge about what the seeker wants in a job and improve their recommendations.

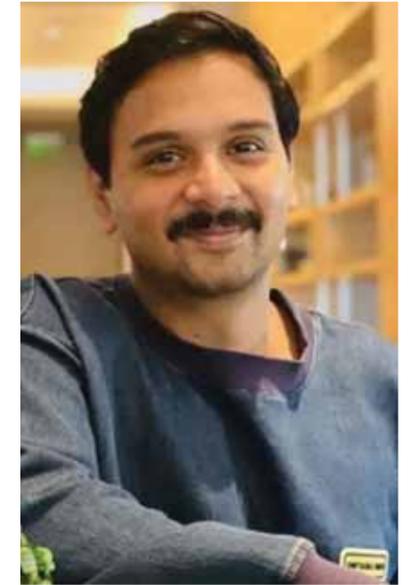
Resume experts

A few platforms also utilise AI to help job-seekers craft the ideal resume. The tool enables them to figure out which keywords to use and what traits companies are looking for while helping them edit their resume and find their strengths and weaknesses.

Transforming the current processes requires institution and organisation leaders to change their approach and adopt a different mindset. It takes time to bring about this change. At first, we may lack certain types of data or tools, or find that certain insights don't work for us. However, by establishing a culture of change and assuming a test-and-learn approach, AI can be used to not only drive but also boost career growth.

(The writer is the founder and CEO of iSchoolConnect.)

'Book will always be alive, so will the show'



Actor **Namit Das** has opened up on being a part of Mira Nair's web series *A Suitable Boy*, as the show completes a year of its release.

Talking about the same, Namit shared, "I feel very happy that *A Suitable Boy* is completing one year. It is still getting a lot of reviews and is also being viewed continuously on Netflix and other platforms across the world. Initially, it had a very lukewarm sort of a response in the Indian market and a lot of friends called me to tell me that they expected it to be bigger. Every project has a different nature and we can understand this with time."

"*A Suitable Boy* is one of those projects which is not limited to only a one-time frame. I think it's going to be remembered for a very long time. It's based on Vikram Seth's novel and whoever has read it will want to watch the series. The book will always be alive and hence, the show will always be alive. Anything that Mira Nair makes survives the test of time," he added.

In the series, Namit plays Haresh Khanna, a shoemaker, a businessman, and one of the suitors of Lata, the lead character played by Tanya Maniktala.

"Even after a year, it still remains fresh. I keep getting a lot of messages on social media. The character of Haresh Khanna was so close to my heart. There's so much hard work that went into it. I'm grateful to Mira and Vikram Seth and everyone involved in the making of the series," the actor further said.

The series also features Tabu, Ishaan Khatter, and Rasika Dugal in key roles.

—IANS

TREND TOOL

CHOOSE YOUR HUE

As calm as the ocean and soothing to the eye, the colour blue evokes a sense of tranquility in one's mind. As a fashion choice, the colour remains a universal favourite, and what better reason than the monsoons to add a dash of blue to your wardrobe. Celebrating blue this season are fashion labels Gulabo Jaipur, Kunal Anil Tanna, Ridhi Mehra, Vedika M, Sukriti & Aakriti, Pink City, Flirtatious, and fine jewellery brand Amaris. So, if blue is on your mind, then this monsoon season, opt for some interesting silhouettes in different shades.

GULABO JAIPUR



Twirl in the rain in this gorgeous Azure blue georgette *anarkali*. Keeping the colour blue in mind, the *leheriya* detailing creates an illusion of flowy water and the fabric is also soft on the skin. Add a dash of bling with the *taari* lace *dupatta*.

Keeping it true with blue: "Blue is the colour of the season, and any hue of blue is a breath of fresh air. So, keeping that in

Fashion brands pick their favourite shade of blue for your wardrobe this monsoon

mind, the *rang anarkali* set is perfect for the monsoons," says Saloni Panwar, founder of the label.

KUNAL ANIL TANNA

Kunal Anil Tanna's ensemble is a perfect blend of ink blue, royal blue and electric blue. Strut in style in this mesh print tunic with matching trousers. Complete the look with an over-layered open long shirt and sail smoothly through the rainy day gloom.

Keeping it true with blue: "Since it is the brand's defining colour, it is seen to be a part of every collection's colour palette. Blue is not only soothing and calm but can also be impactful to create a lasting impression," says fashion designer Kunal Tanna.

RIDHI MEHRA

Enhanced with the classic shade of blue, this delightful floral printed kurta in



Chanderi embodies the essence of freshness. The outfit is breathable, lightweight, and easy-to-slip-into, thus, making it truly ideal for the season. The large floral print against a backdrop of this beautiful blue portrays an air of mystery along with an intense appeal.

Keeping it true with blue: "It is a versatile colour. Even design-wise, it's an easy colour to work. It complements floral and geometric prints and pairs easily with other colours too," says fashion designer Ridhi Mehra.

VEDIKA M

A steady mix of cobalt blue and deep blue, label Vedika M's design features a drop shoulder long dress with a high low fall. The colour combination enhances the silhouette, and the tonality of lighter and deeper shades adds balance to the entire look.

Keeping it true with blue: "It is an inspiring colour that looks great as a solid tone and also as an off-setting colour. Blue adds positivity to the garment and instantly makes it stand out," says Vedika M Sonthalia.

PINK CITY

Tradition meets luxury in this midnight blue *sharara* set. The colour plays a perfect background for the intricate embroidery embellished with *zardozi* and pearl textures.

Keeping it true with blue: "When we talk about royalty and richness, the classic midnight blue comes to mind. The hue transports

you to the majestic palaces of Rajasthan. Thus, making it a timeless shade of blue, shares fashion designer Sarika Kakrania, founder of the label.

FLIRTATIUS

Play it cool and sassy in this Egyptian blue monokini. As a solid colour, the shade of blue stands out in this swimwear making it a fine option for the next pool party.

Keeping it true with blue: "Blue represents the healing nature of water and is a great option for colour therapy. It transports you to the moment by the water where you feel the wind in your face and how magnificent the world is," says Aakriti Grover, founder of the label.

AMARIS BY PRERNA RAJPAL

Channel

your inner diva and glam up your festive evening with Amaris' 'Once Upon a Dream' bracelet. The masterpiece is an eclectic twist and twirl of Sapphire blue mystery set stones combined with a roman structure set in sparkling diamonds. This bracelet is bound to make all heads turn.

Keeping it true with blue: "Blue is a calming tone which symbolises serenity, stability, and reliability. And it aesthetically matches with the AMARIS promise of creating products with the highest standards of workmanship and purity," says Prerna Rajpal.

SUKRITI & AAKRITI



Enjoy the magic of turquoise in this cotton silk *sharara* set with embroidered mirror work. A perfect festive wear, the silhouette compliments the colour turquoise and the mirror work adds a dash of drama to the overall look.

Keeping it true with blue: "Effortlessly combining the uplifting nature of blue and the glorious natural splendour of green, the colour turquoise (blue-green) reflects the balance the world creates and is usually linked to growth and new life. For me, turquoise creates an atmosphere of calmness, growth, creativity, purity, and love," says fashion design duo Sukriti Grover and Aakriti Grover.

TREND BLAZER



YAMI'S LOST GOES ON FLOORS

Actor **YAMI GAUTAM**-starrer investigative drama titled *Lost* has gone on floors.

Helmed by the National-Award Winning director Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury, the film will be largely shot at locations across Kolkata and Purulia to highlight the underbelly of an urban city.

Lost is an investigative drama that will highlight the issue of media integrity. It features Yami in a feisty crime reporter's character.

fairtalk



'Badshah is very wise as he knows what is going on. He reads the trends. We perform together, so that connection is there. After every show, we listen to world or random music and discuss what's in, what kind of vibe people are liking these days. It is very important to know what your audience is liking and we work accordingly.'

dailytalk



'I saw a lot more successful films in the south. The industries work in exactly the same fashion. There is no difference in the work. At the end, wherever you get success that place accepts you a lot more right? I feel I got that kind of love and fan following in the south. I aspire to reach out to more pan-India and hopefully, global audience.'

'OSCAR ISAAC IS MY NEW MAN-CRUSH'

Aquaman star **JASON MOMOA** has tagged actor Oscar Issac as his new man-crush.

The actor also shared that he had a great time working on the forthcoming film *Dune* because it had such a great cast, including the *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* star and his "dream" co-star Javier Bardem.

Momoa said, "I'm just so pumped for the world to see this epic film."



ANOTHER TOUGH DAY FOR INDIA

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Hockey:** India women's lose 0-2 to Germany in Pool A fixture.
- Table Tennis:** A Sharath Kamal beats Tiago Apolonia 4-2 in round two. Manika Batra loses to Sofia Polcanova 0-4 in round three. Sutirtha Mukherjee loses to Yu Fu 0-4 in round two.
- Boxing:** Ashish Kumar loses to Erbieke Tuoheta 0-5 in round of 32.
- Swimming:** Sajan Prakash finishes 24th in Men's 200m Butterfly.
- Fencing:** C A Bhavani Devi beats Nadia Ben Azizi 15-3 in table of 64 but loses to Manon Brunet 7-15 in table of 32.
- Archery:** India lose to South Korea 0-6 in quarterfinals after win against Kazakhstan 6-0 in pre-quarterfinals.
- Tennis:** Sumit Nagal loses to Daniil Medvedev 2-6 1-6 in men's singles second round.
- Badminton:** Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty lose 2nd group stage match, still in with a shout to reach QF. Sai Praneeth's campaign is over even before his 2nd match.
- Shooting:** Angad Vir Singh Bajwa finishes 18th and Mairaj Ahmad Khan 25th in the men's skeet event.

IN FOCUS TODAY

- Shooting:** 10m Air Rifle and Pistol events.
- Hockey:** India vs Spain (Men's)
- Table Tennis:** A Sharath Kamal vs Ma Long.
- Badminton:** Satwiksairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty vs Ben Lane/Sean Vandy.
- Boxing:** Lovlina Borgohain vs Nadine Apetz.

BHAVANI MAKES HISTORY

First-ever fencer to represent India at the Olympics also became first to win a bout but goes down fighting in 2nd round

India's first ever fencer in the Olympics, C A Bhavani Devi, lasted two rounds at the Games, her historic maiden appearance ending with a loss to world number three Manon Brunet in the women's individual sabre event on Monday.

The 27-year-old began her campaign with a confident 15-3 win against Tunisia's Nadia Ben Azizi but bumped into Rio Olympic semifinalist Frenchwoman Brunet in the next round, which she lost 7-15.

"I did my level best but couldn't win. I am sorry... Thank you so much I will come back much stronger and successful at Next Olympics with all your Prayers," she tweeted thanking her coaches, the Government and her family for backing her. Bhavani said she committed mistakes against Brunet but will take the result in her stride.

"I didn't fence well in the first half but in the second half I tried to change something but it was too late. I am happy I fenced with one of the top fencers in the world," Bhavani



Nadia Ben Azizi of Tunisia, left, compete against India's Chadalavada Anandha Sundhararaman Bhavani Devi in the women's individual round of 64 Sabre competition on Monday

said of her contest vs Brunet. The sabre is the fastest of the fencing competitions in which opponents can slash anywhere above the waist. The fencer who touches the 15 point-mark first is declared the winner.

In the other two events — foil and epee — only the tip of the sword can be used to target the opponent. The Chennai fencer said she has gained valuable experience from her Tokyo outing, which will help her in future challenges.

"It is my first Olympics and it could be better but I am okay with the experience I had from this Olympics. It will be a learning experience for me to improve myself. From here onwards, I will be living my dream as an Olympian."

INDIA'S SCHEDULE ON JULY 27 (ALL TIMES IST)

TIME	EVENTS	ATHLETES
05:30 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Qualification Stage 1	Saurabh Chaudhary & Manu Bhaker
06:15 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Qualification Stage 2	Yashaswini Deswal & Abhishek Verma
06:30 AM	Hockey: Men's Pool A Match	India vs Spain
07:30 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Medal Rounds	Subject to qualification
08:30 AM	Badminton: Men's Doubles Group A Match	Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty
08:35 AM	Table Tennis: Men's Singles Round 3 Match	Achanta Sharath Kamal
08:35 AM	Sailing: Women's Laser Radial 5 & 6	Nethra Kumaran
08:45 AM	Sailing: Men's Laser Race 4, 5 & 6	Vishnu Saravanan
08:45 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team Qualification Stage 1	Elavenil Valarivan & Divyansh Panwar
10:30 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team Qualification Stage 2	Subject to qualification
10:57 AM	Boxing: Women's 69kg Round of 16	Lovlina Borgohain
11:20 AM	Sailing: 49er Men's Race 1, 2 & 3	KC Ganapathy & Varun Thakkar
11:45 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team Medal Rounds	Subject to qualification

LIVE ON SONY TEN & SIX NETWORK

Sharath advances but women challenge ends

Tokyo: India's leading player Sharath Kamal overcame a sluggish start to beat Portugal's Tiago Apolonia in the men's singles second round while the women challenge ended with Manika Batra and Sutirtha Mukherjee losing to their superior opponents here on Monday.

The 39-year-old Sharath struggled in the first game but pulled himself up just in time to win 2-11, 11-8, 11-5, 9-11, 11-6, 11-9 in 49 minutes.

Later in the day, Manika's impressive campaign in the women's singles came to an end with a 0-4 loss to 10th seed Sofia Polcanova in the third round.

The star Indian player, who had stunned world number 32 on Sunday, did not have the game to challenge the attacking left-hander from Austria.

The only Indian left in the fray, Sharath, faces reigning Olympic champion Ma Long of China in the third round on Tuesday. Arguably the greatest player of all time, Long has won every singles title in the sport, and is the reigning world champion as well.



Achanta Sharath Kamal competes during the table tennis men's singles second round match against Portugal's Tiago Apolonia



Manika Batra in action during her table tennis round 3 match against Austria's Sofia Polcanova on Monday



Sutirtha Mukherjee

Hopefully, I can challenge him," said Sharath.

Sutirtha Mukherjee also lost her second round match to Portugal's Yu Fu in straight games to crash out of her maiden Olympics. The 98th-ranked Indian who showed remarkable grit for a come-from-behind win over Sweden's Linda Bergstrom, looked completely off-colour to lose 3-11, 3-11, 5-11, 5-11 in a 23-minute affair against the world number 55.



Germany's Sonja Zimmermann, right, battles for the ball against India's Vandana Katariaji (16) and Neha Neha, left, during a women's field hockey match

Poor execution costs India

Tokyo: The Indian women's hockey team fought valiantly but poor execution proved to be its undoing on Monday, leading to a 0-2 defeat at the hands of Germany, a second consecutive setback for the side at the Tokyo Olympics.

After the 1-5 drubbing at the hands of world No 1 Netherlands, the Indians lifted their game but it was not enough to get past world No 3 and Rio Games Bronze-medallists Germany in their second Pool A match at the Oi Hockey Stadium.

The team was guilty of wasting a lot of opportunities, including a penalty stroke by Gurjit Kaur in the third quarter while luck also didn't favour the Rani Rampal-led side. Skipper Nike Lorenz (12th minute) and Anna Schroder

(35th) were the goal scorers for Germany, who registered their second win on the trot having beaten Great Britain 2-1 in their first match.

Indian will play Great Britain in their next pool match on Wednesday.

INDIA VS SPAIN

On Tuesday, the men's hockey team would be desperate to rebuild a shattered morale when it takes on a lower-ranked Spain in its third Pool A match.

After a fighting 3-2 win over New Zealand in their campaign opener, the Indians were completely steam-rolled 1-7 by world No 1 Australia in their second game and now the team would like to get back into winning ways against world No 9 Spain.

Indian archers fail to get past Korean hurdle

Tokyo: Indian archers bowed out of the team events on Monday after failing to get past the mighty Koreans for a second time in the Tokyo Olympics.

Two days after the mixed team was knocked out by Korea in the quarterfinals, the men's trio of Pravin Jadhav, Atanu Das and Tarundeep Rai succumbed in straight sets against their formidable opponents in the same round of eight stage.

South Korea went on to win the title by smothering Chinese Taipei 6-0.



Indian Tarundeep Rai in action

The twin blow exposed India's pathetic shooting in the ranking round on Friday when all the male archers finished outside top-30, handing them tough draws.

Their first-ever Olympic medal hope in archery is fading fast as they will brace for a tougher road ahead in their respective round of 64 individual matches beginning Wednesday.

The Indian men's team, which won a Silver at the last World Championships in 2019, started the day at the Yumenoshima Park with a lot

of promise, downing Kazakhstan 6-2.

But the Korean team of London 2012 champion Oh Jin Hyek, Kim Woojin and 17-year-old Kim Je Deok — the youngest archer at Tokyo Olympics — proved to be too strong against the Indians.

In pursuit of a sixth men's team title from nine Olympics, the Korean men's team enjoyed a flying start, shooting 10 perfect 10s from 12 arrows while missing only two in the first two sets to apply early pressure.

India were let down by

Guatemala City World Cup Gold medallist Das who failed to repeat his brilliant show earlier against Kazakhstan. He could not find a single 10 in the three sets.

The Indians responded well in the third set, with a series of four 10s, but Das faltered with an 8 in the last arrow, as Korea enjoyed two near-perfect rounds.

Olympic debutant Jadhav, on the other hand, was brilliant with five 10s, while veteran Rai, in his third Games appearance, also stepped it up with three 10s.



Ashish Kumar, left, exchanges punches with China's Tuoheta Erbieke

Ashish ousted

Tokyo: Indian boxer Ashish Chaudhary (75kg) paid for an underwhelming start as his maiden Olympic appearance ended with an opening-round loss to China's Erbieke Touheta on Monday.

The 27-year-old went down 0-5 in the bout, which could have been way closer had he turned it up a little bit earlier.

The boxer was caught on the back-foot in the opening round and lost it unanimously to the busy Chinese, who used his jab to good effect.

Ashish raised his game in the second round to give a better account of himself with more attacks but once again, the lack of clear and precise punches hurt his cause as the Chinese excelled in dodging him on most occasions.

He went all out in the final three minutes and managed to trouble Touheta despite a cut beneath his left eye.

The judges also scored unanimously in his favour but the Chinese had the decisive lead which gave him the victory.

Satwik-Chirag lose to world No 1

Tokyo: The Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty suffered a straight game loss to world number one Marcus Gideon Fernaldi and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo of Indonesia in their second Group A match on Monday.

The world number 10 Indian duo could never get into any kind of rhythm and lost 13-21, 12-21 in 32 minutes against the top seeded team. It was their ninth defeat to the Indonesian pair in as many meetings.

Sukamuljo and Gideon are now at the top of the group, while Satwik and Chirag are on the second spot. The Indians will look to beat England's Ben



Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty play against Indonesia's Marcus Gideon & Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo during their men's doubles group stage match

Lane and Sean Vandy, who had also suffered a defeat against the famed Indonesians.

World number three Chinese Taipei pair of Lee Yang

and Wang Chi-Lin, the fourth team in Group A, also notched up a win against the English duo earlier in the day to stay in contention.

Nagal hammered out by Medvedev

Tokyo: Sumit Nagal was blown away by world number two Daniil Medvedev's thunderous strokes and serves in the men's singles second round as India's tennis challenge all but ended at the Tokyo Games on Monday.

The Russian did not even need his 'A' game as he cruised to a 6-2, 6-1 win in just 66 minutes against 160th ranked Nagal at court 1 of the Ariake Tennis Centre.

The gap between a world class

Medvedev and Nagal, who is still struggling to play the ATP Tour events regularly, was pretty clear.

It is highly unlikely that India will be able to field a team in mixed event, the entries for which will be announced on Tuesday.

The cut is likely to be around 50 and combined ranking of the Indian players Nagal (144) and Mirza (9) is 153.

Olympic Silver-medallist Mirabai returns home

New Delhi: Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu returned to the country on Monday after her superb Silver medal-winning performance at the Tokyo Olympics, walking into sheer chaos after stepping out of the airport where social distancing

went for a toss.

Chanu walked out of the Indira Gandhi International Airport, flanked by security and clad in a face shield and mask.

"Happy to be back here in amidst so much love and sup-



port. Thank You so much," she tweeted after landing.

Inside the airport, the 26-year-old was greeted with chants of *Bharat Mata ki Jai* by the staff present there and felicitated by officials of the Sports Authority of India among others.

Once out, the young star was mobbed by the waiting media, leading to a melee and

had to be completely enveloped by security personnel as she made her way through.

Later in the evening she met Sports Minister Anurag Thakur at his residence who hailed Mirabai for creating history by winning a first day medal at the Tokyo Olympics, an unparalleled feat by an Indian athlete in the history of the games.

"First day, first medal, nobody did it. You brought smiles in the faces of 135 crore Indians and the entire nation is proud of you," Thakur said during a felicitation ceremony of the diminutive weightlifter and her coach Vijay Sharma. "You made history. It's a big achievement," Thakur added.

Manipur to appoint Chanu as ASP

Imphal: Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Monday announced that weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu, who won Silver at the Tokyo Olympics, will be appointed as the Additional Superintendent of Police in the state police department.

The state Government would also reward her with ₹1 crore, the Chief Minister said.

The Olympian who won the Silver medal in the 49 kg category will hold the designation of Additional Superintendent of Police (Sports), Singh said.

The Manipur Government has also decided to establish a world-class weightlifting academy in the state soon, he added. Judoka L. Sushila Devi will also be pro-

moted from the rank of constable to sub-inspector, Singh said.

All participants of the Tokyo Olympics will be handed a sum of ₹25 lakhs, he announced. At least five athletes from Manipur, including Chanu, Devi and boxer Mary Kom, are representing the country at the ongoing Tokyo Olympics.

DISTRICT MINERAL FOUNDATION, JAJPUR

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CORRIGENDUM-I

With reference to RFP No.337 dated 01/07/2021 the last date of submission of proposal is extended to 09th August 2021 (3.00 P.M.) for the RFP title name "To Set-up and running of a Rescue & Rehabilitation Centre for Vulnerable/Destitute Mentally ill Persons (Female) and a Child Care Institute for Homeless Children in Sukinda Block of Jajpur District". The detail of the RFP Corrigendum is available in the district website, i.e. www.jajpur.nic.in.

S/d
Collector & Managing Trustee,
DMF Trust, Jajpur.

OIPR-24163/11/0021/2122

Rifle, pistol shooters gear up for mixed events

Tokyo: The Indian shooters are keeping their fingers crossed for the squad's young guns who will try to end the medal drought in the Tokyo Olympics in the 10m air pistol and air rifle mixed team events here on Tuesday. On Monday, India's Angad Vir Singh Bajwa finished 18th while Mairaj

Ahmad Khan ended 25th in the men's skeet event, failing to make the six-man finals by some distance. In the 10m air pistol mixed team event, the formidable pair of Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker will fancy their chances after a terrific run in recent years.

Abhishek Verma and Yashaswini Singh Deswal will be the other Indian team participating in the event. Divyansh Singh Panwar and Elavenil Valarivan will represent India in the 10m mixed rifle team event with Deepak Kumar and Anjum Moudgil being the other team.

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NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
No. IT-66/2021- 4817 / O.L.I.C., Dated 19.07.2021

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Important features of this NCB are as under:

A. Brief description of Work : Installation, electrification, energisation and commissioning of Borewell in Kalahandi, Balangir, Cuttack, Sundargarh and Garjampal Districts (05 Packages)
B. Estimated cost of works : Varies from Rs. 319.12 Lakhs to Rs. 1393.30 Lakhs
C. Date and time of availability of bid document in the portal: From dt. 28.07.2021 to dt. 23.08.2021 (up to 17.00 Hours)
D. Last date / time for receipt of bid in the Portal- dt. 23.08.2021 up to 17.00 Hours
E. Last date of seeking clarification- dt. 06.08.2021 up to 17.00 Hours
F. Technical Bid will be opened on - dt. 24.08.2021 at 10.00 Hours.

Any Addendum/ corrigendum/ Cancellation of tender will be available in the said website. Authority reserves the right to accept /reject any or all the tenders, increase or decrease the quantities of work put to bidding without assigning any reasons thereof.

OIPR-32135/11/0002/2122 MANAGING DIRECTOR O.L.I.C. LTD, BHUBANESWAR