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India rejoices at Chanu's feat

21-year-long wait for weightlifting medal at Olympics ends



Mirabai Chanu reacts during a successful attempt in the 49 kg category of Women's Weightlifting event of the Summer Olympics 2020 in Tokyo on Saturday

PTI

PTI ■ TOKYO

A confident smile never leaving her face, Mirabai Chanu ended India's over two-decade long wait for a weightlifting medal at the Olympics, clinching the 49kg category silver medal five years after leaving the same platform in tears following a disastrous

debut. With her historic triumph, she ensured that India was second on the medals tally for a brief while, a feat that has never been achieved before by the country. It was also the first time that India managed to win a medal on the opening day competitions.

The diminutive iron lady

from Manipur lifted a total of 202kg (87kg+115kg) to better Karnam Malleswari's bronze in the 2000 Sydney Olympics. With this, she exorcised the ghosts of the 2016 Games where she had failed to log a single legitimate lift, leaving her shattered.

"I am very happy, I have been dreaming of this for the

past five years. I am very proud of myself right now. I did try for gold but even silver is a great achievement for me," Chanu told reporters after her career-defining triumph for which she had been training in the US for past few months.

The 2016 experience was a watershed in her career and Chanu had spoken about how

Mother in tears as Mirabai sports 'good luck' earrings

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A historic silver medal and a radiant smile were not the only eye-catching things about Mirabai Chanu on Saturday, her gold earrings shaped like Olympic rings were as striking, a gift from her mother who sold her own jewellery for them five years ago.

The hope was that the earrings would bring her "good luck". It didn't happen in the Rio 2016 Games but Chanu made the little sacrifice count in Tokyo this morning with a

silver medal and Saikhom Ongbi Tombi Leima has struggled to stop her tears from flowing ever since.

"I saw the earrings on TV, I gave them to her in 2016 before the (Rio) Olympics. I have made it for her from the gold pieces and savings I have so that it brings luck and success," Leima told PTI from her home in Manipur where a considerable number of relatives, friends and well-wishers gathered to watch Chanu script history in Tokyo.

Continued on Page 9

confused she had felt during her debut at the biggest stage. There was none of those nerves to be seen on Saturday, just a very composed and focussed athlete who knew she was destined for the podium.

"I am very happy to win the first medal for India at these Games. I don't just belong to Manipur, I belong to the whole country," she said in response to a query on what it meant for her as a Manipuri.

"I would like to thank my coach Vijay Sharma and the support staff for their continuous hard work, motivation and training," she added.

Continued on Page 9

Could not have asked for a happier start to Tokyo 2020! India is elated by Mirabai Chanu's stupendous performance. Congratulations to her for winning the Silver medal in weightlifting. Her success motivates every Indian

— Narendra Modi

Heartiest congratulations to Mirabai Chanu for starting the medal tally for India in the Tokyo Olympics 2020 by winning silver medal

— Ram Nath Kovind

Better safe than sorry: Embassy to Indians in Af

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As fighting rages in Afghanistan, the Indian embassy there on Saturday said the situation "remains dangerous" and advised all Indian nationals there to exercise caution.

The advisory came days after the IAF planes evacuated more than 50 diplomatic staff of the Indian consulate in Kandhar.

The note of caution by the embassy in Kabul on Saturday urged Indians staying, visiting, and working in Afghanistan to exercise utmost vigilance at all times and avoid all non-essential travel as security situation in Afghanistan remains dangerous. It also warned Indian nationals are not exceptions, and they additionally face a serious threat of kidnapping.

The detailed advisory also asked the Indian nationals to remain vigilant with security at workplace, place of residence and also during movement to their places of work. It is recommended that all types of non-essential movements be avoided. Movements especially during peak commuting hours should also be avoided. While traveling on roads, maintain distance from possible targets like military con-

'Avoid travel as Af situation dangerous'



voys, official vehicles of Government and Ministries, high ranking officials, law enforcement agencies, it cautioned.

Indians were also asked to refrain from going to crowded markets, shopping complexes, restaurants and other public places. All essential movement may please be kept as discrete as possible, it said.

It also advised traveling outside the main cities should be strictly avoided. Moreover, all Indian nationals arriving in Afghanistan are advised to register with the Embassy.

Continued on Page 9

CAPSULE

BATLA HOUSE CONVICT ARIZ KHAN MOVES HC

New Delhi: Ariz Khan, who was awarded the death penalty for the murder of decorated Delhi Police Inspector Mohan Chand Sharma in connection with the sensational 2008 Batla House encounter case, has moved the Delhi High Court challenging his conviction and sentence.

ARMY JAWAN DIES IN MINE BLAST ALONG LOC

Jammu/Hamirpur: A 27-year-old Army jawan was killed in a mine blast along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said on Saturday. Sepoy Kamal Dev Vaidya was on operational duty in Krishna Ghati sector on Friday.

GOLD SMUGGLING: INDIGO, SPICEJET STAFF ARRESTED

New Delhi: Seven persons, including four staffers of Indigo and Spicejet airlines, were arrested by the customs officials at Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport here for allegedly smuggling into the country gold worth ₹72.46 lakh, an official statement said on Saturday.

Delhi Metro, buses to run at full capacity; theatres at 50%

But no standing allowed in Metro

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In the latest unlock guidelines issued on Saturday for the national Capital, the Delhi Metro and public buses in the city will operate at full seating capacity, while cinema halls, theatres and multiplexes will open with 50 per cent occupancy from Monday.

The city witnessed an unprecedented surge of cases and deaths during the second wave of coronavirus in April and May. The situation seems to have been improving over the past few weeks, allowing the Government to reopen the city in a phased manner.

The latest unlock guidelines by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority



(DDMA) said the Delhi Metro, the city's lifeline, will be allowed to operate with 100 per cent seating capacity from Monday but no standing passenger will be allowed.

Cinema halls, theatres and multiplexes will be allowed to open with 50 per cent seating capacity from July 26, while

business-to-business (B2B) exhibitions will also be allowed, but only with business visitors, the guidelines said.

The order also directed that number of people allowed at marriage functions and last rites will be raised to 100 from Monday.

Spas can also open from July 26 but their all employees have to be fully vaccinated or undergo RT-PCR test fortnightly, the DDMA said. Delhi faced a brutal second wave of the pandemic that claimed a large number of lives daily. The rapid rise in the number of cases led to a shortage of medical oxygen at various city hospitals.

On April 20, the city had reported a record 28,395 cases. On April 22, the case positivity rate was 36.2 per cent, the highest so far. At 448, the highest number of deaths was reported on May 3.

CBI raids 40 locations in fake arms licence case

Premises of 20 gun dealers, IAS officers in J&K, Delhi searched

PNS ■ JAMMU



According to a statement issued by the CBI headquarters, "CBI had registered two cases on the request of J&K Government and further notification from Government of India, and taken over the investigation of two FIRs i.e No.18 of 2018 dated 17.05.2018, earlier registered at Police Station Vigilance Organisation Kashmir (VOK), and FIR No. 11 of 2018 dated 17.05.2018 of Police Station Vigilance Organisation Jammu (VOJ) on the allegations of bulk issuance of arms licences in the erstwhile State of J&K during the period 2012 to 2016."

The CBI collected documents about the issuance of these arms licences allegedly spread over 22 districts of J&K.

During investigation and scrutiny of documents, the CBI reportedly found that certain gun dealers in connivance with District Magistrates were allegedly issued such illegal arms licences. The persons who got these licences were not residents of the places from where the said arms licences were issued.

Senior IAS officer Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, who served as DM in three districts of Reasi, Udhampur and Kathua during the said period of investigation, posted a tweet confirming the raid at his residence. "With reference to media reports I've to confirm that CBI did search my residence & found nothing incriminating in the ongoing arms licence probe. Media friends may note the probe covers 4 years across all dists. I am fully answerable to CBI for my tenure," Dr Shahid Iqbal wrote giving details of total arms licences issued during his tenure.

Blinken: Will discuss human rights in India as we share values

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Secretary of State Antony Blinken will raise issues of human rights and democracy with Indian officials during his first visit to New Delhi as the two nations have more values in common on those fronts than otherwise, according to a senior US official. Blinken is scheduled to arrive in New Delhi late on July 27.

During his stay in the country, he will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. The Ministry of External Affairs said in New Delhi that National Security Adviser Ajit Doval will also meet Blinken.

"With respect to the human rights and democracy question, yes, you're right; I will tell you that we will raise it, and we will continue that conversation, because we firmly believe that we have more values in common on those fronts



than we don't," Dean Thompson, the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, told reporters during a conference call ahead of the visit.

"We believe India is going to be a really important part of continuing those conversations and building strong efforts on those fronts in partnership as we go forward," Thompson said in response to a question.

India has previously rejected criticism by foreign Governments and human rights groups on allegations that civil liberties have eroded in the country.

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Massive evacuation in rain-ravaged Maha

89,000 moved to safety; relief ops continue

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

More than 89,000 people were evacuated from the rain-ravaged coastal Konkan region and several parts of western Maharashtra as multiple agencies continued rescue and relief operations in the flood-affected areas of the State on Saturday.

Despite a let-up in the rain in most parts of the State, large parts of western Maharashtra districts of Satara, Sangli and Kolhapur remained thick sheets of floodwater, while the towns of Chiplun, Khed in Ratnagiri district and other areas in coastal Konkan region continued to reel under inundation.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray visited Talai village in Mahad taluka of Raigad district where

more than 50 people were killed in a massive landslide on Friday. He assured the affected people that the State Government would, apart from giving compensation to the affected families, undertake rehabilitation of the displaced people across the coastal Konkan region and other parts of the State.

As many as 89,333 people were rendered homeless as they were evacuated in various flood-affected districts of coastal Konkan region and several parts of Western Maharashtra.

Sangli district in western Maharashtra bore maximum brunt of the flood situation arising from the heavy rain battering the region for the past four days.

While 40,573 people have been evacuated to safer places in Sangli district, the neighbouring Kolhapur district accounted for the evacuation of 40,882 people. As many as 2,681 marooned people were shifted to safer places in Thane district, there were evacuation

of people in other districts like Ratnagiri (1200), Raigad (1000), Satara (734) and Pune (263).

Due to heavy rainfall in the district and heavy discharge from the Koyna dam, rivers in the district, including the Panchgana breached the danger mark and contributed to inundation in many areas in Sangli and Kolhapur districts. On its part, the district administration evacuated people from low-lying areas with help of NDRF and local teams.

Apart from the heavy rain, the discharge of huge volumes of water from Almati dam is contributing to the flood situation in Kolhapur district. The authorities have sounded high alert and deployed more teams to face any eventuality.

Earlier in the day, the State Disaster Management Authority pegged the current rain-flood toll at 76, while another 59 have gone missing and 38 others were injured in the floods, landslides and other rain-related tragedies.

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People stranded in floodwaters watch others being rescued at Kolhapur in Maharashtra on Saturday. Officials say landslides and flooding triggered by heavy monsoon rain have killed more than 100 people in Maharashtra

AP

CM to inaugurate ISDA 2021 on July 28

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Hoping to tap the huge base of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) in the state to become potential suppliers to the defence sector, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be virtually inaugurating the Indigenisation Summit on Defence and Aerospace (ISDA 2021) on July 28.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home) and Chief Executive Officer of UP Expressway Industrial Development Authority Awanish Awasthi said in Lucknow on Saturday that the MSMEs could be effectively tapped to become potential suppliers to the defence sector with the right guidance on the requirements and ISDA aimed at taking a step in this direction.

"The UPEIDA being the nodal agency for development of UP Defence Industrial Corridor can further embolden the move with its lucrative land rates, enabling policy and upcoming common facilitation centre near the CCS International Airport in Amausi," he said.

The defence and aerospace sector in India is at an inflection point, given the modernisation and indigenisation programmes being undertaken by all three services of the second largest military force in the world with the fifth largest defence budget in the world. The defence sector is one of the key sectors under Make in India initiative of the Union government which has huge potential to boost manufacturing capability and employment in the country.

The importance of the sector can be highlighted from the fact that it is poised to reach \$26 billion by 2025 as per the government projections.

ISDA 2021 Chairman and Chairman of CII Northern Regional Committee on Defence, Manoj Gupta,

"The UPEIDA being the nodal agency for development of UP Defence Industrial Corridor can further embolden the move with its lucrative land rates, enabling policy and upcoming common facilitation centre near the CCS International Airport in Amausi"

remarked, "The MSMEs play a pivotal role in the defence manufacturing sector and act as incubation sector for defence technology. Aiming to improve the MSME ecosystem and boost domestic R&D manufacturing in the country, the Central and UP governments have been initiating several steps.

At CII, we are trying to supplement the government efforts through this summit by bringing various wings of defence services and industry at a common platform to create a better understanding of the demand and supply in the sector. The HAL, DRDO, Bharat Electronics & Ordnance Equipment Factory, Kanpur would be conducting vendor development programmes during the four-day summit."

Urging the industry for participation, Chairman of SIDM UP, Sachin Agarwal, said, "Given the regulatory environment in the country coupled with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, the time is ripe for the Indian MSMEs to enter defence and aerospace manufacturing. This is a unique opportunity where the DPSUs and senior personnel from the Indian defence segments would be interacting with the manufacturing enterprises."

Yogi: All districts of UP to have a medical college in six months

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Saturday that all 75 districts of the state would have medical colleges in six months. "It is ironic that only 12 government medical colleges were built in Uttar Pradesh between 1947 and 2016 but our government built 32 new medical colleges in four-and-a-half years since assuming office in 2017," he said after an inspection of Maharshi Devraha Baba Medical College in Deoria district.

It is one of the nine medical colleges of the state which will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as soon as the approval is granted by the Medical Council of India.

He said that the state government, with the help of the Centre and its own resources, had established a chain of medical colleges in the state covering as many as 59 districts.

"Such developmental activ-



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during an inspection of Maharshi Devraha Baba Medical College in Deoria

ities take place when the like-minded governments are there at the Centre and the state," he pointed out.

Expressing his gratitude to the prime minister for launching Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana, the chief minister said that five-seven years ago it could not have

been imagined that Deoria would also have a medical college.

He said that Rs 155 crore had already been spent on the Rs 208-crore project of Deoria medical college where the appointment of faculty had been completed while the remaining work would be com-

pleted by December this year.

The chief minister said that the people of eastern Uttar Pradesh would get world class medical facilities. He said there used to be only BRD Medical College in Gorakhpur which catered to the entire region but now there would be medical colleges in Deoria, Basti and Siddharthnagar too while the construction work was underway in Kushinagar.

"The AIIMS in Gorakhpur, with world class medical facilities, has also started serving in Gorakhpur. It will also be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in October," the chief minister said.

He said that the role of medical colleges had been significant in controlling the menace of pandemic in the largest populated state of the country. He said encephalitis was also controlled during the last four-and-a-half years. He said once Deoria was also among the most encephalitis-affected districts but now the deaths due to it had come down by 95 per cent.

Govt to provide free WiFi facility from Aug 15

Lucknow (PNS): The Yogi Adityanath government has planned a gift for the people, especially the youth, by ensuring availability of free WiFi facility at 217 public places across 75 district headquarters, municipal councils and 17 municipal corporations of the state from August 15 onwards.

The chief minister has directed officials of the Urban Development department to make necessary arrangements in this regard.

Divisional commissioners, district magistrates and municipal commissioners have been told to identify hotspots at major public places, including city bus stands, railway stations, tehsils, courts, block offices, registrar offices and main markets in order to provide free WiFi facility.

"After assuming office in Uttar Pradesh, the Yogi Adityanath government

provided free WiFi facility at major places in several cities of the state, including Lucknow. Hotspots were made available in Hazratganj area of Lucknow to enable people within a range of 50 metres from the hotspot to avail free WiFi. Now, the chief minister has decided to provide free WiFi at major public places of cities across the state. The government feels that WiFi is one of the necessities these days and free WiFi will benefit thousands of people in every city," a top government official said.

According to a plan prepared by the Urban Development department, free WiFi will be available at two places in big cities (municipal corporations) and at one place in towns. The state government will provide the free WiFi facility in Lucknow, Kanpur Nagar, Agra, Aligarh, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Jhansi, Bareilly, Saharanpur,

Moradabad, Gorakhpur, Ayodhya, Meerut, Shahjahanpur, Ghaziabad, Mathura-Vrindavan and Firozabad municipal corporations as well as in municipal councils.

The Urban Development department will tie up with internet service providers to provide free WiFi facility for people across the state with special focus on proper internet speed. "Municipal commissioners and executive officers have been told that the Smart City Project or urban bodies will bear the cost of the WiFi installation and the urban bodies have been asked to regularly provide information about the status of installations," the official said.

Also, internet service providers that are engaged in the installation of WiFi networks will also have to look after its maintenance to ensure that it works properly. The speed of the WiFi will be decided by the local authorities," the official informed.

BJP set to field all its veterans in UP Assembly polls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Gearing up for the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has prepared a mega plan and if sources are to be believed, the party is set to field all its veterans in the upcoming polls.

The ruling party leaders who are certain to contest the elections include Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Dinesh Sharma and BJP state president Swatantra Dev Singh, cabinet minister Mahendra Singh and others.

The BJP holds an overwhelming majority of 312 seats in the 403-seat UP Assembly at present and aims

to win over 300 plus seats in the next polls.

Well-placed sources in the BJP said in Lucknow on Saturday that Yogi Adityanath, currently a member of UP Legislative Council, would contest the poll from any constituency of his home district Gorakhpur. Similarly, other MLCs like Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya would contest from Sirathu seat of Kaushambi, and Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma from one of the Assembly constituencies of Lucknow and minister Mahendra Singh from Pratapgarh.

In 2019, Keshav Prasad Maurya was elected to the Lok Sabha from Phulpur constituency while Dinesh Sharma

was elected twice as Mayor of Lucknow.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently kicked off the UP poll campaign by praising Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's COVID-19 handling during his recent visit to his Lok Sabha constituency, Varanasi.

The UP cabinet is also likely to be expanded and seven ministers are expected to be inducted.

The sources said that appreciation from the prime minister sent a strong message to the Yogi detractors that they must get themselves ready to fight the UP Assembly polls under his leadership.

Earlier, the BJP organised a meeting of district working committees across the state. In

the meeting held in Lucknow, organisation general secretary Sunil Bansal said that people had to be connected as much as possible by running a special campaign and making door-to-door contact about the plans and ideology of the BJP. He recalled that Jan Sangh was once started with a team of five members and as on date was the largest outfit in the world.

With barely seven months remaining for the Assembly elections in UP, the BJP is trying to do its best to ensure that the party wins more seats than the 2017 polls.

The same thing was discussed in the coordination meeting of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh functionaries held for two days last

week. The RSS officials wanted the upcoming elections to be fought on the issue of nationalism and Hindutva with Yogi Adityanath as the mascot.

The BJP is presently facing challenges on several fronts in Uttar Pradesh. Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party chief Om Prakash Rajbhar has firmed up an alliance with All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) naming it as Bhagidari Sankalp. Besides, caste-based smaller outfits like Azad Samaj Party, Pragatishheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) and also parties like Aam Aadmi Party, Shiv Sena and Janata Dal United (JDU) have announced that they would be contesting the UP Assembly polls next year.

13 killed in separate road accidents

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Thirteen persons, including four pilgrims, were killed in different road mishaps reported in Rampur, Barabanki and Budaun during the last 24 hours.

In Rampur, five persons died on the spot and a woman was seriously injured when an oil tanker collided head-on with the car they were travelling near Ajiptur village on National Highway 24 on Saturday.

The driver of the tanker fled the scene after the accident abandoning his vehicle. The police were trying to ascertain the identity of the deceased through three cell phones recovered from the crash site.

The car was registered in the name of Rahul Bhati of Rampur.

In Barabanki, four pilgrims on their way to Majitha Naag Devta temple were killed and 18 others were injured when a tractor-trolley carrying them from Sitapur collided with a truck near Baddriuddindpur village on Dewa Road late Friday night.

The deceased were later identified as Santosh (30), Virendra (25), Chhotu (35) and Maya Devi (50), all residents of Bagulapara village in Sitapur. The injured were admitted to the district hospital in Barabanki.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief over the deaths of pilgrims in the accident and directed the Barabanki district authorities to provide adequate treatment to the injured.

In Budaun, four persons, including a child, were killed in a road accident on Bisauli-Aonla road near Dharampur Biharipur village under Bisauli police station late Friday night. The victims were returning from a marriage function on a motorcycle when they were hit by a speeding car.

The deceased were identified as Naresh (45), Meharban (42), Umesh (44) and eight-year-old Nandini. While Naresh and Meharban died on the spot, Umesh and Nandini succumbed to their injuries at the hospital. The police later seized the car but its driver managed to abscond.

AAP outfit demands White Paper on status of employment in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Aam Aadmi Party Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Samiti's state chief Vanshraj Dubey dared the Yogi Adityanath government to issue a White Paper on the status of employment in Uttar Pradesh. He alleged that the state government was presenting fudged data to cover up its failure on providing jobs. He said the state government had failed to complete the recruitments during its four-and-a-half year rule. "The Bharatiya Janata Party government has completed four-and-a-half years in office. At the time of assuming office in 2017, the Yogi government had promised 13 lakh jobs within 90 days but it failed miserably. The government is presenting fake data on jobs it gave to unemployed people in UP and this way it has frustrated the youths of the state. If the BJP government has indeed provided 4.5 lakh jobs then it should issue a White Paper to prove its claim," he said.

"The state government had announced recruitment for 12,387 through the UP Subordinate Services Selection Commission and all these vacancies are lying pending for various reasons. A similar situation prevails in other commissions set up for recruitment, be it recruitment of teachers or sub-inspectors. The unemployed youths are going through a harrowing time as they have been misled by the false promises of the BJP government and when they raise their concern by staging demonstrations they are beaten with lathis," he said. On the other hand, AAP Backward Cell state chief, AP Singh, alleged that the UP government was conspiring to end reservations for Backward Classes and warned of a massive agitation if the government played with the quota. He said the OBCs had played a big role in bringing the BJP to power in 2017 but the youths of the OBC community were cheated by the ruling party.

UP administers record 10.06L doses of Covid vaccines in single day

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Pipping another record in Covid vaccination on Friday, Uttar Pradesh administered as many as 10.06 lakh doses of the vaccine in a single day, taking the total number of jabs given till date to a whopping 4.38 crore.

A top state government official said, "We have surpassed our previous best performance in Covid vaccination which was around 10.03 lakh doses on July 6. The state government is sparing no effort to trace every case and contain the transmission of coronavirus infection and is now focusing on the importance of the vaccine to prepare itself in a better way against the anticipated third wave of COVID-19. Also, Uttar Pradesh has administered the maximum number of first doses to people in the age group of 18-44 years."

Meanwhile on Friday, the state also witnessed the sharpest decline in the number of active COVID-19 cases with the caseload standing at 932, a decrease of 99.6 per cent from its peak capped at 3.10 lakh cases on April 30. In the last 24



hours, over 2.55 lakh samples were tested, taking the total number of Covid tests conducted in the state to 6.37 crore. Besides, the positivity rate also slumped to 0.02 per cent, the lowest in the country.

The total number of fresh novel coronavirus infections detected in the last 24 hours in the state was just 42 while during the same period, 99 COVID-19 patients recovered across the state.

Where other states have been witnessing a surge in fresh coronavirus infections (daily cases in the range of 14,000-3,000), Uttar Pradesh has restricted the daily case count below 50. In what comes as a big relief, none of the 75 districts of the state reported fresh coronavirus cases in double digits.

सहायक आसूचना ब्यूरो गृह मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार 110, माल रोड लखनऊ

निविदा सूचना

आसूचना ब्यूरो लखनऊ द्वारा किये पर दिनांक **16.08.2021** से दिनांक **31.03.2022** तक लेने हेतु एक वाहन इन्वोवा क्रिस्टा के लिए निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। इच्छुक निविदाधारकों से अनुरोध है कि कृपया मोहरबंद निविदा व संबंधित निविदा प्रपत्र इस कार्यालय में दिनांक **02.08.2021** सायं पांच बजे तक जमा करा दें। **निविदा प्रपत्रों को इस कार्यालय के स्वागत कक्ष से दिनांक 26.07.2021 से दिनांक 02.08.2021 तक किसी भी कार्यदिवस पर सुबह दस बजे से सायं पांच बजे तक निशुल्क प्राप्त किये जा सकते हैं।**

अति० उप निदेशक

Subsidiary Intelligence Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 110 Mall Road, Lucknow-226001

Tender Notice

Subsidiary Intelligence Bureau, Lucknow invites quotations for hiring one vehicle (Innova Crysta) for the period 16.08.2021 to 31.03.2022. Prospective suppliers are requested to submit their quotations alongwith requisite documents in sealed covers at 110, Mall Road, Lucknow. Tender documents, free of cost, may be collected from Reception of our office on any working day from 1100 hrs to 1700 hrs from 26.07.2021 to 02.08.2021. The last date for submission of quotation and requisite documents is 02.08.2021 (1700 hrs.)

Sd/-
Additional Deputy Director

कार्यालय : परियोजना प्रबन्धक, निर्माण इकाई-14


यूपी00 प्रोजेक्ट्स कारपोरेशन लि०
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फ़ॉक- 846 /वीपीसीएल/ पब्लि 30-14 दिनांक 24 / 07 / 2021

अति अल्प-कालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

एतद्वारा इस इकाई के अन्तर्गत जनपद अमरोहा के 50 बेड संयुक्त चिकित्सालय बछरावू एवं 30 बेड सामुदायिक स्वास्थ्य केन्द्र हसनपुर में मेडिकल गैस पाइप लाइन की स्थापना हेतु निविदा सूचना संख्या-23 / यू.पी.सी.एल. / परि. प्रव.-14 / 2021-22 दिनांक 24.07.2021 द्वारा ई-टेंडरिंग के माध्यम से प्रतिशत दरों के आधार पर ऑनलाइन निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। आमंत्रित निविदा दिनांक 26.07.2021 से दिनांक 31.07.2021 अपरान्ह 3:00 बजे तक ऑनलाइन सबमिट की जा सकती है तथा तकनीकी बिड उसी दिन अपरान्ह 4:00 बजे अयोध्यालासरी के कार्यालय में खोली जायेगी। निविदा से सम्बन्धित आवश्यक सूचना, निविदा प्रपत्र, निविदा शर्तें एवं ऑनलाइन निविदा अपलोड किये जाने व खाननोड किये जाने की तिथि आदि का समस्त विवरण **www.upprojects.org** एवं **http://tender.up.nic.in** पर उपलब्ध है। परियोजना प्रबन्धक, निर्माण इकाई-14



NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ

E-Procurement Tender Notice No.: 21/54

E-Procurement Tender Notice

Date: 23.07.2021

On behalf of the President of India, The Principal Chief Materials Manager, North Central Railway, Prayagraj, (An ISO 9001:2015 certified unit) invites the following E-Procurement tenders.

SN	Tender No.	Short Description	QTY.	Tender Opening date
1	20213552	Head Light Lamp	75 Nos.	13.08.2021
2	20212836	PANTOGRAPH FOR HIGH SPEED AC ELECTRIC LOCOS	13 Set.	24.08.2021

Note: • The complete information of above Tenders can be seen and downloaded from IREPS website i.e. <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.

839/21 (R)

 North central railways

www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

 @ CPOR NCR

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ				
No. CC-2/GOODS/ DISPOSAL/2021		AUCTION NOTICE		Date : 23.07.2021
Auction of coals by Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, North Central Railway, Prayagraj at Chunar Goods shed.				
1	Place	Chunar Goods shed / Chunar Railway station, District Mirzapur		
2	Commodity of auction	COAL		
3	Quantity (Weight)	137 Tonne (Estimated)		
4	Date, day and time day of auction	10.08.2021, Tuesday Time 11.00		
5	Date and Time of opening of sealed estimate cost envelope	In the presence of the competent authority on the prescribed date and time.		
Terms and Conditions: 01. Interested persons can participate in the auction on the predetermined date and time along with photo identity card and by depositing Rs.1,000/- as security deposit. 02. The item will be auctioned in favour of the highest bidder as per rules. 03. The above security deposit will be adjusted in favour of successful bidder and the same will be refunded to the un-successful bidders. 04. The successful bidder will have to deposit the offered amount by 17.00 in the office and will have to remove the auctioned goods from the railway premises within prescribed time by the railway administration. The failure to do so will result in forfeiture of the security deposited and the goods auctioned will not be given. 05. 5% GST will be levied on the auctioned amount and successful bidder will have to deposit the same in cash along with the auctioned amount. 06. Successful bidder will have to remove the auctioned goods from the railway premises within the time period fixed by the railway. If the auctioned goods are not removed from the railway premises within the fixed, Wharfage charges will be levied on the auctioned goods as per railway rules. 07. Railway reserves the right to postpone or cancel the process of auctioning under any foreseen circumstances, as per rule.				
				838/21 (AN)
North central railways		www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in		@ CPORNCR

Results sans exams evoke mixed feelings

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Results without examinations evoked mixed feelings amongst the ISC and ICSE students. However, they were undeterred in terms of their big plans for future. The results were declared by the Council of Indian School and Certificate Education (CISCE) on Saturday afternoon without the usual buzz in the school premises, unlike in the pre-Covid times.

Majority of the students said that the corona pandemic played a spoilsport and they were not able to have interactive classes throughout the academic session. However, some felt that the pandemic gave them sufficient time to prepare for entrance exams. They said they had no plans for celebrations and they were missing out on the fun after board exam results.

Yash Raj Gupta, a Class 12 student of City Montessori School who scored 99.75 per cent marks, said: "I was a little nervous before the results were declared. The pandemic has not dampened my enthusiasm as I got a lot of time for self-study."

He said he aims to become an engineer and appeared for JEE in April. "I am aiming to go into Robotics engineering and serve the country in different sectors," he added.

Radhika Gupta, a Class 12 student of CMS who also scored 99.75 per cent marks, said she had been feeling a little anxious before the results were declared since she had not appeared for exams. She said she was not missing out on the general excitement which prevailed when the results were declared because her focused on NEET scheduled for September.

"I want to be a doctor and serve the country because there is a shortage of good doctors, especially when we are in the middle of a pandemic. The pandemic has affected us in a very adverse manner because we did not go to the school in our last year and we were not able to interact with our friends. It was a stressful time for all. I myself got Covid and was home quarantined for a month. It also adversely affect-



Radhika Gupta



Sankalp Dwivedi



Vanshika Agarwal



Yash Raj Gupta

ed my studies because I always learn better with personal interaction with my teachers. Online studies are fine but cannot replace the actual classroom studies," she said.

Asmita Swapnil, a Class 12 student of CMS who also scored 99.75 per cent marks, said she was nervous and excited about the results. "We missed out on the fun of attending the classes and there is always this excitement of taking the exams. I am also afraid that we would always get to hear 'tum toh aise hi pass ho gaye', but it is fine," she added.

She said the corona pandemic affected everything, included studies and social life. "One needs a positive mind set for studies. During the corona and lockdown, I noticed that all my stamina for studying was lost and enthusiasm reduced because I was always at home. Staying at home was tough because I am an outgoing extrovert and I always perform better under pressure. Had I gone to school, I would have studied more," she added.

Asmita said that normally, a student remains relaxed during the pre-boards because they have boards to clear. "Had I known that only pre-boards would count, I would have taken it more seriously," she said. She added that she was not planning any celebrations for her results.

"I don't like meeting my friends wearing masks and when we visit another person's house, we hesitate in eating. I am missing out on eating and going out with my friends without masks on," she said.

Asmita said she aims to become a doctor. "It's my dream and that of my family. I have always felt doctors are

very cool and in India they are held in high esteem by general public," she added.

Sankalp Dwivedi, a Class 12 of City Montessori School who scored 99.75 per cent marks, said the pandemic impacted his studies in a major way.

"I contracted coronavirus infection and had to remain in the hospital for 22 days. The cancellation of exams affected me adversely because I was aiming to get 100 per cent marks. Because of the pandemic, I could not study well till December and my first pre-board exam also did not go well. In the second exam, I got a hundred per cent in all the subjects and I was waiting for the boards to do an

encore," he said. He added that he is very excited about the future.

"I am not too bothered about the marks which I score but I am looking forward to doing BSc (Physics) since I want to become an Astrophysicist as India is lagging behind in this sector. The study requires a lot of endurance and commitment of over 10-12 years. Corona cannot kill the fire inside me for doing something in this area," he added.

Vyom, a Class 12 student of Seth MR Jaipuria School, said it was a mixed feeling till the results were declared. "The corona pandemic did affect us but also gave us more time for competitive exams. I am

appearing for NEET," he said. He added that the online classes are sufficient as regards the preparations.

Amitesh Kashyap from Lucknow Public School (Rajajipuram) scored 99.75 per cent marks in Class 12. He said he aims to become an engineer and make the country proud of his achievements.

Vanshika Agarwal, a Class 10 student of Seth MR Jaipuria School who scored 98.16 per cent marks, said she is very happy. "In the beginning, I was not comfortable with the online classes but gradually I got used to it, though offline classes are much better. I did well in pre-boards because I had a feeling that board exams could be cancelled," she said.

No merit list declared by CISCE

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Council of Indian School and Certificate Education (CISCE) declared no merit list this year too as the results of the ICSE and ISC were declared on Saturday.

"Given the exceptional circumstances under which the results have been prepared, this year too, the CISCE will not be publishing the merit lists for the ICSE and ISC Year 2021 examinations. This year has been an extremely difficult one for the entire country, with the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic wreaking havoc and impacting every aspect of life, especially the educational sector. In spite of the severe crisis, the CISCE, has against all odds and difficult circumstances, prepared, and tabulated the results for the ICSE

(Class X) and ISC (Class XII) examinations," chief executive and secretary of the Council Gerry Arathoon said.

He said that to tabulate the results, the CISCE, after much deliberations, had decided on several broad parameters which were used for the compilation of marks.

"For the ICSE (Class X) examination, the parameters were the average marks of papers, subjects scored by the candidates in various tests, examinations conducted by the school at the Class IX and Class X levels, through the academic years 2019-20 and 2020-21, respectively and internal assessment marks (the project and practical work for the ICSE Year 2021 examination)," he said.

He further said that for the ISC (Class XII) examina-

tion, the parameters were the average marks of papers, subjects scored by the candidates in various tests, examinations conducted by the school at the Class XI and Class XII levels, through the academic years 2019-20 and 2020-21, respectively, the Class X average marks (English + best four subjects) and the marks of the project work or practical examination for the ISC Year 2021 examination.

"The data submitted by the schools was analysed by a team of reputed statisticians from some of the premier institutions in the country, along with senior officials of the CISCE. While devising the methodology for computing marks, the endeavour was to ensure fairness to all candidates concerned to the best possible extent," he added.

40 CMS students score 99.75% in ISC

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

City schools did well in the ISC and the ICSE 2021 results which were declared on Saturday afternoon. As many as 40 meritorious students of City Montessori School created history by securing 99.75% marks in the ISC (Class 12) exams.

Besides, 121 CMS students secured above 99% marks in ISC (Class 12) while 831 students passed with above 95% marks while an astounding number of 1,974 CMS students (72.12%) students secured above 90% marks. CMS had a total of 2,737 students in ISC this year.

In ICSE (Class 10), five CMS students secured between 99% and 99.40% marks this year. As many as 40 meritorious students who secured 99.75% marks in ISC (Class 12) included Apul Ranjan,

Kushagra Shankar Saxena, Paarth Dwivedi, Rishika Shukla, Shubhi Kapoor, Shyam Agarwal, Saad Furqan, Yashfeen Shahrar, Prabhav Khara, Aditya Chaturvedi, Aniket Kanojia, Arindam Chaturvedi, Bhoomi Maurya, Divyanshi Verma, Krishnanshu Pandey, Manisha Singh, Priyank Yadav, Sanvika Bansal, Satvik Tekriwal, Saubhagya Tiwari, Shagun Trivedi, Vanshika Mittal, Vishal Chaudhary, Anukriti Dutta, Asmita Swapnil, Atharv Sharma, Prakriti Tandon, Radhika Gupta, Sankalp Dwivedi, Sanskriti Gautam, Shinjini Kacker, Stuti Upadhyay, Sumedha Rastogi, Syed Mohd Mustafa, Yash Raj Gupta, Devsh Agarwal, Mohd Taha Khan, Shivam Saxena and Sachin Srivastava.

Similarly, students securing marks between 99% and

99.40% marks in ICSE (Class 10) included Priyanka Arora (99.40%), Aditya Singh (99.20%), Shubhanshi Srivastava (99.20%), Abhigyan Gopal Bhartiya (99%) and Ananya Agarwal (99%). A total of 3,416 CMS students appeared for ICSE exams and 2465 students (72.16%) secured above 90% marks. Besides, 1,078 students secured 95% or above marks.

At the Career Convent Girls' College, Shraddha Srivastava secured 98%, Zaara Alam 97%, Shruti Verma 97%, Shikha Dubey 96%, Nidhi Verma 96% and Ankita Bora 96%.

At the Lucknow Public Schools and Colleges, 103 students of ICSE and 112 of ISC got above 95% marks while 315 students of ICSE and 243 students of ISC scored 90% and above marks. In ICSE, 871 students and in ISC, 726 stu-

dents appeared for the exams.

ISC achievers included Prabhav Mishra and Utkarsh Patel (LPC, Sahara States), Amitesh Kashyap (LPC, A-Block, Rajajipuram) got 99.75%, Mayank Pratap Singh & Suryanshu Verma (A-Block, Rajajipuram) 99.5%, Vaishnavi Gupta & Aditya Karan (LPC-A-Block, Rajajipuram) 99.25%, Shivanshu Singh 98.25%, Ankita Verma and Swetchha Shukla (LPC, Sahara States) 98% marks.

The ICSE achievers included Jahnvi Pandey (97.8%), Saba Parveen (97.8%), Bhumika Pandey (97.6%), Vatsal Kumar Singh (97.6%) and Bhavya Tripathi (97.4%) while Eva Dubey, Hidayatullah, Urvarshi Srivastava, Kushagra Srivastava, Mandvi Srivastava, Manas Chaudhary, Tanmay Singh and Shreya Singh scored 97.2% marks.

At SKD Academy, it was a 100% result even in the pandemic times. In ISC, Anushka Kaushal topped with 97.25% marks, followed by Mohd Waris & Vaishnavi Srivastava (97% each) on the second spot, while Shreshtha Gupta got 96.5% marks and secured third position. Charchit Agarwal and Vaibhav Yadav got 96.25% marks each and shared the fourth spot while Lipi Sharma secured fifth place with 96% marks.

In ICSE, Rashi Gaur topped with 99.2% marks while Aryan Singh got 98.8% marks and achieved the second spot. Diksha Vaish scored 98.6% marks and ended up on the third spot while Ishan Rastogi, Arpita Singh and Zoya Rafi got 98.4% each and shared the fourth spot. Apoorva Verma, Banshika Singh and Saksham Gupta scored 98.2% each and shared the fifth position.

Mumbai-based realtor duped of ₹9.39 crore by sand mafia

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Director of a Mumbai-based real estate company lodged a case against five people alleging that he was defrauded of Rs 9.39 crore. The accused included Anand Kumar Singh aka Baba Trikaladarshi, who, the victim alleged, is a sand mafia active in Banda.

In his complaint, Deepak Sharma of Malad (Mumbai) said he met Trikaladarshi of Eldeco Colony in PGI police station area of Lucknow at a party in Mumbai in December 2018.

Trikaladarshi introduced himself as a sand miner and became friendly with Deepak who was interested in dealing in sand mining and had a good hold in market in Banda.

Deepak, along with his friend Ajay Singh, visited Lucknow three times between December 2018 and February 2019 and stayed in hotels in Vibhuti Khand area. Deepak also had a meeting with Trikaladarshi at the house of latter's aide Rajeev Paliwal in Gomtinagar. During the meetings, Trikaladarshi's friends Navneet Singh Bhadauriya, Vijay Prajapati and others also used to accompany him.

Deepak said Trikaladarshi boasted of his links with people in the power corridors and told him that government ten-

ders for sand mining would be out in Banda and asked Deepak to transfer over Rs 1 crore in his account for facilitating him the contract.

Later, at the behest of Trikaladarshi, his aide Vijay Pal applied for the tender from his own firm, VP Constructions, while keeping Deepak in the dark. When Deepak demanded an explanation, he was told that he would be holding the reins.

The accused later lured Deepak into striking a partnership and promised to keep the right to sell the sand excavated from the sites and took the remaining sum on different occasions. In due course of time, Trikaladarshi started selling the sand on behalf of his aide Vijay Pal's firm and it led to differences between him and Deepak.

Deepak alleged that Trikaladarshi and his men started committing fraud in sand excavation and its sale and he objected to that. "To iron out the differences, Trikaladarshi called a meeting at a hotel in Vibhuti Khand on March 9 earlier this year. When I pointed out cheating and violation of terms and conditions of the partnership, Trikaladarshi and his men held me at the gun-point and threatened to kill me. They told me that it was UP where they ruled the roost.

They said they would kill me and bury me any time. My colleagues Ajay Singh, Prakash Rai and Pramod Tiwari somehow saved me from their clutches," he stated in the complaint.

He said he was told by his well-wishers that Trikaladarshi had served jail term in a case of bank fraud which was probed by CBI, and Rajeev & Navneet were named in a case of illegal mining in Hamirpur, also being probed by CBI.

ARRESTED

A 45-year-old man was arrested on Saturday for sexually harassing a minor girl in Gudamba. He was named in the case three days ago. The accused was identified as Bablu Giri aka Badlu Seth of Lakhimpur Kheri presently staying in Mishripur locality in the area.

The police had challaned him under sections 354 (a) (for assaults or use of criminal force against any woman or abetment of such act with the intention of disrobing or compelling her to be naked), /504/506 (threatening and abusing) of IPC. He was also booked under POCSO Act.

Parents of the victim had lodged the case on July 21 naming the accused. On the fateful day, the accused lured the girl on some pretext and sexually harassed her.

Thieves strike at posh colony in Jankipuram

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A gang of thieves struck at four houses in a posh locality of Jankipuram but stole ornaments and cash from only one house on Friday. The incident came to light when the house owner returned on Saturday. Locals, under the banner of Sahara Estate Residents-Owners Association, took a march in protest against the spate of theft incidents in the colony and also complained to the maintenance officer.

Swapnil Singh of New Malhar Apartment in the area said that he, along with his family, had gone to his native house in Basti on July 22 and the house was locked. "The thieves cut open the window grill to gain access to my house and decamped with Rs 2 lakh in cash and ornaments worth several lakh. I called the secretary of the residents association. Later, some of the residents and office-bearers of the association reached the scene. It surfaced that the thieves had broken the locks at three other houses in the area but they could not commit theft there as there were interlocks placed," he said.

Later, a team of police reached the scene. During investigation, the police a CCTV footage in which three thieves were seen attempting to break the lock of the houses. They were seen turning their faces to hide themselves on spotting CCTV cameras.

Locals took out a protest march and demanded that security arrangements in the colony be beefed up to prevent theft incidents.



Preparations underway at Mankameswar temple in Lucknow on Saturday, on the eve of the start of Sharavan month

CH. CHARAN SINGH UNIVERSITY (CAMPUS), MEERUT
SIR CHHOTU RAM INSTITUTE OF ENGG. & TECH. (SCRIET)
INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS STUDIES (IBS)
COUNCELLING CODE (AKTU) FOR B. TECH./ MCA/ MBA-1506

Registration/Admission Notice for 2021-22
B. Tech./ MCA / B.Sc. Computer Science (Hons.). BBA/ MBA/ BBA (Hospital Administration) / MBA (Hospital Administration)
Online Registration / Admission in the University Campus in B.Tech. (CSE,ITE,ME, ECE, AGE, CE, 1st & 2nd year (Lateral Entry) El(only lateral entry), B.Sc. Computer Science (Hons.), MCA, BBA, MBA, BBA (Hospital Administration) and MBA (Hospital Administration) running in the University Campus are opened. For more details visit official web portals www.ccsuweb.in or ccsuuniversity.ac.in / scriet or
Contact: (0121) 2770083, 2774974, 2763064, 9808622540.
REGISTRAR

मोहिनी बी. मनवाणी गर्ल्स डिग्री कालेज
(अल्पसंख्यक संस्थान)
आवास विकास नं.-3, पनकी कल्यानपुर रोड, कल्यानपुर, कानपुर - 208017

डी.एल.एड. (बी.टी.सी.) सत्र 2021-23 हेतु ऑन-लाइन आवेदन
अल्पसंख्यक संस्थान में प्रबन्धकीय कोटे के अन्तर्गत डी.एल.एड. (बी.टी.सी.) 2021 में प्रवेश हेतु ऑन-लाइन आवेदन आमंत्रित है, ऑन-लाइन आवेदन हेतु शैक्षिक अर्हता, आयु एवं अन्य मानक व शर्तें उत्तर प्रदेश शासन के नियमानुसार होगी। प्रवेश मेरिट के आधार पर किये जायेंगे तथा प्रवेश प्रक्रिया व चयन उ.प्र. शासन के मानकानुसार किये जायेंगे। ऑन-लाइन आवेदन महाविद्यालय की वेबसाइट www.mbmngdc.in पर दिनांक 25.07.2021 से 12.08.2021 तक कर सकते हैं। अल्पसंख्यक समुदाय के अभ्यर्थियों को वरीयता दी जायेगी।
प्रबंधक

Focused, random sampling in Ganj, surrounding areas

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

Hazratganj and the surrounding VIP areas under the Nawal Kishore Road CHC witnessed more than 15,000 corona cases in the second wave. The CHC is now gearing up to tackle the third wave by carrying out focused and random sampling in commercial markets, residential VIP areas and amongst general public.

Superintendent of the Nawal Kishore Road CHC Dr YK Singh, who is also a public health expert, admitted that there was a time when they had over 400 cases daily during the second wave. He said that areas which come under the CHC include Hazratganj to Lalbagh, back side area of KD Singh 'Babu' Stadium, Vikramaditya Marg, Butler Palace, Dalibagh, CSI Towers, Baalu Adda, Jiamau, Narhi, CM residence, Annexe, Lok Bhawan, Raj Bhawan etc.

He said they have identified the hotspot areas such as Raj Bhawan where those posted from the battalions for duty from other districts tested positive, Butler Palace, Narhi, Jiamau, Neelmatha, Telibagh, Akash Enclave, Ghasiyari Mandi and Hazratganj itself because of the several offices located here.

"The reason for the spread of the infection during the second wave in



these areas was that the commercial belt was located in this main area and several people who live in other areas came for work here, be it banking, big institutions or headquarters, DRM Office and other government departments. The reason which we analysed was that people coming from outside brought the infection and spread it to other employees," he said.

Dr Singh said whenever they carried out testing at the Laxman Mela

grounds and Baalu Adda in the slum areas, they got all negative results. "The cases were found only in the posh colonies or government offices," he pointed out.

He said that focused sampling was being carried out as per the directions of the state government where they received per-day targets, otherwise they carried out extensive contact tracing in which if even one person is found positive, several others are tested.

"For example, recently we found three cases in Raj Bhawan and we tested the entire staff. For every case which emerges in a belt, we carry out sampling of 100," he said. He added that random sampling is being carried out in Jiamau, Vrindavan while daily sampling in Hazratganj.

In Hazratganj, we visit garment shops on one day and sweet shops the other, as also coaching institutes and schools. We keep sampling so that coronavirus does not spread," he said.

He said they are covering a population of 2.37 lakh and have a good coverage of vaccinations over one lakh people have been jabbed.

"We have vaccinated more than one lakh people because we have held camps at the KD Singh 'Babu' Stadium. Vaccines are also being sent by us to the Information department, and Civil & Jhalkari Bai hospitals. In the cluster vaccinations, we were told by the district magistrate to cover two wards, Ram Teerath & Raja Ram Mohan Roy wards, and we vaccinated 10,000 people in six days. We have regularly held camps covering not less than 30,000 people," he said. He added that people are aware of the importance of vaccination and want to get jabbed.

However, he admitted that people are now flouting Covid guidelines and are not following Covid protocols.

COUNCIL OF ARCHITECTURE
A Statutory Authority of Government of India
India Habitat Centre, Core 6A, 1st Floor, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003

NATA 2021
EXAMINATION NOTICE: NATA-2021
Subject:- Announcement of Third Test of NATA-2021
The Council of Architecture is pleased to announce that the Third Test of National Aptitude Test in Architecture (NATA) 2021 shall be conducted on September 3, 2021.
As per the Regulations of 2020, all candidates need to qualify an Aptitude Test conducted by the Council (i.e. NATA) for admission to B.Arch. course. Therefore, all candidates who have passed in any other aptitude test in Architecture conducted by other authorities shall also be required to qualify NATA in order to be eligible for admission to the B.Arch. course.
As per NATA 2021 Brochure, a candidate shall be allowed to appear for NATA 2021 only for a maximum of two times. Therefore, candidates who have not appeared in either one or both tests of NATA are eligible to register and appear for Third NATA Test. Further, those candidates who, after registering themselves for NATA, could not appear or remained absent in the either one or both tests of NATA due to any reason, may also register for Third NATA Test.
The NATA portal shall also be opened shortly to facilitate the students to register for Third NATA Test. The NATA-2021 Brochure with details of registration & other important dates for Third test shall be soon uploaded on the websites www.nata.in and www.coa.gov.in.
The eligible candidates desirous to take admission into 1st year of 5-year B.Arch. degree course are advised to register themselves for Third Test of NATA-2021.
July 25, 2021
New Delhi
Registrar

Guru Purnima celebrated with simplicity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

For the second time in succession, Guru Purnima was celebrated in this ancient holy city with simplicity without a big gathering of shishyas (disciples) here on Saturday. Contrary to normal times, no big functions were organised at some leading religious institutions as generally on this auspicious occasion, the rush of followers is seen throughout the day. The coronavirus pandemic dampened the festive spirit as most of the disciples observed the day indoors, seeking blessings from their teachers. At most of the religious places including ashrams and maths, only a limited number of people were allowed to seek blessings from their gurus.

On the appeal of head Gurupad Sambhav Ram, for the second continuous year thousands of followers from different states did not turn up and the main gate remained closed. As the ashram located at Parao on the northern outskirts of the city is big where scores of people including the employees of Bhagwan Awadoor Kusht Ashram live, they sought the blessings of the Guru by maintaining social distance. This leprosy centre entered the Guinness Book of World Records for treating the maximum number of patients through traditional methods. Earlier, a few followers took out a prabhat pheri and offered shramdaan to make the premises clean. Gurupad Sambhav Ram offered prayers to Aghoreshwar Mahaprabhu and secretary of Shri



Scenes of Guru Purnima (from top left clockwise) at Parao Ashram, Garhwa Ghat, Patalipuri and Kinaram Ashram in Varanasi on Saturday

Pioneer

Sarveshwari Samuh Dr SP Singh hoisted flag near the statue of Baba Kinaram followed by the safal yoni path by Prithvipal.

Similarly, yet another big ashram is located on the southern outskirts of the city where scores of sadhus and many others sought blessings from Peethadishwer Sadguru Sarnanand. Normally, like Parao ashram, three-day festivals are organised on the occasion in a grand manner. The ashram, which runs several educational and health institutions, has a large number of followers and it is the reason why Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and other dig-

nitarities visited it recently.

The same was the scene at yet another big institution, Kinaram (Krikund) Ashram located in the mid-city area of Ravindrapuri.

Only a few followers did the formalities of the day in a symbolic manner seeking blessings from Peethadishwar Aghoracharya Baba Siddharth Gautam Ram.

Unlike previous years, there was no festive mood seen outside as main doors remained closed.

In the same manner, only a limited number of followers sought blessings from their gurus including Peethadishwar Santosh Das at Sathuwa Baba Ashram, Mahant of Sankat Mochan temple Prof VN

Mishra and many others.

At Patalipuri Math, several Muslims including women and other disciples sought the blessings from Mahant Balak Das. Muslim women reached there under the leadership of chief of Muslim Mahila Foundation Nazneen Ansari. Co-convenor of Puranchal (eastern UP) unit of Muslim Rashtriya Manch Mohd Azharuddin, Afsar Baba, Safiq Ahmed and many others were also present. At Srividya Math, Kedarghat, the function began amidst the chanting of Vedic mantras recited by P Guru Prasad and Pt Nikhil Tiwari followed by shehnai presentation by Mohan.

Then the devotees offered prayer at the portraits of their Gurus.

Guru Purnima celebrated with pomp and show

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Guru Purnima was celebrated on Saturday with pomp and show. During this, with devotion and faith, the devotees also visited the temples, monasteries and temples to seek blessings. The disciples expressed their gratitude to the gurus who enabled them to cross the entire ocean of knowledge. Devotees from far and wide came to Prayagraj for Guru Darshan and worship on Guru Purnima. The disciples prayed to the gurus by performing aarti, worshipping and bowing their heads at their feet and wishing to attain lifelong companionship. The gurus also blessed the disciple for liberation from the whole ocean of material.

Bathing in the Sangam started from the morning itself. The devotees of Sanatan Dharma after bathing and meditating in the Sangam, performed charity as per the instructions of the pilgrimage priests. After this, they reached the monasteries and temples to worship the gurus.

Devotees had come from far and wide to worship Jagadguru Swami Vasudevanand, a member of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, at Shankaracharya Ashram



Sankaracharya Swami Vashudevanand Saraswati offering prayers to Aadi Sankaracharya on the occasion of Guru Purnima in Prayagraj

Pioneer

Alopibagh. Everyone was given entry after thermal scanning. All the events were organised following physical distancing. At the same time, Mahant Narendra Giri, President of Akhara Parishad in Shrimath Baghambari Gaddi, performed rudrabhishek in the morning for flag worship and public welfare. After this his disciples worshiped him and performed

aarti. The disciples coming from outside offered prasad in bhandaras.

Guru Purnima Mahotsav was organised under the chairmanship of Dr Rameshwar Prapannacharya Shastri at Sridevaraha Baba Ashram located at Triveni Dam. The image of Shankaracharya Swami Swaroopanand was worshiped

under the leadership of Brahmachari Sridharanand in the ancient Mankameshwar temple. After this Dharanand's disciples worshiped him. Devotees from far and wide came to seek the blessings of Prabhu ji, the founder of Om Namah Shivaya Sansthan located at Gaughat. Disciples took blessings by worshipping the Guru.

NCR GM holds review meeting

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

General Manager of North Central Railway VK Tripathi conducted a review meeting through video-conferencing to discuss safety and punctuality issues.

While reviewing safety related issues, the GM said that staff should be regularly counselled and updated to ensure safety in train operations. He said that it is the duty of officers to ensure that instructions received from Railway Board and Headquarters should reach and get understood by the field staff properly.

Taking serious note of the damage caused due to the open doors of freight trains, the General Manager directed the officers concerned to ensure

that the doors are properly closed at every loading and unloading point. Apart from this, the trains received from other zones should also be monitored carefully.

The General Manager also discussed brake binding, maintenance of signaling gears and OHE implements and management of other assets. He also directed to form a committee for assessing the brake binding cases occurring in LHB coaches. He reviewed the progress with respect to the target of closure of level crossings during the current financial year. He directed that action should be taken to close the crossings as soon as the work of road overbridge or road underbridge is completed. North Central Railway has set a target of con-

struction of 75 road underbridges during the current year, out of which 04 works have been completed.

NCR TO CELEBRATE 'AZADI KA AMRIT MAHOTSAV': In response to the call of the Ministry of Culture to celebrate 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' on the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence, North Central Railway has decided to celebrate the occasion for 75 weeks from now.

On August 15, India will be celebrating the 75th anniversary of Independence. So 75 weeks prior to the 75th anniversary, NCR is celebrating the entire period as 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

As curtain raising activities, NCR is celebrating important

days associated with the great people who were associated with the freedom struggle. NCR has planned activities including paintings, drawings, speech competitions to commemorate the legends involved in national movement.

An important part of the event is to commemorate and pay homage to them to mark their presence on social media.

In tune with it NCR celebrated the birth anniversary of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Shaheed Chandrashekhar Azad on Friday. Under this, posts related to their supreme sacrifices were shared on official social media accounts of NCR — Twitter, Facebook, Koo and Instagram. Also, visuals were displayed at Prayagraj station.

Elaborate security at KV temple in Shravan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Elaborate security arrangements have been made to maintain peace as well as Covid-19 norms in one of the Dwadasa Jyotirlinga Kashi Vishwanath temples on the eve of the start of auspicious month of Shravan here on Saturday. As the first Monday of the month is falling on the second day, it is expected that

despite all the restrictions on arrival of saffron-clad kanwarrias, the rush of devotees may come. Both inside and outside, proper barricades were put up in order to check the rush and maintain social distancing. Security arrangements at other famous Shiv temples of the city and on the outskirts have also been strengthened.

To see all the arrangements, senior administrative

and police officers visited there and gave several instructions to the officers concerned.

According to the temple administration, only the devotees wearing masks would be allowed to enter the premises and they would enter the premises after sanitising their hands.

Apart from this, arrangements have been made to

install LED screens at different places so that the devotees can see the live telecast to puja and aarti of Garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum). For keeping a watch on all the activities of the devotees, closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras have been installed and the security personnel will keep a watch on all the devotees through watch towers.

Get 'prasad' by Speed Post during Shravan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Taking an initiative, Postal department once again has decided to provide 'prasad' of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple during the auspicious month of Shravan at home by Speed Post for Rs 251, informed the Postmaster General (PMG), Varanasi Region, Krishna Kumar Yadav. He said that under an agreement between the Department of Posts and Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple Trust, prasad of the temple in new format is being made available to the people through Speed Post Service.

Under this scheme, an e-money order of ₹251 has to be



PMG KK Yadav giving Kashi Vishwanath temple prasad to a devotee in Varanasi

sent to the Senior Superintendent of Post Offices, Varanasi (East) Division from the nearest post

office. Prasad will be sent to the addressee immediately by the Department of Posts as soon as the e-money order is

received. The prasad will be in a tamper-proof envelope with proper packaging.

The PMG said that the image of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Jyotirlinga, Mahamrityunjaya Yantra, Shri Shiva Chalisa, 108 beads of Rudraksha's garland, bel patra, coin having Bhole Baba's image inscribed with Mata Annapurna, dry fruits, bhasma, sandalwood, raksha sutra and mishri packets etc will be included.

Senior Superintendent Post Offices, Varanasi East Division, Sumit Kumar Gatt said that prasad can also be obtained from the counter of Varanasi City Post Office for just ₹201.

Devotees to pay more for aartis

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Devotees will have to pay more money to watch Mangla and other aartis of Lord Shiva at Kashi Vishwanath Mandir during the auspicious month of Shravan beginning July 26.

The temple administration has revised the fees of various aartis of Kashi Vishwanath Mandir for the auspicious month of Shravan. On each Monday during this auspicious month, the devotees will have to pay ₹1,500 to be part of Mangla Aarti while other days of the week, the fee will be ₹700, the chief executive officer of the temple Sunil Kumar Verma said. It is noteworthy that on normal days, there is a fee of ₹350 to watch Mangla Aarti and on Monday, it increases to ₹750.

Similarly, the devotees will

have to pay ₹200 each to be part of Bhog, Saptarishi and Night Sringar. There will be a fee of ₹700 for performing rudrabhishek under the guidance of one Vedic scholar during this month and to perform the same religious rituals with five Vedic scholars the devotees will be required to pay ₹2,100.

For the sanyasi bhog on Monday, the devotees will be required to pay ₹7,500 while they will have to pay ₹15,000 for the shringar of Lord Shiva on Monday. The revised fee for purnima shringar during this auspicious month is ₹3,700 and for the akhand-deep and the devotees will be required to pay ₹700. The devotees will have to pay ₹25,000 for the rudrabhishek (20 years).

There is also a fee to have darshan of Baba Vishwanath

during this month and the devotees can have darshan of Lord Shiva smoothly on a normal day by paying ₹500 while they will have to pay ₹750 to have darshan on Monday. For the Mahamrityunjay jaap for one day by 32 Vedic scholars, the devotees will be required to pay ₹1 lakh while the fee for 7 Vedic scholars is ₹51,000, the CEO of the temple said.

There will be shringar of Lord Shiva on the first Monday of this auspicious month on July 26 and there will be shringar of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati on the second Monday on August 2 while on the third Monday on August 9, there will be shringar of Ardhnarishwar. There will be shringar of Baba Vishwanath with rudraksh on the fourth Monday on August

16 and on the fifth and last Monday of this month on August 22, there will be jhula shringar of movable idols of Lord Shiva, Goddess Parvati and deity Ganesh, the CEO said.

NO POSITIVE CASE ON 3RD CONSECUTIVE DAY: No positive case of the novel coronavirus infection was recorded in Varanasi on the third consecutive day on Saturday even as active cases dropped to 31 on Saturday.

A total of 5632 tests were conducted during the last 24 hours. The confirmed cases remained at 82342, as per the figures released by the Health department on Saturday evening. With no death from COVID-19, the toll remained at 773.

Eight corona patients recovered during the past 24 hours — all in home isolation.

FIR registered for derogatory remarks against Anupriya Patel

ALLAHABAD (PNS): Colonelganj police of Prayagraj has registered an FIR in connection with derogatory remarks made against Apna Dal (S) leader and Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel on Facebook.

The objectionable words used against the minister had

been posted from the Facebook ID of Sardar Munshi Rampal Verma. Now the police are trying to trace out the location of the person who posted abusive content against Anupriya Patel. The party workers were concerned and they drew the attention of the officials towards the Facebook post. The Colonelganj police came

into action and registered an FIR in this regard. Anupriya Patel, daughter of Apna Dal founder Dr Sonelal Patel, is a part of the NDA government at the centre, and she has been made Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry.

NANDINI SCORES 93.5% MARKS: Nandini Singh, daughter of senior scribe

Devendra Singh, cleared her class XII examination of ISC Board with flying colours. A bright student of St Mary's Convent Commerce stream, Nandi preferred to take an offline examination and scored 93.5 per cent marks with 98 per cent each in English and Accounts besides 93 per cent in Economics.



Additional District Magistrate, (F&R) Mr Veerendra Pandey chairing the Ugyog Bandhu Meeting at the the Collectorate on Saturday.

Pioneer

Electricity poles, transformers in middle of road to be removed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chairing the Ugyog Bandhu meeting at the collectorate on Saturday, Additional District Magistrate (Finance and Revenue) Veerendra Pandey directed officials to complete all works relating to the retaining wall on the approach road of the bridge between Dadanagar and Vijaynagar at the earliest. He also directed the Kanpur Nagar Nigam and Public Works Department (PWD) to coordinate with

ACM and electricity department for the removal of encroachments and form a committee to implement it in the right earnest by carrying out a survey immediately. He said the Fazalganj crossing, where there were several defunct islands, should be reduced in size so as to make the movement of traffic smoother. He also directed the PWD to ensure the repair of the roads on priority within one week. He said all the pot-holes and craters should be

filled up and the road should be made motorable. He also directed officials to ensure that widening of the Dadanagar main route from Double Pulia to Lohia Bypass and construction of drain was completed latest by December 2021. He said an estimate for Rs 6.73 lakh had been prepared for removal of electricity poles in the middle of the road along with the transformers. He directed the departments concerned to work in close coop-

eration so that the work was accomplished on time. The ADM (F&R) expressed concern over water-logging in the Panki Industrial Area and directed that the Panki fire station should become functional and also to ensure that entry of all permitted vehicles was allowed. Prominent among those who took part in the meeting were Deputy Director, Industries, Sudhir Srivastava, SP Yadav, Manoj Banka, Umang Agarwal and SK Gupta.

BC families which lost bread earner to Covid to get credit link subsidy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar District Magistrate Alok Tiwari, on Saturday, directed all SDMs and BDOs to identify families from the Backward communities who lost their sole bread earner to COVID-19 so that they could be benefitted through the Credit Link Subsidy Scheme. He asked the officials to submit the names of such people to the district backward class welfare officer within a week. He said the scheme was to be run by National Backward Classes Corporation and Finance and Development Corporation Limited. He said this scheme was meant for the weaker sections

of society from the Backward Class category. He said under the scheme the beneficiaries would be provided a sum of Rs 5 lakh for starting their own trade or business. He said out of the total amount, Rs 1 lakh was subsidy and Rs 4 lakh would be loaned at 6 per cent interest. He said the eligible candidates must be from the BC category and their annual income should not exceed a sum of Rs 3 lakh per annum. He said the deceased should have been in the age group of 18-60 years and the families should have a death certificate certified by the competent authority. Meanwhile, addressing a meeting late on Friday evening, the district magistrate said that as per the directive of Chief

Secretary RK Tiwari, all the oxygen plants under construction or nearing completion in Kanpur Nagar should be completed within the stipulated time frame. He said in case there was any issue that was retarding the pace of construction or completion of work it should be brought to the notice of the authorities. He said in view of the apprehended third wave of COVID-19, it was decided by the UP government to make elaborate arrangements to tackle the deadly novel coronavirus and reduce loss of life. He said the current pace of work was not enough and thus it had to be given further momentum. He said as per the chief secretary's directive, all private hospitals should have their own

oxygen plants. The district magistrate said as per the feedback from GSVM Medical College, the oxygen plant at the neuro and maternity wing was ready and very soon a plant was to be set up in the Emergency as well. He said it had also been planned to set up an oxygen plant at the community health centres (CHCs) at Ghatampur and Bilhaur. H He said work on two oxygen plants was in progress at Ursula and AHM Dufferin Hospital. He said the chief secretary had directed that there should be no laxity in setting up and completion of oxygen plants so that by the time the third wave of COVID-19 struck, the government was prepared to handle it.

IIT-K incubated company brings portable oxygen

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur, has produced a Swasa Oxyrise bottle which increases the oxygen level in the human body. This unique device can be carried anywhere with great ease and can meet the need for oxygen in case of a medical emergency. It has been made at IIT-Kanpur Incubation Centre and is a portable oxygen canister. The invention came in the wake of the second wave of COVID-19 which wreaked havoc across the country when lack of oxygen triggered a major crisis. IIT-K alumnus Sandeep Patil, director of E-Spin Nanotech, said, "In view of the COVID-19 crisis in the country, E-Spin Nanotech has created Swasa Oxyrise. It increases the oxygen flow inside the body. To fulfill the requirement of oxygen during the second wave of COVID-19, this device has been made at IIT-Kanpur Incubation Centre. It has been created during the ongoing pandemic by E-Spin Nanotech and Jasolab. It can prove to be very effective during a medical emergency. But it cannot be used in case of critically ill patients." He said, "One more product can be kept with the first aid box. This bottled device can be used during the COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from COVID-19, it is very effective for asthma patients and army



Swasa Oxyrise bottle developed by IIT-K alumnus.

Pioneer

personnel posted at high altitudes. It can be kept in the medical kit quite easily. If someone's oxygen level suddenly starts to drop, it can be very helpful on the way to the hospital. One can easily intake oxygen by spraying it inside the face mask which will last for a long time. This will boost the oxygen supply in the body." Patil said that 10 litres of oxygen was compressed in a 180 gram bottle. He said nearly 200 shots of oxygen could be given to a person from a single bottle which was available for Rs 499. He said nearly 500-600 such bottles were prepared per day. The demand for Swasa Oxyrise bottles are rising all over the country while its online sale has also been started on the company's website swasa.in. Patil said during the bhoomi puja of the Ram temple at Ayodhya, Prime Minister Narendra Modi wore a mask made by the IIT-Kanpur incu-

bated company E-Spin. He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also praised the masks made by E-Spin in the monthly radio programme Mann Ki Baat. SCIENTISTS DISCUSS IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SOIL: Vice Chancellor of Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Dr DR Singh, while extending his wishes on the occasion of Guru Purnima on Saturday, said the onus for the proper and timely implementation of the New Education Policy 2020 rested on the shoulders of the teaching community. He said with dedication and devotion together the university could be taken to new heights. He advised the faculty to remain complacent and hope for the best in future. Speaking on Guru Purnima, Dr Singh said, "A guru was termed a guru because he or she led a person to light from abject darkness." He said this day was also celebrated as the birth anniversary of Vedavyas, who had combined the four Vedas in the form of a book and thus this day was celebrated in his honour. He then praised the efforts of the faculty of the university and said they were at par with Corona Warriors because during the acute pandemic times the faculty had continued to work so that administrative and other related works did not come to a grinding halt. He said

as it was an agricultural university, the onus to keep it clean and green rested on each individual of this university. Meanwhile, a virtual session was held later in which noted soil scientist of Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Dr Khalil Khan, spoke on the 'impact of COVID-19 on soil.' He said fertile soil was the key to a healthy, biodiverse environment which of late had dangerously affected the food availability. He said pressure was being exerted on local food production which had led to intensive cultivation and soil degradation. He said thus it engendered the need for sustainable management. He said the five-point plan worked out by the UP government was focused on improved access to land, sound land use planning, sustainable soil management, enhanced research, and investments in education and extension. The coronavirus pandemic was testing the ability of societies to survive an extreme global situation. He said healthy soils formed the most necessary natural resource for food production, on which human existence was dependent. He said appropriate soil management was imperative for solving and anticipating food security and nutrition requirements that governments and individuals would face in the post-pandemic period.

Guru Purnima celebrated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Many organisations and institutions organised Guru Purnima celebrations in the city on Saturday. The day is celebrated to pay respect to teachers or gurus who share their wisdom with pupils and show them the right path. While disciples of renowned music exponent Pt Vinod Kumar Dwivedi of Ranjana Devi Sangeet Mahavidyalaya in Kidwai Nagar, honoured him and other teachers for sharing their knowledge this them, students of Aakash Institute paid respect to their teachers by taking part in prayers and rituals with reverence, as part of Guru Purnima celebrations. Speaking about the Guru Purnima celebrations, the gurus of both the institutions said, "In several societies and cultures, teachers enjoy the highest regards and are kept on the same pedestal as parents. But in the Indian tradition, teachers come in the hierarchy above parents, and are revered as God in the human form. We have organised Guru Purnima celebrations for our students to honour their teachers who have made invaluable contributions to their academic excellence and professional success."

They said that even when educational institutions were out of bounds for students in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the teachers had made themselves available to the students 24x7, using mobile phones and other digital means such as email, online meeting apps, and messaging services. "Their selfless efforts to make sure that the pandemic does not come in the way of their education are commendable and heartwarming. They quickly upskilled themselves and adopted their lifestyle and teaching style to suit the virtual classrooms."

ATARI discusses customer relationship management

KANPUR (PNS): The ICAR-Agricultural Technology Application Research Institute (ATARI) at Kanpur organised a virtual review meeting on customer relationship management (CRM) to discuss the software for the agriculture industry which allowed farmers to store and follow up on customer leads to help find new customers, track customer behaviour, interactions and purchases of products and services.

The virtual session was to sensitise utilisation of budget under the project. Addressing the session, principal scientist at ATARI, Ludhiana, Dr Arvind Kumar, discussed the various aspects of the CRM project implemented in Uttar Pradesh. He spoke on KVKs which had been grouped in respective state agricultural universities and how many Kisan Vikas Kendras (KVKs) had been transferred to other districts. He briefed the audience upon the importance of the project by convergence, collaboration and competition with support of all the stakeholders and added that women farmers should be given priority so that the intense awareness can be created among them. He said that projects should be implemented with farmers' participation for awareness and presented demonstrations on farm mechanisation, training etc. He said the rice, wheat cropping system should be managed by paddy residue management so that environmental challenges could be tackled in an efficient manner. Dr Kumar said the non-utilisation of budget could affect the implementation of the project and suggested that all balance of the budget should be utilised properly for better results. He added that because utilisation of budget was poor in all the three state agricultural universities and KVKs thus the balanced budget must be utilised under IEC activities and flexi funds. He said the strategy which had been prepared could be implemented properly by considering all programmes under the CRM project.

Remarkable performance in goods loading

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Better marketing strategy being adopted for increasing loading of goods by North Eastern Railway (NER) administration is yielding positive results. In view of the concerted efforts of the Business Development Units (BDUs) constituted in the headquarters and divisions, many facilities being provided by the railway administration for loading of goods besides improvement and expansion of goods sheds the thrust of industry and business world towards railways is increasing continuously. Demonstrating remarkable performance in the field of loading of goods in NER success has been achieved in attaining much more freight traffic than the set target. In the same sequence from Haldi Road station of Izzatnagar division of NER for Sankrail Rail

Goods Terminal Yard located on Kharagpur-Howrah rail section loading of 25 wagons of Maggi was done on July 22 and 23. In the 25 newly-modified goods (NMG) wagons a total of 2,376 quintals of Maggi were loaded from which ₹8,76,267 Railway revenue



was received. In the new NMG wagons made by converting old ICF coaches the railway administration has also given permission for transportation of food items, FMCG products and other retail goods. As a result in these new NMG wagons for the first time in NER under food items Maggi is being transported. Work is being done in a

well-planned manner by the railway administration to increase loading of goods, Chief Public Relations Officer Pankaj Kumar Singh said. For the convenience of traders, goods sheds have been improved and expanded. Under it 22 new goods sheds were opened and 23 others have been developed for 24 hours working. By improving the average speed of goods trains it has been done to about 50 km per hour (km/h). As a result of several efforts for promoting goods transportation in NER the freight transport of new goods like automobile sector and FMCG products is being received. In the year 2021-22 till the month of June in the first quarter in NER a total of 0.8912 million tonnes (MT) of loading of goods was received which is 126 per cent more than the goods loading of the corresponding period last year.

ANVT-Muzaffarpur spl to be diverted

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

In view of the remodeling work in Shahjahanpur yard under Moradabad-Shahjahanpur rail section of Northern Railway (NR) due to the block being taken by the railway administration for pre-n interlock and non-interlock works the following trains will be run by being diverted, CPRO Pankaj Kumar Singh said. MFP-ANVT SPECIAL: The 02557 Muzaffarpur-Anand Vihar Terminus (ANVT) special train departing from Muzaffarpur from July 24 to 27 instead of running on its scheduled route i.e. Lucknow-Moradabad-Ghaziabad will be diverted via the Lucknow-Kanpur Central-Ghaziabad route. ANVT-MFP SPECIAL: The 02558 Anand Vihar Terminus - Muzaffarpur special train to depart from Anand Vihar Terminus from July 25 to 28 instead of running on its scheduled route i.e. Ghaziabad-Moradabad-Lucknow via will be run by being diverted via Ghaziabad-Kanpur Central-Lucknow route.

Three stolen motorcycles recovered

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Padari police arrested one accused and recovered three stolen motorcycles on Friday. (SHO) Manoj Kumar Pandey a police team during routine patrolling was informed about the presence of two criminals along with a stolen motorcycle on Darhima Tiraha. Thereafter the police swung into action and started checking the vehicles. On seeing the police personnel two persons on a motorcycle tried to dodge them. However, the police succeeded in nabbing one of them while his accomplice managed to escape from the spot. During interrogation he said the motorcycle in his possession was a stolen one and two more were hidden in his house. At this the police raided the place and recovered two more motorcycles. After completing the necessary legal formalities the police sent the accused, identified as Chandrashekhar Chaubey, a resident of Mahadauri village under Padari police station, to jail.

ADVICE TO FARMERS: Chief Development Officer (CDO) Srilaxmi VS has advised the farmers to adopt marketing methods for earning more. While chairing the



meeting of farmer producer organisations on Thursday, she said farmers should come under the umbrella of FPO on the lines of 'one block, one product. She said it was the need of the hour

741 doses of vaccine administered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the direction of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vijay Kumar Panjari for the prevention of coronavirus infection in Varanasi division vaccination is going on continuously. In this sequence under the leadership of Additional Chief Medical Superintendent (ACMS) Dr RR Singh at North Eastern Railway (NER) Divisional Hospital, Lahartara, on Thursday the Covid vaccination of contract employees working at various railway stations of the division and of those associated with railway service through other means was done in the form of a campaign by the railway medical team and the one constituted by the state government. With the help of the district administration a total of 741 doses of Covid vaccine were administered on Wednesday and Thursday in which Varanasi division's 34 employees, relatives of 52 employees, including 12 contract labourers and 730 non-railway people were administered the Covid vaccine. Notably, at the Divisional Hospital of NER vaccination of old, physically disabled and sick people is being done



in their private vehicles in its lobby. Continuing this sequence, the vaccination of elderly and disabled persons, besides retired employees was done by railway medical staff in their private vehicles in the lobby outside the premises of Divisional Hospital. Besides, the employees and their families were also informed to follow the Coronavirus prevention guidelines i.e. wearing of the mask properly, washing their hands frequently and thoroughly, maintaining physical distancing. Apart from it in division's various rail sections, station premises, stations and trains deep cleaning, sanitisation and cleanliness is being done daily. At the major stations of the division for railway passengers and in the station premises for the passengers as well as employees messages related to prevention of Coronavirus infection and vaccination against it are being displayed at various places through posters for awareness among them. Markings have been made in the stations and railway premises to follow social distance. Coronation protocol is being ensured in station premises along with trains and strict action is being taken against violators.

Three terrorists killed, jawan hurt in Bandipora

Srinagar: Three unidentified militants were killed while an Army jawan was injured in an encounter in Bandipora district of Jammu & Kashmir on Saturday, officials said.

Security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Shokbaba forest in the Sumblar area of Bandipora in north Kashmir following inputs about the presence of militants there, they said.

The officials said as the forces were conducting search-es in the area, the militants fired



upon them.

The forces retaliated, ensu- ing an encounter in which so far three militants have been killed, they added.

Srinagar-based PRO Defence Col Emron Musavi said an Army personnel suf- fered injuries in the gunfight.

He said the injured jawan has been evacuated and is undergoing treatment.

The officials said the iden- tity and group affiliation of the slain ultras are being ascer- tained. The operation is in progress and further details are awaited, they said. **PTI**

BSF lodges protest with Pak over drone in first meeting

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A day after Jammu & Kashmir police shot down a Pakistani drone fitted with a 5kg IED in Kanachak area of Jammu, senior officers of the Border Security Force of Jammu frontier Saturday lodged a strong protest with their Pakistani counterparts during their first sector com- mander level meeting after the declaration of ceasefire agree- ment by DGMOs on February 24/25, 2021.

The meeting was held on the request of Pakistan Rangers in the Suchetgarh area.

The BSF delegation was led by Surjit Singh, DIG, Border Security Force and Pakistan Rangers delegation was led by Brig Murad Hussain,sector commander Pakistan Rangers, Sialkot Sector.



According to a BSF spokesman, "During the meet-

ing, Commanders of both the border guarding Forces, dis-

cussed various issues with main emphasis by BSF delegation on

Pak Drone activities, terrorists activities by Pakistan from across the border, digging of tunnels by Pakistan and other issues related to Border man- agement.A very strong protest was lodged by BSF delegates against drone activities by Pakistan authorities in the Jammu Area".

According to a BSF spokesman, "It was decided to re-energize instant communi- cation between field Commanders, whenever required, to resolve the ops matters. Meeting was held in a cordial, positive and construc- tive atmosphere and both sides agreed for expeditious imple- mentation of the decisions taken in the earlier DG level talks and committed to each other to maintain peace and harmony at the International Border".

उत्तर प्रदेश राज्य भार प्रेषण केन्द्र
उ०प्र० पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लि० (उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार का उपक्रम) **यू०पी०एसएल०डी०सी० परिसर, विभूति खण्ड-11 गोमती नगर, लखनऊ-228010 उत्तर प्रदेश स्टेट लोड डिस्पैच सेंटर उ०प्र० पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड ई-निविदा संख्या-08/UPSLDC/VRV/2021-22** अघोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा अनुमती देकेदारों/ फर्मों से निम्नलिखित कार्यों हेतु अलग-अलग सीलबन्ध ई-निविदाओं दो भागों में ई-टेंडरिंग वेब साईट www.etender.up.nic.in पर आमन्त्रित की जाती हैं। ई-निविदा के प्रथम भाग में धरो, हर धनराशि व बैतता, तकनीकी एवं अनुभव सम्बन्धित प्रश्न, व्यावसायिक व अन्य शर्तों आदि एवं दूसरे भाग में दरे व वाणिज्यिक नियम एवं शर्तों प्रदान करनी होंगी। निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य, धरोहर धनराशि एवं जीएसटी पंजीकरण प्रमाण-पत्र आवेदन पत्र के साथ संलग्न करते हुए इनकी Scanned copy upload करना अनिवार्य है। निविदा प्रश्न एवं **धरोहर धनराशि**, जो कि मुख्य अभियन्ता (एस०एल०डी०सी०), यू०पी०एसएल०डी०सी०, लखनऊ के (Account Name:- UPTCL- SLDC A/c Current A/c No. 628105029041, IFSC : ICIC0006281, Shalimar Tower, Hazratganj, Lucknow) के खाते में RTGS/NEFT के माध्यम से स्थानान्तरित कर यूटीआर, संख्या तथा पे-रिसप की प्रति ई-टेंडरिंग वेबसाईट www.etender.up.nic.in पर निविदा प्रश्नों के साथ स्व प्रमाणित PAN एवं GST पंजीकरण प्रमाण-पत्र की प्रति प्रथम भाग के साथ लगाना अनिवार्य होगा। वांछित धरोहर धनराशि एवं अन्य प्रश्न पूर्ण तथा उचित/स्वीकार्य योग्य न होने पर द्वितीय भाग को नहीं खोला जायेगा। ई-निविदाओं का विवरण निविदा सं० कार्यों का नाम, धरोहर धनराशि, खुलने की तिथि व समय क्रमशः निम्नानुसार है :- 08/यू०पी०एसएल०डी०सी०/बी०आर०बी०/2021-22, UPSLDC, गोमतीनगर, लखनऊ में स्थापित 370 HP VRV/VRF एयर कंडीशनिंग सिस्टम (ओ-जनरल मेक) एवं 79.50 TR कैंसेट एयर कंडीशनर (ओ-जनरल मेक) के कम्प्रीहेसिव वांकिंग अनुसूचक एवं परिचालन आदि का कार्य, धरोहर धनराशि रु० 42000.00, निविदा दिनांक 12-08-2021 को 16:00 बजे तक ई-टेंडरिंग वेब साईट www.etender.up.nic.in पर अपलोड की जा सकती है। भाग-1 खुलने की तिथि 13-08-2021 समय 14:00 बजे के उपरान्त एवं भाग-2 (ग्राइड पार्ट्स) खुलने की तिथि तदनुसार ई-वेबसाईट पर सूचित की जायेगी। निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य रु० 590/- मात्र (रु० 500.00+G.S.T. @18% अतिरिक्त)। ई-निविदा खुलने की तिथि को अवकाश की स्थिति में निविदा अगले कार्य दिवस पर खोली जायेगी। विस्तृत जानकारी एवं अन्य संशोधनी आदि के सम्बन्ध में सूचना एवं निविदा प्रश्न डाउनलोड करने हेतु ई-टेंडरिंग वेबसाईट www.etender.up.nic.in देखी जा सकती है। कृपया विस्तृत जानकारी, ड्राइंग्स, अन्य संशोधनों एवं ई-निविदा प्रश्न उपर्युक्त करने के दिनांक तक रिसर्च आदि के सम्बन्ध में ई-टेंडरिंग वेबसाईट www.etender.up.nic.in देखी जा सकती है। **बैंक लिस्टेड फर्म एवं ऐसी फर्मों जिनके निरूपक कोई सरकारी/सी.बीआई/जॉय बल रही है अथवा लिमिटेड है अथवा निविदाओं स्वीकार नहीं की जायेगी।** अघोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता को बिना कोई कारण बताये किसी भी ई-निविदा अथवा सभी ई-निविदाओं को अस्वीकार/विभाजित करने का अधिकार सुरक्षित है। अधीक्षण अभियन्ता (अधीक्षण एवं मानव संसाधन), यू०पी०एसएल०डी०सी० उ०प्र० पावर ट्रा० कारपोरेशन लि० पत्रांक: 1771/यू०एस०एमएफ०/यू०पी०एसएल०डी०सी०/निविदा मण्डल दिनांक 24.7.2021 राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाए

उ० प्र० पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लि० खली निविदा आमन्त्रण सूचना
अघोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्यों हेतु अनुमती देकेदारों/ फर्मों से मोहर बन्द **निविदा को भागों में निविदा संख्या-22, दिनांक 30-07-2021 को 14:00 बजे तक** आमन्त्रित की जाती है, जो उसी दिन 15:00 बजे सार्वजनिक रूप से उपस्थिति इच्छुक निविदादाताओं अथवा उनके प्रतिनिधियों की उपस्थिति में अघोहस्ताक्षरी अथवा अधिकृत प्रतिनिधि द्वारा खोली जायेगी। निविदा के प्रथम भाग में धरोहर धनराशि, अनुभव का विवरण, व्यापक कर/आकर/सेंसेकर का रजिस्ट्रेशन प्रमाणक तथा दूसरे भाग में दरे एवं वाणिज्यिक नियम व शर्तें होंगी। निविदा की बैतता खुलने की तिथि से 90 दिन होंगी। धरोहर राशि भी प्रत्येक निविदा के अनुसार होगी, जो बैंक ड्राफ्ट/सी०डी०आर०/एफ०डी०आर० के रूप में **अधीक्षारी अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, गोण्डा के पदनाम में बचको होनी अथवा** निविदा प्रश्न शुल्क एवं ई०एफ०डी० अधिशाही अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, गोण्डा के बैंक खाते में (बैंक का नाम- पंजाब नेशनल बैंक, खाता सं- 108100210020697, आईएफएससी कोड- PUNB00181007) आर०डी०सी०एस/एन०एफ०डी के माध्यम से जमा कराई जा सकती है तथा बैंक में जमा किये जाने का साक्ष्य यथा यूटीआर संख्या, खाते का नाम, निर्रतकर्ता बैंक अधिकारी द्वारा हस्ताक्षरित एवं निविदादाता द्वारा प्रतिलिखित पे-इन रिसप की स्कॅन्ड कापी, ईमेलडी के लिए बैंक गारंटी की स्कॅन्ड कापी, जारीकर्ता बैंक के कन्फर्मेशन मेल की प्रति टेंडर प्रश्नों के साथ जमा किया जाना अनिवार्य है। धरोहर धनराशि के बिना एवं सशर्त निविदाएं स्वीकार नहीं की जायेगी। निविदा प्रश्न नकद या बैंक ड्राफ्ट अथवा आर०डी०सी०एस द्वारा भुगतान कर निविदा **खुलने की तिथि को 12:00 बजे तक** अधिशाही अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, गोण्डा के कार्यालय से कम/प्राप्त किये जा सकते हैं। निविदा का मूल्य रु० 236/- (कर सहित) निविदा खुलने की तिथि को अवकाश की स्थिति में, निविदा अगले कार्य दिवस में निर्धारित समय तक प्राप्त कर खोली जायेगी। अघोहस्ताक्षरी को किसी या समस्त निविदाओं को निरस्त करने का अधिकार सुरक्षित है। विस्तृत विवरण www.uptcl.org वेबसाइट पर भी देखा जा सकता है एवं निविदाये डाउनलोड करके उसके साथ निविदा मूल्य का ड्राफ्ट संलग्न कर भी स्वीकार्य है। **1. निविदा सं०-22/वि०एम०/गो०/2021-22** विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड बरसाइत के अन्तर्गत उपखण्ड अधिकारी, विद्युत पारेषण उपखण्ड-प्रथम, बरसाइत हेतु 01 अन्दर वाहन उपलब्ध करने सम्बन्धी कार्य। **धरोहर राशि रु० 2,000/-मात्र। अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल 220 के०पी० उपकेन्द्र परिसर जेल रोड, गोण्डा संख्या-668/वि०एम०/गो०/टेंडर नं०-22 ई०टी०सी०/गो०/2021-22, दिनांक-22.07.2021** "राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचाये साधारण बल्ब के स्थान पर एल०डी०सी० बल्ब का प्रयोग करें"

Village along Indo-Bangla border gets 1st women self-help group

PTI ■ SILCHAR

A visit by their deputy commis- Asioner on Covid-19 duty has inspired the women of a remote village along the Bangladesh border in Cachar district of Assam to form their first self-help group (SHG) which would now provide them the linkage to Government welfare schemes.

Cachar Deputy Commissioner Keerthi Jalli had visited the minority-dominated Tugkergram revenue village (Puran Basti), bordering Bangladesh, under Haringagar Gaon Panchayat of Katigor Development Block, f o r Covid-19 testing and vaccination awareness on June 11, an official statement said on Saturday.

During the visit, Jalli noticed that women of the area aspired to do developmental works but were not organised to that extent, it added. She then asked them to form a SHG, comprising marginalised women of that area, so that they could be brought under the fold of Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission (ASRLM) and supported through various Government schemes, like 'Kanaklata Mahila Sabalakaran Yojana'.

This led to the formation of the first SHG in the area, named 'Pally Unnayan SHG', on Thursday, the statement further said. Expressing her happiness at mobilising these women to enable them to avail benefits under government schemes, Jalli said, "I am optimistic that skilling and hand-holding under ASRLM would enable them access to income generating platforms through activities like goat rearing, milk farming, etc.

"Most importantly, they are now in a position to plan for their families on financial matters as well, which paves the way for them to emerge as role models of women empowerment among their community and area."

Kerala's co-operative bank accused of embezzlement as customer commits suicide

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

A t a time when the Government of Kerala is on a warpath with the Union Government over the latter's decision to set up a Ministry of coo- perate affairs which the former alleges to be a blatant encroachment into the rights of the State, suicide of a senior Congress leader in Thrissur district over the irregularities in Karuvannur Cooperative Bank has come as an embarrassment to the ruling Left Democratic Front.

Officials of the State Cooperative Department, in their preliminary investigation has come across financial impropriety to the tune of Rs 1,000 crore in the bank. The Registrar of Cooperative Department on Thursday night dissolved the director board of the Bank and appointed an assistant registrar as administrator. The director

board of the Bank was full of CPI(M) nominees.

T M Mukundan, a 59-year-old Congress leader, committed suicide by hanging in his house on Thursday. According to family members, Mukundan resorted to the extreme measure following the receipt of a revenue recovery notice from the Bank.

According to family members, Mukundan had availed loan worth ₹25 lakh in lieu of 16.5 cents land and a house. "But the revenue recovery notice says the loan amount was ₹80 lakh and interest. He was summoned by the Bank authorities and asked to settle the loan without delay. We were in the process of disposing a property to settle the loan but of late the Bank authorities started to torment him with threats," said a close relation of Mukundan.

But the Bank officials state that Mukundan had availed loan amount of

₹50 lakh on 2018 March 3. "He stood security for another person for ₹30 lakh. Since the borrower failed to pay back ₹30 lakh, the responsibility of paying the amount fell on Mukundan," said a Bank official. They also disclosed that Mukundan had agreed to repay the loan arrears by February 2021 itself.

Investigation has been ordered into how the ₹25 lakh loan availed by Mukundan shot up to ₹80 lakh and why he was not given the 'breathing space' to pay back the loan despite the assur- ances made by him to the Bank.

Though the manager of the Bank had informed the Cooperative Department authorities about the shady deals carried out by the director board members in 2016 itself, a CPI(M) leader who was also the minister in the previous LDF government (2016-2021) got the manager dismissed citing indis- cipline and financial impropriety.

Investigating officials told The Pioneer that the Bank was a conduit for money laundering. By Saturday morning, the probe agencies including police and cooperative department have found that the many cooperative banks in the State were actively engaged in money laun- dering and embezzlement to the tune of more than ₹10,000 crore.

Karunakaran Nambiar, all India general secretary of Sahakar Bharati told The Pioneer that Cooperative Banks in Kerala were being used for money laundering and hoarding of black money.

"Since provisions like Know Your Customer (KYC) were not applicable in these Cooperative Banks, they are ideal avenues for money laundering and violation of all financial regulations. Besides Banks, the cooperative sector in the State itself is enmeshed in financial embezzlement," said Nambiar.

Covid-19 cases continue unabated in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

D espite strict regulations slapped on movement of people across the State, Saturday saw 18,531 new persons getting diagnosed with Covid-19 in Kerala out of the 1.55 lakh samples tested during the last 24 hours.

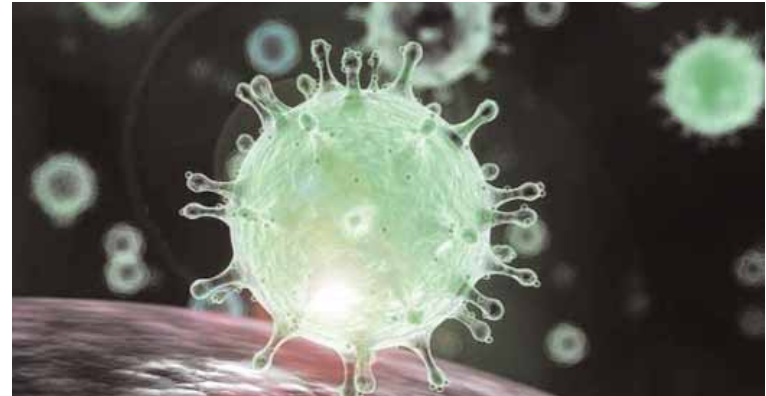
A release issued by the Health Minister's office said that 98 patients succumbed to the pandemic taking the death toll till date to 15,969.

The State's average Test Positivity Rate (TPR) showed 11.91 percent while there are 271 places across Kerala which have TPR of 15 per cent and above.

Dr P Gopikumar, secretary, Indian Medical Association's Kerala wing told The Pioneer that the home quarantine and isolation of persons tested positive was no more paying the desired results.

"The virus causing Covid-19 detected during the second wave of attack has been found to be more power- ful than the earlier version. Now what has happened is that the other members of the family where the patient is put in quarantine or isolation too get afflicted with the pandemic and this does not augur well," said Dr Gopikumar.

He said the IMA has asked the State Government to shift all the persons who test positive to either community living



centres or First Line Treatment Centres which there are no death in Kerala.

"Ill not go to the extent of telling that the situation was alarming. We, the IMA has asked the Government to reschedule the lock down mode and allow shops and business establishments to function on all days. But the crowd restrictions should be enforced strict- ly," said Dr Gopikumar.

But senior Government physicians said the situation in Kerala was a cause for concern. "It has been found that the pandemic is spreading much faster than the initial phases. Kerala has become an epicenter of Covid-19 and there are no restrictions on movement of people, Public transport, especially buses and whatever trains that ply are filled to

capacity. There is no reduction in traf- fic blocks even in small towns," said a senior Government physician in Ernakulam.

Both Dr Gopikumar and the Government physician were on the same page regarding their word of cau- tion to people in other States who are planning to visit the State. "Kerala is not safe for a holiday trip. It is safe and bet- ter to postpone the scheduled journey to the State lest the travelers end up as victims of the pandemic," they said in unison.

There are four districts in the State each showing more than 2,000 new Covid-19 cases on Saturday while there were three districts each logging more than 1,000 cases.

2,174 Covid-19 cases, 18 deaths reported in AP

PTI ■ AMRAVATI

A ndhra Pradesh reported 2,174 fresh cases of coro- Navirus, 2,737 recoveries and 18 deaths in 24 hours ending 9 am on Saturday. The total positives stood at 19,52,513, a health department bulletin said. The active cases slide to 22,358 after a total of 19,16,914 recover- ies and 13,241 deaths, it said. East Godavari added 418 fresh cases to its count while Chittoor reported 329, Krishna 248, SPS Nellore 246, Prakasam 233, West Godavari 209, Guntur 132 and Visakhapatnam, 103. Five districts reported less than 90 cases each, with Kurnool logging just eight in a day.

Krishna had five fresh fatalities, Chittoor four, East Godavari, Prakasam and West Godavari two each and SPS Nellore, Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam one each.

Five districts did not report any Covid-19 toll in a day.

SIKKIM REGISTERS 225 NEW CASES

GANGTOK: Sikkim's Covid-19 tally rose to 24,823 on Saturday as 225 more people tested positive for the infec- tion, while one fresh fatality pushed the Himalayan state's coronavirus death toll to 330, a health bulletin said.

West Sikkim district reported the highest number of new cases at 81, followed by East Sikkim (72), South Sikkim (71), and North Sikkim (one).

Sikkim now has 2,849 active cases, while 21,380 peo- ple have recovered from the disease, and 264 patients have migrated to other states so far, it said.

The recovery rate among the coronavirus patients in the state stands at 87 per cent.

The Himalayan state has tested over 1.87 lakh sam- ples for Covid-19 thus far, including 1,972 in the last 24 hours, the bulletin said, adding the positivity rate now stands at 11.4 per cent. **PTI**

उत्तर प्रदेश राज्य भार प्रेषण केन्द्र
उ०प्र० पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लि० (उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार का उपक्रम) **यू०पी०एसएल०डी०सी० परिसर, विभूति खण्ड-11 गोमती नगर, लखनऊ-228010 उत्तर प्रदेश स्टेट लोड डिस्पैच सेंटर उ०प्र० पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड ई-निविदा संख्या-07/UPSLDC/DECORATION/ 2021-22** अघोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा अनुमती देकेदारों/ फर्मों से निम्नलिखित कार्यों हेतु अलग-अलग सीलबन्ध ई-निविदाओं दो भागों में ई-टेंडरिंग वेब साईट www.etender.up.nic.in पर आमन्त्रित की जाती हैं। ई-निविदा के प्रथम भाग में धरोहर धनराशि व बैतता, तकनीकी एवं अनुभव सम्बन्धित प्रश्न, व्यावसायिक व अन्य शर्तों आदि एवं दूसरे भाग में दरे व वाणिज्यिक नियम एवं शर्तों प्रदान करनी होंगी। निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य, धरोहर धनराशि एवं जीएसटी पंजीकरण प्रमाण-पत्र आवेदन पत्र के साथ संलग्न करते हुए इनकी Scanned copy upload करना अनिवार्य है। निविदा प्रश्न एवं **धरोहर धनरा- शि**, जो कि मुख्य अभियन्ता (एस०एल०डी०सी०), यू०पी०एसएल०डी०सी०, लखनऊ के (Account Name:- UPTCL- SLDC A/c Current A/c No. 628105029041, IFSC : ICIC0006281, Shalimar Tower, Hazratganj, Lucknow) के खाते में RTGS/NEFT के माध्यम से स्थानान्तरित कर यूटीआर, संख्या तथा पे-रिसप की प्रति ई-टेंडरिंग वेबसाईट www.etender.up.nic.in पर निविदा प्रश्नों के साथ स्व प्रमाणित PAN एवं GST पंजीकरण प्रमाण-पत्र की प्रति प्रथम भाग के साथ लगाना अनिवार्य होगा। वांछित धरोहर धनराशि एवं अन्य प्रश्न पूर्ण तथा उचित/स्वीकार्य योग्य न होने पर द्वितीय भाग को नहीं खोला जायेगा। ई-निविदाओं का विवरण निविदा सं० कार्यों का नाम, धरोहर धनराशि, खुलने की तिथि व समय क्रमशः निम्नानुसार है :- 1. अघोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा अनुमती देकेदारों/ फर्मों से निम्नलिखित कार्यों हेतु अलग-अलग सीलबन्ध ई-निविदाओं दो भागों में ई-टेंडरिंग वेब साईट www.etender.up.nic.in पर आमन्त्रित की जाती हैं। ई-निविदा के प्रथम भाग में धरोहर धनराशि व बैतता, तकनीकी एवं अनुभव सम्बन्धित प्रश्न, व्यावसायिक व अन्य शर्तों आदि एवं दूसरे भाग में दरे व वाणिज्यिक नियम एवं शर्तों प्रदान करनी होंगी। निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य, धरोहर धनराशि एवं जीएसटी पंजीकरण प्रमाण-पत्र आवेदन पत्र के साथ संलग्न करते हुए इनकी Scanned copy upload करना अनिवार्य है। निविदा प्रश्न एवं **धरोहर धनरा- शि**, जो कि मुख्य अभियन्ता (एस०एल०डी०सी०), यू०पी०एसएल०डी०सी०, लखनऊ के (Account Name:- UPTCL- SLDC A/c Current A/c No. 628105029041, IFSC : ICIC0006281, Shalimar Tower, Hazratganj, Lucknow) के खाते में RTGS/NEFT के माध्यम से स्थानान्तरित कर यूटीआर, संख्या तथा पे-रिसप की प्रति ई-टेंडरिंग वेबसाईट www.etender.up.nic.in पर निविदा प्रश्नों के साथ स्व प्रमाणित PAN एवं GST पंजीकरण प्रमाण-पत्र की प्रति प्रथम भाग के साथ लगाना अनिवार्य होगा। वांछित धरोहर धनरा- शि एवं अन्य प्रश्न पूर्ण तथा उचित/स्वीकार्य योग्य न होने पर द्वितीय भाग को नहीं खोला जायेगा। ई-निविदाओं का विवरण निविदा सं० कार्यों का नाम, धरोहर धनराशि, खुलने की तिथि व समय क्रमशः निम्नानुसार है :- 1. **स्वतन्त्रता दिवस की पूर्व संध्या एवं स्वतन्त्रता दिवस की संस्था पर 02 राखियों हेतु यू०पी०एसएल०डी०सी० भवन, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ को किराये की एल०डी०सी० झालरों से प्रकाशमय करने के कार्य हेतु धरोहर धनरा- शि रु० 5000.00 (रुपये पांच हजार मात्र) कार्य की अवधि 02 राखियों एवं निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य रु० 990 (रुपये पांच सौ नब्बे मात्र) (जोएसएल० सवित)। नियम व शर्तें :- 1. यू०पी०एस० एल०डी०सी० /निविदा मण्डल निविदा अभिलेखों को प्राप्त करने एवं जमा**

करने की तिथि :- (अ) निविदा केवल ऑनलाईन ई-टेंडर पोटल/वेबसाइट <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर ही दिनांक 02.08.2021 के अपराह्न 16:00 बजे तक अपलोड किया जा सकता है। (ब) दिनांक 03.08.2021 को अपराह्न 14:00 बजे से निविदा का प्रथम भाग (तकनीकी/वाणिज्यिक विवरण) खोला जायेगा, जिसके पश्चाणोपरान्त उपयुक्त पाये गये निविदादाताओं के भाग-द्वितीय (वित्तीय विवरण) को खोला जायेगा। तकनीकी योग्यता पूरा न करने वाले निविदादाता के निविदा वित्तीय भाग-पत्र (भाग-द्वितीय) पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा। **निविदादाता का अनुभव प्रमाण पत्र दिये गये निर्देश के अनुसार** (a) The Minimum Average Annual Turn Over (MAAT) for the last three Years out of the last five financial year MAAT should not be less than Rs. 01.00 Lac (b) Experience of having successful- ly completed similar work/supply during last 3 years ending last day of month previous to the one in which applications are invited should be either of the following :-1. Three similar completed work/supply each costing not less than the amount equal to 50% or 3. One similar completed work/supply each costing not less than the amount equal to 80% 4. निविदा की बैतता खुलने से 180 दिन होगी। 5. अघोहस्ताक्षरी को पूर्ण अधिकार होगा कि बिना कारण बताये किसी या सभी निविदाओं को निरस्त कर अथवा दो या दो से अधिक निविदादाताओं में विभक्त कर सकते हैं। 6. निविदा डालने हेतु निविदादाता का e-pro- curement येबसाइट <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर registered user (पंजीकृत) होना अनिवार्य है। 7. निविदा खुलने की तिथि पर आकस्मिक अवकाश पड़ जाने या इन्टरनेट/तकनीकी बाधित होने पर निविदा अगले कार्य दिवस में खोली जायेगी। 8. निविदादाता निविदा में किसी भी प्रकार के परिवर्तन/संशोधन/ शुद्धिपत्र हेतु ई-पोर्टल/वेबसाइट [http:// etender.up.nic.in](http://etender.up.nic.in) पर सजग रहें/देख सकते हैं। अधीक्षण अभियन्ता (अधीक्षण यू०पी०एस० एल०डी०सी० उ०प्र० पावर ट्रा० कारपोरेशन लि० पत्रांक : 1769/ य०ग० (उ०प्र०परि०)/ 1. यू०पी०एस० एल०डी०सी० /निविदा मण्डल दिनांक 23.7.2021 राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाए

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल-प्रथम, उ०प्र० पावर ट्रान्समिशन कॉरपोरेशन लि०, कक्षा सं०-111 से 114, यू-तल, पारेषण भवन, विभूति खण्ड-11, निकट मंत्री आवास गोमती नगर, लखनऊ उ०प्र० पावर ट्रान्समिशन कॉरपोरेशन लिमिटेड, निविदा आमन्त्रण सूचना (1) अल्पकालिक निविदा संख्या 41-वि.पा.मं. (प्र.)ल/2021-22, उपमहाप्रबन्धक (लेख), लखनऊ के प्रयोगार्थ चालक सहित एक नग डीजल चालित टैक्सी कोटे का हल्का वाहन 08 माह की अवधि के लिये किराये पर लिए जाने हेतु निविदा आमन्त्रित की गयी है जिसे www.uptcl.org पर दिनांक 24.07.2021 को प्रकाशित किया गया है। कार्य की अनुमानित लागत रु. 1.84 लाख का कार्य की धरोहर धनराशि रु. 2,000.00. है। प्रश्नों को मूल रूप में इस कार्यालय में दिनांक 06.08.2021 को 14:00 बजे तक जमा करेंगे। (2) अल्पकालिक निविदा संख्या 42-वि.पा.मं(प्र.)ल/2021-22, अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल-प्रथम, लखनऊ के प्रयोगार्थ चालक सहित एक नग डीजल चालित टैक्सी कोटे का हल्का वाहन 08 माह की अवधि के लिये किराये पर लिए जाने हेतु निविदा आमन्त्रित की गयी है जिसे www.uptcl.org पर दिनांक 24.07.2021 को प्रकाशित किया गया है। कार्य की अनुमानित लागत रु. 1.84 लाख का कार्य की धरोहर धनराशि रु. 2,000.00. है। प्रश्नों को मूल रूप में इस कार्यालय में दिनांक 06.08.2021 को 14:00 बजे तक जमा करेंगे। कार्य की कुल मात्रा ई-निविदा विशिष्टीकरण व अन्य नियम एवं शर्तें www.etender.up.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है। अघोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता को बिना कोई कारण बताये किसी भी ई-निविदा अथवा सभी ई-निविदाओं को अस्वीकार/विभाजित करने का अधिकार सुरक्षित है। निर्धारित तिथि के विस्तार तथा शुद्धि पत्र से सम्बन्धित सूचना यदि कोई होगी केवल वेबसाइट पर डाली जाएगी। अतः स्वयं को अपडेट रखने के लिए उपरोक्त वेबसाइट को नियमित देखते रहना चाहिए। **अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल-प्रथम, उ०प्र० पावर ट्रान्समिशन कॉरपोरेशन लि०, लखनऊ पत्रांक- 1160/वि. पा.मं.(प्र.)ल/निविदा मण्डल दिनांक - 24.07.2021 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचायें"**



A view of clouds hovering over the Taj Mahal in Agra on Saturday

PTI

Booster shot with 2nd gen vax needed: AIIMS



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Director Dr Randeep Guleria on Saturday said that India might have to adopt a booster dose with second-generation Covid-19 vaccines as the Delta variant of the coronavirus has swept across the world and driven up infections in several countries.

He further said Bharat Biotech's Covaxin trials for children are presently underway and the results are expected to be released by September. "It seems that we probably need the booster dose of vaccines as with the passage of time the immunity tends to fall," Dr Guleria said. "There is waning immunity. We would like to have a booster dose that will cover for various emerging variants," Dr Guleria said adding that the booster dose will be a second-generation vaccine.

"We will have second-generation vaccines which would be better in terms of the immunity they give, covering of the new variants and a having a



better overall efficacy," Dr Guleria said.

On Covaxin trials on children, he said: "The Bharat Biotech's Covaxin trials should be over by August or September, and by that time we should get an approval. Pfizer vaccine has been already approved by the FDA (US regulator - Food and Drug Administration). Hopefully, by September, we should start vaccinating children, and that will be a big boost as far as breaking the chain of transmission is concerned."

Dr Guleria's statement comes as the second dose of Covaxin is likely to be administered to children aged 2-6 years in trials next week. "We need to get our own vaccines too - that's why both Bharat Biotech and Zydus are impor-

tant. Getting the Pfizer vaccine will also be helpful, as there is enough data to suggest it's safe... but we can't be sure if we will get required numbers. We will hopefully have more than one vaccine for children by September," he said. The second dose of Covaxin has already been given to children between the ages of 6-12 years at the Delhi AIIMS. Besides Covaxin, the trials for Zydus Cadila's vaccine for children are also currently underway in the country.

On June 7, Delhi AIIMS started screening children between the age of 2 to 17 for trials of Covid-19 vaccine. On May 12, the DCGI granted permission to Bharat Biotech to carry out phase 2, phase 3 trials of Covaxin on children as young as two.

ICSE declares Class 10th, 12th Board results



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Council of Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE), which conducts the exams for the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE), or Class 10, and Indian School Certificate (ISC), or Class 12, on Saturday declared the results of the cancelled exams.

The overall pass percentage for this year is 99.98 per cent for ICSE results and 99.76 per cent for ISC results.

The CBSE is scheduled to declare the results any day next week.

The Southern region has secured the best pass percentage for the Class 10th and Class 12th exam results followed by the Western region in Class 10th results and Northern region for Class 12th results. While the pass percentage for the Southern region in ICSE results is 100 per cent, it is 99.91 per cent for ISC exams.

Delhi NCR has recorded a pass percentage of 100 percent. In ISC Class 12 results, Delhi has also recorded 99.93%.

The overall pass percentage in West Bengal for ICSE is 99.98 per cent and it is 99.63 per cent for ISC Class 12th. As many as 39,520 and 26,859 students have enrolled for Class

Delhi NCR has recorded a pass percentage of 100%. In ISC Class 12 results, Delhi has also recorded 99.93%.

10th ICSE and ISC Class 12th exams respectively.

Odisha has recorded a pass percentage of 99.98 per cent in the ICSE results. While in ISC Class 12 results, the state has recorded 99.83 per cent. In this year, 8,935 students have appeared for the ICSE examination. For ISC exams, 1,813 have appeared this year.

The overall pass percentage in Punjab for ICSE is 99.99 per cent and it is 99.79 per cent for ISC Class 12th. As many as 13,773 and 2,796 students have enrolled for Class 10th ICSE and ISC Class 12th exams respectively.

Karnataka has recorded a pass percentage of 100 per cent in the ICSE results. While in ISC Class 12 results, the state has also recorded 99.95 per cent. The analysis of results of other States were being examined till the report filed.

SC to hear plea on premature release from jail

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a plea that has raised a legal issue as to whether the policy for premature release from jail existing at the time of conviction or the subsequent one which is in existence at the time of consideration of such relief would be applicable.

The apex court sought the response of the Madhya Pradesh government and others within four weeks on the plea filed by a convict, who is serving a life term and is seeking directions to the state to release him from jail on the grounds that he has undergone a sentence of over 20 years including the period of remission.

The petitioner has said that he also qualifies under the policy for premature release which was applicable at the time of his conviction in the case.

The plea came up for hearing on Friday before a bench of justices L Nageswara Rao and Hrishikesh Roy which issued a notice seeking the response of the state government and others.

"Issue notice returnable in four weeks," the bench said.

The petition, filed through advocate Rishi Malhotra, said the petitioner was convicted by a trial court in a case of 1996 along with others and was sentenced to life imprisonment in September 2005.

The plea said at the time of his conviction, the policy for premature release dated December 4, 1978 was applicable.

"However, for the first time on January 10, 2012, there was a substantial change/departure from the said policy wherein it stipulated that such prisoners who are facing life imprisonment would have to undergo actual sentence of 20 years with a total sentence of 26 years," it said.

The plea said as per the December 1978 policy, any convict who has been sentenced to life imprisonment after December 18, 1978 and has undergone 14 years of the actual sentence and completed a total sentence of 20 years would be entitled to premature release. PTI

Cong appoints new State chiefs in Assam, Manipur

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday made changes in its Assam and Manipur units. While Bhupen Bora was appointed as chief of its Assam unit by replacing party's Rajya Sabha member Ripun Bora for the post, Loken Singh was appointed interim president of the Manipur Pradesh Congress with immediate effect till a full-time chief is named.

With this the Congress has effected changes in four States within a week's time including Punjab and Uttarakhand. Of the changes done, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Manipur goes to assembly polls next year while elections were conducted in April this year in Assam where the party's performance was not good.

Continuing with the organisational revamp, a party statement said Congress pres-

ident Sonia Gandhi has appointed Bhupen Bora as president of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) and also named three working presidents -- Rana Goswami, Kamalakhy Dey Purkayastha and Jakir Hussain Sikdar.

The organisational changes in the state unit came weeks after the party's defeat in the assembly polls for which it entered into a grand alliance with the Badruddin Ajmal-led AIUDF and some other parties but failed to stop the BJP from coming back to power.

The party appreciates the contributions of outgoing APCC president Ripun Bora, the statement said.

Bhupen Bora and Rana Goswami are being relieved from their present responsibilities as All India Congress Committee secretaries, it said.

In another appointment, Loken Singh was appointed

interim president of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee with immediate effect till a full-time chief is named.

AICC general secretary Organisation K C Venugopal in a statement said the Congress high has appointed Nameirakpam Loken Singh as the interim president of the Manipur unit of the party. The development took place following the resignation of party leader Govindas Konthoujam as the MPC president a few days ago. The appointment of Loken Singh, senior vice-president of the MPCC, comes into force with immediate effect. Venugopal said that Loken Singh, also an MLA, will be in his new position till a full-time state unit president is appointed.

Also, the party named Arya Kumar Jnanendra as chief organiser for the Odisha Pradesh Congress Seva Dal.

SC junks PIL to declare NCLT can't act as appellate authority

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has declined to entertain a PIL seeking to declare that the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) cannot act as an appellate authority to the decisions of the top court and find flaws so as to circumvent the "rule of law" laid down.

A bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and M R Shah said the petition is clearly not maintainable and there is no reason to entertain the petition under Article 32.

"It is not necessary for this court to return any finding on the question sought to be raised in the abstract without any live challenge to an order of the adjudicating

authority. In any event there are appellate remedies available under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) to an aggrieved party. The petition is dismissed," the bench said.

The apex court was hearing a PIL filed by one Ashok Surana seeking to declare that the

NCLT cannot act as an appellate authority to the decisions of this court and find flaws so as to circumvent the "rule of law" laid down.

The plea also sought directions that the "rule of law" laid down by the top court is binding on the authorities below without any conditions and cannot be

sidelined or overruled.

"Declare that the rule of constructive res judicata (matter decided) applies to the decisions of this court and is a fundamental rule which sustains the rule of law in ensuring finality to litigation," the plea said.

Surana submitted that the NCLT has misinterpreted the judgments of this court and, hence, the invocation of the jurisdiction under Article 32 is sought to be justified.

He also clarified that he is not a party to any of the proceedings before the adjudicating authority under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016. PTI

Classic case of missing spine: Rahul at Govt's vax drive timeline comment

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Government informed Parliament that no fixed timeline can be indicated at present for the completion of the vaccination drive, former Congress President Rahul Gandhi on Saturday took a swipe saying people's lives are on the line and it's a classic case of a missing spine.

In a tweet he said, "People's lives on the line, Government admits no timeline, classic case of missing spine."

He tweeted with the hashtag of #WhereAreVaccines.

His remarks came a day after the government said that no fixed timeline can be indicated at present for the com-



pletion of the vaccination drive.

The Government said it is expected that beneficiaries aged 18 years and above will be vaccinated by December 2021.

Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Bharati

Pravin Pawar in response to Congress MP Rahul Gandhi and Lok Sabha MP Mala Roy's unstarred question said, "The Covid-19 vaccination is an ongoing and dynamic process, which is being guided by National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 (NEGVAK) on the basis of concurrent scientific evidence."

She said that in view of the dynamic and evolving nature of the Covid-19 pandemic, "no fixed timeline at present can be indicated for the completion of vaccination drive."

Pawar said, "However, it is expected that beneficiaries aged 18 years and above will be vaccinated by December 2021."

MP, Gujarat likely to get intense rainfall in next 2-3 days: IMD



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Parts of central and adjoining west India, particularly the States of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, are likely to have some intense rainfall activity for the next two-three days. The India Meteorology Department (IMD) on Saturday said rainfall intensity along the west coast is expected to decrease over the next 24 hours, in a much needed relief to rain-battered Maharashtra and Goa. Rainfall activity will increase over the north Indian plains and hills from July 25, it said.

Having already drenched Chhattisgarh, Telangana, east Madhya Pradesh and central Maharashtra, the system has now shifted its focus on to the western half of Madhya Pradesh. The IMD has indicated that the system will produce isolated extremely heavy falls over west Madhya Pradesh on Saturday, July 24.

Therefore, a red warning has been issued over the sub-division for the day, as it instructs the residents to 'take action' to protect themselves from rough weather. Meanwhile, since the beginning of the monsoon period on June 1, both Madhya Pradesh

and Gujarat have received below-average rainfall.

"Further reduction in rainfall intensity is very likely along the west coast, including Konkan, Goa and adjoining interior Maharashtra, during the next 24 hours," the IMD said. "Fairly widespread to widespread rainfall with isolated heavy to very heavy falls (a r e) very likely to continue over west coast, including Maharashtra, on July 24 and isolated heavy falls thereafter," it said. Extremely heavy rains have killed scores of people in Maharashtra over the past few days, submerging several areas and damaging property.

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has enhanced the number of its teams from 26 to 34 for undertaking rescue operations in the coastal areas of Maharashtra that have been hit by landslides and floods triggered by heavy rainfall.

A spokesperson for the federal contingency force said these teams are being deployed in affected areas of Mumbai, Ratnagiri, Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Satara, Sangli, Sindhudurg, Kolhapur, Pune and Nagpur for rescue and relief work after consultation

with the state administration.

"In view of the severity of the situation, additional eight NDRF teams have been airlifted from Kolkata and Vadodara base which are being deployed in affected areas of Maharashtra," the spokesperson said. "This will take the total NDRF deployment to 34 teams," the spokesperson said.

The IMD said scattered to fairly widespread rainfall with isolated heavy to very heavy falls are likely to continue over Gujarat till July and reduce thereafter. Widespread rainfall with isolated heavy to very heavy falls are likely to continue over east Rajasthan till July 26 and reduce thereafter.

In north India, rainfall activity is likely to increase over northwest India from July 25. "Fairly widespread to widespread rainfall with isolated heavy to very heavy falls (are) likely over Uttarakhand during July 25-28; Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and West Uttar Pradesh during July 26-28, and Punjab and east Uttar Pradesh on July 27 and 28," the IMD said.

Isolated extremely heavy falls are also likely over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand on July 27 and 28, it added.

Shilpa defends husband Kundra, says Hotshots app not pornography but erotic

▲Kundra is innocent, actress tell cops
▲Resigns from Kundra-owned industries

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty has defended her businessman-husband Raj Kuinde, who has been named as a "key conspirator" in the scam involving the producing and streaming of pornographic films on mobile and other Apps, by saying that Kundra's HotShots App did not have pornographic content and that all content was of bold and erotic in nature.

Shilpa, who was questioned by the Mumbai Crime branch sleuths on Friday evening, distanced herself from husband's firm M/s Viaan Industries Ltd, of which Kundra is the owner and she used to be the co-owner, while Pradeep Bakshi Bakshi — a British citizen, who is married to Kundra's sister — is the Chairman of Kenrin Ltd., London.

In defence of herself and her husband, Shilpa — who has made come back into films through "Hungama 2" released on an OTT platform, reportedly told the police that "content on Raj Kundra's App was not pornography but erotica. He is innocent".

Kundra, who was arrested on July 19, was on Friday remanded in police custody till July 27.

The crime branch sleuths of the Mumbai police have seized 48 TB worth of images and videos, most of which is adult content.

During their investigations, the investigators have traced a record of transactions - from an account in Yes Bank registered to Mr Kundra to one in the United Bank of Africa.

They suspect money was accrued from the sale of pornographic content. A sum of ₹ 7.5 crore has been seized so far.

Following a raid conducted on February 4 this year by them on a private bungalow at picturesque Madh Island at Malad (west) in north Mumbai where a porn film was being shot, the Malwani police registered a case in pornographic movie 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.

Meanwhile, Kundra has moved the Bombay High Court challenging his arrest and seeking dismissal of the lower court's order on extending police custody on that distinction. His petition also claims he was arrested after being summoned to the police station "under the garb of recording his statement".

On their part, 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. The investigators have also 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 UK 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.

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 Khansnavis (38), Bhanusuryam Thakur (26) Tanvir Hashmi (40) and Umesh Kamat (39).

Model-actress Gehana Vashisth, 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.



REPUBLIC DAY VIOLENCE AND NORTHEAST RIOTS

LG sends cops' PP panel demand files to MHA

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Lieutenant Governor's office on Saturday forwarded a file of the Delhi Cabinet rejecting Delhi Police's proposal to set up panels of public prosecutors for the Republic Day violence and northeast riots to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) due to difference of opinion.

Last week, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government had rejected police' proposals and thus setting a stage for a fresh round of confrontation with the Centre and the office of Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal. "The matter has been reserved for the consideration of the President of India due to the difference of opinion between the L-G and the elected AAP Government. The file of Cabinet decision received by the L-G office was forwarded to the Ministry of Home Affairs on Friday for further action," a Delhi Government official said.

"It has been recommended that the 11 special public prosecutors in Republic day vio-

lence-related cases and three others in northeast Delhi riots cases, proposed by the Delhi Police be immediately appointed in view of the gravity of the two matters," he said.

This is the first time the L-G has reserved any matter for consideration of the President, owing to the difference of opinion with the Arvind Kejriwal dispensation, since the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021, came into force in April this year," the government official added.

Last year, in a similar way, the L-G had used his special powers to give effect to the appointment of Delhi Police's special prosecutors in cases related to northeast Delhi riots of 2020 that claimed over 50 lives besides resulting in injuries to hundreds of persons and extensive damage to private and public property.

The Delhi Cabinet, in its meeting chaired by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on July 16, had observed that "a free-and-fair trial of these cases



would not be possible by a panel of lawyers selected by the city police itself," rejecting L-G's recommendation of special public prosecutors suggested by Delhi Police.

The Delhi Government had in July 2020 also rejected the proposal of the Delhi Police for the appointment of special prosecutors in the riot's cases. The LG had overturned the Delhi Government's decision and directed its home department to grant approval to the Delhi Police's proposed panel of

lawyers.

Bajjal had rejected the cabinet decision by exercising his special power under Article 239AA(4) of the Constitution by reserving the matter of appointment of public prosecutors, for consideration by the President of India.

The Delhi Government has already protested with the LG over his use of "veto power" in matters relating to subjects of its domain. Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in a letter to Bajjal last Saturday had

stated the Constitution has given "veto" power to the LG to reserve any matter on which he disagrees with the decision of the elected Government, for consideration of the President.

"However, the Constitution bench of the Supreme Court has stated that the LG will use it occasionally and under extraordinary circumstances," Sisodia had said referring to an apex court verdict in 2018 that among other things empowered the elected Government in Delhi of decision making in all matters except police, land and public order.

In April this year, however, Delhi's lieutenant governor became the effective in-charge of the national Capital with the Centre notifying a new law making it clear that the elected government will now have to seek the opinion of the L-G before any executive decision.

The Union Home Ministry's notification giving effect to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021 came into effect from April 27.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

While the Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal on Saturday rejected the Delhi Cabinet's decision to reject the police's proposal to set up panels of public prosecutors in farmers' case, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the L-G's interference in everyday work is an insult to the people of Delhi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) should respect democracy.

"Delhi people formed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) with a historic majority and defeated the BJP. Let BJP run the country and let 'AAP' run Delhi," Kejriwal added.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said that the Central Government's anti-farmers conspiracy would be exposed in Court. "Fearing that Central Government's anti-farmer conspiracy would be exposed in Court, LG rejected the panel of lawyers decided by the Delhi Cabinet," Sisodia said, "Overturning cabinet's decisions like this is an insult to the people of Delhi, BJP should respect democracy."

"It was decided in the Delhi Cabinet on July 19 that lawyers would be appointed by the Delhi Government with respect to the farmer agitation cases going on in the Court. However, the Lieutenant Governor reversed this decision of the Delhi Government on Saturday and sent the file to the President."

"As per the Constitution, the Chief Minister of the elected government of Delhi has



been given the right to appoint lawyers. Overturning the decision of the Delhi Cabinet by the Lieutenant Governor is entirely against the Constitution. If the appointment of lawyers is also to be done by the Lieutenant Governor, what will happen to the rights of the Government elected by the people as per the constitution?"

"The Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court, including 5 senior judges, had clearly stated in its order that the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi has only two powers.

Either the LG can agree with the decision of the elected Government and act accordingly, and if the LG disagrees, then he may send his disagreement to the President. The Supreme Court had also said in its order that the Lieutenant Governor has been given the power to refer a matter to the President only in extraordinary circumstances and not in every case."

Sisodia alleged that the

Centre is violating the constitutional rights of the elected Delhi Government. "Centre needs to read the constitution and reflect that if the government elected by the people is not being allowed to function, then what is the need to hold elections, and what is the need for the constitution? This shows the unconstitutional and undemocratic attitude of the BJP-led Central Government," he added.

Questioning the Central Government, the Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia asked, "What is the intent behind rejecting the panel of lawyers decided by the Delhi Government?"

The Central government is afraid that the panel of lawyers appointed by the CM will expose the conspiracy led by the Central government against the farmers in Court." While advising the Centre, Sisodia said that the Central Government should stop interfering in the matters of farmers and the Delhi Government.

Security guard held for killing man in southwest Delhi



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested a 41-year-old security guard for allegedly killing a person who used to harass his daughter in southwest Delhi's Mahipalpur area. Police said that the accused was caught by police on the weekly hours of Saturday while he was trying to dispose of the body in a cart rickshaw.

The accused has been identified as Surmesh, a resident of Mahipalpur and native of Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh (UP). He was working as a security guard with NS Security for the last four year.

According to Ingit Pratap Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southwest district, at around 4 AM on Saturday, head constable Vinod Kumar from the PCR unit spotted Surmesh carrying the body on a rickshaw and nabbed him.

"The deceased has a tattoo on his left arm and a parking slip of IGI airport was found in

his pocket. He was later identified as Santosh Kumar Jha (25), a resident of Mahipalpur and native of Muzaffarpur in Bihar. He was a driver in a courier company," said the DCP.

"Interrogation revealed that Jha was harassing the daughter of Surmesh for the last three years. He used to follow her whenever she went out. On Thursday, Jha came to the house of the accused in a drunken condition and started arguments with him. During these arguments, they both went to the ground floor and entered a vacant room," said the DCP.

"During heated arguments, Surmesh gave a fist blow to Jha and strangled him with gamcha that Jha was carrying with him. He kept the body in a room in the basement where he was working as security guard and on Saturday, he was trying to dispose of it and was caught. Accused has been arrested and is being produced in the court," said the DCP.

"No complaint was received against Jha for harassing the daughter of the accused. Further investigation is in progress," he said. Surmesh has a wife, one daughter and one son.

Teen girl abducted, sold for ₹50K by social media friend, victim rescued



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Crime Branch of Delhi Police has rescued a 16-year-old girl from Bhind in Madhya Pradesh (MP) who was sold there for marriage by a person whom she met on a social media application.

The accused, identified as Rajeev Garg, a resident of Bhind, was also arrested on Thursday.

According to Monika Bhardwaj, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Crime Branch, on May 29, the girl told her parents that she was going to one of her friends' house and when she did not return, search was made by her family and later a case was registered at Rannah police station next day under

section 363 (punishment for kidnapping).

"The call detail records of the victim were scrutinized and police focused on a mobile number whose location was found to be in Etawah in UP and Gwalior and Bhind in MP. The location of that mobile number was in Delhi on the day when the girl went missing. Its movement was followed and police apprehended Garg on Thursday from Bhind," said the DCP.

"On his instance, the victim was recovered from a house near bus stand, Bhind, Madhya Pradesh. Enquiry revealed that the victim had created an ID on a social media application where she came into contact with Garg through his ID that he had created in the name of

Mahi Garg," said the DCP.

"The interaction between them started and the girl had no idea that the person on the other end was a man with nefarious designs.

One day, when she came to know that her virtual friend is a male and not a female, she stopped talking to him and later blocked his mobile number when he tried to contact her," said the DCP.

"After sometime, Garg called her from some other number and emotionally exploited her to continue friendship and unblock his phone number," said the DCP adding that he also convinced her to meet him at Madhuban Chowk.

"On May 29, the girl went to Madhuban Chowk and met Garg who abducted her and took to Bhind to sell the victim. The victim was subjected to physical and sexual assault by Garg and he had sold her to one Ram Mohan, a resident of Bhind, for Rs 50,000 and she was forced to marry him," said the DCP.

"Garg has remained in Gwalior jail for seven months in a dowry case. Mohan is a tenant of Garg and is at large. Efforts are on to trace him. Victim and Garg were brought to Delhi and handed over to local police for further necessary action," said the DCP.

Car runs over labourers on roadside, six injured

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Six labourers, who were sitting on the roadside, were injured after a speeding car hit them in north Delhi's Narela area. Police said a manhunt has been initiated to nab the driver who fled from the spot after the incident.

The injured have been identified as Narendar (43), Sharad (40), Sanjay (35), Anil (30), Nand Lal (32) and Sukhdin (21).

According to a senior police official, information was received at Narela Industrial Area police station regarding the accident following which Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) was dispatched for the spot. On spot, police team found that all the injured persons were shifted to MV Hospital. One accidental Baleno car was found at the spot. Enquiry revealed that the car was coming from Narela side and going towards Bawana which got disbalanced due to over speed and the vehicle hit the labourers sitting near roadside green area," he said. "Medico-legal cases of the victims have been collected and a case under section 279 (rash driving) and 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered," he said.

AAP: NMC gives eviction notice to shopkeepers near Gaffar market

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) accused the north municipal corporation of demolishing areas around Gaffar Market to reconstruct complexes and to sell it afresh while evicting the existing shopkeepers.

AAP chief spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj said that the north corporation wants to evict shopkeepers who were given a lease of 99 years in 1976 and reconstruct it with a new builder who will sell these shops to new people instead.

"The corporation did not carry out maintenance for 40 years and now served an eviction notice to empty the market within three days. MCD and DDA construct market complexes at various places and the shops in these markets are given on lease for 99 years. Ideally, these leases are converted into freehold deeds. However, the MCD in connivance with big builder mafias is coming up with a new technique," he said.

He further added, "The most astounding thing in this situation is that the MCD wants to evict the shopkeepers who were given a lease of 99 years. There are about 39 such markets in Delhi and the MCD is making a similar plan for all these markets. This is being done so that the BJP can fill hundreds of crore rupees in their pockets before leaving the MCD."

Mob fury in Bihar town over custodial death

Several cops injured, woman constable dies

Jehanabad (Bihar): A female constable died after being run over by a vehicle here while trying to quell a mob which in protest against a custodial death indulged in heavy stone-pelting and fired gunshots in the air, leaving many police personnel injured.

The busy Jehanabad-Arwal highway remained jammed for hours on account of the trouble that erupted in Parasbigha police station area of the district, said Sub Divisional Police Officer, Jehanabad, Ashok Kumar Pandey.

The mob was furious over the death of one Govind Manjhi

who was arrested some time back for engaging in liquor trade. He had been remanded to judicial custody and lodged at a jail in the adjoining Aurangabad district," he said.

Notably, sale and consumption of liquor is completely banned in Bihar where the Nitish Kumar Government had brought in a stringent prohibition law six years ago.

"Manjhi died at the jail on Friday. As the news reached here, residents of his village squatted on the highway blaming the death on physical torture. When a police party tried to assuage them, they took

recourse to violence", said Pandey.

The SDPO said the constable, Kanti Devi, "was hit by a vehicle while she was engaged in the operation and she succumbed to injuries while being rushed to a hospital".

"The agitators indulged in heavy stone-pelting and fired a few shots from unlicensed firearms. Several police personnel have received grievous injuries. We have arrested five people in this connection. A heavy deployment of police is in place to keep the situation under control".

Said Pandey. **PTI**



Dismantling of chariot after Rath Yatra festival in Puri on Saturday

PTI

Nine killed in Gujarat LPG cylinder explosion

Ahmedabad/Bhopal: At least nine persons, including four children, have died after suffering grievous injuries in the explosion of an LPG cylinder and resultant fire in a room on the outskirts of Ahmedabad in Gujarat, police said on Saturday. The deceased belonged to Madhya Pradesh, a senior officer said.

The incident occurred on the night of July 20. While eight victims - labourers and their family members - died in the last couple of days during treatment, another one succumbed to injuries on Saturday morning, he said.

"Leakage of gas from an LPG cylinder had triggered explosion and fire, in which 10 persons, including children and women, suffered severe burn injuries.

The incident has claimed the lives of nine of them so far. They were undergoing treatment at the civil hospital," inspector P R Jadeja of Aslali police station said.

The labourers and their family members were sleeping in the small room when the gas from their cylinder started leaking.

When their neighbour knocked on their door to alert them about the leakage, one of the labourers got up and switched on the light, which triggered a spark and led to the explosion due to the concentration of gas, another police official said.

The incident occurred on the night of July 20. While eight victims-labourers and their family members - died in the last couple of days during treatment, another one succumbed to injuries on Saturday morning

The 10 injured persons, including the neighbour who had come to alert them, were then rushed to the civil hospital for treatment, he said.

Three persons died during treatment on Thursday, five others on Friday and one more on Saturday morning.

The deceased were identified as Rampyari Ahirwar (56), Rajubhai Ahirwar (31), Sonu Ahirwar (21), Seema Ahirwar (25), Sarju Ahirwar (22), Vaishali (7), Nitesh (6), Payal (4), and Akash (2), all natives of Guna district in Madhya Pradesh, the inspector added. "One injured person, identified as Kulsinh Bhairwa (30), is undergoing treatment and his condition is said to be critical," Jadeja said, adding Bhairwa hails from Kudgaon in Karauli in Rajasthan.

Jadeja said the bodies of the six deceased were sent to their native village in Madhya Pradesh in ambulances. Three bodies had been sent earlier, he added.

Meanwhile, Madhya

Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed grief over the death of the nine persons in Ahmedabad who belonged to Madhusudangarh in Guna district, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said in a statement.

The MP government announced financial assistance of Rs four lakh each to the next kin of the deceased. "Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed deep condolences on the death of seven workers of Madhusudangarh (MP's Guna district) due to gas leak in Ahmedabad. Chouhan has directed a financial assistance of Rs 4 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased and Rs 2 lakh to the injured besides free treatment to them," the CMO said. Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai C Patel also expressed grief over the death of workers. Praying for the departed souls and for strength to the bereaved families, Patel wished a speedy recovery to the injured, the

Peace in Af possible only through political solution: US

‘The US will continue to provide, humanitarian and security support to Afghan govt’

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US administration, led by President Joe Biden, believes lasting peace in Afghanistan is possible only through a political solution, the White House has said, noting the ongoing dialogue between the Government of the war-torn country and the Taliban.

"I would note that there are ongoing political negotiations and discussions that we certainly support between Afghan leaders, members of the Afghan Government, and the Taliban," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters at her daily news conference on Friday, amid a wave of violence from the Taliban.

"We believe a political solution is the only outcome to lasting peace in Afghanistan, but

we will continue to provide support to the Government in the form of humanitarian support, security support, training. We will also continue to encourage them to take a leading role in defending and protecting their own people," she said.

In an interview to MSNBC, Secretary of State Tony Blinken said the US is determined that Afghanistan does not become a training ground for terrorism directed against the United States or its allies and partners. "That's exactly why we went there in the first place, which is important to remember. We were attacked on 9/11, we went to Afghanistan to get the folks — who attacked us — to bring them to justice. Osama bin Laden was brought to justice 10 years ago, and the group, al-Qaida, responsible

for those attacks has been dramatically diminished in terms of its capacity to attack anyone from Afghanistan," he said.

"We're going to make sure that we keep our eyes on that. If we see the threat re-emerging, we're going to be in a position to take action against it. But that's why we were there, and now we're 20 years and a trillion dollars and thousands of Americans lost later in that campaign. I think the reason we went there is what we have to keep the focus on, and we've largely succeeded in doing what we needed to do," Blinken said.

The United States, he said, does have deep concerns about the actions the Taliban is taking, indicating that it may be trying to take the country by force.

Senior American military

officers have admitted that the Taliban has gained "strategic momentum," with their forces now controlling about half of Afghanistan's more than 400 district centres.

Blinken said Afghanistan would become a pariah state, if the Taliban took it by force.

"It would not get the assistance that it's looking for and that the Taliban says it wants if it has any responsibility for the country. It would not get the support from the internation-

al community that it says it wants. We're actively engaged in diplomacy because there is no military solution to this conflict that's been going on for more than 40 years in Afghanistan, and we're working to try to bring that to an end," he said.

US Central Command, which is in charge of Afghanistan, said recently that the withdrawal of US forces is more than 95 per cent complete.

Pak NSA, ISI chief likely to visit US next week for talks on Afghanistan: Report

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf and ISI chief Lt Gen Faiz Hameed are likely to visit the US next week for talks with their American counterparts on the situation in Afghanistan as part of Washington's diplomatic efforts aimed at ensuring a peaceful transfer of power in the war-torn nation, according to a media report.

The efforts also include visits by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to New Delhi and Kabul for talks aimed at formulating a regional response to the Afghan crisis, the Dawn newspaper reported from

Washington while quoting diplomatic sources.

The trip of Yusuf and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Director General Lt Gen Hameed was part of these diplomatic efforts, it said.

"Pakistan has a key role in a new US diplomatic offensive aimed at ensuring a peaceful transfer of power in Afghanistan," diplomatic sources told the newspaper on Friday. Under a deal with the Taliban, the US and its NATO allies agreed to withdraw all troops in return for a commitment by the militants that they would prevent extremist groups from operating in areas they control.

Pakistan deploys regular troops along Afghan border: Report

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has deployed regular troops at forward positions along the Afghan border due to the fluid security situation in the neighbouring war-torn country in the wake of the withdrawal of American and NATO troops, a media report said on Saturday.

Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said that Pakistan Army soldiers have replaced the Frontier Constabulary (FC), Levies Force and other militias from the frontline positions, the Dawn newspaper reported.

The US and NATO are on the verge of completing their final troops withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Ahmed said the FC Balochistan and other militias working under the interior ministry had been called back from border patrolling.

"Now regular army troops are manning the border after replacing the paramilitary forces," the minister said, adding the decision had been made in wake of the volatile situation across the border.

Ahmed said the situation not only demanded containment of the influx of refugees from Afghanistan but also the

entry of armed army personnel and militants into Pakistan.

"Paramilitary troops including the Frontier Constabulary, Levies, Rangers are deployed at the borders to deal with regular issues including illegal border crossing, smuggling etc," the minister was quoted as saying in the report.

"However, the current volatile situation (in Afghanistan) demands that regular military troops be deployed along the border," he said. Military spokesperson Major General Babar Iftikhar recently told a TV channel that troops were manning the border and the move would help prevent escalation of conflict from the Afghan soil or airspace to the Pakistani side.

Meanwhile, sources in the armed forces told the newspaper that the most serious challenge in the current scenario was not just the inflow of refugees or any infiltrators in the garb of refugees but the movement of Afghan army personnel or Taliban fighters.

"We have seen that more than 1,000 Afghan soldiers fled into Tajikistan early in July to escape clashes with the Taliban," an officer said. "But Taliban's presence in

the northern areas of Afghanistan is not as strong as it is in the areas bordering Pakistan. Therefore, if Afghan army troops enter Pakistan while fleeing fighting, there are chances that Taliban would follow them and the conflict would spill over inside Pakistan, and it could spread to the mainland too," the officer added.

Pakistan and Afghanistan have already traded barbs last week after the Taliban took control of the Spin Boldak border crossing, and the Afghan Air Force wanted to attack Taliban positions from the Pakistani side, which was not allowed by Islamabad.

"Pakistan does not want to see any such situation when the Afghan air force might use our airspace without permission to attack Taliban and in retaliation the militants attack Pakistani positions creating a new issue," the officer said.

Meanwhile, responding to a question, the interior minister said that the fight inside Afghanistan was their internal matter and Pakistan was not taking any side and had no favourites.

"It is time that the Afghan politicians and their military leadership learn to deal with their issues," Ahmed said.

GLOBE TROTTING

BANDITS KILL 4 IRANIAN TROOPS NEAR PAK BORDER

Tehran: Armed bandits killed four members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard in fighting in a southern province, the official IRNA news agency reported Saturday. The report said the clash between Guard members and the bandits happened Friday night in the Gounic district of Sistan and Baluchistan province. The site of the fighting is some 1,250 kilometers (775 miles) southeast of the capital Tehran. It did not elaborate.

14 KILLED IN WAREHOUSE FIRE IN CHINA

Beijing: Fourteen people died and 26 others were injured after a fire broke out at a warehouse in northeast China's Jilin province on Saturday, local authorities said. The accident happened at a logistic warehouse in Jingyue high-tech industrial development zone at Jilin province's capital Changchun, according to officials with the zone. Fourteen people were confirmed dead in the blaze, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. Among the 26 injured, 12 were in severe condition, it said.

US AIRSTRIKE IN SOMALIA IS 2ND THIS WEEK

Washington: For the second time this week, US on Friday conducted an airstrike against the al-Shabab extremist group in Somalia. The earlier strike, on Tuesday, was the first in Somalia since President Joe Biden took office in January. In a brief statement, the Pentagon said the attack was conducted in support of Somali partner forces, and thus was allowed under existing congressional authorization for the use of military force. A Pentagon spokeswoman, Cindi King, said the airstrike was coordinated with the Somali government and took place in the Galmudug area in central Somalia.

Millions sleep well at night due to technologies like Pegasus: NSO

Jerusalem: Amid the raging controversy over its surveillance software Pegasus, Israeli cybersecurity company NSO Group has defended itself by saying that millions of people around the world sleep well at night and walk in the streets safely due to such technologies available with intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

The company also stated that it does not operate the technology nor does it have access to the data collected by its clients.

The alleged use of the Pegasus software to spy on journalists, human rights defenders, politicians and others in a number of countries, including India, has triggered concerns over issues relating to privacy. Politicians, rights activists and journalists were among those targeted with phone spyware sold to various governments by the Israeli firm, according to an international media consortium.

"Millions of people around the world are sleeping well at night, and safely walking in the streets, thanks to Pegasus and similar technologies which help intelligence agencies," a spokesperson for NSO said. **PTI**



Firefighters light a backfire to stop the Dixie Fire from spreading near Prattville in Plumas County, Calif. on Friday

AP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

INDIA REJOICES AT...

Her smile shone the brightest during the entire performance on Saturday but also hard to miss were the Olympic rings' shaped earrings that she was sporting, which were a gift from her mother.

"I would like to thank my family, especially my mother for a lot of sacrifices and believing in me," she said.

The gold went to China's Hou Zhihui with an effort of 210kg (94kg+116kg), who created Olympic records in all three categories (snatch, clean and jerk and Total).

"I've tried many times to beat her. I failed one attempt (on clean & jerk) but I was trying very hard to beat her," Chanu said. Aisah Windy Cantika of Indonesia took home the bronze with an effort of 194kg (84kg+110kg).

Considered her weakness in the run up to the marquee event, Chanu attempted 84kg in her first snatch attempt. The Manipuri took her time and cleanly heaved the barbell.

She lifted 87kg in her next attempt and raised the weight to 89kg, which was 1kg more than her personal best of 88kg that she had lifted at the national championship last year.

However, she was unable to better her personal best and settled for 87kg in the snatch event only behind leader Zhihui, who created a new Olympic record with an effort of 94kg. The Chinese lifter also holds the world mark (96kg) in the category. In the clean and jerk, world record holder Chanu lifted 110kg and 115kg in the first two attempts.

and open India's account. The diminutive Mannipuri broke down after realising that she has secured a medal and hugged head coach Vijay Sharma in jubilation. She later broke into a punjabi bhangra too to celebrate the historic podium finish.

Delighted by her achievement, not even a face mask could hide Chanu's smile that spread ear to ear at the medal ceremony, where there was a bit of confusion among the winners. As per COVID-19 protocols laid out for the Games, the winners were supposed to be social distanced and not pose for a group photograph as per the Games protocols. But the three medallist congratulated each other and came together to get pictures clicked before being asked to distance by an official.

An Olympic medal was long overdue for the Indian, who has proved her mettle as a fighter in the international arena time and again. Her cabinet includes a coveted world championship gold medal, two Commonwealth Games medals -- silver in 2014 and gold in 2018 -- and an Asian Championship bronze. **PTI**

MOTHER IN TEARS...

"I was in tears seeing it and also during the moment she won the medal. Her father (Saikhom Kriti Meitei) was also in tears. Tears of joy. All her hard work has led to the success," Chanu ended India's 21-year wait for a weightlifting medal at the Olympics by clinching a silver medal in the 49kg category to open the country's account on Saturday. The 26-year-old lifted a total of 202kg (87kg+115kg) to better Karnam Malleswari's bronze in the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

With this, she exorcised the ghosts of the 2016 Games where she had failed to log a single legitimate lift.

MASSIVE EVACUATION...

The toll estimated by the SDMA is a conservative one. Unconfirmed reports said the number of deaths had crossed 100 and the final toll might be much more.

Giving an overall picture of the rain and flood situation in coastal Konkarn region and western Maharashtra, a senior state government official said, "Mahad and Poladpur in Raigad, Chiplun and in Ratnagiri in Konkarn region and districts of Satara, Kolhapur and Sangli have been badly affected both by rains and consequent flood. We are witnessing flood situation in Thane and Palghar districts."

In an effort to deal with the flood situation, the Disaster Management, Relief & Rehabilitation authorities deployed teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State Disaster Response Force across all the affected districts. As many as 890 villages have been affected by the floods. A total of 25 NDRF teams plus 8 on standby, 3 units each of Indian Army and Indian Coast Guard, 7 of Indian Navy and 1 of Indian Air Force have been engaged in the rescue operations nonstop since the past over 24 hours.

According to official reports, heavy rainfall led to the breaking of the banks of Savitri river, resulting flooding in Mahad and Poladpur towns. The whole town of Mahad was completely cut off and was not accessible by road. Many people were stranded on roof tops and upper floors of the

houses. Owing to overflow of Savitri river water onto the bridges, rescue teams could not reach the said regions. There landslides in the villages of Tayle, Sakharsutarwadi in Mahad taluka and Kevnale in Poladpur taluka. In Ratnagiri district, Chiplun and Khed towns have been completely inundated due to discharge from the Koyna dam and subsequently the Koltewadi dam leading to the rise in the levels of the Vashisti river. The two towns were cut off due to land routes being inundated. The bridge over the Vashistitriver on the Mumbai Chiplun route was washed away.

Thousands of people were stranded on roof tops and upper floors of the houses as the water levels rose to over 15 to 20 feet in many places. NDRF and Coast Guard teams were deployed. Helicopters of the Airforce were also deployed for rescue and air dropping of food and water packets.

Relief camps have been set up at three locations where all arrangements were made for the rescued people. "One column of the Army was also dispatched for relief efforts. Coast Guard teams were also dispatched to the spot. More than 1000 people were safely evacuated by the various response teams," the State Government official said.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Food and Civil Supplies Minister Chhagan Bhujbal announced that the State Government provide free foodgrains and kerosene to the people in the flood-affected regions of the State.

Talking to media persons at Nashik in north Maharashtra, Bhujbal said the State Government would provide 10 kg wheat, 10 kg, five kgs dal

and five litre kerosene to each family, as per a government policy of March 2019.

"The kerosene will help people cook their meals since many areas are still water-logged and without electricity and other fuels supplies due to the floods since the past three days," he said.

BLINKEN: WILL DISCUSS...

The Government has asserted that India has well established democratic practices and robust institutions to safeguard the rights of all. The government has emphasised that the Indian Constitution provides for adequate safeguards under various statutes for ensuring the protection of human rights.

Thompson asserted that the relationship with India is a strong one that has endured through administrations of all colours and stripes in the United States and will continue to do so. "We are looking forward to this opportunity for the Secretary to talk with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, and continue to pursue the myriad areas of common interest that we have," he said.

"I think it's fair to say that we see the relationship continuing at a very high level, and India will. Of course. Remain an incredibly important partner," he said. "We're going to continue pursuing our global comprehensive strategic partnership, and I think by virtue of the President making the Quad

and our partnership with India very high priorities right at the outset of this administration, it sets the tone for what we think we can achieve and



Chinese President Xi Jinping visits the Drepung Monastery located in the western suburbs of Lhasa, southwestern China's Tibet Autonomous Region on Thursday AP

Pradesh, and also called for "further strengthening the work of training soldiers and war preparation," the Global Times reported.

Xi, 68, made his first visit

to Tibet as President from Wednesday to Friday. But his important visit was kept under wraps by China's official media till the end of the tour on Friday due to the sensitivities

of the trip. As part of his trip, he first went to Nyingchi, a strategically located town close to the border with Arunachal Pradesh. On Thursday, Xi went to Nyingchi Railway Station, learning about the overall design of the Sichuan-Tibet Railway and how the Lhasa-Nyingchi section has been operated since June 25.

It was the first time in recent years, a top Chinese leader visited the Tibetan border town. From there he went to the provincial capital Lhasa by the recently launched high-speed train.

He wound up his visit to the politically sensitive Himalayan region on Friday by meeting "representatives of troops stationed in Tibet".

"Xi met with representa-

tives of troops stationed in Tibet, calling for efforts to strengthen military training and preparedness in all aspects and make contributions to the lasting stability, prosperity and development of Tibet," the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

However, the CPC-run tabloid Global Times said that Xi in his meeting with the PLA representatives "stressed that the local troops should fully strengthen the work of training soldiers and war preparation and contribute positive strength to promote the long-term stability and prosperity of Tibet".

Xi's first visit to Tibet took place amidst the current India-China military tensions in eastern Ladakh.

Biden stumps for McAuliffe in early test of political clout

AP ■ ARLINGTON

President Joe Biden led the kind of campaign rally that was impossible last year because of the pandemic, speaking before nearly 3,000 people in support of a fellow moderate Democrat whose race for Virginia governor could serve as a test of Biden's own strength and coattails.

Biden motorcaded across the Potomac River Friday night to back Terry McAuliffe, a former governor looking for a second term whose centrist leanings in many ways mirror those of the president. The race is seen as an early measure of voters' judgment on Democratic control of all branches of the federal government.

The president stood before an enthusiastic and largely unmasked crowd who gathered around a park pavilion and playground on a warm July night. He emphasized that he shared the same vision as McAuliffe about the need for greater public investments in order to drive economic growth. But Biden was also focused on the political stakes.

"You're not gonna find anyone, I mean anyone, who knows how to get more done for Virginia than Terry," Biden said. "Off-year election, the country's looking. This is a big deal." Biden pointed to his management of the pandemic and highlighted the economic recovery during the first six months of his term, providing a window into his party's messaging as it tries to maintain narrow margins next fall in both houses of Congress.

‘Playing an asura came with challenges’

SIDDHARTH NIGAM, who plays a 2500-year-old asura in Hero-Gayab Mode On on Sony SAB, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about his reaction on getting this role and challenges faced

■What was your reaction when you were offered to play a 2500-year-old asura?

When I was approached for the project, I was not told what character I was being offered. I was only given the brief. They told me that they already had their main lead. And now they were looking for a person who was more powerful than this superhero — someone who can make the hero a superhero. I was interested. I felt that the show was unique. I have always tried to do projects where I could be different from what I had done in the past. When I was offered this role, I was excited. However, when I was told that I would be an *asura*, I was taken aback a bit but I was told that I would remain in my human form; just that I would have superhuman powers. The best part was that I would get to be part of the project with my brother.

■How did you come on board the project?

I was lucky that I didn't have to audition for this project. The producer of Peninsula Pictures, Alind Srivastava offered me this role. He said that he wanted me to be part of this show and play Shivaay. I agreed and here I am.

■What are the challenges that come with playing Shivaay?

There were quite a few. First, Shivaay's voice is a bit heavy. I am unlike Veer Nanda (Hero) who is street-smart. I am all-powerful and strong. Then there is the look. I have tattoos and initially it would take up to two hours to get ready. Now, of course, it doesn't take that long. Also, the dialogue delivery is different; he is extremely intelligent. Whatever he says has deeper meaning. How this has to be conveyed had to be practiced.

■Do you get into fights with your brother — off-screen?

Onscreen, I am obviously trying to turn him into a superhero, so there are fight sequences. Off-screen, sometimes we have differences of opinion and get into verbal fights, as is normal. We sometimes end up in a WWE kind of situation. But we are brothers and respect each other. The good part is that we have no

ego clashes.

■How did you get into acting?

I never wanted to be an actor. My background as a gymnast left very little time for any recreational activities. If I ended up on the news, that was enough for me. I was in the hostel; I didn't have a mobile; we had to practice for eight hours a day. That left little time for anything else. It never occurred that I would end up acting. I have a Gold in parallel bar and a Silver in high bar at 58th National School Games, Pune and during one of the games I was spotted and was approached for the audition of Bournvita ad. That is how I came into the industry. It was destined.

■Was it tough to do the ad?

It was tough. I had no acting background. I have never taken any classes. It was difficult to face the camera, well-known actors and memorise dialogues and deliver them with emotion was so alien to me. This made me nervous. But I was determined that since I was offered to play a part I would do it to the best of my abilities. So, I worked really hard.

■You have done a couple of movies. Why not pursue Bollywood?

I am sure that there is something really big that will come my way from Bollywood. I am also looking at roles that I can play in web series. Since I came into this industry I have always tried different roles. I know only one thing however big or small the screen may be, my job is to give my best.

■You have done a few music videos. How has the experience been?

Doing music videos is so different from serials. There are two types of music videos. One where there is a song and there is a boy and or a girl and they go dancing about. Then there are videos that tell a story. What I have done comes under the second category. I love doing such music videos since they are shot within two-three days; it is a stress-buster. Listening to music and performing it is very relaxing.



Plan Your Sunday

It's hard to say no to coffee especially in this rainy season. How about making it yummier and healthier coffee with available ingredients in your kitchen? These hot coffees has the goodness of natural ingredients and spices like cinnamon and ginger that boost your immunity.

SPICY CINNAMON COFFEE WITH ORANGE ZEST

This a Perfect monsoon coffee with extra dose of caffeine. Natural ingredients like cinnamon, ginger and orange zest pairs beautifully with this creamy black coffee.

Ingredients:

- ◆ 3 tbsp ground coffee
- ◆ 2 tspn grated orange zest
- ◆ 2 tspn chopped crystallized ginger
- ◆ Pinch of cinnamon powder
- ◆ 3 cups hot water
- ◆ Whipped cream, cinnamon sticks and/or additional orange zest, optional

Preparation:

- ◆ Combine the coffee, orange zest, ginger



and cinnamon; pour into a Frenchpress and brew it for

4-5 minutes.

- ◆ Pour into mugs; if desired, garnish with whipped cream, cinnamon sticks and orange zest.

PARISIAN CHOCOLATE COFFEE

This Parisian Hot Chocolate Coffee is an indulgent blend of thick and creamy hot chocolate and bold hot dark roast coffee. The perfect brunch or dessert beverage for rainy day.

Ingredients:

- ◆ 1 cup freshly brewed French press coffee
- ◆ 1 cup full cream milk
- ◆ ½ cup heavy cream
- ◆ 2 tspn powdered sugar
- ◆ 60gm bittersweet chocolate
- ◆ whipped cream
- ◆ chocolate shavings

Preparation:

- ◆ In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, whisk together the milk, cream, and sugar and heat until bubbles start to form on the outer edge. Do not boil.
- ◆ Remove from heat and add in chopped chocolate, let set for 2 minutes, then whisk until a rich chocolate color forms. Let set for about five minutes.
- ◆ Pour hot coffee into two mugs, half each cup. Top it with hot chocolate to the coffee and finish off with whipped cream and chocolate shavings Note: Store in temperature of 20 degree C and humidity less than 5 per cent, away from foreign odours, for up to three weeks.

Courtesy: Abdul Sahid Khan, Head Trainer, Lavazza India

TELLY TALE

VIRENDRA SAXENA IS BACK ON THE SMALL SCREEN

After several extremely successful collaborations such as *Hum Paanch*, *Pavitra Rishta*, *Jodha Akbar*, *KumKum Bhagya*, *Kundali Bhagya*, Zee TV and Balaji Telefilms are set to present viewers with an exciting story about life, love, karma and destiny. Set against the backdrop of Mumbai, Zee TV's *Bhagya Lakshmi* will follow the journey of Lakshmi, a selfless girl of limited means, who despite her humble background and the curveballs life has thrown at her, always puts others' needs before hers. While TV actress Aishwarya Khare has been paired opposite the heartthrob television actor Rohit Suchanti to play the lead characters, featuring alongside them will also be the veteran television, film and theatre actor, Virendra Saxena.

With several notable characters and shows to his name, Virendra Saxena is definitely a prominent personality in the industry. The actor's work has been recognised across fields and he is all set to once again enthrall his fans, bringing yet



another interesting character to life with all his efficiency and artistry. Virendra who was last seen as a part of a show in 2010 is all set to return to the small screen after more than a decade with the role of Lakshmi's father, Manoj Bajwa, who has a rustic

charm and shares a great bond with his daughter. He firmly believes that Lakshmi has both his and his wife's values instilled in her and that their small family is only weaved in happiness.

Talking about making a comeback on television, Virendra Saxena said, "A good story always impacts the audience and their lives, and I'd like to believe *Bhagya Lakshmi* would do the same. I've been keeping away from TV for quite some time now, because the kind of stories that has been happening and the kind of roles I've been getting over the years had somehow bored me. In fact, when I got the offer for this shiwi also, I wasn't very curious, but when I read the script, I couldn't say no. Also, when I got to know that Ekta ji (Kapoor) wanted me to play this role, there was no way I could say no to the project because I have always had this huge respect for her for the person she is. Working with Balaji has always been a treat because the investments they do for their projects are really unfathomable."

NEW KHATARNAK CHALLENGE FOR KHILADIS

Colors' much-awaited stunt-based reality show, *Khatron Ke Khiladi* is back with bang as it has already captivated the viewers with its darr, dare and endless drama. This season is bigger, better, and wilder as we are back in Cape Town, "Yeh Hai Darr aur Dare ka battleground, welcome to Cape Town". *Khatron* ke real *khiladi* and the master of action, Rohit Shetty, and the makers of the show have left no stones unturned to make the show better than ever.

In the upcoming episode, Rohit Shetty will give another interesting challenge to the contestants to win the K medal. The winner will get the golden opportunity in the future challenges to skip one of the tasks and also choose any other contestant to perform the same on their behalf.

Vishal Aditya Singh, Shweta Tiwari & Divyanka Tripathi Dahiya will be chosen to perform the task wherein they will stand around each other just like a Mexican standoff.

The thrill and fun didn't end here, as the episode also witnessed Divyanka flinching. In this task, as Rohit Shetty asks rapid-fire questions to Divyanka, she starts to slow down and



gradually drown in the water!

Curious? Who will win the K- Medal among Vishal Aditya Singh, Divyanka Tripathi & Shweta Tiwari?

CENTURY OF CELEBRATION

Adding to the monsoon cheer and continuing to spread the Khushiyon Wali Feeling, Wagle Ki Duniya - Nayi Peedhi, Naye Kisey has continued to entertain the audience. To celebrate 100 episodes and to thank the viewers for declaring it the 'best show on television currently', lead actors Sumeet Raghavan, Pariva Pranati and new entrant Anju Jadhav, who comes in as Sumeet's new tough boss, engaged in a candid chat.

Delighted by the appreciation shown by the fans, Sumeet Raghavan said, "There are many reasons the audience love us so much. The credit goes out to the storyline and the atmosphere that we have all built on the sets. From making a conscious decision to avoid preachy content to building amazing bonds offscreen, it all reflects well on-screen in the interest of all generations. Aanjan ji and Bharati ji on the sets never fail to surprise us with the hard work and motivation they bring daily. The way Aanjan Ji comes so well

prepared with all his lines learnt continues to inspire me to be a better actor." Adding further, Pariva Pranati said, "I'm glad that we continue to inspire more and more people by the day. Recently a fan from the US got in touch with us, mentioning how we have impacted her and her family's life, it was truly surprising and unexpected. We continue to keep the episodes realistic and contribute from the nuances of daily life, ensuring we always stay connected with our fans. Also, a huge amount of credit goes to our bond that has been built over time. We bond over food, music and loads of *nok jhok*."

The upcoming track adds more thrill and excitement. Anju Jadhav on her entry in the show said, "Kiara Tejwani as a character is a business-minded individual who doesn't appreciate mixing emotions with work. Kiara enters the show as Rajesh Wagle's new boss, and she is here to take the company to new heights. The role and the show is what amazed me to accept this offer. It allows me to explore many emotions at a go. It is also something that I haven't explored before, and I truly believe I am blessed to have received this opportunity."

‘I don't have fans, they are my friends’

ZAKIR KHAN, who has recently collaborated with KARAN JOHAR for a campaign film by Britannia Good Day, tells MUSBA HASHMI about the concept, what made him swap his look with KJo and that he misses stage

■How was your experience working with Britannia Good Day?

It was beautiful. We were going to start before the second lockdown, but the situations that arose caused a delay. Finally, we were able to come up with this film and I am happy and excited. I love the concept, so I was dying to be a part of it.

■How was your experience collaborating with Karan Johar for the campaign film?

It is a beautiful opportunity for me. He is someone I have seen him as a fan. He is an icon for a lot of us, over the years. I remember watching *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*. I remember watching his interview on Doordarshan after the film. In our memory, it is always a magical moment when we meet a person we have seen on TV in real life. So, it is a magical moment for me. Someone I have seen giving interviews as a kid, today I am getting to see them work in real life.

■What made you guys come up with the idea of swapping. And how difficult or fun was it for you?

The idea itself is fun. As an artist I would like to say that image is for under confident people who are not sure of themselves. Protecting image is something you do when you are very insecure. I assume Karan as well as me, though we are two distinguished personalities, we have full faith in what we do in our separate fields. Thus, we didn't refrain from looking like someone else. The experience of swapping was so exciting that there was no second thought about doing it or not.

■A trait of Karan Johar that you would like to swap with yours.

I think his access to Shah Rukh Khan and all the actresses in the world. I am a huge Shah Rukh Khan fan and somebody who can be in his first circle is something that I would like to exchange. I can give him my cricket gang from Bombay in exchange for it, or my Anvar Kranti from *Chacha Vidhayak Hai Humare*. So, he can give me Shah Rukh Khan and I can give him Anvar Kranti.

■How do you think your fans will react when you swap your personality?

I think first of all I have no fans, all of them are my friends. And everything is fine in front of friends. Max to max, they will make fun of me and there is no harm in it. And I do not think that my fans see

Protecting image is something you do when you are very insecure. I assume Karan as well as me, though we are two distinguished personalities, we have full faith in what we do in our separate fields. Thus, we didn't refrain from looking like someone else. The experience of swapping was exciting



me like that. They know me in many different *avatars*. They know that I am a musician, I have played *sitar* for 21 years of my life and I do stand-up comedy. So, I keep doing things which are pole apart, in my life. The people who know me are not affected by it and the people who do not know me, I am not affected by them.

■While Karan and you are both writers, you both have very different personalities. Did you take any time to prepare or study each other's personality to execute this better?

Of course, I saw some of his interviews and tried to understand how he talks. Secondly, as an iconic figure, I somehow knew how he talks to a certain extent. But yes, some days before the shoot I tried to understand how he works. And as an artist, I am not a very good mimic but I can imitate. So, I was just trying to look at the kind of mannerisms I can pick, and what will look nice. There are some things which you pick, but they do not look good on you. So, the idea was to pick things which will look okay on me.

■You have been one of the most popular faces in Indian stand-up comedy. Do you think that now we have a wider audience to appreciate your field of art?

I feel even when the audience was less, it was wide for me. Because, the art form is so new that we still do not know what is its full potential. My aim is to explore and to reach to more and more people so that there comes a time when we know exactly the number of people that are there in the audience.

■Do you miss the stage? How different is it to perform on a virtual platform?

Stage is different from a virtual platform. It is like meeting someone you love in person and talking to them on video call. They are exactly two very different things. The affection is there of course, but the warmth is definitely missing. That hype, that rush of being on stage is definitely not there, though, the rush of good conversations is always there on an online platform. But not as great as what it is on stage. It is like

asking somebody that how do they feel catching the scent of *biryani* as compared to actually getting to taste it. Of course, having *biryani* is more satisfying than just getting to smell it.



EDUCATION ON PANDEMIC MODE

Education has gone through many changes in the last one-and-a-half-year. However, the question remains unanswered on their permanency. Experts tell MUSBA HASHMI that it is the entire system that needs an overhaul for better results

In March last year schools' gates were shut, hoping to open in a few months, but that month never came. It has been more than 18 months into the pandemic, and it remains unclear when physical classrooms will resume — though, it will not become part of history.

From online classes to no Boards, the education sector had seen several unprecedented changes during this period. Were these for the better is a question still unanswered.

50:50 SCENARIO

However, the constant to and fro in Boards or school assessment decisions has exposed several fault lines in the education sector. Amid all the noise, students are left confused regarding their future. "The pandemic has, indeed, exposed fault lines and fundamental flaws in the education sector that existed even earlier. We must take this opportunity to not merely sail through the pandemic but to reform the system from scratch based on sound scientific principles of what constitutes good learning," says Dr Jamshed Bharucha, Founding Vice Chancellor, Sai University. He adds that the 50-50 formula on CBSE Boards is an understandable decision under crisis circumstances, but it should spur systemic reform for the future.

However, Bharucha says, "I would be interested to hear the explanation of why Class X and Class XI are given equal weightage, given that students are conditioned to view 11th as less important.

Students should not be penalised for not having taken 11th exams seriously, which has been the cynical message communicated to them by the system."

Prof Dheeraj Sanghi, VC Designate, JK Lakshmiipat University, believes that as a short term measure to reduce anxiety and stress in students, this is a welcome move. But this does not address the issue of quality at all.

On the other hand, Dr Sanjay Govind Patil, Associate Dean & Director — RICS School of Built Environment, Amity University, Mumbai, says that it is a much-appreciated step to help break down the syllabus. "I fully vouch for this move because it will break down the entire assessment into small parts; hence, learning will be much better. Students' shortcomings in the previous part exam could be overcome in the next exam through a robust feedback mechanism, thus achieving a better learning outcome," opines Patil.

RE-ENERGISE SYSTEM

High-stakes exams, Bharucha says, have no empirical support in research on learning. The learning tends to be transient, devoid of meaningful context, and does not transfer well to the kinds of problems students will have to solve as professionals. Research shows that, if administered frequently — with feedback after each exam and repeated testing of the same material in different ways — exams can be powerful tools for learning, not just for assessment.

"The system has failed students by contin-

uing to rely on high-stakes examinations. Why should a single mark on a single high school exam be the measure of what you've learned throughout high school? Why should it determine what you can and cannot do in the future? Research on how the brain learns is completely at odds with this system of learning and assessment," says Bharucha.

He adds that the CBSE Board decisions for this batch are understandable, but they are band-aids; they should be followed by meaningful steps to re-energise, mentor, and empower students whose education got disrupted and lives thrown into confusion. Most of these students, probably, will adjust and be fine. But, some may fall between the cracks of this rigid system of narrow credentialing and career channelling.

TIME TO NURTURE

"The Board should establish a committee consisting of a broad range of stakeholders — including students — to hear the concerns of students who have been adversely affected and to propose ways to get these students back on track in life. A nation has a responsibility to ensure that every single child should have a productive path forward," says Bharucha.

The Board should also establish a diverse blue-ribbon committee to implement NEP recommendations at the high school level. The goal should be to enable students' unique talents and shortcomings and give them the fundamental cognitive tools to pursue their dreams. Society benefits when all talent is unleashed — in all its messy but glorious diversity.

"There is no empirical basis for forcing students to make irreversible choices between streams. A student may love math and literature, computers and music, biology and economics. It's the unforeseen combinations of ideas that will trigger future innovations — and continuous innovation is what drives economies. We, as educators, are deeply mistaken if we believe we know which branches of knowledge are in the best interests of our children to know," adds Bharucha.

Sanghi says that the problems of quality in education were well-known much before the pandemic. "I feel that the problems of quality in the school education sector were well-known much before the pandemic. The Annual State of Education Report (ASER) has been telling us how poorly our students have been performing even with our standards. As far as international standards are concerned, we have not even participated in the Program for International Students Assessment (PISA)," says Sanghi.

TECHNOLOGY MYTH BUSTED

Yet, the pandemic has exposed one myth which was that technology would solve all our problems. "There is no doubt that technology can help, but we have seen during the pandemic that access to technology is limited. We may take pride in having the largest number of mobile phone users with Internet access or the high-



“WHEN WE FINALLY OPEN UP, WE MAY NEED TO REDESIGN THE CURRICULUM OF THE NEXT FEW YEARS. MAYBE INTRODUCE SOME FRESHER COURSES. EACH SCHOOL BOARD WILL HAVE TO PLAN THE POST-PANDEMIC SCENARIO CAREFULLY. IT SHOULD NOT HAPPEN THAT THEY NOW WANT TO COVER BOTH — WHAT WAS LEFT DURING THE PANDEMIC AND THE USUAL SYLLABUS OF THE NEXT CLASSES. THAT WOULD BE TOO MUCH OF A BURDEN ON STUDENTS — PROF DHEERAJ SANGHI, VC DESIGNATE, JK LAKSHMIIPAT UNIVERSITY”

est per capita data consumption, but all this is skewed, and the poor still has little access to online education. If we want to depend on technology to improve the quality of our education, we will have to seriously think about how underprivileged sections of our society can get access to both devices and data, and perhaps space where they can study peacefully," adds Sanghi.

Being compelled to teach online has highlighted the known weakness of passive forms of learning in which teachers speak and students listen. To keep the attention of students online, teachers have had to make the online sessions more interactive.

"But active and interactive learning should be the norm even in the physical classroom. In a physical classroom, a student can be physically present but mentally absent. Only by having students actively engaged (speaking, solving problems, collaborating, creating) in the classroom can meaningful and enduring learning be optimised. So, let's come out of the pandemic with an agenda for fundamental reform that is more than a temporary crisis fix," says Bharucha.

PLAN FOR POST-PANDEMIC

Since we are amid a pandemic of the kind that hasn't happened in the world for 100 years, Sanghi says, there is going to be an emergency response, and the decisions will change as the trajectory of the virus changes.

"So, confusions will happen, and that would cause anxiety and stress amongst the students. We need to work on two aspects. One, what to do while the pandemic is still a threat, and education will continue to see disruptions. And second, what to do when the pandemic threat has sufficiently faded, and we are back to some normalcy," he says.

In the current scenario, experts believe that we must keep some semblance of education going, at least what is considered as more important aspects of it, so we have reduced syllabus, easier exams, teacher training in online education, access to technology for the poor and so on.

"When we finally open up, we may need to redesign the curriculum of the next few years. Maybe some fresher courses. Each school Board will have to plan the post-pandemic scenario carefully. It should not happen that they now want to cover both — what was left during the pandemic and the usual syllabus of the next classes. That would be too much of a burden on students," opines Sanghi.

BRING HONESTY IN EVALUATION

Experts say that there are many issues in every aspect of school education. And we do need to rethink the whole education process holistically. However, few simple things can improve the quality of education in the short term drastically.

"One idea is to ensure that the marks printed on the board marksheet reflect the educational attainments of the students. And, I am

not referring to this year's process where you get some marks assigned based on your performance in something completely different. Even in pre-Covid times, CBSE would add lots of marks to the actual marks obtained by the students; this is beside the practical marks where the whole country seems to get perfect scores. And that is on top of having easy papers and an extremely liberal grading. It may be noted that CBSE has the reputation of being one of the best school boards in India. If we can bring in honesty in evaluation by the boards, there will be a lot of pressure within the system to perform better," says Sanghi.

He adds that the boards cannot be honest since there is competition among the school boards to be more dishonest than the others — a race to the bottom. "They justify it on the grounds that if one board tries to be honest, its students will face difficulty in gaining admissions in universities that only look at Class XII marks. Also, if one State board tries to be honest, the pass percentage in that State would go down, leading to political issues. And frankly, there is no political constituency for quality education. There is only a lip service paid to the quality," he says.

MULTIPLE BOARDS REQUIRED

The changes, Sanghi says, should begin with having a large number of school boards. "Maybe every district should have one. There may be some school boards that are State-wide and a few which are national. By having 100s of small school boards, it would be possible for some boards to do experiments in improving quality that may succeed, and others could learn from it. Also, political pressures would be lower on individual boards if they all affect a smaller number of students," opines Sanghi.

Second, there could be a few standardised tests in various subjects that would be optional for students. Students will take those tests only if the university they seek considers these test scores as one of the inputs in deciding admissions. "Universities should develop admission strategies that consider multiple parameters (and unlike the popular perception, it is possible to have a completely objective system that considers multiple parameters). If the admissions are based on standardised tests and other achievements of the students, we could start the admission process six months early. Students can be offered admission before the Board exams, and they will then take those exams in a stress-free fashion," adds Sanghi.

Bharucha thinks, "In the future, continuous modes of assessment should be adopted (bi-weekly or monthly). Research shows that frequent assessment produces more enduring learning than a single assessment at the end; this will not be the last pandemic, nor will it be the last crisis that disrupts our lives. Learning and assessment must both be continuous. At any given cross-section in time, the student, the school, and the Board should know where a student stands."

“Decided in Rio Olympics itself that I will prove myself in Tokyo”

MIRABAI LIFTS WEIGHT OF A NATION

An Olympic medal finally around her neck, star Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu on Saturday said she can finally take a break at home without worrying about training after managing just five trips to her place in Manipur in the last five years.

“I have just been home for five days in the past five years. Now I will go with this medal,” said Chanu, whose family is based in Nongpok Kakching village about 20 kilometres from Imphal.

“I will now go home and eat food made by my mother,” she added.

Chanu revealed that after the Rio Games debacle she changed her training and technique completely so that she could redeem herself in Tokyo.

Competing in her second Olympics, Chanu claimed the Silver medal in the 49kg category with a total of 202kg (87kg+115kg). It was India's second Olympic medal in the sport after Karnam Malleswari's Bronze that came 21 years ago



Mirabai Chanu Saikhom competes in the women's 49kg weightlifting event at the 2020 Olympics on Saturday

PTI

at the Sydney Games.

“My dream of winning an Olympic medal has been fulfilled today. I tried a lot in Rio, put in a lot of effort but it was not my day then. I thought that day only that I will prove myself in Tokyo,” Chanu said during a virtual press conference.

Considered a strong medal contender five years ago in Rio as well, Chanu buckled under pressure in the women's 48kg event and failed to log a legitimate lift.

“I learnt a lot from that day — my training and technique was changed, we put in a lot of effort after that.”

“I was very sad after Rio, there was a lot of pressure on me and I got nervous, I couldn't understand anything for days but then coach sir and the federation counselled me, told

me that I have a lot of potential,” she added.

Head coach Vijay Sharma revealed he was also under a lot of pressure after the disappointing outing in Rio.

“There was a lot of pressure on me after the Rio failure, we failed in a very important competition and we were expected to win then also,” Sharma said.

Determined to prove herself in the Tokyo Games, Chanu and Sharma changed the Manipuri's training, employing a more stringent regimen.

“After that we changed the training pattern and technique a lot. The result of which we saw in the 2017 in world championship, then we took the Gold in the 2018 Commonwealth Games. We won a medal in the 2019 world championship. We have been

growing and improving regularly.”

“The lesson we learnt was that we need a lot of determination and discipline. I worked with that and Mira partnered me.”

“She hasn't done anything but eat, sleep and train in the last five years. It took us 2.5 years instead of 1.5 for the Olympic qualification because of coronavirus. Overall the result of the journey is that we are sitting here today with the medal.”

The Manipuri's sole focus for the past five years was on winning a medal at the Olympics and that required several sacrifices including staying away from her family.

The efforts paid off as Chanu went on to win the world championship in 2017 following it with a Gold at the

“Could not have asked for a happier start to @Tokyo2020! India is elated by @mirabai_chanu's stupendous performance. Congratulations to her for winning the Silver medal in weightlifting. Her success motivates every Indian. #Cheer4India #Tokyo2020.”

—PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

“Many many Congratulations to @mirabai_chanu on winning India's first medal at #Tokyo2020. Such An inspiring performance that will be remembered for a long time to come and will inspire generations. Well done.”

—ABHINAV BINDRA

“Congratulations for a beautiful opening on medal tally @mirabai_chanu. This Second place medal medal is a morale boost for our Indian contingent. Thank you for a spectacular performance..... jai hind.”

—BAJRANG PUNIA

2018 Commonwealth Games.

At the 2019 Asian championship she picked up a Bronze in clean and jerk where medals are awarded separately for snatch, clean and jerk, and total lift.

Ahead of the Tokyo Games, the Khel Ratna awardee had created a world record in clean and jerk at the 2020 Asian championship earlier this year.

Chanu hoped her exploits in the international arena and the Olympics win can inspire more girls to take up the sport specially weightlifting.

“There will be change, there are few girls in weightlifting right now but I hope many will be inspired by me and will feel they can also achieve something in the sport.”

Mirabai's mother in tears as daughter sports 'good luck' earrings she gifted

New Delhi: A historic Silver medal and a radiant smile were not the only eye-catching things about Mirabai Chanu on Saturday in Tokyo, her gold earrings shaped like Olympic rings were as striking, a gift from her mother who sold her own jewellery for them five years ago.

The hope was that the earrings would bring her “good luck”. It didn't happen in the Rio 2016 Games but Chanu made the little sacrifice count in Tokyo on Saturday morning with a Silver medal and Saikhom Ongbi Tombi Leima has struggled to stop her tears from flowing ever since.

“I saw the earrings on TV, I gave them to her in 2016 before the (Rio) Olympics. I have made it for her from the gold pieces and savings I have so that it brings luck and success,” Leima said from her home in Manipur where a considerable number of relatives, friends and well-wishers gathered to watch Chanu script history in Tokyo.

“I was in tears seeing it and also during the moment she won the medal. Her father (Saikhom Kriti Meitei) was also in tears. Tears of joy. All her hard work has led to the success.”

The Chanu household at Nongpok Kakching village, around 25km from state capital Imphal, visitors had been trickling in since Friday despite the curfew caused in part by the Covid-19 pandemic.

“She had told us she will win Gold or at least a medal. So, everybody was waiting for it to happen. Many of our relatives who lived far came last evening. They stayed overnight with us,” Chanu's mother said.



Family members and neighbours of Mirabai Chanu gather together to watch her lift

@Media_SAI

“Many came this morning and the people of the locality also thronged. So, we have brought out the television to the verandah and around 50 people were there to watch Mirabai in Tokyo. Many sat at the front courtyard. So, it was a kind of festival.

The Gold they had wished for didn't come but the Silver was enough to send a packed courtyard, glued to the TV, into frenzy as the tense little crowd broke into celebrations, unclenching their fists and clapping frantically.

Chanu was on video call with her family from the weightlifting arena in Tokyo before her event began and she had sought blessings from her parents.

“She (Chanu) rarely comes home (because of training) and so we have



made a Whastapp group to communicate with each other,” said Chanu's cousin Aroshini.

“This morning, she had a video call with all of us and she bowed down and sought blessings from her parents.”

“She said ‘bless me to win a Gold medal for the country’. They gave their blessings. It was a touching moment.”

Amit Shah, NE CMs give standing ovation to Mirabai

Shillong: Union Minister Amit Shah and Chief Ministers of all eight North Eastern states on Saturday gave a standing ovation to Mirabai Chanu who took home India's first Olympic medal in weightlifting at the ongoing Tokyo Olympics, officials said.

Manipur Chief Minister Biren Singh broke the news during the meeting which was chaired by the Union Home Minister following which everyone in the meeting gave the standing ovation with pride, they said. Singh also announced a ₹1 crore

package besides other perks an Olympian enjoys besides reserving a special post for the 26 year old Manipur woman.

All eight CMs of the Northeast are attending a meeting presided over by Shah in Meghalaya's capital Shillong.

Manika, Mukherjee off to promising start

Tokyo: India's slim hopes for a table tennis medal in mixed doubles vanished in no time but Manika Batra and Suthirtha Mukherjee made promising starts to their women's singles campaign on Saturday.

The start to India's table tennis campaign was disappointing with Sharath Kamal and Manika losing 0-4 to the third seeds Lin Yun-Ju and Cheng I-Ching of Chinese Taipei in the mixed doubles round of 16.

However, world number 62 Manika returned to beat 94th-ranked Tin Tin Ho of Britain 4-0 in her singles opener while 98th-ranked Suthirtha made a strong impression on

her Olympics debut with a come from behind 4-3 win against 78th-ranked Linda Bergstrom of Sweden.

Mukherjee play Portugal's Fu Yu in the second round while Manika takes on Ukraine's Margaryta Pesotska.

Mukherjee showed remarkable grit to down her Swedish opponent after trailing 1-3 in the best of seven affair. She won 5-11, 11-9, 11-13, 9-11, 11-3, 11-9, 11-5.

Earlier in the mixed doubles, Sharath and Manika had to make all chances count against a superior opponent from Chinese Taipei but they couldn't do so after leading 5-1 and 5-3 in the first two games. In the end, it was a comfortable 11-8, 11-6, 11-5, 11-4 win for Lin and Cheng.



Manpreet & Co start with win, women's lose

Tokyo: Harmanpreet Singh scored a brace and veteran goalkeeper P R Sreejesh stood like a wall in the closing minutes as the Indian men's hockey team overcame a late surge from New Zealand to eke out a close 3-2 win in its opening Olympic Games match on Saturday.

Aside from Harmanpreet (26th and 33rd minutes), Rupinder Pal Singh (10th) was the other goal-getter for the eight-time former champions, currently ranked fourth in the world, in the Pool A match at the Oi hockey stadium.

For the eighth-ranked New Zealand, Kane Russell scored from a penalty corner in the sixth minute before Stephen Jenness (43rd minute) reduced the margin of defeat later in the match.

India will next play mighty Australia on Sunday. The Kookaburras beat hosts Japan 5-3 in another Pool A tie.

India's chief coach Graham Reid was happy to start the campaign on a winning note but said there are many areas to improve ahead of Sunday's tough match.



Harmanpreet Singh celebrates with his Indian teammates after he scores a goal against New Zealand during Pool A match

@TheHockeyIndia

“Winning three points in a competition like the Olympic Games is really important. I think we had a good second and third quarter but the first and fourth we struggled a little bit,” he said.

“When we watch the video later today, we will be able to find out what we need to get better at and surely there are going to be things we learn from today

too,” he added.

INDIA WOMEN LOSE 1-5

The Indian women's hockey team fought valiantly in the first two quarters before losing the steam to go down 1-5 against world No 1 Netherlands in their opening pool match.

Felice Albers gave Netherlands the lead in the sixth minute before the advance-

tage was evened out by India skipper Rani Rampal in the 10th minute.

The Indians defended bravely in the first two quarters to go into the half time locked at 1-1 but the break seemed to have broken their momentum as the Dutch came out all guns blazing after the change of ends and pumped in three goals to nip any chance of an upset in the bud.

Margot van Geffen (33rd minute) restored Netherlands' lead soon after resumption before the three-time Olympic champions and reigning Silver medalist scored two goals in quick succession through Albers (43rd) and Frederique Matla (45th) to take control of the proceedings.

If that was not enough, there was more agony in store for the Indians as Caia Jacqueline van Maasakker slammed home from their sixth penalty corner in the 52nd minute.

India will play Germany in their next Pool A match on July 26.



Nagal creates history with singles win

Tokyo: Sumit Nagal on Saturday became only the third Indian tennis player to win a men's singles match at the Olympic Games and the first in 25 years, when he edged past Denis Istomin 6-4, 6-7(6), 6-4 in two hours and 34 minutes on court 10 at the Ariake Tennis Centre.

Zeeshan Ali was the first Indian to win a singles match at the 1988 Seoul Games when he beat Victo Caballero from Paraguay.

After that, the legendary Leander Paes won the historic men's singles Bronze at the 1996 Atlanta Games, beating Brazil's

Fernando Meligeni.

No Indian could win a singles match after Paes' heroic feat. “To lose second set from 5-3 and then comeback in the third set in a weather like this, is not easy. Playing for my country gave me the push,” said Nagal after the match.

Nagal now faces a herculean task as he takes on Australian Open runner-up Medvedev.

“I am very excited for this match to play the world number two on a big court. That's why we play tennis for, to live for these moments. I am looking forward to it,” he said.

Chirag-Satwik stun World No. 3

Praneeth suffers defeat; Sindhu in action today

Tokyo: The Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty shocked the world No 3 pair of Yang Lee and Chi-Lin Wang of Chinese Taipei in a thrilling group A match of the badminton competition where the country experienced disappointment in the singles' event on Saturday.

Chirag and Satwik, the current world No 10, notched up a stunning 21-16, 16-21, 27-25 win over third seeds Lee and Wang, who had claimed back-to-back titles at the Yonex Thailand Open, Toyota Thailand Open and BWF World Tour Finals in Thailand earlier this year.

However, 13th seeded B Sai Praneeth suffered a demoralising 17-21, 15-21 loss to world number 47 Misha Zilberman of Israel in a 41-minute men's singles group D match.



India's Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty compete against Taiwan's Lee Yang and Wang Chi Lin during their men's doubles group stage match

PTI

Satwik and Chirag, who have been working under Danish coach Mathias Boe for the last few months, dished out a tactical superior game and held their nerves in the final moments to emerge victorious during the one hour and nine minute contest, which turned out to be an edge-of-the-seat thriller.

The Indians had five

match points but the Chinese Taipei pair, the 2018 World championship Bronze-medallists, saved all of them before grabbing one themselves but Chirag and Satwik were up to the task and had the last laugh.

Satwik and Chirag will next play Indonesian world No 1s Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo on Sunday.

Injured Vikas out



Vikas Krishan stands in his corner during his men's 69-kg boxing match

AP

Tokyo: Indian boxer Vikas Krishan (69kg) was out-punched 0-5 and left with a bloodied eye by local favourite Sewonrets Quincy Mensah Okazawa as he bowed out of Olympics on Saturday after fighting with a shoulder injury in the opening round.

The 29-year-old Vikas sustained a cut below his left eye in the high-voltage clash.

“During the last sparring session in Italy (before the team left for Tokyo), he injured his shoulder. He got treatment and we had hoped that he would be

fine, he started without problem,” India's High Performance Director Santiago Nieva said. “But when he attempted a jab at Okazawa's body, he hurt the shoulder again and could not use his left hand properly. He fought with one hand today,” the Swede added.

Vikas was the only Indian boxer in action on the day.

On Sunday, six-time world champion M C Mary Kom (51kg) and Commonwealth Games Silver-medallist Manish Kaushik will compete in their opening bouts.



Indian shooters fail to fire

Tokyo: Indian shooters endured multiple heartbreaks on the first day of their competition in the Tokyo Olympics on Saturday, with the biggest disappointment being Saurabh Chaudhary's failure to win a medal after topping the qualifications.

Chaudhary could not replicate the form he displayed in the qualifications to finish seventh in the men's 10m air pistol final.

His roommate and friend Abhishek Verma could not make the eight-man finals, settling for the 17th place with 575 in the event that was considered one of India's best bets for a

podium finish.

In the women's 10m air rifle event, first-timer Elavenil Valarivan and Apurvi Chandela, too, failed to qualify for the finals, finishing 16th and 36th respectively, at the Akasa Range.

Following his sensational entry into the finals, a lot of hope were pinned on Chaudhary after a dismal show by the women. But the script did not pan out the way the country's shooting team would have wanted it to.

The Indian ace shot 137.4 to be eliminated in the seventh place. Things were different in the qualifications though, with

Chaudhar shooting 586 to finish ahead of a world-class field, thanks to a perfect 100 in the fourth series after back-to-back 98s.

Verma was also in contention to make the cut after staging an excellent rally, but two 8s in the final series dashed his hopes.

Earlier in the day, world number one Elavenil finished 16th in the qualifications after shooting 626.5 over six series of 10 shots each, while the more experienced Apurvi, who is also the world record holder in the event, settled for the 36th place after aggregating 621.9.

China lead tally with 3 yellow metals

AP ■ TOKYO

Roundup of gold medals from Saturday, July 24 at the Tokyo Games:

ARCHERY (MIXED TEAM)

An San and teenager Kim Je Deok paired up to lead South Korea to a Gold medal in the Olympic debut of archery's mixed team event at the Tokyo Games.

On a sizzling Saturday at the Yumenoshima Park Archery Field, they held off Gabriela Schloesser and Steve Wijler of the Netherlands by a tally of 5-3 to bring home yet another archery Gold for South Korea. The country has now captured 14 of 17 Gold medals in archery team competitions since the current format was introduced to the Olympics in 1988.

Alejandro Valencia and Luis Alvarez combined for Mexico and knocked off Yasemin Anagöz and Mete Gazoz of Turkey to earn the Bronze medal.

CYCLING (MEN'S ROAD RACE)

Ecuador won its first cycling medal as Richard Carapaz took Gold in the Olympic road race.

FENCING (WOMEN'S EPEE INDIVIDUAL)

Sun Yiwen of China defeated five-time Olympian Ana Maria Popescu of Romania 11-10 in overtime to win Gold in the women's épée fencing competition.

Popescu tied the score at 10 with 3 seconds remaining to go to overtime, but Sun soon scored the winning point in the deciding period. Sun completed her set of Olympic medals after winning individual Bronze and team Silver at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.

MEN'S SABRE INDIVIDUAL

Aron Szilagyi of Hungary became the first Olympic fencer to win three individual sabre Gold medals after beating Luigi Samele 15-7 in the men's final. Szilagyi used his fast reflexes to build an early 7-1 lead and held off a brief comeback from his Italian opponent before closing out the win.

Szilagi won Gold at the 2012 London Games and the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.

JUDO (WOMEN'S 48-KILOGRAM)

Dristia Krasniqi of Kosovo beat Funia Tonaki in the women's 48-kilogram Olympic judo final.

MEN'S 60-KILOGRAM

Naohisa Takato has won



Yang Qian, of China, reacts after winning the Gold medal in the women's 10-meter air rifle at the Asaka Shooting Range on Saturday

AP



Japan's first Gold medal at its home Olympics, beating Taiwan's Yang Yung-wei in the men's 60-kilogram judo final.

SHOOTING (WOMEN'S 10-METER AIR RIFLE)

China's Yang Qian won the first Gold medal of the Tokyo Olympics in women's 10-meter air rifle.

Yang overtook Anastasiia Galashina when the Russian missed the center two rings for an 8.9 on her final shot.

Yang had a 9.8 on her final shot and finished with an Olympic record 251.8. Galashina finished at 251.1.

MEN'S 10-METER AIR PISTOL

Javad Foroughi has become the oldest Iranian athlete to win an Olympic medal, earning Gold in men's 10-meter air pistol.

Foroughi set an Olympic record with 244.8 points, finishing 6.9 ahead of Silver medalist Damir Mikek of Serbia. China's Pang Wei, the 2008 Gold medalist, took Bronze.

TAEKWONDO (WOMEN'S 49KG & MEN'S 58KG)

Panipak Wongpattanakit of Thailand and Vito Dell'Aquila of Italy won the first two Gold medals of the Olympic taek-



wondo competition.

Wongpattanakit won her first Gold in dramatic fashion in the women's 49-kilogram final, scoring two points on a body kick inside the final 10 seconds for an 11-10 victory over 17-year-old Adriana Cerezo of Spain. Wongpattanakit's Gold is only the 10th in Thailand's entire Olympic history.

Dell'Aquila defeated Mohamed Khalil Jendoubi of Tunisia 16-12 in the men's 58-kilogram final to claim his first Olympic medal.

WEIGHTLIFTING (WOMEN'S 49 KG)

Hou Zhihui won China's second Gold medal of the Tokyo Olympics with a commanding showing in the women's 49-kilogram weightlifting category.

Hou lifted a total 210kg, 3kg short of her world record, to take Gold.

INDIA'S SCHEDULE ON JULY 24 (ALL TIMES IST)		
TIME	EVENTS	ATHLETES
05:30 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Pistol Women's Qualification	Manu Bhaker & Yashaswini Deswal
06:30 AM	Shooting: Men's Skeet Qualification Day 1	Mairaj Ahmad Khan & Angad Vir Singh
	Artistic Gymnastics: Women's Qualification	Pranati Nayak
06:40 AM	Rowing: Men's Lightweight Double Sculls	Arjun Lal Jat & Arvind Singh
	Repechage Round 2	
07:10 AM	Badminton: Women's Singles Group Stage	PV Sindhu
07:30 AM	Tennis: Women's Doubles First Round	Sania Mirza & Ankita Raina
07:45 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Pistol Women's Final	
08:35 AM	Sailing: Women's Laser Radial Race 1	Nethra Kumaran
09:30 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Rifle Men's Qualification	Deepak Kumar & Divyansh Panwar
	Sailing: Women's Laser Radial Race 2	Nethra Kumaran
10:30 AM	Table Tennis: Men's Singles Round 2	Sathiyan Gnanasekaran
11:05 AM	Sailing: Men's Laser Race 1	Vishnu Saravanan
12:00 PM	Table Tennis: Women's Singles Round 2	Manika Batra
	Sailing: Men's Laser Race 2	Vishnu Saravanan
	Shooting: 10m Air Rifle Men's Final	
01:30 PM	Boxing: Women's 51kg - Round of 32	MC Mary Kom
03:00 PM	Hockey: Men's Pool A	Australia vs India
03:06 PM	Boxing: Men's 63kg - Round of 32	Manish Kaushik
03:32 PM	Swimming: Women's 100m Backstroke Heat 1	Maana Patel
04:26 PM	Swimming: Men's 100m Backstroke Heat 3	Srihari Nataraj
LIVE ON SONY TEN & SIX NETWORK		



United States First lady talks with the US team following their women's 3-on-3 basketball game against France on Saturday

@TeamUSA

Early exit for judoka Shushila

Tokyo: Indian judoka Shushila Devi's challenge in the Tokyo Olympics came to an early end as she lost her contest to Hungarian Eva Csernoviczki.

Csernoviczki, a 2012 London edition Bronze medalist, pinned Shushila for a full 20 seconds to claim the Ippon and win the round of 32 match.

Shushila fought hard for a major part of the bout until she committed a small error, which proved to be disastrous for the Indian and cost her the match.

Shushila was the only Indian Judo athlete at this year's Olympic Games.



Shushila Devi Likmabam, right, and Eva Csernoviczki of Hungary compete during their women's - 48kg round of 32 judo match

AP

Surya, Shaw going to Eng as replacements

New Delhi: Suryakumar Yadav has received his maiden Test team call-up and he along with opener Prithvi Shaw will be flying to England as replacements sought by the team management after three players were ruled out due to injury.

Shubman Gill, Washington Sundar and Avesh Khan have been forced out from the ongoing tour. The Test series is due to start on August 4.

Off-spinner Jayant Yadav was also supposed to go to UK as Washington's replacement but it has been learnt that as of now only Suryakumar and Prithvi are being sent.

A senior BCCI office-bearer confirmed the development. "Yes, Prithvi and Surya are flying to UK from Sri Lanka. Jayant was also supposed to go but there has been some change in plans due to quarantine requirements. Jayant is now not going. Both players will have a bubble to bubble transfer from Colombo to London. Whether they will fly in the middle of the T20Is (Shaw and and Suryakumar are part of team in Sri Lanka) or post that is being worked out," the senior official said.

"But yes, they are our replacement players for Test series in England. They might just leave after the three T20Is but we will get confirmation in another three days."

It is understood that Shaw's form has impressed the team management and Mayank Agarwal's current rhythm isn't the greatest.

However, with quar-

antine rules in place, it is not clear if Suryakumar and Shaw can make it in time for the first Test after completing their hard quarantine.

As far as Jayant is concerned, he was considered for his superior batting abilities as he has a Test hundred. He was also looked upon as a steady net bowler unless Ravichandran Ashwin or Ravindra Jadeja suffer from any injury in the long series. But the plan has been shelved for now.

Suryakumar's assertive batting could be used during some point in the series as Ajinkya Rahane's hamstring injury will keep the team concerned.

"In any case, if Ajinkya misses the first Test, it will be KL Rahul who will bat in the middle-order in Nottingham. The team management is still confident that Ajinkya might be alright before the first Test."

However, no pacer is being sent right now as already there are seven speedsters in UK for match and net sessions.

PTI



We'll experiment only after ensuring series win: Dhawan

Colombo: India captain Shikhar Dhawan said the team management will try out new faces but only if they fit into the best playing XI during the upcoming three-match T20I series against Sri Lanka, starting here on Sunday.

Like India blooded as many as five newcomers in the final ODI, Dhawan indicated on Saturday that he is not averse to experimenting with new men like Ruturaj Gaikwad, Varun Chakravarty and Devdutt Padikkal in the coming games, but series win will remain a priority.

"New guys definitely have the opportunity to play. We have to win the series. In the last ODI, there was a good opportunity to give some youngsters a chance and give them

a taste of international cricket, because we had already won the series," Dhawan said ahead of the first game.

"Now it's a new series, so we will of course go in with our best XI first. We will try to win the first two matches, and then according to the situation, we can experiment in the last game if needed," Dhawan said.

He also feels that the current Sri Lankan team has shown a marked improvement through the ODI series.

"I think the competition will be good. You saw the Sri Lankan team improve a lot in the last two matches.

SL vs India (1st T20I)
Live from 8:00pm IST
SONY TEN 1, 3 & SIX

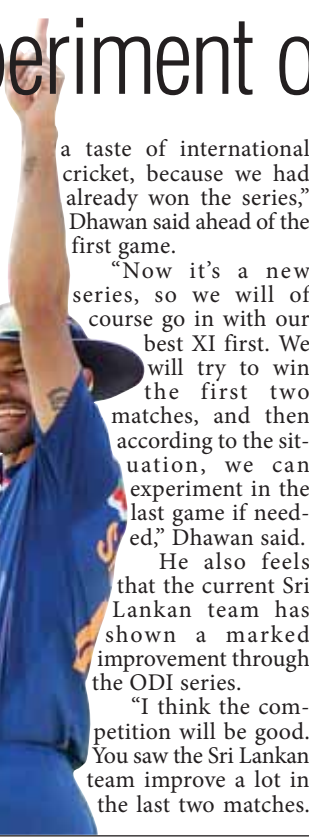
They played really well and they are a good team, with a lot of youngsters.

"So I think it will make for a good contest between the two teams. We have both already played three matches now, so both teams know each others' strengths and weaknesses. That's a good thing, and it will add to the challenge (of the series)."

On a personal note, Dhawan knows that even he is auditioning for a place in the T20 World Cup side.

"It is very important. Of course, any international match has its own impact, and whenever you perform internationally it makes a huge impact."

"So, on a personal note, I



Jemi smashes 92 off 43 in The Hundred

PTI ■ LEEDS

Star India batter Jemimah Rodrigues roared back to form with a superb unbeaten 92 off 43 balls to power Northern Superchargers to a six-wicket victory over Welsh Fire in the fourth match of The Hundred here on Saturday.

Rodrigues hit an astounding 17 boundaries and a six as Superchargers chased down a target of 131 in 85 balls after Fire posted 131 for 8 in 100 balls at the Headingley.

The innings gains more significance as Superchargers were reduced to 19 for 4 after 18 balls but Rodrigues' swift counter-attack changed the



course of the match in a flash. Rodrigues had a lean patch through the home series against

South Africa and the recently concluded limited overs matches in England as she was

Sri Lanka getting better but need depth in batting: Arthur

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka head coach Mickey Arthur on Saturday said his team is improving fast but needs to have depth in batting.

Sri Lanka lost the ODI series 1-2 to India but the win in the final ODI gave confidence to Arthur.

"We are creating depths across all the departments now. We just have to get that little bit of consistency and that same depth into our batting," Arthur said.

"For numerous reasons we never seem to put our best

batting line up out there. It is being about creating depth for me, but also trying to be consistent. Giving guys clear roles but then allowing them to go out and playing with freedom. We saw a really good example of that in Charith (Asalanka) the other night," added the South African.

"The growth I have seen in these players has been fantastic and the growth comes from giving them confidence and giving them that consistency that they are going to play. We will see the rewards of that in the future for sure,"

the 53-year-old noted.

Arthur also said that the Sri Lankan team learned a "massive amount" from the ODI series against India.

"We are right at the embryonic stage of this journey and it is about us playing against ourselves every-day we go out on the ground. We have got benchmarks, which we want to meet in every game."

"We are measuring ourselves and the progression in terms of those KPIs has been outstanding. We are getting better and better," he added.

my place more stronger for the World Cup. Then we'll see

how it goes in the future."

BCCI @BCCI · 5h
Great to have you back gents
TeamIndia bowling coach B.Arun, @Wriddhipops and Abhimanyu Easwaran have joined the team in Durham.



Indian cricket team bowling coach Bharat Arun, left, wicketkeeper batsman Wriddhiman Saha, top right, and batsman Abhimanyu Easwaran join India's bio-bubble in Durham on Saturday

@BCCI



India's Deepika Kumari, right, releases the arrow flanked by her teammate Pravin Jadhav during the mixed team event on Saturday

PTI

Inconsistent India lose to Korea, makes QF exit

PTI ■ TOKYO

Going by the rankings it was a fair call but tactically appears a mistake as Pravin Jadhav joined Deepika Kumari for archery's mixed pair event instead of Atanu Das and the last-minute pairing fumbled to go out of the medal race at the Tokyo Games, here on Saturday. Deepika and Jadhav looked completely out of sorts and lost 2-6 to Korea in the quarterfinals despite some below-par shooting by both the seeds.

The two Korean Olympic debutants, 17-year-old Kim Je Deok and 20-year-old An San won two sets despite scoring only 35 out of a possible 40 showed the below-par shootings by both the teams.

The team think-tank here on Friday made the bold decision to split up the husband-wife combination of Deepika and Das, who had won a World Cup mixed team Gold less than a month back in Paris.

The mixed teams are formed on the basis of scores and on Friday it was Jadhav who was best among the trio finishing 31st, four places ahead of Deepika's favourite partner Das in the ranking round.

Countries, however, have one-hour time to exercise the option of switching to their best combination but the Indian think-tank chose to be bold.

Deepika was already unhappy at the surprise decision to rejig the combination.

"I'm a little sad, he (Atanu Das) is not with me in the mixed team. It mattered, as I really wanted to play with him but it did not happen," Deepika said after the first round win against Chinese Taipei.

Archery Association of India (AAI) official Virendra Sachdeva, who is accompanying the team in Tokyo, however defended the decision.

"There was no problem

with the coordination as we did really well to bounce back against the Chinese Taipei.

"But archery at the Olympics will remain a mystery for us. We lost the match in the first set only after we failed to win despite the Koreans shooting a poor 35."

"It's not the Koreans who won, we lost the match. I've never seen Koreans shoot so poorly that too at the highest level."

Asked about the decision to leave out Das, he said: "He (Jadhav) earned his place purely based on the ranking score and there was absolutely no favoritism. Our selection committee was neutral and sent our No 1 archer. There's always a first time together."

Deepika and Jadhav looked scrappy in their first match together against Chinese Taipei and trailed 1-3 but the duo seized the momentum with six 10s in the final two sets to storm into the last-eight.

Up against the Korean pair, who were making their Olympic debuts, Deepika failed to notch a single perfect 10 from eight arrows, while rookie Jadhav misfired a six in the crucial fourth set after drilling in three perfect 10s to lose the match.

With no women's team in fray, India now stare at yet another grim prospect as they brace for tougher challenges ahead in the men's team and individual rounds slated next week.

ROWERS IN REPECHAGE

The Indian rowing duo of Arvind Singh and Arjun Lal Jat qualified for the repechage round after finishing fifth in the men's lightweight double sculls heat on Saturday.

Competing in heat 2, the Indian pair finished with a timing of 6:40.33 in the six-team field, failing to qualify for the semifinals.



talktime

VIR DAS

The entertainer, comedian and actor is back with a new project The Most Epic Max Show. Musba Hashmi chats him up about the concept of the show, what kept him going during the lockdown and his takeaways from it

'IT IS IMPORTANT TO FIND HAPPINESS IN SMALL THINGS'




■ **What is The Most Epic Max Show about?**
My show is about the smaller simple things in life that make you feel epic inside, meaning that you don't have to do epic things to feel epic. I think it's been a rough year and everybody in the world deserves to feel good about themselves and celebrate the smallest things that bring them joy. I'm coming from a place of not knowing and willing to learn but also willing to fail massively and gloriously.

■ **The show's concept is fun. Were there any challenges that you faced while shooting? Any fun instances you'd like to share?**


We shot the show during the pandemic when the lockdown had lifted. All of a sudden, the frills that one may usually be used to suddenly went away. Limited crews, people in PPE kits all around me, all trying to create something fun with all cards stacked against them. It was challenging, but I had a great team around me that kept everyone's moral high. I think the fun really came from the limited resources and the creative way we improvised when we needed to.

■ **In every episode you take on a new task, be it making Maggi in less than two minutes or writing the perfect apology. Which episode stood out for you the most?**

I don't think there is any one particular episode that was more fun to shoot than the other. But I think the foodie in me enjoyed the ice cream episode the most. I surprised myself with how that turned out. I have my *MasterChef* application form on standby.



WE SHOT THE SHOW WHEN THE LOCKDOWN HAD LIFTED. ALL OF A SUDDEN, THE FRILLS THAT ONE MAY USUALLY BE USED TO SUDDENLY WENT AWAY. LIMITED CREWS, PEOPLE IN PPE KITS ALL AROUND ME, ALL TRYING TO CREATE SOMETHING FUN WITH ALL CARDS STACKED AGAINST US. IT WAS CHALLENGING, BUT I HAD A GREAT TEAM THAT KEPT EVERYONE'S MORAL HIGH



■ **What can the viewers expect from the upcoming episode?**

As the show progresses, I will continue to take on challenges — pushing my creative boundaries — while coming up with innovative techniques and ingenious solutions. Each challenge is either entirely 'Epic' or a complete 'Fail'. Either way, all episodes create a fun learning experience for Snapchatters!

■ **What helped you stay active/fit physically and mentally during the lockdown?**

We all struggled with keeping mentally and physically fit in the lockdown. My life went from travelling the world and being in amongst 1000's of people every night to not travelling past my front door and trying to entertain my wife, which I also failed with.

Trying to be creative and knowing that there will be light at the end of the tunnel kept me going. Not losing faith, and trying to just innovate, preparing myself for the day I can pack my suitcase again and be better than when I last unpacked it. That kept me going.

■ **What is your biggest takeaway from lockdown?**

Time! Time to recharge, rethink and revisit some of the things I had only thought of but never had the time and motivation to do.

The biggest takeaway from this challenging phase is that it is important to find happiness in small things. It's not the outcome but the journey that matters. You may either do something out of the box or simply fail; thus, learning from it either way.

Bolly World

Punjabi vibes


Actor Arshi Khan, who rose to fame with reality show *Bigg Boss 14*, is all set to feature in upcoming Punjabi song *Book Likhda* sung by Shok-E.

"I'm excited to feature in the song, these days people enjoy Punjabi songs not only here but overseas too. After this there are more songs coming soon. I am back in action," says Arshi.

The actress recently underwent a image makeover.

Talking about it, she says, "I have always enjoyed a simple look with a stylish aura. But now the lockdown has helped me to experiment with my looks and I'm really enjoying it. I feel like a princess. And of course my audience will witness a new me in the song."

Music of *Book Likhda* us given by Jee Pro and lyrics are by Honey Kakowalia. The song is slated to release on August 5. *IANS*




Big B, Prabhas' new film launched

Actors Amitabh Bachchan, Prabhas and Deepika Padukone's upcoming film kickstarted, with a *muhurat* 'poja' and clap here on Saturday.

The film, which is directed by Nag Ashwin has been given the working title *K* so far.

Amitabh landed in Hyderabad, as the film's *muhurat* was held on Saturday, on the auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima. For the *muhurat* shot, Prabhas sounded the clapboard on Amitabh Bachchan whose portions will be shot in the first schedule.

According to the film's production team, Nag Ashwin will be shooting some crucial sequences with Amitabh and few other actors in the first shooting schedule, which commences on Saturday in Ramoji Film City, here. However, Prabhas will join the team later. *IANS*



Masterstroke

Work attire depends on the kind of place one works at. A management professional will almost always be found wearing suits however people working in creative industries can wear smart casuals.


Even when you can wear casuals in your workplace, you will need to make sure they are smart casuals. Then there are certain standard rules for both men and women that are universal. For men big checks on shirts are a no-no. You can not wear white socks with black shoes. Your tie should always be darker than your shirt. Sleeve cuffs of your dress shirt should be exposed about half an inch under the suit jacket. Your belt should be fairly thin and the same colour as your shoes. Women can start with keeping colour, cut and shape to subtle. Peep toe shoes are not considered office wear. Sleeveless tops should be kept in the casual wear domain.

Writer is Devender Kharb, Dean (School of Fashion), World University of Design



NatureTalk

Plants require different care during monsoon season. While some like the Pothos are sturdy plants and can survive in any conditions, there are some like the Wandering Jew that need more care. This plant needs bright but indirect light. If the light is too dim, the distinctive leaf markings will fade. Keep the soil slightly moist, but don't water directly it will lead to rot. Wandering Jews like the soil to be moist, but over water. Stick your finger inside the soil. If it feels dry, add water to moisten the soil.



Travel immunity check

With the lockdown restrictions easing, travel and tourism is picking up. However, if not urgent, it is still not advisable to plan a trip. Here is a list of things one should keep in mind before stepping out for that unavoidable trip

Boosting immunity has never been a top priority of a majority of people but, it is now! When travelling these days, one might be wondering how to stay safe, healthy and away from the risk of catching an infection. For sure, you would not want to fall sick on a trip, especially on a work trip. Spending time in railway stations, airports or places where people gather increases the risk of catching flu or cold. Following a healthy routine on a trip is hard and busy schedule, unhealthy food, as well as abnormal sleeping patterns, enhance the problem. From backaches to low immunity and stress-induced headaches, there are many problems that routine travellers face. Fortunately, there are several ways of travel immunity check and to ensure that nothing puts a damper on your trip and you enjoy your travel to the fullest.

HEALTHY DIET

Following a healthy diet in a routine is always a good idea because while you can plan for a foreseen trip, there is nothing you can do for immediate travel plans — for work or personal reasons. When you are on the go, you generally rely on packed food, ready to eat stuff or fast food which interferes with your immune system. On top of it, if you follow an unhealthy diet even in routine and don't provide your body with the nutrition it needs to ensure a stronger immune system, it will make you prone to sickness while you travel.

Your immune system needs regular nourishment and good food to perform efficiently so it is important



to follow a diet that is rich in micronutrients. Also, while you are travelling, make sure to pack some healthy snack like protein bars, dry fruits, diet mixtures etc.

STAY HYDRATED

A hydrated body can save you

from stomach infections, dehydration and many other health issues. Make sure you take a particular amount of water intake daily especially in summers. You can also include water based fruits and vegetables in your diet like cucumber, watermelon, orange, musk melon etc.

Even while you are travelling, try to stay hydrated, avoid tapped water and avoid alcohol & caffeine based drinks.

GET ENOUGH SLEEP

Getting enough sleep is important to ensure a strong immune sys-

tem as a lack of sleep increases the chances of getting sick. Try to get good night's sleep a few days before you travel to ensure that you are healthy, active, engaged and safe on your trip. To get a good sleep, avoid using smartphones or gadgets at night and minimise your alcohol & caffeine intake.

EXERCISE

Exercise routine and a healthy diet are directly connected to good immunity. Doing some yoga or stretching exercises in a routine can boost your immunity. You may download a fitness or meditation app to keep yourself motivated. Further, several foods like berries, banana, lemon, kiwi etc in addition to multivitamin supplements help in supporting the immune system.

WATCH WHAT YOU TOUCH

Make sure you don't touch any contaminated surface and even if you have to, wash your hands frequently or sanitise them. Also, avoid touching your face before sanitising or washing your hands. You can also use disinfectant wipes or spray to clean armrests, table top or any other surface you come in touch in routine as well as while you are travelling.

Lastly, being fit, healthy and ensuring strong immunity should be a lifestyle choice and not something you only follow right before or while travelling. The more you follow a healthy lifestyle, the less you will have to worry about immunity check before stepping out for a vacation or office trip.

DAYANA ERAPPA, who was seen in her first Hindi venture, Sunflower, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about how she got this project

❖ **How did you end up doing Sunflower — the web series?**

This was my first Hindi venture so I was quite excited about it. Like any other actor, I went through a couple of rounds of auditions and finally made it to the role.

❖ **How was the experience of working with Vikas Bahl?**

It was amazing. Vikas is a great mentor. He lets you improvise and makes it very comfortable and easy for an actor to perform. There's a lot that I learnt from him. I hope to associate with him in the future as well.

❖ **What's your role here? How exciting was it to do this genre?**

I play Justina. The character shows how every woman can be bold. She speaks her mind out and values that immensely. She is confident and independent. It was easy to identify with this character; I truly have the same kind of beliefs. So, the character's attitude towards life is very similar to mine. I thoroughly enjoyed being part of this pro-



ject and playing this role. I would say that it is among my favourites till date.

❖ **You started as a model, how did acting happen?**

When I got a call from Mani Ratnam's office, I came on board for his hit film, *Chekkappa Chivantha Vaanam*. Post that, there's been no looking back. I'm glad I transcended to films and

'It was amazing to work with Vikas Bahl'

people and there is always something to take back from each campaign that one does. I've learnt a lot by being part of so many ad campaigns.

❖ **Are you still pursuing modelling?**

Yes, I still enjoy modelling but I have limited myself to editorials and designer campaigns. It all started with modelling, so I can never dissociate myself from that.

❖ **Lots of actors are doing regional films as well. What is the driving force here?**

Honestly, for me the driving force is the content. As far as I am getting good scripts that have great content, I will do that whether it's regional cinema or Bollywood. Also I feel, OTT has been great platform for regional cinema. The medium doesn't really matter to me. All that matters is the content and my part.

❖ **What next?**

I am working on a few projects but I can't really talk about them right now.

Sound of music

Music is the best medicine. Here are the top 10 songs of the week that will lift up your weekend mood

BOLLYWOOD VIBES

- Paani Paani (Badshah, Aastha Gill)
- Param Sundari (AR Rahman, Shreya Ghoshal)
- Doob Gaye (Guru Randhawa, BPrak)
- Jo Tum Aa Gaye Ho (Arijit Singh)
- Number Likh (Tony Kakkar)

ENGLISH VINGLISH

- Bad Habits (Ed Sheeran)
- Peaches (Justin Bieber)
- Leave The Door Open (Bruno Mars)
- Traitor (Olivia Rodrigo)
- Kiss Me More (SZA)

the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE



Support system for rural India
If more private companies perceive rural development as a market investment, we will be able to better support our rural regions

2



4

Watch your thoughts
Every individual is born with a stockpile of thought seeds in mind, coming as it may as Karmic carryover from the past

For marriage to be a success, every woman and every man should have her and his own bathroom. The end
— Catherine Zeta-Jones



Identifying a passive aggressive partner could be the first step towards curbing the hostility growing between you and your partner, writes NIDHI UPADHYAY

HOW FINE IS 'I AM FINE'?

We all use 'I am fine' as the most powerful means to avoid any potentially costly confrontations, be it with a spouse, with your colleague at work agrees with your constructive feedback in the meeting to avoid confrontation and later forgets to copy you in an important email? What if your usually punctual spouse doesn't show up on time for a dinner date simply because he or she disagreed with your choice of restaurant? And what if you have noticed a pattern in this behaviour but every time you try to bring it up with your spouse you are dismissed for reading too much between the lines?

While developing the characters for *That Night*, I accidentally stumbled upon an interesting article about passive aggression in a marriage and how sometimes what might appear like a difference of opinion on the surface could be a classical setup for passive aggressive relationship. Although the partner exhibiting such behaviour in a relationship might not be a full-fledged, card carrying passive aggressive personality, but he or she could be a member of the club, subtly abusing the partner emotionally and sometimes physically too.

According to WebMD: Passive-aggressive behaviour is when you express negative feelings indirectly instead of openly talking about them. During World War II, when soldiers wouldn't follow officers' orders, experts described them as "passive-aggressive." Someone who uses passive aggression may feel angry, resentful, or frustrated, but they act neutral, pleasant, or even cheerful. They then find indirect ways to show how they really feel.

We all might show a streak of passive aggression at times, however, when this repetitive sulking, backhanded compliment, withdrawal, or manipulation becomes a way of life, it can result into grave consequences in a relationship, especially in a marriage. Identifying a passive aggressive partner could be the first step towards curbing the hostility growing between you and your partner.

While each passive-aggressive spouse might operate differently, but they all have one thing in common: they avoid confrontation, and often these individuals appear and behave outwardly supportive or content, which makes it all the more difficult to spot them. However, identifying a behavioural pattern can serve as a key differentiator between a momentary angry acceptance and a passive aggression in a relationship.

RECOGNISING PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Below are some red flags that can help you identify a harmless sulking from a hostile one.

- **Disguised Verbal Hostility:** 'I'm Just Saying' a sentence that sounds so harmless can be your partner's coping mechanism developed over the years to express his or her angry feelings without being affirmative about it.

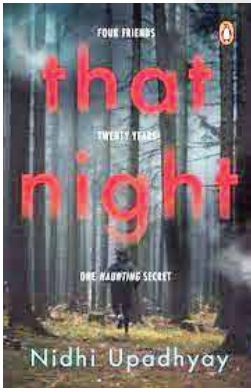
- **Disguised Hostile Humour:** 'Can't You Take a Joke?' The backhanded compliment or sarcasm could be another powerful weapon often used by a passive aggressive partner, especially in the instances when they are confronted about their demeaning act. Playing a victim card 'that it was meant to be a joke' is their knee-jerk reaction to avoid any uncomfortable conversations.
- **Guilt-Baiting:** 'You were taking so long to finish that call with your mom that I started the match instead.' Aggressive passive spouses are an expert at wielding guilt as a weapon to show their disagreement or hostility. They inadvertently or skillfully manipulate and coerce you into an agreement by attacking your vulnerable spots.
- **Disguised Psychological Manipulation:** 'I think you need to go for a yoga class to manage your stress.' Passive aggressive spouse usually have a tendency to change your perception by spinning the whole blame on you for being the inconsiderate or the short tempered one.
- **Stonewalling:** Avoiding responsibility, duty, and obligations and withdrawing from a relationship is another trick up the sleeves of these individuals. It's their way of maintaining power and control by imposing many hurdles for you to jump through.

While the phrases such as 'I am just saying,' 'It was a joke' and the silent treatment are invariably part of every marriage, it should not be a breeding ground for hostility that leaves the receiving partner shattered and confused about her or his own worth in a relationship.

Unfortunately, often these tricky psychological manoeuvres take absolutely no planning on your passive-aggressive partner's part. On the contrary, they are acting on pure instincts. Hence identifying the cause for such behaviour could work as a powerful tool to stop such manoeuvres in the track.

POSSIBLE CAUSES FOR PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

- **Upbringing:** Voicing your strong opinion was(is) often categorised as disrespectful in most Indian households. However, a constant suppression of opinion during the formative years can impact adversely, pushing an individual to find ways to passively channel their anger or frustration.
- **Sense of powerlessness:** A manipulation in a marriage can often be a side-effect of tussle of power between the partners, especially when one partner feels out of control in a situation or area where his or her spouse is enjoying success. This sense of insecurity can fuel underhanded tactics to sabotage the partner's success and emotional wellbeing, sometimes without even realising it. This power hunger can also manifest into establishing their territories by subtle emotional and physical abuse.



WHILE EACH PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE SPOUSE MIGHT OPERATE DIFFERENTLY, BUT THEY ALL HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON: THEY AVOID CONFRONTATION, AND OFTEN THESE INDIVIDUALS APPEAR AND BEHAVE OUTWARDLY SUPPORTIVE OR CONTENT, WHICH MAKES IT ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT TO SPOT THEM. HOWEVER, IDENTIFYING A BEHAVIOURAL PATTERN CAN SERVE AS A KEY DIFFERENTIATOR BETWEEN A MOMENTARY ANGRY ACCEPTANCE AND A PASSIVE AGGRESSION IN A RELATIONSHIP



- **Inability to accept their own emotion:** Passive aggression is a personality disorder, and these individuals cannot approach situations, feelings, relationships or communication directly. They are often unaware of what they are doing, and when confronted, they refuse to acknowledge both the behaviour and the results.
- **Low self-esteem:** The passive-aggressive partner often feels that he or she is the one at the receiving end, inadvertently playing the victim card. These individuals often operate out of a deep sense of insecurity, and they persistently feed their negative emotions to justify their actions, sometimes to the extent of demeaning the partner in an attempt to elevate themselves.
- **Buried feelings of inadequacy and injustice:** Often words like 'it's-unfair' can be passive aggressive person's way of communicating that the spouse has some kind of unfair advantage over them in a relationship. It could be in career, relationships at work and family, or kids.

HOW TO COPE WITH PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Once you have identified a classical pattern of passive aggression in your spouse, the most critical step is to protect your and your partner's emotional wellbeing. The following few steps can act as a crucial steppingstone in bringing your relationship back to a healthy track.

- **Accepting the situation:** It's painful to accept that your spouse is operating within a passive-aggressive pattern, especially, because these individuals have a tendency to manipulate your emotions by displaying sacrifices made by them in a relationship. They usually go an extra length to prove that their love for their spouse is unmatched. But if you notice a concrete pattern in the sugar-coated humiliation or purposeful withdrawal to punish you, it's time to trust your instincts and accept the reality.
- **Identify the trigger:** There is no excuse for aggression and abuse of any form in a marriage. However, knowing the reason for this aggression can help you predict the behaviour pattern of your spouse. Also, sometimes the issue can be as trivial as your spouse fearing to hurt your feelings and thus, he or she inadvertently finds an underhanded way to express his or her dislike. Understanding the triggers can minimize the potential damage to your relationships.
- **Don't justify your spouse's behaviour:** The chances are that you have been manipulated enough in a relationship by now that you tend to find flaws in you than in the spouse who appears so nice and non-confrontational. So, train yourself to stop inwardly justifying or finding excuses for your spouse's unacceptable behaviour.
- **Stay calm and keep you anger in control:** It's essential to keep a check on your emo-

tions, especially when the passive aggressive spouse is acting up. If you can recognise triggers of your own anger and get a control of your reactions, you are less likely to get psychologically manipulated or gaslighted by the partner.

- **Establishing a healthy channel of communication:** It is important to approach your spouse with vulnerability and empathy as passive aggressive individuals are hypersensitive and often operate from low self-esteem or sense of insecurity. You can help them by wording their angry feelings in a way that it doesn't appear judgmental yet factual. Share with your spouse how his or her behaviour hurts you but do it without placing the blame on them.
- **Set healthy boundaries and ground rules:** It hurts deeply to accept that your spouse might not have your best interest in mind always. However, it is important to set boundaries to protect yourself from any form of emotional or physical abuse. By drawing a clear list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour might help you and your partner identify the patterns you've been experiencing. Also, setup consequences for the next time he or she does the same thing and don't back down if they demean you.
- **Seek help of a marriage therapist:** It never hurts to seek help of a good marriage therapist. With the right approach and professional support, you can overcome passive-aggressive patterns and manipulations in a relationship to build a happier, healthier marriage together.

However, even after repetitive efforts at your end, if your partner still believes that you are at fault, in that case, you might be forced to take the tough decision of saving yourself from any form of emotional abuse. If despite all your love and patience your partner is persistently falling back to his or her old ways of demeaning you or manipulating you, or they refuse to seek help, it's time to walk out of a relationship that is ruining you (and your partner) inside out. Because marriage should not be about turning yourself inside out, it should also be about loving yourself and defining your own worth in a relationship, and it can only happen when the boundaries about what is acceptable and not are defined clearly for both the partners. And if something unacceptable still finds its way into your marriage, time and again, despite all your efforts, perhaps walking away from a relationship would be a better idea. Because these episodes of withdrawal, aggression, abuse and manipulation are a double-edged sword that wounds you and your partner, too. So, before you fall out of love with yourself and with your partner seek help.

The writer is an engineer-turned-headhunter. *That Night*, published by Penguin, is her debut novel

STILETTOS

MINIMA
CHATTERJI



NEED TO BUILD A SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR RURAL INDIA

If more private companies perceive rural development during and beyond disasters as a market investment, instead of an evangelist or missionary ad-hoc project, we will be able to better support our rural regions

With the tragic second wave of Covid-19 in India done and dusted, malls and restaurants in cities are once again thronging with customers. However, in rural India the devastating effect of Covid-19 this time round has been so grave that the mood there might take far longer to pick up.

By May 2021, one in every two cases was in India's rural areas, while states like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan had 75% of their cases in rural areas. Exposing the weakness of the public healthcare system, rural India only had 40% of the beds in the country even when it is home to 70% of India's population. In fact the number of hospital beds per 10000 population between 2010 and 2020 reduced from 9 to 5.

I spent much of last month leading the philanthropic effort of a consortium of partners to establish more Covid care facilities in rural parts of India. It has been challenging to raise funds for Covid relief in the second wave as charitable funds for health care in India have dried up while government regulations have clamped down on international funds coming in to the NGOs in the country.

Secondly, given the intensity of this wave, only ICU beds or at least beds equipped with oxygen concentrators were mostly needed in the second wave, pushing up the effort and cost of equipment procurement. Thirdly, many individuals and organisations including established not-for-profits were no longer contributing to the cause voluntarily but instead leveraged the desperate situation of the second wave to make a buck.

Nonetheless with the support of local NGO iBihar and its founder Anis Bari, the sustained efforts of Anant National University, besides my own firm Sustain Labs, we managed to establish 13 Covid care facilities in rural Bihar.



It is indeed easy and not incorrect to blame the government as state governments with higher expenditure on health had lower confirmed cases of Covid. However, at a time when the government has demonstrated substantial inertia in effectively managing the pandemic in the country, the civil society must (and has!) step up. With management expertise, wide distribution networks in the country, human resources at disposal, the private sector has an especially strong role to play in disaster management in rural India. Corporations hold enormous influence within their domains and communities around their factories and depots that are often located in remote or rural areas. In this context, government effectiveness in rural areas can thus be strengthened by leveraging existing private

sector capacities, reach and core competencies.

There is a need to emphasize greater market driven ways for the private sector to support rural development in India, during and beyond disasters. A balanced approach to driving market driven rural development strategies ensure that the development is sustained as stakeholders see incentives to do so. CSR funds alone, on the other hand, are undependable as it runs dry exactly at the time of socio-economic crisis such as the current pandemic, which is ironically when it is most needed.

There are at least three ways that the private sector can play a central role in managing disasters better in rural India.

First, through the investments they make and the decisions they take, companies directly impact the

THERE IS A NEED TO EMPHASIZE GREATER MARKET DRIVEN WAYS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO SUPPORT RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

world around us. Establishing markets in rural regions and offering affordable products and services to rural India is a market opportunity. For example, Visaka Industries Limited is a Hyderabad based diversified company that manufactures asbestos cement roofing sheets, building products and textile yarn, in ways that established it as a primarily green business. Further, 90% of Visaka's asbestos sheets, 30% of VBoard products, and 20% of its ATUM solar roofing are sold in rural and semi-urban parts of the country, thus enhancing the quality of life of rural communities.

Similarly, ICICI too has a substantial rural presence. 650 of ICICI's rural branches are in previously unbanked villages and which also promote entrepreneurship among women by developing

tailored financing and loan options catering to rural India. During disasters such as the ongoing pandemic, the reach and institutionalised presence of companies in these rural areas are of paramount importance for providing sustained livelihood and disaster relief to people.

Secondly, rural India still needs to be better connected to cities via roads, highways, and also telecommunications. Goods for relief work (and beyond) need to be transported by roads to villages and this becomes difficult to do if road infrastructure is inadequate. Until June this year we also saw that the vaccination distribution exclusively relied on a digital portal for booking vaccination slots for a significant population of the country, which became an impediment for India to achieve universal immu-

nisation. Ultimately on June 2, 2021, the Supreme Court asked the government to explain how the use of the CoWin app for booking slots is going to overcome the digital divide in rural and urban India, following which offline channels of vaccine booking were introduced. This again is an opportunity for the private sector to step in and build physical and digital infrastructure that connects rural India better to the rest of the country. Indeed the government needs to also prioritise the development of infrastructure projects, make approvals more efficient, besides tightening quality control.

Third, we need more public private partnerships. Disasters by themselves are beyond anyone's control. However, the preparation and response to them can be managed so that the human and economic losses can be minimised or eliminated. This is why, whereas states have the overall responsibility to drive disaster recovery and mitigation efforts it must be understood as a shared task between the government and relevant stakeholders. Currently the Indian private sector provides disaster support in a less systematic and more ad-hoc manner. Far more strategic and planned partnerships between the government and the private sector for rural development and disaster mitigation and recovery remains an area for improvement.

If more private companies perceive rural development during and beyond disasters as a market investment, instead of an evangelist or missionary ad-hoc project alone, we will be able to better support our rural regions and not lose as many lives during disasters.

The writer is the CEO of Sustain Labs, a company that transforms companies towards being sustainable and profitable.

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Changing demographic profiles & women

The formation and the break-up of a society determine the consequences of a radical shift in external forces. For instance, the negligible say of women in the USA before the 1800s prompted women leaders to band together to promote a new, separate women's rights movement and change the direction of Abolitionist Movement of the 1830s.

Generations upon generations, the gender equality rhetoric has filled the gap of responsibilities and rights through gradual and profound movements around the globe. However, the 21st-century demographic picture is still blurry for women, which face constant denial of individual rights and powers.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been the greatest peacetime disruptor of years of progress in demographics of the society, especially in India, where there only 943 females per 1000 males. Moreover, in 2020, India ranked at 189th position out of 201 countries in terms of female to male ratio. In a society where 77% of parents prefer a male child over a female, this disproportion in the gender ratio has had profound implications in the lives of an average Indian woman during the pandemic.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DIVORCE & CHILD CUSTODY

With only 66% women literate as compared to 83% men in India, the social awareness among women is at the lowest, which makes them incapable of voicing their power against domestic abuse. Indian women filed more domestic violence complaints than recorded in a similar period in the last 10 years. But even this unusual spurt is only the tip of the iceberg as 86% of women who experience domestic violence do not seek help in India. Social isolation amid the pandemic has also caused circumstances where victims and aggressors cannot separate, and there are fewer options

Closing the gender gap in digital inclusion is an urgent priority in the pandemic. This involves a special focus on women-owned enterprises under the stimulus programmers, write RAJESH MEHTA & UDDESHYA GOEL

for women to escape their conditions, especially in the rural regions.

Despite this fact, post first wave, India saw a nearly three-fold increase in cases pertaining to divorce and child custody being filed. From an average of 1,280 cases in a month, their numbers went up to it 3,480 during the lockdown. This has placed them in a situation where they have to face social denial and the increased financial burden of their child individually.

THE SECOND SHIFT AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

A study by McKinsey found mothers are more than three times as likely, compared with fathers, to meet the majority of the demands for housework and caregiving during the pandemic. In addition, they are more than one and a half times as likely as fathers to spend three or more hours per day on these activities.

This "second shift" is where women complete their day of paid work and then spend another full shift doing work at home supporting children, families and at-home tasks. This dynamic has been exacerbated by the limits and lockdowns associated with the pandemic.

Naturally, this has brought detrimental effects on the mental fitness of working women, which constitutes 21% of the total workforce in India. According to a *LinkedIn* survey, the pandemic is taking a toll on the emotional well-being of India's working women as 47% report they are experiencing more stress. For men, this number stood at 38%, pointing towards a disproportionate impact on women.



JOB LOSSES AND POVERTY

Female job loss rates due to Covid-19 are about 1.8 times higher than male job loss rates globally, at 5.7% versus 3.1% respectively. Moreover, 4.5% of

women's employment is at risk in the pandemic globally, compared with 3.8% of men's employment. This is because women are over-represented in industries that are likely to experience the greatest

declines because of the pandemic. These include hospitality and foodservice, retail, education and manufacturing.

As a direct consequence, the pandemic will push 96 million

people into extreme poverty by 2021, 47 millions of whom are women and girls, widening the gender poverty gap.

WIDENING ENTREPRENEURIAL GAP

In India, women-owned a little over 20% of all micro, small and medium businesses compared to nearly 80% among men in FY21. The crisis has made family resources scarce for women, such as financial capital to invest in businesses or digital devices that families must now share as children's schooling has gone online. This has brought a disproportionate impact on female entrepreneurship, including women-owned microenterprises in developing countries like India

THE LOST FUTURE TALENTS

The cascading effect of pandemic-induced economic insecurity is not just the income losses but also the rippling effect of years of education denied to women and girls. Impacts on education and employment have long-lasting consequences that, if unaddressed, will reverse hard-won gains in gender equality.

According to a UNESCO estimate, a total of 11 million girls may leave school by the end of the Covid crisis; evidence from previous crises suggests that many will not return.

Lack of education and economic insecurity also increases the risk of gender-based violence. Without sufficient economic resources, women are unable to escape abusive partners and face a greater threat of sexual exploitation, trafficking and teen pregnancy.

These consequences won't disappear when the pandemic subsides: women and girls are likely to experience long-term set-

backs in workforce participation and income. The fallout will be most severe for the most vulnerable women, those who are rarely in the headlines: migrant workers, refugees, marginalised racial and ethnic groups, single-parent households, youth and the poorest of the poor.

DIRECT INTERVENTIONS

The challenge is huge but the cause is even gargantuan. Direct interventions are needed to draw an inflection point in the current demographic status to bring a fundamental change down the line. This mandates addressing attitudinal biases. Any drive toward gender parity arguably starts with efforts to change entrenched, widespread attitudes about women's role in society. This is an extremely difficult and complex challenge that will require all stakeholders to play a sustained part over the long term.

Addressing unpaid child care cannot be overstated. There is an immediate requirement of reducing the gender imbalance in responsibility for care. This involves employer- or state-funded provision of childcare or tax policies that encourage both spouses to work and a professionalised childcare industry, with public-financing support to enable women to work and create employment for others

Interventions are also required to address digital and financial inclusion. Closing the gender gap in digital inclusion is an urgent priority in the pandemic. This involves a special focus on women-owned enterprises under the stimulus programmers. Tax burdens should be eased and where possible, governments should source food, personal protection equipment, and other essential supplies from women-led businesses.

Mehta is a consultant in Market Entry, Innovation & Public Policy and Goel is a researcher with interest in public policy, international business and capital markets

EdTech platforms: Same old wine in new bottle?

For a country as populated as ours, where a large section struggles to make a decent living, access to basic education still remains a privilege. However, there exists an inherent paradox where even a good percentage of the educated population find it difficult to have gainful and stable employment. So, given this paradox, how do we expect that educating the underprivileged lot will somehow help them in finding a better livelihood?

But before making an attempt to decipher the underlying code behind this paradox, we need to dig a little deeper beneath the surface to come up with an answer to this question.

Who exactly are the stakeholders that tend to benefit most out of the current education system?

All the educational institutes usually serve the purpose of signalling certain qualities like intelligence, diligence, compliance, and conformity to potential employers. As a result, there is a widespread clamour among students to get themselves validated through a paper degree as it presumably increases the chances of landing a well-paying job.

Therefore, as long as we don't find any fault in subscribing to a free market doctrine, only skills and experiences that are directly convertible to income are considered useful. As a consequence, the need for the education system to make itself sufficiently market aligned has

always managed to remain the top priority, where institutes keep thriving by serving as a certification agency. As long as both the stakeholders (students and institutes) are happy with this arrangement, the 20th-century educational ecosystem will keep haunting us even in the 21st century.

Whereas the third stakeholder (parents) doesn't seem to bother much about the present education system, primarily because they themselves are a product of that system. Besides, in India, the sense of pride associated with raising an academically exceptional child is something difficult to express in words. It is the ultimate validation to prove their worth as successful parents. It helps parents in covering every other possible flaws in their parenting. Not only that, but it also gives them a false sense of assurance that their children will eventually become an overachiever in actual life.

The false promise!

Now given this ground reality, the more we see change around this system, the more they seem to remain the same. And that seems to be true for the growth in EdTech platforms. All the changes introduced so far in the education ecosystem remind us of the earlier models of coaching centres that held a promise of a better tomorrow if you could afford their fees.

However, despite these apparent shortcomings, the



media is never tired of celebrating the success of EdTech initiatives that are nothing but a rehash of the same old wine in the shinier bottle. The content and delivery by most of these EdTech platforms are woefully dated, with a minimum collaboration, participation, and feedback from students.

Now given the widespread celebration in media, there is a temptation to accept education as a potent investment opportunity for people with deep pockets. Given the poor quality associated with most forms of public education, people, in general, have been conditioned to accept the association of good quality education at a cost. As a result, there is no dearth of institutes claiming to offer the same.

As an integral part of tar-

geting the gullible parents and students, there is a deliberate attempt from these EdTech entities with deep pockets to sell their product as something very essential for the success of students — an unsubstantiated claim sold as gospel truth.

Celebrity endorsement is another potent method to capture the attention of insecure parents. These insecure parents are made to feel guilty if they dare to deny their kids "the key to success" on financial grounds. There is a lot of unnecessary noise created in the media about the potency of their life-altering products and courses. A kid as young as 5 years is not spared from their tempting media campaigns.

Is there a way to weed out these outright commercial entities occupying the educational

space?

In the era of low-cost internet, the availability of good quality free content has never been in question. It's the concomitant contextual understanding and subsequent follow-up lectures that make the whole difference. You can't expect a student with limited working knowledge of English to comprehend a two-hour lecture by Harvard faculty on quantum physics.

So, what's the solution?

Given the kind of complexity inherent in the problem, the solution needs to incorporate the seemingly conflicting interest of different stakeholders into account. Therefore, it wouldn't make sense to come up with one size solution that fits everyone.

It's important to embrace the true potential of EdTech. It's

not just about reformatting books into pdf or teaching remotely, it's also about using tech to deliver brand-new learning architecture, opening up the world of education to new audiences, boosting student engagement, while cutting costs to improve access for all.

There is no denying that the pre-university generation is digital natives; they favour individual expression and personalisation to such an extent that they expect to resolve all of life's problems with the device in the palm of their hands. They don't mind being bombarded with information via social media.

Therefore, there is a need to go straight to the heart of social media, where Gen Z spends a lot of time. EdTech platforms need to find a way to

cut through the noise and reach students across the social divides who could be given the needed support.

In the name of online classes whatever is being done with books and whiteboard can merely be termed as a good start especially for visual learners, but can't be termed as a technological revolution in the education space by any stretch of the imagination. Because a forward-looking twenty-first-century education envisages more than exposing students to audio-visual content. Here every learner is expected to collaborate, communicate, be creative and think critically to solve problems!

We need to prepare students to work in teams, exchange ideas with peers who may be in different geographies. The students are expected to find solutions by thinking out of the box with the world of information at their fingertips. We need to outgrow the mentality of spoon-feeding, and allow children to learn for themselves and be there to support them as a facilitator.

Till we succeed in bringing these much-needed changes within the existing ecosystem, the promise of gaining a better livelihood after going through the pain of years of formal education will eventually turn out to be a hollow one.

(The writer is an educator, former IRS officer & author of upcoming book "The Current Perspective on INDIAN ECONOMY.")

Do we actually need them? The content and delivery by most of these EdTech platforms are woefully dated, with a minimum collaboration, participation, and feedback from students. EdTech platforms need to find a way to cut through the noise and reach students across the social divide



PIYUSH KAMAL

PERSPECTIVE

South Sudan — A decade of Independence

This month South Sudan is celebrating its first decade of Independence, but there is not much to rejoice. Since its separation from mainland Sudan, it has been experiencing continued violence, endemic corruption, poverty and underdevelopment. However, the 10th anniversary of country's historic achievement of Independence provides an opportunity to inject fresh initiatives to the ongoing peace process



MAKHAN SAIKIA

South Sudan became the world's youngest nation on July 9, 2011. The birth of the Republic of South Sudan was the culmination of six years of peace process that began with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005. With the signing of the CPA, the war between the South and the North Sudan came to an end and the peace deal, known as the Naivasha Agreement between Khartoum Central Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M), led to a historic referendum which took place in Southern Sudan between January 9 and 15 in 2011.

The main purpose of the referendum was to decide whether the region should continue to remain a part of Sudan or become independent. However, a simultaneous referendum that was supposed to be held in the Abyei region on whether to join South Sudan could not take place due to massive violence. The Referendum Commission published the results of the referendum on February 7, 2011, which showed more than 98.83 per cent people voted in favour of separation from the mainland Sudan.

South Sudan's partition from Sudan was predicted long ago. Interestingly, this part of Sudan was experiencing unrest for nearly six decades before its Independence. Omar al-Bashir, then President of Sudan and a former army veteran, who ruled the country from 1989 to 2019, indeed talked about the right of South Sudan to secede from the mainland. Once a powerful strongman who ruled one of Africa's largest nations with an iron fist, Bashir commented that the referendum for South Sudan was helpful as he believed "unity could not be forced by power". However, then he was of the opinion that secession was not the answer for bringing an end to the myriad of problems of South Sudan. He had said, "The stability of the South is very important to us because any instability in the South will have an impact on the north...The

South suffers from many problems. It's been at war since 1959. The South does not have the ability to provide for its citizens or create a state or authority".

The brutal man, who ruled his country for three decades and having the scar of carrying genocide in Darfur, almost turned his words prophetic over the newly independent South Sudan. As of this date, Juba is fervently struggling for peace, stability and unity.

This month the country is celebrating its first decade of Independence, but there is not much to rejoice. Since its separation from mainland Sudan, it has been experiencing continued violence, endemic corruption, poverty and underdevelopment. South Sudan is located in the northern and eastern hemisphere of the planet earth. It is bordered by six other African nations — Sudan to the north, Ethiopia to the east, Kenya to the south-east, Uganda to the south, the Democratic Republic of Congo to the south-west and Central African Republic to the west. The country has been undergoing a number of significant changes since 2011. At its birth, South Sudan had only 10 provincial States, but in 2015, it was divided into 15. In 2017, the country was further made into 32 provinces purely based on ethnic lines. However, after three years of running a troubled Government and signing of a peace treaty in February 2020, the South Sudanese Civil War came to an end. And with this, Juba decided to roll back the ethnic divisions of States created in 2017 and reverted to the earlier system of 10 States.

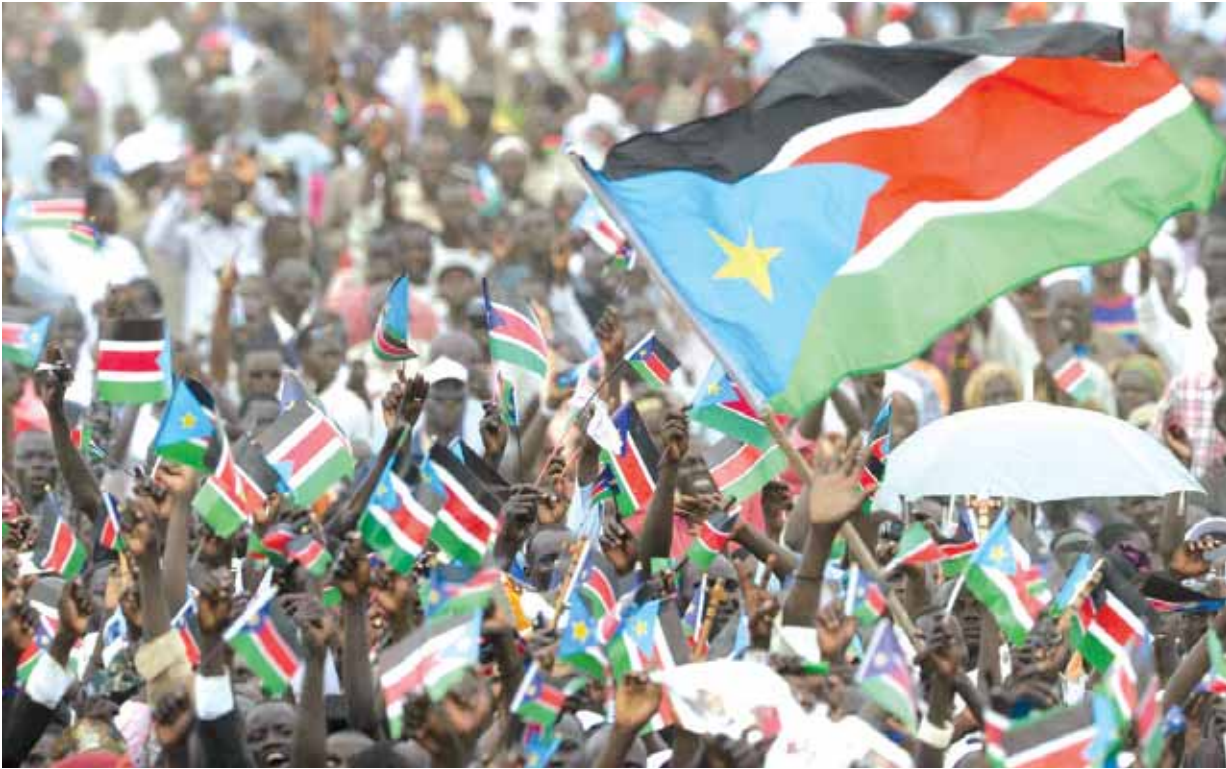
How the Civil War began in South Sudan? The two titans — Salva Kiir, the President, and Riek Machar, the former Vice President, were fighting to claim their rights over the fragile nation. This conflict started just after two years of the country's Independence from the mainland Sudan. The vast majority (over 80 per cent) of the people fleeing South Sudan in the past are women and children. And sadly, children make up to the 63 per cent of the total South Sudanese refugees during the

country's recent Civil War that lasted between December 15, 2013 and February 22, 2020, covering a period of nearly six years, two months and one week. Since the Civil War erupted, nearly 400,000 people have been killed and over 2.3 million became refugees and asylum seekers.

In November 2013, President Kiir, from the Dinka ethnic group, dismissed Machar who belonged to the Nuer group of South Sudan. Following the rumours of a possible coup, the President immediately replaced the members of the Army and the Government. He added fuel to the fire by dismissing all the main organs of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), citing that their time in office had expired. Further, massive violence sparked between the armed groups of Kiir and Machar, when the President accused the latter of plotting a coup against him in December 2013. Gradually, the violence took an ethnic turn by dividing and arming militias and villagers belonging to the Dinka and Nuer groups. There have also been allegations by both sides of crimes against humanity, including rape, extra-judicial killings, abductions, torture and the use of child soldiers in the war.

How has the UN responded to the crisis so far? As large swaths of South Sudan are facing violence against civilians, particularly children and women, the UN peacekeeping mission in the country known as United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is establishing a number of camps to protect the victims. Nicholas Haysom, the UN Secretary General's

Special Representative for South Sudan briefed the UN Security Council about the current situation on June 21, 2021. In his briefing he said: "I would like to highlight the pervasive insecurity, in particular inter-communal violence, which continues to obstruct the realisation of a durable and sustainable peace in South Sudan. This year more than 80 per cent of the civilian casualties were attributed to inter-com-



munal violence and community-based militias". Therefore, the UNMISS has a turbulent road ahead in South Sudan.

What is the latest peace deal? On September 12, 2018, President Kiir and Vice-President-turned rebel leader Machar signed a renewed peace agreement to put an end to the five-year long ethnic war in South Sudan. The agreement known as the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict of the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) was nothing new and indeed built upon a previous peace deal signed by both the leaders. It's a renewed peace process as both these rebels have come across a number of negotiations in the past. But then all of them failed as both the parties keep violating the terms for strengthening their own militias. The R-ARCSS envisioned an eight-month "pre-transitional period" that focussed largely on stabilising the security situation of the country. After eight months, the agreement stipulates the starting of another eight-month "transitional period" when the country would be led by a "Unity Government" with Kiir as President and Machar as

Vice President. Needless to say, that the proposed Unity Government structure resembles the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict of the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) signed on August 17, 2015. Even under that agreement, Machar was supposed to be appointed as the Vice President of the country. But unfortunately, the formation of that Government was delayed till April 2016 as Machar refused to travel to the Capital city, fearing for his security and life. Eventually, fierce fighting between the two groups began in the summer of 2016 in Juba and Machar had to leave as widespread violence engulfed the entire country.

A UN Report highlighted that the slow implementation of the revitalised peace accord may push the country again into a chaos. Experts on Africa say that political, ethnic and military divisions are growing across South Sudan. The parties and factions that signed the peace deal are again fighting in many places. Also, the UN says that nearly 100,000 people are facing famine like situations in the war-torn nation.

Even barely a year after signing the peace deal in 2019, South Sudan's National Security Service recruited a force of 10,000 fighters in President Kiir's stronghold. These were all apparently violating the peace accord. The Kiir administration is taking very little interest in following the terms and conditions of the deal. Sadly, an often-overlooked conflict, the South Sudanese civil war has already taken the lives of more than 400,000 people so far. Violence, disease and dire scarcity mar this land-locked country in East Central Africa even after a decade of its Independence. Women and children are largely bearing the brunt of the violence.

However, the 10th anniversary of South Sudan's historic achievement of Independence provides an opportunity to inject fresh initiatives to the ongoing peace process. The idea is to bring back peace, stability and growth that all South Sudanese people deserve today. Notwithstanding the recent signs of tranquillity, the overall implementation of the revitalised agreement is abysmally slow. Nevertheless, the feeble and almost paralysed insti-

tutions of State governance throughout South Sudan have directly helped the perpetrators of violence to exploit the existing perennial ethnic and communal cleavages. Entrenched insecurity has prevented the regular cultivation and herd rearing practices of the traditional communities in the countryside leading to food shortage and famine.

Above all, the global Covid-19 pandemic and a continued economic downturn are deteriorating the current state of affairs in South Sudan. The weakened law and order and rising criminal networks are making huge roadblocks in bringing peace back. It is time for Kiir and Machar to rebuild the newest nation of the world once again. Let Juba jubilate!

(Dr Makhan Saikia has taught political science and international relations for over a decade in institutions of national and international repute after specialisation in globalisation and governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He is the chief editor of the Journal of Global Studies, an international research journal)



Lucky number 22
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Friday

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Monday

Lucky number 31
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Wednesday

Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Friday

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Watch your thoughts

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