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

Opp targets Centre; Cong embarrassed by own States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

## Six officials of Monsanto on snooping list: Report

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

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

## Israeli inter-ministerial team, NSO to probe Pegasus affair

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Israel has set up a senior inter-ministerial team to "look into" proliferating allegations that spyware sold by an Israeli cyber firm has been abused on a global scale, news agency *Reuters* said on Wednesday quoting an Israeli source.

In another interesting development on Wednesday, NSO, the developer of spyware Pegasus said it will no longer

respond to media inquiries. It said that the expose by 17 news organisations across the world since Sunday was a "planned and well-orchestrated media campaign led by *Forbidden Stories* and pushed by special interest groups".

"NSO will thoroughly investigate any credible proof of misuse of its technologies, as we always had, and will shut down the system where necessary," a spokesperson said.

## Tharoor-led panel on data security to meet soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a full-blown political battle over revelations that Opposition leaders, Union Ministers, journalists, and many others were potential targets of snooping by Israeli company NSO Group's Pegasus spyware, a Parliamentary Committee headed by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor will hold a meeting on July 28 on the subject of 'citizens' data security and privacy'.

The committee has called officials of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Ministry of Communications to hear their views. "Evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Ministry of Communications (Department of Telecommunications) on the subject 'Citizens' data security and privacy', read the agenda of the meeting. Sources in the panel said the Pegasus phone tapping issue will definitely be raised in the meeting and details will be sought from the Government officials.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

## CGD: Fatalities 10 times more than Govt figures

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

As per the Health Ministry, India's

cumulative death toll stands at 414,482 — the world's third-highest after the US' 6,09,000 fatalities and Brazil's 5,42,000 casualties.

The report has been prepared by the Washington-based think tank Center for Global Development (CGD) and is co-authored by India's former Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian, Abhishek Anand, from the Harvard University and Justin Sandefur, from the CGD.

## Centre nixed bid to probe O<sub>2</sub> shortage deaths: Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday said thousands of people lost their lives due to shortage of oxygen during the second wave of the pandemic in the national Capital and the Centre rejected the proposal of the Delhi Government to form a panel to investigate the deaths.

Addressing the media, Sisodia said, "The Delhi Government constituted a committee to investigate deaths caused by lack of oxygen with an aim to give an assistance of Rs 5 lakh to the aggrieved families but the Centre rejected the formation of this committee through an order by the Lieutenant-Governor."



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

### CAPSULE

#### JUNTA AGAIN SEEKS TO REPLACE ITS UN ENVOY

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

#### 3 CIVIL AVIATION ADVISORY GROUPS FORMED

**New Delhi:** The Civil Aviation Ministry under Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has formed three advisory groups to look into challenges being faced by the sector.

#### CONSUMERS DON'T WANT GOVT TO BAN E-DISCOUNTS

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

#### AIRTEL, INTEL ANNOUNCE COLLABORATION FOR 5G

**New Delhi:** Bharti Airtel is collaborating with Intel for 5G network development by leveraging vRAN/O-RAN technologies. The collaboration is part of Airtel's 5G roadmap for India as it transforms its networks to allow its customers to reap the full possibilities of the hyperconnected world.

## Guj HC grants gift of motherhood to wife of critical Covid patient

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

The extent of human suffering brought on by the pandemic is immeasurable and there are many personal tragedies unfolding across the world. One such story is that of a young Gujarati couple. The husband who was suffering from multi-organ failure after getting the Covid infection and was on a life support system, has very slim chances of survival and his distraught wife is desperate to have his child.

However, when all her pleas to the Vadodra-based hospital for help in her endeavour to conceive through In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)/Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) procedure fell on deaf ears, the couple had no choice but to approach the Gujarat High Court (HC).

Playing safe, the hospital was not allowing the couple to get the IVF/ART procedure done unless the wife got a court order directing it to collect her husband's semen sample, her



lawyer Nilay Patel said. Hence, she approached the HC with an urgent plea, he said.

Thankfully, the HC understood the urgency and poignancy of the situation and directed the hospital to conduct the IVF/ART procedure for the collection of the semen sample of the critical patient.

Considering it as an "extraordinary urgent situation," Justice Ashutosh J Shastri directed the hospital to complete the procedure and keep the sample stored in an appropriate place as per medical advice and issued notices to the State Government and the hospital's director, and sought their response on July 23.

## Husbands of native J&K women to get Domicile Certificates now

PNS ■ JAMMU

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has finally removed the last bottleneck for the issuance of domicile certificates to spouses of Kashmiri women/men married outside the Union Territory. So far, children of such women were entitled to receive domicile certificates.

Ever since the UT administration started preparing domicile certificates after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, women married outside the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir were facing piquant situations.

Initially, their children were included in the list and now, the UT administration has included spouses in the list of beneficiaries.

According to a notification issued by the General Administration department on Tuesday, "In exercise of the powers conferred by the proviso to Article 309 of the Constitution of India, read with Section 15 of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services Act 2010, the Government hereby directs in sub-rule (1) of



Couples and families walk at Mughal Garden Nishat in Srinagar File photo

rule 5 of the Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Domicile Certificate Rules 220, after S.No./Clause 6, the following shall be added."

The spouse of a domicile certificate holder can get the certificate upon submission of certain documents, as a new clause has been added under the J&K Grant of Domicile Certificate (Procedure) Rules, 2020. The power to grant the category of domicile to the spouse of domicile has been conferred with the thesildar.

The spouse is eligible to get a certificate upon showing - 1) Domicile certificate of his/her

## Sink your differences to overthrow saffron regime: Didi to Opp

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In a speech matching her national aspirations, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday urged the national leaders of all Opposition parties to sink their differences and mint an anti-BJP coalition ahead of the 2024 general elections to overthrow the "divisive, anti-poor and pro-rich" saffron Government.

"BJP carries bigger load of virus than the corona" that was aiming at finishing the three democratic pillars "elections, judiciary and media," she said. "I ask all the national leaders from all the States to make a Front and start working on a plan well in advance to overthrow this anti-people Government from the Centre. ... there is no point starting late because calling the doctor after the disease has set in makes no sense," Banerjee said.



West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee shows her taped phone while speaking on the Pegasus spyware row during virtual Sahid Divas in Kolkata PTI

She was delivering a nationally-aired speech on the occasion of Trinamool Congress martyrs' day.

Banerjee who was likely to go to Delhi later this week said she would appeal to the leaders like Sharad Pawar to arrange for meetings where all the parties could be taken on board.

State Govt will resolve genuine issues of employees: HP CM

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Himachal Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Wednesday said that the State Government is committed towards the welfare of the employees of the state and all their genuine demands are being redressed from time to time.

The Chief Minister said this while addressing the delegation of Himachal Pradesh NGO Federation led by its president Ashwani Thakur that called him at Oak Over here.

Thakur said the employees are the backbone of any Government and played a vital role in effective implementation of the policies and programmes of the State Government. Employees are pillars of the Government on whose shoulders the responsibility to implement the Government policies lies, he added.

He added the employees of the State had played an important role in effective management of Covid-19 in Himachal. Despite the coronavirus pandemic, the State Government

has also ensured that the employees get all their dues from time to time, he said.

He also thanked the employees of the state as they stood with the State Government during the testing time of the pandemic.

The Chief Minister further said that the State Government would soon hold a meeting with the employees so that they get an opportunity to take up their issues.

He assured the Federation that the endeavour of the State Government would be to am-

Himachal Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur also urged the employees to work with greater dedication and commitment to make Himachal Pradesh a model State in the country

ably resolve all the genuine issues of the employees, as the Government wants to maintain cordial relations with its employees.

Thakur also urged the employees to work with greater dedication and commitment to make Himachal Pradesh a model State in the country. He assured the members of the Federation that their interests would be safeguarded at all cost as they are part and parcel of the Government.

Cong Govt should stop discrimination in giving power subsidy to industries: AAP

Demands balanced and transparent policy to subsidize small, medium, and large enterprises

PNS n Chandigarh

Criticising the Punjab Government for discriminating against small and medium enterprises and business entities in the State and giving huge power subsidy to a few crony industries, Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) senior leader and the Leader of Opposition in

Vidhan Sabha Harpal Singh Cheema on Wednesday said that the Congress-led Government should stop the discrimination in giving power subsidy and other concessions to the industrialists and traders.

Cheema demanded that the Punjab Government should formulate a transparent, balanced, and streamlined policy to provide more subsidies to the industries, including electricity, to save the industry and business world which was facing severe financial crisis due to deadly policies and COVID pandemic.

Alleging that the Congress Government had discriminated against the industries of the State in providing power supply and power subsidy, Cheema said, "The Captain Government is looting the state's treasury on a few of his favourite industrialists. The biggest hit in Punjab is small and medium enterprises... Just as the Prime Minister Narendra Modi is looting the coffers of the entire country on his few favorites, so is Capt Amarinder Singh."

Cheema said that the Chief Minister should refrain from benefiting his cronies.

2.8L women, adolescent girls sensitised under 'Anaemia Mukh Punjab'

Chandigarh: Punjab Social Security, Women and Child Development Minister Aruna Chaudhary informed that the Department has so far sensitised approximately 2.6 lakh women and 20,000 adolescent girls of the State since the inception of the 'Anaemia Mukh Punjab' campaign, besides continuously providing nutritious food to more than three lakh children along with pregnant and nursing women.

"The State Government has launched the Anaemia Mukh Punjab' campaign on July 7, and since then, the Department, through its Anganwari Workers and helpers, conducted awareness activities in Anganwari Centres and villages by strictly complying to the COVID appropriate behaviour protocols," said the Minister.

She added Anaemia is one of the issues of public health concern. Numerous initiatives have been planned to address this challenge in the State. A community-based event with a focus on Anaemia is organised every Wednesday. Apart from this, social media platforms are being used to create awareness about Anaemia, she added.

The Minister said new dietary recipes were also introduced last month under the Supplementary Nutritional Program which includes moong daal, besan, soya flour, and soya nuggets and this nutritious diet is prepared by Markfed. PNS

Classifieds

LOST AND FOUND

I, Amritjit Kaur D/o Shri Gurtej Singh, VPO Dashmesh Garden Colony, Pathankot, I have lost/misplaced my CBSE 10th class certificate with roll no. 2182440. If anyone finds it please return it to the above address or call 9023427776.

PUBLIC NOTICE

We Jagdish Chand S/o Panjku Ram and Rita Devi W/o Jagdish Chand R/o 551 Vikas Nagar Mauli Jagran Chandigarh disown our son Anil Kumar and daughter-in-law Shalita from my all movable/immovable property. Anybody dealing with them at own risk.

I, Lalita Aslia spouse of No.1557777N Ex NK Surender Kumar R/o H.No.459/03, Ward No.32, Shivaji Colony, Rohtak (Haryana) have changed my name from Lalita Aslia to Lalita for all future purposes. My correct/Actual DOB is 15.10.1971 instead of 18.07.1971 (As per Aadhaar/Pan Card) concerned note please make it correct in my husband's Army records, vide Affidavit dated 20 July 2021 before Notary Public, Rohtak.

I, Amit Kumar Verma S/o Prahlad R/o H.No.1205, Ward No.24, Jagdish Colony, Rohtak (Haryana) hereby declare that in my Aadhaar Card my name is recorded as Amit Kumar Verma but in my Passport my name recorded as Amit Kumar. So amend my name from Amit Kumar to Amit Kumar Verma in my passport. In future I may be known/written and called as Amit Kumar Verma, concerned note and kindly correct it.

I, Rajkumar S/o Loknath R/o VPO Hathira, Tehsil Thanesar, District Kurukshetra have disown my wife Usha Devi, Son Gaurav Sharma, Son Lavkesh, Son Gaurav Sharma's wife Poonam Sharma, from all my movable immovable properties, as they are out of our control. Anybody dealing with them at their own risk.

I, Prem S/O Maava Ram, R/O # 756, Ground Floor, Danik Bhaskar Colony, Sector-25, Chandigarh declare that my son Sohan and daughter in law Kiran are out of my control. I disown both of them from my all movable and immovable property. Any person who deals with them will do it at his/her own risk and responsibility.

I, Seema Sharma W/o Vijay Kumar Sharma and Vijay Kumar Sharma s/o Bawa Ram r/o Village Ghullia PO Abul Khair Distt Gurdaspur declare that we have no objection if in our son's passport his name is written as Dhruv and our names are written as Seema and Vijay Kumar. Concerned note.

I, Victor Masih S/o Sardar Masih r/o Near Government High School Lehal, Distt Gurdaspur have changed my minor son's name from Anubhav to Anubhav Lahoria. Concerned note.

I, No. JC-341686A Ex Nk Sub Jaswant Singh S/o Sh. Mohinder Singh R/o Vill: Thathian Mahantana Teh & Distt. Tarn Taran (PB) declare that Rupinder Kaur is my real daughter her DOB wrongly recorded in my service record as 03-08-1994. But her correct and actual DOB is 09-08-1994.

I, Raj Kumari wedded wife of No. 10545711M Rank L/Nk Dilbir Singh resident of Village Jodhpur Po. Tarn Taran Tehsil & Distt. Tarn Taran PB-143401 I have changed my name from Rajwinder Kaur to Raj Kumari, I want to change my husband documents.

I, Jagmeet Kaur W/o Ravinderjit Singh, Village Muradpur Awana Teh-Mukerian Distt. Hoshiarpur, declare that in my Passport my mother's name wrongly entered as Mandeep Kaur. Her correct name is Balwinder Kaur.

I, Ramandeep Kaur W/O Navdeep Prashar, R/O H.No-2601/8, Mathura Dass Street, Sirhind Mandi, Distt. Fatehgarh Sahib, Hereby Declares That My Native Village & Birth Place Is Bhaini Baringan, Tehsil Raikot, Distt. Ludhiana.

I, Jujbir Singh S/o Surjit Singh and Gurpreet Kaur W/o Jujbir Singh R/O Vill: Mollian Wali Teh and Distt. Fazilka declare that my son Hamandeep Singh and his wife Reetu Rani alias Ravneet Kaur are out of my control. So I disown with them from my moveable/immovable property. If anybody dealing with them at his/her own risk.

I, Angrej Singh S/O Kooru Singh R/O Vill. Sarala Kalan Sub-Tehsil Ghanour Tehsil Rajpura Distt. Patiala declare that My Son Jagtar Singh And His Wife Ritu Gure Who Are Beyond My Control, I Evict Them From My Movable And Immovable Property, The Person Dealing With Them Will Be Responsible Himself/ Herself.

मैं रणवीर सिंह पुत्र दीवान सिंह वारी मकान नंबर 1935 सेक्टर-10 अर्बन एस्टेट जीव व्यान करता हूँ कि मेरा पुत्र राजेश्वर सिंह अर्बन उरसकी पत्नी सोनिया कथा मेरी बेटी अर्चना देवी मेरे कहे से बाहर हैं। तीनों को मैं अपनी चल-अचल संपत्ति से वेदखाल करता हूँ। उनके किसी काम या लेन-देन का मैं और मेरा परिवार जिम्मेवार नहीं होंगे।

CHANGE OF NAME

I, No. 15356511H Ex Nk Jarmail Singh S/o Onkar Singh R/o Village & PO Bhambator Tehsil Dasuya Distt. Hoshiarpur Punjab have changed the name of my wife from Sushma to Sushma Rani Concerned Note.

I, Sumitra W/o Late Narendra Singh R/O H.No. 77, Sector-14, Rohtak (Haryana) declares that my daughter Ashima Ahlawat's name is incorrectly written as Ashima Ahlawat in her passport. Now, I want to get corrected her name from Ashima Ahlawat to Ashima Ahlawat in her passport.

I, Himanshi Goyal W/o Rahul Singla R/O Flat No. 102, Tower 1 Victoria Heights Peermushalla SAS Nagar Punjab have changed my name to Himanshi Singla.

I, Chandar Parkash S/o Cham Bahadur Bishwokarma R/O H.No.3250, Sector 22-D, Chandigarh have changed my name from Chandar Parkash to Chandar Parkash Bishwokarma.

I, Chandar Parkash Bishwokarma S/o Cham Bahadur Bishwokarma R/O H.No.3250, Sector 22-D, Chandigarh have changed my daughter name from Amandeep to Amandeep Bishwokarma, sons name Arun Kumar to Arun Kumar Bishwokarma and Diwakar to Diwakar Bishwokarma and wife Indrakala to Indrakala Bishwokarma.

I, Bindu Rani W/o Sh. Suraj Parkash R/O H. No. 573/18, Mohalla Dogran, Near Hanuman Mandir, Hisar hereby declare that I have changed my name from Bindu Rani to Bindu for all future purposes.

I, Dama Devi Mother of No. JC246239L Rank RIS Name Mithlesh Singh R/o Vill- Mahmudpur Kot, PO-Badnupur, Teh- Ghazipur, Distt- Ghazipur, State- U.P.-233300 hereby declare that I have changed my name from Dama Devi to Dharma Devi vide affidavit dated 21.07.2021 before session court, Hisar.

I, Mannu Devi Spouse of No. JC246239L Rank RIS Name Mithlesh Singh R/o Vill- Mahmudpur Kot, PO-Badnupur, Teh- Ghazipur, Distt- Ghazipur, State- U.P.-233300 hereby declare that I have changed my name from Mannu Devi to Mannoo Singh vide affidavit dated 21.07.2021 before session court, Hisar.

I, Deeksha Chhoda W/o Pankaj Sethi R/O 1404, Sargodha Colony, Jagadhri, Distt. Yamuna Nagar have changed my name to Deeksha Sethi.

I, Ravinder S/O Sadao Sohan R/O 1614, Sec. -17, HUDA, Jagadhri, Distt. Yamuna Nagar have changed my name to Ravinder Kamboj.

I, Punam Devi W/o Vikas Saini r/o Vill Ghespur, PO Radaur, Teh. Radaur, Distt Yamunanagar have changed my minor daughter's name from Jeevika to Jeevika Saini.

I, Bhawrat SMT Kailash Ben Khetabhai Spouse of No. 14632012W Rank HAV Name Bhawrat Jijibhai R/O Vill- Gorad, PO- Tarapur, Teh- Tarapur, Distt- Anand, State- Gujarat, PIN- 388180 hereby declare that I have changed my name from Bhawrat SMT Kailash Ben Khetabhai to Bhawrat SMT Kailash Ben Bhawrat Jijibhai vide affidavit dated 21.07.2021 before session court, Hisar.

I, Lakhbir Singh S/O Balwinder Singh, V. Patti Pura, Fazilka, have changed my minor son name Adesh Partap Singh to Adesh Partap Singh Dhillon.

I, 10315948L L/Hav Mohan Sharma of 124 TA BN Sikh Declare that my service record my daughter name wrongly written Achal but it's correct name is Anchal.

I, 10315948L L/Hav Mohan Sharma of 124 TA BN Sikh Declare that my son name wrongly written Sudarshan Sarshwat but it's correct name is Sudarshan Sarawat.

I, Lakshya Bansal S/O Randeep Singh R/O Ward No. 06, Mohala Imli Wala Banur, Distt Mohali Declared In My Lic Policy My Name Is Written Wrongly As Mani. My Correct Name Is Lakshya Bansal. Please Correct It.

I, No. 14650822F Hav Manjit Singh son of Jagdish Singh resident of VPO Bhatnara Lubana District Jalandhar, Punjab declare that I have applied for to correct the spellings of the name of my wife from Gurwinder Kaur to Gurvinder Kaur and correct date of birth from 08.07.1984 to 08.07.1985.

I, Dr. Kundan Lal S/o late Mata Parsad R/O #56-A, St no.1, Jagtar Nagar Patiala have declare that my wife name late Seema Rani @ Shimla Devi Known as both names.

I, Parmala Rani D/o Shri Darshan Singh, wife of Shri Iqbal Singh R/O House No. 2293, Mariwala Town Manimajra Chandigarh, declare that I have change my name Parmala Rani to Harpreet Kaur.

I, Shri Krishan S/O Harsh Roop R/O House No. 103-B, St. No.3, Deep Nagar, Patiala have changed my daughter's name from Chanchal to Chanchal Verma.

I, Gurmeet Singh S/O Lakha Singh R/O -VPO -Buttar Kalan/ Buttar Siviya / Tehsil- Baba Bakala District-Amritsar Declare That I Have Changed My Name From Gurmit Singh To Gurmeet Singh Concerned Note Please.

I, Satwinder Kaur W/o Nishan Singh Rathour R/O Vill. Aupar Aranian Teh & Distt. Patiala have changed my name to Satwinder Kaur Rathour.

I, Paranjit Kaur, my name in my husband's service record was wrongly written as Parmitj Kaur. My correct name is Paranjit Kaur W/O No. 15484993M L/D Rakesh Kumar R/O Unit HQ SQN, First Armd. Div C/o 56 APO. Aff. No AT855058 date 19.07.2021 Patiala Court.

I, Ankur S/O Dinesh Kumar # 296/12, Tehsil Road, Pehowa, Kurukshetra Changed Name Ankur Sharma.

I, Paranjit Kaur W/O Mastan Singh Vpo Bakhli Plot No 4, Pehowa, Kurukshetra , I, Changed My Minor Son Name From Sumet Singh To Sumet (Given Name) Singh(Surname)

I, Paranjit Kaur W/O Mastan Singh Vpo Bakhli Plot No 4, Pehowa, Kurukshetra , I, Changed My Minor Son Name From Gurdit Singh To Gurdit(Given Name)Singh(Surname)

I, Arvinder Singh S/O Gurmit Singh Vill Harigarh Bhorakh /Pehowa, Kurukshetra , I,Want To Change The Name Of My Son Harshdeep To Harshdeep Singh.

I, Bhanu Priya D/O Naresh Kumar R/O H.No.300/11 Gurdaspur Hardochani Road Gurdaspur, Tehsil/Distt Gurdaspur. Have changed My Name To Bhanu Priya Sarangal.

I, Venus W/o Manjit Singh Gill R/O H.No. 343, Ward No.15, Chandan Nagar, Kartarpur, Distt. Jalandhar (144801) have added my surname to Venus Gill.

I, Ravinder Kaur W/o Kuljeet Singh R/O H.No.13, Mohalla No. 21, Jalandhar Cant, Jalandhar Have Changed My Minor Son Name Haraziz Singh To Hsaraziz Singh Sabharwal.

I, Anand Kumar S/o Sukhdayal R/O 1191, Bootan Pind, Jalandhar-144003, Punjab have changed my name to Anand Kumar Kaul.

I, Gagan Sethi S/o Surinder Pal Sethi R/O 42, Ravinder Nagar Extn., Jalandhar-144003, Punjab have changed name/spelling of my minor daughter from Akriti Sethi to Aakriti Sethi (Same Person) All Please Note.

I, Harsh Sethi W/o Gagan Sethi R/O 42, Ravinder Nagar Extn., Jalandhar-144003, Punjab certified that Harsh Sethi & Harsh Bala. is one and the same person. All Please Note.

I, Harsh Bala Chopra W/o Gagan Sethi R/O 42, Ravinder Nagar Extn., Jalandhar-144003, Punjab have changed my name to Harsh Bala.

I, Manjit Singh S/o Darshan Singh R/O NG-120, Kot Baba Deep Singh, Jalandhar declare that Boota Singh and Manjit Singh is one and the same person.

I, Ramandeep Kaur W/O Navdeep Prashar R/O H.No-2601/8 Mathura Dass Street Sirhind Mandi Distt. Fatehgarh Sahib declares that my name is Ramandeep & Surname Is Kaur.

I, Jaismeen Kaur Dhillon D/o Jarmail Singh Vill-Deeparth Distt. Barnala have changed my name to Jaismeen Kaur.

I, Saminder Singh S/O Bhag Singh R/O Vpo Rauni Tehsil Payal (Ludhiana) Changed My Name To Suminder Singh.

I, Sahib Singh Bhogal S/O Gurmukh Singh R/O Mazara Naubad District S.B.S. Nagar have changed my name to Saheb Singh Bhogal.

I, Harpreet Singh S/o K Ujjit Ram R/O Vpo. Ghurka Tehsil Phillaur District Jalandhar known by two names Harpreet Singh and Harpreet one and the same person.

I, Surinder Kaur W/o Kesar Singh R/O Vill: Balamgarh Teh-Samana (Patiala) changed my name to Sinder Kaur.

I, Vivek Kumar S/O Balwant Rai R/O Vpo.Bassian (Ludhiana) Declare That My Minor Daughter Krishna Rani Tublian Kumar And Krishna Rani Kumar Is Same Person.

I, Kuldeep Kaur W/O Satnam Singh Vill Madh, Po Rayya, Tehsil Baba Bakala Tehsil, Distt Amritsar Have Change My Name As Kuldeep Kaur.

I, Ravinder Kaur W/o Kuldeep Singh Rana R/O Sarafan Bazar Vpo. Apra Teh-Phillaur (Jalandhar) changed my name to Ravinder Kaur Rana after marriage.

I, Ravinder Kaur Rana W/O Kuldeep Singh Rana R/O Sarafan Bazar Vpo. Apra Teh-Phillaur (Jalandhar) changed my minor son name from Manpreet Singh to Manpreet Singh Rana.

I, Ravinder Kaur Rana W/O Kuldeep Singh Rana R/O Sarafan Bazar Vpo. Apra Teh-Phillaur (Jalandhar) changed my name to Ravinder Kaur Rana after marriage.

I, Kavish S/O Rajinder Kumar R/O Basti Balochan Wali, Ferozepur City Have Changed My Name To Kavish Arora.

I, Raj Rani W/O Ashwani Kumar (D/O Des Raj) R/O Street No. 12, Gurusarashahi, Distt. Ferozepur Changed My Name Raj Rani To Geeta Rani.

I, Palwinder Kaur @ Kulwinder Kaur D/O Gurnam Singh R/O Guru Amardas Colony, Neelpur Tehsil Rajpura (Patiala ) Both Name Are Mine. I Am One And Same Person.

I, Arvinder Singh @ Kulwinder Kaur D/O Gurnam Singh R/O Guru Amardas Colony, Neelpur Tehsil Rajpura (Patiala ) Both Name Are Mine. I Am One And Same Person.

The Pioneer does not take responsibility for the contents for the advertisement (Display/ Classified) carried in this newspaper. The paper does not endorse the same. Readers are requested to verify the contents on their own.

Classified Advertisement Contact : 94174-19351

LOST & FOUND

I, ABHISHEK S/O K.K MAKHJA R/O H.No. 49 SECTOR -6, URBAN ESTATE KARNAL DECLARE THAT MY ORIGINAL RECEIPT NO. 50195354 DATED 14.8.2015 CHEQUE NO. 012101 DATED 8-8-2015 CHEQUE PAYMENT 695920/- BANK NAME OBC PLOT NO. C-458 PARSVNATH CITY KARNAL HAS BEEN LOST DOCUMENT. CONTACT: 8054669969.

COURT NOTICE

(U/o 5 Rule 20 CPC) IN THE COURT OF Sh. Amanpreet Singh Additional Civil Judge (Senior Division), Rupnagar. CNR NO. PBRO02-000087-2021 Next Date: 16-08-2021 PARVEEN KUMARI Vs. GENERAL PUBLIC

Publication issued to: GENERAL PUBLIC In above titled case, the defendant(s)/ respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/ respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 16-08-2021 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=distric\_notice&district=Rupnagar Additional Civil Judge (Senior Division) Rupnagar

COURT NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF Sh. Satish Kumar Sharma Judicial Magistrate - Ist Class, Ludhiana. CNR NO. PBLD03-003364-2019 Next Date: 17-08-2021 PREM CHANDRA SINHA Vs. LUCKY SINGH SIDHU

Publication issued to: Lucky Singh Sidhu S/o Sh. Parveen Singh Sidhu R/O Plot No. 34, (III) Third Floor, Sewak Park, Uttam Nagar, West Delhi, Delhi 110059 Whereas it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that You, the above named accused/ (accused persons) can't be served in the ordinary way of service. Hence, this proclamation under section 82 of code of criminal procedure is hereby issued against you with a direction that you should appear personally before the court on 17-08-2021 at 10.00 a.m. or within 30 days from the date of publication of this proclamation.

Take notice that, in case of default on your part to appear as directed above, the above said case will be heard and determined as per law, in your absence. Given under my hand and seal of the court this 12-07-2021. Complaint U/S 138 of N.I. Act For details logon to https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=distric\_notice& district=Ludhiana Judicial Magistrate-Ist Class Ludhiana

COURT NOTICE

(U/o 5 Rule 20 CPC) IN THE COURT OF Ms. Gurpreet Kaur-III Civil Judge (Junior Division), Hoshiarpur

CNR NO. PBHO02-001124-2019 Next Date: 03-09-2021 Swaran Kaur @ Swarni, aged 98 years Wd/o R/o Village Thathal, Tehsil and Distt. Hoshiarpur. ....Plaintiff

Vs. Birbal S/o Gurdas Ram R/O V. Thathal, Tehsil and Distt. Hoshiarpur and others. ....Defendants

Suit for declaration Publication issued to: 6. Gur D/O Gurdas Ram W/O Dev Raj R/O Village Nariala PO Sikri, Tehsil and Distt. Hoshiarpur.

13. Dinesh S/O Surinder Pal S/O Gurdas Ram, R/O Village Thathal, Tehsil and Distt. Hoshiarpur.

In above titled case, the defendant(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 03-09-2021 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=distric\_notice&district=Hoshiarpur Civil Judge (Junior Division) Hoshiarpur

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified for the information that I Ashwani Dhawan S/o Ved Prakash R/O 401 Phase 3B1, Mohali, SAS Nagar and Parveen Gulati W/O Late Sh. Surinder Gulati have lost the Receipts No. 518939, Amount 6,00,000/-, 925960 Amount 2,50,000/-, 1630897 Amount 1700/-, 1630901 Amount 1,73,300/- . Plot No. 1074-C (OCE/905) located Omaxe New Chandigarh. A DDR No. 154936 Dated 21.07.2021 has also been registered for the same.

It is notified for the information of the general public and all concerned with the property type-B, House no.507, GHS-3, Sec-31, Panchkula stands in the name Late Sh. Mahinder Singh S/o Sh. Daya Ram as per record of this office.

It has been reported by the applicant (s) that Late Sh. Mahinder Singh S/o Sh. Daya Ram is the owner of this property dated on 15.05.2021 of Sh. Kuldeep Kumar S/o Late Sh. Mahinder Singh S/o Sh. Mahinder Singh R/O VPO-Gudha, Tehsil-Gohana, Sonapat Haryana due to death of original allottee Late Sh. Mahinder Singh S/o Sh. Daya Ram living intestate property.

It is notified for the information of the general public and all concerned with the property type-B, House no.507, GHS-3, Sec-31, Panchkula stands in the name Late Sh. Mahinder Singh S/o Sh. Daya Ram as per record of this office.

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If anybody have any objection for the transfer of the said property in favour of the applicant of Sh. Kuldeep Kumar S/o Late Sh. Mahinder Singh R/O VPO-Gudha, Tehsil-Gohana, Sonapat Haryana objection in writing in the office of the undersigned within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which this property shall be transferred accordingly and no further claim whatsoever shall be entertained later on. Estate Manager Haryana Panchkula

Publication issued to: GENERAL PUBLIC In above titled case, the defendant(s)/ respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/ respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 16-08-2021 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=distric\_notice&district=Rupnagar Additional Civil Judge (Senior Division) Rupnagar

COURT NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF Sh. Satish Kumar Sharma Judicial Magistrate - Ist Class, Ludhiana. CNR NO. PBLD03-003364-2019 Next Date: 17-08-2021 PREM CHANDRA SINHA Vs. LUCKY SINGH SIDHU

Publication issued to: Lucky Singh Sidhu S/o Sh. Parveen Singh Sidhu R/O Plot No. 34, (III) Third Floor, Sewak Park, Uttam Nagar, West Delhi, Delhi 110059 Whereas it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that You, the above named accused/ (accused persons) can't be served in the ordinary way of service. Hence, this proclamation under section 82 of code of criminal procedure is hereby issued against you with a direction that you should appear personally before the court on 17-08-2021 at 10.00 a.m. or within 30 days from the date of publication of this proclamation.

Take notice that, in case of default on your part to appear as directed above, the above said case will be heard and determined as per law, in your absence. Given under my hand and seal of the court this 12-07-2021. Complaint U/S 138 of N.I. Act For details logon to https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=distric\_notice& district=Ludhiana Judicial Magistrate-Ist Class Ludhiana

COURT NOTICE

(U/o 5 Rule 20 CPC) IN THE COURT OF Ms. Gurpreet Kaur-III Civil Judge (Junior Division), Hoshiarpur

CNR NO. PBHO02-001124-2019 Next Date: 03-09-2021 Swaran Kaur @ Swarni, aged 98 years Wd/o R/o Village Thathal, Tehsil and Distt. Hoshiarpur. ....Plaintiff

Vs. Birbal S/o Gurdas Ram R/O V. Thathal, Tehsil and Distt. Hoshiarpur and others. ....Defendants

Suit for declaration Publication issued to: 6. Gur D/O Gurdas Ram W/O Dev Raj R/O Village Nariala PO Sikri, Tehsil and Distt. Hoshiarpur.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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CONGRESS IN CRISIS

# Sidhu claims to host 62 MLAs amid rift with Capt

**TO TAKE OVER AS PPCC CHIEF ON FRIDAY**

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Virtually playing his second innings in Punjab Congress, the cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu on Wednesday was 62 not-out while the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh was restricted to just 15.

In a massive show of strength, no less than 62 legislators, out of total 77, reached Amritsar to show their support to Sidhu — giving, in the process, clear indications that the Chief Minister's "public apology" demand did not hold any ground.

As majority of party legislators reached Sidhu's Amritsar residence for breakfast meeting on Wednesday morning and later accompanied him to the Golden Temple, Durgiana Mandir, and Ram Tirath Sthal,

they insisted that the Congress party in Punjab is united and there was "no need for an apology".

Contrary to the claims of Sidhu camp, an MLA close to the Chief Minister maintained that only 42 legislators have reached Amritsar, of which three were Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) rebel leaders who have recently shifted loyalties towards the Congress party.

Notably, Congress has a total 77 legislators, besides three AAP rebel MLAs have also joined the party recently, thus having the support of a total 80 legislators in a House of 117.

The development assumes significance as it comes amidst a public tussle between Sidhu and Capt Amarinder, who was strongly opposed to the former cricketer's elevation to the party's apex post in Punjab.

Even as the party high command wanted to put an end to Punjab Congress' internal crisis and power struggle by appointing Sidhu as Punjab

Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) president, the gulf between the two warring leaders has only widened. In fact, the Chief Minister, a day before, had made it clear that he would not be meeting Sidhu till he apologises in public.

Sources have informed The Pioneer that Sidhu has written to the Chief Minister inviting him for his coronation ceremony on July 23 (Friday). However, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) has, till the filing of this report, refused to have received any communique from the newly-appointed Punjab Congress chief.

Available information suggests that Sidhu's letter to the Chief Minister has been signed by about 60 Congress legislators. Besides, the cricketer-turned-politician has also invited All India Congress Committee (AICC) member and in-charge of the party's affair in Punjab Harish Rawat to the programme.

It has also been learnt that PPCC's one of the four newly-

appointed working presidents Kuljit Singh Nagra would be meeting the Chief Minister on Thursday to personally invite him for the coronation ceremony of Sidhu and the four working presidents.

"Sidhu will formally assume the charge of the state party chief at Chandigarh on Friday and expects all the senior leaders including the Chief Minister to be present at the event," said Nagra.

Along with Sidhu, the Congress high command has appointed four working presidents — Kuljit Singh Nagra and Pawan Goel are from Malwa region, while Sukhwinder Singh Danny is from Majha region, and Sangat Singh Gilzian is from Doaba region.

Capt Amarinder has all along been opposing Sidhu's appointment on the party's top post, but finally conceded with the condition that the latter has to apologise publicly for his "150-odd derogatory tweets". Other than that, Capt Amarinder had demanded say

in government and party matters, with the high command assuring him that four working presidents would be of his choice.

However, in a clear snub to the Chief Minister, the Delhi Durbar did not consider the candidates close to Capt Amarinder even for the posts of working presidents.

**NO NEED FOR APOLOGY: MLAs**

A day after senior most Cabinet Minister Brahm Mohindra refused to meet Sidhu till he resolves his issues with the Chief Minister, the legislators present at Sidhu's residence maintained that there was no need for an apology.

"Why should Sidhu apologise (to CM)? It's not a public issue. The Chief Minister has not solved many issues. In that case, he should also apologise to the public," said Sidhu's close aide and Congress MLA Pargat Singh.

Another MLA Madan Lal Jalalpur, considered a strong

Capt Amarinder loyalist, also maintained that Sidhu should not apologise because it is the Chief Minister's duty to address the concerns of people of his state, even if it is against him.

"Sidhu is not just Sidhu anymore; he is the Punjab Congress president. He has nothing to apologise for. Although, yes, Sidhu should respect him since he is like a father to us all," said Jalalpur, adding that the party and the Chief Minister have to work together to be successful.

"I have faith that the 2022 Assembly polls will be won because of Sidhu. CM's advisers are misleading him. Due to this, Punjab is going backward...The day Sidhu was appointed as the Punjab party president, about five percent of votes for Congress increased. The youth, who were leaving Congress and joining the AAP, came back because of this. I am sure that at least 20 percent of votes for Congress will increase because of Sidhu," he added.

Cabinet Minister

Sukhjinder Randhawa, who was behind organising Amritsar's meeting, told the reporters he was surprised at the Chief Minister's "behaviour". "Sidhu's elevation as state unit chief has to be respected and accepted by all, irrespective of whatever differences there might have been in the past," he said.

Randhawa said that even senior leaders Partap Singh Bajwa and Sukhpal Singh Khaira earlier were at loggerheads with Capt Amarinder but now they have sunk their differences. "Why can't the Chief Minister sink his differences with Sidhu," Randhawa asked.

Gidderbaha MLA Amarinder Singh Raja Warring said that the leaders should not ask each other to apologise at this level.

**SIDHU, WORKING PRESIDENTS TO TAKE CHARGE ON JULY 23**

The newly-appointed Punjab Pradesh Congress

Committee (PPCC) president Navjot Singh Sidhu, along with his four working presidents, would formally take over reins of the state unit at a function on Friday (July 23).

It has been learnt that all senior leaders are expected to attend the event though a formal list is being drawn out. With differences between him and Capt Amarinder Singh continuing to persist, it remains to be seen whether the Chief Minister attends the event.

**SIDHU TO LEAD PROTEST MARCH TO GUV TODAY**

After becoming the Punjab Congress president, Navjot Singh Sidhu will reach Chandigarh on Thursday to lead the party's "protest march" towards the Raj Bhavan from the Sector 15 Congress Bhawan over Pegasus Snooping. Sidhu, along with party leaders including Cabinet Ministers and MLAs, will submit a memorandum to the Punjab Governor VP Singh Badnore.

## Haryana CM hits out at Cong over ruckus in Parliament

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Wednesday hit out at the Congress over the Pegasus snooping row, and accused its leaders of joining hands with those forces who want to tarnish India's image.

Khattar while coming down heavily on Congress for creating ruckus in the ongoing monsoon session of the Parliament over 'phone tapping' issue said that Congress has a habit of raising allegations rather than discussing development issues.

"Our party has nothing to do with spying or phone tapping. If at all there is any party who has a habit of hatching spying conspiracies and destabilizing popular governments, it is definitely Congress," the Chief Minister said while addressing a press conference here.

Condemning Congress for supporting Amnesty International, an agency that had first published a report about snooping on personal data of ministers and journalists in India with the help of Israeli spyware called Pegasus, Khattar said that in the last seven years, as Narendra Modi led government did not give Congress a chance to raise valid issues therefore like their

previous times, this time also they hatched a conspiracy to defame and malign the Indian democracy.

He also targeted Amnesty International, saying the agenda of the organisation, "which had failed to disclose its source of funding, is well-known".

Continuing his tirade against the Congress, Khattar said "It is unfortunate how Congress rather than discussing development issues is supporting international agencies and left-wing organizations to damage India's democratic fabric. Congress is not going to gain anything by doing these petty things to malign the image of India. The country is watching them."

"Congress never believed in running the country democratically. Today, they are raising their voice against 'phone tapping' by just believing the reports published in international agencies and a Left-wing portal but I would like to remind them that when Congress was at the Centre, they themselves had used surveillance as a tool to spy on its own leaders," he said.

Citing an example, the Chief Minister said that several evidences along with media reports are there highlighting how Congress had not only spied on their own party lead-



As well as former Railway Minister Mamata Banerjee and other leaders too.

He also raked up snooping allegations levelled against the opposition party in the past, including a row involving then Union Ministers Pranab Mukherjee and P Chidambaram.

Not only this, Congress's pivotal role in the fall of the then Chandra Shekhar government is also known to everyone. At that time too, Congress had falsely alleged that two policemen belonging to Haryana CID had spied on Late Rajiv Gandhi near his residence 10 Janpath, though Congress was never able to prove their allegations, he added.

Further targeting the Congress, he said it has been revealed that around 9,000 phones were monitored during the previous UPA regime.

He said that Parliament



would have taken up many important issues pertaining to various sections, including the youth, women, farmers and backward classes, but the opposition stalled the proceedings.

"Congress' target has always been that when some good things are to take shape in the country, it joins hands with some forces to derail things," he alleged.

"They are not creating obstacles in the functioning of the government, but in the country's progress. Congress' black deeds will never succeed in the country," the Chief Minister said.

When asked about the claim that Pegasus spyware is sold only to the government,

Khattar quipped, "No, private agencies also procure it from them. Now, it may be that private agencies take it from them privately and not declare it."

Notably, an international media consortium reported on Sunday that over 300 verified mobile phone numbers, including two of ministers, over 40 journalists, three opposition leaders besides scores of business persons and activists in India could have been targeted for hacking using Pegasus spyware. Meanwhile, talking about Haryana, Khattar said that Congress has always questioned the State Government over the increasing unemployment rate in Haryana, by referring to a Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) report which doesn't even have any credibility.

He said that under the ambitious scheme Parivar Pehchan Patra being run by the Citizen Resource Information Department, almost every family in the state has been registered, in which people have declared their own unemployment, which is only 6 per cent. When the people of the state themselves are declaring the unemployment rate, on what basis are the leaders of the opposition saying that the unemployment rate is increasing in Haryana, he added.

## Haryana CM hears grievances of public during Janata Darbar

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Wednesday heard the grievances of various delegations during Janta Darbar held at Haryana Niwas here and gave necessary directions to the officers on the spot for their redressal.

A delegation of ITI instructors met the Chief Minister during the Janta Darbar and put forth their demand for the regular and permanent recruitment, regarding which the Chief Minister immediately gave necessary directions.

The delegation of Narnaud Anaj Mandi Association, Hisar placed its demands before the Chief Minister, urging the officials to compensate for the loss of 50 percent wheat. The Chief Minister took strict cognizance of the matter and ordered the Additional Chief Secretary, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department, Anurag Rastogi to make recovery against the nine officials with immediate effect and said that half of the loss incurred by the government should be compensated by the guilty officials.

Urban Estate Welfare

Association, Karnal also placed many problems related to the estate area before the Chief Minister, who ordered the Chief Administrator, Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran that a special camp should be organized for the people of the area on August 2, at 11:00 am at Estate Office, Karnal and everyone should be issued OCs on the spot. The same delegation raised the issue of double billing being done by the Municipal Corporation in the construction of roads, about which the Chief Minister ordered an immediate inquiry and asked to submit a report within a month.

The newly elected executive team of Haryana Roadways Employees Union demanded several policy decisions regarding the department, regarding which Khattar asked the department to give its comments in writing within seven days. The delegation of Bahadurgarh Footwear apprised the Chief Minister about the problems being faced by the ongoing farmers' movement, in light of which the Chief Minister ordered DGP Manoj Yadava to take up the matter in this regard. Union of Bahadurgarh Modern Industrial Estate apprised the Chief Minister

about the slow pace of construction of sewer and roads, in light of which Khattar ordered Managing Director, HSIIDC, Anurag Agarwal to start construction from Monday itself.

Several industry associations raised the issue of delay in getting fire NOCs, on which the Chief Minister ordered the officers of the Urban Local Bodies Department to immediately investigate and take strict action against the guilty officials. The delegation of Ayurvedic Medical Officers also placed their demands before the Chief Minister who ordered to do away with the mandatory CCH test for the NHM personnel in the future and asked the Department to pay an honorarium of Rs 15,000 per month to the existing employees so that they can give the CCH test through Indira Gandhi National Open University so that no employee is fired during the CCH test.

Veterinary and Livestock Development Assistant Association thanked the Chief Minister for fulfilling the demands placed in the last Janata Darbar and demanded to make Science in class XII mandatory for those opting for Veterinary and Livestock Development Assistant course.

## Haryana strengthening FPOs through value chain, market linkage

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Government has engaged M/s Ernst and Young LLP (EY) to conduct value chain studies for important horticulture crops of the state.

Value chain studies have been completed on six important crops in the state that is Kinnow, tomato, potato, strawberry, capsicum and ginger, said an official spokesman.

He said that this report was presented in the General Body meeting of Small Farmer Agri-Business Consortium Haryana (SFACH) chaired by Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture

and Farmers' Welfare department, Sumita Misra. During the study various gaps were noticed at production, harvest, post-harvest and marketing stage.

The spokesman said that EY in collaboration with Horticulture Department and Small Farmer Agri-Business Consortium Haryana (SFACH) is addressing these gaps at every stage of the value chain and handholding the FPOs in quality management and marketing of the produce. By way of the market linkages of FPOs with modern retailers and processing industries, significant increase in the income of FPOs

has been observed, he said.

The state has taken major strides in horticulture development through handholding support of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPO) by collectivization of farmers, through Crop Cluster-Based approach. On this occasion, Dr. Arjun Singh Saini, Director General Horticulture Department, Dr. Hardeep Singh, Director General Agriculture Department, Dr. Ranbir Singh, Joint Director Horticulture and senior Officers of horticulture department and other line departments were present.

## Punjab to further cut compliance costs for MSMEs

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

To provide ease of doing business and cutting down the compliances for the trade and industry in the border state, Punjab Government has decided to reduce the costs of mandatory compliances for the MSMEs.

This will be done by implementing the recommendations submitted by the Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship (GAME), said state Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan, while chairing a high-level meeting on Wednesday.

Reviewing the implementation of the GAME recommendations, the Chief Secretary directed the departments of Labour, Local Government,

Printing and Stationery, and Governance Reforms to expedite the implementation of these recommendations aimed at further cutting down the costs of mandatory compliances, deemed as red tape, to ensure ease of doing business and maintain a congenial environment to boost the trade and industry in the landlocked state.

It was informed that the Labour Department has already accepted 22 of 33 recommendations made by GAME.

The Chief Secretary asked the Labour Department to consider the recommendations on the standing order exemptions for industry.

Mahajan also instructed the Printing and Stationery



Department to implement the recommendation of the GAME for improvising the online e-gazette portal with investor-friendly searchable feature, while instructing to merge the online public grievances redressal mechanism developed by the Governance Reforms department with the Invest Punjab Business First Portal for early resolution of grievances of MSMEs as per the recommendation of GAME.

Principal Secretary Industries and Commerce, Alok Shekhar, apprised the Chief Secretary that the Local Government Department was working on reducing the stages of mandatory fire NOC and was asked to consider abolishing trade licence or merging it with the registration of shop and establishment being granted by the Labour department.

He further informed that the GAME has identified several

NOCs being issued by various departments and has recommended their rationalisation.

Shekhar proposed the recommended rationalisation in consultation with the concerned departments and to put forth the proposal before the Council of Ministers for freezing the requirement of several NOCs for setting up of business in the state.

Notably, the Punjab Government had signed a MoU with the GAME in November 2020. The GAME was working closely with the state departments to reduce the costs of compliances for MSMEs that will help further improve the congenial business environment for MSMEs in Punjab.

## Mahajan: New ADC posts to ensure holistic development in districts

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan on Wednesday said that the newly-created post of Additional Deputy Commissioner (Urban Development) in all the 23 districts will further improve efficiency in the functioning of urban local bodies and strengthen coordination with the District Administration to ensure holistic urban development in the State.

Mahajan, chairing a maiden introductory meeting with the Additional Deputy Commissioners (Urban Development) in the presence of the Deputy Commissioners,

said that these 23 posts have been created, one each at all district headquarters, in place of the Regional Deputy Directors Local Government (DDLGs) which have been scrapped. The ADCs (UD) will also be the ex-officio additional CEOs of the Punjab Water Supply and Sewerage Board (PWSSB). Welcoming the newly-appointed officers, Mahajan directed the Deputy Commissioners to provide adequate office space and requisite staff, mainly consisting of MIS and IT experts, SWM, wastewater specialists, and assistant programme officer (Housing) and (NULM), to all the newly appointed ADCs in their respective districts.

## INLD chief OP Chautala visits Tikri border, extends support to farmers' agitation

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Former Haryana Chief Minister and Indian National Lok Dal supreme OP Chautala on Wednesday said that the ongoing farmers' agitation will force the Central Government to scrap the "black farm laws".

Chautala who visited Tikri border to extend his support to the farmers' agitation said that the protest of the farmers is getting stronger day by day, due to which the government will be forced to repeal all the three agricultural laws. This fight is not only of farmers and laborers but of the whole country and the eyes of the whole world are on the farmers' movement, he said while addressing the protesting farmers. A day before, the INLD

chief had visited Ghazipur and Palwal borders where farmers have been protesting against Centre's three farm laws.

Chautala, while targeting the BJP government at the Centre and in Haryana said that the BJP is anti-farmer and the government of capitalists.

It has been more than eight months since the farmers' movement, but the government is not ready to listen to the voice of the farmers. There is a lot of anger among the farmers of the country against the government, he said.

The INLD chief said that all his life former Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal struggled to ensure that farmers, weaker sections and other common people get their due. We want to realise the dreams of the late

Chaudhary Devi Lal, he said.

These farm laws should be withdrawn. India is an agriculture-based country and agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy. The INLD will stand by the farmers and continue to fight for farmers' rights, he added. Notably, Chautala (86) was released from Delhi's Tihar jail earlier this month where he was serving a 10-year sentence in a teachers' recruitment scam. Chautala's younger son Abhay Chautala, INLD's lone legislator had resigned from the Haryana Assembly in protest against the farm laws while his grandson and Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala's JJP is part of the coalition government in Haryana, which supports the laws.

## Punjab increases income limit for loans under direct loan scheme to ₹3L

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Under the direct loan scheme run by the Punjab Scheduled Castes Land Development and Finance Corporation, the income limit for borrowing has been raised from Rs one lakh to Rs three lakhs.

"The State Government has extended the powers to sanction loans up to Rs one lakh to the district managers of the corporation at the district level for the expeditious disposal of debt cases for the convenience of people," said the state Social Justice, Empowerment, and Minorities Minister Sadhu Singh Dharmot on Wednesday.

He said that similarly, the

district level screening committees are revised and a new committee at the state level has been constituted under the chairmanship of Social Justice, Empowerment, and Minority Officer to provide loan to the needy as soon as possible.

Dharmot said that the main objective of the Corporation is to provide low interest rate loans to the Scheduled Castes and persons with disabilities for self-employment occupations such as dairy farms, grocery shops, clothing shops, shuttering work, lumbering, higher education loans, so that their economic status can be raised and can be lifted out from the poverty line.

The Minister further said

that the Corporation has provided financial assistance of Rs 2,293.73 lakh to 2,116 beneficiaries even during the difficult times of COVID-19 during the current financial year 2021-2022. The Corporation had set a target of disbursing Rs 40 crore to 1,400 borrowers, under which loan-subsidy of Rs 624.81 lakh has been disbursed to 562 beneficiaries so far.

Punjab Government during its tenure of almost four years has extended loans of Rs 8,066.23 lakh to 8,590 eligible and needy SC youth. In addition, the State Government has given huge relief to the debtors by waiving the debts of 14,260 beneficiaries amounting to Rs 4,540.80 lakh, he added.

# CBSE extends deadline for Board results to July 25



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

and key representatives from the private sector.

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

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

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

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

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

The second group comprises top officials of major

Indian airport operators -- Airports Authority of India Chairman Sanjeev Kumar, GMR Group Business Chairman G B S Raju, Adani Group Vice President Jeet Adani and Bangalore International Airport Limited Chief Executive Officer Hari K Marar.

Another Aviation Ministry's order stated that the second group would advise the government on issues including enhancing the airport capacity, infrastructure augmentation and modernisation, increasing passenger facilities and amenities at airports and regulatory issues concerning airports.

The group will be meeting every month to suggest steps required to enhance airport capacity, infrastructure modernisation and improving customer experience.

The third advisory group would comprise four sub-groups: one each on MRO, ground handling, cargo and FTO. Each of the sub-group would have four industry executives as members who work in that particular industry.

It will also spell out steps needed to be taken to expand this sector.

Scheduled domestic passenger traffic was suspended in India for about two months between March 25 and May 24 last year due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown. Since June 2020, the domestic traffic had been on a path of recovery when the second wave of the pandemic hit India during April and May this year.

# Three more Rafale jets arrive in India from France

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A seventh batch of three more Rafale fighter jets arrived in India after flying non-stop for a distance of almost 8,000 km from France, in a further boost to the strike capability of the Indian Air Force (IAF).

The new batch of the aircraft will be part of the IAF's second squadron of the Rafale jets.

The aircraft were provided mid-air refuelling by the air force of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

"Three Rafale aircraft arrived in India a short while ago, after a direct ferry from #IstresAirBase, France. IAF deeply appreciates the support by UAE Air Force for in-flight refuelling during the non-stop ferry," the IAF said in a tweet.

Following the arrival of the new batch, the number of Rafale jets with the IAF went up to 24.

The new squadron of Rafale jets will be based in Hasimara airbase in West Bengal. The first Rafale squadron is based in the Ambala air force station.

A squadron comprises around 18 aircraft. India had signed an inter-governmental agreement with France in September 2016 for the procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets at a cost of around ₹58,000 crore.

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



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

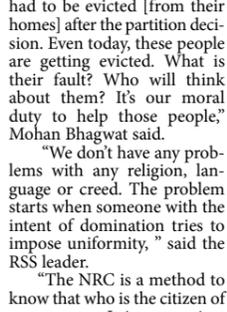
"A large number of people had to be evicted [from their homes] after the partition decision. Even today, these people are getting evicted. What is their fault? Who will think about them? It's our moral duty to help those people," Mohan Bhagwat said.

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

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

# DRDO successfully tests missile

Fire and forget, anti-tank guided missile developed indigenously



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

In another test, the DRDO scientists successfully flight-

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

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

the representatives of the IAF.

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

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

# SJM seeks changes in consumer protection e-commerce rules

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Covid Delta variant found in 124 countries: WHO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Sexual assault plaintiff row shakes Kerala Govt

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## EID ON LOC IN KASHMIR

# Indian, Pak troops exchange sweets

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ NILGIRIS

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

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

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



Both the challengers from MRC are not just pushovers but seasoned athletes who have won many national and international titles, according to Hemand Raj, the Army coach who oversaw the training of the two Thampis. Rajiv is an Arjuna Awardee who has excelled in 400 meters race. He is a bronze medalist in the 2014 Asian Games held at South Korea. He will be contributing his might to the 4x400 meter relay team.

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



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

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

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

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

lost the bronze in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

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

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

## Kundra scam gets murkier, details of porn film shoots, nude auditions emerge

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The investigations into the pornographic films racket involving businessman and actress Shilpa Shetty's husband Raj Kundra have thrown up lurid details of the porn film shoots held at private bungalows at Madh Island and "nude auditions" conducted by racketeers who circumvented the Indian laws, made the porn films and uploaded them on mobiles in the United Kingdom.

Two days after Kundra's arrest, the Mumbai Crime branch sleuths have uncovered the conspiracy behind the making and streaming of pornographic videos through an app called "Hotshots" and also OTT platforms by putting up advertisements on social media platforms.

In another major development, the investigators are recovered the messages from as WhatsApp group run by Kundra to deal with money accrued from the porn movies produced by them. The group was named "H AAccounts" and had Kundra as its admin with four other members: Pradeep Bakshi, Rob Digital Marketing Hotshot, Raw Evans. They have found some incriminating messages relevant to the case being investigated by them.

The distribution and marketing strategy adopted by Kundra and team was to send the videos produced in Mumbai through an application to Kenrin Production in the UKs to avoid legal issues in India. Kenrin Production would edit and upload the pornographic films Hotshot. Kenrin was allegedly funding the porn film production through agents based in India.

Confirming the financial trail among the culprits behind the porn scam, Mumbai's Joint Commissioner of Police (crime) Milind Barambe said: "We have the details of the financial trials among them," said.

Meanwhile, in a new twist to the ongoing investigations into the sleazy porn film racket, a model and actress - whom Kundra's frontman Umesh Kamat had approached for a "nude audition" -- came into the open, by claiming that she gave her audition over a video call. Much to the annoyance of Kamat, she claimed that she did not "undress" for the audition, but she did give the audition on the promise by Kamat that she would land a role in a web series.

Among other things, she claimed that Kundra was a "mere pawn" in the entire racket, in which she alleged several people were involved.

The model-cum-actress, who did not want to be identified but demanded stern action against Kundra and his associates, explained the modus operandi involved in the racket in which women who approached for roles would soon be involved in bikini shoots, bold shoots and eventually nude. In search of small roles in films, the women would not come into the open about things they were forced to do and some of them would end up prostitution.

Another ploy used by the racketeers was to lure women -- coming from different parts of the country to make a career in Bollywood, with roles in web series. However, after the start of shooting, they would change the script to indulge in bold shoots and even nude shoots. If the women in question refused, the racketeers would force the women to pay up expenditure incurred on the preparations for the shoots, a threat would force the women to succumb to the dictates of the porn film makers.

Informed sources that a raid conducted on February 4 this year by the Malvani police on a private bungalow at picturesque Madh Island at Malad (west) in north Mumbai where a porn film was being shot, ripped the lid off a well-oiled racket. It was a tip-off from an affected woman who approached the police with her grievance that led to the raid.

After initial investigation, the Mumbai Police handed the case to the Property Cell of Crime Branch-CID for further probe during which the name of United Kingdom-based Pradeep Bakshi, the brother-in-law of Kundra, surfaced.

Kundra is the owner of Viaan Industries Ltd, jointly promoted by the couple, while Bakshi -- a British citizen, who is married to Kundra's sister -- is the Chairman of Kenrin Ltd., London.

The Hotshots app -- described as the "world's first 18+ app" showcasing some of the hottest models and celebs globally in exclusive photos, short films and hot videos (implying soft-to-hard porn) -- was removed from mobile platforms. Similarly, Apple and Google have removed the app because of the pornographic content in it.

In all, eleven persons -- including Kundra, his aide Ryan John Tharpe and Kamat, have been arrested in connection with the pornography racket. They are: TV actress Gehna Vashisht (32) Yasmin Baig Khan alias Rowa Khan (40) Monu Joshi (28) Pratibha Nalavade (33) Atif Ahmed (24), Shaan Banerjee alias Dipankar Khasnavis (38), Bhanusuryam Thakur (26) Tanvir Hashmi (40) and Umesh Kamat (39).

Model-actress Gehna Vashisht, while Yasmin Rowa Khan was the producer-director. Kamat was the frontman for Kundra. Pratibha was the graphic designer, Joshi was cameraman.

Gahna and Kamat were both involved in producing and shooting porn, writing scripts; they also sent copies of their scripts to Kundra.

In a related development, Gehna -- who is currently on bail -- has claimed that she was arrested wrongly in the case. "Those videos are just adult videos. They are of erotic nature. None of them falls under the category of porn," she said.

On their part, the investigators are examining call records on her phone and information on her laptop both of which they seized.

## Amid leadership change buzz, BSY asks supporters not to indulge in protests

Bengaluru: With voices growing in his support, amid speculation that his replacement was on the cards, Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Wednesday urged his supporters and well-wishers not to indulge in any kind of protests or indiscipline that is disrespectful and may embarrass the BJP.

The 78-year-old BJP veteran said the party is "like mother" for him.

"I am privileged to be a loyal worker of BJP. It is my utmost honour to serve the party with highest standards of ethics & behaviour. I urge everyone to act in accordance with party ethics & not indulge in protests/indiscipline that is disrespectful & embarrassing for the party," Yediyurappa tweeted.

Appealing to supporters not to give statements in his favour or indulge in protests, "based on the current political developments", Yediyurappa in a Kannada tweet said, "your goodwill should not exceed the boundaries of discipline. Party is like a mother to me and disrespecting it will cause pain to me. I believe that my true well-wishers will understand and respond to my feelings."

His statement came as support continued to pour in for him from Muttis, pontiffs, and political leaders.

Leaders and pontiffs, especially from the Veerashaiva-Lingayat community, also All India Veerashaiva Mahasabha, have declared support to Yediyurappa and have urged for his continuation as the Chief Minister, while also warning "bad consequences" for the BJP if he is replaced. Striking a discordant note, dissident BJP MLC A H Vishwanath asked the Lingayat seers whether they were "backing corruption" by rallying behind Yediyurappa.

Speaking to reporters in Mysuru, Vishwanath, who has been vocal against Yediyurappa, criticised them, claiming that they are setting a "wrong precedent" by backing the Chief Minister and his government "instead of standing with the people".

Some BJP leaders like MP G M Siddeshwara and former legislator B Suresh Gowda have also expressed confidence that he will continue as CM, as the high command has not asked him to step down. PTI



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

PTI

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

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

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

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

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

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

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

to the medical community".

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Still opaque

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

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



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

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

### PICTALK



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

PTI

## Spoke in wheel

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

After ticking off the Uttar Pradesh Government over its reluctance to cancel the Kanwar Yatra this year, the Supreme Court has taken another similar, welcome step and castigated the Kerala Government over its ostensible appeasement policy in granting a three-day relaxation from COVID-19 restrictions ahead of the Eid al-Adha (Bakrid) festival. Hinting that its pliable stand emanated from the vote bank and economic concerns, the court stated that the State Government bowing to traders' pressure by granting the relaxations shows a "sorry state of affairs" and was "wholly uncalled for". Observing that the "pressure groups in the market" can't be allowed to affect the general public's right to health, the apex court lamented: "Can't quash the Kerala Government's notification. The horse has already bolted." However, the court didn't let the matter pass based on the time elapsed since the notification and, rightly pointing to its recent order passed in the Kanwar Yatra case, warned the State Government that it would invite strict



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

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

# Fresh challenges await Deuba in the hot seat



RISHI GUPTA

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

It was a similar coalition in 2017 with Nepali Congress

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

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

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### PEGASUS AS AN ALBATROSS FOR THE GOVT

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

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

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

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

### PREPARE BEFORE OPENING PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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

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

### No deaths by oxygen shortage?



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

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

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

G David Milton | Kanyakumari

### NOT THAT EASY TO TOPPLE A GOVT

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

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

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

MR Jayanthi | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUNDBITE

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

Former Congress president — Rahul Gandhi

The economic situation with which our country was confronted, has been changing now.

Pakistan Prime Minister — Imran Khan

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

YouTuber — Puneet Kaur

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

Germany's 14-year-old Olympian — Lilly Steophasius

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

West Bengal BJP chief — Dilip Ghosh

## FIRST COLUMN ECI AND PANDEMIC POLL BLAME

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



ABHINAV NARAYAN JHA ABHINAV K SHUKLA

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



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

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

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

# Indian black money in western white banks



PRASHANT TEWARI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## POINTCOUNTERPOINT

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



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

# Coming out of the shadows

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

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



SURAVI SHARMA KUMAR

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

patients living in less efficient conditions.

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

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

# Unprecedented floods hit China

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

PTI ■ BEIJING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

# China blasts dam to divert massive floods

AP ■ BEIJING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

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

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

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



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

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

"We will continue to fight

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

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

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

AP ■ LONDON

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

Since the U.K. Left the

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

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

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

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

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Unit No. 921, 9th Floor, Tower-B, Advent IT Park Pvt. Ltd. Plot No. 007 Sec. - 142, Noida whose original allottee Albin Tariq Sojeja, S/o Sh. Mohd. Tariq Suleja, R/o 40/177, Marwama Bazar, Prad Kanpur, UP has executed a GPA (General Power of Attorney) on 19/06/2021 in favor of Mohd. Imran Ayyub, S/o Late Mohammad Ayyub Shamsi, Resident of 501 Gokul Apartment, Civil Line, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh which is duly certified in the office of Embassy Records of India and after that the said GPA (General Power of Attorney) has been registered in the office of Assistant Commissioner of Stamp, Dist. Gautam Budh Nagar, on dated 23/06/2021 by paying a stamp duty of Rs 100/- The Original Allottee of the above said Unit No. 921, 9th Floor, Tower-B Advent IT Park Pvt. Ltd. has not registered or unregistered any Agreement to Sale in the name of anyone. The Original Allottee has allowed the GPA holder to execute/sign the transfer/transfer deed document and other documents and the original allottee himself has given the said unit to Mrs. Payal Agarwal. It is informed through this notice that the transfer application has been submitted in favor of Mrs. Payal Agarwal, W/o Sh. Sudhanshu Agarwal on the basis of Unit No. 921 Tower-B Advent IT Park Pvt. Ltd. Plot No. 007, Sector-142 Noida, U.P. through GPA. If any person has any objection in this regard, then please file your objection with all the evidence in the Institutional Department of Noida Authority within 30 days from the date of publication of this information, otherwise the said unit will be sent to Mrs. Payal Agarwal After that the Noida Authority will transfer as per its rules. Imran Ayyub

# Nepal PM Deuba, ally Dahal discuss common min plan

## Amid hectic lobbying for Cabinet berths

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal's newly-appointed Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Wednesday discussed with former premier Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' the common minimum programme for the remaining one-and-a-half-year term of the government even as coalition partners started hectic lobbying for Cabinet berths in lieu of the support they had extended during Sunday's trust vote in Parliament.

CPN-Maoist Centre Chair

Prachanda met Prime Minister Deuba, who is set to induct more ministers from the Nepali Congress and the CPN-Maoist Centre when he expands the Cabinet in the coming days. The Himalayan Times reported. Dahal's personal aide Bishnu Sapkota said that the two veteran leaders agreed to formulate a common programme on behalf of the five-party alliance, the report said, adding that coalition partner Janata Samajbadi Party-Nepal will also join the government.

Dahal and Janata Samajbadi Party-Nepal Co-chair Upendra Yadav also met CPN-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal. Leaders of the Nepal faction of the UML, the CPN-MC and the JSP-N had voted in favour of Deuba.

The Kathmandu Post reported that Deuba wants representation of all parties that stood by 75-year-old Deuba, President of the Nepali Congress.

"Discussions are going on with all the parties who supported us," Purna Bahadur Khadka, a Congress general secretary, told the Post.

Since all political parties have their own challenges, Deuba's Nepali Congress is no exception. The rival faction of the party, led by Ram Chandra Poudel, has demanded at least

one deputy prime minister post with the other General Secretary Shashanka Koirala, former vice-president Prakash Man Singh and senior leader Sujata Koirala vying for the post, the report said.

"But Deuba has made it clear that it is not possible and the Poudel faction will get just two portfolios in the Cabinet."

"One of the major reasons behind the delay in Cabinet formation is dynamics inside the Nepali Congress," a Nepali Congress leader close to Deuba said on condition of anonymity. Deuba has also assured one Cabinet portfolio to another camp of the party led by former general secretary Krishna Prasad Sitaula, he said. Nepal's Constitution allows only 25 Cabinet ministers.

Meanwhile, Deuba and Dahal also agreed to scrap all political appointments made by the previous K P Sharma Oli government, the report said.

The government has already scrapped the Oli government's recent decision to appoint ambassadors to some countries, it said.

Deuba, who was appointed as the prime minister for a record fifth time on July 12 following the Supreme Court's intervention, secured 165 votes in the 275-member House on Sunday.

# Haiti installs new leader as country mourns slain Prez

AP ■ PORT-AU-PRINCE (HAITI)

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

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



"The task that awaits us is complex and difficult," Henry said as he called for unity and promised to meet with various sectors in the upcoming days to build consensus. "I'm from a school that believes in dialogue."

He also thanked "sister nations" that he didn't identify for their solidarity and expertise in the ongoing investigation as he demanded that all

those responsible be brought to justice.

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

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

AP ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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

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

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

# US condemns Kabul attack

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

### GLOBE TROTTER

#### EX-PAK DIPLOMAT'S DAUGHTER MURDERED

Islamabad: A former Pakistani diplomat's daughter has been murdered here, according to a media report on Wednesday, just days after a diplomatic row broke out between Pakistan and Afghanistan over the alleged abduction of the daughter of Afghanistan's Ambassador in Islamabad, Noor Mukadam, 27, daughter of Shaukat Mukadam, was found dead in the capital's upscale Sector F-7/4 area on Tuesday, Dawn newspaper reported. Mukadam has in the past served as Pakistan's ambassador to South Korea and Kazakhstan.

#### S AFRICAN FIRM TO MAKE PFIZER VACCINE

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

#### RUSSIA LAUNCHES LAB MODULE TO ISS

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

**पंजाबीय विदेशालय, उत्तराखण्ड, देहरादून**  
रजका 638 / पं-2 / सेवा / विज्ञाप / 2020-21 दिनांक 20 जुलाई, 2021

**अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा आमंत्रण**  
पंजाबीय विदेशालय, उत्तराखण्ड द्वारा ग्राम मन्जहिनुपुर सतीलाखा खालसा, हरिद्वार में कॉमन वेस्ट प्लास्टिक रिसायकलिंग प्लांट में **LT Panel, Cabling and related Electrical Equipments** हेतु ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। ई-निविदा दिनांक 20 जुलाई, 2021 से वेबसाइट <https://ukntenders.gov.in/> पर उपलब्ध होगी।  
भविष्य में इस निविदा से सम्बन्धित कोई भी विवरण/ शुद्धि पत्र मात्र उक्त वेबसाइट पर ही प्रसारित किया जायेगा।  
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पंजाबीय विदेशालय

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

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

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

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

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

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

AP ■ GENEVA

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Hong Kong police arrest former Apple Daily editor

AP ■ HONG KONG

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

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

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

AP ■ TOKYO

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

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

The officials reaffirmed the importance of respecting international law, including maintaining freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea, and opposed any unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the East China Sea and in the Taiwan Strait.

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

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

# IBBI amends regulations for insolvency process

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CIRP refers to the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process.

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

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

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

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

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

The amendments have come into effect from July 14.

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



unchanged price of Rs 89.87 a litre.

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

great importance during these difficult times, it noted.

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.15.2."

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

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

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

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

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

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

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Bengaluru airport signs 10-year pact with IBM

**Bengaluru:** Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) -- operator of Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru (KIA/BLR Airport) -- has signed a ten-year partnership with IBM to create an "Airport in a Box" platform, which transforms technology, operations and customer experience.

IBM Hybrid Cloud capabilities, Red Hat Automation and Kyndryl managed infrastructure services will help BIAL improve productivity, automate IT and reduce costs, an IBM statement said on Wednesday.

BLR airport needed a nimble, scalable and cost-competitive technology and operations environment that can increase its agility and operational flexibility to handle future growth in passenger traffic, it said.

To achieve this goal, BIAL has selected IBM Global Business Services, IBM hybrid cloud capabilities and Kyndryl, the new, independent company that will be created following the separation of IBM's Managed Infrastructure Services business, to design and implement a next generation architecture. **PTI**

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

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

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

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

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

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

IANS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer, Guwahati

**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is informed to all concerned that Sh. Dhirendravir Rastogi S/o Sh. V.V. Rastogi R/o 9/3 Saranyya Vihar New Delhi-16 is the Owner of Plot No. D-34, Sector-55, Noida G.B. Nagar. He has executed Registered Agreement to sell and Will in favour of Sh. Bindya Basin Rai S/o Sh. B.N. Rai R/o Village & Post Desoria Distt. Ghazipur U.P. dated 03/08/2001 in Book No. 1 Volume No. 86 on page no. 1049 to 1060, Document No. 2832 at Sub. Registrar (II), Noida and Registered G.P.A in favour of Smt. Geeta Rai W/o Sh. R.K. Rai R/o Village & Post Desoria Distt. Ghazipur U.P. dated 3-8-2001 in Book No. 1 Volume No. 161 on page No. 737 to 745, Document no. 766 at Sub. Registrar (II), Noida Sh. Bindya Basin Rai has expired in January 2013.

Now the said above Plot is going to be transferred through the said above registered G.P.A in favour of Sh. Rajesh Kumar Rai S/o Late Sh. B.N. Rai R/o A-95, II Floor, Madhubani, Delhi-110092. If anyone has/have any objection, he/she may file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Residential Plot Department of Noida Authority, Sector-6, Noida within the 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. **Rajesh Kumar Rai**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chief Personnel Officer

**SEARCH FOR MISSING**

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

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

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

**SHO**  
**P.S. Khyala, Delhi**  
**DP/483/WD/2021 Ph: 011-28335686, 8750871132**

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

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

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

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

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

**NHSRCL, New Delhi**

**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**

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

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

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

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



# FIND HIS FUNNY BONE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

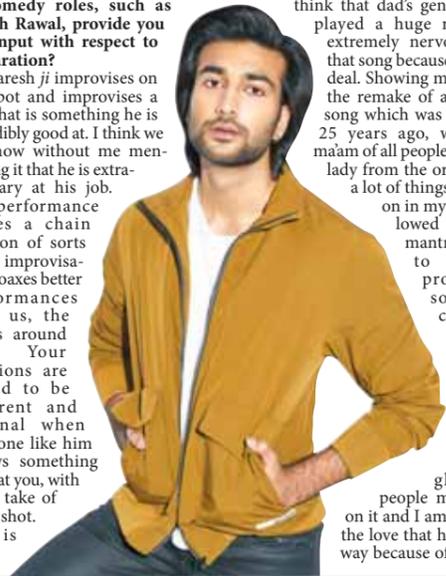
Seeing Paresh ji at work I have understood the significance of completely letting yourself go, without any inhibitions, in this industry. That, I would say, was the most important lesson — staying true to the character assigned to you. That is something I won't forget and will hopefully shape me as an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

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

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

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

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



## Extreme dedication

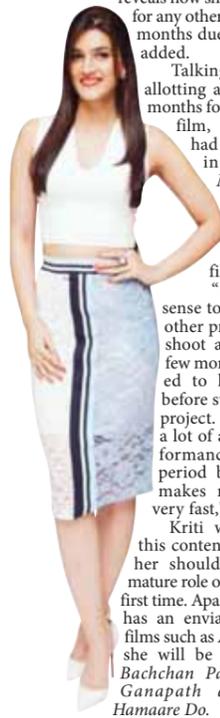
Actor KRITI SANON opens up about her drastic transformation in *Mimi*. By TEAM VIVA

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

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

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

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



## Adapting to the changing tides

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

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

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

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

### SOCIAL MEDIA

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



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

### SETTING UP ONLINE PAID CONCERTS

In these times, setting up online

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

### ONLINE REALITY SHOWS

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

### CONDUCTING ONLINE WORKSHOPS

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

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

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

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



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

Photos by Pankaj Kumar

## TRENDBLAZER



### ADVICE FOR BUDDING ACTORS: ANUPAM

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

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

### fairtalk

TANYA MANIKTALA



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

### dailytalk

AMIT SHARMA



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

### JULIA ROBERTS' TIMELESS MESSAGE

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

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



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

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

The campaign was launched in partnership with UNICEF and WHO. The goal is to connect over 50 lakh tribals, informing them that COVID-19 vaccination is free and available in the nearby centres. It not only protects people from hospitalisation costs and death but also helps to continue with livelihood activities.

**The campaign will highlight the three key Js:**

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## ESIC felicitation ceremony held

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

## NTPC achieves over 100 BUs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

## PNB adjudged best public sector bank

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

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

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

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

## Kolkata metro organises mobile vax camps

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

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

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



## RITES wins Dun & Bradstreet Corporate Award

RITES Ltd, a Miniratna (Category-I) Schedule 'A' Public Sector Enterprise, has been conferred Dun and Bradstreet Corporate Award 2021 for 'Best Growth Performance' in the Engineering Projects/Capital Goods category.

The award, presented by Dun & Bradstreet, recognises RITES' efforts in facilitating the

creation of transport infrastructure and its well-diversified business model.

Also, RITES has been profiled in the 21st edition of 'India's Top-500 Companies' based on total income, net profit and return on net worth et al. These companies across 50 sectors have grown faster than the Indian economy over the past 20 years.

Crediting "Team RITES" for this achievement, VG Suresh Kumar, director (Projects) and chairman and MD (Addl Charge), RITES Ltd, said, "We are delighted with this award. It is a testimony to our efforts in facilitating the creation of infrastructure in India and abroad, along with creating value for stakeholders."

## LIC LAUNCHES NEW HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN



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

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

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

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

**It gives the following benefits under one policy:**

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

tive of actual medical costs.

- Auto step-up benefit and no claim benefit.
- If more than one member is covered under a policy, a premium waiver for other insured(s) in case of unfortunate death of the original principal insured i.e. the policyholder at the inception of the policy.
- Premium waiver benefit for one year in the event of any insured undergoing surgery falling under Category I or Category II for certain major surgical benefits.
- Ambulance benefit.



## STF, DDA reviews progress of complaints

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

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

The 'Encroachment Removal Action' was under-

taken by NDMC at areas including Connaught Place, Palika Bazar, Gole Market, Janpath, Shankar Market, LBN, Sarojini Nagar and Chanakyaपुरi, VIP area.

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

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



## Rotary honours SRM Group Chairman

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

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

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

