

OPINION 8
THE REFORMS OF 2015
ARE FRUCTIFYING NOW**WORLD 11**
TUNISIA ON EDGE AS PREZ
SUSPENDS PARL, FIRES PM**SPORT 14**
NAGAL HAMMERED
OUT BY MEDVEDEV

LUCKNOW, TUESDAY JULY 27 2021; PAGES 14 ₹3



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**YAMI'S LOST
GOES ON
FLOORS
13 VIVACITY**
CAPSULE

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

DELHI ZOO TO REOPEN FROM AUGUST 1

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

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE TO COME UP IN N-E

New Delhi: The Ministry of Science and Technology is setting up a first-of-its-kind Centre of Excellence in the Northeast, according to an official statement on Monday.

JEE-ADVANCED TO BE CONDUCTED ON OCT 3

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

Assam-Mizo border war escalates, 6 cops killed

PNS/PTI ■ GUWAHATI/AIZAWL

In a major flare-up of tension along the Mizoram-Assam border, at least six Assam Police officials were killed and 50 others, including an SP, were injured on Monday.

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

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

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



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

PTI

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

While the Assam CM put the blame on miscreants, Mizoram Home Minister Lalchamliana, in a statement, said Mizoram Police responded "spontaneously by firing

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

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

firing and stone-pelting.

The senior police officer said miscreants from across the State border suddenly started firing when civil officials of both sides were trying to sort out the differences. "I immediately cannot say how many people have been injured, but my guess is at least 50 personnel. Our SP was also injured in the firing and a bullet hit his leg," he said over phone.

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

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

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

BSY, who submitted his resignation to Governor Thawarchand Gehlot at Raj Bhavan, will continue as caretaker Chief Minister. Karnataka BJP Legislative Party will meet soon to "elect" a new leader. The BJP is pushing younger leadership across other States, but the choice for the successor in Karnataka would also be influenced by the consideration of 2023 State Assembly polls, sources said.

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

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

Ending days of speculation



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

PTI

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

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

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

emotional Yediyurappa after submitting his letter of resignation in 'Raj Bhawan'.

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

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

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Pegasus row, farmers' issue rock Parliament

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Mamata forms judicial panel to investigate Pegasus case

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress Government on Monday formed a two-member judicial panel to enquire into the Pegasus phone hacking case, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Monday. The judicial commission will comprise retired Supreme Court Judge MB Lokur and former Calcutta High Court Chief Justice Jyotirmoy Bhattacharya.

"We are the first Government to set up a judicial commission to enquire into the phone hacking issue," the Chief Minister said hours before she flew off to Delhi where she will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday evening.

"The situation is such that everyone is Nazarband (under surveillance) today," the CM said on the Pegasus spyware row. "We thought that after the Opposition raised its voice, the Centre will order a court-headed enquiry into it."

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taken and discussed amid the din. The agitated Opposition was in no mood to relent and the Upper House was finally adjourned for the day within 15 minutes of function.

The protesting members did not pay heed to repeated appeals made by Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu and some members stormed in the Well of the House displaying placards and yet others raised slogans forcing two adjournments in the post-lunch session.

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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Army Chief General MM Naravane, Air Force Chief Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria, Navy Vice Chief Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar, and CISC Vice Admiral Atul Jain pay tribute to the martyrs of Kargil War on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas, at National War Memorial in New Delhi on Monday

PTI

UK HC declares Mallya bankrupt

London (PTI): A British court on Monday granted a bankruptcy order against Vijay Mallya, paving the way for a consortium of Indian banks led by the State Bank of India (SBI) to pursue a worldwide freezing order to seek repayment of debt owed by the now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines. "As at 15.42 [UK time], I adjudicate Dr Mallya bankrupt," Chief Insolvency and Companies Court (ICC) Judge Michael Briggs said in his ruling during a virtual hearing of the Chancery Division of the High Court here.

The Indian banks, represented by the law firm TLT LLP and barrister Marcia Shekerdemian, had argued for the bankruptcy order to be granted in favour of the Indian banks.

Tikait threatens to lay siege in Lucknow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bharatiya Kisan Union has threatened to lay siege to Lucknow on the patterns of Delhi.

Rakesh Tikait, national spokesperson of Bharatiya Kisan Union, said that Uttar Pradesh would be the next major destination for the ongoing farmers' agitation.

"We will turn Lucknow into Delhi and all roads to the state capital will be closed. Our agitation will continue

until all three agricultural laws are repealed," he said here on Monday. He said a kisan mahapanchayat would be organised in Muzaffarnagar on September 5 where the strategy for intensifying the agitation would be formulated.

"We have no issue with the Bharatiya Janata Party but with the Narendra Modi government. We will not be browbeaten by the Modi government and the farmers' agitation will continue till the three agriculture laws are rolled back,"

Tikait said.

He said the Modi government was unwilling to bring a law for ensuring the procurement of the agriculture produce on minimum support price (MSP). He claimed that the agitation was not only for the farmers but also for the labourers and working class.

"We will go among the farmers. A huge kisan panchayat will be organised in Muzaffarnagar on September 5. The fourth estate is being targeted and the entire country is

being held captive," Tikait said.

"Uttar Pradesh is a state of agitation. The state advisory price (SAP) of sugarcane has not been increased for four years and sugar mills are yet to make the payment of as much as Rs 12,000 crore to the sugarcane farmer," Tikait said, adding that electricity was free for farmers in several states but in UP the power tariffs were the highest.

He said in UP, the government was now being run by the police, like in Gujarat.

SC refuses to stay proceedings against Gambhir's foundation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to stay the proceedings against BJP MP Gautam Gambhir's foundation in a case relating to illegally procuring and distributing Covid-19 medicines.

A bench comprising Justices DY Chandrachud and MR Shah said people were running around for medicines and drugs, and in this situation suddenly a trust comes and says we will give you medicines.

"This is not done. We do not want to say anything but we also have our ears to the ground," the SC observed while refusing to entertain the plea.



The SC asked the petitioner to approach the Delhi High Court for appropriate remedy. "Kailash Vasdev, learned senior counsel appearing on behalf of the petitioners states that the petitioners are advised to withdraw the Special Leave Petition so as to enable them to move the HC for implementation in the pending proceedings. The SLP is dismissed as withdrawn," the plea said

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TT veteran Sharath advances, fencer Bhavani makes mark

Disappointments in archery, shooting, boxing and tennis

PTI ■ TOKYO

Veteran paddler A Sharath Kamal turned back the clock to make the next round and fencer CA Bhavani Devi showed some spark in her debut but India's Olympic campaign on day 3 of the competitions was littered with disappointments in archery, shooting, boxing and tennis.

The 39-year-old Sharath defeated world Bronze-medallist Tiago Polonia of Portugal, prevailing 2-11, 11-8, 11-5, 9-11, 11-6, 11-9 in 49 minutes to set up a clash with Olympic and world champion Ma Long from China who is arguably the greatest table tennis player of all time. But the women's singles campaign in the same sport came to an end with Manika Batra and Sutirtha Mukherjee losing their respective preliminary round matches.

Loss awaited India's first ever fencer in the Olympics, CA Bhavani Devi, too.

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Indian Fencer Bhavani Devi at Tokyo Olympics

PTI

TOKYO 2020					
OLYMPICS: DAY 4 MEDAL TALLY					
RANK	COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
1	Japan	8	2	3	13
2	USA	7	3	4	14
3	China	6	5	7	18
4	ROC	4	5	3	12
5	Great Britain	3	3	1	7
6	Korea	3	0	4	7
7	Australia	2	1	3	6
8	Kosovo	2	0	0	2
9	Italy	1	4	4	9
10	France	1	2	2	5
33	India	0	1	0	1

Chief Minister Yogi launches MyGovUP portal

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Aimed at enhancing public communication with the Uttar Pradesh government, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched MyGovUP portal on Monday on which the citizens could share their opinion on the government's policy and the government could receive feedback on programmes of public interest.

Basically, <https://up.mygov.in/> is a platform to disseminate the schemes of governance and to know the opinion of common citizens on them.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister said that democracy was a system of governance of the people, for the people and by the people.

"Prior to 2014, public participation in the government was negligible, there was no place for the feelings and thoughts of the common citizen. But in July 2014, within two months of the formation of the Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party government, the platform 'MyGov' was launched. The platform launched by the prime minister to realise the spirit of



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launching MyGovUP portal on Monday

democracy through technology, has played a big role in achieving the goal of good governance," he said.

Praising the team of 'MyGov', Yogi said, "During the COVID-19 pandemic, we realised the use of technology and how together we can reach the benefits of the schemes of

governance with complete transparency and honesty to crores of people. The portal will encourage innovative ideas from the youths, discussing policies and the people would benefit by joining this platform of the Uttar Pradesh government." Union Minister for Communications and

Electronics Ashwini Vaishnav said, "MyGov is a step towards digital democracy. In the last seven years, this platform has played an important role in making public views the basis of the policies of the government. Today the portal completes its seven years. On such a special occasion, the arrival

of the country's largest state, Uttar Pradesh, on this platform, will further expand its success."

CEO of MyGov, Abhishek Singh, also gave a brief overview of MyGov's journey of seven years and expressed his gratitude towards the Uttar Pradesh government for joining it as the 15th state.

Steepest decline in fresh Covid cases

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

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

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

In another significant achievement, Uttar Pradesh, continuing the downward trend, dropped the daily Covid Test Positivity Rate (TPR) -- the

number of positive cases against the total tests done -- and it stood at 0.01 per cent, the lowest in the country. This rate was at its highest at 16.84 per cent on April 24 and now remains even lower than the lowest post-first wave of COVID-19. With eleven districts -- Aligarh, Budaun, Basti, Bahraich, Etah, Fatehpur, Hamirpur, Hathras, Kasganj, Mahoba and Shravasti -- becoming free of the deadly coronavirus and reporting no cases, the state's success story in combating COVID-19 has been strengthened further.

Emerging as a leader in conducting maximum Covid tests, Uttar Pradesh has tested as many as 6.42 crore samples for the coronavirus infection so far. The number of active cases in the country's most populous state has also reduced to just 857, which is now equal to the tally which the state had in April 2020. Active Covid cases have been brought down by over 99 per cent from its peak

capped at 3.10 lakh on April 30, while the percentage of active cases as against the total confirmed cases is 0.01 points.

Besides, stepping up preventive measures in view of a probable third wave of COVID-19, the state has ramped up its oxygen production as 234 out of the 549 sanctioned plants have become functional. As part of its mission to achieve self-sufficiency in oxygen production in Uttar Pradesh, the state government is currently working on a war footing to get all plants functional by August 15.

"The state is now left with merely 857 active COVID-19 cases. The decline has been over 99 per cent since the peak, which recorded 3.10 lakh cases on April 30. We must continue with a better system of prevention and treatment to break the chain of coronavirus infection," said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at a high-level Covid review meeting in Lucknow on Monday.

UP emerges as largest ethanol producing state

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

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

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

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

According to environmental experts, ethanol mixed with petrol may reduce carbon monoxide pollution by 35 per cent.

It may be recalled that the distilleries of sugar mills and other units produced a record 1.77 crore litres of sanitiser which was not only supplied within the state but also exported to other states.



NOTICE

I have changed my name from Krishna Mukerji to Jasbeer Kaur Randhawa Jasbeer Kaur Randhawa W/o Kuldeep Singh R/o 94/8, Labour Colony, Govind Nagar, Kanpur.

NOTICE

Be it known to all that earlier my name was Guriya Agrawal, which is changed to Shivani Agarwal. In future I will be known as Shivani Agarwal. Shivani Agarwal W/O Rupam Agarwal 56/13, Motilal Nehru Road Allahabad, UP

प्रवेश सूचना

एस.जे. महाविद्यालय, रमईपुर, कानपुर नगर - 209214 (अल्पसंख्यक संस्था) बी.एड. - 2021 में प्रबंधकीय कोटे पर प्रवेश हेतु 11/08/2021 तक आवेदन करें। प्रवेश परीक्षा 14/08/2021 को महाविद्यालय परिसर में सम्पन्न होगी। प्रवेश मंत्रिके अधार पर होगा। योग्यता एवं अर्हता उ.प्र. सरकार / एन.सी.टी.ई. के अनुसार होगी। इच्छुक अभ्यर्थी व्यक्तिगत रूप से कार्यालय में समस्त अभिलेखों के साथ उपस्थित हो कर आवेदन करें। अल्पसंख्यक आवेदकों को वरीयता दी जाएगी। - प्राचार्य

UP govt making no discrimination on basis of caste, religion: Maurya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said on Monday that his government was making no discrimination on the basis of caste or religion and was committed for the welfare of each member of society and stressed that focus of the government was on development and with zero tolerance towards corruption and criminals.

He exuded confidence that the Bharatiya Janata Party would win the coming assembly election with absolute majority by winning at least 325 seats.

Maurya was speaking at a function where he laid the foundation stone or inaugurated projects worth Rs 1,200.34 crore in Meerut. The projects include building of a medical college in Bulandshahr and one industrial training institute (ITI) each in Khurja and Baghpat.

Speaking on the occasion, Maurya said that development works undertaken under the



Yogi Adityanath government do not reflect a caste bias. "We are unbiased, which is why, be it a Yaduvanshi or Raghuvanshi, all are with BJP. What we are doing is just a glimpse of much more that we intend to do. The BJP will not sit in peace until it has ensured that members of each and every section of society are happy and living safely."

The deputy chief minister also praised the government for putting an end to corruption and hooliganism and claimed that whether money came from the Centre or was given by the state government, it reached directly to the

accounts of beneficiaries.

He said that the government had extended the best ever infrastructure in Uttar Pradesh by way of smooth roads, 24-hour power supply and above all a fear-free society by ending the mafia criminal raj in the state.

"No one has done as much for the farmers as this government has done. Farmers were provided with every help and the Central government also introduced new farm laws to remove middlemen from mandis and facilitate best price to the farmers for their crops," Maurya claimed.

Cop suspended after video of liquor party in SSP office goes viral

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A head constable clerk was suspended And a probe was ordered after a video of police personnel having a liquor party in the office of SSP of Etawah went viral on Sunday evening.

The video, uploaded by a Samajwadi Party leader, mentioned that police personnel at SSP Etawah office were collecting huge money from constables for transferring them to police stations of their choice and later they enjoyed a booze party in the office.

The SP leader tagged the video with a tag on Twitter that said, "This is Yogi's police."

Interestingly, in the video, the cops were seen wearing winter uniforms which pointed that the video was made earlier but now the probe would throw light on when and why it was made and who were the remaining cops.

SSP Etawah, Brijesh Kumar Singh said that soon after learning about the video, head constable Sanjay Kanauija posted as clerk in SSP office was suspended and a departmental probe into the matter was being conducted by SP (Crime) Gyanendra Singh.

The action against the cop was taken on the direction of IG of Agra Range, Mohit Agarwal.

Noida attracting large number of investors

Lucknow (PNS): Established on April 17, 1976, on the border of Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, the New Okhla Industrial Development Authority (Noida) of Gautam Buddha Nagar district has been attracting investors from both within the country and abroad since its inception. During the last four years of the Yogi Adityanath government, Noida has witnessed the most rapid development in 45 years of its existence.

Officials claimed that as many as 855 big investors based in India and abroad are setting up their ventures in Noida at a cost of Rs 20,560 crore and industrialists have been allotted plots by the development authority to set up their units, which will provide employment to 1.47 lakh people. Prominent among the investors are Samsung, Paytm, TCS, Microsoft, Adani Group, Kent RO and Haldiram's.

With the construction of Jewar airport in progress, the number of investors setting up their firms in Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) will increase exponentially in coming days. According to the officials, all the 855 investors who have acquired industrial plots in Noida have already started construction of their units while some of these units have been completed and have become operational as well.

Samsung has set up a mobile display

unit at a cost of Rs 4,826 crore in Noida that employs 2,500 people. Similarly, Paytm has set up its own venture with an investment of Rs 302 crore that has provided jobs to 15,000 people. Besides, in the information technology (IT) sector, TCS and the Motherhood Group have invested Rs 2,300 crore and Rs 47 crore, respectively, in Noida. The Adani Group has also acquired 39,146 acres of land to set up a firm at a cost of Rs 2,500 crore in the data processing sector. Multinational company, Microsoft, has got 60,000 acres of land to set up a unit at a cost of Rs 1,000 crore in the IT sector. INGKA Company has purchased 47,833 acres of land to invest Rs 5,500 crore in the property business.

Besides, Westway Electronics, Dixon Technology, Vivotex Project, Roto Pumps Ltd., Agarwal Associates, Neptune Systems, Adverb Technology, Surabhi Group, Ikea Solutions, Yun Flex Ltd., Kent RO have also acquired plots of land in Noida to start their business ventures. Since its inception in 1976, more than 10,200 industrial units have been established in Noida thereby providing employment to more than eight lakh people. There are more than 2,000 call centres in Noida. The per capita income of Noida is more than ten times the per capita income of the state. Against the state average of Rs 66,512, Noida's per capita income is a whopping Rs 6.71 lakh.

SP, BSP bid to woo Brahmins bewilders their caste-based vote banks

VIRENDRA NATH BHATT ■ LUCKNOW

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

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

Political analysts rubbished the narrative built by the detractors of the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh that the Brahmin community, particularly in Central UP, was sore with the Bharatiya Janata Party government over

the killing of Kanpur gangster Vikas Dubey in a police encounter in July last year.

"Resentment against certain policies of the government and its transformation into vote against the ruling party are two entirely different issues. It is a flawed assumption and over simplification of the political process obtaining at the ground level that Brahmins of Kanpur will vote against the BJP. Vikas Dubey was a dreaded mafia and a terror in the district and most of his victims were none other than Brahmins," said Kanpur-based political analyst Dr AK Verma. "The SP and BSP treated the political model of exclusive politics based on caste-based identity as final politics and never contemplated expanding their vote base and making it more inclusive. Their failure to expand created the opportunity for the BJP and it was quick to grab it, which has been proved by the three successive elections results in 2014, 2017 and 2019 and is likely to be repeated in 2022. In fact, it was the BJP which sincerely implemented the slogan of BSP founder Kanshiram demanding relative share in power structure as per population of the caste and communities," Dr Verma said.

Another analyst opined: "Identity politics is not a bad thing as this politics has immense-

ly contributed in social, political, economic empowerment of the Dalits and OBCs in UP. During the four decades of dominance of the Congress in UP and national politics, there was no place for identity politics at all levels including power, institutional and social structure. Identity politics of SP and BSP was a game changer as voters of these parties became a substantive participant in the democratic politics process rather than a formal participant during the Congress era," the analyst said.

The political analyst pointed out that even after three decades of existence, the two parties were operating at the fringe level and were yet to enter the mainstream inclusive politics. The best performance of the BSP was 30.1 per cent votes in 2007 UP Assembly polls when the party secured a simple majority by winning 206 seats in a House of 403, while the SP polled 29 per cent in 2012 and won 224 seats.

"Mayawati had made a good beginning in 2007, reaching out to the Brahmins, but did not care to further consolidate that coalition. The present situation makes it amply clear that both Mayawati and Akhilesh Yadav lack the political competence to turn their respective identity politics into inclusive politics," Dr Verma said.

BSP REMEMBERS BRAHMINS ONLY FOR POLLS: AAP LEADER

Lucknow (PNS): Aam Aadmi Party state president Sabhajet Singh criticised the Bahujan Samaj Party for remembering the plight of Brahmins at the time of election. In a statement he said Brahmins had started haunting the BSP at the time of election.

"BSP move to invoke Brahmins at the time of election is farce. In fact BSP is the B team of Bharatiya Janata Party. In their Brahmin Sammelan, there were neither Brahmins nor BSP workers," he said.

The AAP state president was reacting to BSP's Brahmin sammelan in Ayodhya. Singh said the BSP was only staging a play and it had nothing to do with the well-being of the Brahmins. The AAP leader questioned why BSP remembered Brahmins only at the time of election. "Where was the BSP when one Nripendra Mishra was murdered in Lucknow?" he asked.

Singh said the Brahmins would not fall into the trap of BSP supremo Mayawati and BSP general secretary Satish Chandra Mishra.

The AAP leader said by trying to woo Brahmins, the BSP was trying to benefit the BJP in the elections.

18 IAS officers transferred

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government transferred 18 IAS officers in the late hours of Sunday. New district magistrates were posted in Aligarh, Muzaffarnagar and Gorakhpur. According to the official sources Vijay Kiran Anand was made DM of Gorakhpur while District Magistrate of Aligarh, Chandra Bhushan Singh was shifted in the same capacity to Muzaffarnagar. Selva Kumari J. was made DM of Aligarh while Gorakhpur District Magistrate K Vijayendra Pandian was relieved for Central deputation.

Additional charge of Lucknow Development Authority vice-chairman was withdrawn from Abhishek Prakash, who is also District Magistrate of Lucknow. Municipal Commissioner of Kanpur, Akshay Tripathi will be the new VC of LDA.

Saharanpur Divisional Commissioner, AV Rajamouli, was posted as Food Commissioner

in Lucknow.

On his return from Central deputation, Lokesh M was posted as Divisional Commissioner of Saharanpur while Food Commissioner Manish Chauhan was transferred as Secretary, Industrial Development.

Chief Development Officer of Lakhimpur, Arvind Singh, was made vice-chairman of Kanpur Development Authority while, CDO of Varanasi, Madhusudan Nagraj Hoolgy, was posted as VC of Moradabad Development Authority and Municipal Commissioner of Varanasi, Gaurang Rathi, was posted as VC of Aligarh Development Authority.

CDO of Deoria, Shiv Sharanappa, was made Municipal Commissioner of Kanpur while Prem Ranjan Singh was posted as VC of Saharanpur Development Authority and VC of Gorakhpur Development Authority, Arvind Kumar Chauhan, was posted as VC of Prayagraj Development Authority.

AISPLB asks govt to reconsider proposed population control law

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

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

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

CM honours families of Kargil War martyrs



CM Yogi Adityanath paying floral tributes to martyrs at Kargil Shaheed Smriti Vatika in Lucknow on Monday

Pioneer

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath felicitated the families of the martyrs of Kargil War here, saying that because of these brave soldiers, the population of 136 crores felt safe. On this occasion, the chief minister paid floral tributes to the martyrs of Kargil War by offering them flowers at the Kargil Shaheed Smriti Vatika.

Saluting the Kargil martyrs, the chief minister said that due to the vigilance, alertness, devotion and sacrifice of the brave soldiers the people of the country were safe. “That is why it is said that a soldier sacrifices his life so that we can live in

peace,” he added. The chief minister said that the day was an occasion of pride and dignity for all because this day the Indian army proved its might in front of the world. Expressing condolences to the families of the martyred soldiers, the chief minister assured them that the state government would always stand by them. “Our ways of worship can be different, our food can be different, lifestyle may be different, language may be different, but our religion is one and that religion is love thy Nation,” he said.

Expressing gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the proposal to establish 100 new Sainik Schools in the new budget of the Central government, the chief minister

said that the process of opening a new Sainik School at the divisional level had started in UP. On this occasion, the chief minister honoured the families of martyred soldiers of Lucknow. He honoured the families of Param Vir Chakra winner Captain Manoj Pandey, Major Ritesh Sharma, Rifleman Sunil Jung. He also released a book ‘Veerta aur Samman’.

On this occasion, Deputy Chief Minister Dr Dinesh Sharma, Urban Development Minister Ashutosh Tandon, Jal Shakti Minister Dr Mahendra Singh, local MLA Suresh Tiwari, Lucknow Mayor. Sanyukta Bhatia and officials and members of martyr families, soldiers and other dignitaries were present.

Bid to jab entire population of city by Aug-end

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Health department is aiming to administer the first dose to the entire targeted population (aged above 18 years) of Lucknow by the end of August, according to District Immunisation Officer Dr MK Singh. The idea is to reduce the severity and mortality amongst public in the event of the third wave.

Dr Singh said they have completed 18.35 lakh doses and about 22,000 people are being vaccinated per day. “These

people are getting the protection from the third wave whose arrival is still a speculation,” he said. He added that the demand for the vaccination is high and they can cross the 20 lakh vaccination mark by the end of this month.

About the coverage of population under Covid immunisation, he said people aged above 18 years constitute 55 per cent of the total population in the district and it is the targeted population of Lucknow.

“This figure is around 32 lakh and if a target of 18 lakh

has been achieved, it is more than 50 per cent of the targeted group being vaccinated,” he said. He added that people are now keen on getting jabbed.

Meanwhile, State Immunisation Officer Dr Ajay Ghai said the number of doses completed in the state is 4.44 crore and the state is still maintaining the lead in terms of the number of doses administered.

However, he admitted that the demand for the vaccine has exceeded the supply.

“Whatever vaccines are being provided to the districts

get used in no time. Hundred per cent vaccines are being used in the districts and the doses being sent for two days get used in a day,” he pointed out.

“The hesitancy has turned into eagerness, primarily because of two reasons. First, because of the IEC approach under which we are spreading awareness among people; and second, because of the near-to-home approach being adopted under which people see others get jabbed. Once they are convinced that vaccination does

not create any problems, they got motivated to get jabbed. Sometimes, people are ready to travel to other areas to get vaccinated,” he pointed out.

Asked whether vaccinations will take place on all the festive occasions in August, he said they are doing it on all the gazetted holidays and vaccines were also administered on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha.

“However, it also depends on local reasons. On the occasion of Holi earlier this year, vaccination had come to a halt for two days,” he added.

Rajajipuram a hotspot under Tudiaganj CHC

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

Tudiaganj and surrounding areas witnessed a spurt in cases during the second Covid wave, with the number of daily infections going as high as 300-400. The Tudiaganj Community Health Centre is carrying out focused sampling in the congested areas of Rajajipuram in a bid to delay the onset of or prevent the third wave. Tudiaganj CHC superintendent Dr Preeti Srivastava said the areas which come under them include Alamnagar, Rajajipuram and Balaganj.

“During the second wave peak, there were huge number of cases. We were getting one to two cases in the recent past but there have been no cases of late. Rajajipuram has been identified as a hotspot under the CHC. The houses are very congested here as it is mostly the lower middle class residing

in this area. There are E & F blocks which have a number of lanes. Barring A & B blocks, the rest of Rajajipuram is extremely congested and hence focused sampling is being carried out to a large extent and the teams also visit Rajendranagar and Balaganj for testing,” she said.

She said amongst those who conducted the testing from the Health department, a single person carried out 60-70 tests, including 40 per cent through RT-PCR. Almost 1,000 samples are collected from high-risk areas on a daily basis. These areas have a large number of vendors and there is also a tempo stand here.

Dr Srivastava said the total population covered under the Tudiaganj CHC is more than 2 lakh and there are eight primary health centres under them.

“This is mainly a peri-urban area which is not well-developed, and we have mainly the lower middle class peo-

ple residing here. The area is as large as that under Aliganj CHC but the population is less in comparison,” she pointed out. About the challenges which they are facing, she said the main challenge is the people residing in Ramnagar and New Haiderganj who not want to get vaccinated. “Besides, they also do not want their children to get regular immunisation. It’s a very resistant area and we handle such areas by asking teachers to motivate the residents, talk to the corporators and local mobilisers,” she said. She added that they have carried out extensive testing at the old-age homes, gas agencies and conducted vaccination drives at all vantage points.

Dr Srivastava said that in terms of treatment, all wards are ready and they have already received oxygen concentrators. “We have been asked to make preparations for 15 oxygen beds,” she added.

Police attach land, mafia’s property worth over ₹2.5 bn

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Lucknow police commissionerate attached property worth over Rs 2.5 billion (Rs 25,54,45,02,951) of the owners of Career Institute of Medical Science and Hospital on Monday.

As per an official communiqué, the action was taken against Mohammed Iqbal and his father Azmat Ali of Dhaila village in Madaion under Section 14 (1) of UP Gangster and Anti-Social Activities Prevention Act 1986. The property attached included academic block/hospital block/campus, MBBS boys’ hostel, Career PG Institute of Dental Science and Hospital, BDS girls’ hostel, BDS boys’ hostel, MBBS girls’ hostel, nurses’ hostel, doctor residents’ hostel, intern PG hostel, canteen/mess, STP inside dental college premises, Rural Health Training Centre (Muttakipur), two-storeyed semi-finished building, Career Convent College in Vikas Nagar and lands in Muttakipur, Dhaila, Allunagar Diguria, Baraura Hussain Bari and in Alinagar localities besides Rs 77 lakh in cash, a bus, a Qualis, an Innova, a Fortuner, an Audi and a TDI Quattro (all worth

above Rs 1 crore).

Giving details about the family background of the accused, the police said Azmat Ali came from a simple family and he had small land in his name and that he had to divide among his brothers and sisters. Azmat started a job with a salary of Rs 1,200 per month with one Nisar Ali. “Azmat later raked in moolah through illegal activities and Iqbal assisted him. Azmat and Iqbal later formed a gang which was headed by Azmat himself. In 1994, Azmat set up a small school in Shivpuri Colony in the area. He later set up Career Convent Educational and Charitable Trust and grabbed government land for getting the office constructed. He set up Career Convent College in 1998-2000 and later set up Career Institute of Medical Sciences using the ill-gotten money. He grabbed the government land in setting up the medical institute,” the police said.

Azmat was named in eight cases of crime while Iqbal in three cases at Madaion police station. Iqbal was a former Cabinet minister in the Samajwadi Party government.

Complainant detained, well-wishers thrashed by cops

Lucknow (PNS): An angry group of cops at Chinhath police station thrashed the well-wishers of a complainant, who was detained along with his aide on suspicion on Sunday night. An inquiry was set up after the issue was brought to the notice of senior police officers.

The complainant, Shashank Jaiswal, works as a salesman at an IMFL shop in Chinchhat from where three gun-wielding miscreants had looted over Rs 3 lakh from him on July 21 night.

Shashank and his assistant Bablu were to hand over the daily collection of cash to collec-

tion agents Vishal Singh and Pawan Dwivedi when they were struck by the robbers. Both Vishal and Pawan were waiting for Shashank sitting in a car when the robbery took place. As the cops failed to get any clue, they doubted the claims of Shashank and Bablu. Both were rounded up two days back for interrogation in a whimsical way. The police allegedly subjected them to third-degree torture and forced them to confess to the crime. As the families of Shashank and Bablu did not get any information since they left

for the police station on being summoned, they asked IMFL shop-owner Abhay Singh for help. Abhay, with the help of some of his well-wishers, succeeded in finding out that Shashank and Bablu had been detained by Chinhath police and were at the police station.

Around 10:30 pm, Abhay and his friend Vishal reached the police station to inquire of Shashank and Bablu and to serve them food.

Abhay told mediapersons that the cops lost their cool on

seeing them and asking about Shashank and Bablu. “They abused us. The cops present at the police station told us that we earn profit from the model shop but do not oblige the police. When someone loots cash, you people remember police,” Abhay told mediapersons. He said he pleaded that he was from the side of Shashank who had lodged a case of loot. “All hell broke loose and the cops thrashed us with belts, hockey sticks and batons. Then came a man in civvies and he tried to choke me. Luckily, a policeman saved me,” he told mediapersons.

LOOT CASE

JEE BEd-2021 postponed

Lucknow (PNS): The JEE BEd 2021, to be held by Lucknow University, has been postponed from July 30 to August 6. LU spokesperson Durgesh Srivastava said that the exams have been postponed because of unavoidable circumstances. He said students can download the admit cards with the new date and those who have already downloaded the admit cards can appear with the same.

Meanwhile, Lucknow University suspended a BA (sixth semester) student of the Ancient History department for sharing vulgar content in the WhatsApp group created by students of the department. Aditya Singh, who was arrested on Sunday, has been asked to submit an explanation in writing on why should he not be expelled from the university.



Devotees throng Mankameshwar temple on the first Monday of Shravan

Pioneer

New LDA VC takes charge

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Akshay Tripathi took charge as the vice-chairman of Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) on Monday evening. He took the charge from District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash, who was holding the additional charge as LDA VC. Prior to taking up this assignment, Tripathi was the Municipal Commissioner in Kanpur. He is a mechanical engineering graduate and his first posting was assistant collector in Etawah in 2015. Later, he worked as the joint magistrate in Jalaun and chief development officer in Ayodhya and Kanpur.

He said his top priority is to set the house in order, rid the city of unauthorised structures and make sure houses and flats are within the reach of the common man so that they can lead a decent life.

CITYBRIEFS

HINDI OLYMPIAD

Aryan Shukla, a Class VII student of City Montessori School, Rajajipuram Campus I, has brought laurels to the city of Lucknow by winning a silver medal in International Hindi Olympiad, organised under the auspices of Hindi Vikas Sansthan, New Delhi. Students of several noted schools of India and abroad participated in this Olympiad. Aryan showcased his talent and proved that each student must be well-versed in the mother tongue to achieve success in the modern age. The organisers rewarded him with a silver medal and certificate, praising his knowledge and talent.

LUCKNOW VISIT

Executive director of Punjab National Bank Swarup Kumar Saha will be on a one-day visit to Lucknow on Tuesday.



Man duped of ₹3.3L by cyber thugs

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A resident of Indiranagar was duped of Rs 3.3 lakh by an unidentified person on the pretext of activating his SIM. The victim, identified as Krishna Gopal Sinha of Mayur Residency, said he got a message that his SIM had been blocked and he was required to dial the customer care number (8391945279). Thereafter, he got another message: “I will call you right back” the same day. Sinha got a call and he was asked to get his KYC status updated. “He asked me to recharge my mobile phone with Rs 10 and after I did that, I received messages regarding deduction of a total of Rs 3.3 lakh in four transactions,” he stated in the complaint.

Meanwhile, three cyber thugs were nabbed by a cyber crime team of UP Police for defrauding a woman of Rs 1

lakh on the pretext of facilitating her a job. The accused were identified as Amar Srivastava, Mudit Sharma (both of New Delhi) and Vishnu Sharma of Kanpur. The accused came on police radar after a team of cyber crime started a probe into a case in which Deepa Yadav of South City locality in Lucknow was defrauded.

It surfaced that the accused made a fake employment website and the victim applied for a job through it. Since the name of the website made by the accused was similar to the original, she failed to sense foul play. She was asked to pay registration money and later, she got a message regarding deduction of Rs 1 lakh from her bank account on July 10. She reported the matter to the cyber crime and a team worked on the case. The accused told the police that they had duped several people in the past.

3-yr-old boy killed during occult practice, buried

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a shocking incident, a three-year-old boy was allegedly killed during an occult practice and his body was buried to conceal the crime in Pinahat police station area of Agra on Sunday.

On being informed, the local police exhumed the body and were trying to ascertain the victim’s identity.

The incident came to light on early Sunday morning after the police were alerted by the locals about some suspicious activity in a jungle area near the river Chambal. A police team immediately rushed to the spot and exhumed the boy’s body and took it to a community health centre (CHC) for check-up. However, the doctors at the CHC pronounced the child dead. The body was then sent to SN Medical College hospi-

tal for post-mortem.

The presence of incense sticks, knife, spade and items related to occult practices near the spot raised suspicion of human sacrifice. The villagers informed the police that four men and a woman had buried a child after offering prayers on the night of Guru Purnima, suggesting it to be a sacrifice but facts would be confirmed only after a complete probe.

The description of the deceased has been sent to neighbouring districts of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in an attempt to identify the child. So far, there is no missing complaint filed for the child in any of the police stations in Agra. An FIR was later registered at Pinahat police station on the basis of preliminary information and investigation.

The child’s identity is yet to

be ascertained. Those involved in the act are also unidentified as those who buried the boy’s body managed to abscond when the police came looking in the jungle but some locals are understood to have seen them. These eye witnesses are being contacted to track down the killers.

Meanwhile, a woman, in her mid-sixties, was allegedly tied up and raped in Kabrai locality of Mahoba on Monday.

After receiving information about the incident, the police reached the spot and found the victim in a critical condition with her hands and feet tied. She was rushed to a hospital for treatment. The woman identified the accused as Bharat Kushwaha (45), who was later arrested and a case was registered against him under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code.

BJP galvanising state frontal organisations

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Bharatiya Janata Party has asked all its frontal organisations to appoint office-bearers by the end of August so that the party activities could be streamlined at the village level.

In a meeting of the newly-appointed coordinators of BJP here on Monday, party state president Swatantra Dev Singh said that formalities for formation of organisational units should be completed by August. Singh, while addressing the party leaders, said that in view of the upcoming assembly elections, the role of newly-appointed coordinators was very important.

“Work has to be done to connect every section of society with the BJP so that the benefits of schemes of both the Central and state governments could be availed,” he said.

He said the achievement of the Narendra Modi-Yogi

Adityanath governments had to be taken to the people. He said, “The opposition is issueless and that is why it is trying to mislead people by telling lies. In such a situation, it is the responsibility of all of us to expose the lies of the opposition.”

Earlier, BJP state general secretary (organisation) Sunil Bansal told the office-bearers about the action plan for the frontal organisations. He said that the people associated with the new responsibilities should keep their direct communication with the public.

“In BJP, post is not important. It is the spirit of service which is important,” he said.

The meeting started with the lighting of the lamp and recital of Vande Mataram. Floral tributes were made to the martyrs of Kargil War and a two-minute silence was observed to pay homage to the brave sons of the country.

Fervour marks first Monday of Shravan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Amidst tight security arrangements and Covid-19 restrictions, lakhs of devotees offered prayers at one of the dwadasa jyotirlingas, Kashi Vishwanath, and about a dozen other famous temples of Lord Shiva located in the city and its outskirts here on the auspicious occasion of the first Monday of Shravan month.

Though at some temples there was no heavy rush as is generally seen on this occasion, long lines were seen at other temples. At many temples, the devotees were not allowed to touch the Shivlingas as they offered jalabhishek from outside the garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum) through metal structures.

It was the second year in succession when the impact of worldwide coronavirus pandemic was seen on this occasion at the famous Shiva temples in this holy city. However, contrary to last year when many famous temples were closed as they failed to seek permissions expressing their inability to control the crowd of devotees during the month and maintain social distancing and other Covid-19 norms, this time most of them remained open but some of them maintained restrictions on entry into the garbhagriha.

Apart from Kashi Vishwanath temple, such restrictions were also seen at Tilbhandeshwar (Pandey Haveli), Sarang Mahadev (Sarnath), Vishwanath (Banaras Hindu University) and many other temples where



Devotees going to Kashi Vishwanath temple to offer prayers in Varanasi on Monday

Pioneer

the devotees offered jalabhishek from outside the garbhagriha. Rush was also seen at Maha Mrityunjaya Mahadev (Daranagar), Gauri Kedareshwar Mahadev (Kedar Ghat), Jogeshwar Mahadev (Ishwarganj) and many others in the city areas while Markandey Mahadev (Kaithi near confluence of rivers Ganga and Gomti), Shooltankeshwar Mahadev (Madhopur) and Kamdeshwar Mahadev, Bhim Chandi, Rameshwar Mahadev (Rameshwar), Paanch Pandav (Shivpur) and Kapildhara on Panch Kosi Marg.

At Kashi Vishwanath temple, right from the wee hours

after Mangla Aarti, the devotees started thronging the temple and there were continuous lines of devotees on both sides of the temple including Maidagin and Godowlia. Despite all Covid restrictions, though masks were seen on the majority of devotees, social distancing could not be maintained at most of the Shiva temples including Kashi Vishwanath. Though outside Kanwaris were not allowed to come here, some locals were seen wearing saffron-clad raising slogans of Bol Bom and Har Har Mahadev. Elaborate security arrangements were made and no vehicles were allowed to

move between Godowlia and Maidagin throughout the day. To maintain law and order, the devotees were checked at many places through metal detectors. Senior administrative and police officers were present there to keep watch on the stock of situation in Gyanvapi premises. All the activities were also watched through various CCTV cameras. To avoid congregation the devotees were asked to move towards Gyanvapi only through barricaded and Rapid Action Force (RAF), para-military and PAC jawans were deployed both inside and outside of the premises.

Devotees throng Shiva temples on first Monday of Shravan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

On the occasion of the first Monday of Shravan, devotees thronged various city temples to offer prayers to Lord Shiva here in Prayagraj. Even heat could not deter their spirit and heavy rush of devotees was witnessed in the Mankameshwar Temple, Nagwasuki temple in Daraganj and Padila Mahadeo temple in Phaphamau.

Queues stretching up to several metres were seen around Mankameshwar Temple. Men and women came in large numbers carrying holy water for jalabhishek of Lord Shiva. Temples were decked up with colourful lights and flowers. The devotees waited in long queues since early morning to offer prayers to the deity and sung bhajans. Inside the temples, the fragrance of agarbattis, sandalwood and flowers gave a pious feeling. In the long serpentine queues, the devotees waited to offer bael leaves, milk and water to Lord Shiva, to whom the month is dedicated.

In the temples, devotees poured milk, curd, honey, ghee and bael (bilwa) leaves on Shivlings and prayed for the well-being and prosperity of the family. People also offered prasad (sweets) to the deity along with flowers which were later distributed among devotees. "Lord Shiva is the one who removes all hindrances in the way of his devotee's life. During the month of Shravan, we visit temples every Monday," Shubhra Shukla, a devotee, said.

On the occasion, devotees also observe fast on every Monday in Shravan. "It is believed unmarried girls who observe fast on all Mondays of the month find a perfect match. Married women observe fast for peace and prosperity of the family. Besides, fasting purifies our soul and provides inner strength," Alka Singh, another devotee, said.



Devotees offer rudrabhishek after taking holy dip in the Sangam on the occasion of first Monday of the Shravan month in Prayagraj

Pioneer

Throwing light on the importance of Monday, Dr Ram Naresh Tripathi said Lord Shiva showers blessings on all those who remember him with true heart.

Mahant at the Mankameshwar temple said, "Large number of devotees queued up outside the temple since the wee hours and the crowd swelled throughout the day. Devotees also performed rudrabhishek and shringar rituals."

In Shravan all the gods sleep, but Shiva remains awake. That is why this month is dedicated to Bholenath. On fasting with performing Rudrabhishek, Mahabhishek and Jalabhishek, Shiva is pleased and gives desired results. Today is the first Monday of Sawan. In this, a rare combination of yoga named Saubhagya is being formed. Dharmacharya says that Lord Shiva will shower good luck on those who observe fast and rituals on the said yoga. Women's wishes for married life, happiness and

prosperity will be fulfilled. Unmarried girls will get the desired groom, while men should praise Shiva for freedom from physical, divine and material sufferings.

Although the month of Shravan had started from Saturday itself, today's importance is different. There is an atmosphere of faith, devotion, detachment and dedication everywhere on the first Monday of Sawan. Since morning, bells have been ringing in Shiva temples. Om Namah Shivay is being chanted. After bathing in the Ganges, devotees performed Jalabhishek with Ganga water to please Bholenath. Shivling is also being anointed with milk, curd and honey. Devotees worshipped with bel leaves, dhatoor, garlands and flowers, etc.

With the beginning of the month of Shravan, there is a devotional atmosphere all around. The process of Rudrabhishek, Jalabhishek and Mahabhishek will continue throughout the month. Despite

the ban on Kanwar Yatra, some Shiva devotee Kanwaris have also left their homes for darshan and worship. Wearing saffron clothes, proclaiming 'Har Har Bam-Bam', bathing in the Sangam and Ganga, performed Jalabhishek in the pagodas like Kanwaria Dashashwamedh Mahadev, Mankameshwar Mahadev, Gangoli Pagoda, Shiv Kachari etc. After bathing the Sangam, Kanwaria leaves for Kashi after filling water barefooted.

Acharya Vidyakant Pandey, director of Parashar Jyotish Sansthan, said that on every Monday, people should go to the ancient pagoda and worship Lord Shiva's idol or Shivling and offer belpatra, fruits, flowers, sweets and perform aarti with incense, lamp. After fasting for the whole day, men keep chanting 'Om Namah Shivay' and women 'Namah Shivay' in their minds. In the evening, again after performing the aarti of Shiva, take the refreshment (swalpa-haar), he added.

Yadav Bandhus perform Lord Shiva's jalabhishek

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Keeping the 89-year old tradition alive, the Yadav Bandhus performed jalabhishek at nine leading Shiva temples, including Kashi Vishwanath, on the occasion of the first Monday of Shravan month. It was the second continuous year when in view of the coronavirus pandemic, only a limited number of Yadav Bandhus did the formalities as per the instructions of the district administration. Unlike five last year, this time 11 people joined the traditional procession carrying flags of Chandravanshi Gop Seva Samiti and big-sized damrus.

After carrying sacred water of the Ganga river at Kedar Ghat, the Yadav Bandhus first visited Gauri Kedareshwar and



Yadav Bandhus taking out a traditional procession in Varanasi on Monday. Pioneer

then visiting Teel Bhandeshwar and Sheelta Mata where they were welcomed by Samiti president Lalji Yadav and senior Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Shalini Yadav. Then after visit-

ing Aadleshar Mahadev, they reached Kashi Vishwanath temple where at Deds Ke Pul, Shalini Yadav presented angvastrums to participants. The function was conducted by

ex-corporator Manish Yadav. Later, they offered prayers at Maha Mrityunjaya Mahadev, Trilochan Mahav and Omkleshwar Mahadev. They ended their pilgrimage journey at Laat Bhairav.

Shalini Yadav said that as Jupiter and moon remain strong during Shravan, Yadav Bandhus prayed for the welfare of humanity. Lalji Yadav said during our visit to various temples, we prayed to Lord Shiva to help the world defeat coronavirus so that the people can live their normal life. Those who were also present in this traditional procession were Vinay Yadav, Manoj Engineer, Durga Yadav, Manoj Yadav, Ayushman Yadav, Vishnu Yadav, Balli Sardar, Ashwani Yadav, Sagar Yadav, Ashok Yadav and Gopal Yadav.

Solar manifesto gets green signal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In a regional interfaith conference held here on Monday, as part of the 'Suraj Se Samridhi' campaign driven by Climate Agenda, the solar manifesto received a green signal from the representatives of all religious communities. The participants urged the government for a full and timely implementation of the solar city programme. They passed a proposal demanding installation of solar infrastructure in UP and employment generation for one million youth under it; inclusion of more cities under the solar city program; at least 50 percent subsidy for household rooftop

solar installation and incorporating the demands of the solar manifesto in their 2022 assembly election manifestos by all the political parties.

During the conference, it was highlighted that with increased subsidy in the RE sector, MSMEs and cottage industry can increase their productivity and aid in the growth of the state GDP. It can certainly help in the development of household products. The religious leaders emphasised upon the fact that the light and energy received from the sun is without any bias of caste, gender, and religion. Similarly, unbiased policy announcements and lucrative

subsidy rates from the government for all sections of the society will ensure maximum installation and pave the way for clean energy and clean environment.

They unanimously said that in addition to the five cities announced in the ambitious Solar City Scheme, adding four more cities would enable common people to take advantage of it as a source of clean energy.

The huge employment opportunities that the Solar City program brings with itself can lead us towards sustainable economic growth. Expansion in the RE sector will result in an employment boost in the

post-Covid scenario.

Apart from Varanasi, representatives of different religions from the districts of Jaunpur, Sultanpur, Amethi, Ambedkar Nagar, Pratapgarh etc participated in this event which was initiated by Ravi Shekhar on behalf of Climate Agenda, and conducted by Raghavendra Pandey. Shehere-Mufti Maulana Batin, Dr Anand Kumar Jain, Yogiraj Vijay Prakash Mishra, Father Prakash Louis, Dr Bhagirathi, Dr Sangeeta Pandit, Rajesh Mishra, Satish Singh, Jagriti, Priyanshu and Manjari were present along with some other dignitaries from religious and cultural backgrounds.

BJP doing injustice to Brahmins: SC Mishra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Bahujan Samaj Party's National general secretary Satish Chandra Mishra, who was in Prayagraj on Monday, said Brahmins in Uttar Pradesh account for 13 per cent population and there are 3 crore Brahmins out of a population of 25 crore. "If they unite instead of being divided, no one will be able to harm them," Mishra said.

He appealed to the Brahmin community for unity.

He said that the temple of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya is being built on the orders of the Supreme Court and there is no contribution of the BJP govern-

ment in it.

The national general secretary of the BSP said that the people of BJP have gulped thousands of crores of rupees in the name of the temple. Had the intention of the BJP been made, it could have built a temple by making a law too, he added. Under the auspices of Bahujan Samaj Party, at the guest house in Saidabad, he participated as the chief guest in the seminar on respect, security and progress of Brahmin society.

Addressing the seminar, he said that BJP is doing injustice to Brahmins. The Bikru incident of Kanpur was also mentioned. He said that Amar

Dubey's wife Khushi Dubey's bail was rejected, while there was no fault of Khushi in the incident.

Mishra's arrival in Prayagraj is being seen by linking it with Mission 2022. In the run-up to the upcoming Vidhan Sabha elections, he was in Sangamnagar on Monday to gauge the pulse of the homogeneous brothers. His attempt will be to do social engineering for the BSP on the lines of 2007. Some big leaders are also expected to join so that the message can be sent in Purvanchal. Bahujan Samaj Party is trying to make Brahmin and Muslim class to vote in its favour in the upcom-

ing assembly elections. There was a similar equation in the 2007 assembly elections. Later it fell apart. BSP's campaign is to consolidate its lost ground by uniting the people who have been left out of the party. For this, the enlightened class seminar was started from Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Ayodhya. A similar seminar was organised in Prayagraj, Saidabad. Saidabad's former block pramukh Narendra Kumar Tripathi had said that this programme is being organised to polarize Brahmin votes in favour of BSP in the upcoming assembly polls. Brahmins did not get due respect in BJP, he added.

AU students create sand art to mark Kargil Vijay Diwas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Students of the Visual Arts Department of Allahabad University recreated Kargil War scenario through sand art at the Sangam here on Monday. It was appreciated by Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court MN Bhandari, District Magistrate Sanjay Khatri and head of the department Prof Ajay Jaitley.

To celebrate Vijay Diwas, the sand artists exhibit their creativity every year, and this year they tried to recreate the Kargil scene of 1999 by carving tanks and giving the specific area olive green colour.

Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court MN Bhandari showered blessings on the artists and said that their gesture towards Indian Army is worth mentioning. They created the Kargil War scene to pay tribute to the martyrs and to celebrate Vijay Diwas. The students come up with new ideas every year and it should continue, he said.

The district magistrate, who also visited the place to pay floral tributes to the Kargil martyrs, said that the artists are committed to nation's cause and they will serve the nation in different ways. Prof Ajay Jaitley, while boosting the morale of the students, said it is a true tribute to Indian



AU students recreate Kargil War scenario through sand art at the Sangam Pioneer

Army.

AIR COMMODORE CHOURASIA TAKES CHARGE: Air Commodore Ajay Kumar Chourasia took over the command of Air Force Station, Bamrauli, from Air Commodore Neeraj Kumar on Monday. An impressive handing/taking over ceremony was conducted in the station on the occasion of change of command.

Air Commodore Ajay Kumar Chourasia is an alumnus of the prestigious National Defence Academy and was commissioned in Helicopter stream of the Indian Air Force on December 17, 1988. He is an graduate from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Further, the Air Officer did Master of Science in Military Operational Art and Science from Air University, USA.

Air Commodore Ajay Kumar Chourasia has 3836 hours of flying experience on different types of Aircrafts namely MI-35, Chetak, MI-17, MI -17 V5, is KARA, HPT and MI-8. He had undergone Air Command and Staff Course in Air Command Staff College, USA and Flight Safety Course in Bangladesh and has participated in various exercises held in India and abroad during his 32 years of career in Indian Air Force. The Air Officer has also served in UN peacekeeping Force at Congo.

BHU releases Vedic Panchang

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Nav Samvatsar Vedic Panchang was released by the Vedic Vignyan Kendra, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), here on Monday by Vice-Chancellor Prof Vijay Kumar Shukla. This Vedic Panchang in itself is wonderful in many ways. It is mainly placed in 12 months on the basis of dates. Each date is accompanied by its expiration time. The main fasts, festivals and festivals are also given along with those dates. Due to the mention of English dates, even a layman can understand it easily. It also describes the solar and lunar eclipses that occur in the year.

This Vedic Panchang is in the form of Vedic Yoga Vignyan, Ritucharya and Vignyan numbers. Indicative description of seasonal diets and introduction

and usefulness of yoga etc have been given for better health. With this Vedic Panchang, people will also have knowledge of dates and aspects as well as of Indian Vedic tradition.

The annual results of the zodiac signs have also been taken for the information of common people. The original heritage of Indian culture and the thought of yoga science described in the Vedas are depicted with postures, postures, mantras and their meanings.

The Vice-Chancellor, while expressing joy on the release of this special Vedic Panchang, said that this is a very easy and simple medium to make Vedic knowledge among the common people, in which the basics related to dates, festivals etc.

There is information as

well as introductory mention of the facts of Vedic yoga science in Vedic texts is going to generate curiosity in the public about Vedic knowledge and science.

The coordinator of the centre Prof Upendra Kumar Tripathi said that yoga has a special place for physical and mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic. Keeping this in view, this Vedic Panchang has been prepared with the aim of acquainting the general public with the specific principles of Yoga, Indian culture and the knowledge store of Vedic science.

The function was also attended by the members of the Steering Committee of the Vedic Vignyan Kendra — Prof Kamal Nayan Dwivedi, Prof RP Malik, Prof Bindhyachal Pandey, Dr Sunil Katayayan apart from Dean of SVDV

Faculty Prof Kamlesh Jha, Dr Shyambabu Patel (Joint Registrar , Development) and Pawan Kumar Mishra (assistant registrar cum administrative officer, Vedic Vignyan Kendra).

NO COVID CASES RECORDED IN KASHI: Not a single person tested positive for the novel coronavirus infection out of the 4,866 samples tested during the last 24 hours. The confirm cases remained at 82,344, as per the figures released by the Health department on Monday evening.

With no death from COVID-19, the toll remained at 773. Two patients recovered during the past 24 hours, both in home isolation. With this, 81541 COVID-19 patients have been cured in the district so far, 75238 in home isolation and 6,303 in Covid hospitals. The total active cases came down to 30 from 32 a day ago.

Paediatric Covid vaccine trials on, results encouraging: CMO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chief Medical Officer Dr Nepal Singh said in order to remain prepared for the expected third wave of COVID-19 outbreak, special emphasis was being laid on paediatric vaccination. He said trials of the paediatric vaccine against COVID-19 began in June in private hospitals and the response was encouraging. He said the feedback on the vaccine was quite encouraging and appealed to parents to get their wards vaccinated so that the children could develop antibodies against COVID-19. Chief guide and head of the paediatric vaccination, Dr JS

Kushwaha, said the vaccines were in three categories, the first for children between 12 and 18 years, the second for children between six and 12 years and the third for children between two and six years. He said in UP, only Prakhari Hospital had been assigned the task for paediatric vaccination and the results of the vaccine were highly encouraging. Dr Singh said in view of the warnings about the possibility of a third wave of COVID-19, all the states had been directed to start the vaccination drive and give feedback on the vaccines. He said the second wave had been a big experience for

medical authorities in Kanpur, especially LLR Hospital, and on the directives of the UP government, preparations had been made on a very large scale to handle the third wave expected around October and November this year. He said LLR Hospital was prepared to double its efforts in this regard. The CMO said that apart from setting up of a statewide command and control system for real time updates on hospital beds, the strategy included doubling of paediatric beds in government hospitals with creation of child-friendly wards. He said the GSVM Medical College was training medical staff and planning to

fill up all the vacancies in government hospitals and ramp up testing. He said the two-pronged strategy to increase vaccination coverage and strengthen paediatric health infrastructure would successfully reduce the impact of the third wave. He said it had also been decided to increase the treatment facilities for children and increase paediatric facilities in government hospitals. He said oxygen and ICU beds in all districts had been arranged and efforts were on to ensure that all the emergency facilities were available in the district so that people did not have to run to the urban areas.

Jaipuria students excel in ISC, ICSE exams

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Seth Anandram Jaipuria Public School has once again proved its mettle on its own set standards and this year in the ICSE (Class X) exams, out of 170 students who appeared in the examination 125 students obtained 90 per cent plus marks. This year the 100 per cent achievers in the exam were computer science (31), Maths (13), Economics (4), Commerce (4) and Environmental Science (2). The school, on an average, scored 92.33 per cent. Medha Agarwal stood first in school with 98.2 per cent marks. Behind her in merit were Anshrah Imtiaz, Snigdha Gupta, Pranav Malpani in the 97.2 per cent slot. Similarly in ISC (Class XII), the 100 per cent scorers were 12 in computer science, three in biology, two in PED, and one each in physics, chemistry and mathematics. The result was 100 per cent. The first slot was bagged jointly by Vanya Jalan and Vanshita Tripathi while those to follow were Vardhaman Jain, Akshat Bajpai, Sania Fatima Mirza, Azmat Fatima and in all 146 students had appeared and 54 scored 90 per cent plus and the school's average was 88.39.

DC reviews progress of works

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

In view of the possible programme for laying the foundation stone of Vindhya Corridor Divisional Commissioner (DC) Yogeshwar Ram Mishra on Sunday inspected the road widening sites along with other preparations. After the inspection the DC held a meeting with DIG police, district administration and the working agencies. Reviewing the progress of the ongoing works the DC gave clear instructions to complete them within two days. On the occasion DM Praveen Kumar Laxkar expressed his discontent over non-compliance of his directions. He warned the officials to take the directions seri-



ously or else remain otherwise face the music. The DC made it clear that not only the widened roads were to be beautified but the route towards Ganga river too. In the meeting Nagar Palika officials were directed to carry out the works of sanitation and ensure that no filth remained in the area. The Electricity department officials were directed get loose electric wires which were hanging repaired. The DC directed the police to ensure barricading with net so that even cattle could not cross it. He directed the police to shift stray cattle far from the area with the help of Nagar Palika. The departments like PWD, Tourism, Electricity, Health etc were directed to complete works which had been allocated regarding preparations within time. For the priests the DC made it clear that only those with a Corona negative report issued maximum two days earlier will be allowed. SP Ajay Kumar Singh directed the cops that all vehicles were to be stopped minimum 200 metres away from the temple.

DISTRIBUTION OF RATION: UP Minister of State for Energy Rama Shankar Singh Patel during the distribution of free ration to the poor under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana in Nunauti village under Rajgarh block on Sunday said the government was committed to providing grain to the poor with quality. Addressing the beneficiaries he said ration packet had been introduced to benefit them with full quantity and proper quality. He asked the village pradhan to connect all citizens with nation building as per their capacity and ensure compliance of Covid-19 guidelines during construction works. He appealed to people

to avail themselves of the facility of Covid vaccination on priority basis.

GOND'S CLAIM: The state president of BJP ST Front Dr Sanjay Gond while addressing the media at district party office on Sunday claimed the BJP was only the political party which was committed to ensuring the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes. Referring to Eklavya Scheme he said under it STs were getting benefits of the government's welfare schemes without any hurdle. During the press conference he was accompanied by state secretary, Ramesh Chandra Gond, district president Rahul Gond and spokesmen of district unit of BJP Gyan Prakash Dubey.

BODY FOUND: The body of Harsh (19), a resident of Rajpura Chauraha under Rajpura police station, Bhadohi, who had come with his friends to Vindhyaasini temple on Saturday for performing rituals and had slipped into the area where water was deep while bathing in the Ganga at Deewan Ghat, Vindhyaachal, was recovered on Monday.

REMEMBERED: Former MP Phoolan Devi was remembered in the district on her death anniversary on Sunday. The main function was organised at the office of Samajwadi Party where speakers threw the light over her struggles. Addressing the workers, district president Devi Prasad Chaudhary described the former MP as the voice of the deprived class whose struggle brought political awareness among the Nishads and Mallahs. In another programme the chief guest, Shanklal Manjhi, threw light over the life of Phoolan Devi. Among those present during the programmes were Shiv Shankar Singh Yadav, Surendra Singh Patel, Gulab Chand Yadav 'Munni', Laloo Shukla, Dr Arvind Srivastava, and Ashok Singh 'Munna'.

ARRESTED: A murder accused, who was at large for more than a year, was arrested recently. As per the reports, Chhotelal, a resident of Ishwarpatti under Chunari police station had on June 29, 2020, lodged an FIR alleging the three persons had burnt his wife and son by pouring kerosene on them as a result of which his wife had died. The police had earlier arrested two accused and while the third, Naveen Singh, a resident of Mendia village under Chunari police station, was nabbed from Balughat under Chunari police station recently. After completing the legal formalities the police sent the arrested accused to jail.

ROAD ACCIDENT: One person died while another sustained serious injuries when a jeep collided with a tractor on Semara Chauraha at night recently. As a result Kalectar Dharikar (36), a resident of Gadbadaraja village under Halia police station, died on the spot while Munnial Patel, a resident of Lalapur under Halia police station, sustained serious injuries. On getting information the area police reached the spot and sent the injured to the district hospital, last reports received here said. They then took the body of the deceased into custody for completing the necessary legal formalities.

IMA-K chief expresses concern on growing violence against doctors

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

President of Indian Medical Association, Kanpur Chapter, Dr Neelam Mishra, while addressing press persons on Monday, expressed concern over the increasing incidence of violence against doctors.

She said violence and vandalism on doctors and hospitals was a major cause of concern for society and government both. She said the state government and the Centre had framed strict laws against this attitude but in the absence of awareness and poor will power, the rules and laws were not being followed and this apathy had led to mobs target-



IMA-Kanpur Chapter, President, Dr Neelam Mishra along with Dr AS Prasad and Dr Aditya Narula addressing press persons on Monday.

the police had taken little interest in the issue. She said the doctors had risked their lives in treating patients during the first two waves of COVID-19 pandemic. She said the accused were untraceable and the police were reported to be searching them by carrying out raids. She demanded that the damage to the property should be recovered from the accused. She also demanded that such incidents should not occur in future.

Prominent among those present in the press meet were Dr SK Mishra, Dr Dinesh Sachan, Dr AS Prasad and several other members of the association. adding that orthopaedist Dr Aditya Narula had to save his life by going into hiding in an X-ray room. She said the vandals damaged the clinic and despite an FIR being lodged,

RSS felicitates Corona Warriors

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The local unit of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) organised a symposium on 'Swasth Nagrik, Samridh Bharat' in which the Corona Warriors were felicitated at a restaurant here on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, RSS akhil bhartiya sahyavastha pramukh Anil Oak praised the efforts of city medicos during COVID-19 pandemic and said it taught everyone a lot.

He also felicitated the hospitals, doctors and officers of the health department with the Corona Warrior crown on

this occasion. RSS vibhag sarsangh chalak Dr Shyam Babu Gupta, prant pracharak Ramji, Shri Ram Lalla Arogya Dham president Dr Umesh Paliwal, secretary Nitu Singh and treasurer Bhawani also felicitated the doctors and officers with mementos and stole. Around 300 doctors including Dr GK Mishra, Dr Dinesh Singh, Dr Yashwant Rao, Dr VN Tripathi, Dr Vinay Krishna, Dr Umesh Paliwal, Dr Rajiv Kakkad, Dr JS Kushwaha, Dr Neelam Mishra, Dr Pravin Katiyar, Dr Vikas Senger, Dr Vikas Shukla, Dr Navneet Chaudhary, Dr Shailini Mohan,

Dr Vikas Mishra, Dr Rajni Singh, Dr SK Mishra, Dr Vinay Kumar and Dr Aditya Tripathi were present on the occasion. Ramji spoke about the role of the RSS during the COVID-19 pandemic and said that a charitable hospital, Shri Ram Lalla Arogya Dham Chikitsalaya, was being constructed in a village of Rawatpur by the Trust Keshav Madhav Sewa Nyas. RSS office-bearers also threw light on the topic of the symposium. The proceedings were conducted by convener Amit Singh Gaur, Dr Deepak Srivastava and Dr Manish Yadav.

A documentary on the proposed charitable hospital showing the building under construction in Rawatpur village was also screened on this occasion. Former IMA president RN Chaurasia, Dr Awadh Dubey, Dr Archana Bhadauria, Dr Malay Chaturvedi, Dr Kunal Shah, Dr Debijoti Debroy, Dr Sangeeta Singh, Dr Sangeeta Shukla, Dr RPS Bhadauria, Dr Vikas Srivastava, Dr Ashish Srivastava, Anshu Thakur, Digvijay Singh, Anirudh Tewari, ND Tewari, Sagar Yadav, Shivam Omar, Vaibhav Kanaujia and Abhishek Singh were also present.

Scientist advocates tissue culture in farming

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Noted fruit scientist from Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Dr VK Tripathi, while addressing a virtual session on 'benefits of tissue culture in farming' for farmers on Monday, said it could grow saplings in a very short time with very little quantity of plant tissue.

He said such saplings were free of virus and disease and did not depend on any season. He said cloning plants using cell technology offered a plethora of potential benefits especially for farmers.

He said plant tissue culture was an effective technology that could be applied to small-scale farmers as well as larger-scale plant propagation operations. He said the plant media was gathered from a mother plant and these cells or tissues were then grown and multiplied into thousands of perfectly identical plants.

He said tissue culture allowed preservation of plant genetics, developed more vigorous plants and increased revenue. He said new plants were grown in a gelling media under strictly controlled environmental and nutritional conditions.

Dr Tripathi said of late, plant tissue culture methods had garnered industrial importance and popularity amongst businesses looking to improve propagation efficiency. He said there were many advantages that tissue culture could offer any person involved in plant propagation, from a local



Dr VK Tripathi

of losing the genetic profile over time. He said farmers could use tissue culture to improve genetics and increase yields to feed the nation and improve exports.

He said tissue culture was a popular investment amongst banana farmers, especially those looking to propagate disease-free banana plantations. He said if farmers were keen on improving their product quality and increasing propagation efficiency they should consider investing in a tissue culture kit.

AMBULANCE DRIVERS, MEDICAL TECHNICIANS STRIKE WORK: The patience of ambulance drivers and medical technicians affiliated to Kashiram Trauma Centre burst into anger on Monday when they struck work and staged a dharna demonstration at the hospital gate to press for enhancement of their remuneration.

Apart from demanding an increase in their salary, they are also demanding compensation of Rs 50 lakh for the kin of their colleagues who died during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to suspension of ambulance service, dozens of attendants of serious patients had to face a tough time in searching conveyance for taking their ailing kin to hospital.

According to reports, on the call of their state leadership, all the ambulance drivers and medical technicians staged a protest at the gate of Kanshiram Centre on Monday. They sat on dharna after parking their 108-102 ambulances in the hospital premises while the techni-

cians struck work. They said despite the change of their service provider, no increase in salary was made. Instead of outsourcing, they demanded salary on contract with the National Health Mission and payment of compensation of Rs 50 lakh for the kin of their colleagues who died during the COVID-19 pandemic, considering them to be Corona Warriors.

GOVT STANCE ON EPS-95 PENSION CONDEMNED: All India EPS-95 Sangharsh Samiti national secretary Om Shanker Tewari said that despite repeated representations, the government was not going to increase the pension of retired employees.

Addressing a general meeting of the Sangharsh Samiti at Rawatpur Roadways Bus Stand on Sunday, Tewari said the government's stance on this issue deserved strong condemnation.

National adviser of All India PF Employees Union, Rajesh Kumar Shukla, said there was apprehension that the government was not in a mood to easily increase the pension as it believed in uplift and prosperity of capitalists only.

He said the local Bharatiya Janata Party MP Satyadeo Pachauri had raised the issue in Parliament during the ongoing monsoon session for increasing the pension of retired employees.

It may be recalled that there are around 11 lakh EPS-95 pensioners in the state, including around 60,000 in Kanpur.

Scholarship distributed

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

NTPC-Vindhyaachal Project under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as per the guidelines of the Government of India keeping social distancing in mind in the time of this pandemic and taking all precautions organised the scholarship distribution programme under NTPC Utkarsh Merit Scholarship Scheme under the presidency of NTPC-Vindhyaachal Executive Director Munish Johri in the Ambedkar auditorium of Kshetriya Gyanarjan Sansthan recently. Scholarship was distributed to a total of 17 students who had in the year 2020-21 passed classes X and XII and were selected. In this scholarship an amount of ₹3,000 was provided to each student. Under the NTPC Utkarsh Scholarship Scheme,



students who have passed classes X and XII in the first attempt from government schools around NTPC-Vindhyaachal and from those run within the campus and belonged to economically weaker families of the society are provided the benefits. Eligible students pursuing ITI, BTech and MBBS degree full-time courses from government colleges are provided ₹90,000 per year scholarship as per the rules. After receiving the scholarship, the students, their parents and teachers expressed their gratitude and thanked NTPC Vindhyaachal for providing it. On the occasion Executive Director (Vindhyaachal) Munish Johri, General Manager (HR) Uttam Lal, Additional General Manager (AGM-HR) Snehasish Bhattacharya, Additional General Manager (RLI) Vinay Ranjan Mathur and Executive (CSR) Mohd Junaid, students along with their parents/guardians were present.

Three arrested



CORRESPONDENT ■ JALAUIN

Police arrested three accused in connection with the incident in which a petrol pump manager was robbed of ₹3,36,000 in an area under Jalaun Kotwali on July 5. The accused were arrested from Chiriyi Salempur village under Jalaun Kotwali police station and a car, ₹34,800 in cash, a pistol and three live cartridges were recovered from their possession. Superintendent of Police (SP) Ravi Kumar said the accused were identified as Vinod Rathore, a resident of Mohalla Gandhi Nagar, Madhaugarh, Akash Sharma, a resident of Islampur in Morena district, MP and Rahul Pandey, a resident of Wah town under the same police station in Agra. On receipt of the application submitted by plaintiff, Meher Bahadur, a case was registered in this connection. The police was searching for others involved in the crime. The team which made the arrest comprised inspectors Sunil Kumar Singh and Mahesh Kumar, senior sub-inspector (SSI) Anand Kumar Singh, sub-inspector (S-I) Kulbhushan Singh (incharge Surveillance Cell), S-Is Balram Sharma, and Gangasagar besides others.

221 doses of vaccine administered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the direction of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Varanasi Vijay Kumar Panjari vaccination is going on continuously for the prevention of coronavirus infection in Varanasi division. In this sequence, under the leadership of Additional Chief Medical Superintendent (ACMS) Dr RR Singh in North Eastern Railway (NER) Divisional Hospital, Lahartara here the Covid vaccination of contract employees working at various railway stations of the division and of those associated with rail service through other means is being done in the form of a campaign by Railway medical team and the one constituted

by the state government, Public Relations Officer (PRO) Ashok Kumar said. In this sequence, in collaboration with the district administration, a total of 221 doses of Covid vaccine were administered on Saturday. In it division's 18 employees, family members of 17 employees, including 10 contract labourers and 176 non-railway people, were administered the Covid vaccine. In the Divisional Hospital the vaccination of aged, physically disabled and sick persons is being done in their private vehicles in its lobby. Besides, the employees along with their family members were informed to follow the Coronavirus prevention rules i.e. proper wearing of the mask, washing their hands frequently and thoroughly and

maintaining physical distancing. Apart from it in various rail sections, station premises besides stations and trains of the division deep cleaning, sanitisation and cleanliness is being done daily. In the main stations of the division for the passengers and in the station premises for the awareness of passengers as well as employees messages related to the prevention of coronavirus infection and vaccination against it are being displayed at various places through posters. In addition marking has been done in stations and railway premises to follow social distancing. Besides, compliance of Covid-19 protocol is being ensured in the station premises and trains and strict action is being taken against the violators.

Maharashtra rain-flood toll mounts to 192

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

The authorities pegged the number of

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

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

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

Meanwhile, seven flood rescue teams



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

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

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

Navy official said.

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

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

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

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

ONGC, ICG prevent tanker from crashing into Mumbai High Fields

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kerala bank scam: Crime Branch arrests 4

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

PTI

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

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

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

The death toll in the State

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

The Health Department tested 1.09 lakh samples on Monday compared to 1.42 lakh

samples tested on Sunday. On Sunday, the State had recorded 17,466 new cases of Covid-19 and a TPR of 12.3 percent.

A senior physician working in Government Hospital in the State said the reduction in the number of new Covid-19 cases does not bring any relief. “The number of samples tested, the number of antigen and RT-PCR tests should be analysed to figure out whether there has been any reduction in the transmission of the pandemic.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

DELHI JAL BOARD GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (EAST)-I M 16 MAYUR VIHAR PKT E PHASE II NEW DELHI 110091						
STOP CORONA: 1. Wash Your Hands 2. Wear Mask 3. Maintain Social Distance						
PRESS NOTICE TENDER NIT NO. 15 /East-I/ (2021-22)						
Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Contract Value (₹Cv) Amount put to tender	Earnest Money (₹MD)	Tender Fees	Date of release of tender in E-Procurement Solution & Tender ID No.	Last date/time of receipt of receipt of Tender E-Procurement Solution
1.	Removal of contamination by replacement of deep and damaged 100 mm dia Ductile Iron Water line in resettlement colony 19-Block Kalyanpuri in AC-56 East-I	26,65,146.00	No. F/84/20 20-PPD and DJB endorsement	500	23.07.2021 2021-08-20 6130_2	09.08.2021 AT 03.15 PM
Further details in this regard can be seen at (https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in)						
ISSUED BY P.R.O (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 211(2021-22)						
Sd/- (Pratap Singh) EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (EAST)-I						

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ				
OPEN TENDER NOTICE				
E-Procurement Tender Notice No. 10/P-69/2021-22/TMC/HQ/NCR/Prayagraj			Dated: 23-07-2021	
On behalf of the President of India, Principal Chief Engineer, North Central Railway, Subedarganj, Prayagraj-211015 invites the following E-Procurement Tenders: (The complete information along with tender document of this E-Procurement Tender are available in website on http://ireps.gov.in up to 15:00 hrs of the due date of tender opening).				
SN	Tender No.	Brief Description	Tender Value	Earnest Money
1	TMC 0412122	Return Hydraulic Hose. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. [Acceptable Make: Soni, Aeroquip, Parker or Superseal only]	₹ 5,93,352/-	₹ 11,900/-
2	TMC 0422122	Wheel Diameter Gauge. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. [Acceptable Make: PIE, Rifeke, Althen or Equivalent Branded (Equivalent to PIE Model No. WD-2(E))]	₹ 2,41,900/-	₹ 4,900/-
3	TMC 0432122	Hydraulic Motor. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. [Acceptable Make: Plasser, Veljan Denison, Parker Denison, Danfoss, or Rexroth only]	₹ 72,15,444/-	₹ 1,44,400/-
4	TMC 0442122	Loctite, Adaptor, Suction hose. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. [Acceptable Make: Henkel, Anabond, Plasser, Parker, Eaton Aeroquip, Soni or Superseal only]	₹ 12,24,405/-	₹ 24,500/-
5	TMC 0452122	Oil Seal, Seal Ring. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. [Acceptable Make: Plasser, WLK, Trelleborg, Freudenberg (Simirit (CFW)) or Hirschmann only]	₹ 1,70,56,858/-	₹ 3,41,200/-
6	TMC 0462122	Hydraulic Accumulator. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. [Acceptable Make: Plasser or Hydac only]	₹ 20,54,319/-	₹ 41,100/-
7	TMC 0472122	Hydraulic Pump. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. [Acceptable Make: Plasser, Rexroth, Sauer, Danfoss, Kershaw, Ameca, Eaton or Salami only]	₹ 21,35,012/-	₹ 42,700/-
8	TMC 0482122	Pressure Disc and Modified Carbide Tamping Tool. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. [Acceptable Make: Plasser or Equivalent]	₹ 19,87,300/-	₹ 40,000/-
9	TMC 0492122	Stone 10V STD. Details of description, make and quantity as per tender document. [Acceptable Make: Loram or Equivalent branded]	₹ 5,83,68,582/-	₹ 11,67,400/-
Quantity: As per Section IV of tender document for all Tenders (Sl. No. 1 to 9). Date of Opening for all Tenders: 23.08.2021. Note: 1. The complete information along with tender document of above E-Procurement Tender is available on Website https://ireps.gov.in up to 15:00 hrs. on the due date of tender opening. 2. Following condition has been included in Tender Document vide Railway Board Letter No. 2001/RS(g)/779/7 Pt. 1 dated 29.06.2017 "Whenever tender is floated with purchase restriction from sources approved by nominated authorities and there exists a suspected cartel situation by approved sources or the rates available from approved/sources are adjudged unreasonably high, despite fair efforts as permissible, the purchaser reserves the right to place order on firms outside the approved vendors list, without any restriction". 3. Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website alongwith class III Digital Signature Certificates issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. 4. This tender notice has also been uploaded on www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in . 5. Allocation for Security deposit and Earnest money is "Deposit Misc stores 00844523. 6. In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached.				
f North central railways		www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in	North Central Railway@CPRONCR	

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

To mark their protest against the Centre’s contentious agricultural laws, a group of 200 women farmers from Uttar Pradesh (UP), Punjab and Haryana gathered at Jantar Mantar in the national Capital for the Kisan Sansad.

The women farmers raised slogans demanding scrapping of the three farm laws and their ‘Kisan Sansad’ was moderated by politician and speaker Subhasini Ali. The focus of Monday’s ‘Kisan Sansad’ was the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020 and the farmers’ demand for the enactment of a law guaranteeing remunerative Minimum Support Price (MSP) for their crops.

It commenced with the singing of the national anthem, followed by the observation of a two-minute silence in the memory of the farmers who have died during the eight-month agitation. “Today’s ‘sansad’ will showcase the strength of women. Women

can farm as well run the country, and today everybody here is a politician,” Ali said.

Asserting that the farmers protest against the three “black laws” and their demand for MSP will continue, she said, “The Government keeps calling us (farmers) by different names like terrorists, Khalistanis, etc. But if they have the strength, then they should not eat the food produced by these terrorists and Khalistanis.”

Neetu Khanna, a farmer leader, said it is shameful that the Government is “mistreating” the farmers when “they are the ones who keep the country alive.” “I would like to put forward the demand for a legal guarantee for the MSP because if we don’t have a MSP, the common man will suffer,” she said.

Another participant, Nav Kiran, demanded the withdrawal of the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, claiming it is “anti-woman, anti-poor, and anti-common man”. Explaining how the law



Women farmers and their supporters during the Kisan Sansad against the Centre’s new farm laws at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Monday

original law passed in 1955 “toothless.”

“The new law will promote hoarding and black marketing. What people do not understand is that this new law will not affect the farmers but the middle class,” she said.

“Also, we are not interested in amendments made to the laws that were not made through due process. These laws have to be repealed,” she added.

The ‘Kisan Sansad’ is part of the farmers’ agitation against the agricultural laws. As part of ‘Kisan Sansad’, farmers from the protest sites at Delhi borders, where they have been camping since November last year, have been gathering at Jantar Mantar to raise their voices against the agricultural laws while the Parliament’s Monsoon session is underway. Delhi Lieutenant-Governor Anil Bajjal has given special permission for the demonstration by a maximum of 200 farmers at Jantar Mantar, a few metres away from the Parliament complex, till August 9.

is anti-women, she said, “We have seen how the prices of cooking oil and cooking gas have gone up because of this law. It will not allow women the scope to save whatever little money they could manage to earlier from their monthly expenses.” The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act deregulates food items like cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potatoes by removing them from the list of essential commodities.

The amendments to the six-and-half-decade law provide that stock holding limit on commodities will only be imposed under exceptional circumstances like national calamities, famine with a surge in prices, the Government had said in Parliament last year.

The Government had said the amendments will boost investment in the agriculture sector and will also create more storage capacities to reduce post-harvest loss of crops.

Actress and activist Gul Panag, who also attended the ‘Kisan Sansad’, said with the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, the Government has made the

Improving border infra highest priority: Govt



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Infrastructure development in Uttarakhand is being holistically executed with bud-



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

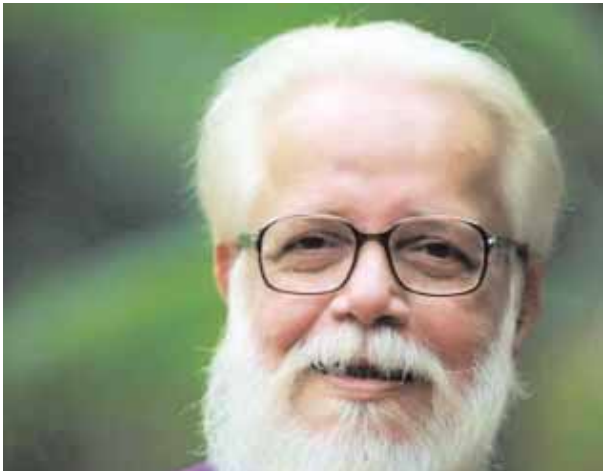
SC gives CBI free hand to probe into Narayanan’s framing in espionage case

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

upon, therefore the Jain committee may cease to function.

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

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

CBI books AP-based firm for cheating bank



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has booked an Andhra Pradesh-based private company for alleged loan fraud to the tune of ₹20 crore. The agency conducted searches at three locations on Monday at the premises of the accused entity and individuals in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

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

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

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

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

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

ED attaches ₹7 cr assets in money laundering case



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

Showing solidarity with farmers, Rahul drives tractor to Parliament



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

he has brought the message of farmers to Parliament.

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

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

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

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

The police said 10 people have been detained.

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

Rajnath pays tribute to Kargil martyrs

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

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

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

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

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

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

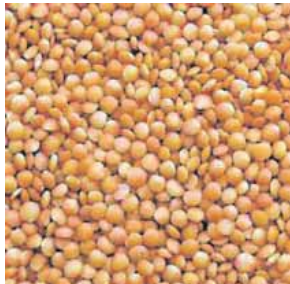
Govt cuts import duty on masoor dal to zero to boost domestic supply

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

333 pvt companies into defence production in India, says Centre



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

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

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

The Defence Procurement Procedure-2016 has been revised as

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

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

The ministry has notified a ‘Positive indigenisation list’ of 209 items for which there would be an embargo on the import beyond the timeline indicated against them.

This would offer a great opportunity to the Indian defence industry to manufacture these items using their own design and development capabilities to meet the requirements of the armed forces in the coming years, Bhatt said. IANS

House Panel seeks incentives for pvt owners of historic buildings

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tharoor seeks SC-monitored probe into Pegasus snooping case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

Tharoor’s party colleague and Home Minister in UPA Government, P

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

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



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

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

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

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

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Healing touch

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

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



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

Afghan Nigara Shaheen left for Pakistan as an infant and has encountered abuses and life threats from both countries but refuses to allow her past

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

PICTALK



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

PTI

Taking stock

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

Sunday's 7-1 drubbing of the Indian hockey team at the hands of Australia in Tokyo Olympics proves that the country is miles behind in the race for a medal in the global arena. Mirabai Chanu's silver medal in weightlifting notwithstanding. If Indian athletes manage to win a medal in the track and field events at Tokyo, it would be a miracle. Our hopes and dreams are chiefly centred on badminton and



tennis players, besides boxer Mary Kom. The country which finished fourth in 1956 Melbourne Olympics football does not figure in the first six even in Asia. The Indian Soccer League has not only failed to revive the game, it has destroyed whatever interest remained among the fans. There are no prestigious football tournaments or teams anymore. Till the 1980s, we had a few reputed football teams and annual fixtures. A State like Kerala hosted seven all-India tournaments and outstation teams used to set the ground ablaze with quality games. Delhi was the venue of the world's second oldest football tournament, the Durand Cup, and the DCM Trophy drew teams from abroad, too. Who can forget Shimla Youngs, a local team that beat the Calcutta giants?

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

The reforms of 2015 are fructifying now

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



BINDU DALMIA

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

YEDIYURAPPA'S EXIT A SETBACK

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

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

KV Seetharamaiah | Hassan

MANOJ JHA HAS A VALID POINT

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

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

Monsoon fury and flooding



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

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

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

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

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

centage of tax payment on one's total income, a poor man's contribution to tax and tax-related expenditures is surprisingly more than a rich person. While direct taxes depend on the taxpayers' ability to pay, indirect taxes are blind to their economic status. High indirect taxes can exist only on luxury goods; essential items should either have zero tax or a maximum of one-two per cent.

Sujit De | Kolkata

IRU KODUGAL JAYANTHI NO MORE

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

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

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

MR Jayanthi | Coimbatore

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

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



Congress leader — Rahul Gandhi

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

Australian Prime Minister — Scott Morrison

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



TV actor-performer — Shefali Jariwala

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

Indian leg-spinner — Yuzvendra Chahal

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



Karnataka ex-Chief Minister — BS Yediyurappa

FIRST COLUMN

THE MICROPLASTIC POLLUTION IN GANGA

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



KOTA SRIRAJ

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



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

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

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

Missing the woods for the trees

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



UTTAM GUPTA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

POINT COUNTERPOINT

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



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



Nipun Bharat: Laying the foundation for a learning society

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

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

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



MANEESH GARG

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

No plan to print currency notes to tide over crisis: FM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has no plan to print currency notes to tide over the current economic crisis triggered by the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman informed Parliament on Monday.

To a question on whether there is any plan to print currency to tide over the crisis, the Finance Minister said, “No Sir”. Many economists and experts have suggested the government to resort to printing more currency notes to support the economy ravaged by the spread of Covid-19, and protect jobs.

India’s real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to have contracted by 7.3 per cent during 2020-21, Sitharaman said in a written reply to Lok Sabha.

This contraction reflects the unparalleled effect of the pandemic and the containment measures that were taken to control the pandemic, she said.

“The fundamentals of the economy remain strong as gradual scaling back of lockdowns, along with the astute support of



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Monday

Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission has placed the economy firmly on the path of recovery from the second half of FY 2020-21,” she said.

The Government had announced a special economic and comprehensive package of ₹29.87 lakh crore under AtmaNirbhar Bharat (ANB) to combat the impact of the pandemic, to revive economic growth and to bolster employment during 2020-21, she said.

The Union Budget 2021-22 announced a number of measures to support broad-based and inclusive economic development including a 34.5 per cent increase in capital expenditure and 137 per

cent increase in health expenditure, she said, adding, the government announced a relief package of ₹6.29 lakh crore in June 2021, to strengthen public health and provide impetus for growth and employment measures.

Replying to another question, Sitharaman said, the impact of the second Covid-19 wave is expected to be muted given localised containment measures and rapid upscaling of the vaccination drive.

The Union Budget 2021-22, estimates India’s nominal GDP growth at 14.4 per cent during the current financial year ending March 2022.

Banks NPAs decline to ₹8.34 L cr at March-end 2021: Minister

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Non-performing assets (NPAs) or bad loans of banks have declined by ₹ 61,180 crore to ₹8.34 lakh crore at the end of March 31, 2021, as result of various steps taken by the government, Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat K Karad said on Monday.

Scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) were carrying NPAs worth ₹8.96 lakh crore on their balance sheet at the end of March 2020.

“Primarily as a result of transparent recognition of stressed assets as NPAs, gross NPAs of SCBs, as per RBI data on global operations, rose from ₹3,23,464 crore as on 31.3.2015, to ₹10,36,187 crore on 31.3.2018, and as a result of Government’s strategy of recognition, resolution, recapitalisation and reforms, have since declined to ₹9,33,779 crore on 31.3.2019, ₹8,96,082 crore as on 31.3.2020, and further to ₹8,34,902 crore (provisional data) as on 31.3.2021,” he said.

Karad in a written reply to the Lok Sabha said Covid-19 Regulatory Package announced by RBI permitted lending institutions to grant a moratorium of six months

on payment of all instalments falling due between March 1 and August 31, 2020, in respect of all term loans and to defer the recovery of interest for the same period in respect of working capital facilities. Replying to another question, Karad said, gross NPAs of public sector banks (PSBs) peaked at ₹8,95,601 crore on March 31, 2018.

As a result of Government’s strategy of recognition, resolution, recapitalisation and reforms, NPAs have since declined to ₹7,39,541 crore on March 31, 2019, ₹6,78,317 crore on March 31, 2020 and further to ₹6,16,616 crore as on March 31, 2021 (provisional data).

“The net NPAs have displayed a similar trend, increasing initially from ₹1,24,095 crore on 31.3.2014 to ₹2,14,549 crore on 31.3.2015, ₹3,24,372 crore on 31.3.2016, ₹3,82,087 crore on 31.3.2017 and peaking at ₹4,54,221 on 31.3.2018, and declining thereafter to ₹2,84,689 crore on 31.3.2019, ₹2,31,551 crore on 31.3.2020 and further to ₹1,97,360 crore as on 31.3.2021 (provisional data),” he said.

Throughout this period, he said, PSBs continued to post aggregate operating

profits of ₹1,37,151 crore, ₹1,58,994 crore, ₹1,55,603 crore, ₹1,49,819 crore, ₹1,74,640 crore in the financial year 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 respectively.

“However, primarily due to continuing aggressive provision for NPAs, they made aggregate provision for NPAs and other contingencies of ₹1,55,226 crore, ₹1,70,371 crore, ₹2,40,956 crore, ₹2,17,481 crore and ₹2,00,404 crore respectively in the said years, resulting in aggregate net losses of ₹17,993 crore, ₹11,389 crore, ₹85,370 crore, ₹66,636 crore and ₹25,941 crore respectively and returning to profitability thereafter with aggregate net profit of ₹31,820 crore in FY2020-21,” he said.

At the same time comprehensive steps were taken to control and to effect recovery in NPAs, which enabled PSBs to recover ₹5,01,479 crore over the last six financial years, he added.

In a reply to another question, Karad said overall credit growth of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) has remained positive for 2020-21 despite contraction in GDP (-7.3 per cent) due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Higher inflation a transitory hump, to help RBI remain dovish in Aug review: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Describing the recent two consecutive spikes in retail inflation beyond the 6 per cent as a ‘transitory hump’, a Wall Street brokerage on Monday said it expects the RBI to overlook it and unanimously stick to the dovish stance at the forthcoming policy review, even though a further upward revision of its already-revised inflation target is more likely. The Reserve Bank-led monetary policy panel is scheduled to announce the third monetary policy review on August 6, amidst the continuing spike in retail inflation that has breached the 6 per cent upper tolerance level for the past two consecutive months.

“We expect the MPC to stick with a dovish pause in the August 6 policy, overlooking the ‘transitory hump’ in inflation. Thereafter, the normalisation path will depend on the evolution of growth, inflation and the pandemic. The governor is likely to reiterate a dovish message and argue against a hasty withdrawal of monetary policy support,” Bank of

America Securities India house economists said in a report.

But they were quick to warn an abnormally high crude prices may force the RBI to adapt to normalisation process sooner than later.

The repo rate has been at record low of 4 per cent since June 2020, after lowering it by 115 bps during the first half of the pandemic-hit year, and the reverse repo, which has become the effective rate given the surplus liquidity, at 3.35 per cent, after it was slashed by 155 bps during the same period, resulting in an asymmetric +25/-65 bps policy corridor.

The MPC is likely to revise up its FY22 average CPI inflation forecast slightly from the previous 5.1 per cent and flag potential upside risks. On the other hand, the MPC is also likely to retain the FY22 real GDP growth forecast at 9.5 per cent, with risks evenly balanced now.

On policy normalisation, the report said if there is no hard-hitting third wave but yet a sizeable outbreak occurs, the RBI is likely to meet its growth and inflation forecasts first.

NIFTY 50					
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	15849.30	15893.35	15797.00	15824.45	-31.60
SBIIFE	1048.00	1104.90	1040.10	1092.05	41.60
BAJAJFINSV	1319.00	1357.45	1315.90	1315.85	31.65
HINDALCO	393.00	402.45	390.20	391.75	7.35
DIVISLAB	4824.75	4940.65	4824.75	4914.90	90.15
ULTRACEMCO	7515.00	7640.00	7419.75	7620.00	129.70
TATASTEEL	1289.00	1308.25	1278.05	1297.00	15.60
TITAN	1700.90	1736.85	1700.00	1721.50	20.55
BRITANNIA	349.95	349.80	343.10	348.10	41.20
SUNPHARMA	695.20	705.00	695.20	701.75	7.75
KOTAKBANK	1711.60	1750.00	1673.35	1739.65	16.70
INFY	1594.10	1611.65	1594.10	1603.05	12.60
NTPC	118.20	120.00	118.05	119.30	0.80
HCLTECH	994.00	1004.00	987.25	1000.70	6.70
EICHERMOT	2544.80	2585.00	2540.00	2564.90	15.25
TATACONSUM	780.25	786.00	770.80	777.00	1.85
COALINDIA	144.00	145.50	143.25	144.20	0.10
POWERGRID	233.45	235.35	232.05	233.15	0.15
GRASIM	1549.50	1566.25	1541.05	1550.00	0.50
ICICIBANK	680.00	687.75	683.60	676.50	-0.15
BAJAJ-AUTO	382.20	387.30	383.00	384.00	-1.90
AXISBANK	754.00	760.00	745.00	754.95	-0.45
DREDDY	5419.00	5447.00	5399.80	5412.00	-10.15
HDFCLIFE	665.00	665.40	660.35	664.00	-1.35
UPL	819.00	826.75	806.65	817.50	-2.20
SHREECEM	27900.00	28228.35	27812.50	27912.00	-74.40
HINDUNILVR	2357.25	2360.00	2338.00	2350.75	-7.35
BAJFINANCE	6150.00	6198.30	6130.00	6159.15	-21.75
ONGC	114.85	115.60	114.10	114.90	-0.40
TCS	3200.00	3224.50	3190.85	3200.35	-12.50
NESTLEIND	18071.85	18187.75	18018.00	18040.00	-103.95
HDFCBANK	1430.00	1444.00	1428.10	1434.50	-8.25
HDFC	2485.00	2485.00	2460.00	2467.80	-14.70
ITC	214.00	215.35	210.80	211.05	-1.35
ASIANPAINT	3079.35	3119.00	3051.20	3059.55	-24.20
LI	1611.75	1627.30	1592.80	1599.00	-12.75
MARUTI	7307.00	7360.00	7180.00	7236.00	-57.85
HEROMOTOCO	2830.00	2833.85	2800.00	2809.80	-25.20
INDUSINDBK	989.30	996.75	980.00	980.00	-9.30
TATAMOTORS	295.00	297.00	291.00	292.75	-2.80
BHARTIARTL	545.00	553.85	542.10	543.00	-5.30
M&M	76.00	76.10	75.20	75.85	-8.35
TECHM	1131.00	1138.55	1116.55	1117.85	-13.15
IOC	106.00	106.25	104.50	104.65	-1.35
BPCL	461.90	462.55	455.10	455.45	-5.90
SBN	427.80	427.80	422.30	422.85	-0.60
RELIANCE	2108.00	2121.00	2071.10	2073.90	-31.80
WIPRO	600.10	600.50	588.25	589.95	-9.20
JSWSTEEL	729.50	729.50	701.00	704.60	-12.95

NIFTY NEXT 50					
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	39371.80	39459.75	39167.95	39351.30	38.95
SBI CARD	97.00	102.70	90.00	101.70	60.10
APOLLOHOSP	3937.00	4158.80	3930.00	4010.05	186.10
YESBANK	13.80	14.10	13.25	13.35	0.30
DMART	3410.00	3499.50	3398.30	3485.05	71.80
INDUSTOWER	220.50	226.65	220.10	224.85	4.35
IGL	538.00	548.65	534.85	548.00	9.85
VEDL	268.60	273.70	267.00	272.05	4.25
HAVELLS	1139.85	1169.80	1116.50	1161.00	17.25
AMBUJACEM	402.50	409.50	390.95	408.05	5.75
ACC	2337.30	2374.80	2308.10	2370.05	32.50
DABUR	593.00	599.00	581.15	597.00	6.85
TORNTPHARM	3045.00	3109.00	3028.00	3073.15	29.95
COALINDIA	1727.00	1763.95	1721.00	1742.60	15.50
AIKEM	3395.00	3464.00	3394.45	3422.00	27.30
BAJAJHLING	3875.80	3889.00	3826.25	3866.85	29.30
NMDC	173.60	176.40	172.55	174.70	1.20
MARICO	533.90	540.80	532.10	537.50	3.55
COLPAL	1799.90	1823.40	1780.00	1805.00	9.95
PIDILITIND	2309.65	2332.95	2295.60	2318.05	11.45
ADANIENT	1399.80	1416.80	1392.00	1405.55	3.90
ICICIRULI	644.45	650.00	639.25	645.75	0.70
GLAND	4012.00	4080.00	3963.25	4020.00	3.15
JUBLFOOD	3500.00	3520.00	3490.00	3569.00	-0.35
SIEMENS	1976.00	1989.90	1965.90	1975.00	-0.10
PGH	12890.00	12890.00	12750.00	12777.00	-21.95
DLF	2261.80	2268.70	2232.40	2250.95	-4.10
PUL	334.15	341.10	332.15	335.45	-0.70
BERGEPAINT	850.00	857.95	844.90	851.90	-2.35
UBL	1452.10	1477.35	1416.50	1440.00	-4.45
LTI	4372.00	4400.00	4314.70	4347.25	-13.95
GODREJPC	984.90	988.45	975.55	977.00	-3.15
PETRONET	219.40	220.70	218.25	218.80	-0.85
MRF	81349.00	81599.55	80700.00	80842.05	-332.80
BOSCHLTD	15080.00	15097.70	14699.35	14975.60	-79.75
ABBOTINDIA	17900.00	17985.00	17795.95	17720.00	-95.85
GAIL	142.00	142.10	139.70	141.60	-0.80
LUPIN	1178.00	1191.50	1168.40	1170.80	-10.40
MUTHOOTFIN	1565.00	1570.25	1547.50	1551.15	-15.90
HDFCAMC	2899.40	2900.50	2860.30	2866.95	-32.65
NAUKRI	5175.00	5179.95	5011.00	5084.00	-58.55
AUROPHARMA	968.45	968.45	951.50	952.40	-11.30
CADILAHC	615.80	618.30	605.00	608.00	-7.25
HINDPETRO	276.10	278.20	271.35	273.05	-4.35
PNB	39.95	40.15	39.25	39.40	-0.65
ICICIGI	1495.00	1497.70	1452.00	1455.00	-29.80
BIOCON	398.15	398.15	388.80	389.70	-8.45
ADANITRANS	963.60	965.00	930.00	940.95	-22.65
BANDHANBNK	305.00	306.00	297.00	297.30	-7.75
MCDOWELL-N	60.05	60.80	60.10	656.80	-26.65
ADANIGREEN	975.00	975.00	935.10	940.45	-39.80

BSE 500					
Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	Change
ASHOKLEY	124.30	124.50	118.60	121.25	
HEROMOTOCO	2836.00	2836.00	2808.00	2810.95	
GMRIINFRA	28.55	28.75	28.05	28.15	
BSOF	481.15	405.45	397.00	400.65	
IDFC	58.60	58.60	56.50	57.25	
GRASIM	823.50	826.60	807.00	819.60	
GLENMARK	649.60	650.00	623.80	626.50	
UBL	1461.00	1476.45	1417.90	1435.95	
CAMS	3319.90	3319.90	3165.00	3190.75	
GUVAS	731.65	731.70	712.50	717.05	
SUNTV	534.00	549.25	530.00	546.70	
GUJALKALI	463.50	488.00	463.50	477.15	
ALLCARGO	180.00	192.70	180.00	188.40	
MAHINDNCIE	250.00	280.60	244.00	268.50	
FORTIS	242.90	247.95	240.05	246.55	
CRISIL	3066.95	3092.40	2981.30	3007.25	
MGL	1143.00	1149.85	1137.00	1140.00	
GLAND	3980.00	4080.00	3978.25	4017.85	
KSCIL	696.00	708.45	680.15	707.90	
GAIL	141.65	142.15	139.75	141.30	
TRIDENT	17.60	17.80	17.05	17.10	
TATAMTRDVR	131.75	135.35	131.40	133.35	
REDINGTON	326.00	328.00	313.75	320.90	
TECHM	1130.30	1138.25	1117.10	1120.05	
WOCKPHARMA	549.90	563.95	546.00	549.85	
IOB	25.75	25.75	24.80	24.95	
RELAJO	1168.00	1185.00	1163.10	1184.00	
SLTTECH	301.00	305.00	298.55	299.30	
HUDCO	50.60	50.70	46.80	47.20	
WELCORP	14.95	15.30	14.50	14.50	
CROMPTON	408.60	472.25	453.95	467.75	
PETRONET	220.35	220.60	218.40	218.65	
BURGERKING	180.95	180.95	175.20	176.25	
LTTS	3496.00	3496.00	3431.15	3452.60	
GLAXO	1700.00	1744.00	1678.85	1731.00	
CEATLTD	1375.00	1380.00	1348.75	1353.35	
TORNTPHARM	3055.00	3108.00	3030.55	3079.05	
TATAELXSI	4260.65	4272.95	4191.80	4200.90	
BEL	182.40	185.00	183.15	184.15	
INDIANB	141.10	141.55	139.15	139.55	
COFORGE	471.80	475.10	4685.00	4716.30	
GODFREYPROP	1560.00	1580.70	1535.65	1543.85	
GREAVESCOT	169.90	172.80	166.50	166.70	
CONCOR	66.00	66.85	65.90	66.80	
OBEOIRILITY	70.95	70.90	70.05	70.10	
TVSIRDRCSIT	41.00	41.00	37.70	38.20	
JMFNANCIL	103.00	108.30	102.05	106.35	
VOLTA	1045.00	1046.00	1025.20	1032.00	
NTPC	118.50	120.00	118.20	119.40	
M&M	76.25	76.40	75.25	75.35	
NCC	88.05	91.45	87.65	88.30	
MAHSCOOTER	4090.00	4247.95	4090.00	4182.00	
CHALET	171.65	185.30	170.80	182.55	
IDBI	37.40	38.50	37.25	38.50	
GRAPHITE	66.10	66.75	64.95	65.60	
PEL	2279.60	2279.60	2234.00	2256.65	
HDFCAMC	2900.00	2900.00	2862.00	2868.25	
BDL	392.00	408.60	388.00	401.00	
CENTURYTEX	702.00	714.00	701.25	703.50	
ATGL	80.00	90.00	86.00	89.10	
NAM-INDIA	40.30	40.90	39.10	39.60	
CENTRALBK	25.50	25.70	24.80	24.90	
CENTURYPL	421.00	443.80	412.70	435.35	
RAJESHGHL	580.00	591.85	580.00	588.85	
NESTLEIND	18000.00	18173.95	18000.00	18040.00	
PNCFINRA	320.00	321.75	313.80	320.00	
MINDACORP	134.50	136.85	132.30	133.50	
PIDILITIND	2130.00	2330.90	2295.70	2324.95	
JAISORPLTD	156.00	160.10	156.00	157.60	
VIJAYMOTOR	88.30	588.30	58.25	584.20	
COALINDIA	144.20	145.45	143.40	144.00	
RAMCOCEM	109.00	1125.90	1089.45	1120.10	
SKFINDIA	2775.00	2805.00	2773.95	2839.75	
NILKAMAL	2512.30	2675.00	2512.30	2614.00	
GRSE	199.60	211.60	199.60	210.15	
PGHL	5492.80	5549.55	5410.80	5425.00	
AMER	3005.10	3024.00	2986.60	3020.00	
DELWEISS	91.40	92.55	89.65	91.30	
MAHABANK	23.35	23.35	22.60	22.80	
IIIF	286.00	298.10	286.00	298.10	
MARICO	534.00	540.65	532.45	536.10	
EMAMILTD	556.00	563.90	551.55	559.00	
DELTAACORP	2419.30	2494.00	2419.25	2473.00	
WHIRLPOL	2200.00	2242.00	2180.75	2218.35	
AJANTPHARM	2167.00	2240.00	2149.75	2224.00	
BAJAJELECL	1138.95	1147.35	1103.00	1142.80	
HATHWAY	25.90	26.70	25.85	25.90	
GESHIP	364.20	371.00	354.65	370.85	
TANLA	91.80	96.40	91.80	93.05	
ORIENTELECL	348.15	357.			

46 Af jawans take refuge in Pakistan

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

China goes on offensive against US at talks

Hands over list of demands to revive ties

PTI ■ BEIJING/TIANJIN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ BEIJING

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

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

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

Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here.

Also, a press release posted on the website of the Chinese Foreign Ministry said Wang in his talks with Qureshi "emphasised that as Afghanistan's neighbours, China and Pakistan are directly impacted by the Afghan situation. It is necessary for the two countries to strengthen cooperation and respond to changes".

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

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

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

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

Imran's party set to form Govt in PoK

Opposition alleges 'rigging' in legislative elections

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Imran Khan's party on Monday was poised to form the government in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir for the first time after it won 25 of the 45 seats in the legislative assembly elections marred by deadly violence and allegations of irregularities by the Opposition.

Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) won 25 seats while Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) came second with 11 and the incumbent Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) secured just six, the state-run Radio Pakistan reported, citing unofficial results announced by the Election Commission.

Thus, PTI secured a simple majority to form the government without the support of any other party.

It is for the first time that PTI will form a government in PoK.

Traditionally, the ruling party in the country wins the elections in PoK. The 2016 election was won by the PML-N. Muslim Conference (MC) and Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Party (JKPP) won one seat each. India has previously slammed Pakistan for its decision to hold elections in Gilgit-Baltistan and said any action to alter the status of the militarily occupied region has no legal basis.

Prime Minister Khan

thanked the people of the region for placing their trust in his party through their votes which resulted in PTI's electoral victory.

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

Khan also said that he will continue to raise the Kashmir issue on all international forums including at the UN.

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry said PTI's "resounding victory in elections is manifestation of the common man's confidence in Prime Minister Imran Khan".

New Zealand to accept alleged Islamic State terrorist, 2 kids

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

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

Lebanon: Najib Mikati named new PM-designate

AP ■ BEIRUT

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

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

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

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

Tunisia on edge as Prez suspends Parl, fires PM

AP ■ TUNIS (TUNISIA)

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

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

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

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

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



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

AP

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

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

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

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

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

FROM PAGE 1

BSF EX-CHIEF...

"VK Jain, a former Indian Administrative Service officer who worked as a personal assistant to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, also appears to have been marked as a person of interest. In addition, the leaked records contain details of the numbers of at least one official each from the PMO and NITI Aayog," said the report. However, the report did not name the officials of PMO and Niti Aayog.

"Two phone numbers used by Rakesh Tiwary (Bihar Cricket Association Secretary) were selected as possible candidates for surveillance in 2018 by an unknown client of the NSO Group, as per the leaked records, about a year before he became president of the Bihar Cricket Association. The Wire spoke to Tiwary on both phone numbers that are part of the leaked data. He said that he did not believe the list of records is real," said the report.

RAW officer Jitendra Kumar Ojha who had filed a case against the organization also figured in the list. He was in charge of training Indian spies at RAW's academy in Delhi between 2013 and 2015 and also served in London. He was eased out of the service in January 2018. Aggrieved by his premature "retirement" from service, he moved the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) in February 2018.

"This is brazenly criminal, particularly to have brought my wife's phone under surveillance. I suspect this is being done at the behest of criminalised officers, with the objective to bring psychological pressure on me, while I fight my case," said Ojha.

The leaked database also contains the numbers of at least two Indian Army officers who took on the Government on service-related matters. Colonel Mukul Dev shot to prominence in 2017 when he sent a legal notice to the secretary of defence arguing against the Government order to scrap free rations for officers who are posted in peace areas. He was posted as deputy judge advocate general in the Jodhpur-based 12 Corps. "I am surprised to know that this may have happened. The only reason I can think of is that they perhaps did not like the fact that I consistently raised my voice for the welfare of the Indian Army," he told The Wire. "Under this government, whoever raises genuine concerns is looked at with suspicion," said Dev.

"Colonel Amit Kumar was also from the legal division within the armed forces and selected for potential surveillance at around the same time as Dev. Kumar was posted as a legal officer at the corps headquarters in Jammu and Kashmir when in August 2018, a few months prior to his appearance in the database, he filed a petition in the Supreme Court on behalf of 356 Army personnel against what they apprehended was an impending dilution of the Armed Forces (Special Forces) Act (AFSPA)," said The Wire report.

MAMATA...

But when we saw they are not interested in doing anything about this, we thought that our Government must do something and so before going to Delhi I called a Cabinet meeting and set up a judicial commission to inquire into the matter, she said "The two-member panel would comprise former Supreme Court judge M B Lokur and retired Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court Jyotirmoy Bhattacharya. They will look into how the entire illegal hacking of the phones took place and how privacy of the people was breached.

The Cabinet has approved the decision and minutes have been written ... according to which the Commission will probe illegal hacking, tracking and recording of mobile phones in Bengal," Mamata said.

Soon after the Chief Minister set up the judicial panel the State BJP hit back bringing counter-spying charges against the TMC Government.

State BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said, "Let this Government bring to light as to which Commissioner of Police visited Israel in the past 10 years (of TMC rule) ... let them also come clean on which top police or some other officer brought the Pegasus to Bengal through backdoor ... let them also make it clear as to which software the STF and CID is using for snooping or did any senior police officer contact

Pegasus or any other spyware company to crack e-mails and WhatsApp messages ... let them also explain why the State ministers and the media men talk among themselves via WhatsApp."

BJP's IT cell head Amit Malviya also attacked the Chief Minister saying, "Why

are we even surprised that Mamata Banerjee has constituted a judicial commission to investigate bogus Pegasus Project? Her priorities have always been warped.

If only she had shown such alacrity to probe post-poll violence and investigate several Covid scams in Bengal!"

PEGASUS ROW ...

He expressed concern over about 90 members of the House being denied opportunities to raise issues due to persistent disruption of proceedings of the House. A total of 69 Zero Hour Mentions including 12 admitted for Monday and 23 Special Mentions by as many members could not be raised in the House during the last week.

Naidu also expressed concern over the members of the House denied opportunity to seek clarifications from the Minister of Information Technology regarding "Compromise on phone data of some persons as reported by media" (alleged Pegasus spyware issue).

The Opposition made its intentions clear soon after the proceedings commenced for the day with members paying respect to the martyrs of the Kargil war on the occasion of 22nd anniversary and lauding Mirabai Chanu's feat of bagging the silver medal in the ongoing Tokyo Olympics.

After complete wash out of the pre-lunch proceedings, Lok Sabha took up the Factoring Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2020, and the National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2021, separately. Discussion on the two bills could not take place as Opposition members continued to stage protests demanding a discussion on the Pegasus snooping allegations and the farmers' demand of repealing the three new agri laws. Rama Devi, who was chairing the proceedings, repeatedly urged protesting members to return to their seats and participate in the discussions. However, with protesting MPs not relenting, she went ahead with the consideration and passage of the two bills.

Earlier in the day, the House saw repeated adjournments and when it met at 2 p.m. and ran for a few minutes, papers were laid on the table and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

As soon as the House met in the morning, Speaker Om Birla paid tributes to personnel of the armed forces for their valour and sacrifice during the 1999 Kargil War. He also congratulated Mirabai Chanu for winning a silver medal at the Tokyo Olympics.

Soon thereafter, Opposition members trooped into the Well raising slogans, disrupting the proceedings. While the Pegasus snooping row remained the dominant issue with the Opposition members, they also raised slogans and displayed placards in support of agitating farmers.

BSY MAKES...

According to sources, given significant "Lingayat" votes in 121 Karnataka constituencies of which BJP won 65, the party wanted a "dignified end" to Yediyurappa's innings. His younger son Vijayendra was in Delhi on behalf of his father "talking" to the central leaders.

BJP apparently agreed to safeguard political interests of "Yediyurappa family" in a trade-off for the Chief Minister announcing his resignation on July 26. He also asserted that he and his supporters shall give their 100 per cent to whoever will become the next Chief Minister. "We will work under whoever has been selected as the new CM by the (BJP) high command. I will give my 100 per cent and my supporters will also give their 100 per cent. There is no need to make any inference of dissatisfaction," said Yediyurappa.

Yediyurappa claimed he had decided to resign two days back. Before submitting his resignation, the outgoing Chief Minister presented his report-card at a program at 'Vidhana Sauda' on the completion of his two-year at office where he said he has "worked hard" for Karnataka and BJP's development.

Yediyurappa also claimed that once late Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had offered him a central role but he had declined it, he said.

He went on to say that only the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Shah can strengthen the nation. "Only if Modi and Amit Shah are in power, the nation will be

powerful. I will pray that they win, and make India's place in the world".

This is for the fourth-time as Chief Minister Yediyurappa could not complete his full-term.

SC REFUSES...

Vasdev, appearing for the foundation, sought a stay on the prosecution under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

On sensing disinclination of the bench, the counsel for the Gambhir's foundation withdrew the petition.

Delhi's drugs control department had on July 17 told the Delhi High Court that it has launched prosecution against Gautam Gambhir Foundation and AAP MLAs, Imran Hussain and Praveen Kumar, before a court for allegedly illegally stocking and distributing Covid drugs during the infection's second wave.

Based on inquiries made by the investigating team, a prosecution in the court of law was launched against Gautam Gambhir Foundation, its trustees and CEO on July 8 for "contravening the provisions of section 18(c) read with section 27(b)(ii) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940", the Delhi Drugs Control Department (DDCD) said in a response which was in the form of a status report. Cricketer-turned-politician and BJP leader Gautam Gambhir is one of the trustees.

Section 18(c) prohibits manufacture, sale distribution of drugs without a licence and Section 27(b)(ii) makes sale, distribution without valid licence punishable with imprisonment for a term, not be less than three years but which may extend to five years and with fine.

ASSAM-MIZO...

Both the CMs have assured Shah that they will do everything to ensure peace and resolve the border issue amicably.

Soon after, Mizoram Home Minister Lalthamlana said in his statement that following the intervention of Shah, the Assam Police have withdrawn from the place and the duty post have been handed back to CRPF personnel.

Earlier, Zoramthanga accused the Assam Police of resorting to lathi-charge and lobbing tear gas shells while Assam Police claimed that a large number of "mis-

creants" from Mizoram were indulging in stone pelting and had attacked the Assam government offices.

Mizoram Deputy Inspector-General of Police (Northern Range), Lalbiaktanga Kiangte, told PTI that at least eight unoccupied farm huts near Aitlang stream in the trouble-torn area were torched around 11.30 pm on Sunday. He said these belonged to farmers from Vairengte, the nearest border village from Assam.

Locals on the Assam side alleged that miscreants armed with sticks, rods and even rifles, attacked personnel of the Assam Police at Lailapur and damaged several vehicles, including those belonging to the office of the Deputy Commissioner.

TT VETERAN SHARATH ADVANCES, FENCER...

But the two rounds she lasted, before being outwitted by world number three Manon Brunet in the women's individual sabre event, made for memorable moments in an otherwise deflating day.

The 27-year-old began her campaign with a confident 15-3 win against Tunisia's Nadia Ben Azizi but bumped into Rio Olympics semifinalist Frenchwoman Brunet in the next round, which she lost 7-15. "I did my level best but couldn't win. I am sorry...Thank you so much I will come back much stronger and successful at Next Olympics with all your Prayers," she said. There was an all-too-familiar disappointment awaiting the archers when they squared off against the invincible Koreans.

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

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


On the tennis court, Sumit Nagal was blown away by world number two Daniil Medvedev in the men's singles second round as India's tennis challenge all but ended at the Games. The Russian did not even need his 'A' game as he cruised to a 6-2 6-1 win in just 66 minutes against 160th ranked Nagal at court 1 of the Ariake Tennis Centre.

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY
JULY 28, 2021

DOCYARD
DR RAJIV LOCHAN

Lead Consultant — HPB
and Transplant Surgery

ASTER RV HOSPITAL



A liver issue



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

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

COVID-19 recommendations for people with hepatitis

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Severe liver disease increases the risk of suffering from severe COVID illness and vice versa. Symptoms such as jaundice, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting often begin to appear when the liver is already severely damaged

SUMMERCOOLER

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



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

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

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



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

Catching a fever these days is nothing less than a nightmare for many. And, if its accompanied by a cough, we often declare it COVID ourselves. However, with the monsoon season settling in, viral fever is on a high.

That doesn't mean, one should self-diagnose and declare a fever as viral without undergoing a test.

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

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

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

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

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

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

fever and loss of smell," explains Goel.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RECOVER WITH YOGA

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

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

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



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

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

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

The writer is a yoga expert

INBRIEF

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

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

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

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

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

The writer is a Dermatologist



MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE

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

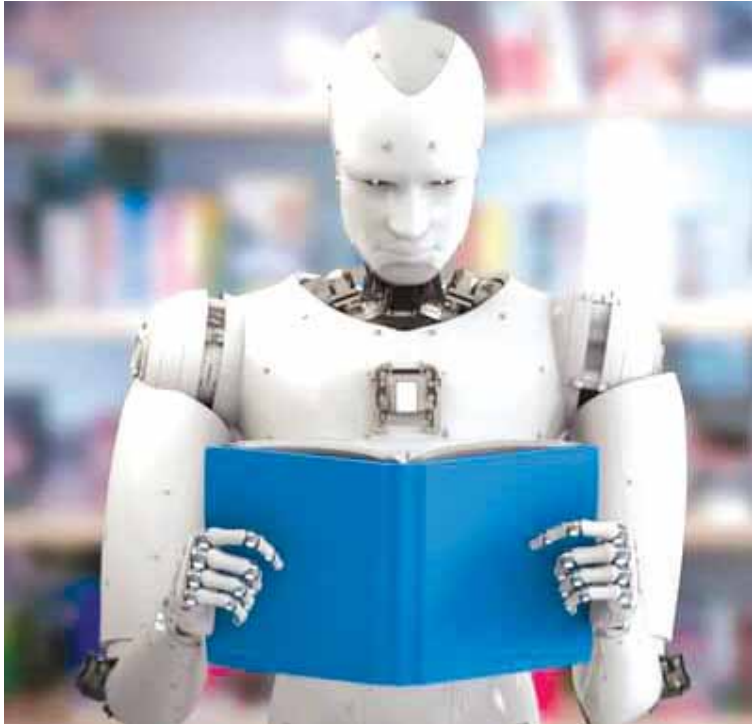
With a sea of options to choose from — course, city, country, duration, opportunity and future career prospects — finding the right college and job takes time, intense research and endless hours of work. Artificial Intelligence (AI) can help students get past this overwhelming and time-consuming process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

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

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

Smart query bots and chat-integrated platforms

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



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

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

AI-based recommendation tools

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

Some AI platforms can match

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

Video tools

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

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

Virtual and augmented reality

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

Apply for a job application using AI

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

Chatbots

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

AI assistants

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

Resume experts

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

—IANS

TREND TOOL

CHOOSE YOUR HUE

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

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

KUNAL ANIL TANNA

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

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

RIDHI MEHRA

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



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

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

VEDIKA M

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

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

PINK CITY

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

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

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

FLIRTATIOUS

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

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

AMARIS BY PRERNA RAJPAL

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

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

SUKRITI & AAKRITI



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

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

GULABO JAIPUR



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

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

TRENDBLAZER



YAMI'S LOST GOES ON FLOORS

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

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

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

fairtalk

AASTHA GILL



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

dailytalk

TAMANNAAH BHATIA



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

'OSCAR ISAAC IS MY NEW MAN-CRUSH'

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

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

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



ANOTHER TOUGH DAY FOR INDIA

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

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

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

BHAVANI MAKES HISTORY

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

Tokyo: India's first ever fencer in the Olympics, C A Bhavani Devi, lasted two rounds at the Games, her historic maiden appearance ending with a loss to world number three Manon Brunet in the women's individual sabre event on Monday.
The 27-year-old began her campaign with a confident 15-3 win against Tunisia's Nadia Ben Azizi but bumped into Rio Olympics semifinalist Frenchwoman Brunet in the next round, which she lost 7-15. "I did my level best but couldn't win. I am sorry...Thank you so much I will come back much stronger and successful at Next Olympics with all your Prayers," she tweeted thanking her coaches, the Government and her family for backing her. Bhavani said she committed mistakes against Brunet but will take the result in her stride. "I didn't fence well in the first half but in the second half I tried to change something but it was too late. I am happy I fenced with one of the top fencers in the world," Bhavani



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

said of her contest vs Brunet. The sabre is the fastest of the fencing competitions in which opponents can slash anywhere above the waist. The fencer who touches the 15 point-mark first is declared the winner.
In the other two events — foil and epee — only the tip of the sword can be used to target the opponent. The Chennai fencer said she has gained valuable experience from her Tokyo outing, which will help her in future challenges. "It is my first Olympics and it could be better but I am okay with the experience I had from this Olympics. It will be a learning experience for me to improve myself. From here onwards, I will be living my dream as an Olympian."

TIME	EVENTS	ATHLETES
05:30 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Qualification Stage 1	Saurabh Chaudhary & Manu Bhaker Yashaswini Deswal & Abhishek Verma Subject to qualification
06:15 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Qualification Stage 2	Subject to qualification
06:30 AM	Hockey: Men's Pool A Match	India vs Spain
07:30 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Medal Rounds	Subject to qualification
08:30 AM	Badminton: Men's Doubles Group A Match	Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty
08:35 AM	Table Tennis: Men's Singles Round 3 Match	Achanta Sharath Kamal
08:35 AM	Sailing: Women's Laser Radial 5 & 6	Nethra Kumanan
08:45 AM	Sailing: Men's Laser Race 4, 5 & 6	Vishnu Saravanan
09:45 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team Qualification Stage 1	Elavenil Valarivan & Divyansh Panwar Anjum Moudgil & Deepak Kumar Subject to qualification
10:30 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team Qualification Stage 2	Subject to qualification
10:57 AM	Boxing: Women's 69kg Round of 16	Lovlina Borgohain
11:20 AM	Sailing: 49er Men's Race 1,2 & 3	KC Ganapathy & Varun Thakkar
11:45 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team Medal Rounds	Subject to qualification
LIVE ON SONY TEN & SIX NETWORK		

Sharath advances but women challenge ends

Tokyo: India's leading player Sharath Kamal overcame a sluggish start to beat Portugal's Tiago Apolonia in the men's singles second round while the women challenge ended with Manika Batra and Sutirtha Mukherjee losing to their superior opponents here on Monday.
The 39-year-old Sharath struggled in the first game but pulled himself up just in time to win 2-11, 11-8, 11-5, 9-11, 11-6, 11-9 in 49 minutes.
Later in the day, Manika's impressive campaign in the women's singles came to an end with a 0-4 loss to 10th seed Sofia Polcanova in the third round.
The star Indian player, who had stunned world number 32 on Sunday, did not have the game to challenge the attacking left-hander from Austria.
The only Indian left in the fray, Sharath, faces reigning Olympic champion Ma Long of China in the third round on Tuesday. Arguably the greatest player of all time, Long has won every singles title in the sport, and is the reigning world champion as well.
However, with the way the 32-ranked Sharath played against his 59th-ranked opponent, it has given him immense confidence going into the round of 32 match against the Chinese. "He is yet to play (with bye in the first two rounds). So, there will be pressure on him. Like I have said earlier, I have never felt better about my game."



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



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



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



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

Poor execution costs India

Tokyo: The Indian women's hockey team fought valiantly but poor execution proved to be its undoing on Monday, leading to a 0-2 defeat at the hands of Germany, a second consecutive setback for the side at the Tokyo Olympics.
After the 1-5 drubbing at the hands of world No 1 Netherlands, the Indians lifted their game but it was not enough to get past world No 3 and Rio Games Bronze-medallists Germany in their second Pool A match at the Oi Hockey Stadium.
The team was guilty of wasting a lot of opportunities, including a penalty stroke by Gurjit Kaur in the third quarter while luck also didn't favour the Rani Rampal-led side.
Skipper Nike Lorenz (12th minute) and Anna Schroder

(35th) were the goal scorers for Germany, who registered their second win on the trot having beaten Great Britain 2-1 in their first match.
Indian will play Great Britain in their next pool match on Wednesday.
INDIA VS SPAIN
On Tuesday, the men's hockey team would be desperate to rebuild a shattered morale when it takes on a lower-ranked Spain in its third Pool A match.
After a fighting 3-2 win over New Zealand in their campaign opener, the Indians were completely steam-rolled 1-7 by world No 1 Australia in their second game and now the team would like to get back into winning ways against world No 9 Spain.

Indian archers fail to get past Korean hurdle

Tokyo: Indian archers bowed out of the team events on Monday after failing to get past the mighty Koreans for a second time in the Tokyo Olympics.
Two days after the mixed team was knocked out by Korea in the quarterfinals, the men's trio of Pravin Jadhav, Atanu Das and Tarundeep Rai succumbed in straight sets against their formidable opponents in the same round of eight stage.
South Korea went on to win the title by smashing Chinese Taipei 6-0.



Indian Tarundeep Rai in action

The twin blow exposed India's pathetic shooting in the ranking round on Friday when all the male archers finished outside top-30, handing them tough draws.
Their first-ever Olympic medal hope in archery is fading fast as they will brace for a tougher road ahead in their respective round of 64 individual matches beginning Wednesday.
The Indian men's team, which won a Silver at the last World Championships in 2019, started the day at the Yumenoshima Park with a lot

of promise, downing Kazakhstan 6-2.
But the Korean team of London 2012 champion Oh Jin Hyek, Kim Woojin and 17-year-old Kim Je Deok — the youngest archer at Tokyo Olympics — proved to be too strong against the Indians.
In pursuit of a sixth men's team title from nine Olympics, the Korean men's team enjoyed a flying start, shooting 10 perfect 10s from 12 arrows while missing only two in the first two sets to apply early pressure.
India were let down by

Guatemala City World Cup Gold medallist Das who failed to repeat his brilliant show earlier against Kazakhstan. He could not find a single 10 in the three sets.
The Indians responded well in the third set, with a series of four 10s, but Das faltered with an 8 in the last arrow, as Korea enjoyed two near-perfect rounds.
Olympic debutant Jadhav, on the other hand, was brilliant with five 10s, while veteran Rai, in his third Games appearance, also stepped it up with three 10s.



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

Ashish ousted

Tokyo: Indian boxer Ashish Chaudhary (75kg) paid for an underwhelming start as his maiden Olympic appearance ended with an opening-round loss to China's Erbieke Touheta on Monday.
The 27-year-old went down 0-5 in the bout, which could have been way closer had he turned it up a little bit earlier.
The boxer was caught on the back-foot in the opening round and lost it unaniously to the busy Chinese, who used his jab to good effect.
Ashish raised his game in the second round to give a better account of himself with more attacks but once again, the lack of clear and precise punches hurt his cause as the Chinese excelled in dodging him on most occasions.
He went all out in the final three minutes and managed to trouble Touheta despite a cut beneath his left eye.
The judges also scored unanimously in his favour but the Chinese had the decisive lead which gave him the victory.

Satwik-Chirag lose to world No 1

Tokyo: The Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty suffered a straight game loss to world number one Marcus Gideon Fernaldi and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo of Indonesia in their second Group A match on Monday.
The world number 10 Indian duo could never get into any kind of rhythm and lost 13-21, 12-21 in 32 minutes against the top seeded team. It was their ninth defeat to the Indonesian pair in as many meetings.
Sukamuljo and Gideon are now at the top of the group, while Satwik and Chirag are on the second spot. The Indians will look to beat England's Ben



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

Lane and Sean Vendy, who had also suffered a defeat against the famed Indonesians.
World number three Chinese Taipei pair of Lee Yang

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

Nagal hammered out by Medvedev

Tokyo: Sumit Nagal was blown away by world number two Daniil Medvedev's thunderous strokes and serves in the men's singles second round as India's tennis challenge all but ended at the Tokyo Games on Monday.
The Russian did not even need his 'A' game as he cruised to a 6-2, 6-1 win in just 66 minutes against 160th ranked Nagal at court 1 of the Ariake Tennis Centre.
The gap between a world c l a s s Medvedev and Nagal,

who is still struggling to play the ATP Tour events regularly, was pretty clear.
It is highly unlikely that India will be able to field a team in mixed event, the entries for which will be announced on Tuesday.
The cut is likely to be around 50 and combined ranking of the Indian players Nagal (144) and Mirza (9) is 153.



Sajan Prakash swims in a heat during the men's 200-meter butterfly

Sajan fails to reach semis

Tokyo: Indian swimmer Sajan Prakash failed to qualify for the men's 200m butterfly semifinals at the Tokyo Olympics after finishing fourth in Heat 2 on Monday.
Prakash, who clocked a personal best of 1:56:38 in Italy last month to breach the A mark for Olympic qualification, could only manage 1:57.22 to finish 24th among 38 swimmers. The top-16 progressed to the semifinals.
Prakash will compete in the 100m Butterfly on Thursday.
The other Indians at the Olympics, Maana Patel and Srihari Nataraj, have already exited the competition.

Olympic Silver-medallist Mirabai returns home

New Delhi: Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu returned to the country on Monday after her superb Silver medal-winning performance at the Tokyo Olympics, walking into sheer chaos after stepping out of the airport where social distancing went for a toss.
Chanu walked out of the Indira Gandhi International Airport, flanked by security and clad in a face shield and mask.
"Happy to be back here in amidst so much love and support. Thank You so much," she tweeted after landing.
Inside the airport, the 26-year-old was greeted with chants of *Bharat Mata ki Jai* by the staff present there and facilitated by officials of the Sports Authority of India among others.
Once out, the young star was mobbed by the waiting media, leading to a melee and had to be completely enveloped by security personnel as she made her way through.



Mirabai Chanu arrives at the airport in New Delhi on Monday

Manipur to appoint Chanu as ASP

Imphal: Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Monday announced that weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu, who won Silver at the Tokyo Olympics, will be appointed as the Additional Superintendent of Police in the state police department.
The state Government would also reward her with ₹1 crore, the Chief Minister said.

The Olympian who won the Silver medal in the 49 kg category will hold the designation of Additional Superintendent of Police (Sports), Singh said.
The Manipur Government has also decided to establish a world-class weightlifting academy in the state soon, he added. Judoka L Sushila Devi will also be promoted from the rank of

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



Neeraj Chopra poses for photo before he departs for Tokyo

Rifle, pistol shooters gear up for mixed events

Tokyo: The Indian shooters are keeping their fingers crossed for the squad's young guns who will try to end the medal drought in the Tokyo Olympics in the 10m air pistol and air rifle mixed team events here on Tuesday.
On Monday, India's Angad Vir Singh Bajwa finished 18th while his senior compatriot Mairaj Ahmad Khan ended 25th in the men's skeet event, failing to make the six-man finals by some distance.
In the 10m air pistol mixed team event, the formidable pair of Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker will fancy their chances after a terrific run in recent years, during which they dominated almost all major competitions.
Abhishek Verma and Yashaswini Singh Deswal will be the other Indian team participating in the event.



Divyansh Singh Panwar and Elavenil Valarivan will represent India in the 10m mixed rifle team event with Deepak Kumar and Anjum Moudgil being the other team.
A total of 20 pairs will take part in the 10m air pistol qualifications with the challengers coming from Russia, Iran, China, France and Serbia.
The 10m mixed rifle event will see participation from 29 pairs with the biggest challenge expected to come from Hungary, Russia, USA, China and Germany.
In the first qualification round of both the events, there will be three series of 10 shots for each team member while in the second, members of the top eight pairs of the first round will shoot two series of 10 shots.
In both the pistol and rifle events, the team with the higher combined score of single shots fired by each team member on command gets two points with one point awarded for a tie. The first team to reach 16 points with a difference of two, wins.