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Body with hands cut off found at farm protest site

Nihang surrenders
in case of lynching
of Punjab labourer
at Singhu border

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a gruesome murder, a man was lynched, his hand chopped off and the body was found tied to a barricade at a farmers' protest site at Delhi's Singhu border in Haryana's Sonapat district on Friday morning.

The deceased identified as Lakhbir Singh, a labourer from Chima Khurd village in Punjab's Tarn Taran district, was allegedly killed by a group of Nihangs for desecrating a Sikh holy book.

A Nihang, Saravjeet Singh, surrendered to the police, taking responsibility for killing a man at Singhu border in the evening. An FIR was registered in the case under Sections 302 and 34 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at



Samyukt Kisan Morcha leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal addresses the media during a Press conference at Singhu border in New Delhi on Friday

PTI

Kundli police station by the Haryana Police. A police spokesman said that investigation in the case is going on to ascertain the allegation of desecration.

As tension prevailed at the farmers' protest site at Singhu border after the murder, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar held a high-level meeting in the evening to review the law and order situation. The Chief

Minister also directed DGP PK Agrawal to take strict and prompt action against those responsible for the murder.

After the murder, a few videos from the protest site went viral on social media. In a video clip, the Nihangs were seen standing near a body and were heard in the clip saying the man has been punished for desecrating a holy book of the Sikhs. The Nihangs are a Sikh order, distinguished by their

blue robes and often seen carrying spears.

After the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) blamed the farmers' leaders for the incident, the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) claimed that the killing of a man at the protest site was an internal matter of the Nihang Sikhs and had nothing to do with the ongoing farmers' protest against three central farm laws.

The SKM leaders condemned the incident and also demanded a thorough probe into the matter alleging that a religious colour is being given to their movement.

While talking to the media, SKM leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal said, "When we reached the spot some people were saying that the deceased man, before dying, admitted he was sent by someone and given ₹30,000. I don't have the video proof of it but the Government should probe this matter thoroughly. This is an attempt to give communal colour to the farmers' protest."



An effigy of Ravan burns during the Dussehra celebrations in New Delhi on Friday. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal attended the event organised by 'Lav Kush Ramlila Committee' at Lal Quila Miadan

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Shield generated by other strains not immune to Delta

Delhi Covid-19 cases
shot up in April when
Alpha was displaced
by Delta rise: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Delhi where by February 2021, over a half (56%) of individuals were thought to have been infected. Since the first case of Covid-19 was detected in Delhi in March 2020, the city had experienced multiple outbreaks, in June, September and November 2020. After reaching a high of almost 9,000 cases daily in November 2020, new cases steadily declined, with very few new infections between December 2020 and March 2021.

However, the situation reversed dramatically in April 2021 when Delhi reported 20,000 infections every day with huge rise in hospitalisa-

tions and ICU admissions, severely stressing the health-care system, with daily deaths spiking to levels three-fold higher than previous waves.

The international team of scientists led by the National Centre of Disease Control (NCDC) and the CSIR Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, India, with collaborators from the University of Cambridge and Imperial College London, UK, and the University of Copenhagen, Denmark used genomic and epidemiological data, together with mathematical modelling, to study the outbreak.

Iran calls Adani Ports' decision not to handle cargo 'unprofessional'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Iran has taken strong exception to the decision by Adani Ports and SEZ Ltd (APSEZ) not to handle any cargo originating from that country. Iran Embassy here on Friday termed the action as "unprofessional and imbalanced move."

The Adani Ports took the decision after the seizure of nearly 3,000 kilos of heroin at its Mundra port last month. It said it will not handle any cargo originating from Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Conveying its displeasure to India, Iran said it was praised even by the United Nations for its fight against drug trafficking and that it has again been "targeted unfairly" through denial of trade and banning its consignments while describing the restriction as an "unprofessional and imbalanced move." The Iranian Embassy issued a statement on the matter but did not directly mention the Adani Ports.



The APSEZ, which operates Mundra Port in Gujarat, on Monday said it will not handle container cargo originating from Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan at all its terminals from November 15. The decision came nearly a month after the seizure of heroin at Mundra Port located in Kutch district of Gujarat.

Unhappy over the move, Iranian authorities are learnt to have taken up the matter with Indian narcotic drug control authorities.

The Iranian Embassy said the discussion also focused on mutual co-operation in the fight against drug trafficking and that it resulted in some positive outcomes.

2 jawans martyred in drive to smoke out ultras in J&K

Op enters into
fifth day in
thickly forested
area of Poonch

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU



Security personnel stand guard at the encounter site in Bhatadurian area of Mendhar in Poonch district on Friday

PTI

The Indian Army has suffered more losses even as the ongoing counter-terrorist operation entered into its fifth day in the thickly forested area of Mendhar tehsil in Poonch district on Friday.

The traffic remained disrupted on the Jammu-Poonch highway for the second consecutive day even as massive searches were being conducted in the area to track down the footprints of the terrorists.

So far seven Indian soldiers, including one JCO, six other ranks have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. Two more Army personnel were killed in an encounter with terrorists in Poonch, officials said on Friday. During the exchange of fire, two Army

personnel were critically injured and they later succumbed to their injuries, he said, adding the operation is still going on.

Earlier, the a defence public relation officer (PRO) had said the body of a junior commissioned officer (JCO) is yet to be recovered. However, he later said the body was identified of that of a jawan and not of the JCO.

"In an ongoing counter-

terrorism operation in the general area of Nar Khas forest in Mendhar sub-division there was an exchange of fire between army troops and terrorists during the evening hours of Thursday," the PRO said.

A militant involved in the recent civilian killings in Srinagar was gunned down in an encounter with security forces in Pulwama on Friday, police said.

CAPSULE

DIP IN RANK IN HUNGER INDEX 'SHOCKING': GOVT
New Delhi: The Centre on Friday said it was shocking that India's rank was lowered on the Global Hunger Index and it termed the methodology used for rankings "unscientific".

3 SLAUGHTER COWS IN ILLEGAL ABATTOIR, HELD
Bengaluru: Three people have been arrested for allegedly slaughtering many cows in an illegal slaughterhouse here, police said on Friday.

1 DEAD, 20 INJURED AS SUV RAMS DEVOTEES
Jashpur: One person was killed and 20 others were injured when an SUV ran into a religious procession at Puthalgao in Jashpur district of Chhattisgarh on Friday afternoon, police said.

ARYAN SPEAKS TO PARENTS VIA VIDEO CALL
Mumbai: Aryan Khan, son of Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan, who is lodged in Arthur Road prison, has spoken to his parents through a video call from inside the prison once, an official said on Friday. Aryan also received ₹4,500 though money-order sent by his father.

Eliminate ultras resorting to targeted killings in J&K, prepare NRC: RSS

Address demographic imbalance in country, asks Mohan Bhagwat

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A part from calling for "re-formulation" of the national population policy to address what he called "demographic imbalance" in the country and implement it uniformly to all, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Friday asked the Government to speed up efforts to "curb and finish off" the activities of terrorists indulging in "targeted killings" of national-minded citizens in Jammu & Kashmir.

He also asked the Government to totally curb "illegal infiltration from across the borders", prepare a National Register of Citizens and prevent "these infiltrators from acquiring citizenship rights and purchasing lands".

Addressing the annual Dussehra rally at the RSS



Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat addresses RSS volunteers during an event on the occasion of Vijayadashami in Nagpur on Friday

PTI

headquarters in Nagpur, Bhagwat demanded that the Hindu temples controlled by the Government be returned to the Hindu devotees and the wealth of the Hindu temples should be utilised for the worship of the deities and the welfare of the Hindu community only. Alluding to a resolution passed at the RSS' Akhil

Bharatiya Karyakari Mandal meeting held in Ranchi in 2015, Bhagwat said, "Vast differences in growth rates of different religious groups, infiltration and conversion resulting in religious imbalance of the population ratio, especially in border areas may emerge as a threat to the unity, integrity and cultural identity of the country."

Self-reliance to make India world's biggest military power: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After undertaking a major reform by corporatising the ordnance factories, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday here said the objective is to propel India as the world's biggest military on its own through self-reliance.

He also said there is more transparency, trust and technology-driven approach in India's defence sector now than ever before and major reforms are taking place for the first time since Independence while discarding stagnant policies.

He made these assertions in a virtual address to dedicate seven new defence companies after reorganising the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) on the occasion of Vijayadashmi.

The seven state-run companies were created after dissolving the over 200-year-old OFB. The assets of the OFB, including its 41 ordnance fac-



tories, were transferred to the seven new firms. The new companies started functioning from October 1.

Modi mentioned that the target should be that the companies not only establish expertise in their products but also become global brands. He urged that while competitive cost is India's strength, quality and reliability should be its identity.

He said the world saw the strength of India's ordnance factories at the time of World War I and that they used to have better resources and world-class skills, but the companies were ignored in the post-Independence period, leading to the country's dependence on foreign supplies.

Fidayeen attack on Shia mosque kills 32 in Af

AP ■ KABUL

Suicide bombers attacked a Shia mosque packed with worshippers attending Friday prayers in southern Afghanistan, killing at least 32 people and wounding 68, according to a Taliban official.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the carnage at the Fatimiya mosque in Kandahar province. It came a week after a bombing claimed by the local Islamic State affiliate killed 46 people at a Shia mosque in northern Afghanistan.

The sectarian bloodletting has raised fears that ISIS — an enemy of both the Taliban and the West — is expanding its foothold in Afghanistan.

Murtaza, who and like many Afghans goes by one name, said he was inside the mosque during the attack and reported four explosions: two outside and two inside. He said



People inspect the inside of a mosque following a suicide bombers attack in the city of Kandahar on Friday

AP

Friday prayers at the mosque typically draw hundreds of people. Another witness, also named Murtaza, was in charge of security at the mosque and said he saw two bombers.

He said one detonated explosives outside the gate, and the other was already among the worshippers inside the mosque.

SENDS SHOCK WAVES

Lynching incident at Singhu border creates divide amongst agitating farmers

Amid the ongoing controversy over blocked highways due to ongoing farmers' agitation against three central farm laws, a young man was found brutally murdered at the Singhu border protest site in Haryana's Sonapat district for allegedly desecrating the Guru Granth Sahib - the holy book of the Sikh community.

The deceased has been identified as Lakhbir Singh, a resident of Chimakhurd village in district Tarn Taran in Punjab.

After a few videos went viral showing Nihangs - a warrior Sikh group, standing around Lakhbir Singh and asking him questions, it has been alleged that the deceased was beaten to death and his left hand and right foot were cut off for allegedly desecrating the Guru Granth Sahib. His body was then tied to a police barricade. A Nihang - Saravjit Singh surrendered to the police on

Friday evening, claiming responsibility for the murder, and was arrested. Earlier in the day, an FIR was registered in the case under Sections 302 and 34 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) by Haryana Police.

In a video clip that went viral on social media, some Nihangs were seen standing around the injured man with his severed left hand close to his head. The group is heard accusing him of desecrating the Sikh holy book. The post-mortem report of the deceased revealed that he died due to injuries and excessive bleeding.

The Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar chaired a high-level meeting at his residence in the evening over the lynching incident and asked police officials to take strict and prompt action against those responsible for the murder. Home Minister Anil Vij, ACS (Home) Rajeev Arora, Haryana DGP PK Agrawal among others

SKM denies involvement in murder, hints at political controversy

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha claimed that the killing of a man at the protest site was an internal matter between the Nihang Sikhs and had nothing to do with the ongoing farmers' movement, which is not a religious one.

Condemning the incident, the SKM also demanded a thorough probe into the matter and said those responsible should be brought to book. They alleged that a religious colour is being given to their movement. SKM leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal told mediapersons, "When we reached spot some people were saying that deceased man, before dying, admitted he

was sent by someone and given Rs 30,000. I don't have the video proof of it. Government should probe this matter thoroughly. Terming the incident a 'conspiracy', SKM alleged that an attempt is being made to give communal colour to the morcha. "We want to make it clear that both parties to this incident, the Nihang group and deceased, have no relation with SKM. The Morcha is against sacrilege of any religious text, symbol. The farmers' movement is for the rights of farmers and against the three farm laws, the SKM leaders said. In a video message, Yogendra Yadav also condemned incident and said such

incidents cannot be accepted in a civilised society. "A dispute triggered in the night between the Nihangs and the deceased. The deceased was accused of sacrilege (beadbi) of religious text," Yadav said.

He said this is not a religious movement, but it is a farmers' movement and several SKM leaders have asked them (groups of Nihangs) to leave, but despite that they have been staying there (at protest site). Another SKM leader Rakesh Tikait said that incident has nothing to do with farmers' protest. The Police has registered a case and investigation is going on, he added.

NCSC seeks strict action against those responsible for lynching

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes has asked the Haryana Police to take strict action against those behind lynching a man at a farmers' protest venue at Kundli near the Delhi-Haryana border. NCSC chairperson Vijay Sampla also sought a preliminary report from the Haryana Police within 24 hours. Sampla said the man identified as Lakhbir Singh belonged to the Scheduled Caste community. Condemning the violence, Sampla said the NCSC has sought a preliminary report from the Haryana Police within 24 hours. He also asked the Haryana police to take strict action in the incident.

chopped off. As soon as the police reached there, the person had died. Some people were standing there. When the police tried to take the body away, the people at the spot protested, the spokesman said.

After some efforts, the body was brought to the civil hospital Sonapat for post-mortem, he added.

This is not the first time that a crime incident has been reported at the protest site of farmers' agitation, which has been going on for more than ten months now.

In June, a man identified as Mukesh, a resident of Kasra village in Bahadurgarh in Jhajjar district died after allegedly being set on fire by four men who were part of the farmers' protest at the Tikri border.

In the past, an FIR was registered against six persons in connection with rape of a 25-year-old activist associated with the farmers' agitation at the Tikri border. The victim from West Bengal had died of Covid-19 at a hospital in Bahadurgarh

on April 30. Another woman who came to create awareness about Covid-19 and vaccination benefits among the protesting farmers at Tikri had also alleged eve-teasing and sexual harassment.

Notably, the ongoing farmers' agitation remains a major concern for the State Government as the farmers have been protesting against the BJP and JJP leaders across the state.

The Chief Minister Manohar Lal had recently met Union Home Minister Amit Shah regarding the reopening of national highways that are blocked in Haryana due to ongoing farmers' protest. The Singhu and Tikri border in Sonapat district have been blocked for more than ten months due to the protest against three central farm laws.

The State Government will file its reply in the Supreme Court on October 20 regarding the ongoing talks with the agitating farmers for opening the blocked highways.

Political blame game begins after incident

Former Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal strongly condemned the entire sequence of events at Singhu border and demanded a fair and impartial probe into all angles of the heinous crime, including the brutal murder and allegations of sacrilege of the holy Sikh scripture.

"There is no place in a civilised society either for heinous acts of sacrilege of holy scriptures or for barbaric violence," he said.

"Allegations that the entire sequence of events is a part of a deep-rooted conspiracy to sabotage the long, peaceful and democratic struggle of the farmers against the three back laws also need a thorough, fair and impartial probe," said Badal in a statement here.

Upping the ante against the ongoing farmers' agitation against three central farm laws, BJP national general secretary

Tarun Chugh said the gruesome murder of an innocent person at the Singhu border clearly established that criminal elements have overtaken the farmers' agitation. In a statement Chugh said any kind of crime on the place of protest by farmers is an alarming signal and brutal murder indicated that all is not well with the intention of the agitation. Farmer leaders should own up the responsibility of criminal activities on the scene of protest and should make sure that criminals surrender themselves, he said.

Chugh said Taliban elements should not be allowed to be part of the agitation. Meanwhile, the Congress said it is the government's responsibility to investigate the incident in which body of a man has been found near a farmers' protest site in Haryana, and that law should take its course.

ers were present at the meeting. A police spokesman said that FIR has been lodged at

Kundli police station in connection with murder near the protest site at the Singhu bor-

der. On October 15, police in Kundli got information that near the protest site at the

Singhu border, the Nihangs had hanged and tied a person to a barricade and his hand was

EX-CM URGES MODI 'NOT TO REPEAT BLUNDERS OF 80'S IN PUNJAB' TERMS EXTENSION OF BSF JURISDICTION AS DANGEROUS

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Five times Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal on Friday called upon all political parties in the state to stop fighting among themselves and wage a united fight against the center's move to turn Punjab into a Union Territory through the back door by handing it over to the central security forces like the BSF. "This move will further weaken the already endangered federal structure of the country and will reduce the state govt to the status of municipality. This will be a

severe blow to the pride and dignity of Punjabis," he said in a statement here.

Badal said, "If don't stop our mutual fights for petty stakes, the center will merrily take advantage of our weaknesses. Tomorrow, we will all repent, having no powers left to solve the problems of the people. There will be nothing left for then."

The Akali veteran said that it was very unfortunate that the center has been usurping the rights of the states even on subjects which fall on the States List in the Constitution. He said that the center had first legis-

lated three Black laws on Agriculture which is a state subject. Now, with this move on BSF deployment, they have done the same encroachment on another state subject, Law and Order.

He strongly appealed to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to get both these encroachments rescinded by revoking the three Black Laws on Agriculture and withdrawing the orders on BSF deployment. Badal said there is also strong ground to believe that the center might be preparing to rob the state of its legitimate rights on its river waters. "They might

be conspiring to use this drastic new step to crush the farmers' movement by blocking it at the farmers' doorsteps in Punjab..."

The former Chief Minister who is also the patron in chief of the Shiromani Akali Dal said that his party would not stand on prestige and would gladly join or follow any other party that is willing to lead the fight.

SAD wants no political limelight and would humbly cooperate with all other parties in a collective endeavor to safeguard Punjab's interests. "In fact, safeguarding Punjab's interests is in the best overall interest of the country as we are the sword arm of the nation," he added. Describing the center's move to place almost half of Punjab under the BSF as a "dangerous move", Badal said that this would mark a return

to the period when Punjab was declared a disturbed area. "By giving sweeping powers to the BSF, the center has rendered Punjab Police totally irrelevant. "I am afraid we are back into the era of midnight knocks and searches of homes by security forces without valid orders or prior notice, and without any platform to seek relief as people can no longer turn to local leaders or officers for the redress of their grievances."

In addition, said Badal, the center has assumed arbitrary powers even to enter and violate the sanctity of the most sacred shrines, including Shri Harmandir Sahib, Durgiana Temple, Ram Tirath Temple. We all know what the outcome of such insensitivity can be. People of Punjab must unite to safeguard their own pride and freedom guaranteed

under the constitution." Badal also appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to rub salt into the already deep and festering emotional wounds of Punjabis by humiliating them through the denial of their basic democratic and federal right to manage their affairs through their own elected representatives instead of being run from Delhi.

"For nearly 15 years, the center had kept Punjab under President's rule and even under army boots, with disastrous consequences.

I hope the present rulers in Delhi will learn from history and not repeat the tragic mistakes of the past. I strongly call upon the Prime Minister in the interests of Punjab and the whole country not to allow past tragedy to be repeated," said the Akali stalwart.



MANY SHADES OF EVIL: Dussehra festival was celebrated with pomp and show in Sector 17 Chandigarh as Ravana symbolising evil went up in flames on Friday symbolising the victory of good over evil T Sharma / The Pioneer

CHANNI ANNOUNCES PROJECTS FOR SRI CHAMKAUR & MORINDA SAHIB

PNS ■ MORINDA

Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi on Friday announced a slew of development projects to ensure holistic growth of Sri Chamkaur Sahib and Morinda. Addressing a public gathering on Dussehra, the Chief Minister greeted the people and announced that the Community Health Centre at Chamkaur Sahib would be upgraded as the 100 bedded hospital and a trauma centre would soon come up at Morinda. He

also announced plans to upgrade the animal husbandry dispensaries in the rural areas across the state to ensure better health care facilities in order to improve the quality of livestock so as to boost the income of dairy farmers. Channi also announced a sewage project for Morinda to be executed at cost of Rs. 42 crores besides Rs.28 crore canal based drinking water supply scheme, which has already been sanctioned. He also said construction of Rs.114 Crore bridge over river Satluj in region has

already been started to link Bela -Paniali road to national highway 344-A to boost economic development in the area. Later, the Chief Minister also set the effigy of Ravana ablaze to mark Dussehra celebrations. Channi further said that Dussehra reminds us the universal truth of virtue triumphing over darkness and this festival surpasses communal barriers and provides an opportunity to people to reinforce their bonds of brotherhood, amity and goodwill. He said Vijaydashmi strengthens our



belief in inevitability of victory of righteousness over evil which further strengthens spirit of har-

mony, brotherhood and tranquility among various segments of the people.



MANY SHADES OF EVIL: Dussehra festival was celebrated with pomp and show in Sector 17 Chandigarh as Ravana symbolising evil went up in flames on Friday symbolising the victory of good over evil T Sharma / The Pioneer

Parks to come up across State, says Punjab CM

PNS ■ BATHINDA

Emphasizing upon the planned development of the cities as the key to ensure overall progress of the urban infrastructure, Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi on Friday announced that Parks would come up across the entire State as sound health is of paramount importance owing to the fast changing lifestyles in modern era.

He was responding to the demand put forward by the Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal for a park in Bathinda alongside Bathinda branch canal.

The Chief Minister said that urban development is the focus area for him and he has a roadmap for the same which includes robust Sewerage system, spacious market places and parks. "The benefits of all the government schemes must reach down to the last beneficiary in a hassle free manner", added the Chief Minister. Dedicating Shaheed Sepoy Sandeep Singh memorial chowk at Paras Ram Nagar, to the public and paying floral tributes, the Chief Minister said that he feels blessed to meet the parents of the martyr who made supreme sacrifice in the service of the nation in Surankot (J&K) on August 2, 1999. Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal paid glowing tributes to five soldiers martyred a few days ago in J&K, saying that although India

is a peace loving country but gives a befitting reply to the enemy who considers it a weak nation. "The Sikh Regiment and Punjab are the crown of the Indian Army", said the Finance Minister while expressing deepest gratitude to the parents of the martyred soldiers. He also lauded the gesture of the Chief Minister for waiving off the arrears of electricity bills upto 2 KW load. Earlier, the Chief Minister laid the foundation stone of canal lining and the renovation work of the Bathinda branch at a cost of Rs. 30 crore.

Besides, the Chief Minister also laid the foundation stone of Balwant Gargi multipurpose auditorium at Rose Garden, Bathinda which would come up in 2 acre area at a cost of Rs. 27.15 crore having inside seating capacity of 928 and open air seating capacity of 120 and equipped with an art and exhibition hall, conference hall, seminar hall, cafeteria, state of the art sound system and picturesque internal design.

Channi while visiting the special dengue ward set up at the meritorious school, enquired after the well being of the patients and expressed satisfaction at the healthcare facilities. He also laid the foundation stone of the new residence of the Finance Minister at Urban Estate Phase-1 and also paid a visit to the residence of the Deputy Speaker Punjab Vidhan Sabha Ajaib Singh Bhatti.

Ellenabad bypoll: Hry CM, Cabinet Mins, MLAs to start campaign from Oct 20

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

For the high stakes triangular electoral fight on Ellenabad assembly seat, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, his Cabinet Colleagues and BJP senior leaders will begin intensive election campaigning after October 20.

The bypoll to Ellenabad assembly constituency in Sirsa district will be held on October 30 while the counting of ballots will be held on November 2.

The Ellenabad seat is witnessing a three-cornered contest among ruling BJP-JJP joint candidate Govind Kanda, Congress candidate Pawan Beniwal and Indian National Lok Dal nominee Abhay Singh Chautala. The ruling BJP, which is facing a tough challenge to wrest the Ellenabad seat in Chautala's citadel, will organize a series of programmes after October 20 in the fifth phase of the party's campaign. Chief Minister, Cabinet Ministers,

party MLAs, chairman of Boards and Corporations will take part in various programmes to be held at village level to reach out to the voters in Ellenabad, a rural assembly seat.

Ellenabad assembly seat has remained a Chautala clan stronghold. In 2009, OP Chautala won from this seat but in 2010, a bypoll was held which his younger son Abhay Chautala contested and won. Abhay Chautala has since then contested on INLD's ticket and won the Ellenabad seat. He had resigned on January 27 from the Ellenabad seat in support of ongoing farmers' agitation against three central farm laws and necessitated the bypoll.

At present, the ruling BJP is undertaking a campaign where each party worker is reaching out to voters known to him in villages and inform about achievements of the current ruling dispensation, Ellenabad assembly constituency has 76 villages. There

are a total of 211 booths in the assembly seat with about 1.86 lakh voters. According to the party spokesmen, BJP's candidate Govind Kanda has so far covered 22 villages during campaigning even after the oppo-

sition's protest in the guise of farmers. Govind Kanda is brother of Haryana Lokhit Party (HLP) founder Gopal Kanda. Govind Kanda had unsuccessfully contested the assembly elections in 2014 and

2019 from Rania segment in Sirsa district. His brother, Sirsa MLA Gopal Kanda has been supporting the BJP in the 90-member Haryana Vidhan Sabha. Notably, the ruling BJP-JJP alliance had lost the Baroda

bypoll in November last year despite fielding a heavyweight candidate Olympian wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt. Thus, the BJP is leaving no stone unturned to win the Ellenabad bypoll in the state.

EC directs voters to produce EPIC at polling stations

With a view to prevent impersonation of electors during bypolls, Election Commission has directed all electors in all constituencies to produce the Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) for their identification at the polling station before casting their votes. An official spokesperson of the office of Chief Electoral Officer, Haryana said that to make the right of genuine electors to vote in a more effective manner, EPIC are to be produced at the polling stations before casting of votes for

identification. For those electors who are unable to produce the EPIC shall produce one of the following alternative photo identity documents like Aadhaar Card, MNREGA Job Card, Passbooks with photograph issued by Bank/Post Office, Health Insurance Smart Card issued under the scheme of Ministry of Labour, Driving License, PAN Card, Smart Card issued by RGI under NPR, Indian Passport, Pension document with photograph, for establishing their identity, Service Identity Cards

with photograph issued to employees by Central/State Government/PSUs/Public Limited Companies, and Official identity card issued to MPs/MLAs/MLCs, the spokesman said. However, if it is not possible to establish the identity of the elector on account of mismatch of photograph, etc. the elector shall have to produce one of the above mentioned alternative photo documents. Also, the overseas electors who are registered in the electoral roll based on the particulars of

their Indian Passport shall be identified on the basis of their original passport only (and no other identity document) in the polling station. Besides this, the Election Commission has specified that votes shall be given and recorded by means of EVMs and VVPAT printers in the manner prescribed, under the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, and the supplementary instructions issued by the Election Commission from time to time on the subject, the spokesman added.

UK Carrier Strike Group enters Bay of Bengal



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Signaling a strong strategic and defence partnership between the two countries, the United Kingdom's (UK) Carrier Strike Group, led by its largest warship HMS Queen Elizabeth, sailed into the Bay of Bengal on Friday. It was the second such voyage in the last three months. The British High Commission said here the Carrier Strike Group (CSG) will take part in the "most demanding exercise" ever between the UK and India, incorporating elements from all

three military services. HMS Queen Elizabeth and its strike task group had carried out a mega wargame with a number of Indian warships and submarines in the Bay of Bengal in July that featured a range of complex drills. "The deployment is a powerful demonstration of the UK's commitment to deepening its diplomatic, economic and security-based ties in the Indo-Pacific region. India is essential in ensuring a free, open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific," the High Commission said in a state-

ment. A carrier battle group or carrier strike group is a mega naval fleet comprising an aircraft carrier, accompanied by a large number of destroyers, frigates and other ships. British High Commissioner to India Alex Ellis said India is an "essential" partner for the UK in the Indo-Pacific region and that the Carrier Strike Group's visit demonstrates the deepening of the bilateral defence and security partnership. The envoy also referred to the resolve by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to work towards shared security and prosperity. "This visit will boost the cooperation of our armed forces and show the living bridge connecting our people," he said. First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin said the CSG's engagement with India showcases the deepening comprehensive strategic partnership. "Both the Indian and the Royal Navy are blue-water, multi-carrier navies, which places us in a very exclusive club," he said. "Our growing interactions are a testimony to the shared commitment to the rules-based international system, a belief in the values of open trade, and in the importance of the freedom of the high seas — a right conveyed on all nations," he added. HNLMs Evertsen, a Provincien-class frigate of the Royal Netherlands Navy, is also visiting Mumbai along with the British CSG. Ambassador of the Netherlands to India Marten van den Berg said the Indian Ocean is a gateway for Europe into the Indo-Pacific and his country definitely recognises India's crucial role in the region. "The visit to the port of Mumbai by HNLMs Evertsen is a confirmation of our long-standing strong relationship and a step towards enhancement of the Netherlands and India defence relations," the envoy said.

ED attaches ₹146.67 cr in bank forgery case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached assets worth ₹ 146.67 crore of Future Metals Pvt. Ltd. (FMPL) and Future Exim India Pvt. Ltd. (FEIPL) under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in a case connected with fraud committed on banks under the guise of merchant trade. The attached proceeds of crime are in the form of immovable properties located in Maharashtra, Punjab, New Delhi, Gujarat, Bengaluru and Bellary. The ED had initiated investigation on the basis of FIR dated July 18, 2009 registered by Bengaluru Police under Indian Penal Code sections relating to cheating and criminal conspiracy and another FIR dated October 9, 2009 registered by Anti-Corruption Branch, CBI, New Delhi for the offences committed by the accused persons relating to cheating, criminal conspiracy and using forged documents as genuine. The accused firms FMPL and FEIPL approached STCL for entering into merchandise trade and requested the latter to facilitate the trade.



Subsequently, FMPL and FEIPL entered into tripartite agreements with STCL Ltd., a fully owned subsidiary of the State Trading Corporation of India Ltd. (Public Sector Enterprise) along with Overseas buyers and sellers for export and import of copper and nickel. FMPL and FEIPL had signed the agreements guaranteeing the payment to be made by the overseas buyers. Money laundering investigation has revealed that FMPL and FEIPL did not honour the tripartite agreements that they had entered with STCL and overseas buyers and sellers. Chairman of FMPL and FEIPL, Naveen Sriram and Managing Director Sudheer Sriram had executed deed of personal and corporate guarantee in favour of STCL against the latter agreeing to provide finance for the merchandise

trade transactions and this corporate guarantee could be invoked by STCL in the event of any default in repayment of amount due to STCL. STCL established irrevocable Letters of Credit for 90 days towards purchase of goods with a condition that the LCs would not be allowed to devolve under any circumstances as per the undertaking given by FMPL/FEIPL. However, the LCs were devolved due to non-payment by overseas buyers which was guaranteed by FMPL and FEIPL causing wrongful loss of USD 249.572 million to STCL. Earlier, in 2018, the ED had provisionally attached assets worth ₹39 crore and a Prosecution Complaint (charge sheet) was filed on December 10, 2018. With the present attachment, total attachments by ED have reached ₹185.67 crore.

IMD predicts clear sky in Delhi



New Delhi: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted a 'mainly clear sky' in the national capital on Friday with the maximum temperature likely to hover around 34 degrees Celsius and the minimum at 18.6 degrees Celsius. As per the morning update, a temperature of 22.6 degrees Celsius was recorded at 8.30 a.m. with a relative humidity of 68 per cent. The wind was blowing in the southern direction at a speed of 7.5 km per hour. The city observed sunrise at 6.22 a.m. and the sun is likely to set at 5.52 p.m. In the past 24 hours, the maximum temperature was recorded at 33.9 degrees Celsius, a notch departure from normal, and the minimum was at 18.6 degrees Celsius. System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR) said the Air Quality Index (AQI) in the national capital was 190 for PM10 and 77 for PM2.5. As PM10 went over 100, the department has issued a 'moderate' health advisory which means that sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion and heavy outdoor work. The PM2.5 level was also under the moderate category. Notably, Delhi has 36 monitoring stations that accurately record the levels of both particulate matters. As per the latest update at 9.31 a.m., the other pollutants Nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and ozone (O3) were recorded at 12 and 197, respectively. The data for carbon monoxide (CO) was not available. IANS

Global Hunger Report 2021 lowers India's rank, Centre calls it devoid of ground reality

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With India slipping behind even Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan on the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021, the Centre on Friday said the report is devoid of ground reality and facts and the methodology used to calculate is unscientific. With a score of 27.5, India has slipped to the 101st position out of 116 countries.

"It is shocking to find that the Global Hunger Report 2021 has lowered the rank of India on the basis of FAO (UN's Food and Agriculture Organization) estimate on proportion of undernourished population, which is found to be devoid of ground reality and facts and suffers from serious methodological issues. The publishing agencies of the Global Hunger Report, Concern Worldwide and Welt Hunger Hilfe, have not done their due diligence before releasing the report," the government said in a statement.

"The methodology used by FAO is unscientific. They have based their assessment on the results of a 'four question' opinion poll, which was conducted telephonically by Gallup. There is no scientific methodology to measure undernourishment like availability of food grains per capita during the period. The scientific measurement of undernourishment would require measurement of weight and height, whereas the methodology involved here is based on Gallup poll based on pure telephonic estimate of the population," it said.

"The report completely disregards government's massive effort to ensure food security of the entire population during the Covid period, verifiable data on which are available. The opinion poll does not have a single question on whether the respondent received any food support from the government or

Sibal takes a dig at Centre as India slips to 101st rank

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal on Friday Sibal took a dig at the Government over India slipping to 101st position in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021 of 116 countries, from its 2020 position of 94th. "Congratulations Modi ji for eradicating: 1) poverty 2) hunger 3) making India a global power 4) for our digital economy 5) so much more. Global Hunger Index: 2020 : India ranked 94. 2021: India ranks 101," the Rajya Sabha MP tweeted. Sibal also alleged that attention was diverted from the Lakhimpur Kheri incident through the Aryan Khan drug

case. He alleged that a "guilty till proven innocent" template was being applied in the case of Aryan Khan, son of Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan. Aryan (23), arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on October 3, will have to remain in jail for some more days as a court on Thursday, after hearing arguments, posted the matter for orders on October 20. "Aryan Khan -- Narcotics Control Bureau investigation -- New Jurisprudence: No evidence of: consumption, possession. Guilty till proven innocent. Attention successfully diverted from Ashish Mishra (Lakhimpur Kheri)," Sibal tweeted.

other sources. The representativeness of even this opinion poll is doubtful for India and other countries," it added. The report, prepared jointly by Irish aid agency Concern Worldwide and German organisation Welt Hunger Hilfe, mentioned the level of hunger in India as "alarming" with its GHI score decelerating from 38.8 in 2000 to the range of 28.8 - 27.5 between 2012 and 2021. Neighbouring countries like Nepal (76), Bangladesh (76), Myanmar (71) and Pakistan (92) are also in the 'alarming' hunger category but have fared better, added the report.

Meanwhile, China, Brazil and Kuwait shared the top rank with a GHI score of less than five, reported the GHI website. GHI is a tool designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at the global, regional, and national levels. The GHI is designed to raise awareness and understanding of the struggle against hunger, provide a means to compare the levels of hunger between countries and regions and call attention to the areas of the world in greatest need of additional resources to eliminate hunger.

I-T detects unaccounted income of ₹184 cr after raid on realtors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Department detected unaccounted income of about ₹184 crore after it recently raided two real estate business groups of Mumbai and some family members of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, sources said on Friday. The searches were launched on October 7 at 70 premises in Mumbai, Pune, Baramati, Goa and Jaipur, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), the policy making body for the tax department, said in a statement.

"The evidence gathered during the search has revealed several prima-facie unaccounted and benami transactions," it said.



"Incriminating documents, evidencing unaccounted income of about Rs 184 crore of the two groups have been found," the statement said without naming the entities involved. Pawar had told the media on the day of the raids that the tax searches were also carried out at the premises of his three

sisters, one living in Kolhapur district and two in Pune district of Maharashtra. The CBDT said unaccounted cash of Rs 2.13 crore and jewellery of Rs 4.32 crore were seized during the operation. "The search action has led to identification of transactions by these business groups

Stubble burning cases go down

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The number of stubble-burning events in Punjab, Haryana and the eight NCR districts of Uttar Pradesh has come down significantly this year, with a total of 1,795 such incidents reported this month as against 4,854 in the same period last year, the Union Environment Ministry said on Friday quoting a report by the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM). The Commission said according to a report based on the protocol framed by the ISRO, paddy residue-burning events have been reduced by 69.49 per cent in Punjab, 18.28 per cent in Haryana and 47.61

per cent in the eight NCR districts of Uttar Pradesh during a one-month period, as compared to the corresponding period last year. "Active paddy residue-burning events in Punjab, Haryana and eight NCR districts of Uttar Pradesh have come down significantly this year, fewer fire counts reported in 2021 as compared to last year. "Total 1,795 fire counts reported for the one-month period till October 14 as against 4,854 instances reported in the corresponding period during 2020. Enforcement agencies have so far inspected 663 of the total reported sites in Punjab, Haryana and NCR districts of Uttar Pradesh," the commission

said. It said of the 1,795 sites from where stubble burning was reported in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, 663 fields have been inspected by the enforcement agencies and the officials concerned of the respective states and that an environmental compensation (EC) has been imposed in 252 cases. During the said period in the current year, 1,286 stubble-burning events were reported in Punjab as against 4,216 for the same period last year while Haryana reported 487 such incidents as against 596 for the corresponding year last year. The total number of stubble-burning incidents reported from the eight NCR districts of

Uttar Pradesh during this period was 22 as against 42 for the corresponding period last year. No stubble-burning incident was reported from Delhi and the two NCR districts of Rajasthan. In a statement, the CAQM said crop harvesting will be at its peak in the next few weeks and the state governments are taking steps in accordance with the plan of action to improve the efficacy of enforcement and implementation to effectively tackle the problem of stubble burning. The hotspots of paddy residue-burning in Punjab are Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Patiala and Ludhiana, accounting for 72 per cent of the stubble-burning events in the state.

Diabetes, obesity, heart-related ailments rising in India at disturbing pace: Survey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes, obesity and heart related ailments are rising in India at a disturbing pace and one way of curbing this may be by mandatory front of package labelling (FoPL) on food products as has been revealed by a national online survey. The survey found that a majority of parents, a significant 80 per cent respondents, favoured a mandatory FoPL to regulate the food industry dishing out high fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) containing packaged food to the kids. The nationwide survey

conducted by IGPP (Institute of Governance, Policies and Politics) and released on the eve of the World Food Day also revealed that almost 60% of parents respondents expressed concern over the increasing presence of the packaged junk food products in the markets and its aggressive unregulated marketing. Similarly, 77% felt that information related to harmful ingredients like salt, sugar and fat, if made mandatory by the government and displayed in a simple, easy to interpret manner, would steer them towards making healthier choices. Also, more than 62% showed their readiness to permanently give up the habit of

eating HFSS laden food, found the survey titled 'People's Awareness about the Relationship between Food Habits/Ingredients and NCDs/CVDs'. It also indicated that parents were keen for mandatory warning labels on the front of pack on all foods so that it can help them explain to their children why they should not buy HFSS food. Dr Madhukar Mittal, Addl. Professor, Dept. Of Endocrinology, AIIMS, Jodhpur said, "majority of packaged foods contain extra calories - also known as zero calories because they lack nutritional value, vitamin and natural fiber which lead to weight gain and high blood

sugar. India is already facing the devastating impact of an unhealthy diet. If this eating pattern continues, soon India will be the capital of diabetes and obesity." Dr Vandana Prasad, Community Pediatrician and member of Nutrition Advocacy in Public Interest (NAPI) noted that, "...Though this study had been done with an urban middle class sample, we see the penetration of junk food to the remotest villages of the country without any attempts at regulation or public information. "Most attempts to provide FoPL are being diluted by big food companies at the level of Food Safety and Standard

According to the Global Burden of Diseases Report 2017, cardiovascular disease (CVD) kills 1.7 million Indians every year

Authority of India (FSSAI) that does not seem to bother with preventing conflict of interest in favour of the health of the general public. Clearly the consumers will have to force adherence to WHO standards where FoPL is concerned." Manish Tiwari, Director, IGPP added, "the online survey results clearly reflect growing concern among parents about easy availability of HFSS filled packaged foods causing NCDs also known as 'Silent Killers'. In fact, an easily understandable, readable and acceptable label may facilitate usage by people to

make healthy food purchases. "The top food regulatory body, FSSAI, and the policy makers should take a cue from such evidence to enact a strong legislation to implement FoPL policies as a viable strategy to reduce obesity and NCDs risk," he added. The survey which was primarily concentrated around the urban middle-class nuclear families covering a sample pool of 237 parents was aimed to have an idea about the entrenchment of packaged food items in Indian markets and to test if people would find warning labels on the front of pack useful in guiding them towards healthier food choices. According to the Global Burden of Diseases Report 2017, cardiovascular disease (CVD) kills 1.7 million Indians every year. Moreover, the premature mortality (years of life lost because of CVD) in India increased to 37 million in 2010 from 23.2 million in 1990 (by 59 per cent).

Shah on 3-day visit to Andaman & Nicobar Islands to review developmental works

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah will arrive at Port Blair on Friday on a three-day visit to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to review various developmental works initiated with the Centre's assistance. According to Home Ministry officials, he will visit the Cellular Jail at Port Blair on Friday afternoon and will pay tribute to freedom fighter Veer Savarkar and also visit the Swatantra-Jyoti. He will also deliver a speech at 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' event and will flag off 'Go-GO tourist buses' to various destinations in Andaman. Shah will hold a review meeting tomorrow with the Lieutenant Governor Devendra Kumar Joshi, Director General

of Police and other senior officials at Port Blair. During his stay in the Island, the Home Minister will also embark on an aerial survey of various developmental works under construction of 'Shaheed Dweep eco-tourism project' and 'Swaraj Dweep Water Aerodrome' in the Union Territory and will be visiting Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Island during the day. On Sunday, he will attend a programme to be organised by the Andaman and Nicobar Police. On Thursday, he laid the foundation stone for the National Forensic Science University (NFSU) at NFSU at Dharbandora in South Goa and also addressed a public meeting there. IANS

Tikait slams ‘red carpet’ arrest of Mishra’s son

PNS ■ ALIGARH

Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) national spokesperson Rakesh Tikait came to Tappal of Aligarh in an private event and expressed displeasure over the ongoing investigation into the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case, saying the ‘red carpet’ arrest of Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra’s son has sparked anger among the agitating farmers.

Demanding the dismissal of Ajay Mishra from the post of minister, Tikait said that if the father of the accused continues in the post, then there cannot

be a fair investigation.

Minister Ajay Mishra’s son Ashish Mishra was arrested last week after 12 hours of interrogation. It is alleged that Ashish was also riding in one of the cars by which four farmers were killed on October 3 at Lakhimpur Kheri.

The BKU leader told reporters here that the ‘red carpet’ arrest of the minister’s son, who is the prime accused in the incident, has fueled the anger of the protesting farmers. Tikait said at an event in Tappal said that the whole world knows that there can be no justice until the father of the

main accused is not removed from office.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the ongoing probe in the case, he claimed that the Union minister was influencing the investigation of the SIT. He reiterated that if Ajay Mishra is not removed from his post, then the ongoing protest against Lakhimpur Kheri violence will intensify.

The BKU leader said that there would be a “rail roko” demonstration on October 18. He also said that BKU would organize a huge Kisan Panchayat in Lucknow on October 26.

Security Forces avenge PSI killing, neutralise ultra

PNS ■ JAMMU

A joint team of security forces Friday avenged the killing of a Probationary Sub-Inspector (PSI) Arshid Ahmad by eliminating a terrorist behind his killing in the Khanyar area of Srinagar on September 12.

The terrorist was killed during an encounter in the Bemina area of Srinagar late Friday evening. The identity of the terrorist has not been established.

Kashmir Zone Police in a tweet said, “Killer of martyr PSI Arshid killed in Bemina

encounter”.

Meanwhile, another terrorist involved in the recent killings in Srinagar was gunned down in an encounter with security forces in Pulwama on Friday.

According to a police spokesman, “Security forces received information about the presence of terrorists in the Wahibug area of Pulwama, following which a cordon and search operation was launched there. Police said the search operation turned into an encounter in which one terrorist was killed”.



President Ram Nath Kovind interacted with the jawans and officers of all ranks along with their families at the Northern Command in Udhampur. He extended his best wishes to the soldiers on the occasion of Dussehra. PTI Photo

Durga Puja celebrated with fervour, idols immersed on Vijay Dashami

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Durga Puja festivities came to an end on the Vijay Dashami Day with most of the Puja organizers immersing their idols on Friday. Vijay Dashami is celebrated both as Mother Goddess Durga’s victory over Mahishasura the demon and Lord Rama’s victory over demon king Ravana.

Hundreds of royal families --- like those of Cooch Behar, Krishnagar, Sovabazar, Burdwan, Vishnupur --- who have been organizing Pujas for centuries too immersed their idols on Friday. With Goddess Durga worshipped as the daughter who comes to her parents’

place once in a year from her husband Lord Shiva’s abode in Kailash along with her two daughters Laxmi and Saraswati and two sons Ganesha and Kartikeya, for many Dashami tends to become a tearful affair.

Hence on Dashami Day the married women bid a farewell to the Mother Goddess with a heavy heart and appeal her to return quickly next year. And while bidding farewell Durga and her family are treated to sweets and the Mother Goddess along with Laxmi and Saraswati are smeared in vermilion or Sindoor.

After this, the women apply Sindur on each others’ foreheads before play with it much

like they do during Holi. This is called Sindoor Khela when they smear each other and dance to the rhythm of Dhak (the drum) while wishing good to all.

Philosophically however Vijay Dashami is celebrated as the victory of good over evil which connote manifestation of evil and good that make a man --- who experience a sustained battle within between these two qualities with the good winning in the ultimate run.

Meanwhile, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday wished the people of Bengal on the occasion of Vijay Dashami wishing all peace, good health and prosperity.

BJP has neither understood Savarkar nor Gandhi:Uddhav

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Singling out his party’s erstwhile saffron alliance partner for severe criticism on several counts, Maharashtra chief minister and Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray on Friday made a cryptic comment on Friday that “BJP has understood neither Veer Savarkar nor Mahatma Gandhi”.

Uddhav was apparently referring to a recent comment by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh who raked up a controversy through a claim that Gandhi had advised Savarkar, who was languishing at Andaman’s Cellular Jail then, to write mercy petitions to the British.

Addressing the annual Dusshera rally at Shanmukhananda Hall at Sion in north-central Mumbai, Uddhav did not spare RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat either. “Mohan Bhagwat has said that all our ancestors came from the same planet. Supposing I take his statement to be true, I would like to know from him if the ancestors of the Opposition leaders came from other planets. Did those farmers who were crushed to death in Lakhimpur Kheri also come from some other planet?,” the Sena president asked the RSS chief.

“On one hand, you (Mohan Bhagwat) say, the Hindutva does not practise

enmity and jealousy, while on the other, do you accept what happened at Lakhimpur Kheri in broad daylight?,” Uddhav asked Bhagwat.

Uddhav also had a dig at the BJP – which “prides itself as the World’s largest political party”, for fielding a former Shiv Sena candidate in Deglur Assembly by-poll. “See the irony, the world’s largest political party has to import candidates even for an assembly by-poll,” he said.

As he tore into the BJP on various counts, Uddhav made a stunning claim that had the BJP fulfilled its pre-Assembly poll promise of giving the CM’s post to his party, he would have perhaps stepped aside, made Shiv Sainik the chief minister and even retired from politics.

“If the BJP had fulfilled its promise of giving (the first term) of the chief ministership, I would have perhaps stepped aside, made a Shiv Sainik the chief minister and even retired from politics. I am being criticised in politics. This is not my field. I came here to fulfil the responsibility as a son (of late Balasaheb Thackeray). I will not keep quiet till I fulfil my responsibility. It is with this intent that I am here,” Uddhav said.

Slamming the BJP for calling the Shiv Sena corrupt after the two parties’ alliance ended in 2019, Uddhav dared it to topple his Sena-NCP-Congress coalition government which will complete two years next

month.

“I do not go after anyone. But, if someone targets me, I would not spare them. What is your stature to attack me? If you have some strength in you to take on me directly, please do it. But, do not use CBI, ED and IT to hand over threats to me. If you take on directly, I will retaliate as the Shiv Sena and not as the chief minister. Unlike you, I am not the one to hide behind police or enforcement agencies. I will do whatever I can through my Shiv Sainiks,” Uddhav said.

Coming down heavily on the BJP for making a song and dance of the arrest of Bollywood super star Shah Rukh Khan’s son Aryan Khan and its efforts to defame the Mumbai and Maharashtra police, Uddhav wanted to know as to why was the ruling party at the Centre talking about the seizure of multi-thousand crore worth drugs from Mundra port.

“Drugs worth several thousand crores were found at Mundra port in Gujarat. The court has ordered a probe into the whole thing. Why are the BJP leaders not talking about it?,” It has launched a campaign that the drugs are freely sold here in Maharashtra. If drugs are found with someone, can he be declared a criminal? Do you make efforts to reform the youngsters so that they can think about their future and not go wayward as they did earlier?,” the chief minister asked.

Lakhimpur case: Arms recovered from Lucknow flat owned by accused

Lucknow: The special investigation team (SIT) probing the Lakhimpur Kheri violence on Friday brought two accused persons, Ankit Das and Latif alias Kale, to a flat in Hussainganj area of Lucknow and recovered a revolver and a gun from there, police sources said.

They said the Hussainganj flat belongs to Das. The revolver licence holder is Das, while Latif holds the licence of the gun. After the incident on October 3, Das had escaped from the spot and hid the weapons in his apartment. Police will take the arms for a forensic test, so that it could be known whether it was used during the violence.

Sources also said that after the violence in Tikononia village on October 3, Das fled from there and hid himself in a hotel in Lucknow. After recovering the weapons from the flat, police reached the hotel located on Lohia Path, and took the CCTV footage.

Das is the nephew of late Congress leader and former Union minister Akhilesh Das.

The SIT probing the Lakhimpur Kheri violence on Thursday took Union Minister Ajay Mishra’s son and three others arrested in the case to recreate the sequence of events leading to the incident in Tikononia village.

Amid tight security, the three accused were taken to the site of the incident on the Tikononia-Banbirpur road, around 60 km from district headquarters of Lakhimpur, police said. Eight people died in the violence and of them, four were farmers, allegedly knocked down by a vehicle carrying BJP workers.

Infuriated farmers then allegedly lynched some people in the vehicles. The other dead included two BJP workers and their driver. In the incident, a journalist was also killed. Farmers claimed that Union Minister Ajay Mishra’s son Ashish Mishra was in one of the vehicles, an allegation denied by both father and son saying they can produce evidence to prove he was at an event at that time. **PTI**

Kerala logs 8,867 Covid cases while doctors launch stir

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Kerala on Friday logged 8,867 new Covid-19 patients from 79,554 samples tested during the last 24 hours. The State recorded 67 deaths taking the fatalities to 26,734 till date.

Doctors belonging to the Kerala Government service launched the second phase of their agitation on Friday demanding better service condition and restoration of pay and allowances that were reduced drastically since the pandemic struck the State.

Things took a turn for the worse on Friday as a group of politicians including the panchayath president of Sooranadu



in Kollam district physically assaulted Dr Ganesh, the duty doctor of Sasthamkotta. Sreekumar, the panchayath president and a group of politicians had brought the dead body of a young woman late Thursday night to the hospital and wanted the duty doctor to issue a death certificate. But Dr Ganesh, who was the lone doctor on duty asked them to wait for few minutes as he was attending to an emergency case

, said Dr T N Suresh, general secretary, Kerala Government Medical Officers Association.

“Moreover, there are guidelines to issue death certificate. The doctor has to check the factors that led to the death. The persons who had accompanied the body refused to bring to the ward and insisted that Dr Ganesh should go to the vehicle to inspect the body. This was a dubious demand,” said Dr Suresh. The video of the group attacking the doctor went viral by Friday morning.

One of the major demands raised by the KGMOA is the safety of the duty doctors from the attack of persons accompanying the patients.

Swamy decries Indian bureaucrats meddling in Lankan affairs

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Dr Subramanian Swamy, BJP’s Rajya Sabha member said in Colombo that bureaucrats should not be allowed to meddle in the ties between Sri Lanka and India. “The relation between the two countries dates back to centuries and it is a time tested one.

We need matured political leaders and not commissars to bring to the ward and insisted that Dr Ganesh should go to the vehicle to inspect the body. This was a dubious demand,” said Dr Suresh. The video of the group attacking the doctor went viral by Friday morning.

Dr Swamy was the chief guest during Friday’s Vijaya Dashami Pooja held at Temple Tree, the official residence of



Dr Subramanian swamy leading Vijaya Dashami Pooja at Temple Tree Colombo, the official residence of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa The PM and Shiranti Rajapakse are also seen Pioneer photo

Mahinda Rajapaksa, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka.

Dr Swamy, a long-time friend of the island’s Prime Minister led the Pooja and

addressed the gathering about the importance of Vijaya Dashami and Navrathri. The BJP MP is in the island nation on the invitation of Mahinda

PM condoles demise of chairman of Dainik Jagran Group



The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has expressed deep grief over the demise of the Chairman of Dainik Jagran Group Yogendra Mohan Gupta Ji.

In a tweet, the Prime Minister said; “Dainik Jagran Samuh ke chairman Mohan Guptaji ke nidhan se atyant dukh hua hai. Unka jana kala, sahitya aur patrakarita jagat ke liye ek apurniye shati hai. Shok ke is ghadi mein unke parijano ke prati main apni sanvedna vayakt karta hun. Om Shanti”

Adanis take over Thiruvananthapuram int’l airport; Tharoor hopes for best

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ■ PTI

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Friday said he was hoping for the best after the Adani Group took over the operation and management of the Thiruvananthapuram international Airport.

The Thiruvananthapuram MP said people would extend support if the group works keeping in mind the development of the capital city of Kerala and its surroundings.

Noting that developments cannot be implemented through strikes, he said for the progress of Thiruvananthapuram, a neat and tidy airport with equipment of the highest standard is required besides increasing the number of flights and airlines operating from there.

“I go forward hoping for the best,” Tharoor, known for his views supporting privatisation of airports, told reporters

here.

A day after the Group announced taking over the management of the international airport, the Congress leader said the private player would get the support of the people if it rises up to their expectations.

While the ruling LDF and the opposition Congress-led UDF opposed the handing over of the airport to the Adani group, Tharoor stuck to his stand that privatisation would help development of the city and its surrounding areas.

Unfazed by criticism over his stand, he had said privatisation would help tap potential and attract investors. The Congress MP has been drawing flak not only from the Left parties but even from his own party for his stand.

Actor-turned politician and Rajya Sabha MP Suresh Gopi too welcomed the privatisation of the airport. “It is

a positive move”, Gopi said. Denying the allegations of the airport having been sold to the Group, he said only the administration of the airport was handed over to it.

When the airport-users are satisfied with the service provided there, such criticisms would end, Gopi told reporters. Last year, the State Assembly unanimously passed a resolution protesting the privatisation of the airport with the Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan criticising its takeover by the Adani group. Vijayan said such a takeover was not for development but to protect the interest of monopolies.

The Thiruvananthapuram International Airport is the first of the four airports in the State to be established. It was set up in 1932, was owned and operated by the Airports Authority of India. PTI RRT TGB RRT

Drugs case: Aryan Khan speaks to parents via video call from jail

Mumbai: Aryan Khan, son of Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan, who is lodged in Arthur Road prison in central Mumbai in a case of alleged seizure of drugs from a cruise ship, has spoken to his parents through a video call from inside the prison once, an official said on Friday.

Aryan also received Rs 4,500 though money-order sent by his father, he said.

Aryan (23) was arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on October 3 from the cruise ship off the Mumbai coast.

He will have to remain in jail at least till October 20, as a special court has posted his and two others’ bail pleas for orders on that day. He is lodged in the Arthur Road prison along with five others arrested in the case. **PTI**

Farmers’ body burns effigy of PM Modi, HM Shah

Jaipur: The Samyukt Kisan Morcha burnt a multi-headed Ravana-like effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi having faces of Home Minister Amit Shah and others in Jaipur on the occasion of Dussehra on Friday.

Apart from the faces of Modi and Shah, the effigy had the faces RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar and businessmen Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani.

The effigy also had lines like ‘I am Narendra Damodardas Modi, I am anti-farmer’ written on it in Hindi.

Morcha workers assembled at Swami Kumaranand Bhawan at Hathroi from where they

marched towards Shaheed Smarak near a government hostel shouting slogans against PM Modi and others in protest against the Lakhimpur Kheri violence in UP and agriculture laws enacted by the Centre.

“Keeping up with the spirit of the festival - victory of good over evil, we burnt the effigy while symbolising the BJP, RSS, PM Narendra Modi and others as evil.

The central government has forgotten all democratic values and is working to benefit select businessmen and acting against farmers,” Sanjay Madhav, state joint secretary of Samyukt Kisan Morcha said.

He said the effigy was burnt under a national call given by the Morcha. **PTI**

Three held for slaughter of cows in B’luru

Bengaluru: Three people have been arrested for allegedly slaughtering many cows in an illegal slaughterhouse here, police said on Friday.

The action was taken on a complaint by Nandini Matiyani, a volunteer of the Gau Gyan Foundation, an animal rights organisation, said the police.

Those arrested are the owner of the slaughterhouse, his worker and an autorickshaw driver, who have been booked under the recently promulgated Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Ordinance-2020, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act-1960, Food Safety and Standards Act and the Karnataka Epidemic Diseases Act.

In a video message, Matiyani said she got a tip-off that many illegal slaughterhouses were operating in the city. **PTI**



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Admission carnival

The preference for DU across the nation is a sad commentary on the state of higher education

The process of admissions to undergraduate courses in Delhi University (DU) is an annual celebration of cosmopolitan student life in the national capital. Not even the COVID-19 pandemic could dent the fervour last year. Ironically, this year, all it took was a mindless remark by a Delhi University professor to dampen the spirit. The professor, who is of a certain political disposition, claimed a “marks jihad” by the Kerala education board. He contented that the board gave 100 per cent marks to its students to “over admit” those from Kerala to particular courses. The university bosses did not like his insinuation and he was ticked off. Two years ago, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal promised in the Aam Aadmi Party manifesto before the assembly elections that 85 per cent of Delhi University seats would be reserved for the Capital’s residents. The Chief Minister, like the physics professor, did not realise that DU is a central university, bound by the Delhi University Act, and it does not come under the purview of any State Government. It treats all education boards alike and nobody can reserve seats for any demographic grouping. Such parochial outlooks apart, admissions time in DU involves millions of people all over India — students, parents, guardians and counsellors — making it a national event. The cut-offs, including 100 per cent for some courses, the number of applications, the numerous lists, make front-page news. Of the 70,000 seats up for grabs this year, over 41,000 seats were secured at the end of the first cut-off. Of this number, around 10,000 seats went to students from various State boards, the rest going to CBSE students.



By the end of the admissions process, Delhi would have become a bit more cosmopolitan than last year. In a broader sense, however, the overwhelming preference for DU across the country is a sad commentary on the general health of higher education in the States. Meritorious students leave for Delhi just as after their graduation they will leave India for abroad. Most outstation students come to Delhi because they are dissatisfied with the teaching standards, academic environment and competition back home and Delhi’s perceived importance as a stepping stone. Pushing this migration, if it can be called that, is a growing force of senior students and even State Governments. Students’ associations of north-eastern and southern States set up help desks in State capitals and Delhi to guide prospective students in selecting courses and colleges, acclimatising themselves in Delhi, or even learning Hindi and getting used to local street food. In the south, the Government-run Telangana Tribal and Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society encourages students from lower castes and classes to get admissions in DU, covering their fees and hostel expenses. What makes the Telangana case unique is the Government’s overt push to enable marginalised young people to make the long journey from their remote homes to Delhi University.

PICTALK



An effigy of Ravana burns during the Dussehra celebrations, in Amritsar

PTI

Cunning edge

The unprecedented number of young women trafficking drugs in Kerala is disturbing

Friday marked Vijaya Dashami and the conclusion of this year’s Navratri Puja. The day is celebrated to mark the victory of good over evil. In Kerala, meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of tiny tots got initiated into the world of letters. Parents and teachers made them write the first letters of the alphabet, a ritual to mark their ‘graduation’ as students. In Sanskrit, the word Guru is made up of two letters: ‘Gu’ means darkness while ‘Ru’ stands for remover. The one who removes darkness is the Guru. It is the teachers who mould future citizens. No wonder, teachers were accorded the status of God in ancient India. Things have changed a lot and it is foolish to expect that customs and tradition would remain constant though there are some values which should never change. The relation between a teacher and student should remain eternally the same because it is imbibed in Indianness. The trigger to point out these values is the recent arrest of a school teacher at Ernakulam for being a drug trafficker. Susmitha Philip, who has been employed as a



teacher at a high-end public school in the city, was arrested by the police for being an agent and drug pusher among the young and old alike.

Susmitha was one of the prime sources who supplied narcotics to rave parties, the police say. The investigators are yet to get the details of students who have been converted into addicts by this special “teacher”. One of the disturbing trends being seen in the State is the arrest of an unprecedented number of young women in connection with drug trafficking. They are good-looking, fluent in English and Hindi and well-mannered, the mandatory requirements to succeed in Kerala. Nobody would be able to resist when they stride into the hearts with their sweet talk. Narcotic traffickers are employing all tricks in the game of marketing which may baffle even multinational enterprises. Rajasthan-born Rishiraj Singh, a brilliant IPS officer who was the director of the Excise Department, had warned the Government and society about the alarming increase in drug trafficking in the State. Not a single day passes in Kerala without reports of drug seizure and sexual abuses. Deployment of women and drug traffickers is the new modus operandi. Are the authorities listening? Would they care enough this Dussehra to ensure that kids’ innocence doesn’t lose out to the evil?

The Taliban 2.0 is no different

The Taliban doubtless said that their governance would be different this time. Developments on the ground, however, tell a different story



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

Three issues have emerged as being of key concern to the United States and the European Union — whose representatives have recently met those of the Taliban — and members of G-20, in respect of the developments in Afghanistan. These are the humanitarian situation in that country, the danger of its becoming a spawning ground of international Islamist terrorism, as it had become during the earlier Taliban dispensation (1996-2001), and the human rights of all Afghans, particularly women, girls and the minorities. The US, on its part, has the specific issue of evacuating out of Afghanistan its own citizens and people who had sided with it — and are now in danger. They got left behind given to the utterly hurried and disorganised manner in which they retreated from the country.

The humanitarian situation is doubtless grim with the country facing an economic collapse, rising food prices and unemployment, at a time when hundreds of thousands of people have been rendered internal refugees — either fleeing the Taliban or what were, until recently, conflict zones. Understandably, the US and the EU have been deeply concerned and the latter has promised one billion euros (\$ 1.15 billion) as humanitarian aid.

Nor is concern about terrorism surprising considering that Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda, who were behind the attack of twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York and E-Wing of the Pentagon in Washington DC on September 11, 2001, operated from Afghanistan. It was the Taliban’s refusal to hand them over to the US that led to the invasion that to their ouster.

Unfortunately, one has the impression that the issue of human rights of women, girls and the minorities, though on the table, is not receiving the same amount of importance as the first two. It is, therefore, essential to emphasise their importance given the fact that they had virtually ceased to exist during the earlier Taliban dispensation from 1996 to 2001. What happened then? What happened during Taliban rule? Kamal Matinuddin,



a retired lieutenant-general of the Pakistan Army, puts it in a capsule in *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1999*:

“Girls are being denied education; women have been prevented from working; if they leave their house, they have to be covered from head to foot with a veil (*burqa*); besides being veiled, women have to be accompanied by a male relative when they venture out in the streets. Shopkeepers have been directed not to sell goods to unveiled women. Rickshaw drivers are not to pick up women passengers unless they are fully covered. Women caught violating these rules are imprisoned, as are the shopkeeper and the rickshaw driver.”

Ahmed Rashid writes in *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, “that edicts of the Department of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, headed by Maulana Qalamuddin, “had changed



WOMEN EMPLOYEES OF THE WOUND-UP MINISTRY, WHO HAVE BEEN TRYING TO COME TO WORK, HAVE BEEN TOLD TO GO HOME

the lifestyles of Kabul’s once easy-going population and forced Afghan women to disappear from public view.” The entire repressive and joyless system rested on terror and ubiquitous espionage. All forms of entertainment were forbidden. Cinema halls were shut and music forbidden. Shaving or trimming of beards was forbidden. Administration of justice was medieval and based on the Taliban’s understanding of sharia law. Punishments were savage — such as public hangings and amputation in the case of thefts.

The Taliban doubtless said after coming to power in August that their dispensation would be different this time, that theirs would be an “inclusive Government”, women and girls would enjoy rights under Islamic law, and would be able to study and work. Developments on the ground, however, tell a very different story. Women are facing a very severe shrinkage of their

rights. Nothing is more emblematic of this than there is not a single woman in the interim Government they have formed. Women demonstrating for a place in it have been violently dispersed. Nor can one miss the symbolism of the closure of the Women’s Affairs Ministry and the use of the premises to house Ministries of Prayer of Guidance and the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. Women employees of the wound-up ministry, who have been trying to come to work, have been told to go home.

The Taliban-appointed Chancellor of Kabul University, Mohammad Ashraf Ghairat, said on September 27, “As long as a real Islamic environment is not provided for all, women will not be allowed to come to the universities or work.” Schools for boys have opened but not for girls.

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EVERY MOSQUITO BITE IS DANGEROUS

Sir — The deadly dengue has been spreading its tentacles across the city swiftly and the worst hit are the children. It seems as if COVID-19 has emerged in another form. There is a continuous rise in cases; however, people are not taking care of themselves because of the festive season. People should be aware and should take proper precautions. Every mosquito bite is dangerous and, hence, people should take proper caution as our healthcare is still fragile and cannot deal with a lot of dengue cases. Dengue can be fatal if the patient does not receive treatment on time. Also, since there is no vaccine for dengue, prevention is the cure.

The doctors are on their toes to deal with dengue patients. Spraying of larvicide must be taken up by the municipality as mosquito control measures. The concerned Government bodies must tackle the situation and come up with mosquito control measures. As a citizen, we also should come forward and spread words of awareness to save our city from the clutches of the dengue.

Somya Agrawal | Ujjain

DELHI NEXT STOP FOR MAMATA?

Sir — On cloud nine following the hat-trick of her chief ministership in West Bengal, the TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee thinking big does not come across as an unthinkable scenario. Actually, her ambitious plan came to the fore when she met at the national capital with several Opposition stalwarts including interim-president of the Congress Sonia Gandhi and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, besides Priyanka Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi in July this year and emphasised the Opposition unity at the Central level with a view to dethroning the BJP in the 2024 Parliamentary Election. But on the way from Kolkata to her cherished destination Delhi, there are many stumbling blocks.

Although Mamata Banerjee had made it clear during her five-day visit

A tempting cricketing format



With the T20 World cup round the corner, the heat in the shortest form of the game is growing up as the Indian Premier League (IPL) gave the much-needed momentum to an all-important ICC tournament. Tempers are hotting up as the IPL has reached the final stage. The last qualifier game between Kolkata Knight Riders and

Delhi Capitals was a last over thriller which led the KKR to the finals. Many of the matches this season have been last-over thrillers and we missed out hat-tricks or ties in the second leg of the season. The fight between the bat and the ball is really engrossing.

The KKR vs DC match was evenly poised till the last over. Spinner Ashwin was given charge of bowling the crucial last over. Ashwin did well to finish the first four balls for a single and also took two wickets in the process. Ashwin was on a hat-trick. The DC needed six runs off the last two balls and the match reached a cliff hanger stage. However, Tripathi’s spectacular sixer saw a limping KKR into the final. Had it been a catch at the boundary line and a hat-trick for Ashwin, then it would have been a different game altogether. But that is what T20 cricket is about. Anyway, it was a tantalising game all the way.

Krishnan Ramanathan Raman | Coimbatore

to Delhi that the burning question as to ‘who will lead the Opposition’ will be decided later, yet there’s a big difference between saying and doing at the end of the day. Had Jyoti Basu who had been held in the highest esteem across all political spectra for his sturn rectitude been alive there, coming of all like-minded parties under one umbrella would have been simply possible. Above all, whether or not the grand old party likes to play second fiddle to any party or to its leader is a million dollar question.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

HUNGER ‘STRIKES’ IN INDIA

Sir — India has slipped to 101st spot out of 116 countries in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021 calculated on four indicators — undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality — and earned the tag, ‘serious’ for the level of hunger it suffers from. Admittedly, hunger has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic all over

the world and not just in India. India’s name near the bottom of the GHI has shone the spotlight on the grim reality of mass hunger in our country and if one might add, stripped India’s gleaming veneer of economic rise and made the vanity of ‘nationalistic surge of triumphalism’ more pronounced.

India has the dubious and unpalatable distinction of having the largest concentration of hungry people in the world. We fail to see why many people go hungry if India indeed produces more than enough food to feed all. We have a moral obligation and a patriotic duty to work for the elimination of hunger, a prerequisite for unlocking the country’s full potential. Intrinsic to the right to life is the right to food. The Government must make the emergence of a hunger-free country its top priority. With political will, it can do it.

G David Milton | Maruthancode

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

I have discussed with Yediyurappa regarding the byelections and he will campaign October 20 onwards.



Karnataka Chief Minister — Basavaraj Bommai



We will prepare for the next surge in infections by considering the worst-case scenario.

Japanese Prime Minister — Fumio Kishida

I have always wanted to do the right film at the right time if it was a Hindi film. I think the time is now.



Actor — Mahesh Babu



My experience as a bowler in T20 cricket was that you have to approach it with a defensive mindset.

Former Sri Lanka spinner — Mutiah Muralitharan

Whatever my issues were...I have told the party high command. I have faith in its decision.



Congress leader — Navjot Singh Sidhu



FIRST COLUMN THREAT WITHOUT A DEADLINE FOR TAIWAN

Beijing can invade the island even now but will be fully prepared in three years' time



GWYNNE DYER

China's President Xi Jinping promised that "the historical task of the complete reunification of the motherland...will definitely be fulfilled." That was a threat to Taiwan, but a threat without a deadline. The next day, President Tsai Ing-wen replied that "nobody can force Taiwan to take the path China has laid out for us." And the United States, while not directly promising to defend the island at the expense of a war with China, let it be known that there are US special forces and Marines in Taiwan on training missions. Beijing already knew that, of course (Trump sent them there two years ago), but Washington's open confirmation of it was a clear warning to China. So there is a crisis of sorts, although a slow-moving one. As Defence Minister Chiu Kuo-Chen said in Taiwan, Beijing is capable of invading the island even now, but will be fully prepared to do so in three years' time. "By 2025, China will bring the cost and attrition to its lowest. It has the capacity now, but it will not start a war easily, having to take many other things into consideration." What did he mean, exactly, and is it true? In part it's a recognition that China is rapidly accumulating weapons that will make a seaborne invasion across the Taiwan Strait possible, although it is 180 km. wide at its narrowest point. The key Chinese weapon is long-range



rocket artillery that can reach all points in Taiwan with high accuracy, and can be launched in such numbers that Taiwanese anti-missile defences would be overwhelmed. Such a weapon exists. It's called the PCL-191, and it's a glorified version of the 'Stalin organ' and other multiple rocket launchers of Second World War vintage, but with a range of 350 km. There are already two brigades of these rocket-launchers stationed on the Chinese coast facing Taiwan, and the number is going up all the time. Soon, if not already, they will give Beijing the power to launch saturation strikes on all of Taiwan's airfields, radar stations, anti-aircraft defences and ports simultaneously. If all the runways and ports in Taiwan are shattered, then its planes and warships cannot stop Chinese assault troops crossing the Strait in ships (ten hours), and nobody else will be close enough to help even if they want to.

Taiwan is at extreme range for fighter aircraft based in Japan, and the US Pacific Fleet is very unlikely to be within reach if the attack is a surprise. So what 'other things' may still deter China from making such an attack even after it has enough rocket launchers on the coast? Just one is enough: the certainty that even if the United States could not intervene militarily in time to save Taiwan, it would certainly institute a complete naval blockade of China immediately afterwards. Ships from China crossing the Pacific must pass between the 'first chain' of islands (Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines); shipping to the Indian Ocean, the Middle East and Europe has to go through the Strait of Malacca (Malaysia and Indonesia). In practice, there's no way out: China's economy would be strangled within months. Further escalation by either side would be deterred by the fear of nuclear war, and some sort of deal would have to be made. It could be very humiliating for China, perhaps so humiliating that it would even undermine the control of the Communist Party. So Xi Jinping won't ever really risk it. That's the way people steeped in classic strategic thinking see it, and they're probably right. Although you don't get your money back if they're wrong.

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'The Shortest History of War'. The views expressed are personal)

Doubling farmers' income by 2022

Evidently, for agricultural productivity and incomes to grow, aggregation of farm holdings in the form of farmer producer organisations is crucial



ALOK RANJAN

It has been some time since the committee under Ashok Dalwai appointed by the Government of India gave its report (2015) on the policies to be followed and action to be taken to double the income of farmers by 2022. We are almost approaching the appointed year but do not seem to be anywhere near the ambitious goal. Even in the state of Uttar Pradesh the current government after coming in had assured that they would double the income of farmers by 2022 but the current reports indicate that UP is far from meeting the assurance.

The Dalwai committee report is a very comprehensive document according to which the issue of doubling farmer's income depends upon increasing crop productivity, increasing livestock productivity, bringing about resource use efficiency or saving in cost of production, increasing cropping intensity, diversification to high value crops, increase in real prices to farmer and shift from farm to non-farm occupations. Except for the last one the rest of the suggestions are all related to the agriculture sector. Doubling in real income is possible only with a 10.4% annual growth rate in farm sector. This requires investments "in" agriculture like irrigation, agriculture market and land development and "for" agriculture like roads, power and transport. Gross capital formation has to be stepped up in both public and private sector.

The recent release of the decennial NSS 77th round situation assessment of Agriculture households (SAS) provides interesting insights which could be useful for public policy makers. This survey gives the figures for 2018-19 and it would be meaningful to compare with the SAS of 2012-13. Taking the base year as 2011-12 the growth in the income of the farmers in real price terms is six per cent. Even in this, the growth rate is much higher in advanced states like Punjab as compared to UP and Bihar. The share of crop production in the total income of agriculture household is 37.7 per cent and that of livestock is 15.48 per cent. The share of income in wages is as high as 40 per cent.

Hidden behind this figure is the fact that in poorer states like UP and Bihar the average size of the land holding is continuously becoming smaller and today 90 per cent of the farmers are small and marginal farmers. These small farms are not viable and so are not able to contribute to growth in income of farmers. They are not efficient in the use of inputs. It is clear that for agriculture productivity and incomes to grow aggregation of farm holdings in the form of farmer producer organizations (FPO) is absolutely essential. NABARD is working in this direction but the pace is slow.

Further, I noticed that in states like UP FPO's are being setup through directives from the top instead of evolving naturally at the ground level leading to a situation where most of these FPO's exist only



IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THAT AGRICULTURE IS A STATE SUBJECT AND THAT POLICY INTERVENTIONS HAVE TO RESPOND TO STATE-SPECIFIC ISSUES. IN FACT, STATES LIKE UP HAVE NINE AGRO CLIMATIC ZONES, EACH REQUIRING A DIFFERENT STRATEGY AND APPROACH

(The writer is former Chief Secretary, Government of Uttar Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)



on paper and are not active. I feel proper training to officers and farmers is required so that proper functional FPO's are created. They need initial financial support also from the Government. This is perhaps the only way in getting out of the small holdings trap. Another option could be to adopt the model land leasing Act formulated by the Niti Aayog.

The cost of cultivation for the farmers is steadily going up. Fertilizers are costing more and the prices of electricity as well as diesel have gone up substantially. However, as far as the market price is concerned the farmer is still subjected to the volatility of the market. The MSP mechanism is benefiting farmers in an uneven manner covering less than 20 per cent of the farmers and mostly those belonging to Punjab, Haryana, MP and western UP. Moreover, this is restricted further to wheat and paddy. Even though the MSP is declared for 23 crops including oil seeds and pulses there is hardly any procurement done for them. Very limited market intervention is resorted to by NAFED.

There is no MSP either for horticulture crops or milk where the phenomenon of prices crashing is seen more often than not. It is imperative in this situation to develop an ecosystem and institutional mechanism which protects the farmers from the vagaries of the market and enables them to avoid distress sale. This requires the building up a post-harvest

infrastructure including WDRA (warehouse development regulatory authority) compliant warehouses and cold storages where the farmer can store his crop and get bank financing under the warehouse receipt negotiable instrument act. Farmers should be able to choose when to sell and not compelled to sell at throw away prices. The agriculture market typically behaves in a manner that prices fall at the time of harvest but tend to rise in future months and farmers need to be economically empowered to take advantage of this.

I was APC (Agriculture Production Commissioner) in UP for more than three years. This post is unique to UP as it coordinates the functioning of nineteen departments concerned with agriculture. My experience was that one of the most under-rated sectors of the economy is animal husbandry which happens to be a major source of employment and it is my firm belief that this is the critical sector which can bring about increase in the income of the farmers. Merely crop production is not sufficient and has to be complemented by animal husbandry. In UP, during my tenure as APC, we started an interest subvention and breed improvement scheme, "Kamdhenu", in the dairy sector which resulted in substantial increase in the income of the farmers.

Similarly, we introduced a scheme for large scale poultry development with similar benefi-

cial results to the farmers. In fact, before the scheme UP used to import 1 crore eggs per day from other states and during my tenure itself this amount was brought down to 60 lakhs. Unfortunately, both these schemes have not been continued by the current government. The SAS clearly shows that income from livestock is showing an increasing trend and has a great potential for the future. The net receipt from crops has declined from 47.9 per cent in 2012-13 to 37.7 per cent in 2018-19 while that from rearing animals has gone up from 4.3 per cent to 15.7 per cent within the same time frame.

It is also important to keep in mind that agriculture is a State subject and that policy interventions have to respond to state specific issues. In fact, states like UP have nine agro climatic zones each requiring a different strategy and approach.

The RKVY (Rashtriya Krishi Vishist Utpadan Yojna) of the Government of India is an excellent example of a centrally sponsored scheme where sufficient leeway is given to the states to formulate state specific interventions. Agriculture requires many more such policy interventions and finances to create an ecosystem where the income of the farmers keeps on increasing on a regular basis. Doubling of income of the farmers by 2022 does not seem to be within the realm of possibility but substantial improvement can be brought about with the right kind of interventions.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

WITH THE SURGICAL STRIKE, WE SENT OUT A STRONG MESSAGE. THERE IS NO TIME TO HOLD TALKS (WITH PAK), BUT TO RECIPROCATE.
—UNION HOME MINISTER
AMIT SHAH



AMIT SHAH IS FIRST ADVISED TO TELL US WHEN THE GOVERNMENT WILL PUSH CHINA BACK FROM INDIAN TERRITORY.
—CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY
RANDEEP SURJEWALA

Do we need to pay more for quality education?

Education has been removed from the service sector to the corporate sector. Many private universities address students as consumers



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

In present-day society, there is a lot of discussion on delivering education in a subsidised manner. Even an illiterate parent feels that only if one pays there would be quality and does not like their children to be taught in government institutions. The quality of education in many government schools and colleges have been badly affected due to over-indulgence of political parties in education. Most of the teachers and professors do not give dedicated service, as they have financial security irrespective of whether they teach properly or not. There is no evaluation system to monitor the quality of their teaching.

Teachers who undertake research projects concentrate less on teaching, as if teaching

(The writer is a popular science writer and academician. The views expressed are personal.)

and research are two different domains. Teaching has changed from a service to a workload-based profession. This attitude has badly affected the quality of many public sector institutions.

The attitude of few irresponsible people should not take away the right of meritorious students to pursue their education at subsidised rates. Otherwise, what is the difference between a student who scored high marks by regularly attending classes and an irresponsible student who somehow managed to get through the exams?

Present day bureaucrats, academicians and politicians all see education through commercial corporate eyes. There was a time when a scholarship was deemed to be a symbol of



quality. Old-time school teachers used to advise students that after qualifying 10th standard one should be self-sufficient in meeting the expenses of his or her studies. So, students used to work hard to get admission to prestigious government institutions. Getting admission in a government college or university is considered as a symbol of quality, as only merit prevails in these centres, whereas in private institutions with money you can buy a seat. Students would vie for the National Merit Scholarship

and University Merit Scholarship.

The starting of private deemed universities and autonomous institutions like IITs, IIMs have destroyed the social fabric of education. Even though clearing IIT -JEE and CAT is the most challenging task in the life of a student, studying in IITs and IIMs is the most expensive education in the country. After clearing such tough examinations, a student is expected to get free education.

Successive governments have removed education from the service sector to the corporate sector. In many private universities students are addressed as consumers in their official communication to teachers. There is an organized effort by vested interests

across the country to destroy good institutions under the government sector. Even UGC is granting autonomy to every college that has been accredited by NAAC. But all these accreditation processes are not fool-proof. You can see science colleges without basic laboratory infrastructure or libraries getting A Grade and many coming in the list of top 100 in NIRF. Most of the colleges show infrastructure on record, but in reality, it is not accessible to students. On record, college authorities say that they function from 9 am to 5 pm, but in reality, the timings are from 9.30am to 3.30pm. The rest is shown as tutorial hour, gardening hour, etc.

This is why most students aspire for institutions like central universities where educa-

tion is highly subsidized. It is the prize they get for their dedicated learning and hard work. These are the places where students enjoy total freedom to learn. The centres of excellence in higher learning should be made totally free for meritorious students and it should be kept exclusively for them. In earlier times we had fewer higher education centres, so only the best got admission to such centres. But over the period of years, the government has created more central universities and autonomous institutions like IISERs and IITs based on their policy of political appeasement. This is eroding the quality of higher education.

Mushrooming of IITs, IIMs, IISERs and central universities has changed the

demographic diversity earlier observed on these campuses. In some institutions one can see the over dominance of students from the host state, similar to a state university, instead of pan-India representation. Today many IITs graduates are finding it difficult to get a job; that was not the case two decades back.

Instead of starting new institutions, the focus should be on improving the quality of already established institutions. Every school, college and university funded by public money should rise to the status of an international centre. Then only we would be able to bring academic enlightenment to our students. Giving free hand to private institutions will ultimately make education elusive to the common man.

British MP stabbed to death at church, suspect held

London: British Conservative MP, Sir David Amess, was on Friday repeatedly stabbed by a knife-wielding man at his constituency in Essex, and succumbed to his injuries later, media reports said.

Sir David, who has been an MP since 1983, was stabbed as he was going to hold his “constituency surgery” -- a public meet where voters can meet their MP and discuss their concerns -- at the Belfairs Methodist Church in Leigh-on-Sea, when he was attacked, the BBC reported.

He was treated by emergency services, but he died at the scene. Sir David is the second British MP to be killed after Labour’s Jo Cox, amid the rising tensions over the Brexit vote since 2016.

The BBC quoted the police as saying that a 25-year-old

man was arrested on suspicion of murder, a knife was recovered and they are not looking for anyone else in connection with the crime.

Tributes poured in for the backbencher MP from across the political spectrum.

Health Secretary Sajid Javid said he was “a great man, a great friend, and a great MP, killed while fulfilling his democratic role”.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak said: “The worst aspect of violence is its inhumanity. It steals joy from the world and can take from us that which we love the most. “Today it took a father, a husband, and a respected colleague. All my thoughts and prayers are with Sir David’s loved ones.”

Speaker of the House of Commons Sir Lindsay Hoyle said: “This is an incident that



Representational Image | AP

will send shockwaves across the parliamentary community and the whole country.”

He said he was shocked and deeply distressed by the killing of a “lovely man”, and said in the coming days they would need to examine MP’s security.

Labour London Mayor Sadiq Khan said he was “deeply, deeply saddened” and described Sir David as “a great public servant”. Flags around Parliament and at 10 Downing Street are being flown at half-mast.

IANS

EU says anti-Semitism has no place in bloc after Jansa tweet

BRUSSELS: The European Union reiterated on Friday that anti-Semitism “has no place” in the 27-nation bloc after Slovenian Prime minister Janez Jansa posted a message on social media that was criticized by some European lawmakers as anti-Semitic.

Jansa, whose country currently holds the rotating EU Council presidency, accused several members of the European Parliament of being “puppets” of George Soros. The Hungarian-American billionaire investor, who is Jewish, has been the subject of anti-Semitic attacks and conspiracy theories for decades.

Jansa made his comments

on Twitter during a visit to Slovenia by a European Parliament delegation assessing press freedom and the rule of law in the Balkan state.

“Social media should be a space for constructive and respectful debate,” said European Commission spokesman for rule of law, Christian Wigand. “It should not be a place for personal attacks, against individuals, be it private or public figures, as was the case with the tweet you mention.”

Wigand added that anti-Semitism is not “only a threat to Jewish communities but also to an open and diverse society.”

Jansa was also involved in a Twitter clash with Dutch caretaker Prime Minister Mark Rutte, who said he condemned the “tasteless” tweet “in the strongest possible terms,” and that he had conveyed the message to the Slovenian ambassador in The Hague.

Jansa responded by urging Rutte not to “waste time with ambassadors and media freedom in Slovenia” and instead “protect your journalists from being killed on the streets.” That was an apparent reference to the murder of crime reporter Peter R. de Vries in Amsterdam.

The EU has repeatedly expressed concerns about

media freedom in Slovenia.

Jansa has long been under scrutiny for keeping a stranglehold on the country’s only news agency, STA. The head of the agency has recently stepped down over a new public service contract that would dictate the way it is funded.

Sophie in ’t Veld, the lawmaker heading the visiting EU delegation, said the STA funding should be “addressed urgently.”

Jansa, a nationalist politician with close links to hardline Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, insists that much of Slovenia’s media is biased against him, but he said in July that the funding issue would be

resolved this fall.

Earlier this year, the EU’s executive arm condemned Jansa for a series of aggressive comments he made about journalists.

Assessing the country’s democratic standards, in ’t Veld said Slovenia’s institutions are working well. She however said the EU delegation was concerned by the harassment and intimidation, as well as the squeezing of budgets being used “in order to weaken certain institutions.”

She also urged the country to nominate prosecutors to the European Public Prosecutor’s Office that began work in June.

AP

Evacuated over 100 football family members from Afghan after complex negotiations: FIFA

Lausanne: Football’s world governing body FIFA on Friday said it has evacuated almost 100 members of the “football family”, including women players, from Afghanistan after “complex negotiations” and with support from Qatar.

The evacuation, especially of women footballers, was necessitated by Taliban’s takeover of the strife-torn country in August this year.

“FIFA can confirm, following complex negotiations, it has, with the support of Qatar, evacuated almost 100 members of the football family from Afghanistan, including female players,” stated the world body

“FIFA would like to express its sincere thanks to the government of Qatar for its support facilitating extensive discussions and for ensuring the safe passage of these individuals, deemed to have been at the highest risk,” it added.

The evacuees were brought

to Doha aboard a Qatar Airways charter flight from Kabul. Qatar is due to host the men’s World Cup next year.

In September, members of Afghan women’s youth football team had fled to Pakistan but several others were stranded during the turmoil triggered by the Taliban takeover.

The volatile situation was exacerbated by the suicide attacks outside the Hamid Karzai International airport in Kabul that killed several Afghans desperately trying to flee the country.

“The FIFA leadership has been closely coordinating with the government of Qatar since August on the evacuation of the group, and will continue to work closely on the safe evacuation of further members of the sporting family in the future,” the statement from FIFA read, promising more such evacuations from the war-torn nation.

PTI

ASEAN Ministers mull censoring Myanmar for hindering envoy

Kuala Lumpur: Southeast Asia’s top diplomats will discuss in an emergency meeting Friday whether to allow Myanmar’s military leader to attend an annual summit after a crisis envoy was barred from meeting ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations had appointed Brunei Second Foreign Minister Erywan Yusof in August as its special envoy to mediate an end to the Myanmar crisis. However, he abruptly cancelled his trip to the violence-wrecked nation this week after being informed by his hosts that he would not be able to meet Suu Kyi and others as he wanted.

Myanmar officials have said Erywan couldn’t meet with Suu Kyi because of criminal charges against her. The foreign ministry said in a statement Thursday it hoped Erywan would seek to build trust instead of putting politically motivated pressure on Myanmar.

AP

France pays tribute to teacher beheaded by radical Islamist

Paris: French schools on Friday were paying tribute to a teacher beheaded by a radical Islamist last year after he showed caricatures of the prophet of Islam to his class.

Samuel Paty, a history and geography teacher, was murdered on Oct. 16 last year near his school in a northwest Paris suburb by an 18-year-old of Chechen origin who had become radicalised.

The attacker was in turn shot dead by police.

The two-day national homage includes a minute of silence to be held in schools on Friday, with teachers to organise a discussion in classes with students around the memory of Paty.

A ceremony will take place on Saturday at the Ministry of Education, where a plaque honoring Paty will be unveiled.

His family will also meet with President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister

Jean Castex, and a gathering will be organised near the teacher’s school.

The killing led French authorities to reaffirm France’s cherished rights of expression and secularism.

Paty’s name was disclosed on social media after a class debate on free expression during which he showed caricatures published by the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo, which triggered a newsroom massacre by extremists in January 2015.

Authorities have identified Paty’s killer as Abdoullakh Anzorov, a Moscow-born Chechen refugee. Anzorov claimed responsibility in a text accompanied by a photograph of the victim found on his phone.

Sixteen people have since been charged in the case, most of them for “complicity in a terrorist murder” or “criminal association.”

AP

Putin: No rush in officially recognising Taliban’s rule

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday there must be no rush in officially recognising the Taliban as the new rulers of Afghanistan, but emphasised the need to engage in talks with them.

Speaking during a video call with leaders of other ex-Soviet nations, Putin said that “the interim government formed by the Taliban regrettably doesn’t reflect the entire spectrum of Afghan society”, but also noted their pledge to hold elections, and their efforts to restore the functioning of state structures.

“We shouldn’t hurry with the official recognition of the Taliban,” he said.

“We understand that we need to interact with them, but there shouldn’t be any hurry and we shall discuss that together.”

At the same time, Putin mentioned Moscow’s intention to host another round of talks between Afghan parties next week and underlined the need to restart consultations on

Afghanistan between Russia, the United States, China and Pakistan.

“We need to support the process of inter-Afghan settlement and try to help normalise the situation in the country,” he said.

Russia is set to host the Taliban and other Afghan factions for talks Wednesday in a move that reflects Moscow’s efforts to expand its clout.

Zamir Kabulov, the Kremlin envoy on Afghanistan, said Friday that the Taliban confirmed they will attend the so-called “Moscow format” talks in the Russian capital.

Diplomats from Russia, the US, China and Pakistan are also set to meet in Moscow for talks on Afghanistan this month.

Soviet Union fought a 10-year war in Afghanistan that ended with its troops withdrawing in 1989.

Since then, Moscow has made a diplomatic comeback as an influential power broker in international talks on

Afghanistan, hosting the Taliban representatives and members of other factions for a series of bilateral and multilateral meetings.

Unlike many other countries, Russia hasn’t evacuated its embassy in Kabul and its ambassador quickly met with the Taliban after they took over the capital.

The Taliban were added to the Russian list of terrorist organisations in 2003, and Moscow has not yet moved to remove the group from the list.

Any contact with such groups is punishable under Russian law, but the Foreign Ministry has shrugged off questions about the seeming contradiction by emphasising the need to engage the Taliban to help stabilise Afghanistan.

Putin on Friday emphasised 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.

AP

Biden nominates Indian-American aerospace and defence expert to key position in Pentagon

Washington: US President Joe Biden has announced his intent to nominate Indian-American aerospace and defence expert Ravi Chaudhary to a key position in the Pentagon, the White House has said.

A former US Air Force officer and pilot, Chaudhary was on Thursday nominated for the position of the assistant secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Energy and the Environment.

He needs to be confirmed by the United States Senate before he can be sworn in for this key Pentagon position.

The Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Energy, Installations, and Environment (SAF/IE) is a civilian office in the United States Department of the Air Force.

The office has overall responsibility for installations strategy and strategic basing processes; built and natural infrastructure; facility, process and operational energy; environment, safety and occupational health; and to ensure the sustainability and operational readiness of the Department of the Air Force, according to the information on the department’s website.

Chaudhary previously served as a senior executive at the US Department of Transportation where he was Director of Advanced Programs and Innovation, Office of Commercial Space, at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), according to his bio released by the White House.

In this role, Chaudhary was responsible for the execution of advanced development and research programs in support of the FAA’s Commercial Space Transportation mission.

While at the Department of Transportation, he also served as the executive director, Regions and Centre Operations, where he was responsible for the integration and support of aviation operations in nine regions located nationwide.

On active duty from 1993 to 2015 in the US Air Force, he completed a variety of operational, engineering, and senior staff assignments in the Air Force, the White House said.

As a C-17 pilot, he conducted global flight operations, including numerous combat missions in Afghanistan and

Iraq, as well as a ground deployment as Director of the Personnel Recovery Center, Multi-National Corps, Iraq.

As a flight test engineer, he was responsible for flight certification of military avionics and hardware for Air Force modernisation programmes supporting flight safety and mishap prevention.

Earlier in his career, he supported space launch operations for the Global Positioning System (GPS) and led third stage and flight safety activities to ensure the full operational capability of the first GPS constellation, the White House said.

As a systems engineer, he supported NASA’s International Space Station protection activities to ensure the safety of NASA Astronauts.

He also served as a member of the President’s Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders during the Obama Administration.

In this role, he advised the President on executive branch efforts to improve veterans support for the AAPI community.

PTI

Minister also warned that China would be capable of mounting a full-scale invasion of the island by 2025 while speaking at the parliamentary committee in Taipei, considering a multi-billion-dollar defence spending bill to build missiles and warships.

Lately, Beijing is becoming increasingly concerned that Taiwan’s government is moving the island towards a formal declaration of independence and wants to deter its President Tsai Ing-wen from taking any steps in that direction.

However, US President Joe Biden has said that his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping had agreed to abide by the “Taiwan agreement”.

On October 12, the People’s Liberation Army Daily published an article titled “The historical task of the complete reunification of the Motherland must be realised”, based on Xi’s speech to commemorate the 110th anniversary of the Revolution of 1911.

The article stated that President Xi’s speech revealed the historical trend of the reunification of the motherland and national rejuvenation.

“The historical task of the complete reunification of the Motherland must be realised and will certainly be realised.”

It is an inevitable requirement for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in the new era and the sacred mission of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA).

The Chinese PLA has firm will, full confidence, and sufficient ability to thwart all external forces interference and separatist acts of “Taiwan independence”, and resolutely defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity, the

Why China did not attack Taiwan

New Delhi: For more than seven decades, China and Taiwan have avoided coming to military face-offs.

The two entities have been separated since 1949 following the civil wars in the 1940s. Taiwan considers itself a sovereign state. China, however, views Taiwan as a breakaway province, and has always maintained that the island should at some point be reclaimed. It has not ruled out the possible use of force to achieve unification.

Tensions with China are at their worst in 40 years, Taiwan’s Defence Minister said, warning of the risk of an accidental strike between the two. China scrambled Taiwan’s defence zone with a record number of fighter jets for four consecutive days earlier this month, triggering massive jitters of war-mongering messaging.

The Taiwanese Defence

article said.

Recently, the Communist party media released a military drill video revealing preparations towards going into war with Taiwan. Is CCP intensively preparing for the plan to attack Taiwan ahead of the schedule?

Revealing the true intention of the Chinese design, on 12 October, Epoch Times published an exclusive internal document of the Chinese Communist Party, which is closely related to the recent tension on the Taiwan issue.

According to the report, the document was issued by the National Defense Mobilization Committee of Hui’an County, Quanzhou, Fujian Province, on January 2, 2020, informing the party officials and government departments to survey the local national defence mobilisation potential.

IANS

S Korea seeks Interpol notice for two cyber gang leaders

Seoul: South African police said Friday they have arrested 56 people who will likely face charges of kidnapping after two government Cabinet ministers and a deputy minister were held hostage for three hours when a meeting with military veterans of the fight against apartheid ended in disagreement.

Police were called to a hotel in the Centurion area near the capital Pretoria on Thursday night to rescue Defence and Military Veterans Minister Thandi Modise, her deputy minister Thabang Makwetla, and Minister in the Presidency Mondli Gungubele, who had been meeting with veterans of various groups that were part of the armed struggle which started in the 1960s against the apartheid regime in South Africa.

The meeting broke down quickly and the three government officials were prevented from leaving the room by some of the veterans, Gungubele said.

Police tried to negotiate with the hostage-takers and when that failed they resorted to a tactical approach and successfully rescued the hostages, the South African Police Services said.

Police said no shots were fired in the operation, denying allegations by some veterans that they were shot at.

Three of the people who were arrested were sent for medical checkups, police said.

Of the 56 arrested, seven were women.

Gungubele said the meeting was an attempt to address the grievances of the veterans’ groups, who want, among other things, cash payouts and housing and medical benefits for their service during the fight for democracy in South Africa more than 25 years ago.

The veterans’ latest demand is that they should each be paid the equivalent of \$270,000 and receive other benefits.

AP

Apple removes Quran app in China after request from officials

New Delhi: Apple has taken down one of the world’s most popular Quran apps in China after a request from Chinese officials, the BBC reported.

Quran Majeed is available across the world on the App Store, and has nearly 150,000 reviews.

However, Apple removed the app at the request of Chinese officials, allegedly for hosting illegal religious texts, the company said.

The Chinese government has not responded to a request for comment.

The deletion of the app was first noticed by Apple Censorship - a website that monitors apps on Apple’s App Store globally, the report said.

The Chinese Communist



Party officially recognises Islam as a religion in the country.

However, China has been accused of human rights violation, and even genocide, against the mostly Muslim Uyghur ethnic group in Xinjiang.

It is not clear what rules the app has broken in China. Quran Majeed says it is “trusted by over 35 million Muslims

globally”, the report added.

Last month, both Apple and Google had removed a tactical voting app devised by jailed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Russian authorities had threatened to fine the two companies if they refused to drop the app, which told users who could unseat ruling party candidates.

China is one of Apple’s biggest markets, and the company’s supply chain is heavily reliant on Chinese manufacturing.

Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook has been accused of hypocrisy by politicians in the US for speaking out about American politics, but staying quiet about China.

IANS

levels seen before the fall of the Western-backed Afghan government in August.

A PIA spokesman told Geo News that operations have been suspended for an “unspecified period” and that the decision was taken in the backdrop of “inappropriate behaviour” demonstrated by the Afghan authorities.

Undesirable conditions for the operation of international flights in Kabul and the Taliban government’s “last minute changes in decisions” are also part of the reason PIA made the move, the spokesman said.

The PIA said it has decided that no aircraft will go to Kabul without insurance, the report said.

Earlier, the Taliban had warned the PIA and Afghan carrier Kam Air that their Afghan operations risked being blocked unless they agreed to cut ticket prices, which have reached levels increasingly out of reach for most Afghans.

IANS

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) official was held at gunpoint for hours by Taliban commanders

The The Pakistan International Airlines said that ever since the new Taliban Government was formed, its staff in Kabul had faced last-minute changes in regulations and flight permissions along with “highly intimidating behaviour” by Taliban commanders.

It said its country representative had been held at gunpoint for hours at one point and was only freed after the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul intervened, the report said.

The suspension of flight operations came as the Taliban government ordered the airline, the only international company operating regularly out of Kabul, to cut ticket prices to

Iran urges ‘practical’ steps, ‘tangible’ results in nuke talks

Tehran: Taking “practical” steps with “tangible” outcomes should be the purpose of an upcoming nuclear talks between Iran and the remaining parties to the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), said Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri.

The Iranian official made the remarks at the meeting with visiting Deputy Secretary-General of the European External Action Service Enrique Mora in the capital Tehran, reports Xinhua news agency.

During the meeting, Bagheri said Iran had always proved a responsible player in the international affairs, while the behaviour of the other side, the US, showed that it was far from being a responsible player.

He added that the side showing more responsibility was closer to the negotiating table.

“Achieving tangible results

is important for Iran, as Tehran is always ready for serious negotiations that result in a practical agreement and not merely a paper agreement,” he was quoted as saying.

Meanwhile, he cast “serious doubts” on the real intention of the US to fulfil its obligations.

Bagheri also criticized what he called “inaction” of the European parties in meeting their commitments under the JCPOA, stressing the need for them to “act responsibly”.

For his part, Mora announced his readiness as the EU coordinator to cooperate with Iran and other parties at negotiations to reach acceptable results for all sides, according to a press release by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

As for the relations between Iran and the EU, the two officials emphasized the promotion of cooperation in a range of regional and international areas and agreed to continue consultations in the coming days in Brussels.

IANS

“Achieving tangible results

Coal ministry to augment fuel supply to power sector from captive mines

New Delhi: The coal ministry on Friday said it has taken various measures, including diverting the output from captive coal mines, to augment fuel supply to the power sector.

The development assumes significance in the wake of country's power plants grappling with coal shortages.

"The ministry of coal has taken all efforts to augment coal supplies to the power sector and decided to divert and augment the supplies to power sector from captive coal blocks," the coal ministry said in statement.

Captive mines are those that produce coal or mineral for exclusive use by the company that owns the blocks.

The ministry offered coal supply from NLC India's Talabira II & III mines in Odisha to NTPC.

In this connection, both the companies worked together to commence the supply of coal from Talabira II & III open cast project (OCP) to NTPC (Darlipali & Lara Power Plants).

With timely support and necessary coal delivery permits from the department of mines, Government of Odisha, the coal delivery to the Darlipali power station has been commenced, within 24 hours from the directives from the Ministry of Coal.

NLC India Limited, a

Coal India to refrain from conducting any e-auction till situation stabilises

New Delhi: Amid the low stock position at the electricity generating plants, state-owned CIL has asked its subsidiaries to refrain from conducting any further e-auction of coal, except special forward e-auction for the power sector, till the situation stabilises.

The development assumes significance as the supply of coal is being prioritised to the power sector to replenish the dwindling stock in the wake of reports of an electricity crisis looming large.

"In view of the current low stock position at the powerhouse end, supply of coal is being prioritised to the power sector to replenish the dwindling stock...Coal companies are advised to refrain from conducting of any further e-auctions of coal with the exception of special forward e-auction for the power sector, till the situation stabilises," Coal India said in a recent letter to its arms, including. Eastern Coalfields Ltd

navratna company under the administrative control of the Ministry of Coal is operating Talabira II & III coal mines

(ECL), Bharat Coking Coal Ltd (BCCL), Central Coalfields Ltd (CCL).

In case, any coal company finds it necessary to liquidate any slow-moving stock through the e-auction route without affecting despatch to the power sector, the same may be communicated to Coal India along with proper justification before any such auction is planned, the letter said.

"This is only a temporary prioritisation, in the interest of the nation, to tide over the low coal stock situation at the stressed power plants and scale-up supplies to them. It does not mean stoppage of e-auction format," Coal India said.

The company said it is augmenting its production and off-take steadily. Once the situation stabilises, expectedly within a short time, and stock at coal-fired plants attains comfort level, other sectors will be brought back to their regular supply norm, the public sector firm said. **PTI**

having annual capacity of 20 million tonnes in in Odisha.

Talabira II& III OCP has commenced production from

Aluminium plants grappling with critically low level of coal stock: AAI

New Delhi: Aluminium plants in the country are grappling with critically low level of coal stocks and if the fuel supply is not restored immediately it would lead to irrevocable collateral damage, industry body AAI warned on Friday.

The statement comes at a time when the supply of coal by CIL to non-power sectors has been kept suspended temporarily amid electricity generating plants in the country facing fuel shortages.

"Today also, aluminium industry has not received any relief with respect to the ongoing coal supply crisis. Indian aluminium plants are grappling with critically low levels of coal stock, with no recourse or alternative means to meet their power needs and keep the plants operational," Aluminium Association of India (AAI) said.

It further warned that if coal supply is not restored immediately, it would lead to an irrevocable collateral dam-

age of these national assets.

"Any power outage in aluminium plants will lead to catastrophic impact & complete shutdown which will take minimum 12 months of recovery, resulting in job loss of more than 8 lakh people. Banks will have debt exposure of over Rs 1 lakh crore and additional national forex loss of Rs 90,000 crore," it warned it a statement.

"Aluminium production is a 24x7, 365 days continuous process industry. There is no provision to switch off and switch on. It is highly power intensive industry, just to illustrate one tonne of aluminium requires 14,500 units of continuous power which is 15 times in comparison to steel...And 145 times as that for cement," it explained.

It further said that Coal India should immediately resume continuous coal supply to the aluminium industry to prevent closure of the plants, it added. **PTI**

efforts to ramp up coal output from one of its mines in Odisha to up to 10 million tonnes per annum this year. **PTI**

Petrol, diesel prices rally to highest ever levels

New Delhi: Petrol and diesel prices on Friday rallied to their highest ever levels across the country, as fuel rates were hiked again by 35 paise a litre.

The price of petrol in Delhi rose to its highest-ever level of Rs 105.14 a litre and Rs 111.09 per litre in Mumbai, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

In Mumbai, diesel now comes for Rs 101.78 a litre; while in Delhi, it costs Rs 93.87.

This is the second straight day of 35 paise per litre increase in petrol and diesel prices. There was no change in rates on October 12 and 13.

Since the ending of a three-week-long hiatus in rate revision in the last week of September, this is the 14th increase in petrol price and the 17th time that diesel rates have gone up.

While petrol price in most of the country is already above Rs 100-a-litre mark, diesel rates have crossed that level in a dozen states, including Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Kerala, Karnataka and Leh.

Prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes.

Shedding the modest price change policy, state-owned fuel

Since the ending of a three-week-long hiatus in rate revision in the last week of September, this is the 14th increase in petrol price and the 17th time that diesel rates have gone up

retailers have since October 6 started passing on the larger incidence of cost to consumers.

This is because the international benchmark Brent crude is trading at USD 84.61 per barrel for the first time in seven years.

A month back, Brent was trading at USD 73.51.

Being a net importer of oil, India prices petrol and diesel at rates equivalent to international prices.

The surge in international oil prices ended a three-week hiatus in rates on September 28 for petrol and September 24 for diesel.

Since then, diesel rates have gone up by Rs 5.25 per litre and petrol price has increased by Rs 4.25.Before that, the petrol price was increased by Rs 11.44 a litre between May 4 and July 17. Diesel rate had gone up by Rs 9.14 during this period. **PTI**

Export curbs on diagnostic kits, reagents removed

New Delhi: With COVID-19 cases coming down in the country, the government on Friday removed export curbs on all diagnostic kits and reagents including instruments, which are used in detection of coronavirus infections.

India logged 16,862 new coronavirus infections, taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 3,40,37,592, while the active cases declined to 2,03,678, the lowest in 216 days, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday. The death toll climbed to 4,51,814 with 379 fresh fatalities.

The daily rise in new coronavirus infections has been below 30,000 for 21 straight days and less than 50,000 daily new cases have been reported for 110 consecutive days now.

"The export policy of all diagnostic kits and reagents (including instruments (apparatus)...Is being made free with immediate effect," the directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT) said in a notification.

The DGFT is an arm of the commerce ministry which deals with export and import related norms.

The export restrictions on these products were imposed in June last year and August 16, 2021 on account of increasing COVID-19 cases. An exporter has to seek licence or permission from the government for exports of goods which are under a restricted category. **PTI**

India most cost-effective globally in rooftop solar power: Report

Mumbai: A global study has found that India is the most cost-effective country for generating rooftop solar energy at USD 66 per megawatt-hour, while the cost in China is marginally higher at USD 68 per megawatt-hour.

Due to the lower cost, rooftop solar photovoltaics (RTSPV) technology, such as roof-mounted solar panels used in homes, and commercial and industrial buildings, is currently the fastest deployable energy generation technology. This, according to this global study, is projected to fulfil up to 49 per cent of the global electricity demand by 2050.

Over the past decade, the massive drop in deployment cost coupled with policy-driven initiatives has led to a rapid uptake of RTSPV globally. Between 2006 and 2018, the installed capacity of the RTSPV has grown from 2.5 gigawatts (GW) to 213 GW.

With an additional capacity installation of 41 GW, RTSPV currently accounts for 40 per cent of the global cumulative installed capacity of the solar energy and nearly one-fourth of the total renewable capacity additions since 2018, which is more than the combined new installed capacities

of both coal and nuclear.

At the same time, RTSPV technology has shown a steep decline in deployment cost, which ranged between USD 63 and USD 265 megawatt-hour in 2019. It is a reduction of 42-79 per cent over 2010 value.

Rooftop solar photovoltaics account for 40 per cent of the global solar photovoltaics installed capacity and one-fourth of the total renewable capacity additions.

According to the study, India has a significant solar rooftop potential of 1.7 petawatt-hour per year. This is against the country's current electricity demand of 1.3 petawatt-hour per annum, it said.

To understand the electricity generation potential of RTSPV globally and its associated costs, the study mapped 130 million square km of the global land surface area to identify 0.2 million sq km of rooftop area using a machine learning algorithm.

This rooftop area was then analysed to document the global electricity generation potential of RTSPV and together represent 27 petawatt-hour per year of electricity generation potential for cost between USD 40 and USD 280 per megawatt-

hour and of this, USD 10 per megawatt-hour can be realised below USD 100.

The cost of attaining the potential is the lowest in India (at USD 66 per megawatt-hour) and China at USD 68, while the same is at USD 238 per megawatt-hour in the US, and USD 251 per megawatt-hour in England, said the study.

The study has been co-authored by Priyadarshi Shukla, a professor at Ahmedabad University and director of its global centre for environment and energy; Shivika Mittal from the Imperial College, London; and James Glynn from Columbia University. The team was led by Siddharth Joshi, researcher at MaREI, the SFI Research Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine in University College Cork.

The global potential of RTSPV is 27 petawatt-hour per year and the global average megawatt-hour cost for this varies in the range of USD 40-280 per megawatt-hour with the greatest energy generation potential in Asia.

The global potential is predominantly spread between Asia (47 per cent), North America (20 per cent) and Europe (13 per cent), accord-

ing to the study.

The second cheapest market for this method is China where it is pegged at USD 68 per megawatt-hour -- USD 2 higher than the potential Indian rate, while England and the US are among the costliest.

Maharashtra, with 181 terawatt-hour per year and Uttar Pradesh with 168.07 terawatt-hour per year have the highest solar rooftop potential in the country now.

The average cost of obtaining solar rooftop potential in India will be between USD 60 and USD 65 per megawatt-hour, with Gujarat and Rajasthan offering the lowest rates, according to the study.

The findings have an important implication for sustainable development and climate change mitigation efforts.

The International Solar Alliance, a joint initiative launched by India and France, is planning to mobilise USD 1 trillion in investments by 2030 to increase penetration of solar energy.

This means that from powering the Nasa's Vanguard satellites in 1958 to lighting homes in the sub-Saharan Africa, solar photovoltaics technology has come a long way. **PTI**

Forex reserves rise by USD 2.039 bln to USD 639.516 bln

Mumbai: The country's foreign exchange reserves rose by USD 2.039 billion to USD 639.516 billion in the week ended October 8, according to RBI data.

In the previous week ended October 1, the reserves had dipped by USD 1.169 billion to USD 637.477 billion. The reserves had surged by USD 8.895 billion to a life time high of USD 642.453 billion in the week ended September 3.

During the reporting week ended October 8, the rise in the reserves was on account of an increase in the Foreign Currency Assets (FCAs), Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) weekly data released on Friday showed.

FCA rose by USD 1.55 billion to USD 577.001 billion in the reporting week, as per the data.

Expressed in dollar terms, FCA include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves were up by USD 464 million to USD 38.022 billion in the reporting week.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rose by USD 28 million to USD 19.268 billion. **PTI**

Mumbai: Even as the motor insurance segment, which had a massive decline in FY21, is returning to the growth path, public sector general insurers have been steadily losing ground to the private insurers overall and more so in the bread and butter motor segment, with pie crimping to 32.6 per cent in August, down from 36.6 per cent a year ago.

As against this, the private sector has improved their market pie to 67.4 per cent in the reporting month from 63.4 per cent in the same period last year, shows an analysis of the monthly data by Care Ratings.

That the decline is so stark for the public sector players is clear from the FY18 market share number when they held 46.5 per cent of the total motor segment premia, while private players had only 53.5 per cent then.

Come FY19, the respective share declined to 40.7 per cent for the public sector while jumped to 59.3 per cent for the private players. The share of public sector players declined to 36.8 per cent in FY20 and further dropped to 34.2 per cent in FY21 while that of private players rose to 63.2 per cent in FY20 and further escalated to 65.8 per cent in FY21, according to Care report.

Similarly, in FY18, the pub-

lic sector had a market share of 37.5 per cent of the motor OD (own damage) market, and the private players had it 62.5 per cent, which declined and increased respectively to 32.5 per cent and 67.5 per cent in FY19 and further to 28.3 per cent and 71.7 per cent, respectively in FY20.

In FY 21 the respective shares were 25.5 per cent and 74.5 per cent. In August 2020 the pie was 27.8 per cent and 72.2 per cent and which further declined to 24.3 per cent and 75.7 per cent respectively.

Its only in motor TP (third-party) segment that the public sector have some leeway as they had a market share of 52.7 per cent as against private players' 46.3 per cent in FY18, but within a year they lost that too.

In FY19 it declined to 46.5 per cent and to 42.2 per cent in FY20 while for private players the pie increased to 53.5 per cent in FY19 and to 57.8 per cent in FY20.

In the last fiscal, the share of public players was at 39.7 per cent and private players at 60.3 per cent. In August 2021, this is at a low of 38.3 per cent for the public sector, down from 42.3 per cent in August 2020, as against private players' 61.7

per cent and 57.7 per cent.

This downtrend is particularly important for the public sector player as the motor TP segment has emerged as the larger segment driving the overall motor insurance growth.

According to industry data, there were over 23.12 crore vehicles on road in the country as of March 2019, of which 57 per cent were uninsured vehicles. Two-wheelers were the largest component of the uninsured vehicles with over 60 per cent of them being uninsured, whereas uninsured cars were only 10 per cent, showing massive potential for growth.

In FY21, motor premium had declined after the pandemic but retained the top spot which it has ceded in FY22 to the health segment.

This is also in line with the international market, where health is significantly larger than the motor segment. Motor TP segment has continued to grow faster than the Motor OD segment.

Amongst the states, Maharashtra continues to occupy the top spot followed by Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh in motor business for insurers. **PTI**

India notifies 8,424 tonnes of raw sugar exports to US under TRQ

New Delhi: The government on Friday permitted export of 8,424 tonnes of raw or white sugar under tariff-rate quota (TRQ) to the US, which enables shipments to enjoy relatively low tariff.

TRQ is a quota for a volume of exports that enter the US at relatively low tariffs. After the quota is reached, a higher tariff applies on additional imports.

"The quantity of 8,424 tonnes of sugar (raw and/or white sugar) to be exported to the US under TRQ scheme from October 1 to September 30, 2022, has been notified," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in a public notice.

India enjoys duty-free sugar exports to the US for up to 10,000 tonnes annually under the preferential quota arrangement.

India, the world's second biggest producer and the largest consumer of sugar, has a preferential quota arrangement for

TRQ is a quota for a volume of exports that enter the US at relatively low tariffs

sugar export with the European Union as well.

The country's sugar export rose 20 per cent to an all-time high of 7.1 million tonnes in the 2020-21 marketing year ended last month, on the back of better demand and financial assistance from the government.

Sugar exports stood at 5.9 million tonnes in the marketing year 2019-20.

According to ISMA, the sugar production is estimated to remain flat at 31 million tonnes in the marketing year 2021-22.

The total availability of sugar is estimated to touch 39.5 million tonnes, including an opening stock of 8.5 million tonnes of sweetener. **PTI**

Gold futures fall on low demand



New Delhi: Gold prices fell Rs 501 to Rs 47,381 per 10 grams in the futures trade on Friday, as speculators reduced their positions amid low demand.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, gold contracts for December traded lower by Rs 501, or 1.05 per cent, to Rs 47,381 per 10 grams in a business turnover of 12,889 lots.

Analysts attributed the fall in gold prices to trimming of positions by participants.

Globally, gold traded 0.95 per cent lower to USD 1,780.80 an ounce in New York. **PTI**

Budget and safety top criteria for Chennai households during festive season: LocalCircles

Chennai: Budget and safety were to be the top criteria for households in Chennai during the coming festive season, a study conducted by a leading community social media platform LocalCircles has revealed.

Sixty per cent of the households have opted for 'budget and value' while shopping during the festive season while 40 per cent backed 'safety', the study said.

More than 24,000 responses were received from over 9,000 households across the city.

As many as 40 per cent of the residents have said that they would like to visit the stores physically to buy, while 30 per cent responded saying that they would like to have stores have their catalogue online to order for delivery.

According to the study, 60 per cent of Chennai households will shop this festive season and are likely to do so by ordering online and via local stores for home delivery.

Smartphones and consumer electronics emerged among the big ticket purchase, with 48 per cent of the households opting for the two categories, while 26 per cent preferred white goods and appli-

ances.

Nearly 33 per cent of the respondents said they would buy groceries and fruits, while 22 per cent said they would buy dry fruits, traditional sweets, bakery items, the study said.

About 39 per cent of the people have said they would buy apparel or clothes, while 20 per cent preferred for cosmetics and fragrances. Nearly 19 per cent said they would spend on shoes, bags. **PTI**

WESTERN RAILWAY PROCUREMENT
Advertised Tender Notice No.WTR/17/2021/09 dated 14.08.2021 for tender on E Procurement mode invited by Chief Engineer (Track Supply), Head Quarter Office, Old Building, 2nd floor, Churchgate, Mumbai: 400 020 for supply of the following item:- **Sr. No.: 1 Tender No.: 216023 Short Description: 6 mm thick GRSP to RDSO Drg. No. T-4218 Quantity: 10149 Set Date of Opening: 23.11.2021 Sr. No.: 2 Tender No.: 216025 Short Description: Various types of Bolts & Nuts Quantity: 999.63 MT Date of Opening: 24.11.2021.** For detailed tender conditions/Corrigendum if any please visit www.irops.gov.in and w.r.indianrailways.gov.in

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CENTRAL RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM
Corrigendum No-1 in Tender Notice No. 11/2021 dt: 16.09.2021 for e-Procurement; Description of Item A of tender no. CRHQENGGETEND74 is corrected & tender closing date revised from 14.10.2021 to 21.10.2021; All terms & conditions remain same as per tender document; The complete information of above E-Procurement Tender notice is available on website <https://www.irops.gov.in/>. Bids other than in the form of E-bids shall not be accepted against above Tender. 460
RailMadad Helpline 139

WESTERN RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION WORK
Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer (Construction), Western Railway, 1st floor, Headquarter Building, Churchgate, Mumbai - 400020 invites offer through e-tender portal www.irops.gov.in for the following tender. **Name of Work:** Electrification of Service Building, Office, Godown, FOB, Colonies, Quarters, Rly Institute, Welfare Centre, Sub Station and cubicles, ORH etc. in connection with 6th line Work Division of Western Railway Tender No. EL/C/CCG/2021-22/01R **NIT Cost:** ₹ 5,83,23,862/- **Earnest Money Deposit in ₹:** NIL **e-Bid submission closing on:** 15.11.2021 at 15:00 hrs. **e-Bid opening date:** 15.11.2021 at 15:30 hrs. Only e-offers submitted online through e-tender portal will be considered please note that printed offers will not be entertained. The Date of tender terms & conditions and scope of work are uploaded and are available in electronic format on our website www.irops.gov.in

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THE BATALA CO-OP SUGAR MILLS LTD.
G.T Road, Batala, District Gurdaspur-143505
Website: www.smbatala.com **Email:** batalacsm@rediffmail.com
GLOBAL E-TENDER NOTICE
Ref. No. BCSM/SUGAREXPORT/2021-22 **Dated:-** 15.10.2021
The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (Department of Food and Public Distribution) Govt. of India vide its notification F.No. 1(6)/2020-SP-1 dated 29th December, 2020 and subsequent order F.No. 1(6)/2020-SP-1 dated 18th August, 2021 has decided to allow export of all grades of sugar namely raw, plantation white as well as refined sugar under MAEQ (Maximum Admissible Export Quota).

Batala Cooperative Sugar Mills on behalf of all nine Cooperative Sugar Mills of Punjab invites e-Tender for export of approx. 35979 MT sugar lying in nine Cooperative Sugar Mills of Punjab under MAEQ from experienced overseas buyers/Export Houses/ Merchandisers and Govt./ Cooperative Institutions (In which State Govt./Central Govt. has/have Invested share capital) having valid Import Export code and experience of sugar export to purchase the aforesaid quantity of sugar from all Cooperative Sugar Mills of Punjab and arrange its export as per above mentioned notifications under MAEQ under stipulated norms on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS". DFIA (Duty free import authorization) holder may also participate in this tender as their sugar purchase will be treated as deemed export as per Govt. of India notification vide F. No. 1(6)/2020-SP-1 dated 31st March, 2021 issued regarding clarification of ISMA: M/s Indian Biscuits Manufacturer's Association (IBMA), Food Ingredients Importer/Exporter Welfare Association (FIEWA), and Star Oxachem Pvt. Ltd.

The documents can be downloaded from the e-Procurement website portal <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in> or from the Batala Sugar Mill's website www.smbatala.com. Online tender will have to be submitted in two bid system i.e. Technical Bid and Financial Bid on or before 17.11.2021 at 11:00 AM on the e-tender portal <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in> along with EMD and other documents. Other details (e-Bid document) for submission of e-bids along with eligibility criteria, date & time of submission of e-Bids, opening of Technical Bids/ Financial Bids, amount of EMD, experience and other terms & conditions will be available on e-Procurement website portal as mentioned above from the date 16.10.2021 onwards. The Bidders will have to deposit e-tender document fee (Non Refundable) of Rs. 1000/-+18% GST= Rs. 1180/- in the account as shown on e-Procurement website portal <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>. Tender without e-tender document fee and EMD will not be accepted. The Govt./Cooperative Institutions are exempted from deposit of EMD. The stipulated norms for export and other terms and conditions are annexed along with the t-Tender form.

The undersigned reserves the right to cancel one or all the tenders without assigning any reason.

GENERAL MANAGER

CHENNAI IS SUPER KING

PTI ■ DUBAI

Mahendra Singh Dhoni played his part to perfection in a n extraordinary script as he led Chennai Super Kings to their fourth Indian Premier League title, outwitting Kolkata Knight Riders by 27 runs in a one-sided final on Friday.

As the final delivery was bowled, the old 'Band Master' had that lingering smile at the far corner of his lips having orchestrated his 'Men', who knows may be one last time.

Unarguably, the most loved and revered Indian captain of all time led a team of old warhorses with oodles of experience as they first posted a formidable target of 192 for 3 and then squeezed Knights for only 165 for 9 despite a promising opening stand of 91 between Shubman Gill (51 off 43 balls) and Venkatesh Iyer (50 off 32 balls).

It was canny captaincy that ensured 91 for no loss turned into 125 for 8 and before one realised, it seemed there was only one team on the park.

Josh Hazlewood (2/29 in 4 overs), Ravindra Jadeja (2/37 in 4 overs), Shardul Thakur (3/38 in 4 overs) got the wickets at regular intervals but it was the wily old Dwayne Bravo (1/29 in 4 overs), whose first two overs for eight runs with five dots which actually became a game-changer.

Dhoni and Bravo go

back a long way. The skipper knows what his 'Go To Man' is capable of and the 'Champion' knew that he had to deliver.

Not many words were exchanged between the General and his loyal soldier as they had their blueprint ready.



When India won the 1985 Benson & Hedges World Championship of Cricket, Sunil Gavaskar, Mohinder Amarnath, Madan Lal, all then on the wrong side of 30s, used to congratulate each other after every dismissal calling "Well Done OT" which meant 'Over Thirty'.

That class of 85 was a very experienced bunch that won a big trophy and one could see similar traits in Dhoni's brigade, which since its comeback in 2018, has been called the 'Dad's Army'.

And it was indeed a 'Daddies' Day Out' as 37-year-old Faf Du Plessis smashed 86 off 59 while Robin Uthappa, now at 35, did what he used to as a cocky 21-year-old nearly decade-and-half back. He smashed 31 off 15 balls with three sixes.

Then it was left to the recently-retired Test cricketer, the 34-year-old Moeen Ali (37 off 20 balls), who found gaps with ease to give the perfect finishing touch.

When it came to bowling and fielding, the main job was done by 38-year-old Bravo and 32-year-old Jadeja. The only aberration was 'Orange Cap' winner Ruturaj Gaikwad (635 runs), who probably would be synonymous with the franchise for years to come.

These are players who decided they would make this 'Charge of the Old Brigade' a reality and show that T20 is a format where experience worth its weight in gold is way more



important than mere youthful exuberance and brilliance of talent.

IPL success requires game this awareness, an attribute which the 'Man from Jharkhand' possesses abundantly.

When KKR chased, Dhoni took some time to gauge that the pitch was slowing down and once Bravo operated post Powerplay, it

was CSK's game to win and they did it in style reaffirming that Dhoni in retirement remains the 'Captain of Captains' even when there is another world champion skipper at the other end.

CSK needed a slice of luck at the start and former Proteas skipper du Plessis got that reprieve in the third over when Dinesh Karthik

bungled an easy stumping chance.

He then made full use by smashing seven fours and three sixes and also finished as the second highest run-getter behind Gaikwad.

All standout shots came off Lockie Ferguson and there was a cracking over drive and two sixes over the long-off region. Ferguson

(0/56 in 4 overs) had a forgettable day in office.

An opening stand of 61 in eight overs with 'flavour of the season' Gaikwad (32 off 27 balls) set the tone and then Uthappa, who had decided to roll back the years, hit his signature pick-up sixes over the deep mid-wicket region.

The 63 runs added in only 5.2 overs did derail KKR's bowling with only Sunil Narine (2/26 in 4 overs) getting his length and variations in pace right.

If that wasn't enough, another veteran Moeen joined the party as suddenly du Plessis played the second fiddle letting the England international go hammer and tongs at the KKR bowling. They added 68 in 6.3 overs.

He first snuffed out Gaikwad, who was caught in the deep, and then bowled a straight one which Uthappa missed the line trying to go for the reverse sweep.

The reason why KKR lost the plot during the first 10 overs was Shakib (0/33 in 3 overs) losing his confidence after Karthik's missed stumping and in the process the length going all awry.

Adding insult to the injury was Ferguson, whose express pace which had been the difference during the UAE leg, became his undoing from the moment Gaikwad sliced him between cover and point.

Du Plessis then transformed using the pace for big hits into art form with an able hand in Moeen, who found the gaps on both sides of the wickets with finesse while lofting the maximums with effort-less ease.



India seek eighth SAFF C'ships title

PTI ■ MALE

Having endured a topsy-turvy beginning to their campaign before a fine turn-around, seven-time champions India will start title favourites when they take on first-time finalists Nepal in the summit clash of the SAFF Championships here on Saturday.

The final will be the 12th for India in 13 editions which shows the domination of the Blue Tigers in this regional tournament. The third-place finish in 2003 was the worst performance for them.

A win against Nepal will also be head coach Igor Stimac's first trophy after taking charge of the Indian team in 2019. Should the team come good, he will become the sixth coach to win the SAFF Championships title and third foreigner after Jiri Pesek (1993) and Stephen Constantine (2015).

India drew against Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in their first two matches which had put them in danger of missing the final but the win against Nepal brought them back in the reckoning.

MS Dhoni becomes first to captain in 300 T20 games

PTI ■ DUBAI

Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni on Friday became the first player in world cricket to captain a team in 300 T20 games across various competitions during his side's IPL summit clash against Kolkata Knight Riders here.

The 40-year-old former India captain, playing his 10th IPL final (ninth for CSK as captain), has led the 'Yellow Brigade' in 214 games across 12 editions that they have taken part out of the 14 IPL seasons. He has also led Rising Pune Supergiants during one IPL season apart from leading India in six T20 World Cups.

His crowning glory would

certainly be leading India to T20 World Cup title in South Africa back in 2007.

Before that tournament, India had played only one T20I in 2006 in South Africa of which Dhoni was a part.

"It's been a long time. We started T20 in around 2005-06 and most of the games have been franchise cricket and in the last five years there have been a lot of T20 games in international cricket as well," Dhoni said at the toss.

In fact, second in the list is Darren Sammy, who has led a team in 208 games for West Indies and various franchises.

Interestingly, both Dhoni and rival captain Eoin Morgan are playing their 347th T20 game.

The joy is back for Neymar in World Cup qualifying

SAO PAULO: Neymar started the week facing criticism after a poor performance in a World Cup qualifying match and his suggestion that the next tournament in Qatar might be his last.

But the striker helped erase many of those thoughts by providing key elements in all of the Brazil goals in Thursday's 4-1 win against Uruguay.

The 29-year-old Neymar, who had a disappointing performance in Sunday's 0-0 draw at Colombia in the previous round. Arrived in the northwest Brazilian city of Manaus on Monday with dozens of fans in front of the team's hotel. That would be the usual, were it not for a wave of criticism he has faced at home for months.

Neymar scored the opening goal against Uruguay after dribbling past goalkeeper Fernando Muslera. He then took the shot that allowed Raphinha to add the second. And then he provided two assists; one in a through pass to Raphinha and a cross that landed on the head of Gabriel Barbosa.

Midfielder Fred, who assisted Neymar on his goal, said Brazil players felt the difference in atmosphere since they arrived in Manaus. And that includes the team's star. "These fans gave us support every day in the stadium, in the hotel. They bought all the tickets and it was an extra strength for us," he said, referring to the attendance of 12,500, the maximum allowed by COVID-19 protocols in Brazil.

PTI

Money doesn't buy success: Klopp warns Newcastle

AFP ■ LONDON

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has warned Newcastle that money does not buy success as the Magpies dream of joining the European elite after their Saudi-led takeover.

Struggling Newcastle are the talk of the Premier League following the £305 million takeover as the new owners prepare to start their reign against Tottenham on Sunday.

Newcastle hope to emulate the sustained success enjoyed by Premier League champions Manchester City under their Abu Dhabi-based backers.

Klopp expects Newcastle to fulfil their ambitions eventually, but he suggested it might



be a rocky road to the top because money alone cannot guarantee success. "What will it mean for football? A few months we had an issue with clubs building a Super League, and rightly so. But this is building a super team, guaranteed

places in the Champions League in a few years," Klopp told reporters on Friday.

"Newcastle fans will love it, but money doesn't buy success.

They have money to make mistakes, but they will be where they want eventually."



Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi extends heartiest greetings to people on 351st Birth Anniversary of Legendary Sikh General BABA BANDA SINGH BAHADUR JI

founder of first Sikh Raj, who abolished zamindari system and conferred ownership rights on the tillers of land.



On this historic occasion
Vijay Inder Singla
Public Works and Administrative Reforms Minister
will dedicate the life-sized bronze statue of the iconic Sikh martyr at Fatehgarh Sahib

Department of Information and Public Relations, Punjab

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