

**OPINION 6**  
THE DILEMMA OF  
DISPLACEMENT

**WORLD 8**  
RUSSIA HOSTS AFGHAN TALKS,  
CALLS FOR INCLUSIVE GOVT

**SPORT 12**  
ROHIT FINDS HIS GROOVE AS  
INDIA OUTPLAY AUSTRALIA

Published From  
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR  
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH  
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol. 17 Issue 284  
\*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

BHUBANESWAR, THURSDAY OCTOBER 21, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹4



# the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



DON'T REACT,  
JUST RESPOND:  
PRATIK GANDHI  
10 VIVACITY

## Won't spare corrupt: Modi

'No matter how powerful, persons betraying nation won't be let off'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday asserted that no matter how powerful a person may be, stern action should be taken against those who work against the interest of the nation or its people by indulging in corruption.

Virtually addressing a joint conference of the CVC and the CBI at Kevadia in Gujarat, the PM asked the agencies to ensure that there are no safe havens anywhere in the world for those who betray the country.

Modi's assertions come against the backdrop of the Centre's engagement in legal proceedings to bring back alleged economic offenders like Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi and Mehul Chowksi, who have taken refuge in foreign countries after allegedly duping the nation of thousands of crores of rupees.

"You have to remember that your partnership is with this 'mitti' (soil), with *Maa Bharti* (Mother India). There should not be any safe havens anywhere in the world for those who betray the country or its people," Modi said in his address.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits the Mahaparivarna Temple, on the occasion of the Abhidhamma Day, at Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday

"However powerful one may be, stern action should be taken against those who work contrary to the national interest or against the people of the country. Everyone should continue to work in the national interest," he said.

Modi said due to the hard work of his Government in the last six-seven years, a faith has been established among people that corruption can be stemmed.

"In the last six-seven years, we have been able to establish a faith among people that it is possible to stop corruption in the country. People of the

country have faith today that they will get benefits of Government schemes without any give and take or without any middlemen, he said.

"Corruption, big or small, takes away the rights of common people. It is a hindrance in the progress of the country and affects our collective energy," he added.

Taking a swipe at earlier dispensations, Modi said, "The way the earlier Government functioned, it lacked the political and administrative will to fight corruption. Today, there is a political will and administrative reforms are also being

carried out to achieve the goal."

Post-Independence, the mindset of the Governments was to keep everything under their control. Those Governments kept maximum control with themselves and due to it, the system witnessed many wrong practices, he said.

Maximum control, be it at home, in family or in the country, causes maximum damage, he said.

Modi added, "We started as a mission to simplify the life of people by reducing controls, we believe in minimum Government and maximum Governance."

## 350 new routes, UDAN has taken big leap, says PM

PNS ■ KUSHINAGAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that the Centre has approved around 900 new air routes under the UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme of which 350 have already become operational while more than 50 new airports, or those which were not in service earlier, have become operational.

"The Government is also working on preparing more than 200 airports, heliports, and water ports for seaplanes in the next four years," the Prime Minister said while addressing a big public meeting here after inaugurating and laying the foundation of 12 projects worth over ₹345 crores, including a ₹280 crore 500-bedded new medical college in Kushinagar.

Modi pointed out that the goal behind all these steps is to provide better connectivity to people living in the remotest corners, while air, rail, road, and waterways add to people's comfort.

The Prime Minister said more middle-class people were able to avail flight services today than in the past due to the steps taken by the Government.

## SC raps UP for slow Lakhimpur probe

Court asks Govt to shed image, orders witness protection

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday reprimanded the Uttar Pradesh Government for "dragging its feet" in the probe into Lakhimpur violence and ordered the protection of witness. The apex court cautioned the State police that probe should not be an "unending story" and UP Government is required to "dispel" that impression and should ensure recording of statements of witnesses before magistrates.

"We think you are dragging your feet, please dispel that impression," said the top court, and red-flagged the issue of non-recording of statements of nearly 40 prosecution witnesses, of the total 44, before judicial magistrates under section 164 of the CrPC.

"Please ask them to immediately take steps to record section 164 statements. That is the most important thing... Protection to the victims as well as the witnesses," said the bench comprising Chief Justice N V Ramana and justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli.

Statements under section 164 of the CrPC (Code of



Criminal Procedure) are recorded before a judicial magistrate and they have evidentiary value. The State Govt informed the court that statements of four out of the 44 witnesses have been recorded by the judicial magistrate.

Ten people, including Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra's son Ashish Mishra, have been arrested in connection with the violence that has triggered a political slugfest ahead of the crucial Assembly elections in the State.

The bench also raised the issue of filing of the status report on the day of hearing with the CJ observing, "We waited till 1 am last night for any filing. But we received nothing."

Senior advocate Harish Salve, who appeared along

with advocate Garima Prasad for the State Government, said the status report has been filed in a sealed cover on Wednesday because of the impression that it was for the perusal of the court only. "No that was not required and we have just received it now... We never said anything about sealed covers," the bench said while declining the request to hear the matter on Friday. It listed the next hearing on October 26.

The Bench said, "Mr Salve, you said that you (police) have examined 44 witnesses and out of them, four witnesses' statements have been recorded under section 164 (before a judicial magistrate) of CrPC. Why have you not recorded the statements of other witnesses under 164?"

## BJP open to alliance with 'nationalist' Amarinder

Captain is a patriot: BJP

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

A day after former Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh announced that he would launch his own political party and hoped for a "seat arrangement" with the BJP in poll-bound Punjab, the saffron party said it is open to alliances with those who put national interests first.

With Amarinder set to float his own political outfit with the BJP which has lost political ground in the State following Akali Dal's exit from the National Democratic Alliance in protest against three Central farm laws, Punjab may witness a triangular election battle with the ruling Congress and the AAP being the other two strong contenders for the seat of power in the State.



Given the fact that farmers from Punjab form the core of the agitation against the three farm laws which they feel may hit the traditional 'mandi system' of sell and purchase of agricultural produce and may even end minimum support price, sooner or later, the BJP may think in terms of seeking some sort of reconciliation with the farmers to pave the way for an alliance with Amarinder.

BJP party general secretary and Punjab in-charge

Dushyant Gautam on Wednesday said "Amarinder is a patriot" and the BJP is open to an alliance with him. "Amarinder was once a soldier and his stand on the issues of national security should be praised," the BJP leader said.

On Amarinder's condition of resolving farmers' issues, BJP general secretary said Singh did not talk about ending the farmers' agitation. "He talked about farmers' issues. We are committed to it and are working for the welfare of farmers. If the time comes, both will sit together and discuss farmers' issues," Gautam was quoted as saying by news agency PTI.

As far as the agitation is concerned, it is politically motivated, he alleged.

"Our main agenda is nationalism and keeping the nation first. All those parties who want to form alliances with us on this agenda are welcome," he said.

## 4 LeT terrorists killed in Op All Out, migrants' murder avenged

Soldier martyred, 2 hurt; 17 ultras killed in 2 weeks

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The joint team of security forces on Wednesday avenged the death of migrant labourers by eliminating four Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) terrorists in the South Kashmir districts of Shopian and Kulgam.

Three Army jawans also sustained bullet injuries during the operation in the Dragad area of Shopian.

One among them, Sepoy Karamveer Singh, succumbed to his injuries in hospital. He hailed from the Rampur area of Madhya Pradesh.

After the recent killing of migrant labourers from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the security forces have launched an operation All Out to flush out the terrorists.

So far, 17 terrorists have been eliminated in 11 encounters in the last two weeks. Eleven civilians, including five



Security forces during an encounter with terrorists at Nar Khas forest area of Poonch district on Wednesday

laborers, also lost their lives during targeted killings.

Kashmir range IGP Vijay Kumar said two LeT terrorists killed in Devsar area of Kulgam were behind the

killing of two labourers from Bihar.

In the first operation, security forces eliminated two terrorists, including Adil Ahmad Wani, a LeT terrorist, believed to have targeted a carpenter Sageer Ahmad hailing from Saharanpur area of Uttar Pradesh.

In the second encounter, a joint team of security forces neutralised LeT district commander Gulzar Ahmad Reshi in the Devsar area of Kulgam. Reshi was behind the killing of two poor labourers from Bihar.

According to a police spokesman, a joint cordon and search operation was launched in the Dragad area of Shopian after receiving inputs about the presence of LeT terrorists in the area on Wednesday.

After confirming their whereabouts in the areas the terrorists were given the opportunity to surrender.

### CAPSULE

#### WEAPONS, 1 KG DRUGS RECOVERED AT BORDER

**Chandigarh:** The Punjab Police and the BSF have recovered a huge cache of weapons near the India-Pakistan border in the Khemkaran area of Tarn Taran district. In a joint operation, the Counter Intelligence wing of the Punjab Police and the BSF recovered 22 pistols, 44 magazines and 100 rounds of ammunition, the police official said. One kg of heroin was also recovered, he added.

#### 43 NAXALS SURRENDER IN SUKMA DISTRICT

**Sukma:** A total of 43 Naxals, including nine women cadres, surrendered before the police in Chhattisgarh's worst Maoist-hit Sukma district on Wednesday.

#### CBI FILES CHARGESHEET IN DHANBAD JUDGE CASE

**New Delhi:** The CBI has filed a chargesheet against two accused in the alleged murder of Dhanbad Judge Uttam Anand, who was mowed down by an auto-rickshaw on July 28.

## Mamita case: Congress, BJP scale up protests, Demand Minister's dismissal

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A day after the arrest of Govinda Sahu, prime accused in the Mamita Meher murder case, shutdown, demonstration and Padayatra by opposition parties marked widespread protests in Kalahandi and Balangir districts as well as in the State capital Bhubaneswar on Wednesday.

While the BJP held a 12-hour bandh in Kalahandi on the day, members of the Congress youth wing staged a demonstration in front of Naveen Niwas, the residence of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik here alleging involvement of Minister of State for Home Dibya Shankar Mishra in the incident. They demanded that Mishra resign from his position or the CM dismiss him forthwith.

Shouting anti-Government slogans and showing black flags, the Congress youths said crimes against women are on the rise in the State as the Government has failed to pro-



vide protection to them. Later, the protesters attempted to barge inside the Naveen Niwas, but security personnel deployed there stopped the activists, who were later detained by the Airfield police.

"We tried to meet the CM to seek justice for Mamita but were picked up by police midway. The Government is protecting the Minister, who is directly involved in the case," said State Youth Congress president Smruti Ranjan Lenka.

The BJP women wing held a demonstration before Minister Mishra's residence here and demanded his immediate dismissal. The demon-

strators also alleged that along with Mishra, Minister Pratap Jena also visited the Mahaling school.

Members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) staged a protest in front of the Utkal University here demanding justice for Mamita.

In Bhawanipatna of Kalahandi district, Youth Congress members took out a Padayatra as a mark of protest over the Mamita case.

Congress Legislature Party Leader Narasingha Mishra visited Mamita's family in Balangir district and said perpetrators of the crime should not be spared.

BJP members led by MP Sangeeta Singh Deo gheraoed the Balangir SP office demanding a CBI probe into the Mamita case.

The BJP called a 12-hour Balangir Bandh on the Mamita issue on Thursday.

Meanwhile, security was beefed up outside the quarters of Ministers Mishra and Pratap Jena to avert any unpleasant situation.

## Mamita killing: Police take prime accused Sahu on 5-day remand

PNS ■ BALANGIR

The Bangomunda JMFC Court on Wednesday allowed the Balangir police to take Govinda Sahu, prime accused in the sensational woman teacher Mamita Meher murder case, on remand for five days. Earlier in the day, the accused was produced before the court while the police sought his remand for further investigation. The cops are likely to question Sahu on possible involvement of others in the crime.

Northern Range DIG Deepak Kumar said Mamita was aware of two extramarital affairs of Govinda Sahu and she had warned him to bring his illicit affairs to light.

Since the 24-year-old teacher of Sunshine Model School at Mahaling in Kalahandi district had threatened Sahu, who was the president of the School Management Committee (SMC), to expose him, the latter was holding a grudge against her. To take revenge, he decided to eliminate her, said Kumar.

"After strangling her (Mamita) to death in his car on October 8, Sahu took the body to the under-construction stadium of the school for disposal and burnt the body with the help of cardboard and tyres before burying it. Next morning, he closed the pit," said the DIG. After obtaining evidences, nine teams conducted raids at various places to nab Sahu. Besides, the driver of the vehicle used in the crime has been detained and investigation is underway to know the extent of his involvement in the crime, he said.

Police have also detained a relative of Sahu, who allegedly helped in burying Mamita's body. Sahu has confessed during grilling by police that he killed Mamita and buried her body. Mamita had gone to Bhawanipatna with him in his car on October 8. While returning, Sahu murdered Mamita in the vehicle. Police have seized the car, from which an ankle and a petrol jar were recovered. Later on Tuesday when the body of Mamita was exhumed from the under-construction

stadium site of the school, an ankle, a chain and a bag were recovered from the spot.

On October 7, Sahu had directed an excavator operator to dig a pit at the stadium construction site. Mamita's body was set on fire with petrol and buried in the pit. Salt was also put on the body for its quick decomposition.

The excavator operator was on October 9 asked by Sahu to cover the pit with earth. Multiple persons were involved in the killing of Mamita and it was a pre-planned murder, the report added.

Mamita had gone missing on October 8. Alleging involvement of Sahu behind her missing, Mamita's family members had lodged a complaint with police, following which police detained Sahu for questioning. He was kept at the Titilagarh police station barrack.

However, Sahu escaped from police custody on October 17 night. He went to the bathroom on the pretext of washing his hands after taking food and gave police guards the slip.

## Denied bail, Aryan moves Bombay HC

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A Special Court set up under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act on Wednesday rejected the bail pleas of Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's eldest son Aryan Khan and two others in the mid-sea drug bust case, prompting Aryan's lawyers of to challenge the sessions court's order in the Bombay High Court.

Apart from Aryan's bail application, the two other bail pleas that Additional Sessions Judge VV Patil rejected — in his much-awaited order — were that of his co-accused Arbaaz Merchant and Munmun Dhamecha.

"Bail application nos 2571/21, 2576/21 and 2583/21 stand rejected. Accordingly, the bail applications are dis-



posed of. The authenticated copy of roznama be supplied to advocates and SP" the Judge noted in his order that he passed at 2.45 pm.

Less than two hours after the Special Court rejected his plea, Aryan's lawyers moved the high court challenging the lower court's order denying him bail in the mid-sea drug bust case.

# Cong seeks Gov intervention to oust Minister DB Mishra

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The Congress on Wednesday submitted a memorandum to Governor Prof Ganeshi Lal relating to the kidnapping and murder Mamita Meher, a teacher of a private school at Mahaling in Kalahandi district. The party demanded immediate removal of Minister of State for Home Captain Dibya Shankar Mishra to make the investigation free from unfair interference and administrative pressure and also to give justice to the victim's family and conduct the investigation in an unbiased and judicious manner. The Congress also demanded a CBI inquiry under the direction and supervision of the Supreme Court. The memorandum said that as the Constitutional head of the State, the Governor is requested to take



appropriate and immediate action to check further erosion of law and order situation in the State. It is also said that it's a matter of great concern that the State Government has not yet been found serious to unearth the mysterious disappearance of Mamita. The Congress alleged that the main accused in the case, Govinda Sahu, is a close associate of Minister Mishra, for which his escape from police custody was preplanned with the support of Minister Mishra.

# Mamita case: Take strong action against culprits, Dharmendra urges CM

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Wednesday demanded strong action based on the rule of laws in the Mahaling public school scandal in which teacher Mamita Meher was kidnapped and murdered allegedly by the school management committee president. Pradhan expected that Chief Minister Naveen



Patnaik would take strong and immediate action against

the culprits. "It is quit disturbing to know that a schoolteacher became the victim of conspiracy and faced such brutal murder and the owner of the school is the main accused. Not only this, the institution was running with Government support and Ministers and other leaders of the ruling party have patronaged him," he said.

# 559 more Covid cases in State: 71 children among infected; 2 die

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The State reported 559 more Covid-19 positive cases in 23 districts and the State pool on Wednesday, with which the total tally increased to 10,36,532. Among the newly-infected were 71 children in the age group of 0 to 18 years. Out of the new cases, 321 cases were detected from quarantine and 238 were local contacts.

Khordha district reported the day's highest 279 cases followed by Cuttack with 54, Boudh 18, Sambalpur 16, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur and Puri 14 each, Baleswar 12 and Dhenkanal and Sundargarh 10 each. The districts which reported below-10 cases were Nayagarh and Mayurbhanj nine each, Koraput six, Bhadrak five, Ganjam and Kendrapada four each, Balangir three, Angul, Bargarh,

Deogarh, Jharsuguda and Kandhamal two each and Rayagada one. Besides, 68 cases were reported from the State pool. The active cases stood at 4,785. Two more patients succumbed to the disease, taking the total death toll to 8,296. Jagatsinghpur and Nayagarh districts reported one death each. So far, 10, 23,398 patients have recovered in the State.

# Was sex racket running at Mahaling school?

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Shocking allegations in connection with the sensational Mamita Meher murder case continue to surface. Mamita's family members have alleged that a sex racket was running at the Sunshine English Medium School at Mahaling in Kalahandi district, where she was working as a teacher. They have further alleged the involvement of Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra in the sex racket during his stay at the school. Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly Pradipta Kumar Naik (BJP) has written to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in this regard demanding a CBI investigation into the incident and resignation of Minister Mishra on moral grounds. The Minister himself is in the charge of Home affairs

and it would hamper the investigation if he continues his office, said Naik. "The sordid saga of the sudden disappearance of Mamita Meher on October 8 while she was on the verge to explode a bombshell exposing the naked facts of the rampant sex racket doing rounds in the campus of the sacred institution has been a great shock for us all. It is crystal clear that some hostile persons who did not want her to come up with those allegations have succeeded in their motives," wrote Naik in the letter. "Even though the family of Meher lodged a report at Sindhekela police station, Dist-Bolangir, the investigation was quite disappointing, may be due to the high handedness of Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra. He is also alleged to have close nexus with Govinda

Sahu (prime accused). During the investigation by the police, Govinda Sahu went absconding from the police custody and I apprehend the involvement of a powerful backing that led to his mysterious absconding," Naik wrote. "Parents of Mamita Meher have brought serious allegation against Dibya Shankar Mishra for his involvement in the sex racket during his stay at the school. It is pertinent here to mention that Dibya Shankar Mishra was a regular visitor to the school and the allegations made by the parents are grave and serious, which needs to be investigated thoroughly. The hand in gloves theory cannot be denied. It's a shame that the integrity and sanctity of a sacred institution would come under the radar of a sex racket," he wrote.

# Mamita had Sahu's objectionable videos



**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Mamita Meher, teacher of the Sunshine English Medium School at Mahaling in Kalahandi district, whose body was recovered on Tuesday, had two objectionable videos of prime accused Govinda Sahu. She had shown the clips to Sahu, for which the

latter decided to eliminate her to evade further trouble for him, a report said. Mamita's family members had earlier alleged that Sahu was involved in sexually harassing the female employees of the school. Mamita had warned Sahu of exposing him and bringing his illicit affairs to the fore, they said.

# NCW urges CM to remove 'accused Ministers'

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The National Commission for Women (NCW) on Wednesday urged Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to remove the Ministers, whose names have surfaced in the case, to ensure an impartial probe into the Mamita Meher case.

The NCW Chairperson has written to Patnaik personally take cognisance of the case. "The National Commission for Women has taken cognisance of the incident. Chairperson Rekha Sharma has written to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to personally take cognisance of this case and to remove the

# BJP calls for Balangir Bandh today

**PNS ■ BALANGIR**  
The BJP on Wednesday called a Balangir District Bandh on Thursday to demand justice for Mamita Meher who was allegedly kidnapped and killed by Mahaling Sunshine public school owner Govinda Sahu, who seems to be a close associate of Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra. Party district president Sibaji Mohanty demanded dismissal of Minister Mishra as his role in the entire episode is suspected because of his close association with main accused Sahu. Earlier in the afternoon, BJP activists and Mahila Morcha leaders staged a demonstration before the Balangir SP Office and burnt an effigy of Minister Mishra under the leadership of Balangir MP Sangeeta Singh Deo.

# In Cuttack: Youth jumps from bridge, dies



**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR:**  
A youth died after jumping from the bridge over the Kathajodi river between Press Square and Gopalpur near Cuttack city on Wednesday morning. According to reports, the youth arrived by a scooter and parked the two-wheeler on the bridge, in the morning. Moments later, he jumped into the river from the bridge and went missing.

**The deceased was identified as Sapan Kumar Behera of the Kharavel Nagar area in Bhubaneswar**

Later, an ODRAF team which carried out an operation to trace the youth, found his body after hours of search. The deceased was identified as Sapan Kumar Behera of the Kharavel Nagar area in Bhubaneswar and worked as a courier delivery boy. The exact cause behind Behera taking the extreme decision was yet to be ascertained. Police are investigating into the incident. Earlier, Debasis Das, working as a Laboratory Assistant at the BJB College in Bhubaneswar went missing after jumping into Mahanadi river on September 26.

# 209 infections in Bhubaneswar

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Capital city Bhubaneswar on Wednesday registered 209 Covid-19 positive cases. With this, the total positive tally

surged to 1,16,456 in the city. Out of the new cases, 155 were local contacts and 54 quarantine cases. Currently, the active cases stood at 3,558 in the city.

So far, 1,044 patients have succumbed to the virus in the city. However, 212 persons recovered from the disease, increasing the total recoveries to 1,11,833.

# HITTING THE BULLSEYE Country's pride Air India at last in safe hands



**BISWARAJ PATNAIK**  
The heartening news is that a unit of the iconic Tata conglomerate has acquired the Air India and its subsidiary Air India Express. The Tata group will get back its own child after 68 years. But the child is gravely ill and requires critical care without which it will perish soon. The Tatas are dishing out a whopping Rs 18,000 crore for a unit that's making 20-crore daily loss. Further, the Air India has an astronomical debt amount of Rs 83,916 crore. The Tatas will get ownership of only the loss-making brands like Air India, Indian Airlines & the Maharajah with a fleet of 117 wide-body and narrow-body aircraft and AIXL has a fleet of 24 narrow-body aircraft half of them on lease, not owned. Though bound to make loss for quite some time, the Tatas have acquired Air India for sentimental reasons only. And for sure, they will turn it around with their superb professional skills. It would be appropriate to share some unknown truths about why and how a vibrant outfit lost all health and lost

lustre. On a bitingly chilly morning of 2012, a horrendously rattled Praful Patel, sweating from head to foot, dashed off an SOS letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to save the country, the Ministry and the UPA only by protecting him from a criminal case initiated by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (Canadian counterpart of CBI) that probes shady arms deals and corrupt activities by citizens abroad. How Manmohan Singh responded to him, no one knows till date. But it was universal knowledge that the national carrier Air India was once upon a time synonymous with luxury air travel because of its unmatched royal hospitality. It was the first choice of wealthy, fussy passengers and also famous for making impressive profits never below Rs 100 crore annually until 2004 when Praful Patel took over as Civil Aviation Minister. Air India began losing money right from next day; and by 2011, it was ailing with a debt of Rs 4,000 crore and an accumulated cash loss of Rs 7,000 crore. It became bankrupt with frequent pilot strikes, employee agitation, chaos and insoluble financial problems. Before the Canadian authorities had sent him notices, Patel was already in trouble with allegations about the airline mismanagement. The Air India required just 28 aircrafts urgently and not even one more as advised by domain experts. But Patel found that number beggarly.

He ordered for 68 aircrafts, including 18 Boeing 737-800, 23 Boeing 777 long-range and extreme-range, and above all 27 prohibitively priced "Dreamliners" specifically rejected in the feasibility study. But he laughed off the expert recommendations and made the public bleed 50-70 billion rupees by having all these 'white elephant' aircraft ordered. Eventually, 50 wide-body and 18 narrow-body planes arrived, but the "Dreamliners" never showed up. The sickened airline asked the manufacturers for compensation for breach of contract, to which Patel disagreed. Patel had also coerced the IA chief to buy fancy aircrafts, but the latter, an honest professional, did not pay any heed. For the Air India deal, a letter from the Ministry was forwarded to CMD DV Thulasidas saying the Hon'ble Minister had directed the CMD to acquire the aircrafts. However very strong objections were made by Additional Secretary-cum-Financial Advisor V Subramaniam who insisted on revisiting the proposal of excess plane purchase. A high-level committee headed by CG Somaiah, included a number of Secretaries and a group of Ministers was kept in total dark about the objections made by the FA. Somaiah was immediately shunted out of the picture within only a week lest he should reveal the truth about non-visibility. A 500-billion rupee worth of aircraft for a 70-billion turnover company was forced upon the nation.

Patel interestingly had also turned the advocate-spokesperson for Goyal and Vijay Malloya when he pressed for allocation of all profit routes to Jet and Kingfisher airlines under the plea of encouraging entrepreneurship. Praful Patel's daughter Poorna Patel, a hospitality manager with the IPL (T-20 cricket), had an Air India craft chartered for ferrying IPL players from Chandigarh to Chennai, compelling the cancellation of a scheduled flight IC-7603. In another incident, Praful had got the type of aircraft changed from Airbus 312 to a much larger Airbus 320 on the Bangalore-Male (Maldives) route in 2010 for a pleasure trip. By this time, Air India, once the pride of India, was virtually gasping for breath with no funds in hand and no top-grade pilot willing to fly suspect-quality planes. Thus, the Air India was virtually finished by 2012. Praful's personal empire's head office called the "Eeja House" is a gleaming 14-storied structure which got glossier and brighter every next day. He was declared the wealthiest Minister in the country as per the declarations made by him. His father had set up a bidi factory which gave them livelihood. So they call him 'Beedi King'. Beauty and money, he imagined, made a person invincible. But the deadliest letter from the Canadian Government made him witless.

The Royal Canadian Police was first alerted by the popular newspaper 'Globe and Mail' which carried the huge kickback story. The story talked of Indian-origin businessman Nazir Karigar who had paid 2,50,000 dollars through his Indian contacts through a friend, Laxman Dhole, who paid the amount to Praful. Hasan Gafoor, a former Mumbai Police Commissioner, and then the Director of Security at Air India also happened to be a chum of Nazir's. Gafoor's father was the Collector of Solapur and Nazir's father a wealthy businessman with factories and textile mills in the same town. Nazir wanted to pull a contract for a software that read boarding passes and recognised human faces, manufactured by Cryptometrics, the firm he represented. The Canadian daily described how allegedly Hasan Gafoor had conspired with Nazir Karigar to rig a contract of 100 million dollars with Air India after a Minister agreed to help. Eventually, since the deal never came off, Karigar spilled the beans before the then Canadian Trade Commissioner in India Annie Dube, who in turn alerted the RCMP in Canada where new law is to nab the culprits involved in fraud or corruption by a Canadian citizen in a foreign country. The bilateral agreement empowers the Canadian authorities to probe in India. Hence, the cold sweat rolling down the great Minister's body.

# 1971 War veteran cries for safety in Puri

**SAROJ KUMAR MISHRA ■ PURI**  
Once he had saved his motherland sustaining bullet injuries in the battlefield, but is he crying for own safety and of his property. Sadly, neither have the police nor the local authorities ever extended a helping hand to the injured soldier. Without military pension, the septuagenarian is fighting for two square meals a day. Meet Mahendra Parija (71) of Gopinathpur under Arakkhukja police limit of Parikud block. Commissioned in 1962 as a foot-soldier, Parija had to quit Army in 1972 after being declared Category-C (unfit due to bullet injury) in the 19 71-Indo-Pak War. He was sent back home with one-time settlement given, including a 2.70 acre of land near the Chilka lake. Since then, he has been living there alone with plantation being his sole source of livelihood. Parija's plight had doubled when he lost his spouse without an issue months after his return to home. Then he preferred to stay single and devoted his life for social works. In the meantime, he got a destitute widow with her two children and continued taking care of them for almost four decades in his house as family members. But ironically, they have quitted him a few months back when at his old age with damaged legs he needs a helping hand to move. In his hard times, some sand mafia have grabbed his land threatening to kill him



unless he quits his house, said Parija while narrating his struggle from Army camp to village. He told as he is not able to move, so he has informed police several times over phone only for safety but was unheard of yet. "With heart problems, I am not able to move without other's support after my leg vein got damaged in a surgery a few years back. My financial condition is grim now as I have

spent all my deposits towards treatment. The Rs 500 old-age pension does not meet my medicine expenditure," said Parija seeking help of the district Collector. He accused Upendra Dalei of Paiksahi, Trinath Pradhan of Siara, Biswanth Behera and Hemakant Behera of Gopinathpur of encroaching upon his land forcefully and threatening him of dire consequences.

# Mamita story: Social media abuzz with comments

BIKASH KHEMKA ■ BHAWANI-PATNA

Social media has been full of comments following murder mystery of woman teacher Mamita Meher whose body was buried at the under-construction building of a stadium by the accused.

Women, men and children watched the live telecast of the local channels where JCB was used to bring out the body.

Fear engulfed parents about their daughters' safety seeing the murder mystery of the school teacher. A housewife requesting anonymity said she is scared of sending her daughter to teach in a school.

After watching the Mamita's death news on television, Jyotipuspa Das posted a photo of a dead body in Facebook and wrote, "Why did you bring me back from the



pit where I was buried under eight feet soil.

Take away that anklet, necklace and all the worldly regrets of mine. I was very well in my mother's womb."

"I was a woman, I had a body...., burnt, buried...Now I am the soil.....What else will you do knowing my DNA? Take away my dead body, put it in your soil and make it fer-

tile," commented another.

Another posted that whether Mamita will get justice or not. Digambar Patra posted in facebook that such a horrific and heinous incident is a blot

for a peaceful area like Kalahandi. "Time will tell whether the formula holders of Kalank will get proper punishment or will slip in the security of politics, but it seems that the rule has been delayed from Naveen Babu! Will the Government investigate in every direction along with giving justice to the family and women society? But even innocent people should not be punished for political purposes!" he wrote.

Supporting the Home Minister whose involvement is alleged, Prasanta Naik posted, "I am fully supporting you.

The opposition party, even if they propagate against you, they will not be benefited. I know you're a completely pure minded person. You are a friend of the poor, so all the poor of the Kalahandi are with you."

# Mamita murder: Govinda Sahu had pre-planned the crime

PNS ■ BALANGIR

After the arrest of the main accused Govinda Sahu, allegedly involved in the murder of 24-year-old Mamita Meher of Jharni village under Turekela block of Balangir district, it has been revealed that Sahu had pre-planned the woman's murder.

Sahu has confessed during interrogation by police that he killed the woman and buried her body.

Sahu and Mamita went to Bhawanipatna in his car on October 8. While returning, Sahu strangled her to death in the vehicle.

As the woman desperately tried to save herself and escape, the back seat of the car got torn, reports said. On October 7, Sahu had directed an excavator



operator to dig a pit at the stadium construction site of the school.

After the death of Mamita, the body was set on fire by dousing petrol and it was buried in the pit. Salt was also put on the body for quick decomposition, the report said.

Family members of the deceased had earlier alleged

that Sahu was involved in sexually harassing the woman employees of the school. Mamita had warned Sahu of exposing his illicit affairs.

Notably, Mamita, who was engaged as a teacher in the Sunshine English Medium School at Mahaling in Kalahandi district, went missing on October 8.

# 'Acquire land early for Talcher-B'garh rly line'

PNS ■ ROURKELA

A delegation of Talcher-Bimlagarh Rail Line Sangram Samiti (TBRSS) under the leadership of Bonai MLA Laxman Munda met Sundargarh Collector Nikhil Pawan Kalyan and urged him for early land acquisition for the important project which has been delayed for long.

The members argued that in current fiscal year Rs 117 crore has been sanctioned for the project. So, the sum of money be invested in the project by acquiring land.

Collector Kalyan said that the district administration and the State Government were giving utmost priority to the project and the thrust is given on land acquisition. So far



75.5 acres of land have already been handed over to the Railways and for the rest 22.21

acres, work is going on. So far, the land acquisition in 22 villages of Lahunipara Block, four villages of Koira Block and three villages of Bonai block has already been completed. By November 30, 70% land acquisition will be completed and the land will be handed over to the Railways from Bimlagarh side, assured Kalyan.

Notably, for the project, a total of 247.640 acres of private land, 192.79 acres of Government land and 95.5 acres of forest land will be acquired and handed over to the Railways.

Among others, Harihar Routray, Bishnu Mohanty, Ramesh Bal, Pamod Samal, Bimal Bisi, Srimanta Behera and Rajkishore Pradhan were in the delegation.

# Mines Secretary opens Nalco project



PNS ■ ANGUL

Navratna Company Nalco's clean slurry project was inaugurated at Angul on Wednesday by Union Mines Secretary Alok Tandon, who stated that it is a significant milestone in the company's

journey for business excellence and adopting outstanding practices in environmental management.

The project would ensure 100% utilisation of fly ash generated at the company's captive power plant (CPP). Tandon accompanied by

Nalco CMD Sridhar Patra visited the smelter and captive power plants of the company at Angul and appreciated the efforts of Nalco in achieving the targets and scaling new heights of success amidst the challenging business environment.

# C'garh truck with stolen ore seized in Joda



PNS ■ CHAMPUPA

On Monday night, a forest squad of Joda under Champupa Range seized a truck, allegedly loaded with theft iron from the local mines.

Champupa Range Officer Sanjiv Kumar Rout revealed that while patrolling was going on led by Forest Section Officer

Anirudha Panda in forest area of Gurubeda, the forest staff noticed a 12-wheel truck, with regd No. CG/15DD/9862, was standing at Pahad hatting.

When the forest staff moved towards the truck to know the matter, the driver and helper ran away, leaving the truck apart.

However, after verification, it was found that the truck was

loaded with iron ore illegally collected from the stack of nearby mines and was to be dispatched to Chhattisgarh etc. Later, the truck was seized and handed over to Bamebari forest section. Joda Mining office whose prime duty is to check the theft of iron ore is sitting silent for the reason best known to the mining authority.

# Five noted poets to receive KBMSS Award

PNS ■ BALESWAR

This year five noted poets of the State would be receiving the Kabi Basanta Muduli Smruti Sansad (KBMSS) Award for the last five years from 2016-21.

The award will be given in the native land of Muduli, that is, Bhadrak, next month. The nominees to receive the award are Kishor Panigrahi, Dr Subhashree Lenka, Preetidhara Samal, Ipsita Sadangi and Badal Mohanty. The award has been instituted in the name of an eminent progressive poet Basanta Muduli who died at an early age of 26 in a road accident.

For 29 years, the award has been given to different poets based on their merits.

**The award will be given in the native land of Muduli, that is, Bhadrak, next month.**

For the last four years, the award ceremony couldn't be held due to inevitable reasons. This year, the committee decided to hold function and felicitate the winners, said KBMSS secretary poet Krushna Kumar

Mohanty, adding the selection of the winners is made by panelists including Arun Khilar, Bijay Nayak and Nirankar Das.

# Puri: 2 women hurt in separate firing incidents, targeted for not paying extortion money

PNS ■ PURI

In yet another incident of the worsening law and order situation in Puri town, a woman Sakuntala Sahu suffered bullet injuries after being shot at by two bike-borne miscreants late on Tuesday night after she refused to pay extortion money.

Another 50-year-old woman Tumi Behera of Mattitota under the Baselisahi police station was injured in firing by the same extortionists in the evening, when she tried to come to the rescue of her son, who was attacked by the two hoodlums. The duo had asked the youth to pay some money but when he declined they attacked him.

A critically injured

Sakuntala, a resident of the Narendrakona area under the Kumbharpada police station in the town, was initially rushed to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) and later referred to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack after her condition worsened.

One of the two bike-borne miscreants, who is the main accused has been identified by the victims as Biju Behera of Gokhasahi while the identification of his associate was yet to be ascertained. The police have formed two teams and launched a hunt to nab Biju and his aide. The two firing incidents in a span of hours have triggered shockwaves among the residents of the holy town.

# Many join BJD at Jharsuguda

PNS ■ JHARSUGUDA

The BJD held a joining ceremony here on Tuesday in presence of Health Minister and Jharsuguda MLA Naba Kishore Das.

Minister Das welcomed the new members to the BJD. Many youth organisers and senior locals of Jharsuguda town joined the party attracted by the development mission of Minister Das and leadership of CM Naveen Patnaik. Coming from different parties, Umesh Behera Ashok Kumar, Rabin Suna, Hadu Bisar, Sita Sandha, Kasta Suna etc joined the BJD.

While BJD town president Sandeep Awasthy presided, senior BJD leaders Tapas Ray Chowdhury, Harish Ganatra, Raghupati Patel, Suresh Kumar Lokchandani, Pratap Nanda, Sidharth Sarkar, Pintu Padhi, Jayprakash Kuanar, Madan Hati, Tulasi Prasad Dash, Nandlal Patel, Alok Tripathy, Sasibhusan Tiwari and Gobind Singhania were present, among others.

# BOOK REVIEW: MY MOTHER, MY HERO

Nilimarani: A life dedicated to others' service



By Achyuta Samanta  
Publisher: Rupa Publications Pvt Ltd

Nilimarani: A life dedicated to others' service

Sometimes, the strength of the motherhood is greater than natural laws.

Our ancient seers have told, "Janani Janma Bhumischa Swargadapi Gariyasi" (The mother and the motherland are loftier than the heaven).

Mothers have a predominant place in the lives of their offspring. It is because God made mothers in His own image on this mundane earth. The Almighty has bestowed mothers with the power to think of the future because they

give birth to it in their children. A mother's arms and lap are full of tenderness and care where the child can sleep soundly forgetting all pains and miseries. Further, Lord has endowed mothers with abundant energy to fight against heavy odds to ward off adversities to protect their children. A mother is the first teacher for a child who teaches the child to learn to walk. Her soothing words, warmth of oneness and caress soothe our bruised heart and soul traumatised by worldly existence. It is needless to mention that mothers are the only ones that think nothing is beyond their control when it comes to their children's welfare. She is the only one who gives us unconditional love. That is why no matter how old we are, as long as mother is there, we need her.

The Covid pandemic will remain alive in mankind's memory as one of the most difficult and trying times of modern civilisation. The "New Normal" brought in curfews, lockdowns, quarantine, self-isolation and containment zones. Fear and panic ruled the days. The two most-sought-after things in these maverick times were "humanity and compassion".

In these tumultuous times,

Prof Achyuta Samanta's "My mother, my hero" will be ranked among the best tributes to the mothers of the world who are symbols of humanity and compassion. Since Prof Samnata lost his father at a very early age, his mother Nilimarani played a multifaceted role of a father, teacher, mentor and role model all rolled into one.

The story of Nilimarani is of a dedicated persona who almost singlehandedly fought against numerous vicissitudes of life to protect her children in the aftermath of her husband's untimely demise. She was the epitome of courage and fortitude. She exhibited to the world that how difficult the path may be, one can come out successful with the right conviction, determination and, of course, the grace of Lord.

The book weaves the storyline of a traditional middle-class joint family in a remote village of rural Odisha in the early 1960. The book is an excellent vignette of life in its varied contours of pain, misery, laughter and joy. The story is embedded with minute details of family life which can make the reader emotional. The main protagonist Nilimarani was born in a family that did not give much importance to girls'

education. Traditionally, people thought girls were meant to be married off once they came of age. Nilimarani married at a young age to a handsome man of the same village. Lord blessed her with happy conjugal life of few years. But with the travesty of destiny, she lost her husband to a tragic mishap when she was only 40. She had to face life with no financial or family support. With seven children to look after, she returned to her native village Kalarabanka from the steel city of Jamshedpur, where her husband was working in an industry.

Her life took a traumatic turn as she struggled day and night to arrange two squares of meals for her children. Yet, she never gave up.

It is said, "Fortune favours the brave." Nilimarani overcame all the trials and tribulations with hard work and quiet fortitude. God has been kind. All her children received good education and established themselves in the society. They became good and caring human beings.

Nilimarani's journey did not end there. Her heart throbbled for the downtrodden and poor of Kalarabanka. She lived a life of a simple woman, not touched by the complications of so-called modern life. She inspired her dear son Prof Achyuta Samanta, who imbibed all godly qualities from her to think about the poor from his very childhood and has unflinching faith in the Almighty. Nilimarani continued to remain in the same non-descript village Kalarabanka that had been her home for decades till her last days. Her continuous efforts and tireless work have contributed in turning the once-remote Kalabanka into the first smart village of Odisha having all modern facilities of city life.

The characterisation of Nilimarani is the image of a traditional devout lady full of lively emotions yet staying firmly rooted to the ground.

Prof Achyuta Samanta, nourished by the vision of his loving mother, has become the founder of two world-class institutions, KIIT and KISS, which are universities of compassion and humanity. He continues to work relentlessly to achieve the dream of a world bereft of hunger, poverty and illiteracy.

# S'garh villagers seek CAG audit of DMF funds: Launch postcard drive

MALAY RAY ■ SUNDARGARH

A group of villagers of Hemgiri block of Sundargarh district launched a postcard initiative on Monday, where in they have appealed their public representatives to conduct audit of District Mineral Foundation (DMF) funds spending by the CAG.

Significantly, while crores of rupees are spent through DMF towards development of the district, mainly of the mines areas, allegations are galore regarding wrongful use of funds and bungling.

Sources said that as per provisions of the Union Government's new mining policy, the DMF was created in every mining district for local development. As per the policy, the district Collector functions as the head of the DMF and the elected representatives are the trustees of the same. The funds are spent in development of the district, with about 60% in mining areas and remaining 40% in other areas of the district.

Of late however, allegations of wrongful use of the funds

have started coming to the fore from different quarters.

According to sources, villagers of seven panchayats under Hemgiri block on Monday reportedly reached at Bileimunda post office and launched a post card drive against alleged wrongful use of DMF funds. They wrote letters to Sundargarh Sadar MLA Kusum Tete and Sundargarh MP Jual Oram through postcard, appealing them to claim CAG audit of DMF.

As per the villagers of these seven panchayats of Hemgiri block, since elected representatives are the trustees of the DMF, they have appealed them to demand CAG audit of the utilisation of DMF, in a bid to ensure transparency.

The villagers are affected by coal mines of the Mahanadi Coalfields Limited. It has been alleged that the DMF funds are being utilised as per the wish of authorities of district administration lacking transparency, as a result of which the mining affected areas of the district continue to be deprived of development.

# Tension at Baleswar oil depot as lorry drivers, helpers stage demo

PNS ■ BALESWAR

Tension erupted in front of an Indian Oil depot here at Somnathpur after the drivers and helpers of tank lorries staged demonstration against a newly joined Deputy Manager.

Due to the agitation, the transportation of oil from the depot was adversely affected. The agitators alleged that the manager was acting arbitrarily without following the guidelines while giving them load. As a result, their lorries were remaining idle for more than 4-5 days without load, which is causing financial loss to them. The agitators maintained that as many as 135 lorries joined the protest and they wouldn't take load till the manager was removed from the charge.

# Events lined up to celebrate 100 cr job feat



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With around 99.4 crore doses already administered on Wednesday, the Government hopes to complete 1 billion, or 100 crore, doses by Thursday. The Government has lined up a string of programmes for the 'great achievement which comes nine months after the vaccination drive started in the country.

Sources said party leaders have been asked to visit vaccination centres; party chief JP Nadda will be in Ghaziabad in UP, which votes early next year, for the occasion, while General Secretaries Arun Singh and Dushyant Gautam will be in Tamil Nadu's Coimbatore and Lucknow, respectively.

To mark the billionth shot the government had also planned to make announcements over loudspeakers on trains, planes, and ships, and hoist the national flag at the Red Fort in Delhi. In the meantime, the Government said that it has

## CO2 emissions to keep rising for want of bids on safe constructions: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic caused CO2 emissions from buildings and construction to fall significantly in 2020, but a lack of efforts to decarbonise in real sense means that emissions will keep rising and contribute to dangerous climate change, according to the 2021 Global Status Report for Buildings and Construction.

The report, published by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)-hosted Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC), finds that in 2020, the sector accounted for 36 per cent of global final energy consumption and 37 per cent of energy related CO2 emissions, as compared to other end use sectors.

While the level of emissions within the sector are 10

per cent lower than in 2015, reaching lows not seen since 2007, this was largely due to lockdowns, slowing of economies, difficulties households and businesses faced in maintaining and affording energy access and a fall in construction activity. Efforts to decarbonize the sector played only a small role.

With large growth projected in the buildings sector, emissions are set to rise if there is no effort to decarbonize buildings and improve their energy efficiency. In Asia and Africa, building stock is expected to double by 2050. Global material use is expected to more than double by 2060, with one-third of this rise attributable to construction materials.

"This year showed that climate change is an immediate, direct threat to every community on this planet, and it is only going to intensify," said Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP. "The buildings and construction sector, as a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, must urgently be decarbonized through a triple strategy of reducing energy demand, decarbonising the power supply and addressing building materials' carbon footprint, if we are to have any chance of meeting the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5C."

The GlobalABC's Global Buildings Climate Tracker (GlobalABC), finds that in 2020, the sector accounted for 36 per cent of global final energy consumption and 37 per cent of energy related CO2 emissions, as compared to other end use sectors.

While the level of emissions within the sector are 10



the Paris Agreement. This number has now hit 136, although ambition varies.

Since 2015, an additional 18 countries have put in place building energy codes - a move that is crucial to shift emissions downwards - bringing the total to 80. Local cities and governments have also developed codes. Investment in energy efficiency rose to over 180 billion USD in 2020, up from 129 billion in 2015. Green building certification has increased by 13.9 per cent compared to 2019.

Overall, however, the report finds that these efforts are insufficient, both in terms of speed and scale.

Other key findings of the report include: two-thirds of countries still lack mandatory buildings codes; most of the increase in energy efficiency spending came from a small number of European countries; too small a share of finance goes into deep energy retrofits, and there is a lack of ambitious decarbonization targets in NDCs.

Energy demand in the buildings and construction sector is likely to rebound as economic recovery efforts take hold and as pent-up demands for new construction are realized. By 2030, to be on track to achieving a goal of net-zero emissions by 2050, the International Energy Agency says that direct building CO2 emissions would need to decrease by 50 per cent while indirect building sector emissions will have to drop through a reduction of 60 per cent in power generation emissions.

## 'Flower protein expression' could accurately predict hospitalisation or death: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Especially helpful in cases of the early phase of Covid-19 illness, the 'flower protein expression', a particular protein on the cell surface, could accurately predict hospitalisation or death as well as forecast who would have a less serious infection, scientists have said in a study published in EMBO Molecular Medicine.

The study shows that analysis of a particular protein on the cell surface is likely to predict who is in danger of a serious infection caused by the virus, explains Assistant Professor Rajan Gogna, lead author of the new study.

"Cells have a so-called fitness status, and by analysing it we could predict hospitalisation or death in Covid-19 patients, potentially making such a biomarker an earlier prediction tool, especially because it can be detected from the common nasal swab covid-19 tests," says Rajan Gogna from the Won Group at the Biotech Research & Innovation Centre.

If the cell fitness status is poor, it indicates that the cell

does not develop well, either because the cell is aged, lacks reliability, has an ill-functioning metabolism or is disease prone etc. Earlier in 2021, the research team discovered that fitness status is expressed in proteins called flower proteins. These flower proteins are on the surface of the cell, and they are expressed in two forms, explains Rajan Gogna.

"In one form, they tell the surrounding cells that this cell is doing well. In the other form, they indicate to the surrounding tissue that this particular cell is not doing well and thus has a bad fitness status. If the cell's fitness status is not great, the cell will get phased out and killed by the surrounding cells."

Especially helpful in cases of the early phase of COVID-19 illness, the flower protein expression could accurately predict hospitalisation or death as well as forecast who would have a less serious infection.

"The method could predict who needed hospitalisation with an accuracy of 78.7 per cent. With COVID-19 patients who would not have a serious

infection, the prediction was accurate at 93.9 percent," said Associate Professor and Group Leader Kyoung Jae Won, who analyzed the data using machine learning.

In order to analyse the data, the researchers performed a post-mortem examination of the infected lung tissue in deceased COVID-19 patients to determine the flower protein's biological role in acute lung injury, which is the main cause of death from the disease.

"The cell fitness, expressed by the flower protein, could help explain why some people respond poorly to COVID-19 and provide an opportunity for pre-identification of high-risk individuals. This discovery has the potential to help save their lives by severely alerting them to be extra protective of themselves, or until they are fortunate enough to get their hands on a vaccine.

In some other nations, the population in general has great hesitancy against vaccination. But people are not hesitant about a test, and we hope this will improve outcomes," said Rajan Gogna.

## Negative RT-PCR test must for int'l travellers visiting India



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

All international travellers visiting India will need a negative RT-PCR test, according to the revised guidelines for international arrivals that will be implemented from October 25. An order issued by the Union Health Ministry said, "The global trajectory of Covid-19 pandemic continues to decline with certain regional variations. The need to monitor the continuously changing nature of the virus and the evolution of SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern (VOCs) must still remain in focus."

"The existing guidelines (issued on 17th February 2021 with subsequent addendums) for international arrivals in India have been formulated taking a risk-based approach. In view of increasing vaccination coverage across the globe and the changing nature of the pandemic, the existing guidelines for international arrivals in India have been reviewed," said the guidelines.

The order stated that the revised protocols need to be adhered to by international travellers as well as by airlines at points of entry (airports, seaports and land borders) for risk profiling of passengers.

As per the order, all travellers should submit a self-declaration form on the online Air Suvidha portal before the scheduled travel, upload a negative Covid-19 RT-PCR report (this test should have been conducted within 72 hrs prior to undertaking the journey) and each passenger shall also submit a declaration with respect to the authenticity of the report and will be liable for criminal prosecution if found otherwise.

## NIA raids locations in J&K terror conspiracy case, 4 held

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday conducted searches at multiple locations in four districts of Jammu and Kashmir and arrested four accused persons in the J&K terrorism conspiracy case.

The agency conducted searches at 11 locations in Srinagar, Pulwama, Kulgam and Baramulla districts of Jammu and Kashmir and arrested four accused persons -- Suhail Ahmad Thokar (Kulgam), Kamran Ashraf Reshi (Hazratbal, Srinagar), Rayid Bashir (Srinagar) and Hanan Gulzar Dar (Srinagar), the NIA said in a statement.

The case relates to conspiracy for undertaking violent terrorist acts in Jammu and Kashmir and other major cities by cadres of proscribed terrorist organisations Laskkar-e-Tayabba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Al Badr and similar other outfits and their affiliates including The Resistance Front (TRF) and People Against Fascist Forces (PAFF)

## Multiple spots raided in Mudra drug haul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA on Wednesday conducted searches in Delhi in the case of seizure of 3,000 Kg drugs at Mundra Port, Gujarat. The agency conducted the searches at a godown in Nebsarai here, the agency said. The search was conducted at Nebsarai in connection with the seizure of narcotics substance imported in the guise of semi processed talc stones by private firm Aashi Trading company. "During the search conducted today white powder material, suspected to be talc mixed with narcotics, has been seized with the help of FSL (Forensic Sciences Laboratory)," the NIA said in a statement.

"Searches conducted today have led to recovery and seizure of electronic devices and incriminating jihadi documents/posters etc.," it said.

Preliminary investigation has revealed that the four arrested accused persons are terror associates/OGWs (over ground workers) of various proscribed terrorist organisations and have been providing logistical and material support to the terrorists, it added.

## BSF seizes bag full of foreign made pistols

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Border Security Force (BSF) on Wednesday said it has recovered a bag containing 22 pistols of Chinese, Pakistani and Italian make besides hundreds of rounds of ammunition from the border in Punjab in a joint operation with the Punjab police.

The seizures of the weapons, ammunition and the contraband items were made in the operational area of Khemkaran in Ferozepur district of Punjab.

"On 19th Oct' 2021, based on intelligence of Punjab Police regarding presence of consignment ahead of Border Security Force

(in between B S Fence Gate No 159 to 160) in the AOR (area of responsibility) of BOP (Border Out Post) Uttar and T Bundh, a joint search operation was carried out by the BSF troops and a team of Punjab Police, Amritsar," the BSF said in a statement.

During the search operation, one shoulder bag (black in colour) was found lying inside the paddy fields (short of 10 metres from International Boundary), in the said alignment of BOP No 160/2 in the operational area of BOP T Bundh, it said.

From the recovered shoulder bag, the seized contraband included 22 pistols.

## Jacqueline appears before ED

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Having evaded four summons served to her by the agency, Bollywood actor Jacqueline Fernandez on Wednesday appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to record her statement under prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in connection with a money laundering case related to alleged conman Sukesh Chandrashekar who has allegedly duped high profile personalities of Rs 200 crore.

Fernandez appeared before the agency here at around 3 PM. Along with the summons, the agency had also asked Fernandez to bring with her bank statements pertaining to her debit and credit cards trans-

actions, they added.

Fernandez's financial transactions and her alleged association with Sukesh Chandrashekar are under the ED scanner. While investigating the money trail of Chandrashekar, the investigators learnt about the alleged link between Fernandez and the conman, sources said.

The ED sleuths are seeking to ascertain any possible financial transactions between Chandrashekar and Fernandez.

The investigators are learnt to have posed to her questions like when was the first time she met either Chandrashekar or his wife Leena Maria Paul. Did she speak to Chandrashekar over the phone and if yes, how many times and whether she knew if the person on the other side was Chandrashekar.

In August, the ED had one questioned Fernandez in connection with the case and then she had reportedly told the investigators that she was also a victim of Chandrashekar and denied any wrongdoing.

Chandrashekar, along with his wife and actor Leena Paul, is in ED custody along with five others in connection with the Rs 200 crore extortion case.

Earlier this month, actor and performer Nora Fatehi was also questioned by the agency over her reported links with Chandrashekar and Paul.

Fatehi's spokesperson had later issued a statement saying that the actor did not have any personal links with conman Sukesh Chandrashekar.

## Cong demands immediate restoration of J&K statehood

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday demanded immediate restoration of statehood and a democratically elected government in Jammu and Kashmir, while alleging that the Centre has "utterly failed" to tackle the situation there. The party also questioned the "silence" of Home Minister Amit Shah after the "selective killings" of 32 civilians and nine soldiers in the Union territory.

"Even after the selective murder of 32 civilians and nine soldiers, the home minister is still silent. This means that neither the Government

of India, under whose direct jurisdiction is Jammu and Kashmir, is able to understand the situation, nor can it tackle the situation," Congress spokesperson Gourav Vallabh said at the AICC Press conference.

"We demand that full statehood be given to Jammu and Kashmir immediately and there should be a government by democratic process and as per the Constitution of the country, and not by bypassing the Constitution. The people who have left Jammu and Kashmir should be immediately provided with financial assistance and employment opportunities at the place of their return," Vallabh said in the wake of the exodus of migrant workers from Jammu and Kashmir.

Noting that Government of India made several promises about the development of the Union territory, he asked why employment rate there is the lowest in the country and why the tourist footfall and capital inflow has decreased since it came under the direct control of the Centre.

Selective murders are taking place because the Centre is unable to govern the State.

# Govts plan to double production of energy from fossil fuels by 2030: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Despite increased climate ambition and net-zero commitments, Governments still plan to produce more than double the amount of energy from fossil fuels in 2030, than the amount that would limit global warming to the Paris Agreement level of 1.5°C, according to the 2021 Production Gap Report, released Wednesday by research institutes and the UN Environment Programme

(UNEP). Over the next two decades, governments are projecting an increase in global oil and gas production, and only a modest decrease in coal production, said the report, cautioning that taken together, these plans mean that fossil fuel production will increase overall, to at least 2040.

For Executive Director of UNEP, Inger Andersen, "there is still time to limit long-term warming to 1.5°C [above pre-industrial levels], but this win-

dow of opportunity is rapidly closing."

Andersen said that at the UN Climate Conference, COP26, taking place in early November in Glasgow, "governments must step up, taking rapid and immediate steps to close the fossil fuel production gap and ensure a just and equitable transition."

"This is what climate ambition looks like," she said.

This year's report provides profiles for 15 major producer countries, showing that most

## This year's report provides profiles for 15 major producer countries, showing that most will continue to support fossil fuel production growth

will continue to support fossil fuel production growth.

Reacting to the report, the UN Secretary General highlighted recent announcements by the world's largest economies to end financing of coal, calling them "a much-needed step" in phasing out fossil fuels.

For António Guterres, though, the report shows that "there is still a long way to go to a clean energy future."

"It is urgent that all remaining public financiers as well as private finance, including com-

mercial banks and asset managers, switch their funding from coal to renewables to promote full decarbonization of the power sector and access to renewable energy for all," he said.

As per the report, countries surveyed plan to produce around 110 per cent more fossil fuels in 2030 than would be consistent with the 1.5°C limit, and 45 per cent more than what would allow a 2°C heating impact.

The report, first launched in 2019, measures the gap between

governments' production plans and the levels consistent with the Paris Agreement. Two years later, the size of the gap has remained largely unchanged.

Current plans would lead to about 240 per cent more coal, 57 per cent more oil, and 71 per cent more gas production in 2030 than would be consistent with limiting global warming to 1.5°C.

Global gas output is projected to increase the most between 2020 and 2040, continuing a trend of long-term

global expansion inconsistent with the Paris Agreement.

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, countries have directed over \$300 billion in new funds towards fossil fuel activities - more than they have towards clean energy.

For lead author of the report, Ploy Achakulwisut, the research is clear: "Global coal, oil, and gas production must start declining immediately and steeply to be consistent with limiting long-term warming to 1.5°C."

# OPS-EPS rift visible; hints of fracture in AIADMK

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The process of disintegration of the AIADMK began in earnest on Wednesday as a prelude to the Golden Jubilee celebration of the party that falls in 2022. The AIADMK's chief coordinator O Panneerselvam was conspicuous by his absence in the official delegation that called on Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi on Wednesday. This comes amidst reports that the party is getting ready to revert back to the single power centre of general secretary against the present system of dual leadership. As on date the AIADMK is led by the Palaniswamy-Panneerselvam combination. But following the debacle of the party in two successive elections (2019 and 2021) there has been a strong demand by veteran leaders to go back to the system of general secretary heading the party.

No official reason has been given by the AIADMK for the absence of Panneerselvam though the delegation was led by Leader of the Opposition Edappadi K Palanisamy and included former ministers C V Shanmugham, K Jayakumar, K P Munusamy, Vaithyalingam, Thankamani and Velumani.

According to Palanisamy,



the leaders submitted a memorandum to the Governor listing the "widespread" irregularities in the recent Panchayat election held in the newly carved out nine districts. The opposition AIADMK was routed in the polls which was swept by the DMK.

Accusing the ruling party for irregularities in election is a ritual in Tamil Nadu and both the AIADMK and the DMK have figured as 'accused' depending on who is ruling the State. What is left unsaid this time by Palaniswamy is another issue which he raised with the Governor. The ruling DMK is selectively targeting leaders belonging to the Palaniswamy camp by subjecting their residences and offices to raids by the Directorate of Vigilance and Ant-Corruption (DVAC), a convenient tool in the hands of the ruling party.

While senior functionaries of the party like Rama Ramanathan are tight lipped about the absence of Panneerselvam in the delegation to Raj Bhavan, they said all was well within the party. Ramanathan said that the report about Panneerselvam not accompanying Palaniswamy was being blown out of proportion. Sources close to Palaniswamy told *The Pioneer* that Panneerselvam has not been informed of the scheduled meeting between the AIADMK team and the Governor. "The recent statement on golden jubilee celebrations issued by the party had the signature of only Palaniswamy though all statements till date were issued with the signatures of both the leaders. This is the indication that plans are afoot to convene the general body meeting to elect the general secretary."

# BJP, TMC spar over Didi's silence on anti-Hindu riots

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bangladesh riots continued to have its political ramifications in this side of the border with the BJP firing more salvos at Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for giving no reactions to "the torture being perpetrated on the minority Hindus of that country."

Bengal BJP president Sukanta Majumdar on Wednesday attacked the Chief Minister for her "mysterious silence on the Bangladesh riots where Hindus are being murdered, looted and tortured at will." He said "this is the same Chief Minister who had threatened to go to the United Nations if Citizenship Amendment Act was implemented in Bengal... now why she has suddenly gone silent on the riots taking place in Bangladesh where houses and properties of Hindus are being looted and burnt down... and they are being killed... why she is not uttering a single word on this."

The Trinamool Congress however hit back saying unlike the BJP it was not trying to politicize the issue. "We have already protested against what happened in Bangladesh... Mamata Banerjee is unwell and is not appearing in public for same reason... our senior leader and Minister Partho Chatterjee has already spoken about this... the BJP has pre-



ferred to ignore what the TMC leader said... this is because they want to politicize the issue and encash it," senior TMC leader and Bengal Minister Subroto Mukherjee said. Meanwhile, actor and director Aparna Sen too condemned the Bangla riots saying "in a modern democratic system right to practice one's own religion is guaranteed everywhere... hence it is the duty of the majority community to ensure that the minorities can follow and practice their religion without hindrance... I am not talking only about Bangladesh though my immediate context is the riots taking place in that country... I am talking about all the countries including India."

Suwendu Adhikari earlier linked the Chief Minister's silence to her alleged "vote bank politics" saying "the Chief Minister does not want to earn the displeasure of a particular section of the society who are incidentally her voters... so she is keeping mysteriously silent about the whole issue... But the people of Bengal are observing this silence closely."

The Trinamool Congress however hit back saying unlike the BJP it was not trying to politicize the issue. "We have already protested against what happened in Bangladesh... Mamata Banerjee is unwell and is not appearing in public for same reason... our senior leader and Minister Partho Chatterjee has already spoken about this... the BJP has pre-

# Fake communal strife videos go viral, WB on alert

SIANS ■ KOLKATA

The West Bengal Home Department has put all the districts, particularly those bordering Bangladesh, on high alert after fake videos aiming to create communal tension following the attacks on Hindus during Durga Puja in Bangladesh, went viral.

One particular video from Bangladesh that has been making the rounds in Bengal is a clip having a tagline "how Jatan Saha, a Hindu Grand Alliance activist, was murdered in a temple at Noakhali".

Several BJP leaders, such as Debdas Mondal, general secretary of the party in Bongaon district, shared the video on Tuesday, seeking justice for the deceased. On the development, Bangladesh Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan on Tuesday said a group with "vested interests" was circulating fake videos on social media to create communal tension. Referring to the video, Khan explained that the 30-second clip he was referring to was of the May 16 incident in Dhaka's Pallabi area over a property dispute. "But a group with vested interests is circulating it, calling it the footage of the killing of Jatan Kumar Saha in

Noakhali, who died in the recent clashes. This is being done with the intention of creating communal tension. We condemn such actions," Khan said at a programme titled "Technological Modernisation of RAB (Rapid Action Battalion)".

A senior official of the state home department said that officials had been asked to keep track of all social media posts, as there are apprehensions that some forces might try to use the "assault on Hindus" in Bangladesh to create trouble in Bengal. "All units are being instructed to keep a sharp vigil on videos that are being forwarded. Even small matters of communal overtures are to be reported promptly at the highest level," he added.

"Any post which is spreading hatred, falsehood or rumours is to be dealt with sternly, as some groups and individuals have launched a concerted effort in the social media to spread communal hatred and create law and order issues," the official said.

The intelligence department has already sent a missive to all the SPs and senior police officers in the state to stay alert, considering the communal unrest in Bangladesh.

# Dalit youth suspected of stealing ₹25L dies in Agra police custody

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Valmiki Jayanti turned out to be a dampener for Agra police as a Dalit youth suspected of stealing ₹25 lakh died in police custody shortly after being taken to his home for recovering the booty in Jagdishpura police station area on Wednesday.

As the news of his death spread, hundreds of members of Valmiki community laid siege to the police station and staged a strong protest, accusing the cops of killing the victim by using third degree torture during interrogation.

The protest ended only after a case was registered against the police team and Senior Superintendent of Police of Agra G Muniraj suspended five cops, including an inspector, a sub-inspector and three constables.

As per reports, victim Arun Kumar worked as a janitor and used to clean the premises of Jagdishpura police station. On October 17, a total of Rs 25 lakh and some confiscated pistols were found missing from the 'malkhana' of the police station. After the incident came to light, the SSP of Agra suspended six police officials, including the then station house officer (inspector).

However during the probe, the police zeroed in on Arun and dur-

ing quizzing he reportedly confessed to stealing the money from the police station and stashing it at his home.

On Wednesday, a police team took the suspect to his house and while the cash was being recovered, Arun's health deteriorated. The cops rushed him to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced dead upon arrival.

Soon after his death, members of Valmiki community gheraoed the police station, accusing the police of using extreme methods to exact a confession leading to Arun's death. The community also declared to cancel Valmiki Jayanti celebrations on Wednesday to protest the custodial killing.

The agitators also demanded a compensation of Rs 1 crore for Arun's family. The victim's family alleged that the circumstances leading to Arun's death needed to be investigated.

ADG, Agra Zone, Rajiv Krishna said, "Our officers are in contact with his family. They're cooperating. Action will be taken if there was any negligence. The family has filed a complaint; they suspect that he was beaten up by police following which he died. An FIR has been registered and the matter will be probed."

# Priyanka allowed to meet kin of deceased after brief detention

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Congress general secretary and UP in-charge of the party, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's motorcade heading to the house of a Dalit youth who died in police custody in Agra on Wednesday was stopped by the Lucknow police personnel on Agra-Lucknow Expressway on Wednesday.

Priyanka had targeted the Yogi Adityanath Government in Uttar Pradesh for the death of Dalit youth Arun Kumar in the custody of Jagdishpura police station personnel in Agra.

On Wednesday morning, the Congress general secretary accompanied by some party leaders left her Kaul House residence in Lucknow to meet and express condolences to the family members of deceased Arun Kumar at Agra. But as her motorcade reached the Agra-Lucknow Expressway, officers and personnel of Lucknow police accompanied by a magistrate stopped the vehicles from proceeding forward, citing imposition of prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Soon, scores of Congress leaders and workers resorted to sloganeering against the Yogi government and created a ruckus. After some heated exchange of words, Priyanka and some of her party men were taken to the reserve police lines and detained till evening.

Upon her release after a day-long high drama, Priyanka and her party leaders proceeded to Agra in the



evening.

In a video that went viral soon after, Priyanka is heard saying, "They say I can't go to Agra. They stop me wherever I go. Should I keep sitting in restaurants just because it is politically convenient for them? I want to meet them (victim's kin), what is the big deal? The moment I try to visit any place other than the party office, then they (administration) try to stop me. It also caused inconvenience to the public. What is the law and order issue? Someone has died...we are just two-three persons going to meet the family"

Later, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra tweeted in Hindi: "Arun Valmiki died in police custody. His family is asking for justice. I want to go and meet his family. What is the UP government afraid of? Why am I being stopped? Today is Valmiki Jayanti. The PM made big statements about Mahatma Buddha, but is assaulting his (Buddha's) teachings."

In another tweet she said: "Beating someone to death in police custody -- What kind of justice is this? Arun Valmiki's death in police custody is condemnable. On Valmiki Jayanti, the UP government has acted against the teachings of Maharishi Valmiki. The incident should be probed by a high-level committee, action should be taken against the involved police officials and the family should be given compensation."

Lucknow's Commissioner of Police DK Thakur said that neither Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was arrested nor detained. "Ms Vadra was taken to reserve police lines after her convoy disrupted traffic movement on Agra-Lucknow Expressway. She was later released in the evening."

In another video, UP Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lalu asked police officers whether Section 144 was imposed in Kushinagar where the prime minister addressed a huge crowd.

# Heavy rain, landslides bring life to standstill in North Bengal



PNS ■ KOLKATA

After Uttarakhand it is the return of the eastern mountains of North Bengal with cloud bursts and heavy rains bringing lives in most towns of the northern part of the State to a standstill.

The road link between Bengal and Sikkim was snapped due to landslides at various places off Rangpo, sources in Darjeeling district administration said adding a part of the Balasan Bridge the one that connects Bengal to Assam and Bihar had subsided resulting in total blocking of the traffic which was currently being divert through another route.

Similarly National Highway 10 and 55 had been blocked due to landslides and flash flood, sources said adding

heavy rains in Bhutan had caused rivers like Jaldhaka to overflow. Two children were drawn in Kalimpong flowing flash flood.

"There has been heavy rains for the past three days with Siliguri witnessing 245 mm of rain... Darjeeling getting more than 200 mm, Kalimpong 199 mm, Jalpaiguri getting 151 and Malabar witnessing 320 mm rain," Pares Adhikari a minister said adding the tourists who were currently in the hills have been asked not to move out.

There has been heavy landslides at Lava, Bijanbari, Gorubathan, Sukhia Pokhri, Manebhanjan and elsewhere leading to virtual closer of most of the roads connecting hill towns to Siliguri. Large parts of Jalpaiguri too had been flooded, sources said.

# Mid-sea drug bust case: Special court rejects bail pleas of Aryan, two others

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

A Special Court set up under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act on Wednesday rejected the bail pleas of Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's eldest son Aryan Khan and two others in the mid-sea drug bust case, prompting Aryan's lawyers to challenge the sessions court's order in the Bombay High Court.

Apart from Aryan's bail application, the two other bail pleas that Additional Sessions Judge VV Patil rejected -- in his much-awaited order -- were that of his co-accused Arbaz Merchant and Munmun Dhamecha.

"Bail application nos 2571/21, 2576/21 and 2583/21 stand rejected. Accordingly, the bail applications are disposed of. The authenticated copy of roznama be supplied to Advocates and SPP," the Judge noted in his order that he passed at 2.45 pm. Less than two hours after the Special Court rejected his plea, Aryan's lawyers moved the high court challenging the lower court's order denying him bail in the mid-sea drug bust case.

Aryan's lawyers will make a mention of his plea before Justice Nitin Sambre for urgent listing.

The Special court, it may be recalled, had on October 14



reserved its order on Aryan's bail plea, after the Prosecution opposed the plea alleging that he was a regular consumer of drugs for the past few years and that he was part of the conspiracy in the mid-sea drug bust case.

Twenty-three-year-old Aryan and seven others were initially detained on the night of October 2 and later arrested on October 3, after the NCB officials busted a rave party and seized 13 grams of cocaine, 5 grams of MD (Mephedrone), 21 grams of Charas, 22 pills of MDMA (Ecstasy) and Rs 1.33 lakh in cash from Goa-bound Cordelia

Cruises' Empress ship, off the Mumbai coast.

The total number of arrests in the sensational drug bust case has gone up to 20, with the arrest of a foreign national Okara Quazma and a local person Shivraj Harihan.

Aryan and other accused have been booked for offences under Section 8(c), 20(b), 27, 28, 29 and 35 under the NDPS Act.

After his arrest, Aryan was remanded to NCB custody till October 4, which was extended till October 7. On October 8, the Mumbai Esplanade Court rejected the bail pleas of Bollywood superstar Shah

Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan and two others on the grounds of maintainability. Thereafter Aryan and four accused moved a Special NDPS court.

After hearing the arguments by Aryan's senior Advocate Amit Desai and other lawyers for the accused in the case and Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Anil Singh, the special NDPS court had on October 14 reserved its order on a bail applications made by Aryan and two other accused in the mid-sea drug bust case for October 20.

Though the grounds on which the special NDPS Court has rejected the bail pleas of Aryan and other accused, both the defence lawyers and Prosecution had argued for and against Aryan and other accused being granted bail.

In a plea made on behalf of Aryan before the Special Court, had made a strong case for their client's bail on the grounds: that no recovery of drugs has been made from his person and that since the offences arraigned against Khan are Sections 8(c), 20(b), 27, 28, 29, 35 of the NDPS Act and that since no Narcotic drugs or psychotropic substance has been recovered from him, the bar against grant of bail under Section 37 of the NDPS Act will not apply.

In another application, Aryan's lawyers had stated that recoveries of the other accused

cannot be held against Khan nor can the entire recovery be used against him in light of the precedents of the Supreme Court and High Court, that the NCB is relying solely upon the WhatsApp chats without verifying the accuracy of the chats "which have no connection with the case".

Aryan's lawyers had also stated that the NCB had invoked the provisions under the NDPS Act "mechanically" without any evidence or corroborating evidence to support ingredients for the offences. "There is nothing to suggest that Khan is in any way connected with the manufacture, possession, purchase or transport of the substances and hence the ingredients for the offences under NDPS Act are not made out," Aryan's lawyers had told the Special Court.

On its part, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) had told the court that Aryan had a role to play in the illicit procurement and distribution of drugs and that he was in touch with some persons linked to an international drug network, even as a Special Court adjourned the hearing on bail pleas of Aryan and others for Thursday after partly hearing the arguments.

"There is material on record to show that Khan was in touch with some persons abroad who appear to be a part of an international drug net-

work for illicit procurement of drugs. The investigation is still in progress," the NCB had told the court.

Rebutting the contention of Aryan's lawyers that since the offences arraigned against Khan are Sections 8(c), 20(b), 27, 28, 29, 35 of the NDPS Act and that since no Narcotic drugs or psychotropic substance has been recovered from him, the bar against grant of bail under Section 37 of the NDPS Act would not apply, the NCB told the court: "The role of one of the accused cannot be dissected from another. Even if there is no recovery of small substances, the accused are involved in conspiracy".

In his arguments made before the special court, Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Anil Singh had told the court: "The present applicant (Aryan) is not a consumer for the first time. The record and the evidence before your honour shows that he is a regular consumer of contraband since the last few years. The contraband in possession of Arbaz Merchant who accompanied Khan, was for consumption of both of them."

"The record in the panchnama signed by the applicant establishes that he was in a conscious position of contraband because he admits it was with his friend and it was for consumption of both of them...The contention that nothing was

found with Applicant may not be correct," the ASG said.

Alluding to the retraction made by Aryan on October 7 that he had consumed drugs, Aryan's lawyer Amit Desai had told the court: "The statement reverberates that there is a confession. But that will be tested in the course of the trial and in the larger scheme. But the retraction that has been filed and it is on record. Let us stick to the law and let us stick to the facts. Retractions are there".

Reading out from the panchnama, Desai had said: "If the phone is voluntarily taken then also there has to be something, but the panchnama says seized it was not handed over. There has to be a seizure memo for that. We have forgotten these things. Nobody stops their investigation, why should it stop my liberty! It stops at liberty, liberty and liberty!"

"If a gentleman is released on bail, how will there be a hindrance to the investigation. Then they say because of section 37(2) of the NDPS Act, the burden reverses so now I must satisfy, so when we look into the matter, if released on bail it is not going to affect the investigation. In context of the twin conditions of section 32 they hang their entire case on two things - conspiracy and second are seizure from Abdul of commercial quantity," Desai had told the court.

# Assam seeks ₹1k-cr from Centre for repair of damage caused by floods

**Guwahati:** The Assam Government has demanded ₹ 1,088.19 crore from the Centre for repair and restoration of various infrastructure damaged by the monsoon floods, officials said on Wednesday.

Officials of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said that a seven-member Central inter-ministerial team led by the Joint Secretary in the Home Ministry, Manish Tiwari, visited Assam on Tuesday and Wednesday and held meetings with the state government officials.

Assam government officials have urged the Central team to consider releasing the funds under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) for repair and restoration works.

An ASDMA official said that the central team discussed the damages to properties and loss of livelihood caused by the floods.

The Assam government officials also requested the central team to consider erosion of rivers as an item admissible under SDRF and NDRF in their report to the Central government, as the state suffers heavily due to erosion every year.



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

## Fetch up!

Though there are ample vaccines now, fully vaccinated people still being fewer is alarming

It was vaccine hesitancy then. It is vaccine complacency now. Some people seem disinterested in taking the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccination. Many are convincing themselves that the chances of a third wave of the pandemic look dim because of low infection rates. Adherence to safety protocol has already slackened; so has the urgency to take the second dose. It is also no longer the case that vaccine stocks are low. They are ample. In the second week of October, 11.12 crore doses were available with the States on a given day but only 38 lakh doses were administered. In Odisha, around 13 lakh people were overdue for the second dose in August-end. Such cases are being reported from all the States. The longer waiting period of 84 days between the two Covishield jabs could be one reason for the low job rate. It is also possible that overcrowding at vaccination centres puts off some people. Or, like in rural areas, they may not want to travel long distances to get their jabs. Whatever the reasons, the fact is lakhs of people are not taking their jabs when they become due. In August, the Union Government said in response to an RTI query that over 3.86 crore Indians had failed to take the second dose within the stipulated time. The poor response for the second dose is making the Government jittery. For, the process of vaccination is incomplete till the second dose is administered.



Some hospital studies reveal that a single dose of Covishield offers protection against symptomatic infections with the Delta variant in a range of 18-61 per cent. The fully immunised had 97 per cent protection against death and the partly vaccinated, 69 per cent. Secondly, an incomplete vaccination gives the coronavirus the chance to infect or mutate in a manner to resist the vaccine. Either way, it militates against the massive vaccination exercise the country has undertaken. Remember how on account of complacency, the strains of tuberculosis bacteria began to resist antibiotics and the country registered the highest number of drug-resistance tuberculosis cases in the world. The Union health ministry is running campaigns about the importance of the second jab but says it cannot force people who deliberately miss the second jab to take it. In contrast, in a judgment in May, the Karnataka High Court made it the Government's obligation to ensure that the second dose is provided. Even though the case was about the scarcity of vaccines, in principle, The court said vaccination affects the right to life. The truth is, the Government can be faulted for the scarcity of doses, and the lack of adequate vaccination centres but it cannot be responsible for people's complacency. That is something the people have to handle for themselves. It is their responsibility to get vaccinated to be safe and, importantly, keep others safe.

### PICTALK



Devotees take part in the International Dussehra festival, in Kullu

PTI

## Straying off

As the farmers' protest approaches its first anniversary, the very spirit of it is in question

Are the farmers and their leaders protesting against the Union Government's three farm laws losing touch with reality? Have they lost their way, probably misguided by the political inputs they might be receiving by the Opposition parties in what was initially their fight for justice? Are they doing what they had set out to do? Or, have their shepherds unwittingly crossed on to another path and are leading the flock influenced by interested political entities? These are the questions that need asking as the farmers' protest approaches its first anniversary. Already, the protests have run out of fizz; so much so that a deserted Rakesh Tikait had to shed tears to emotionally blackmail the disgruntled farmers to make them return to the protest site. Since then, he has travelled far and wide, from West Bengal to Punjab and Haryana, to amass support — and possibly funds — for the farmers' cause. But the truth of all this on ground really is that the public perception against the agitation has turned from sympathetic caring to irritatingly banal.

The locals have been inconvenienced for too long and they have started reacting adversely to the cause though, to be fair to them, nobody across the country is genuinely against the welfare of farmers and hence they have so long been supported in the pursuit of their goal; right or wrong is for the courts to judge. The farmers and their leaders themselves have done no less to hurt their own cause. Though the Lakhimpur Kheri incident may have divided people depending along the lines of which social media group members they are, the farmers haven't had a good advertisement for themselves beginning from the Red Fort on January 26, to the gherao of the Mini Secretariat, followed by the violence in Karnal, and now the brutal murder at the Singhu border. It's high time for the farmers to coax their leaders into thinking about the right strategy and execute it efficiently. Otherwise, the support and sympathy they have received thus far is likely to wane and they would have hardly anything to show for their struggle. In a democracy, that shouldn't happen. But, in a similar vein, in a democracy nobody has the right to take away the rights of anybody else. My right to swing my hand ends where your nose begins; they should remember this.

# The dilemma of displacement

The whole country is going through a weird moment. Not that violence is new to India, but it was never so blatant and cover-up so brazen



GYANESHWAR DAYAL

When the State acts with aggression against its people on spurious grounds, One can only expect danse Macabre. Only this time it was performed by Bijoy Shankar Bania, who stomped over the corpse of Moinul Haq who had succumbed to the police gunshots. When hate has paralysed the minds and poisoned the thinking, anything is possible.

It is diabolical and sends chills down the spine. The stomper was a Government photographer. He accompanied the police team that went to evacuate the Government land in Dholpur village in Assam on September 23, 2021. He has been arrested and would be out as soon as jumping over a dead body is no big crime legally. Amorality is not punishable under the law. It is a hate crime at its best or worse. A professional psychologist would be better placed to understand the mind of a person who stomps over a dead body, religion of dead body notwithstanding. He had hatred for a community that made him do a dastardly act. It gives a peep into the mindset of the people now on the daily diet of communal hatred that has poisoned the minds of the people.

The Government of Assam was ostensibly dealing with a spin off of love jihad, land jihad with all its so-called good intentions. It acted with brute force but legally. Thanks to a nineteenth-century archaic law called 'Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886'.

Dhalpur was "grazing ground" on Government land. The "chars" had erected their shanties and were around for quite some time. Around 800 people have been evicted in the drive, whereas the real numbers could be around 20,000, if not more. The people evicted were served with notices a few hours before the eviction. The violence was a logical corollary in Assam's Darrang district. However, the Government did not realise that it would come to such a pass. The police opened fire so much for the Government's will to solve the land issue with its "good intentions".



After winning the elections on a manifesto that promised illegal encroachments to be cleared, it was on the cards. Those addressed in the manifesto knew it would be Bengali Muslims, dubbed Bangladeshis in local parlance. The BJP harped upon its narrative of 'land jihad and consolidated its votes. The Bengali Muslims were portrayed as encroachers upon the land of the indigenous Assamese.

The Government wanted land for a farming project for locals called the "Garukhuti Project". The forceful eviction drive that led to resistance and firing. It killed Moinul Haque and the twelve-year-old child, Sheikh Farid, died on the altars of the Garukhuti project. The public good led to public misery. Though legally dressed it was naked oppression defying the basic premise of law.

In Assam, land is a far more emotional issue than elsewhere. Assam has been home to a multi-ethnic group which are often jostling for the land.

The marginalised communities are the worst sufferers in eviction drives. Be it eviction drives for beautification like 'Turkman Gate' in Delhi in the seventies or Kathputli colony rather recently or acquiring land for a pro-

ject like in Bengal's Singur or Evicting forest land encroachers in Kerala or Niyamgiri in Odisha. The marginalised communities are touted as squatters standing in the way of development. It is conveniently forgotten that they too are citizens of India, who deserve to have the dignity of a small place to call their own

Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886 gives the right to the commissioner to forcibly remove acquisitions but after due notice. This was not done. The Government could also have the option of going to court, though time taking, would have given a fair chance to the person. It was not used. The Government wanted to act and wanted to be seen as acting harshly.

Even if the persons were illegal squatters on Government land, the eviction must be done following the procedure established by law. This would need a fact-finding exercise to gauge whether a person is illegally encroaching upon the said land, or has a bona fide claim upon that land.

The Government followed a "summary eviction" procedure, under Rule 18 of the Settlement Rules made under the archaic 'Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886'.

However, a person cannot be directed to vacate the land if they have a bona fide claim over the land. Rule 18 also mandates a publication of notice to provide the illegal encroacher with 15 days to vacate the land. This was again not done.

The stomping of the corpse was a 'George Floyd' moment for India but it passed rather calmly. That speaks volumes about sensitivities that we have as a nation. The whole country is going through a weird moment in history. Take, for instance, the incident at the Lakhimpur Kheri. Allegedly, the son of a Union Minister mauled the protesting farmers. Not that violence is new to India but it was never so blatant and cover-up so brazen.

The Opposition leaders were rounded up while the national media called people going there "political tourism"! Incredible as it may sound, the Opposition and voices of dissent are shrinking. The over-enthusiastic bird heads are getting out of control. The frankenstein planted in their heads is now manifesting in danse macabre.

(The writer is a columnist and documentary filmmaker. The views expressed are personal.)

IN ASSAM, LAND IS A FAR MORE EMOTIONAL ISSUE THAN ELSEWHERE. ASSAM HAS BEEN HOME TO A MULTI-ETHNIC GROUP WHICH ARE OFTEN JOSTLING FOR LAND

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### LITERATE VS EDUCATED

Sir — No kudos is enough for the humanitarians of West Bengal's Dharmadanga village for continuing with the 43-year old tradition of celebrating Lakshmi Puja jointly by transcending all norms of religious barriers amidst this utmost communally vitiated environment all around. Tarak Das — secretary of the Lakshmi Puja committee — humbly states that though he is not "very educated" (being a school dropout), he can't forget the lines of Kazi Nazrul Islam — *Mora ek brinte dui kusum Hindu Musalman* (we are two buds of one stalk — Hindus and Muslims) — and so we never differentiated among Hindus and Muslims!

Far from being "not very educated", Tarak Das and his Hindu-Muslim companions of farming community are infinite times more "educated" than innumerable so-called "educated" who are outright communal to the core despite being armed with academic degrees and holding medium to high Chairs in respective professions. Mere earning of a university degree hardly serves the moral fabric of the society. Hence if the concerned authorities really want to see a society where the future citizens of the society turn truly educated while pursuing degrees for career prospects; then inculcation of moral values, principles and humanity remain the urgent need of the hour in school curriculum.

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

### PINK IS BEAUTIFUL, FOR ALL

Sir — Pink has not always been considered a colour for girls. There was no sudden, unanimous cultural shift but both men and women wear pink attire and that suits them well. It gets noticed, no matter who wears it. The amount of attraction that pink receives is much more than that of red. Pink is more English in nature and is combined with the right options and right apparels, it can give an elegant tone — a pink tie, for example.

Pink is a light tint of red and was named after a flower of the same name. It was first used as a color name in the

## Two-wheelers are two-seaters!



The Assam BJP chief has said that tripling on two wheelers will be allowed when the price of petrol goes up to Rs200 per litre in the State. It is foolish to link the number of persons to ride on a two wheeler with petrol price. The capacity of two wheelers has been limited to two. Extra seats beyond that are likely to increase the chances of accidents due to inability of the rider to balance in certain conditions. Is it

possible to allow four members on two-wheelers when the fuel price rises to ₹300?

The price of goods and services will never be the same with changing conditions in the coming days. At the same time, the income level of any community is also not the same. The business community has its own strategy to increase the price of their goods and services. The Government employees meet the increased cost of goods and services due to increased income as 'dearness allowance' and pay revision. Even a beggar's income level changes for the better. Level of corruption keeps pace with the increased cost of goods and services. There is no reason to cry hoarse over the spiraling cost of fuel when the income level is also rising corresponding to the increased cost of goods and services. Rise in income level is the only panacea to meet the increased cost of living.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

late 17th century. According to surveys in Europe and the United States, pink is the color most often associated with charm, politeness, sensitivity, tenderness, sweetness, childhood, femininity and the romantic. As long as you are aware of how different work environments have a different way of dressing and in the daily routine pink occupies the top spot and women love to wear their favorite colour and pink is the best suited for them. A pleasing colour like pink pays well for your appearance and brings about a sea change in your dress sense as well.

Jayanthy Subramaniam | Mumbai

### THE EARTH IS SUFFERING

Sir — International prices of petroleum, coal, natural gas and LPG are too high and unbearable for the poor and the middle class. Better if India imports clean renewable energy (solar, wind, green hydrogen) batteries rather than the conventional fuel. Also India should make big plans to produce clean renewable energy on both small scale and large

scale — solar roads, solar and wind energy plants in Thar desert, Ladakh and J&K). This can generate employment, help reduce air pollution and provide low cost fuel.

Also climate change related weather catastrophes such as floods, cyclones in various parts of India can be reduced to an extent. Other measures should include — increasing the use of e-paper, e-books, e-bills, mechanical pencils and chopsticks, and cashless transactions. This can save millions of trees and limit deforestation. It is pertinent that we keep the oceans clean and plastic free so that they can absorb more carbon dioxide and mitigate various kinds of pollution. That is why many countries are growing sea plants, seagrass and sea phytoplankton too. It is high time that we imbibe such measures from individual to national level so that the ecosystem yields less damage.

Nivriti Sreelekha | Secunderabad

## SOUNDBITE

Unfortunately, the Opposition and a section of yellow media is unable to digest the love and affection we receive from people.

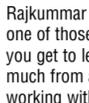


Andhra Pradesh CM — YS Jagan Mohan Reddy



We had said that when the Government is established, work (on nuclear talks) will be maintained, and now it is being pursued.

Iranian President — Ebrahim Raisi



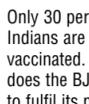
Rajkumar Rao is one of those actors you get to learn so much from and enjoy working with.

Actor — Parash Rawal



You always need that sixth option to free your bowlers, in case someone has a bad day.

India vice-captain — Rohit Sharma



Only 30 per cent Indians are fully vaccinated. How does the BJP plan to fulfill its promise to vaccinate all by December 2021?

Congress spokesperson — Jaiveer Shergill

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## FIRST COLUMN REVAMPING THE EDUCATION SECTOR

The new education policy aims at providing premium yet affordable education to all



DEVENDER SINGH ASWAL

Eyebrows were raised when a member of the Kasturirangan-led committee, set up recently to revise the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and lay down the broad guidelines for school syllabus and textbooks, said that the existing curriculum in schools dwells "too much on defeats", and that "in the light of new facts, history should be rewritten". The member, an ideologue, also remarked that textbooks should talk about the "fighting spirit" of rulers such as Maharana Pratap in battles against foreign invaders. When Dr Murlu Manohar Joshi, HRD Minister in the Vajpayee government, caused some revision in the school text books, it was considered by the left-wing as saffronisation of the syllabus. The revision of the extant NCF has been necessitated by the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020. It is not new or novel. It was last revised in 2005, and earlier in 1975, 1988 and 2000. The NEP, the first education policy of the 21st century, aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of India. The NEP envisages revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance and to create a new system aligned with the aspirational goals of the 21st century and the SDG4, while building upon India's great traditions and value systems. The NEP unambiguously says that 'the pursuit of knowl-



edge (Jnan), wisdom (Pragya), and truth (Satya) was always considered in Indian thought and philosophy as the highest human goal. A member of the National Steering Committee entrusted the task of drafting the NCF, and a right-wing ideologue, has hinted at re-writing history and the text books 'in the light of new facts' of history. The precise mandate of the steering committee is to develop the NCF within the mandated remit. The NEP speaks, among other things, of incorporating local content and flavour as the students must know about their past, immediate surroundings and topography, India's civilisational heritage, constitutional values, so as to develop the spirit of critical thinking and enquiry. The Policy advocates multilingualism, ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of life-long opportunities for all by 2030 by incorporating rapid changes in the knowledge landscape in the globalised world. The aim is to promote India as a global study destination by providing premium education at affordable costs so as to help 'restore its role as a Viswa Guru'. Evidently, the founding fathers of our republic laid the foundation of a civic nation, and not an ethnic nation by crafting a republican democratic Constitution, solemnly affirming to secure to all its citizens: justice, liberty, equality and fraternity—assuring the dignity of the individual. When one speaks of India's civilisational heritage and the need for inculcating the spirit of enquiry and scientific temper, the following Vedic hymn flashes across the mind — 'Whether God's will created it (the universe), or...Only He who is its overseer in highest heaven knows, Only He knows, or perhaps He does not know.' In a steering committee of 12 eminences in diverse fields of knowledge, there may be initial difference of opinion but when they talk together, deliberate, build consensus, they will surmount parochial considerations and develop the national curricular framework in perfect accord with the hallowed provisions of the NEP 2020, staying clear of the potential carping criticism of the extreme left or the radical right, by not harking too much on the past. Of course, we must analyse the past — without being its prisoner — in the context of the present for the purpose of building a resurgent India by laying the foundation of a sound, secure and holistic school education system to meet the aspirational needs of the 21st century.

(The writer is former Additional Secretary, Lok Sabha, and member of the Delhi Bar Council. The views expressed are personal.)

# Making sense of the power crisis debate

For import-dependent India, it is costlier to import longer haul Australian coal than shorter haul Indonesian coal which is getting diverted to China



SUBHASH C PANDEY

A barrage of news about rising electricity consumption, rising international price of coal and shortage of coal with power plants have raised fears of an impending power crisis. There are 135 coal-fired power plants with total installed capacity of about 202 GW meeting about 70 per cent of electricity supply. On October 7, more than half of these plants had coal stocks of less than three days. 16 small plants with total capacity of 17GW had no coal stock. Low coal stocks with thermal power plants does not mean shortage of coal in the country.

Here is the big picture; facts that speak for themselves. There is absolutely no shortage of power if people are willing to pay its price, both in terms of cash and health.

International Energy Agency has highlighted that energy demand has shot up worldwide as economic activity picks up post-pandemic. During April-September 2019, India's electricity consumption was 68100 crore units (kwh). It fell down 62500 crore in April-Sept 2020, mainly during the lockdown months of April-May 2020. However, electricity consumption during April-Sept 2021 jumped to 71500 crore units, more than the pre-covid level even though there was a distressing second wave in April-May 2021 and the tour/travel/hospitality industry is not yet back to pre-covid level. Air/rail travel is not fully restored.

Increase in electricity demand is a positive sign indicating economic recovery. Increased coverage of households with access to electricity connection have brought new electricity consumers in the market. Growing digital economy also contributes to rising demand. A welcome surge in electricity demand has raised supply concerns, especially, as all indications are further increase in electricity demand in coming months.

Since 2013, total primary energy consumption in India has been the third highest in the world after China and the US. Total power generation capacity in India has increased from 243 GW in March 2014 to 320 GW in March 2017 to 388 GW in August 2021. Out of this, 202 GW is coal/lignite fired thermal power, 46 GW is from large hydroelectric projects, 45 GW from Solar and 40 GW from Wind power. Renewable energy capacity is about 37 per cent of total and India will reach 40 per cent renewable energy capacity well before 2030 as per target accepted under 2015 Paris Climate Change agreement.

Although coal-based power plants contribute only to 52 per cent of installed electricity generation capacity, these plants meet almost 75 per cent of total electricity demand. So even though we have made impressive gains in expanding solar power, we are still largely dependent on coal for electricity. Our domestic production of coal is about 730 MMT and we annually import over 300 MMT. Electricity sector accounts for about 2/3rd of total coal consumption.



SINCE 2013, TOTAL PRIMARY ENERGY CONSUMPTION IN INDIA HAS BEEN THE THIRD HIGHEST IN THE WORLD AFTER CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES. TOTAL POWER GENERATION CAPACITY IN INDIA HAS INCREASED FROM 243 GW IN MARCH 2014 TO 388 GW IN AUGUST 2021

(The writer is former Special Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. The views expressed are personal.)



India is the second largest coal consumer after China. International prices of coal have risen recently for two reasons. Sharper increase in gas prices mean that countries are increasing dependence on cheaper coal-based thermal plants.

China is facing increased electricity demand in post-pandemic economic recovery and in a trade war with Australia, China stopped coal imports from Australia, one of the major exporters of coal.

Coal makes up nearly 60 per cent of China's energy consumption. Increased coal/power demand from China has set coal prices soaring high and many coastal power plants depending on (previously cheaper) coal imports are now switching to domestic coal in India.

For import dependent Indian power producers, it is costlier to import longer haul Australian coal than shorter haul Indonesian coal that is increasingly getting diverted to China. The net result of all this is higher demand for coal, higher price for coal and resultant financial stress on power generating companies.

There have been temporary supply disruptions (monsoon-related) in coal mining and transportation. The coal supply position is steadily improving but there are basic issues to be addressed to ensure long term health of the power sector which is victim to populism. Coal supply is a temporary problem. There is enough coal and production/transport will increase once monsoon woes are over. But the real issue of financial distress on power generating companies remains. Power generating companies owe about ₹20,000 crore to Coal India Limited alone.

Thermal plants are expected to have stock of 20 days requirement

but many power producers don't have money to stock coal because they have themselves not been paid by discoms for power supplied. Discoms are cash starved because tariffs don't cover all costs, many consumers don't pay their bills or delay payment. Power theft and leakage through unmetered supply continues to be rather high. This is all reflected in discoms inability to pay to power producers.

Power producers give 45 days' credit to Electricity Distribution companies (discoms). If the dues are not cleared in 45 days, outstanding dues are called 'overdues' liable to charge of penal interest.

On 17 October, 2021, discoms owed an overdue amount of ₹98,067 crore to power generation/transmission companies. Nearly ₹23,310 crore is payable to public sector thermal power generating companies (NTPC, etc.) Around ₹51,899 crore is payable to public sector thermal power generating companies (maximum amount payable to a single company is ₹25,611 crore, to Adani Power). Around ₹17,980 crore is payable to renewable power producers and ₹4,877 crore is payable to PowerGrid.

If coal companies have to recover ₹20,000 crore from power utilities, will it make sense for them to produce more coal and supply on credit? If power producers are not getting paid for power supplied, will they not reduce production? Does it make sense for them to improve plant load factor and produce more electricity to supply on credit? That is the real problem.

The discom reform scheme UDAY ended in 2019-20 with most of the states failing to meet their stipulated targets. On July 1, the Centre has launched a new scheme of 'Reforms-based and Results-linked,

Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme' to provide conditional financial assistance to discoms for strengthening of supply infrastructure. The scheme with total outlay of ₹3,03,758 crore will involve Central government budget support of ₹97,631 crore by 2024-25. All existing power sector reform schemes namely DDUGJY, IPDS, PM-KUSUM scheme would be subsumed into this new umbrella program.

Among the many contemplated reforms is a measure to create separate feeder for agricultural electricity supply, expansion of network of solar run irrigation systems. Other pending electricity reforms are removal of cross subsidies and open access, introducing competition by allowing consumers choice of electricity supplier.

States are presently administering two types of cross subsidy arrangements. One is between high-end and low-end household consumers and the other is between household consumers on one hand and industrial/commercial consumers on the other.

There are just too many consumer categories and tariff lines - slabs and fixed charges, making electricity pricing quite complex and non-transparent. On top of tariffs fixed by independent regulators, States levy electricity duty (as it is not subsumed in GST) which ranges from 0-70 per cent for certain categories of consumers.

Cross-subsidy burden on industry is problematic because it adversely affects cost competitiveness — manufacturing and exports and resultant job creation. It is frustrating that these reforms are getting delayed and deferred. Any myopic politics will sap the nation of energy in the long run.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

RAHUL GANDHI IS A DRUG ADDICT AND A DRUG PEDDLER. I DO NOT SAY THIS, IT HAS APPEARED IN NEWS REPORTS.  
—KARNATAKA BJP PRESIDENT  
NALIN KUMAR KATEEL



KATEEL MIGHT HAVE CONSUMED SOME DRUGS SEIZED FROM THE ADANI PORT, WHICH IS WHY HE IS MAKING SUCH REMARKS.  
—AICC GENERAL SECRETARY  
RANDEEP SURJEWALA

# Women officers in the armed forces

There is no doubt that officers and other ranks have to undergo a sea change in their thinking process and attitude to accept gender equality

The recent Supreme Court judgement directing the Government to open the portals of the National Defence Academy for women has finally paved way for across-the-board gender equality in the armed Forces. Eligible women will now be permitted to appear for the NDA Entrance Examination for the first time and the sky will be the limit for their career aspirations. This will now enable women to join all available combat or non-combat branches of the three services.

Notwithstanding the above judgement, women have always had their presence in the armed forces, though in a limited role like that of doctors in all the three wings of the armed forces. It



RAVI CHANDER KOCHHAR

(The writer, a retired Rear Admiral, is Group Pro Vice Chancellor & OSD (HR), Amity University, Uttar Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)

has, however, been almost three decades when women entered many other branches where only men dominated once.

The women officers in Indian armed forces have come a long way and have adapted well with the changing times. However, it is incumbent on the services to be accommodative in assimilating women in all domains — be it combat, administration, engineering or medical. Therefore, the onus is still upon the male-dominated armed forces to recognize the power of women officers and facilitate them to achieve their full potential.

I still fondly remember, whilst I was in command of INS Vikrant in 1992, when the first batch of women officers



reported onboard for initial sea training for Short Service Commission in the Indian Navy. The lady officers were very enthusiastic and took keen interest in the training. Normally when officers join for sea training, they all live on the ship throughout their training. In this case as there were no separate arrangements onboard for their stay, the ship was in harbour and they would come in the morning and leave in the

evening. Throughout their training they exhibited their skill levels, adaptability, physical fitness and mental alertness to match with standards laid down for men.

These young lady officers were quick on the uptake and always enthusiastic to learn the service ways. They were happy with the training but had one observation — why they could not stay onboard. It was explained to them that as of now the arrangements onboard ships are for men, especially living spaces and washrooms. Whilst they all understood the existing constraints, they were keen to know when ships will have women's quarters as well. I recollect my reaction to that was 'when a child is born, he/she first learns to

crawl, then stand and only thereafter runs'. I can only say that the time has come for all of them to run.

On the lighter side, many of those young lady officers found their soul mates among the naval officers during their initial service career and thereafter, lived happily ever after. Being from the same service the understanding between the partners also proved to be of higher quality, essential for marital harmony. In short it is a win in situation, as both the partners know each other's service conditions and do not take long to settle.

I can only say that the day has come when the idea of women joining armed forces had taken shape and has now evolved to women getting

permanent commission and entering areas dominated by men like fighter pilots, combat units and serving onboard ships and sailing on operational missions.

There's is no doubt that officers and other ranks have also to undergo a sea change in their thinking process and attitude so as to accept gender equality and when required, take orders from women officers in command. Having said that, women must also remember that they are getting into new fields and must tread with caution and never hesitate to take guidance from men who have been holding the fort for a much longer period.

By the way in the US Navy, for the first time, a woman officer has recently

been appointed to command a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. I have no doubt it is only a matter of time when we will have lady officers in command of combat units and move shoulder to shoulder with their male counterparts.

Indian history is replete with examples of women in command of combat troops, like "Rani of Jhansi" and many others who have led troops in battle and given a befitting reply to the enemy. It was only somewhere along the time when we lost the plot and armed forces became the forte of men alone.

At the end, I can only say, 'Welcome to Indian armed forces, brave Ladies, you are indeed the pride of India.'

# Russia hosts Af talks, calls for inclusive Govt

MOSCOW: Russia hosted talks on Afghanistan on Wednesday involving senior representatives of the Taliban and other factions, a round of diplomacy that underlines Moscow's clout.

Opening the talks, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov emphasized that "forming a really inclusive government fully reflecting the interests of not only all ethnic groups but all political forces of the country" is necessary to achieve a stable peace in Afghanistan.

Russia had worked for years to establish contacts with the Taliban, even though it has designated the group a terrorist organization in 2003 and never took it of the list. Any contact with such groups is punishable under Russian law, but the Foreign Ministry has responded to questions about the apparent contradiction by saying that its exchanges with the Taliban are essential for helping stabilize Afghanistan.

The Soviet Union fought a 10-year war in Afghanistan that ended with its troops withdrawing in 1989. In recent years, Moscow has made a strong comeback as an influential power broker in international talks on Afghanistan, hosting the Taliban representatives and members of other

factions for bilateral and multilateral meetings.

Unlike many other countries, Russia hasn't evacuated its embassy in Kabul and its ambassador has maintained regular contacts with the Taliban after they took over the Afghan capital in August.

Lavrov in his opening speech at the conference commended the Taliban for their efforts to stabilize the situation in the country and ensure the operation of state structures.

Last week, Russian President Vladimir Putin noted that there must be no rush in officially recognizing the Taliban as the new rulers of Afghanistan, but emphasized the need to engage in talks with them.

At the same time, he emphasized the security challenges posed by the Islamic State group and other militants based in northern Afghanistan, and noted that drug trafficking from Afghanistan will continue to present a challenge.

Russia has vowed to provide military assistance to its ex-Soviet allies in Central Asia to help counter the threats, and held a series of joint drills in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan that neighbor Afghanistan.

Another sweeping military exercise in Tajikistan

involving 5,000 troops, more than 700 military vehicles and combat jets has started this week. **AP**

## Pak Army chief urges world to avert humanitarian crisis in Afghan

**Islamabad:** Pakistan Army Chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa on Wednesday urged the international community to get together to stop a brewing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, which is now ruled by the Taliban.

Gen Bajwa made the appeal during his meeting with Stefano Pontecorvo, Senior Civil Representative NATO, who called on him at the army headquarters in Rawalpindi, the army said in a statement.

During their meeting, matters related to mutual interest, peace and stability in the region and the Afghanistan situation were discussed, it said.

"There is a need for global convergence on Afghanistan to avoid a humanitarian crisis," Gen Bajwa said.

The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's role in the Afghan situation including successful evacuation operations and efforts for regional stability. He also assured to enhance cooperation with Pakistan on Afghanistan and regular engagement by the NATO countries for all bilateral issues. Pakistan has been trying to convince the world to engage with the Taliban in Afghanistan as it fears a humanitarian crisis in the neighbouring country due to looming shortages of food and other essential commodities. The Taliban seized power in Afghanistan on August 15, two weeks before the US was set to complete its troop withdrawal after a costly two-decade war. **PTI**

# Protesters in Bangladesh demand law to protect minorities

## They condemn violence against Hindus

**DHAKA:** Demanding that the Bangladesh government should enact a new law to ensure religious freedom for everyone, protesters and academicians across the country condemned the mob attacks on the Hindu community and vandalisation of temples and idols during Durga Puja festivities.

Attacks on Hindus and their temples have intensified in Bangladesh since last Wednesday after an alleged blasphemous post surfaced on social media during the Durga Puja celebrations.

On late Sunday night, a mob damaged 66 houses and set on fire at least 20 homes of Hindus in Bangladesh.

Condemning the attacks on the Hindu community, protests were held across the country for the sixth day on Tuesday, the Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported on Wednesday.

Speakers at various programmes demanded that the perpetrators of the violence be brought to justice, as well as other measures to protect minorities in Bangladesh, it said.

The Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) demanded exemplary punishment for those involved in the attacks on Hindu temples and Durga Puja venues across the country.

They also urged the government to enact a new law to ensure religious freedom for everyone.

Over a hundred teachers from various departments of the university participated in the programme and made a human chain, voicing the demands, at the Dhaka University campus.

Condemning the violence, DU Vice-Chancellor M Akhtaruzzaman said: "The Durga Puja celebration of this country was a model of secularism for the entire world. This festival is supposed to be open

to people of all religions. The rise of communal evil in various parts of the country is disgraceful and cannot be tolerated. We urge the government to identify the perpetrators immediately and bring them to book." According to M Wahiduzzaman, former VC of Noakhali Science and Technology University, the government should immediately enact a law that effectively discourages communal violence.

"Compensation must be ensured for all the victims of the recent attacks," he added.

Former Vice-Chancellor of Jagannath University Mijanur Rahman said perpetrators of communal violence often get away without punishment, and this needs to be stopped.

Leaders and activists of the Progressive Student Alliance and the Khulna University Teachers' Association also condemned the violence against the Hindu community.

Students and teachers of Dhaka University also staged a street drama titled 'Dekhte Ki Pao, Purche Bangla? (Can you see that Bangla is burning?) to protest the attacks.

Rights activists under the banner 'Poets, litterateur, artists and journalists against communal terrorism' organised a rally in front of the National Museum at Shahbagh on Tuesday. **PTI**

ment for those involved in the attacks on Hindu temples and Durga Puja venues across the country.

They also urged the government to enact a new law to ensure religious freedom for everyone.

Over a hundred teachers from various departments of the university participated in the programme and made a human chain, voicing the demands, at the Dhaka University campus.

Condemning the violence, DU Vice-Chancellor M Akhtaruzzaman said: "The Durga Puja celebration of this country was a model of secularism for the entire world. This festival is supposed to be open

**OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER-II DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, DELHI**  
4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001

**PROCLAMATION OF SALE**

Notice Under Rule 38 of The Second Schedule to The Income Tax Act, 1961 Read With Section 25(a) The Recovery of Debts Due to Banks & Financial Institutions Act, 1993.

**RC No. 312/2014 Dated: 09.09.2021**

**In the matter of: ICICI BANK V/S BHARAT SOMASTAMB**

To, **CD#**  
Bharat Somastamb S/o Sh. Krishan Gopal Somastamb  
R/o House No. 523, Sector-21C Faridabad, Haryana- 121001.  
Also at: Bharat Enterprises G1/203A, Indera Enclave, Sector-21-D, Faridabad- 121002.

Whereas in execution of bid **RC No.312/2014** dated **28.08.2014** in **OA No.308/2013** drawn up by the Hon'ble Presiding Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal-II, Delhi, the CD is to pay to the applicant **Rs.12,16,823/- (Rs. Twelve Lacs Sixteen Thousand Eight Hundred And Twenty Three Only)** has become due from you as per the bid Recovery Certificate drawn in **OA No. 308/2013** by the Presiding Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal-II, Delhi. The applicant is entitled to recover a sum of **Rs. Rs.12,01,823/- (Rs. Twelve Lacs One Thousand Eight Hundred And Twenty Three Only)** alongwith pentadentite and future interest @15.01% per annum w.e.f. **18.10.2013** till realization with cost of **Rs.15,000/-** and costs from the Certificate Debtor (CD), failing which the amount shall be recovered by sale of the hypothecated vehicles. In case of any shortfall, the same shall be recovered from the personal movable and immovable assets of the CD.

2. And whereas the undersigned has ordered the sale of the hypothecated vehicle mentioned in scheduled property for satisfaction of the said Recovery Certificate.

3. Notice is hereby given that in the absence of any order of postponement, the said hypothecated vehicle (mentioned under the schedule of property below) shall be sold through e-auction through <https://auctions.cardekho.com/> or <https://auctions.cardekho.com/>, by e-auction at **11:00 AM on 27.10.2021**.

4. The CH bank shall ensure that prospective bidders are allowed inspection of the said hypothecated vehicle (mentioned under the schedule of property below) before day of auction for which interested individuals may contact the concerned officer of **CH Ms. Kalayani Preeti (MOB: 9599281817)**.

5. The sale shall be of the movable property of the above named Certificate Defaulters (CD), subject to the liabilities and claims attaching to the said hypothecated vehicle, if any.

6. The sale shall be stopped if, before lot is knocked down, the arrears mentioned in the said certificate, interest costs (including cost of sale) are tendered to the officer conducting the sale or proof is given to his satisfaction that the amount of such certificate alongwith the interest and costs has been paid to the undersigned.

7. At the sale the public generally are invited to bid either personally or by duly authorized agent. No officer or other person, having any duty to perform in connection with this sale shall, however, either directly or indirectly bid for, acquire or attempt to acquire any interest in the property sold.

8. The property is being sold on **"AS IS WHERE IS" BASIS** and **"AS IS WHAT IS" BASIS**. The sale shall be subject to the conditions prescribed in the Second Schedule to the Income Tax Act, 1961 and the rules made thereunder and to the following further conditions.

9. The particulars specified in the Schedule have been stated to the best of the information of the undersigned, but the undersigned shall not be answerable for any error, mis-statement or omission in this proclamation.

10. The Reserve Price and Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) be fixed as follows-

S. No.	Details of property	Reserve Price (In Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (In Rs.)
1.	Mercedes Benz/ E280CDI, bearing Registration No. HR- 51Y-0945.	1,60,000/-	16,000/-

11. The amount by which the biddings are to be increased shall be determined by the Officer conducting the sale. In the event of any dispute arising as to the amount of bid, or as to the bidder, the lot shall at once be again put to auction.

12. Intending bidders shall be required to pay Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) by way of pay order/demand draft payable at New Delhi and in favour of Recovery Officer-II, DRT-II, Delhi before the start of bidding and identity proofs, address proofs etc. The said deposit shall be adjusted in the case of successful bidders; and in the case of unsuccessful bidders the same shall be refunded without interest, on the date of sale.

13. Successful highest bidder shall have to deposit 25% of the sale proceeds by way of pay order/demand draft favoring the Recovery Officer-II, DRT-II, Delhi, within 24 hours (next working day) by way of bank draft, after adjusting the EMD stated above, failing which the EMD shall be forfeited.

14. The purchaser shall deposit the balance 75% of the sale proceeds alongwith postage fee @ 2% upto Rupees 1,000/- @ 1% of the sale price exceeding Rupees 1,000/ within 15 days from the date of auction. The Postage fees shall be deposited through a demand draft payable in favor of the Registrar, DRT-II, Delhi.

15. In case of default, the amount earlier deposited by the bidder, if the undersigned considers fit, after defraying the expenses of the sale shall be forfeited and the property shall be resold, and the defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claims to the property or to any part thereof or of any part of the sum for which it may subsequently be sold.

16. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids if found unreasonable or postpone the auction at any time without assigning any reason.

S. No.	Description of property to be sold with names co-owners where the property belongs to the defaulter and any other persons is co-owners	Revenue assessed upon the property or any part thereof	Details of any encumbrances to which the property is liable	Claims, if any which have been put forward to the property and other known particulars bearing on its nature and value.
1.	Mercedes Benz/ E280CDI, bearing Registration No. HR- 51Y-0945.	No Information	No Information	No Information

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal at New Delhi on this **09.09.2021**.

(Dattatrey Bajpayee)  
Recovery Officer-II,  
DRT-II, Delhi

# 48 died, 31 missing in Nepal's flood and landslides

**Kathmandu:** At least 48 people have died and 31 others went missing in Nepal's flood and landslides triggered by incessant rains from Sunday, Nepal's Ministry of Home Affairs said.

Similarly, thousands of farmers across the country have lost their crops to rains this year. Destruction of the paddy crop is a major setback for Nepal's overall economy. Paddy alone contributes around 7 per cent to the national gross domestic product and is the major income source for more than half of the population.

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has called an emergency Cabinet meeting on Wednesday afternoon to discuss the situation created by the rain, floods, and landslides. As many as 11 districts of the country reported deaths and missing people, according

to the Home Ministry.

Some bridges collapsed and highways were obstructed. Some cities and airports are inundated and in some districts, some human settlements were submerged under the floods. Local authorities have shifted some settlements to safe places in some districts to save people from the flood and landslides.

Several districts of the country have been hit hard by the unexpected autumn rain. According to Nepali Airlines officials, at least 100 domestic flights scheduled for an operation to and from the capital, Kathmandu were suspended on Wednesday owing to bad weather conditions. This is the highest number of flight suspensions recorded in a single day in recent times as air carriers could not operate services to various hilly as well as plain areas due to incessant rains and

bad weather conditions.

The Home Ministry said that 31 people are still missing in landslides and floods in several parts of the country and search and rescue operation is underway. The sudden and extreme rainfall in the third week of October, has left experts wondering-and worried-how climate change is impacting the economy and livelihoods of the people.

Nepal's economic well-being is intimately linked with the rainy season. Water from the skies is the lifeblood of Nepal's Rs 4.26 trillion economy which is farm-dependent, as nearly two-thirds of the farmlands are rain-fed. A large part of the country gets nearly 80 per cent of its annual rainfall during the four months-June to September. Given the above-normal rainfall this year, Nepal was expecting a bumper harvest. **IANS**

# Jailed Russian Opp leader Navalny wins top EU prize

**Brussels:** Imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was awarded the European Union's top human rights prize Wednesday in a clear slap at President Vladimir Putin.

In awarding the Sakharov Prize to Navalny, the European Parliament praised his "immense personal bravery". The 45-year-old activist was poisoned with a nerve agent last year and promptly arrested upon his return to Moscow from treatment in Germany and later imprisoned.

"He has campaigned consistently against the corruption of Vladimir Putin's regime, and through his social media accounts and political campaigns, Navalny has helped expose abuses and mobilize the support of millions of people

across Russia. For this, he was poisoned and thrown in jail," parliament President David Sassoli in a statement.

Sassoli called for Navalny's immediate release.

The recognition of Navalny will further sour relations between the 27-nation bloc and Russia. These ties have been on the decline for years, especially following Moscow's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and its support for a separatist insurgency in eastern Ukraine.

The impact reverberated beyond the EU as well.

Days after Russia suspended its mission at NATO and ordered the closure of the alliance's office in Moscow in retaliation for NATO's expulsion of Russian diplomats, the organisation's chief said he embraced the news. **AP**

# Pak PM accused of selling gifts received from other countries' heads

**Lahore:** Pakistan's Opposition parties on Wednesday accused Prime Minister Imran Khan of selling gifts he received from other countries' heads, including an expensive watch worth USD 1 million.

Gifts are routinely exchanged between heads of states or officers holding constitutional positions during a state visit. According to the gift depository (Toshakhana) rules, these gifts remain the property of the state unless sold at an open auction. Rules allow officials to retain gifts with a market value of less than Rs 10,000 without paying anything. The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

"Imran Khan has sold the gifts he received from other countries," PML-N vice president Maryam Nawaz tweeted in Urdu. **PTI**

# Career diplomat Donald Blome named US envoy to Pakistan

**Washington:** U.S. President Joe Biden plans to nominate Donald Blome, currently ambassador to Tunisia, as his top diplomat in Pakistan as Washington works to manage the situation in neighboring Afghanistan following the withdrawal of American troops.

Joe Biden will announce plans to nominate Blome to the job in Pakistan, the White House said. Blome is a career Foreign Service diplomat with long experience in the region who once worked in the Kabul embassy, shuttered earlier this year during the U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Pakistan is playing a major role in diplomacy with its Taliban-ruled neighbor.

International agencies have warned that Afghanistan is on the verge of humanitarian collapse without access to aid or foreign reserves, which remain frozen in the United States.

Pakistan's relationship with neighboring China has also been of interest to the Biden administration, which regards Beijing as its chief international rival. Tunisia, where Blome has worked as ambassador since 2019, is an important diplomatic outpost for the United States in North Africa, representing interests beyond the country's borders, including in neighboring Libya. **PTI**

# Volcano in southwest Japan erupts, warning issued

**Tokyo:** An eruption was observed on Wednesday at Mt Aso in Kyushu area, southwestern Japan, the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) said.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters in Tokyo that no injuries have been reported so far and that local authorities are working to determine whether there are any climbers still on the mountain, Xinhua news agency reported.

According to the JMA, the eruption occurred at 11.43 a.m. local time at the No 1 Nakadake crater, with smoke billowing out of the peak in Kumamoto Prefecture.

Volcanic ash has blown more than 1 km from the crater and reached a height of about 3,500 meters, and pyroclastic flows could occur in areas within about 2 km, the JMA said.

The agency raised the volcanic alert level of Mt Aso to 3 on a scale of 5. **IANS**

# Former German troops arrested over alleged terror plot

**Berlin:** Two former German soldiers have been arrested on suspicion of trying to form a terrorist mercenary force to fight in Yemen's civil war, officials said. The former soldiers -- Arend-Adolf G and Achim A, face terrorism charges after police raids in southern Germany on Wednesday, the BBC reported.

They allegedly planned to recruit up to 150 men for a private army made up of former police officers and soldiers.

According to prosecutors, they wanted to offer their services to Saudi Arabia's government for illegal missions in Yemen. Yemen has been racked by a civil war between the Saudi Arabia-backed internationally recognised government and the armed Houthi movement since 2014. Saudi Arabia entered the civil war in 2015 shortly after the capture of the capital, Sanaa, by the Houthis, who are supported by Iran. **IANS**

# Queen cancels travel plans within UK after medical advice to rest

**London:** Britain's Queen Elizabeth II has cancelled a planned visit to Northern Ireland following medical advice to rest for a few days, Buckingham Palace said on Wednesday.

The 95-year-old monarch was to begin a two-day trip to Hillsborough in County Down and attend a church service marking the centenary of the formation of Northern Ireland in Armagh on Thursday, but will now remain at Windsor Castle instead.

"The Queen has reluctantly accepted medical advice to rest for the next few days," a Buckingham Palace spokesperson said. "Her Majesty is in good spirits and is disappointed that she will no longer be able to visit Northern Ireland, where she had been due to undertake a series of engagements today and tomorrow. The Queen sends her warmest good wishes to the people of Northern Ireland and looks forward to visiting in the future," the spokesperson said.

The decision is not believed to be related to coronavirus and the monarch is now said to be resting at her Windsor Castle residence in Berkshire, south-east England.

The Queen, the UK's longest-serving monarch, has been attending a series of public events in recent days, including hosting a Global Investment Summit at Windsor Castle on Tuesday evening. It was revealed on Tuesday that the Queen had declined a so-called "Oldie of the Year" award, from a magazine of the same name, saying: "You are only as old as you feel".

She is still expected to attend the UN COP26 climate conference in Glasgow.

The Queen was seen using a walking stick for the first time at a major public event earlier this week, when attending a Westminster Abbey service marking the centenary of UK armed forces charity Royal British Legion. **AP**

# Decision on Air India will give new energy: Modi

## AVIATION SECTOR

PTI ■ KUSHINAGAR

With Air India set to be acquired by Tata group, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the decision on the national carrier will give new energy to the country's aviation sector.

His comments come weeks after Tata group emerged as the winning bidder for Air India paying the way for disinvestment of the loss-making carrier.

In an address after inaugurating the Kushinagar International airport, Modi said the decision on Air India will give new energy to the aviation sector of India.



Tata group has emerged as the winning bidder for Air India, and on October 11, a letter of intent (LoI) was issued to the group.

Earlier this month, the government accepted an offer by Talace Pvt Ltd, a unit of Tata group, to pay ₹ 2,700 crore cash and takeover ₹ 15,300 crore of

Air India's debt.

After Tatas accept the LoI, the share purchase agreement (SPA) for the sale will be signed.

Along with Air India, Tatas will acquire low-cost carrier Air India Express and Air India's 50 per cent stake in equal joint venture AISATS.

# Power crisis: Govt looks to revise coal stocking norms for thermal plants

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to avert power crisis being triggered in the country due to fuel shortages in the months following monsoon rains, the government proposes to revise the coal stocking norms for thermal power plants, based on regular shift stock limits, depending on the actual fuel requirement during a particular period.

Sources said that the Central Electricity Authority will come up with revised coal stocking guidelines that will have higher stocking requirement for non-pit head power plants while lower for those located near the coal-bearing regions of the country.

As per a draft that is being discussed, against the uniform requirement of 20-22 day coal

stocks to be maintained by power plants, lower coal stock of 10 days may be mandated for pit-head power plants while 20 days stock may be needed for power plants farther from coal-producing areas. But in the peak summer months (April-June), non-pit head plants would still require to stock 22 days of coal while pit head plants around 12 days. The norms of stocking may change slightly in winter months. The thinking within the government is that the revised coal stocking norms will prevent a situation like the one that faced the country recently when post monsoons, several of the 135 coal-based power plants in the country were found to be sitting with critical coal stock levels sufficient to meet just three to four days of supply.

# IMF revises down Asia economy growth forecast to 6.5%

IAN S ■ WASHINGTON

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has revised down its 2021 economic growth forecast for Asia to 6.5 per cent, down by 1.1 percentage points from its April projection, according to a newly released regional economic outlook.

"The resurgence of the pandemic, amid initially low vaccination rates, slowed the recovery in the Asia-Pacific region, especially in emerging market and developing economies," Chang Yong Rhee, director of the IMF's Asia and Pacific Department was quoted as saying by Xinhua news agency. Noting that the Asia-Pacific remains the fastest growing region in the world, Rhee said as vaccination rates accelerate, the region is expected to grow by 4.9 per cent in

2022, 0.4 percentage points faster than projected in April. For advanced economies, the latest IMF forecast is broadly unchanged for 2021 with upgrades in South Korea and New Zealand and downgrades in Japan and Australia, according to the report.

Most of the downgrades in the region come from emerging market and low-income countries, led by India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. China is projected to grow by 8.0 per cent in 2021, down by 0.4 percentage point from the April projection, according to the report. India is projected to grow by 9.5 per cent after a sharp decline in 2020. While the pandemic

surge earlier this year had a large adverse impact on growth, the subsequent rebound in activity has gained strength, it said. The ASEAN-5 countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand), are still facing "severe challenges" from a resurgent virus and weakness in contact-intensive sectors.

"The divergence between Asian advanced economies and developing economies is deepening, with output levels in the emerging market economies and low-income countries expected to remain below pre-pandemic trends in the coming years, reflecting differences in policy support and vaccination rollout," Rhee said.

# IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath to leave job and return to Harvard University

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

IMF's Chief Economist Gita Gopinath will leave her job in January next year and return to the prestigious Harvard University's Economics Department, according to the global financial institution. The 49-year-old prominent Indian-American economist had joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the Chief Economist in January 2019. She was the John

Zwaanstra Professor of International Studies and Economics at Harvard University when she joined the Washington-based global lender. IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva on Tuesday announced that the search for Gopinath's successor would begin shortly. "Gita's contribution to the Fund and our membership has been truly remarkable - quite simply, her impact on the IMF's work has been tremendous," Georgieva said.

# India to see salary hike at 9.3% in 2022: Report

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

After a pandemic-induced lull, pay rises are making a comeback. With India projected a salary increase of 9.3 per cent next year, the country is set to be the highest payer in Asia Pacific, according to a report.

This is an increase of 8 per cent compared to 2021, revealed the latest report by advisory, broking and solutions company Willis Towers Watson.

India is followed by Sri Lanka (5.5 per cent),

China (6 per cent), Indonesia (6.9 per cent), and Singapore (3.9 per cent) for the highest salary increase for 2021 in the Asia Pacific region.

Pointing towards a much-anticipated economic recovery, a majority (52.2 per cent) of companies in India have projected a positive business revenue outlook for the next 12 months, up from 37 per cent in Q4 2020.

This translates in increased hiring across businesses with 30 per cent of companies planning to hire in the next 12 months. This is almost three times more than last year.

# India needs to become a global power to defend itself: Gadkari

New Delhi: Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday said India needs to become a global power, not to attack anyone but to defend itself. Addressing an event organised by industry body FICCI, he said India is not an expansionist power and does not intend to attack its smaller neighbours. "We need to make India a global power... We need to become powerful but not to attack anyone," the road transport and highways minister said. Gadkari noted that India is becoming self-reliant in the defence sector. "We are a rich nation with a poor population. We need to work to make India a rich nation with a rich population," he emphasised.

# Markets skid for 2nd day as profit-booking takes hold

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex slumped 456 points while the Nifty closed below the 18,300-level on Wednesday as market participants pared exposure to overbought counters for the second straight session.

Midcap and smallcap stocks too saw heavy selling amid concerns over frothy valuations, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 456.09 points or 0.74 per cent lower at 61,259.96. Similarly, the NSE Nifty dropped 152.15 points or 0.83 per cent to 18,266.60.

Titan was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, shedding

2.97 per cent, followed by HUL, NTPC, L&T, PowerGrid, Bajaj Finserv and M&M.

In contrast, Bharti Airtel led the gainers' chart with a jump of 4.03 per cent. SBI, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank, ITC and HCL Tech were the other winners. "Indices corrected quite meaningfully led by the expensive side of the market where valuations had got stretched," said S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities.

Almost all sectoral indices ended in the red, although PSU banks were seen bucking the trend with investors cherry-picking for value in that pocket, he noted.

Further, he said the street is taking note of the cost pressurising from higher input costs in companies that do not possess the pricing power.

**PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited**  
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)  
Corporate Identity Number: U410PB2010SGC33813  
Website: www.pspcl.in, (Contact Number 96461-18774)

Tender Inquiry No. 04/2122/CD Dated: 19-10-2021  
Dy. Chief Engineer/CIVIL DESIGN, PSPCL, E-2, Shakti Vihar, Patiala, invites E-tender for DMIT FOR PURCHASE OF 43 GRADE ORDINARY PORTLAND CEMENT CONFORMING TO IS:269/2015 (WITH LATEST AMENDMENTS)/PACKED IN NEW SYNTHETIC/JUTE BAGS CONTAINING 20 BAGS IN A MT AT PSPCL PILOT WORKSHOPS MOHALI, MUKTSAR & SARNA--- QUANTITY--- 20000 MT. For detailed NIT & tender specification, please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> (Contact No.- 0172-2970263, 0172-2970284) from 21.10.2021 from 05:00 PM onwards.  
Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any, will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>  
RO No. 76155/12/499/2021/9067 C378/21

**NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA**  
Ministry of Education, Government of India Nehru Bhawan,  
5 Institutional Area, Phase-II, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110 070,  
Tel: 011-2670783  
Email: office.nbt@nic.in ♦ Website : www.nbtindia.gov.in

**TENDER FOR A DOCUMENTARY FILM ON PROMOTION OF ANGANWADIS**

National Book Trust, India, an autonomous organization established by the Government of India in the year 1957 to develop reading habits and creation of book culture in the country intends to produce a Short documentary/ promotional film on the age- appropriate books available at Anganwadi Centres for children, which is the largest outreach programme of NBT.

NBT India invites tender/bids from all interested Agencies for the production of a 30-40 minute documentary film, a 5-minute short film and 1-minute on promotional video including on-site interviews with teachers, learners, Anganwadi-sevikas, villagers and key stakeholders in Amethi, Lucknow, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Jhansi and Muzaffarnagar.

For Tender Form and detailed terms and conditions, please refer to our website i.e. [www.nbtindia.gov.in](http://www.nbtindia.gov.in). Last date for submitting tender/bids is 10 November 2021 upto 10:00 AM. The decision of the Director, NBT, India will be final and binding.

davp 21103/11/0018/2122

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
E-Tender Notice  
By: CSTE/TW, DIVISIONAL RAILWAY MANAGER OFFICE, 2ND FLOOR, ROOM No. 203, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055 for & on behalf of 'President of India' invites online OPEN E-tender in two packet system from the experienced & established contractors having sufficient experience in similar work and satisfying minimum eligibility criteria on the prescribed form for the under noted work:

Name of work	Provision of Indian Railway KAVACH (Formerly known as Train Collision Avoidance System) (IR Kavach) over NDLS-PWL, Ex TKJ-CPYZ, LKO-Ex CNB Sections of Northern Railway including Provision for Double Distant along with Interlocking of required Block section L&S in LKO-Ex CNB section and Provision of STIM/Telecom towers at locations wherever not available in NDLS-PWL & Ex TKJ-CPYZ sections along with loco TCAS filament works in 106 nos of 160kmph Electric locos in connection with achieving speeds upto 160kmph over New Delhi-Mumbai and New Delhi-Howrah (including Lucknow-Kanpur) routes of Indian Railways.
Tender No.	172-Sig-TW-Tender-EPC-T13
Approximate cost of the work	Rs. 123.027 Crs
Cost of tender form	Nil
Address from where tender document can be downloaded	Indian Railways website <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 21.10.2021
Earnest Money	Nil (Bid Security declaration required)
Completion Period	700 days.
Date and time of submission of tender and opening of tender	Tender to be submitted online on Indian Railways website <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 21.10.2021 up to 11:00 hrs of 23.02.2022. Date of tender Opening: 02.03.2022 after 16.00 hrs.
Detailed Tender Notice	Available at Indian Railways website <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>
No: 172-Sig-TW-Tender-EPC-T13 Date: 20.10.2021	2383/2021
Serving Customers With A Smile	

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
The Shabad Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd., Plot No.5, Sector-13, Dwarka, New Delhi -75 has proposed for clearance of the member as under:  
1) Smt. Archana Bhatia, (2) Sh. Dheeraj Chhabra (3) Sh. Mahesh Kumar Jethani (4) Sh. Ashwani Sharma (5) Mrs. Jaya Asrani for allotment of flats by way of draw by DDA/RCS objections are invited from general public, members of the society and all concerned, if any within 15 days of publication of this Public Notice.

**NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, that a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company will be held on Thursday, 28th October, 2021, inter-alia, to consider and approve the Un-audited Financial Results for the quarter ended on 30th Sept., 2021.  
The information contained in this notice is also available on the Company's website [www.cubical90.com](http://www.cubical90.com) as also on the website of the Stock Exchange viz. BSE Limited- [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com) For Cubical Financial Services Limited Sd/-  
Place: New Delhi (Ashwani Kumar Gupta) Managing Director Date: 20-10-2021

**MAHATRANSCO**  
Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.

**MAHARASHTRA STATE ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION COMPANY LTD.**  
Praskashgad, 1st Floor, Plot No.9, Station Road, Bandra (E), Mumbai- 400 051.

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER CPD/16- 2021-22**  
Tenders are invited through e-Tendering in SRM system from the registered vendors for Supply of following:

Tender No. & Description of Material	Estimated Amount (in Rs. Lakhs) Tender Fee (in Rs.)	Due Date & Time (Hrs.) for Submission & Opening of Tender
SP/T-0609/1021 (RFN No. 500000942) (Two Bid System)	773.88	
Procurement and Retrofit of Existing Old Quadruple Break SF6 Circuit Breakers (Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning) by New one alongwith Dismantling of Existing 400kV Quad Circuit Breakers for HVDC-1 & II Line Bays at owners yard of 400kV Chandrapur & Padghe S/s.	5,000.00	02.11.2021 Up to 17:00 Hrs. 02.11.2021 at 17:05Hrs

Contact Person: Office of the Executive Engineer (P&C)  
Tel. No.022-2647421/1/022-26472131 Extn.2491/2493.  
Email: eegrp6@mahatransco.in, dyeegrp5@mahatransco.in  
For further details visit our website <http://www.srm.tender.mahatransco.in>  
Any further amendments will be published on the MSETCL website [www.mahatransco.in](http://www.mahatransco.in). So bidders are requested to check the website.  
DGIPRC 2405/21-22 Executive Engineer (P&C)

**Chola**  
Enter a better life

**CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED**  
Corporate Office: 1st Floor, 'Dare House', No.2, N.S.C. Bose Road, Chennai-600 001.  
Branch Office: 1st & 2nd Floor, Plot No.6, Main Pusa Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110 005

**DEMAND NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION & RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002**

You, the under mentioned Borrower / Mortgagor is hereby informed that the company has initiated proceedings against you under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and that the Notice under 13 (2) of the Act sent to you by Registered Post Ack. Due for Borrower/s has been returned undelivered. Hence, you are hereby called upon to take notice and pay the outstanding loan amount mentioned against the said account with interest accruing there from within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the company will proceed against you by exercising its right under Sub-Sec (4) of Section 13 of the Act by enforcing the below mentioned security to realize its dues with interests and costs. It is needless to mention that this notice is addressed to you without prejudice to any other remedy available to the company.

Name and Address of the Borrower/s	Loan Amount	Date of Demand Notice & Amount Outstanding	Description of the property/ Secured Asset
LOAN ACCOUNT NO.X0HEDHE0000875978 MANMOHAN SINGH (BORROWER) At:- C 82 GALLI 1A WEST AZAD NAGAR KRISHNA NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110051 Also At:- PROPERTY BEARING NO. C-82, AREA MEASURING 90 SQ. YDS., OUT OF KHASRA NO. 165 MIN. SITUATED IN BLOCK-C, WEST AZAD NAGAR, KNOWN AS AREA OF VILLAGE GHOUNDLI, DELHI MANMEET SINGH (Co-BORROWER) At:- C 82 GALLI 1A WEST AZAD NAGAR KRISHNA, NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110051 BHAGAT SINGH (Co-BORROWER) At:- C 82 GALLI 1A WEST AZAD NAGAR KRISHNA NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110051 PARAMJEET KAUR (Co-BORROWER) At:- C 82 GALLI 1A WEST AZAD NAGAR KRISHNA, NAGAR, NEWDELHI-110051 CHARANJEET KAUR (Co-BORROWER) At:- C 82 GALLI 1A WEST AZAD NAGAR KRISHNA NAGAR, NEWDELHI-110051 M/S ASER ELECTRONIC PVT LTD (Co-BORROWER) At:- 42 A /27 1ST FLOOR LAXMI NARAYN COMPOUND, DILSHAD GARDEN INDUSTRIAL AREA, NEW DELHI-110095	Rs. 1,03,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore Three Lakh Only)	27-09-2021 Rs.70,11,562/- (Rupees Seventy Lakh Eleven Thousand Five Hundred Sixty Two Only)	ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROPERTY BEARING PROPERTY BEARING NO. C-82, AREA MEASURING 90 SQ. YDS., OUT OF KHASRA NO. 165 MIN. SITUATED IN BLOCK-C, WEST AZAD NAGAR, KNOWN AS AREA OF VILLAGE GHOUNDLI, DELHI-110051 NORTH: PROPERTY NO. C-83 SOUTH: ROAD EAST: PORTION OF PROPERTY NO. C-82 WEST: PROPERTY NO. C-80
LOAN ACCOUNT NO.X0HEEDL00001926828 SATISH KUMAR SAINI (BORROWER) At:- H.NO.61, SAINI MOHALLA, NANGLOI, NEW DELHI-110041 Also At:- KHATU NARESH TENT HOUSE 668, KHASRA NO-126, SAINI MOHALLA NANGLOI, DELHI-110041 Also At:- PROPERTY BEARING NO. C-225, KHASRA NO. 62/25/2, VILLAGE NANGLOI, KNOWN AS SAINI VIHAR, LAXMI PARK, NEW DELHI. MANJU SAINI (Co-BORROWER) At:- H.NO.61, SAINI MOHALLA, NANGLOI, NEW DELHI-110041 KHATU NARESH TENT HOUSE (Co-BORROWER) At:- THROUGH ITS PROPRIETOR MR SATISH KUMAR SAINI 668 KHASRA NO.126,SAINI MOHALLA, NANGLOI, NEW DELHI-110041	Rs. 20,00,000/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh Only)	27-09-2021 Rs.18,13,079/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Thirteen Thousand Seventy Only)	ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROERTY BEARING PROPERTY BEARING NO. C-225, AREA MEASURING 100 SQ.YDS., SITUATED IN THE AREA VILLAGE NANGLOI JAT, COLONY KNOWN AS LAXMI PARK, NAGLOI, NEW DELHI, BOUNDED ON: NORTH: OTHER'S PROPERTY SOUTH: ROAD 25 FT WIDE EAST: ROAD 12 FT WIDE WEST: OTHER'S PROPERTY
LOAN ACCOUNT NO.X0HEEDL00001683751 VIKAS GOEL (BORROWER) B-45, GALLI NO-2, CHANDU NAGAR, BIHARI PUR NORTH EAST DELHI NEWDELHI-110094 MANGE RAM GOEL (Co-BORROWER) At:- B-45, GALLI NO-2, CHANDU NAGAR, BIHARI PUR NORTH EAST DELHI NEWDELHI-110094 KUSUM GOEL (Co-BORROWER) At:- B-45, GALLI NO-2, CHANDU NAGAR, KARAWAL NAGAR SABAPUR NORTH EAST DELHI NEWDELHI-110094 HARYANA TRADING COMPANY (Co-BORROWER) At:- A-18, GALLI NO-2, CHANDU NAGAR, KARAWAL NAGAR ROAD, NEAR BHAINPURA, NEWDELHI, NEWDELHI-110094 NIYATI GOEL (Co-BORROWER) At:- B-45, GALLI NO-2, CHANDU NAGAR, BIHARI PUR NORTH EAST DELHI NEWDELHI-110094 HARSH GOEL (Co-BORROWER) At:- B-45, GALLI NO-2, CHANDU NAGAR, BIHARI PUR NORTH EAST DELHI NEWDELHI-110094 GOEL TRADERS (Co-BORROWER) At:- A-18, GALLI NO-2, CHANDU NAGAR, KARAWAL NAGAR ROAD, NEAR BHAINPURA, NEWDELHI, NEWDELHI-110094	Rs. 1,00,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore Only)	27-09-2021 Rs. 1,01,02,098.85/- (Rupees One Crore Lakh(s) Two Thousand Ninety Eight And Paise Eighty Five Only)	ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROERTY BEARING PROPERTY BEARING OLD NO. B-40, NEW NO. B-45, MESURING AREA 160 SQ. YDS., I.E 133.77 SQ.MTRS OUT OF KHASRA NO. 40, FITTED WITH ELECTRICITY AND WATER CONNECTION IN RUNNING CONDITIONS, CONSISTING OF ACCORDING TO SITE WITH CONSTRUCT UP TO THE LAST STOREY SITUATED AT VILLAGE MEERAPUR TURK, IN THE ABADI OF GALT NO.2, CHANDU NAGAR, KARAWAL NAGAR, ILLAQ SHAHDARA SHAHDARA, DELHI 110094
LOAN ACCOUNT NO.X0HEDHE00001142898 & X0HEDHE00001356212 RENU SHARMA (BORROWER) At:- HOUSE NO-7 SECOND FLOOR BLK-B, SHAKTI NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110052 Also At:- PROPERTY BEARING NO. 7, BLOCK-B, SITUATED IN THE DELHI CORPORATION ENGINEERING CHBS LTD. SHAKTI NAGAR EXTN, DELHI RAJ KUMAR SHARMA (Co-BORROWER) HOUSE NO-7 SECOND FLOOR BLK-B, SHAKTI NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110052 Also At: 1094, KASHMERE GATE PO PS KASHMERE GATE DELHI 110006 PRATEEK SHARMA (Co-BORROWER) At:- HOUSENO-7 SECOND FLOOR BLK-B, SHAKTI NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110052	Rs. 2,65,00,000/- (Rupees Two Crore Sixty Five Lakh(s) Only)	27-09-2021 Rs. 1,80,06,787.65/- (Rupees One Crore Eighty Lakh(s) Six Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty Seven And Paise Sixty Five Only)	ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROERTY BEARING PROPERTY NO. B-7, CONSISTING OF GROUND FLOOR, FIRST FLOOR AND SECOND FLOOR WITH TERRACE/ROOF RIGHTS BUILT ON FREE HOLD LAND ADMEASURING 275.55 SQ. YDS., SITUATED IN THE LAYOUT PLAN OF THE DELHI CORPORATION CO - OPERATIVE HOUSE BUILDING SOCIETY LTD, SHAKTI NAGAR EXTENSION, DELHI-110052, BOUNDED BY: NORTH: ROAD 45' WIDE SOUTH: SERVICE ROAD 15' WIDE EAST: PLOT NO.B-8 WEST: PLOT NO. B-6
LOAN ACCOUNT NO.X0HEEDL00001892604 & X0HEEDL00001892629 ANIL KUMAR (BORROWER) At:- CN-482 MAIN SABOLI ROAD SANJAY COLONY, NARELA, NEW DELHI-110040 Also At:- PROPERTY BEARING NO. 482, KHASRA NO. 37/6/2, NEAR SABOLIRoad, OLD ABADI OF VILLAGE NARELA, DELHI-110040 (AREA MEASURING 144.4 SQ. YDS.) SANGEETA (Co-BORROWER) At:- CN-482 MAIN SABOLI ROAD SANJAY COLONY, NARELA, NEW DELHI-110040 BHARDWAJ TRADERS (Co-BORROWER) At:- 1961/6A SABZI MANDI, NARELA, NEW DELHI-110040 ASHISH KUMAR (Co-BORROWER) At:- CN-482 MAIN SABOLI ROAD SANJAY COLONY, NARELA, NEW DELHI-110040	Rs. 4500000/- (Rupees Fourty Five Lakh(s) Only)	27-09-2021 Rs. 1,80,06,787.65/- (Rupees Fourty Seven Lakh(s) Seven And Paise Twenty Six Only)	ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROERTY BEARING NO. 482, GROUND FLOOR (WITH ROOF RIGHTS UPTO SKY) FORMING PART OF KHASRA NO. 37/6/2, SITUATED AT NEAR SABOLI ROAD, OLD ABADI OF VILLAGE NARELA, DELHI-110040 (AREA MEASURING 144.4 SQ. YDS.)

Date : 21.10.2021  
Place : Delhi

AUTHORISED OFFICER  
Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited.



# EXPLORING THE CONFLICT WITHIN

Writer-director, HARDIK GAJJAR, and lead actor, PRATIK GANDHI, tell CHRISTY VARGHESE that there is much more to *Bhavai* than the controversy surrounding its previous name, *Raavan Leela*

Pratik Gandhi became a household name after the raging success of *Scam 1992*. However, how many of us can claim to know that he was quite a prominent name in the Gujarati theatre circuit, much before *Scam 1992*?

Hardik Gajjar, the writer-director of Gandhi's forthcoming film, *Bhavai*, is someone who knew him from his theatre days. They have collaborated on and off over the years, their camaraderie only grew with time. And believe it or not, Gandhi was shooting for the film when he got the opportunity to star in *Scam*.

*Bhavai* was all set to release in theatres on October 1. However, the release date was pushed forward to October 22, following the announcement by the Maharashtra government that cinema halls in the state will reopen on October 22.

You may have heard of *Bhavai*, although under a different name; it had been named *Raavan Leela*, however, after a certain section of audience flagged the concern that the film may hurt religious sentiments, the name of the film was duly changed.

When we quiz Gajjar on the prompt renaming of the film, he shares unabashedly, "I did not expect the audience to misinterpret the name of the film. When I coined the name, *Raavan Leela*, I was talking about the Raavan that is all around us. When I conceptualised the film, what I had in mind was the essence of the story — internal conflict. Am I right, or am I wrong? And I believe the best way to depict the same was through *Ramayana*. I feel that both Ram ji and Raavan are within us. It is all about perception, and intention. When we got to know that some people were not pleased about the name of the film, we changed it without any hesitation, since it has no bearing on the film itself. There is nothing in the film related to the *Ramayana* or RamLila, for that matter."

What does *Bhavai* mean, though? "It all depends on your perception. (chuckles before continuing) For me, the word mean two things. When something



goes wrong in life, it is termed 'bhavai' in our lingo. As in, 'Ye kya bhavai ho gaya?!' Bhavai is also a form of folk-theatre in Gujarat," expresses Gajjar animatedly.

He went on to reveal that he has a long line up of projects with Gandhi in the pipeline, with the next one being the horror rom-com, *Atithi Bhooto Bhava*.

When we ask Gajjar whether he has a message for the audience, pat comes the reply, "I welcome everyone's opinion, but I would urge you to go watch the film with an open mind before passing your verdict on the same."

Keep reading for excerpts of our conversation with the protagonist of *Bhavai* and *Scam 1992*, Gandhi...

**Q We heard that after *Scam 1992*, you opted to star in a Gujarati web-series, *Vithal Teedi*, because of your character. Other interviews have you stating that when it comes to choosing new projects, you go by your intuition. What was it about *Bhavai* that reeled you in?**

The same formula. The first time the film was narrated, I felt that I could relate to the character's emotions. And without any second thoughts, I said yes, let's do it. This was before *Scam* and I was searching for something I could perform in. I wanted to get into the shoes of a character in a story that touched me. And the process you mentioned, I have been following it since a long time now.

**Q What is the premise of *Bhavai*?**

The most simple way I can explain the story without giving away the plot is that we are talking about moral dilemma here. If you see Ram and Raavan as a metaphor, the good and evil is present within us all.

We all are constantly involved in the fight between Ram and Raavan. It is up to us, we have to decide who wins — Ram or Raavan?

But literally speaking, *Bhavai* is a love-story. It has nothing to do with Ram or Raavan per se.

**Q When you say that it is up to us,**

**whether we choose to be Ram or Raavan in any given moment, can you say that it is as simple as that? In a world where external factors influence everything we do, can we really claim to be in complete control of our lives?**

Let me try and explain. If we take social media for instance, there are times when one has this strong urge to say something, without even thinking of the repercussions. But if we can control our urge in that moment, having that sense of mastery over yourself changes the game altogether. And I believe this is the situation throughout our life, everywhere.

However, I would agree with you that there are many variables, which we need to constantly factor in, since they are not in our control. But what we can control is how we react to it. Otherwise the world would be a chaotic place. Because, I am sure, everyone has this urge to lash out at people. Road-rage is one example that will get my point across. And such things are happening everywhere.

What is of vital importance is that crit-

ical moment, when you hit that point of saturation, do you lose control over yourself? Or are you able to take a step back, and take stock of the situation? That is why they say, don't react, just respond.

**Q Going by the first example you stated, about controlling one's urge to be impulsive on social media, do you regret achieving stardom after *Scam 1992*?**

(laughs) Not really, no. I am well aware of the fact that once you are well known, each and every word that you utter needs to be measured. It is bound to reach a large number of people. Even if I was not a prominent actor and was instead employed elsewhere, it's a personal choice. How you speak, what you speak, it is on you. And it should be well thought.

However, I will agree that once you have made it in the entertainment industry, you have to be more careful of your actions and words than people engaging in other professions.

**Q How have your dreams changed post *Scam 1992*?**

My dreams have not really changed, but I am more hungry now. I want to enact more characters, and be part of good scripts. In fact, I would like to broaden my horizon and perform without having language as a barrier. You might think that I have my eyes set on the international platform, however, I would love to perform in regional cinema also; I am raring to go.

## On a roll

Actor ADARSH GOURAV is all set to star alongside Meryl Streep, Sienna Miller and Kit Harington for Scott Z Burns' anthology, *Extrapolations*. By TEAM VIVA

Adarsh Gourav had a breakthrough role in *The White Tiger* playing the role of Balram Halwai which found him incredible fame, both locally and internationally. The talented young actor earned himself three major award nominations including a BAFTA, AACTA and Independent Spirit Awards a few months back for his first international project. Now, the actor has bagged his second major project, Scott Z Burns' anthology series for Apple TV+, titled *Extrapolations*. The show stars big wigs of the acting fraternity from the west alongside Gourav, including Meryl Streep, Sienna Miller, Kit Harington, Tahar Rahim, Matthew Rhys, Daveed Diggs, Gemma Chan and David Schwimmer.

The series explores the stories of how the changes to the planet will impact love, family, work both on a personal level and at a large human level. It will feature eight interconnected episodes which will display the need for survival in the current era, across the globe. The show has Scott as the writer, director and executive producer, with the show being helmed by Michael

Ellenberg's Media Res. The show also has Ellenberg, Greg Jacobs, Dorothy Fortenberry and Lindsey Springer as executive producers.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh expresses his joy, saying, "This is beyond anything I can express, to be honest. But to be working with such an incredible team at such an early juncture of my career is truly rewarding. I'm elated to be part of this project and grateful that I will be working alongside some of the very best in the business. I have grown up and looked up to each of my co-stars and to now be sharing screen space with them is incredible. This story is such an important one for our current generation and is interconnected with the realities of today."

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh will wrap this project before heading back to India to start his next, *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Adarsh recently flew off to the US, to New York where the show is currently expected to go into production. Adarsh

# ABHIDHAMMA DAY CELEBRATIONS

PM Modi believes that Buddha is universal because he encouraged people to start from within as *Buddhatva* is a sense of ultimate responsibility



Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, participated in an event marking the celebrations of Abhidhamma day at the Mahaparinirvana temple in Kushinagar.

The Governor and Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, union ministers, G Kishan Reddy, Kiren Rijiju, and Jyotiraditya Scindia, the cabinet minister of Sri Lanka government, Namal Rajapaksa, Buddhist delegation from Sri Lanka, diplomats from Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Lao PDR, Bhutan, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, Japan,

Singapore, Nepal, and others, were present during the occasion.

Addressing the event, PM Modi noted the auspicious occasion of Ashwin Poornima and the presence of holy relics of Lord Buddha. Welcoming the delegation of Sri Lanka, he traced back the connections between India and Sri Lanka to emperor Ashoka's son, Mahendra, and daughter, Sanghamitra, taking the message of Buddhism to Sri Lanka. He also remarked that it was believed that on this day, Arahant Mahinda, a Buddhist monk, returned and told his

father that Sri Lanka had accepted Buddha's message with enthusiasm. The belief spread and Buddha's message was accepted by and for the whole world. Buddha's dhamma was for humanity.

Lauding the role of the International Buddhist Confederation in spreading the message of Lord Buddha, the Prime Minister remembered Shri Shakti Sinha, who passed away recently, for his contribution as DG of the International Buddhist Confederation. He also remarked that Buddha came back to Earth from Tushita

heaven and on Ashwin Purnima, the monks also completed their three-month *varshavas*.

He also said that Buddha was universal and *buddhatva* was a sense of ultimate responsibility. He underlined that many questions arise along with environmental concerns and climate change. But, if we adopt the message of Buddha, then instead of 'who will do, what is to be done' path would start to show itself. PM Modi mentioned that Buddha was in the soul of humanity that connected different cultures and countries.

"India never believed in restricting the knowledge, great messages or the thoughts of great souls. Whatever was ours was shared with the entire humanity and that is why, human values, like non-violence and compassion, are settled in the heart of India so naturally", he commented.

He stated that Buddha was the source of inspiration for the Constitution of India as Buddha's Dhamma Chakra is sitting on the tricolour of India and giving us momentum. Even today, if someone goes to the Parliament of India, then the mantra, 'dharma chakra pravartanaya', is observed.

Talking about the influence of Lord Buddha in Gujarat and, specifically, the Prime Minister's birthplace, Vadnagar, he said Buddha's influence could be observed in western and southern parts of the country in equal measures as the eastern parts.

"The history of Gujarat shows that Buddha is beyond boundaries and directions. Mahatma Gandhi, born in the land of Gujarat was the modern flag-bearer of Buddha's message of truth and non-violence", he added.

Quoting Lord Buddha, "appa deepo bhava", meaning, "be your own lamp", the Prime Minister said that a self-illuminated person would show the path to the world. He concluded, saying that the day would mark the motivation for India to become self-reliant, providing strength to participate in the progress of every country in the world. PM Modi also remarked that Lord Buddha's teachings were being taken forward by India in the mantra of 'sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka



## Strengthening fuel security

### NTPC ties up with Talabira mines of NLC in Odisha

In its effort to strengthen fuel security, NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation) Limited, the country's largest power generator, commenced coal offtake from Talabira mines of NLC in Odisha. As per the agreement, NTPC shall offtake coal from Talabira mines to Lara and Darlipalli. Besides this, NTPC is also ramping up coal production from its captive mines.

The present installed capacity of NTPC Group is 66,900 MW (including 13,425 MW through subsidiaries), comprising 47 NTPC stations (23 coal-based stations, seven gas-based stations, one hydro station, one small hydro, 14 solar photovoltaic system (PV), and one wind-based station), and 26 joint venture stations (nine coal-based, four gas-based, eight hydro, one small hydro, two wind, and two solar PV).

## Top innovators

### BHEL wins the Clarivate South and South East Asia Innovation awards

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has been adjudged as the winner of the Clarivate South and South East Asia Innovation award, 2021, under the corporations in India. BHEL's efforts, as a leader in innovation, were recognised and placed among the top innovators in India. The award has been won by BHEL earlier in the years 2018 and 2020 also.

The Clarivate awards were announced, at the Clarivate South and South East Asia Innovation forum, that were held virtually earlier. The award was received by Renuka Gera, the director (IS&P, additional charge E, R&D) on behalf of BHEL, from Rajat Sikka, the director of Intellectual and South East Asia of Property group, South Asia Clarivate Analytics.



## Addressing public concerns

Dr Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad visits the LIC central office and expresses his desire of seeing it as a top company

Dr Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad, the Minister of State, department of Financial Services, Government of India, visited the central office of LIC of India in Mumbai on October 18.

The chairperson, MR Kumar, and managing directors, Siddhartha Mohanty, Mini Ipe and BC Patnaik, welcomed the minister.

Karad addressed his focus on people and how they can be benefited. While expressing satisfaction over the brand image of LIC, he stated the desire of seeing LIC occupying a numero uno position in global insurance brands.

Subsequently, he visited various departments of the central office and interacted with departmental officials, wherein he emphasised on the prompt disposal of work.



## New investment strategy

LIC Mutual Fund announced the launch of LICMF BAF, an open-ended dynamic asset allocation fund which would invest across equity, debt and money market

The investment strategy for LIC MF Balanced Advantage Fund (LICMF BAF), essentially a hybrid scheme, would be uniquely driven by the Fundamental Driven Mathematical model.

Explaining the dynamics of the model-based unique investment approach for the new fund offer in LIC MF BAF, Dinesh Pangtey, the CEO of LIC Mutual Fund Asset Management Ltd said, "Bond yields, in a way, represent the opportunity cost of investing in equities and perception of risk appetite. We at LIC MF would be using this inverse relationship between equity and debt in



LICMF BAF for switching from equity to debt and vice versa, based on the Fundamental Driven Mathematical model."

LICMF BAF model would precisely use this relationship to determine optimal asset allocation level for the scheme. The model would use interest rates, one-year forward price-earnings ratio and earnings yield, to arrive at the optimum asset allocation level.

Pangtey added that the model automatically would arrive at asset allocation between equity and debt, as the underlying fundamentals change. However, the equity and debt portfolio should be managed actively by seasoned fund managers.

The model would be designed

in such a way that it automatically factors in, any change in any of the parameters, on a real-time basis and keep changing the price to earning band using linear progression.

LICMF BAF would not only help investors participate in the market rally but, more importantly, it would also aim to minimise the downward risk, and this would be a crucial part of any investment strategy. LICMF BAF would be benchmarked against a customised index, LIC MF hybrid composite 50:50 index. The index composition would be 50 per cent nifty, 50 TRI and 50 per cent nifty 10 year benchmark G-Sec. The fund endeavours to keep gross equity allocation 65 per cent or above to enable investors to avail equity taxation benefits.

The New Fund Offer (NFO), which has opened on October 20, would close on November 3, 2021. The fund managers for LIC MF BAF would be Yogesh Patil for the equity portion, and Rahul Singh for the debt portion.

International Chef's day 2021 was celebrated at SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST), Kattankulathur, which had live food demonstrations. The theme for this year's event was 'Healthy food for the future'.

Organised by SRM Institute of Hotel Management (SRMIHM) and South India Chef's association, chief guest Chef Dr K Damodaran, president of SICA, held an interactive session with students. The celebrity chef, who also holds a Guinness world record, shared his work experience and love for cooking healthy meals while demonstrating on how to do the traditional *meen kolumbu*.

"Chefs are the backbone of the food industry," he stated, while urging senior chefs to pass down their skills and knowledge to the youngsters so that the latter may have the opportunity to get creative and innovate newer meals.

"Traditional food has a lot of healthy optional medicinal values. This will help in beating Covid," Damodaran added.

Chef Damodaran was honoured with the Life Time Excellence award by

## Healthy food for the future

SRM honours chef Dr K Damodaran with Life Time Excellence award on International Chef's day



SRMIHM. Guest of honour, chef N Sheetharam Prasad, and general secretary of IFCA, and culinary director of GRT Hotels & Resorts, was honoured with the Service Excellence award. The Vocational Excellence award was presented to Chef Dr M Thirulogachander.

In his speech, Prasad said, "Students need to do a lot of research to develop good healthy eating habits." He urged all the upcoming chefs to practise cooking and eating local food.

SRMIHM also honoured 19 chefs, from all over the country, who had participated in the mega event. Chef Zubin Writer, executive sous chef at ITC grand Chola also held a live demonstration for students.

The fruit mixing ceremony was held during the event in which all the guests and chefs took part. The event concluded with cultural performance and prize distribution ceremony.

Also present at the event were SRMIST registrar Dr S Ponnusamy, the director of hotel management, Dr D Antony Ashok Kumar, and vice-principal of SRM IHM Lalitha, among others.

## Welfare schemes for people

Chhattisgarh CM, Bhupesh Baghel, receives the highest popularity rating amongst all heads of Indian states, according to the Governance Index

As per the CVoter Governance Index, the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Bhupesh Baghel, is the best performing Chief Minister in the country.

He has received the highest popularity rating among all chief ministers of states. The index report attributed his popularity to several welfare schemes introduced by the state government.

Recent schemes, such as Mahatari Dular Yojana, that will provide free education to children who lost their guardians/parents to Covid, is appreciated by all. The government will bear the entire expenses of their education.

The report says that the Chief Minister is popular among the masses because of his strong decision-making ability and his CEO style of working. Around 94 per cent people of Chhattisgarh are happy with the Baghel's performance.



## Milestones in environmental management

Union Mines secretary, Alok Tandon, IAS, inaugurates the lean slurry project of NALCO at Angul

The secretary of Ministry of Mines, Government of India, Alok Tandon, inaugurated the lean slurry project of National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) at Angul yesterday, marking a significant milestone in the Navratna company's journey of business excellence and adopting outstanding practices in environmental management.

Completion of the lean slurry project by the company will ensure 100 per cent utilisation of ash generated at the company's Captive Power Plant (CPP) and marks a big step forward in its commitment towards environ-



ment-friendly and sustainable operations.

Tandon, accompanied by Sridhar Patra, CMD of NALCO, visited the smelter and captive power-plants of NALCO at Angul and appreciated the efforts of NALCO in achieving the targets and scaling new heights of success amidst a challenging business environment. The IAS also interacted with officials and employees and motivated them to maintain the tempo of production and productivity.

# Rohit finds his groove as India outplay Australia

PTI ■ DUBAI

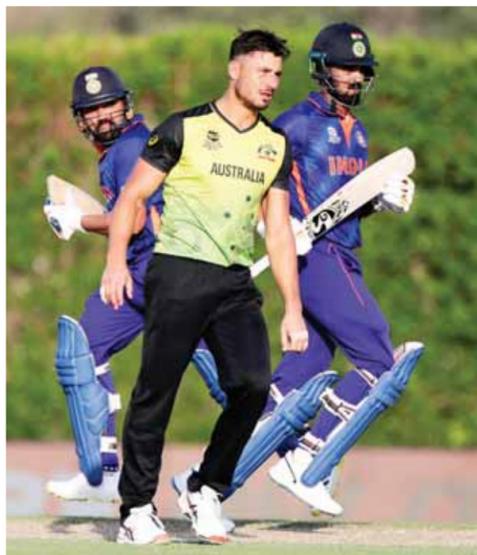
India fine-tuned their T20 World Cup preparations with a convincing nine-wicket win over Australia in their final warm-up game here on Wednesday but the sixth bowler's slot remained a worry as even Virat Kohli rolled his arm over going into the tournament proper.

Captaining the side with Kohli only taking the field to bowl, Rohit Sharma (60 retired off 41) showed sublime touch alongside opening partner K L Rahul (39 off 31) as India chased down Australia's 152 for five in 17.5 overs.

Suryakumar Yadav (38 not out off 27) came at number three in Kohli's absence and got valuable time in the middle which should boost his confidence going ahead.

Hardik Pandya (14 not out off 8) came at four to finish the game and he did it with a clean hit over the bowler's head.

Another plus for India was seasoned pacer Bhuvneshwar



Australia's Marcus Stoinis looks on as India's Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul run between the wickets during the Cricket Twenty20 World Cup warm-up match between India and Australia in Dubai, on Wednesday

Kumar finding rhythm after a poor outing against England. India had also beaten England in their earlier practice game.

The batting department looks more or less settled and the five specialist bowlers also inspire confidence but the same can't be said about the extra bowling option with Hardik not bringing his all-round skills to the table at the moment.

"Hardik is coming along pretty well, but it'll be a while before he will start to bowl. He hasn't started bowling, but he should be ready by the start of the tournament," said Rohit at the toss for the warm-up match against Australia.

The team management is hoping he will be ready to bowl during India's World Cup campaign which begins with the marquee clash against Pakistan on Sunday.

Skipper Kohli kept things tight with two overs of medium

pace but to expect him to do the job in high-pressure scenarios would be asking for too much from him.

India conceded 58 runs off the last five overs and that is something they would like to improve on.

After losing the toss, India put up a decent bowling effort. Rohit mentioned at the toss that Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami were rested from the game but the skipper took the field to bowl a couple of overs in which he conceded 12 runs.

India had Australia on the mat at 11 for three after Aaron Finch opted to bat first. David Warner's barren run continued after a failed attempt at a reverse sweep had him trapped in front off Ravichandran Ashwin.

With his very next ball, Ashwin got rid of birthday boy Mitchell Marsh who played for the turn which wasn't there only to edge it to the first slip.

## Hardik expected to bowl when Indian T20 WC campaign begins: Rohit

PTI ■ DUBAI

India vice-captain Rohit Sharma on Wednesday said that all-rounder Hardik Pandya is expected to be "ready" to bowl when the team starts its T20 World Cup campaign here on Sunday. Rohit, who is leading the side in the warm-up game against Australia as Virat Kohli has been rested, said the team needs a sixth bowler during the showpiece.

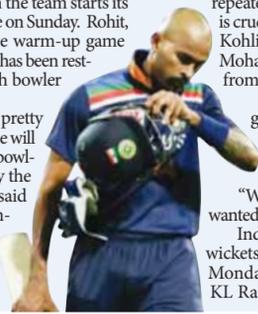
"Hardik is coming along pretty well, but it'll be a while before he will start to bowl. He hasn't started bowling, but he should be ready by the start of the tournament," said Rohit at the toss for the warm-up match against Australia.

"We have quality in the main bowlers, but you need an option for a 6th bowler," he

added. India play Pakistan in their opening match here on Sunday. Pandya's fitness is a concern heading into the tournament as he did not bowl at all in the IPL. The team management has repeatedly stated that Pandya's bowling is crucial for the team's balance. Besides Kohli, pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami were also rested from Wednesday's warm-up game.

"We want to make sure that we get the 6th bowling option, some options in the batting order as well, we'll try all those things today," Rohit said.

"We wanted to bat first as well, just wanted to try and get runs on the board." India had beaten England by seven wickets in their first warm-up game on Monday, riding on a 24-ball 51 from KL Rahul.



Ravindra Jadeja had Finch trapped LBW with a slider off his very first ball, leaving Australia with a lot of work to

do. Steve Smith (57 off 48) and in-form Glenn Maxwell (37 off 28) tried to break the shackles with a 61-run partnership.

While Maxwell used his reverse sweep to good effect, Smith kept himself busy by rotating the strike.

## T20WorldCupwindow

### 12 YR OLD DEIGNED SCOTLAND T20 WC JERSEY

Dubai: Scotland beating teams such as Bangladesh in the ICC T20 World Cup was never unthinkable. But what is difficult to believe is that the team's striking dark blue and purple-coloured jersey has been designed by a 12-year-old girl. Rebecca Downie is the young designer and she has been cheering her team, which proved to be the most impressive in the first week of the tournament. The team chose the design from over 200 entries from school children across the country. The jersey is based on the colours of Scotland's national emblem — the thistle.

### 'IF WE DONT GET RESULTS, WE SEARCH FOR SCAPEGOATS'

Karachi: Former captain Misbah-ul-Haq said that there will be no improvement in Pakistan cricket unless it changes its culture and stops hunting for scapegoats. Speaking for the first time after his sudden resignation as head coach last month, Misbah said "cosmetic surgery" will not change anything in Pakistan cricket as the problems are deep rooted in the system. "The problem is that in our cricket we only look at results and we don't give time or have patience for planning ahead and improving the system," he said on A-Sports channel.

## Namibia beat Netherlands, keeps them in hunt for Super 12

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

In a sensational display of power-hitting, David Wiese conjured up a 66-run knock to fashion Namibia's six-wicket win over the Netherlands in a crucial first round Group A game of the T20 World Cup here on Wednesday.

Wiese's maiden international half-century changed the pace of the game in matter of minutes as runs flew thick and fast after he took charge at the crease and in the process added 93 runs with skipper Gerhard Erasmus (32) for the fourth wicket. Chasing 165 to stay alive in the competition,

debutants Namibia were stuttering at 52 for three after nine overs but Wiese single-handedly sank the Dutch side.

His onslaught on the spinners, especially the monstrous straight sixes, was a treat to watch as the Dutch bowlers were guilty of putting the balls in the slot for Wiese to clobber.

And even if the pacers drew the length a bit back, the 36-year-old Wiese had enough power to muscle the ball around for big shots.

He raised his fifty in just 29 balls, with a six off rival skipper Pietar Seelar. His 40-ball unbeaten knock was adorned with five



sixes and four shots to the fence. Erasmus too timed the ball beautifully and got boundaries with ease in his 22-ball knock

that had four fours and a six. The victory has kept Namibia in hunt for the Super-12 stage and now need to beat

Ireland in their final game in the first round.

They had lost to Sri Lanka in their opening match.

The Netherlands now have lost both their games and their chances to make it to the next stage are quite low.

Earlier, opener Max O'Dowd (70) struck his second consecutive half-century and shared a 82-run stand with Colin Ackermann (35) to help the Netherlands post a competitive 164 for four.

O'Dowd, who had hit 51 against Ireland in the previous match, expressed himself freely, going after the bowlers. At times he played uppish shots, not exactly in control but still kept finding the gaps to keep the scoreboard going.

## Pattinson retires from international cricket

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australian fast bowler James Pattinson on Wednesday retired from international cricket after realising that he won't be in the reckoning for the Ashes series due to fitness issues.

The 31-year-old, who has played 21 Tests and 15 ODIs, though will continue to play domestic cricket.

Pattinson had recently suffered a knee injury during an intra-squad Victorian trial game.

"Leading into pre-season I really wanted to give the Ashes a crack but in the end I haven't had the preparation I would have liked heading into the coming season," Pattinson was quoted as saying by cricket.Com.Au in a statement.

"If I was to be part of the Ashes I would need to do myself and my teammates justice. I didn't want to be in a position of battling with my body when you need to be 100 per cent fit and ready to go at any time. That would not be fair to myself or the team."

"It was then I felt that instead of trying to play at the very highest level, knowing I have only got three or four years of cricket left, I would focus more on Victoria, helping the young guys develop, perhaps some cricket in England and spending more time with my family."

## It should be spinners' World Cup, says Rashid Khan

PTI ■ DUBAI

The ICC T20 World Cup will belong to the spinners. Afghanistan's star leg-break bowler Rashid Khan has asserted, and said they can beat any team if they bat well in the showpiece. Since being picked up by IPL team Sunrisers Hyderabad as an 18-year-old in 2017, ace leg-spinner Rashid has emerged as T20 cricket's leading wicket-taker in this period with 333 scalps and is wanted by franchises across the world.

Appearing in his second T20 World Cup, Rashid feels spinners are always "effective" on pitches at three venues in the UAE, where the Super 12s, the



semi-finals and final will be played.

"Conditions here are always good for spinners and it should be spinners' World Cup," Rashid was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

"Doesn't matter how wickets are prepared here, it is always helpful for the

spinners. Spinners will play a huge role in this World Cup.

"As we have seen in the IPL, spinners have brought back their team in the game. I feel that will be same in the World Cup as well. The best spinners will bring their team back in the game and win it."

Rashid feels Afghanistan, who are in Group 2 along with India, Pakistan and New Zealand, would need to do "lots of hard work" considering all their opponents in the Super 12s are "good players of spin".

Afghanistan have played 14 T20Is at the three venues in the UAE and have won all of them.

PTI ■ ODENSE

Young Lakshya Sen thumped compatriot Sourabh Verma in straight games to enter the second round but it was curtains for Saina Nehwal at the Denmark Open Super 1000 tournament here on Wednesday.

Lakshya, who had finished runners-up at Dutch Open last Sunday, dished out a superb performance to outclass national champion Sourabh 21-9 21-7 in 26 minutes.

The 20-year-old from Almora, who had failed to make the cut for the Sudirman Cup and Thomas Cup Final after losing his only match in the trials, is likely to clash with second seed



and Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen of Denmark next.

London Games bronze medalist Saina, who had retired midway through her first match at Uber Cup Final due to a groin injury, couldn't match Japan's world no 20 Aya Ohori and lost

21-16 21-14 in the opening round.

The Indian doubles players had a dismal outing as apart from Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponnappa, none of the others could put up a fight in their respective matches.

While Satwik and Ashwini's gallant battle ended with a 17-21 21-14 11-21 loss to China's Feng Yan Zhe and Du Yue in mixed doubles, Meghana Jakkampudi and Poorvisha S Ram lost 8-21 7-21 to Indonesian combination of Nita Violina Marwah and Putri Syaikhah in women's doubles.

Commonwealth Games bronze medalists Ashwini and N Sikki Reddy also went down 17-21 13-

21 to second seeded Korean pair of Lee Sohee and Shin Seungchan.

Lakshya had claimed five titles in 2019 before COVID-19 forced the suspension of the BWF calendar.

On Wednesday, the world no 25 Indian was up against Sourabh, an opponent against whom he had lost twice in the past but it made no difference as Lakshya dished out a dominating show to blow him away.

He led 7-2 early on and never looked in trouble as he reeled off seven straight points from 13-7 to grab seven game points. Sourabh saved two before Lakshya pocketed the opening game.

## Messi scores 2 goals to rescue PSG



AP ■ PARIS

Lionel Messi scored twice in quick succession, including an exquisite Panenka-style penalty, to rescue Paris Saint-Germain as it rallied to beat Leipzig 3-2 in the Champions League after being dominated for long spells.

Messi equalised in the 67th minute on Tuesday, poking home from close range after goalkeeper

Peter Gulacsi tipped his first shot onto the post. He then sent Gulacsi diving to the left before dinking the ball softly down the middle for his third goal since joining PSG from Barcelona.

They have all come in the Champions League, with Kylian Mbappe setting up the first two and winning the penalty for Messi's winner against Leipzig in the 74th minute.

Mbappe pointed straight at Messi to tell him he could take the spot kick.

"It's normal, it's about respect," Mbappe said.

"He's the best player in the world. I've always said it's a privilege to play with him."

It was the 34th time that Messi scored at least two goals in a Champions League game, bringing the Argentina captain's total to 123

goals in the tournament. He remains second to longtime rival Cristiano Ronaldo on 137.

Mbappe then took a penalty in the fourth minute of stoppage time, awarded following a video review for a foul on right back Achraf Hakimi, but he blazed it well over.

PSG is atop Group A with seven points, one more than Manchester City. Leipzig is last with no points.

Mbappe opened the scoring with a ninth-minute goal. But after that, the visitors took control by pressing high up the field and forcing panicky PSG into numerous errors.

"(Were we) lucky, no? You make your own luck," Mbappe said. "But of course, it was difficult, Leipzig played well. We had some low spells which were perhaps a little bit too low."

Striker Andre Silva equalised in the 28th and midfielder Nordi Mukiele volleyed in powerfully in the 57th, with left back Angelino setting up both with his deft left foot.

"Leipzig have a good team, full of confidence," PSG winger Julian Draxler said. "They caused us some problems, but we ruthlessly exploited the room we were allowed."

PSG was missing forwards Neymar and Mauro Icardi, which gave Draxler a rare start alongside Mbappe and Messi in attack. Neymar has a sore adductor while Icardi was excused for family reasons.

## Lakshya sails into second round, Saina sinks at Denmark Open



and Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen of Denmark next.

London Games bronze medalist Saina, who had retired midway through her first match at Uber Cup Final due to a groin injury, couldn't match Japan's world no 20 Aya Ohori and lost

21-16 21-14 in the opening round.

The Indian doubles players had a dismal outing as apart from Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponnappa, none of the others could put up a fight in their respective matches.

While Satwik and Ashwini's gallant battle ended with a 17-21 21-14 11-21 loss to China's Feng Yan Zhe and Du Yue in mixed doubles, Meghana Jakkampudi and Poorvisha S Ram lost 8-21 7-21 to Indonesian combination of Nita Violina Marwah and Putri Syaikhah in women's doubles.

Commonwealth Games bronze medalists Ashwini and N Sikki Reddy also went down 17-21 13-

21 to second seeded Korean pair of Lee Sohee and Shin Seungchan.

Lakshya had claimed five titles in 2019 before COVID-19 forced the suspension of the BWF calendar.

On Wednesday, the world no 25 Indian was up against Sourabh, an opponent against whom he had lost twice in the past but it made no difference as Lakshya dished out a dominating show to blow him away.

He led 7-2 early on and never looked in trouble as he reeled off seven straight points from 13-7 to grab seven game points. Sourabh saved two before Lakshya pocketed the opening game.

## SINGLES

### BENZEMA ABSENT FOR BLACKMAIL TRIAL

Versailles: Real Madrid forward Karim Benzema wasn't present Wednesday for the opening of his three-day trial for involvement in an alleged attempt to blackmail former France teammate Mathieu Valbuena over a sex tape. The 33-year-old Benzema's legal team told the court in Versailles that professional obligations made it "impossible" for him to attend. Valbuena's lawyer said he deplored the absence. Benzema played for Madrid in Kyiv on Tuesday against Shakhtar Donetsk in the Champions League. Madrid plays again Sunday against Barcelona in the Spanish league. Four other people accused of attempted blackmail in the case were present in court.

### AKEAL HOSEIN REPLACES FABIAN ALLEN

Dubai: Left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein was on Wednesday approved as replacement for an injured Fabian Allen in the West Indies squad for the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup. The Event Technical Committee of the tournament has approved Hosein as a replacement for Allen, the ICC said in a statement. Hosein, who has played nine ODIs and six T20Is, was picked after Allen was ruled out due to an ankle injury. Hosein was a reserve as per the allowance for teams to travel with extra players in view of COVID-19 quarantine requirements.

### OLYMPIANS HEADLINE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Hisar: Olympians Simranjit Kaur (60kg) and Pooja Rani (81kg) headline a strong field for the National Women's Boxing Championship, which will double up as a selection trial for the world championships, starting here on Thursday. The tournament, which is being conducted in association with Haryana Boxing Sangh, will see participation of more than 320 boxers from 36 States/UTs/Boards from across the country. Apart from Simranjit (60kg) and Pooja (81kg), who is the reigning Asian champion, 2019 World Championships bronze-medallist Jamuna Boro (54kg), defending champion Pwila Basumaty (60kg) and Asian Championships bronze medalist Jaismine (60kg) will be seen presenting strong challenges.



## Olympic flame arrives in Beijing amid boycott calls

PT ■ BEIJING

The Olympic flame arrived in Beijing on Wednesday amid calls from overseas critics for a boycott of the Feb. 4-20 Winter Games.

Beijing's Communist Party Secretary Cai Qi, the top official in the Chinese capital, received the flame at a closely-guarded airport ceremony.

Beijing successfully hosted the Summer Olympics in 2008, although the event failed to produce the more open political and social environment in China that many had hoped for.

Activist groups disrupted the flame lighting ceremony in southern Greece on Monday, accusing the International Olympic Committee of granting legitimacy to rights abuses in China.

IOC officials have said they are committed to seeing the competition go ahead and that rights issues are not part of their remit.

Speaking in the ancient stadium of Olympia, IOC President Thomas Bach said the Games must be "respected as politically neutral ground."

Activists on Tuesday said human rights in China have deteriorated since 2008, claiming that the Summer Games "emboldened" China.