

**OPINION 6**  
THE REFORMS OF 2015  
ARE FRUCTIFYING NOW

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

**SPORT 12**  
NAGAL HAMMERED  
OUT BY MEDVEDEV

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YAMI'S LOST  
GOES ON  
FLOORS  
11 VIVACITY

## CAPSULE

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

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

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

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

# Assam-Mizo border war escalates, 6 cops killed

PNS/PTI ■ GUWAHATI/AIZAWL

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

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

Assam's Barak Valley districts of Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi share a 164 km long border with Mizoram's three districts of Aizawl, Kolasib and Mamit. This is third time in less than two years that violence has erupted following the territorial dispute. There inter-State border dispute saw violence in August 2020 and February this year also. The Assam Chief Minister announced on Twitter that six personnel of the Assam Police were killed in firing by "miscreants" from Mizoram along the inter-State border in



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

the Cachar district.

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

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

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

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

Chandrakant, were injured in firing and stone-pelting.

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

# BJP seeks House panel probe into attack on Congress MLA

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Assembly Speaker adjourned the House twice on Monday after the BJP sought a House panel probe into allegations by a Congress tribal legislator that a senior Minister was to blame for an attack on him.

As Congress legislator Brihaspati Singh said that he feared for his life, BJP members pointed out on first day of the Monsoon session that Singh had accused Health Minister and Congress heavy-weight T.S. Singh Deo for the attack on one of the vehicles in his convoy.

BJP legislators called it a serious matter and urged the Speaker to set up an Assembly panel to inquire into the incident.

Speaker Dr Charan Das



Mahant said he will have to hear the other side also before coming up with a decision. Amid continued chaos, the Speaker adjourned the House for five minutes.

The Opposition continued to raise the issue after the Speaker said the MLA had not registered any such complaint or moved any privilege motion with the Assembly.

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel intervened and said there will be no slackness in providing security to the MLAs.

The Home Minister will

take necessary action.

The House was adjourned for a second time till 3.00 pm after the Opposition kept raising the issue seeking statements from the MLAs and Ministers.

After the House resumed, the Speaker said the matter could be taken up on Tuesday, after which the Opposition allowed the official proceedings to continue.

One of the vehicles in the convoy of Ramanujganj legislator Brihaspati Singh was attacked by three youths after their vehicle was overtaken by the MLAs' vehicle at Ambikapur town on Saturday evening.

One of the accused turned out to be a relative of Singh Deo. Police have registered a case and all the three accused were arrested.

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

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

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

take a decision on naming a successor to the 78-year-old "Lingayat" strongman.

BSY, who submitted his resignation to Governor Thaaawarchand 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.

# 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

# 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."



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

The protesting members did not pay heed to repeated appeals made by Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu and some members 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.

# 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.



Army Chief General MM Naravane, Air Force Chief Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadouria, 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

# India's joblessness soars to 7.14%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's unemployment rate stood at 7.14 per cent in the week ending July 25, a rise of 1.16 per cent from the previous week ending July 18, as joblessness increased both in urban areas and the hinterland.

Fresh data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) on Monday

showed the national joblessness rate climbed to 7.14 per cent in the past one week. The national joblessness rate last week stood at 5.98 per cent. Since the beginning of July, the unemployment rate in urban India stayed below 9 per cent while at the national level, it remained under 8 per cent.

However, a 7 per cent to 8 per cent unemployment



rate in an Indian labour market is high and shows the struggle in the job market.

# Delta variant infecting fully vaccinated ones

New Delhi: Evidence is mounting that the Delta variant of coronavirus is capable of infecting fully vaccinated people at a greater rate than previous versions, and concerns have been raised that they may even spread the virus, experts said, according to a Reuters report.

"The biggest risk to the world at the moment is simply Delta," said microbiologist Sharon Peacock, who runs Britain's efforts to sequence the genomes of coronavirus variants, calling it the "fittest and fastest variant yet".

The major worry about the Delta variant is not that it makes people sicker, but that it spreads far more easily from person to person, increasing infections and hospitalisations among the unvaccinated.

# 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 impleadment in the pending proceedings. The SLP is dismissed as withdrawn," the plea said.

# 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-medalist 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 play-



(L-R) Pravin Jadhav, Alanu Das and Tarundeep Rai during their Summer Olympics 2020 quarterfinal match against Republic of Korea in Tokyo on Monday PTI

er 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 respec-

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

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

# 'New laws won't hit farmers but people'



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

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 'sanskad' 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 for-

ward 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 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.



Protesters during the Kisan Sansad against the farm laws at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Monday

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 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.

# Five arrested for cattle rustling, firing at cops

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested five people who were involved in cattle rustling. The five men had been stealing hundreds of animals, mainly buffaloes from Delhi, Rajasthan and Haryana. They were arrested on Monday morning after a brief exchange of fire in south-west Delhi's Dwarka area.

The accused have been identified as Ajaj (33), Irshad (35), Ismaile (24), Sajat (53) and Nabiya (55), all residents of Meerut in Uttar Pradesh (UP).

According to Santosh Kumar Meena, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Dwarka district, on January 12, police received information regarding cattle rustling from Main Najafgarh Chhawla Road.

"Police reached the spot and found that four buffaloes had been stolen by unknown persons after tying their caretaker with a rope. On Monday, the police got a tip-off that five

people would come to the Goyla Dairy-Dwarka Road in their pick-up tempo around 4 AM. The Goyla Dairy Road was barricaded and around 4:35 AM, one tempo was spotted," said the DCP.

"It was given the signal to stop at the checkpoint, but the driver hit the barricade and tried to escape.

However, the tempo came to a halt after colliding with a street light pole. Two people started firing at the police. Police also retaliated and both the accused were shot in the legs. They were apprehended with their three other accomplices," said the DCP.

"The accused used to steal the animals and later sell them in Meerut. Two country-made pistols, three knives, two live rounds, one pickup van etc. were recovered from their possession," said the DCP adding that further investigation is in progress and efforts are being made to ascertain their involvements in other criminal cases



# EDMC organised 75 property tax collection camps

A mobile application has also been launched for payment of property tax

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) on Monday claimed to have organised 75 property tax collection camps in the various wards falling under the corporation till July 25 in the current financial year.

The Assessment and Collection (A&C) department of the corporation will organise these camps on Saturday and Sunday also, the corporation said in a statement.

Additional Commissioner Dr Brajesh Singh said that property tax is being collected through online mode and to facilitate tax payers, the department has produced a short tutorial video to educate them about the functionalities of the property tax portal.

"The link of video has been sent to 25 lakh mobile numbers through SMSs. The Area inspectors are assigned to contact the residents' welfare associations to motivate the tax payer to come forward for depositing the property tax.

Dr Singh further said that a mobile application has also been launched for payment of property tax. "A number of Common Service Centres (CSCs) have been operationalized for the convenience of the general public to avail various municipal services including the payment of property tax," he said.

# ₹5,000 EACH AS COVID RELIEF AAP Govt comes to aid of 47K building workers



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government granted Covid relief of ₹5,000 each to 47,996 construction workers on Monday.

The decision came after Deputy Chief Minister and Labour Minister Manish Sisodia issued directions to the Delhi Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board (DBCWB) in this regard.

Sisodia urged all construction workers to get registered with the DBCWB in order to avail the benefits of welfare schemes of the Government. He assured the workers that the Delhi Government would stand with them at all times.

already disbursed ₹5,000 each to 2,16,602 construction workers as Covid-relief in April this year.

This ex gratia payment is for construction workers whose applications were approved between May 28 and July 18. This relief comes as an additional benefit for construction workers who were hit hardest because of the Covid crisis in Delhi.

The Deputy CM further said, "After the first lockdown was imposed because of the pandemic last year, the Delhi Government was one of the first Governments to grant relief disbursement to all the 39,600 workers who were registered with the construction board in March 2020."

"We carried out a series of reforms in the labour department by conducting regular inspections and mass registration drives for the beneficiaries. As a result of this, within eight months the number of construction workers registered with the board has increased to three lakh," he said.

The Labour Minister appealed to all the construction workers to get registered with the construction board so they can avail benefits like funds for education, marriage, maternity, pension, etc.

Sisodia also said, "Earlier workers had to stand in long queues for hours to submit their application but now, the entire process has been shifted online which helps the workers apply quickly on the Government website and not miss their daily wage."

"It is noteworthy that the Delhi Government also started a 24x7 helpline for construction workers, where workers can dial 011-41236600 and give a missed call. The grievances of the workers were solved within 48 hours. These construction workers belong to the most marginalised section of Delhi and were one of the hardest-hit sections of the society during the Covid crisis. This relief disbursement for construction workers comes as a much-needed support during these tough times," he added.

# DCW identifies 791 women widowed due to Covid-19



**734, which accounts for 92.79 per cent, are in the age bracket of 18-60 years, while the rest are senior citizens**

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) has identified 791 women who were widowed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A report prepared by the DCW has also been submitted to the Delhi Government to ensure their rehabilitation.

"The DCW got Mahila Panchayat teams to go door-to-door to identify women who got widowed and were able to identify 791 such women. We are sending a detailed social survey report to the govern-

ment so that the benefits of the scheme can be passed on to these women. Also, these women should be vaccinated on priority," said Swati Maliwal, the DCW Chief.

The Commission has also conducted a social survey of all these women to help the Government in the rehabilitation process. The social survey was conducted on the grassroots level by the DCW through its Mahila Panchayat network.

According to the survey report, 774 (97.85 per cent out of 791 women) have at least one child while 360 women have three to five children. If found that 30 women have over five children.

From the list of identified 791 women, 734, which accounts for 92.79 per cent, are in the age bracket of 18-60 years, while the rest are senior citizens. Nearly 191 women fall in the age group of 18-35, the survey found.

Out of the 791 women, 721 are housewives, while the rest work as domestic workers,

labourers, small business owners and private and Government employees.

Nearly 28.57 per cent of the women have no source of income while almost 60 per cent women have a monthly income of less than ₹15,000, it found.

It was also found that 597 women had not been vaccinated till the date of survey.

The Delhi Government has rolled out the "Mukhyamantri Covid-19 Pariwar Aarthik Sahayata Yojana" under which an ex-gratia of ₹50,000 will be provided to those who have lost a family member to coronavirus.

The scheme also provides for an additional ₹2,500 pension per month if the deceased was the sole breadwinner. The social survey conducted by the DCW will increase the access of the identified women to the benefits of this scheme.

"The Commission is still identifying other women who were widowed during Covid pandemic and will submit additional lists to the Government," said the DCW.

"The Commission strongly believes that it is very important to get these women vaccinated on priority. The Commission has recommended the Government to issue an order to the district magistrates to get these women vaccinated," the DCW said.

The commission said the scheme by the Delhi Government will come in very useful for the rehabilitation of these women and the benefits must reach them.

# Delhi sees 93 dengue cases



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

At least 93 cases of dengue have been reported in the national Capital so far this year, the data released by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) said on Monday. According to the latest report released by all three Municipal Corporation, mosquito-breeding has been reported in at least 50,273 households and 4,847 prosecutions have been launched this year.

The dengue breeding checkers have checked 12878376 houses and also issued 45,398 legal notices to various office and residential premises, the data said.

The number of dengue cases for the January 1-July 3 period is also the highest this year since 2018 when the count had stood at 33 in that same duration. No case has been reported in the month of July, as per the report.

As per the civic report issued by the municipal cor-

porations, 36 cases of dengue have been recorded till July 24 this year. However, no deaths have been reported due to dengue in the city till now, it said. As many as 32 cases of malaria and 14 cases of chikungunya have also been reported till July 24 this year, as per the civic report released on Monday.

The malaria parasite is transmitted by female Anopheles mosquitoes, which bite mainly between dusk and dawn.

According to World Health Organisation malaria is caused by the protozoan parasite Plasmodium. Human malaria is caused by four different species of Plasmodium: P. falciparum, P. malariae, P. ovale and P. vivax.

Dengue mosquito larvae breed in clear, standing water, while those of malaria thrive even in dirty water. Cases of vector-borne diseases are usually reported between July and November but the period may stretch till mid-December.

# Zoo to reopen from August 1



PTI ■ 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 the 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 pan-

demic. "We are planning to open the National Zoological Park (Delhi Zoo) from August 1. (We are) preparing for things to be in order.

"It will be in two shifts as earlier. Online booking will

open from July 31," Zoo Director Ramesh Pandey said.

Visitors can buy tickets online either on the zoo's website or at the entry gates using QR codes. The zoo will operate in two shifts. The first shift will be from 8 am to noon and the second will be from 1 pm to 5 pm.

The zoo administration has also introduced cycles for staff and asked them not to use bikes or cars inside the premises.

Pandey said the zoo recorded only 124 animal deaths, the lowest in the last three years, while it remained closed for public in 2020-21.

There are 94 species and 1,162 animals in the zoo at present, he said. "We are moving towards having 100 species soon," he said.

# PICTALK



Commuters wait to enter the Rajiv Chowk Metro Station in New Delhi on Monday

Ranjan Dimri

# C'garh Assembly pays homage to kargil heroes

## Monsoon session begins

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh Assembly on Monday paid homage to nine former members and ex-MPs who passed away during the inter-session period as it began a five-day Monsoon session. Tributes were also paid to soldiers killed in the Kargil war.

Speaker Dr Charan Das Mahant made the obituary reference of Gulab Singh, ex-member of the Assembly, Somprakash Giri, Balam Verma and Balram Singh Bais, former members of the undivided Madhya Pradesh Assembly, Karuna Shukla, a former MP, Badridhar Diwan, a former Deputy Speaker, Dr Shakrajeev Nayak, a former Minister of State, Ramadhar Kashyap, a former Rajya Sabha member, and Khelan Ram Jangde,



Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and Chhattisgarh Assembly Speaker Charan Das Mahant walk towards the Assembly on the inaugural day of the Monsoon session.

a former Lok Sabha member. He said Chhattisgarh and its people have lost key political and social workers.

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel shared his experience of working with most of the leaders in the undivided Madhya Pradesh Assembly and later in the Chhattisgarh Assembly.

Paying tributes to the Indian soldiers on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas, Baghel said they won the war due to their indomitable spirit and fearlessness even in inhospitable conditions. Leader of Opposition Dharamlal Kaushik, former Chief Minister Dr Raman Singh, Dharamjeet Singh (JCC-), Keshav Chandra (BSP) and other members also paid tributes to the departed leaders and the Kargil heroes.

# Schools in C'garh to open from Aug 2

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government is set to open conditionally all private and government-run schools in the state from August 2, it was announced on Monday.

The School Education Department has allowed off-line classes for Class 10 and 12 in all private and government schools from August 2, an official communication said.

In rural areas, it is necessary to get the recommendation of the Gram Panchayat and the parent committee of the school while recommendation of the ward corporator is needed in urban localities before starting classes for children from Class I to V and Class VIII.

The classes will be started only in those districts where the positivity rate of coronavirus is less than 1 percent for 7 days.

The students will have to



attend the classes on alternate days and those who suffer from cough, cold or fever will not be allowed to attend, it said.

Online classes will also be run and there will be no compulsion to attend the off-line classes in schools, it added.

# No resentment in party after appointments: Punia



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

ICC Chhattisgarh-in-charge A.P.L. Punia on Monday denied any resentment among Congress workers after appointments were made in boards and corporations. Talking to the media, Punia said those not accommodated in

boards and corporations would get key posts in the party. "There is no reason for workers to get disappointed."

Earlier, Punia was told that there were many posts lay vacant for promotion for Scheduled Caste employees in the government besides backlog in vacancies which

were not being filled. The Congress will pay for this in the coming elections, they warned.

To the complaint and suggestions from the Scheduled caste wing, Punia said he will talk to the government for fulfilling the promises made in the 2013 election manifesto.

# 44 complaints against 20 IAS/IPS officers

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Monday said 44 complaints have been received against 20 IAS/IPS officers from January 1, 2018 to June 30, 2021. Congress MLA Satyanarayan Sharma in the Assembly sought details from Baghel regarding the complaints received against the IAS/IPS cadres of the state.

He sought to how many cases have been probed, crimes registered and chargesheets filed. He wanted to know the number of officers suspended. Baghel said four complaints have been handed over for probe. In three cases, the files have been closed. Action has been initiated against four officers in six cases. In other cases, a probe is in progress. No chargesheet has been filed against any officer, he added.

# C'garh's rich heritage must be brought out: Baghel



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has underlined the need to bring on the world map the natural beauty, tourism, historic and mythological importance of Chhattisgarh.

Taking part in the oath taking ceremony of the Chhattisgarh Tourism Board (CTB), Baghel

said Lord Ram spent the maximum period of his 14 years in exile in the state.

Keeping this in view, the government has decided to beautify the Kaushalya temple at Chandrakhuri in Raipur district. The mythological Sheorinarayan is also being developed as a heritage site. Similarly, a 10 sq km area in Sirpur houses the ancient

Buddha Vihar which includes Buddha age idols and ruins. This place was of international importance. The world also wants to understand the primitive tribes in the state, and so their places of habitation should be developed as a tourist spot, he said.

The CTB must develop these places and bring them on the world map, he said.

# Centre responsible for fertilizer crisis: Congress

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Congress on Monday said the BJP raising the issue of fertilizer shortage unmasked its dual character and said the problem was a creation of the Central and not the Chhattisgarh government.

In a statement, the PCC Communication wing said the protest staged by the BJP on Monday was a complete failure.

The Congress said the BJP blaming the state government for the shortage of fertilizer was annoying.

"The Union government is responsible for the supply of fertilizer and the shortage is because of



not getting consistent supply from the Centre", the party said.

The Centre had adopted a step motherly attitude towards non-BJP ruled state and less than 50 percent of the required fertilizer quota had reached to such states, it said.



A meeting of the Business Advisory committee of the Chhattisgarh Assembly was held on Monday before the Monsoon session began.

Pioneer Photo

# CMO among four suspended

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government has suspended four employees for paying Rs 13.21 lakhs to a civil contractor without any proof of construction work done in Mungeli district, it was announced on Monday.

The action was taken following the directives of Urban Administration Minister Dr Shiv Kumar Dahariya, an official communication said.

Mungeli Chief Municipal Officer (CMO) Vikas Patle, Deputy Engineer Joyas Tigga, accountant Anand Nishad and Assistant Revenue Officer Siyaram Sahu have been suspended,

it said. During the suspension, they will be attached at the regional office of Joint Director, Urban Administration and Development, Bilaspur.

Also, Mungeli Municipal Council President Santulal Sonkar has been served a show cause notice and a letter has been written to the Collector to lodge a FIR against the four officers, the statement said.

The Municipal Council paid Rs 13.21 lakhs to the Janjgir-Champa-based Sophia Construction and Suppliers without it building a 300-meter-long drain in Paramhans ward in Mungeli town, it added.

# Govt denies mishandling on farmer related issues

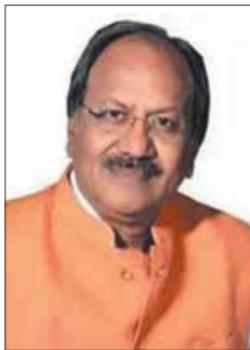
STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government on Monday denied any mismanagement of official schemes, non-availability of chemical fertilizers or any other problem related to farmers after the BJP raised them on the first day of the Monsoon Assembly session.

Thirteen BJP members moved an adjournment motion seeking a discussion and the government's reply on the issues faced by farmers.

After Speaker permitted a discussion, BJP's Brijmohan Agrawal said the problems of farmers were being aggravated due to corruption, financial constraints and non-availability of chemical fertilizers as the state had made more allocation to private sellers.

They also spoke about black-marketing and sale of



sub-standard fertilizers and seeds.

He said the government's portal shows details of stock of fertilizers allocated during the last season. The BJP leaders said there is no monitoring of demand and supply of fertilizers



and seeds, which they insisted has led to mismanagement in the farm sector.

Agriculture Minister Ravindra Choubey said agriculture is a high priority for the state government.

In 2020-21, out of the Rs

7,561 crores allocated to the department, 98 percent was spent for agriculture works and farmers.

For Kharif 2021, the demand was for 11.75 lakh tonnes of chemical fertilizers and 9.52 lakh quintals of seeds against which 56 percent of fertilizers and 95 percent of seeds were stored. The supply was less in quantity from April to July, he said. Action was taken against sub-standard quality products sold to farmers. Regular inspection and sampling were done to monitor the quality of fertilizers and seeds. There is no resentment against the government among the farmers, Choubey added.

# Two held for cheating 23 youths over jobs

STAFF REPORTER ■ BILASPUR

Chhattisgarh Police have arrested two persons for cheating 23 youths of Rs 75 lakhs on the pretext of providing them government jobs in the High Court in Bilaspur, it was announced on Monday.

Bilaspur Superintendent of Police Deepak Kumar Jha identified them as the mastermind Yashwant Sonwani (23) and his accomplice Ashutosh Miri (22)

They took Rs 75 lakhs from 23 people by promising to secure for them Grade-II and grade-III jobs in the High Court. They then absconded.

Police identified them as the mastermind Yashwant Sonwani (23) and his accomplice Ashutosh Miri (22)

a cheating case. Sonwani was arrested from Rajnandgaon district while Miri was nabbed from his village in Bilaspur district.

They took Rs 75 lakhs from 23 people by promising to secure for them Grade-II and grade-III jobs in the High Court. They then absconded.

# 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-



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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).

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.

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.

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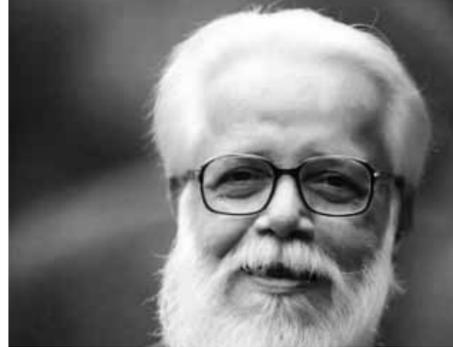
# SC gives CBI free hand to probe into Narayanan's framing in espionage case

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.



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

upon, therefore the Jain committee may cease to function.

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

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

# CBI books AP-based firm for cheating bank



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# ED attaches ₹7 cr assets in money laundering case



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

# Showing solidarity with farmers, Rahul drives tractor to Parliament



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

he has brought the message of farmers to Parliament.

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

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

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

Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala and Youth Congress chief BV Srinivas, along with a number of party leaders, were detained by the Delhi Police outside Parliament and taken to Mandir marg police station. The police said 10 people have been detained.

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

# Rajnath pays tribute to Kargil martyrs

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

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

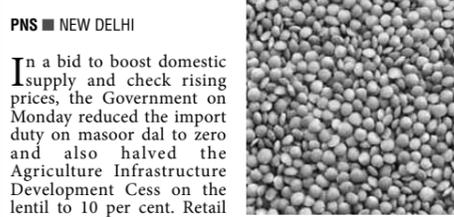
Singh recalled the valour of the bravehearts of the Kargil conflict, saying that nation will never forget the sacrifice made by the gallant heroes of Indian Armed Forces.

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

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

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

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



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# 333 pvt companies into defence production in India, says Centre



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

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

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

The Defence Procurement Procedure-2016 has been revised as

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

In order to promote indigenous design and development of defence equipment, the 'Buy' (Indian-IDD or 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

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

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



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

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

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

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

# Maharashtra rain-flood toll mounts to 192

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

The authorities pegged the number of

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

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

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

Meanwhile, seven flood rescue teams



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

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

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

Navy official said.

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

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

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

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

# ONGC, ICG prevent tanker from crashing into Mumbai High Fields

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Kerala bank scam: Crime Branch arrests 4

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The ruling CPI(M) on Monday cracked the whip on persons associated with the financial embezzlement reported from Karuvannur Cooperative Bank in 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, 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 Thirissur 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.

# AISPLB asks UP Govt to reconsider proposed population control law

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

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

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

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

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

VIRENDRA NATH BHATT ■ LUCKNOW

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

Analysts found it intriguing that the two parties, instead of formulating a comprehensive poll strategy to further consolidate their vote banks and bring to their fold new voters, were engaged in chasing the mirage of "Parshuram" and one of the two promising to build a grand Ram temple in Ayodhya. The SP and BSP had forged an electoral alliance ahead of 1993 UP Assembly elections and their popular slogan was 'Mile Mulayam 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 immensely contributed in social, political, economic empowerment of the Dalits and OBCs in UP. During the four decades of dominance of the Congress in UP and national politics, there was no place for identity politics at all levels including power, institutional and social structure. Identity politics of SP and BSP was a game changer as voters of these parties became a substantive participant in the democratic politics process rather than a formal participant during the Congress era," the analyst said.

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

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# UP emerges as largest ethanol producing State

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

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

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

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

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

# Man held for raping mentally challenged minor in Assam



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

PTI



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Healing touch

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

The Olympic Games have sent out a message for the second time running, first from Rio in 2016 and now from Tokyo, that it is not all about winning, it is also about belonging. The message comes from just 29 sportspeople who represent 82 million people currently Stateless or displaced from their homes and living as refugees across the world. They now have a voice and a platform after the International Olympic 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.

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

**The exponential growth of the Startups universe:** The PM in 2015 had said that "India should be known as a nation of job creators and not job seekers", thereafter setting in motion an enabling environment by improving on the Ease of Doing Business parameters and providing easier access to credit in order to encourage entrepreneurship and startups. Just as demonetisation triggered the growth of fintech startups like Paytm in 2017, similarly the pandemic accelerated the adaptation 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 Karnataka Congress Government. Yediyurappa was implicated in a denotification case and lost ground to Sadananda Gowda to succeed him, followed by Jagadeesh Shettar. The party recently put pressure on Yediyurappa to submit his resignation. Yediyurappa has to be remembered for increasing the superannuation age of Government employees from 58 years to 60 years.

KV Seetharamaiah | Hassan

#### MANOJ JHA HAS A VALID POINT

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

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

## Monsoon fury and flooding



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

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

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

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

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

#### IRU KODUGAL JAYANTHI NO MORE

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

Sujit De | Kolkata

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

Jayanthi received the President's Medal for Best Actress. The actor starred in 36 films with legendary actor Dr Rajkumar. She made her debut in 1963 with the Kannada film *Jenu Goodu*. The actress also worked in Tamil films in the 1970s, alongside legendary actors like MG Ramachandran and Gemini Ganesan. *Iru Kodugal*, made by Dadasaheb Phalke award winner K Balachandrar, 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

### SOUNDBITE

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



Congress leader — Rahul Gandhi

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

Australian Prime Minister — Scott Morrison

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



TV actor-performer — Shefali Jarwal

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

Indian leg-spinner — Yuzvendra Chahal

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



Karnataka ex-Chief Minister — BS Yediyurappa



## FIRST COLUMN THE MICROPLASTIC POLLUTION IN GANGA

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



KOTA SRIRAJ

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



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

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

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

# Missing the woods for the trees

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



UTTAM GUPTA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Instead of trying to micro-manage the industry (this is what the bill seeks to do), the thrust of the law should be on (a) incentivizing innovators to invest in R&D, bring new crop protection solutions, and fast-track their registration; (b) rein in "Me too" registrations 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).

## POINTCOUNTERPOINT

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



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

# Nipun Bharat: Laying the foundation for a learning society

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

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

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.

# 46 Af jawans take refuge in Pakistan

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# China goes on offensive against US at talks

## Hands over list of demands to revive ties

PTI ■ BEIJING/TIANJIN

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

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

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

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

Besides launching a well-publicised scathing attack on the US, accusing it of "bullying" other countries with "might is right" coercive diplomacy by imposing sanctions, Xie also handed down a "List of US Wrongoings 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 wrongoings, China urged the US to revoke the visa restrictions on members of the ruling Communist Party of China and their families unconditionally, revoke the sanctions on Chinese leaders, officials and government agencies, cancel visa restrictions on Chinese students and stop harassing them, stop suppressing Chinese companies and "oppression" Confucius institutes, he said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ BEIJING

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

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

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

Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here.

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

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

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

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

# Lebanon: Najib Mikati named new PM-designate

AP ■ BEIRUT

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

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

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

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

# Tunisia on edge as Prez suspends Parl, fires PM

AP ■ TUNIS (TUNISIA)

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

# Iraq PM says doesn't need US combat troops

AP ■ BAGHDAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AP ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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

# New Zealand to accept alleged Islamic State terrorist, 2 kids

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

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

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

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

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

# 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.

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

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

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

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

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

sd/  
DIRECTOR

DIP/Shabdarth/01/80/21-22 (DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT)

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

E-Tenders are invited for & on behalf of the president of India for the supply of following items. Only E-offer will be accepted for which vendors must have class III Digital Signature and registration on IREPS. The details of tenders are in the following sequence S.No., Tender No.(Due Date), Description and Quantity. (1) 05211030 (04.08.2021), Special Socket, Part No. 15620013, 04 Nos. (15) 08211187 Advertise Tender, (09.08.2021), Air Drive Kit for Crank Over Tool, Part No. 15610858, 03 Nos. (3) 05211046 (04.08.2021), Torque Multiplier Kit for Loosening, Part No. 15630134, 02 Set. (4) 05215137 (04.08.2021), Carburetorizing Box & Cover, 02 Nos. (5) 05191127B (05.08.2021), Bimetal Band Saw Blade Endless, Part No.72017557, 160 Nos. (6) 05191075C (06.08.2021), Gauge for Alignment of Driving End, Part No. 15630092, 20 Nos. (7) 05215138 (12.08.2021), Spare Parts for ACE Mobile Crane, 01 Nos. (8) 05215055A (13.08.2021), Thruster, 05 Nos. (9) 05215088A (12.08.2021), Permanent magnetic lifter, MOD-72009, 05 Nos. (10) 05211039 (12.08.2021), Depressor Valve SGS Ring, Part No.15510670, 04 Nos. (11) 05211041 (12.08.2021), Hook For Lifting, Part No. 15610019, 01 No. (12) 05211042 (12.08.2021), Tube For Crab Stud Thread Protector, Part No.15610664, 205 Nos. (13) 05211044 (12.08.2021), Lead Wire Holder, Part No.15610895, 123 Nos. (14) 05211045 (12.08.2021), Special Socket, Part No. 15620013, 04 Nos. (15) 08211187 Advertise Tender, (09.08.2021) BOLT 1/2-13 DR HEX AS PER DRG NO.8358590 ALT-B SPECN-AS PER DRG, QTY-135 NOS. (PL No. 19014314), (16) 08191057C Advertise Tender, (09.08.2021), KIT SANDER CONTROL VALVE (RECON MAKE) DRG.NO.17660105 ALT- NIL, QTY- 55 NOS. (PL No. 17660105). Note: For Complete details of EMD and downloading of tender documents and Hindi Version also available at website [www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in) and [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). Corrigendum Notice- Dated- 19.07.2021, Sl No.-1, Tender No.: 05201712B, Bid Inv. No.-13, Existing due date: 29.07.2021, Revised due date: 09.08.2021. Note: All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

PCMM

[www.blwvaranasi.com](http://www.blwvaranasi.com) Website:- [www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in)

# Afghanistan could see highest civilian casualties in 2021: UN

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ KARACHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# DUTRTE THREATENS TO KILL DRUG DEALERS

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

# 8 KILLED IN 22-CAR PILEUP DURING SANDSTORM

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

# 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



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

support of 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 expen-

diture and 137 per cent increase in health expenditure, she said, adding, the government announced a relief package of ₹3,23,464 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 2021.

"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 ageing 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 last six 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.

# Govt cuts basic customs duty on masur dal to zero; says move to provide relief to consumers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Monday reduced the basic customs duty on imports of masur dal to zero and halved the Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess on the lentil to 10 per cent, with an aim to augment domestic supplies as well as provide "relief to consumers" from high prices.

The reduced customs duty and cess will come into effect from Tuesday.

Notifications in this regard were tabled in both houses of Parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

The effective import duty on masur dal will now come down to 10 per cent from 30 per cent.

"To give relief to consumers, Government has reduced Customs Duty on Masur Dal from 30 per cent to 10 per cent. (Basic Customs Duty reduced from 10 per cent to 'Nil' and Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess reduced from 20 per cent to 10 per cent). This will bring down the retail price of Masur Dal," the finance ministry said in a tweet.

According to the notifica-

tions, the basic customs duty has been reduced from 10 per cent to nil on lentils (masur dal) originated in or exported from countries other than the US.

Also, the basic customs duty has been reduced to 20 per cent from 30 per cent on lentils originating in or exported from the US.

Further, the Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess (AIDC) on lentils has been reduced from the present rate of 20 per cent to 10 per cent.

Retail price (model) of masur dal has increased by 21 per cent to ₹85 per kg now from ₹70 per kg on April 1, this year, as per the data maintained by the consumer affairs ministry.

On Monday, the maximum selling price was as high as ₹129 a kg at Dharwad while the minimum selling price was ₹71 in Warangal and Rajkot.

As per the agriculture ministry data, India's domestic production of lentil, a rabi crop, increased to nearly 1.3 million tonne in 2020-21 crop year (July-June) from 1.1 million tonnes in the previous year.

# Tea Board asks producers to sell 50 per cent through auctions

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Tea Board India has asked all producers to sell 50 per cent through public auctions, prompting companies to urge the supervising body of the industry to keep exports out of the purview of the order.

In a recent circular on Tea Marketing Control Order (TMCO), 2003, the board said routing 50 per cent of the produce through auctions will bring stability in the price realisation process.

It also said if any producer does not comply with the order, strict action will follow.

Reacting to the order, Rudra Chatterjee, managing director of Luxtee Tea, which manufactures premium Darjeeling tea like Makaibari, said it should not be made applicable for exports and value-added tea (packet tea).

Whole-time Director of McLeod Russel, Azam Monem, said the directive has been in existence and organised producers have been adhering to it.

"The genesis of the Tea Board order is to bring small tea growers (STG) in its fold. STGs account for 50 per cent of the total production in the country," he said.

# Proposed amendments to e-commerce rules disincentive to consumers: IAMA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Industry body IAMA on Monday termed the proposed amendments to the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules 2020 as a "deterrent" for the industry's growth, and pointed out several ambiguities that it claimed are likely to have unintended negative consequences for consumers.

The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMA) has suggested excluding the entire value chain from the ambit of e-commerce definition, clarifying the flash sale concept, and confining the rules to protect the rights and interests of the consumers as "in its current form, they fall under the jurisdiction of Competition law, legal metrology law, intermediary law, etc."

In a statement, the association said although it supports the government's initiatives and regulatory interventions to protect consumer interests, the proposed amendments to the rules raise several concerns and ambiguities from an e-commerce business standpoint that are also likely to have un-

tended negative consequences for consumers.

The draft e-commerce rules released by the government on June 21 propose a ban on fraudulent flash sales and mis-selling of goods and services on e-commerce platforms.

Appointment of chief compliance officer/grievance redressal officer are among the key amendments proposed under the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020.

The government on Monday extended till August 5 the deadline for public comments on proposed amendments to the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020. Earlier, the last date for public comments on the draft e-commerce rules was July 6.

The IAMA highlighted that the amendments seek to regulate the entire e-commerce supply chain, many elements of Platform to Business (P2B) and Business to Business (B2B) e-commerce, which are beyond the remit of the parent Consumer Protection Act (CPA).

# Auto component industry revenues to grow by 20-23 pc in FY22: Icr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian auto component industry is expected to post 20-23 per cent revenue growth in the current fiscal aided by strong exports and recovery in the domestic market, as per rating agency Icr.

The growth would however be on the low base of the last two fiscals and will look optically strong because of the exceptionally weak first half of the financial year 2020-21.

"For the full year FY2022, we expect a revenue growth of

20-23 per cent aided by growth across segments and commodity pass through, albeit on a low base."

"However, headwinds such as sharp increase in commodity prices, supply chain disruptions partly arising from semiconductor shortage and premium freight expenses are expected to weigh in industry margins in FY2022, partially offsetting benefits arising from improved operating leverage," Icr Vice President and Sector Head Ashish Modani said in a statement.

The rating agency noted that commodity prices were expected to

remain at a multi-year high in the first half of the financial year 2021-22 before softening in the second half of the financial year. An increase in air freight, resulting in higher freight costs for the industry, also remains a challenge, it added. "Despite the strong revenue growth and consequent benefits from operating leverage expected, these headwinds are expected to weigh in on margins," Icr said.

# Markets close modestly lower; RIL, HDFC twins weigh

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity indices nursed mild losses on Monday after choppy trade as investors pared positions in blue-chips amid a largely subdued trend in global markets.

World markets were rattled after China intensified its regulatory crackdown on tech companies, while participants also awaited cues from the US Federal Reserve meeting later this week.

Snapping a two-session rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 123.53 points or 0.23 per cent lower at 52,852.27. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty slipped 31.60 points or 0.20 per cent to 15,824.45.

SBI was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 1.36 per cent, followed by Reliance Industries, M&M, Tech Mahindra, L&T, Bharti Airtel, HDFC and IndusInd Bank.

On the other hand, Bajaj Finserv, UltraTech Cement, Sun Pharma, Titan and Tata Steel were among the major gainers, spurring up to 2.46 per cent.

Kotak Mahindra Bank climbed 1 per cent after the private sector lender reported a nearly 32 per cent jump in its net profit to ₹1,641.92 crore in the first quarter of 2021-22.

manufacturing output declined 3 per cent in June on a seasonally adjusted, month-on-month basis.

"During the afternoon session markets swung between positive and negative territory with lacklustre trade as traders were concerned as foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) offloaded Indian equities to the tune of over ₹5,689 crore in July so far..." said Narendra Solanki,

Head- Equity Research (Fundamental), Anand Rathi Shares & Stock Brokers.

Also, the European stocks were seen retreating as investors watch corporate earnings, coronavirus cases and German business sentiment, which fell unexpectedly in July as supply chain constraints and rising Covid-19 infections dampened recent optimism, Solanki added.

# Rupee drops by 2 paise to 74.42/USD

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee slipped by 2 paise to close at 74.42 against the US dollar on Monday, snapping its three-day gaining streak amid a muted trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said the rupee is trading in a narrow range as investors are awaiting cues from the US Fed's policy decision due this week.

Foreign fund inflows, losses in the US dollar and weaker crude oil prices lent support to the local unit, they added. At the inter-bank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 74.43 against the dollar and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.40 and a low of 74.52 during the session.

# World stocks mostly lower after Wall Street highs

AP ■ BANGKOK

World shares were mostly lower on Monday after stocks rallied to records on Wall Street, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average closing above the 35,000 level Friday for the first time.

Investors are awaiting a meeting of the Federal Reserve this week for indications of future policy as new outbreaks of coronavirus.

# Govt paid ₹164.5 cr to Infosys for new I-T portal: Chaudhary

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government paid ₹164.5 crore to Infosys to build the new income tax e-filing portal between January 2019 and June 2021, Parliament was informed on Monday.

"The contract for Integrated e-filing & Centralized Processing Centre (CPC 2.0) Project was awarded through an open tender published on Central Public Procurement Portal (CPPP) to Infosys Ltd, the Managed Service Provider on the lowest cost basis.

"Since January 2019 till June 2021, the total amount paid to Infosys is ₹164.5 crore under this project," Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

He said the Union Cabinet on January 16, 2019, gave its approval for this project at an outlay of ₹2,41,97 crore for a period of 8.5 years, including payout to the Managed Service Provider (MSP), GST, rent, postage and project management cost.

On June 7 this year, the government launched the new income tax e-filing portal as part of the Integrated e-filing and Centralized Processing Centre 2.0 Project.

# Glenmark Life Sciences Limited Initial Public Offer to open on July 27

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Glenmark Life Sciences Limited ("GLS" or the "Company"), a leading developer and manufacturer of select high value, non-commoditized active pharmaceutical ingredients ("APIs") in chronic therapeutic areas, plans to open its Initial Public Offering ("Offer") on July 27, 2021.

The Price Band of the Offer has been fixed at ₹695 to ₹720 per Equity Share. Bids can be made for a minimum of 20 Equity Shares and in multiples of 20 Equity Shares thereafter.

The Offer consists of equity shares of face value of ₹2 each of Glenmark Life Sciences Limited ("Equity Shares") comprising a fresh issue of Equity Shares aggregating to ₹10,600 million (the "Fresh Issue") and an offer for sale of up to 6,300,000 Equity Shares by Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Limited ("Promoter" or "Promoter Selling Shareholder"). This Offer is being made through a Book Building Process and in terms of Regulation 19(2)(b) of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules, 1957, as amended ("SCRR") read with Regulation 31 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2018, as amended (the "SEBI ICDR Regulations") and in accordance with Regulation 6(1) of the SEBI ICDR Regulations wherein not more than 50% of the Offer shall be available.

**Invitation for Quotations**  
Shriya Srishti Apartment Owners Association, 15, Ahinsa Khand 1, Indraprastha, Ghaziabad-201014  
Invites quotations from companies engaged in following services:

- Overall facility and maintenance services including housekeeping and technical services
- Accounting firms for the overall management of day to day accounts
- Horticulture & landscape maintenance
- Intercom system AMC

Quotations are to be sent via mail to [aaa.srishti@gmail.com](mailto:aaa.srishti@gmail.com) by 31st July 2021, 4 pm. Firms may contact Anurag Srivastava on 9717597954 for necessary site visit for sending the quotations.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
My clients Mr. Manohar Lal Batta and Mrs. Krishna Rani Batta are owners of Block-A Shriya Srishti Apartment, New Delhi-110018. My clients are old age senior citizen and said property is self acquired of my clients. My clients are highly disappointed and affected due to very bad behaviour of grandson Shri Lakshay Batta Srivastava and his wife Mrs. Anshika Batta and others.

My clients Mr. Manohar Lal Batta & Mrs. Krishna Rani Batta are disowning the grandson Lakshay Batta and his wife Anshika Batta from his/her self acquired property, A-1 Block, Shriya Srishti Apartment, New Delhi-110018 and all his/her other movable & immovable property from immediate effect. They shall have no legal rights over any property of my clients in any manner whatsoever.

Manuendra Kr. Tripathi (Advocate) 315, M.C. Setalwad Block, Supreme Court of India New Delhi-01

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
TRANSPORT CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED  
CIN No. L70109TG1995PLC019116  
Regd. Office: Flat No. 306-307, 1-B-273, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Ashoka Bhojpal Chambers, SP Road, Secunderabad - 500 003. Ph. 040-27840104

Notice is hereby given that the Certificate(s) for the under mentioned Equity Shares of the Company Transport Corporation of India Limited have been lost/misplaced & the holder(s) of the said Equity Shares have applied to the Company to issue duplicate share Certificate(s). Any person who has a claim in respect of the said Shares should lodge the same with the Company at its Registered within 21 days from this date else the Company will proceed to issue duplicate certificate(s) to the aforesaid applicants without any further intimation.

Sr. Folio No. Name of Holder Distinctive Certificate No. (No.) Shares (No.)  
1. 00036791 Indu Malhotra 824881- 1703 750  
2. 00036791 Indu Malhotra 825630- 355 500

Place: Delhi Date: 27-07-2021

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Sr. Folio No. Name of Holder Distinctive Certificate No. (No.) Shares (No.)  
1. 0007791 Anil Malhotra 256336- 355 500  
2. 0007791 Indu Malhotra 256336- 355 500

Place: Delhi Date: 27-07-2021

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
E-TENDER NOTICE

Name of Work with its Location	Replacement of Electronic Exchange (OMNI-230) of DRM office, New Delhi.
App. Cost of the Work (₹)	₹ 86,84,963.60/- only
Tender Document Fee (₹)	₹ 0/- only
Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	₹ 0/- only
Address of the Office	Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer - C, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annex-1, DRM office, New Delhi - 110055.
Date & Time for upload the Tender / Closing of Tender	Tender uploading / Closing Date & Time - 18.08.2021 upto 15.00 hrs.
Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.	See the Northern Railway website <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> & Notice board at S&T Branch, 3rd Floor, DRM office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055.
Tender No. : 558-Sig-16-Tele-OT-932 Dated: 26.07.2021	1686/2021

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
I Dalvinder Singh inform General Public that I have lost Property Paper - Builder Buyer Agreement receipts etc. of my property number EHF-350-I-FF-025, Ivory block, Sector 65, Gurugram, Haryana, issued by EMAAR INDIA LIMITED. If anyone finds it, please contact: 9910693951

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This Notice hereby is given to Public at large that Shri P.V.S. Iyer, Late Sh. P.R. Bharate (B-401, Aashiana) is reported to have lost his Original Share Certificate issued by Aashiana CGHS Ltd., Plot No.5, Mayur Vihar extn, Phase I, Delhi-110091. An application for issuance of a Duplicate Share Certificate has been filed on July 19, 2021. Any person or persons having objections against issuance of duplicate Share Certificate to Shri P.V.S. Iyer may file objections in writing within one month from Publication of this Public Notice in the office of AASHIANA CGHS Ltd. failing which the Duplicate Share Certificate will be issued after fulfilling other procedures and obligations as advised by the Managing Committee of AASHIANA CGHS Ltd. For Aashiana CGHS Ltd. President

**RAIL LAND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
(A Statutory Authority under Ministry of Railways Government of India)  
Unit No. 702-B, 7th Floor, Connetxus Tower-II, DMRC Building, Bhavbhuti Marg, Ajmeri Gate, New Delhi-110002

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANT FOR PROVIDING ARCHITECTURAL & REAL ESTATE CONSULTANCY FOR RAILWAY COLONY DEVELOPMENT WORKS AT HAZARIBAGH COLONY-AJMER, SADUL COLONY-BIKANER AND NEW LOCO COLONY-JODHPUR**

Estimated Cost for the work: Rs. 10.25 Lakh. JGM/Architect, M. 75078 96327 (E-mail: [jgmarch@rlda.railnet.gov.in](mailto:jgmarch@rlda.railnet.gov.in))

Last Date & Time of Submission of RFP Documents: 23.08.2021 upto 15:00 hrs.

(1) For complete details, visit [www.rlda.in/railways.gov.in](http://www.rlda.in/railways.gov.in) or [www.tenderindia.in/RLDA](http://www.tenderindia.in/RLDA).  
(2) Any Correspondence/Address to this publication, if any, would be hosted on above mentioned website only and will not be published in newspapers.  
(RFP Notice No. RLDA/RFP/CT-17 of 2021) AM/Tender, (Mob: 87505 54811)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
TRANSPORT CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED  
CIN No. L70109TG1995PLC019116  
Regd. Office: Flat No. 306-307, 1-B-273, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Ashoka Bhojpal Chambers, SP Road, Secunderabad - 500 003. Ph. 040-27840104

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Sr. Folio No. Name of Holder Distinctive Certificate No. (No.) Shares (No.)  
1. 0007791 Anil Malhotra 256336- 355 500  
2. 0007791 Indu Malhotra 256336- 355 500

Place: Delhi Date: 27-07-2021

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is to bring to the notice of the general public that one ID Card of Mr. Babul Singh issued by ICICI Bank No. having ID card no. 2134028 has been found missing and/or lost on Haidar Pur. Anyone, who finds the said ID card, is requested to return the said ID card to the Manager Debt Services & Management Group, ICICI Bank Limited, SD Tower Rohini Sector 8 New Delhi 110085. Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Limited are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorised person holding the said ID card no. 2134028. Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID card shall do so at his/her own costs, risk and perils and ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment.

For ICICI Bank Limited  
Date: 26.07.2021  
Place: New Delhi Sector



## Health's Wealth

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



### WORLD HEPATITIS DAY JULY 28, 2021

**DOCYARD**  
DR RAJIV LOCHAN

Lead Consultant — HPB  
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 and liver-related complications begin to develop. In order to detect Hepatitis early, it is important to go for regular check-ups. A blood check-up where the liver profile is tested, will give you a better understanding of your liver health.

## SUMMER COOLER

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

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

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

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



## 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

## 'Patients want to be engaged and informed'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The writer is a Dermatologist

## IN BRIEF

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

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

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

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

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



## MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE

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

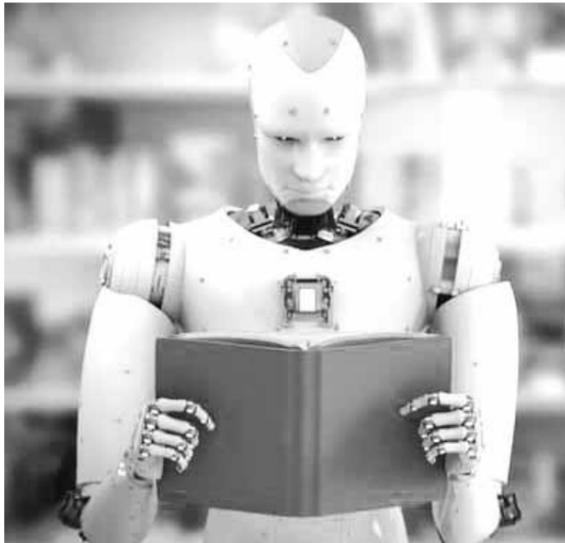
With a sea of options to choose from — course, city, country, duration, opportunity and future career prospects — finding the right college and job takes time, intense research and endless hours of work. Artificial Intelligence (AI) can help students get past this overwhelming and time-consuming process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

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.

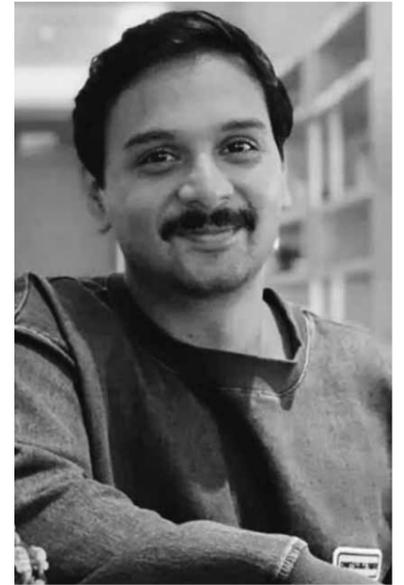
### Resume experts

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 Manikata. "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

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

### GULABO JAIPUR



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

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

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

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

### KUNAL ANIL TANNA

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

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

### RIDHI MEHRA

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



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

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

### VEDIKA M

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

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

### PINK CITY

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

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

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

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

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

### SUKRITI & AAKRITI



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

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

## TREND BLAZER



### YAMI'S LOST GOES ON FLOORS

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

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

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

### fairtalk



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

### dailytalk



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

### 'OSCAR ISAAC IS MY NEW MAN-CRUSH'

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

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

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



# ANOTHER TOUGH DAY FOR INDIA

## MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

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

## IN FOCUS TODAY

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

## BHAVANI MAKES HISTORY

First-ever fencer to represent India at the Olympics also became first to win a bout but goes down fighting in 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 said of her contest vs Brunet.



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

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

In the other two events — foil and epee — only the tip of the sword can be used to target the opponent. The Chennai fencer said she has gained valuable experience from her Tokyo outing, which will help her in future challenges. "It is my first Olympics and it could be better but I am okay with the experience I had from this Olympics. It will be a learning experience for me to improve myself. From here onwards, I will be living my dream as an Olympian."

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

TIME	EVENTS	ATHLETES
05:30 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Qualification Stage 1	Saurabh Chaudhary & Manu Bhaker
06:15 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Qualification Stage 2	Yashaswini Deswal & Abhishek Verma
06:30 AM	Hockey: Men's Pool A Match	India vs Spain
07:30 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Medal Rounds	Subject to qualification
08:30 AM	Badminton: Men's Doubles Group A Match	Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty
08:35 AM	Table Tennis: Men's Singles Round 3 Match	Achanta Sharath Kamal
08:35 AM	Sailing: Women's Laser Radial 5 & 6	Nethra 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
10:30 AM	Shooting: 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team Qualification Stage 2	Anjum Moudgil & Deepak Kumar
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 by 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



Sutirtha Mukherjee

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



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

## Poor execution costs India

Tokyo: The Indian women's hockey team fought valiantly but poor execution proved to be its undoing on Monday, leading to a 0-2 defeat at the hands of Germany, a second consecutive setback for the side at the Tokyo Olympics. After the 1-5 drubbing at the hands of world No 1 Netherlands, the Indians lifted their game but it was not enough to get past world No 3 and Rio Games Bronze-medallists Germany in their second Pool A match at the Oi Hockey Stadium. The team was guilty of wasting a lot of opportunities, including a penalty stroke by Gurjit Kaur in the third quarter while luck also didn't favour the Rani Rampal-led side. Skipper Nike Lorenz (12th minute) and Anna Schroder

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

## INDIA VS SPAIN

On Tuesday, the men's hockey team would be desperate to rebuild a shattered morale when it takes on a lower-ranked Spain in its third Pool A match. After a fighting 3-2 win over New Zealand in their campaign opener, the Indians were completely steam-rolled 1-7 by world No 1 Australia in their second game and now the team would like to get back into winning ways against world No 9 Spain.

## Indian archers fail to get past Korean hurdle

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

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

South Korea went on to win the title by 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 Tuoheta on Monday.

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

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

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

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

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

## Satwik-Chirag lose to world No 1

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

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

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



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

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

World number three Chinese Taipei pair of Lee Yang

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

## Nagal hammered out by Medvedev

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

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

The gap between a world class

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

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

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



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 felicitated by officials of the Sports Authority of India among others.

Once out, the young star was mobbed by the waiting media, leading to a melee and had to be completely enveloped by security personnel as she made her way through.



Mirabai Chanu arrives at the airport in New Delhi on Monday



Neeraj Chopra poses for photo before he departs for Tokyo

## 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.

## 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.