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NEW DELHI, FRIDAY OCTOBER 1, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



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Will abandon 'sinking ship': Capt

Won't take such
insults from Cong,
says Amarinder;
to float new party,
not to join BJP

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Dismissing all rumours of joining the saffron brigade, Punjab's former Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Thursday announced to leave the Congress after all the "humiliation" meted out to him by the party.

Minutes later, he dropped the party's name from his Twitter bio, which now reads as, "Army Veteran | Former Chief Minister Punjab | Continuing to serve the State". However, Amarinder is yet to officially part ways with the Congress, which he said is "going downhill".

"I will not be treated in this humiliating manner, I will not take such insults," he said, adding that his principles and beliefs do not allow him to stay with the Congress.

Amarinder's announcement came hours after he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi's close aide and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval on Thursday morning for half an hour. A day before, Amarinder had an hour-long meeting with Union Home



Capt Amarinder Singh

Minister Amit Shah during his Delhi visit, sparking speculation of his joining the BJP.

Mincing no words, Amarinder asserted that he would leave the Congress where he was "utterly humiliated and not trusted". He stated that the Congress party is going downhill with senior leaders completely ignored and not given a voice.

"I will resign, will not stay in the party," he said, adding that he was still thinking through his options in the interest of Punjab, whose security was the predominant priority for him.

Terming the senior Congressmen as the "thinkers", who were critical to the future of the party, Amarinder said the younger leadership should be promoted to implement the plans, which the senior leaders are best equipped to formulate. Unfortunately, the seniors were being completely sidelined, he said, adding that this is not good for the party.

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Sidhu agrees on 'formula' to resolve crisis

Coordination Committee to be set up

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

The political storm brewing within the Punjab Congress appears to have abated, at least for the time being, with apparent settling down of disturbances between Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi and Navjot Singh Sidhu by coming up with a "formula". The signs of its slowing down came during the meeting between the two lasting for more than two hours on Thursday. Among other things, it was decided to leave the decision-making process to a coordination committee, composed of Channi, Sidhu, and a member of the party high command.

However, Sidhu is yet to withdraw his resignation.

Adamant on his decision of



Navjot Singh Sidhu

stepping down from the post of State Congress president, Sidhu on Thursday showed the signs of thaw by accepting the offer for talks with Chief Minister Channi. The softening of Sidhu's stand came as the party's top brass has taken a tough stand, apparently to send across a stern message to Sidhu, by not talking to him in the past two days, since he announced his resignation.

There were also reports that the top brass has also started discussing names for his replacement.

Continued on Page 2

Jakhar accuses Sidhu of undermining CM

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Congress' former president and senior leader Sunil Jakhar on Thursday came down heavily on his successor Navjot Singh Sidhu accusing him of trying to "undermine" the authority of a Chief Minister. At the same time, Jakhar urged the party high command to "put its foot down and clear the air".

Taking to micro-blogging website, Twitter, Jakhar virtually rebuked Sidhu by saying "enough is enough".

"Enough is enough. Put an end to attempts to undermine the authority of CM time and again. Aspersions being cast on selection of AG & DGP is actually questioning the integrity/competence of CM and Home Minister to deliver results. It's time to put the foot down and clear the air," said Jakhar in a hard-hitting tweet that came minutes after Sidhu's tweet informing about his scheduled meeting with the Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi at Chandigarh.

Jakhar, a senior party leader in Punjab who at one point of time was tipped to be the Chief Minister to fill the space after Capt Amarinder



Sunil Jakhar

Singh's resignation from the apex post, has all along been vocal in party affairs.

Jakhar did not spare Amarinder also from his attack. Taking a dig at Amarinder for his meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Jakhar quipped "Capt must have had some compulsions".

Tweeting an old picture of Amarinder and Shah, Jakhar captioned it with a Bashir Badr quote, "*Kuchh toh majbooriyan rahi hongi, yun hi koi bewafa nahi hota*".

Notably, Jakhar had also lashed out at Sidhu for his sudden resignation by reminding the cricketer-turned-politician that it was not a cricket, and his decision amounted to "breach of trust".

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G23 stands by Sibal after his house attacked

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Top Congress leaders, including Parliamentarians Shashi Tharoor, Manish Tewari, Anand Sharma and Ghulam Nabi Azad, on Thursday came out in support of senior party colleague Kapil Sibal, who a day earlier questioned the functioning of the grand old party.

While demanding an immediate convening of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), the party's highest decision-making body, they also asked party chief Sonia Gandhi to act tough against "orchestrated hooliganism" at the residence of Sibal soon after he addressed media questioning the way the party was being run.

Responding to the demands of party leaders, the Congress on Thursday said the Congress Working Committee (CWC) will meet very soon. AICC chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said the party president had indicated last week that a meeting of the CWC, the top decision-making body of the party, would be called very soon.

"Before leaving for Shimla, Congress president Sonia

Leaders demand CWC meeting immediately



Gandhi had already indicated that a CWC meeting shall be called very soon. Accordingly, the CWC meeting shall be held in the coming days," Surjewala said.

Without naming Sibal, Surjewala said, "Every Congressman and woman must also seriously introspect whether by their words and actions they are attempting to weaken the Congress in the times of crisis."

The leaders who are part of the G23 (Group of 23 leaders who have been writing a dissent note to Sonia about party's affairs), said they are shocked and disgusted to hear the news of attack and ruckus created by party men at Sibal's house.

Congress workers protested outside Sibal's house and reportedly damaged a car.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

EIGHT CORE SECTORS' OUTPUT UP 11.6% IN AUG

New Delhi: The output of eight core sectors grew by 11.6 per cent in August, mainly due to an uptick in the production of cement, coal, and natural gas, official data showed on Thursday. The eight infrastructure sectors of coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity had contracted by 6.9 per cent in August 2020 due to the nationwide lockdown.

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IMD: NORMAL RAINFALL DURING JUNE-SEPTEMBER

New Delhi: The country received "normal" rainfall during the four-month Southwest Monsoon season from June to September, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Thursday.

VHP: DECLARE BHAGAVAD GITA NATIONAL BOOK

New Delhi: The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Thursday demanded the 'Bhagavad Gita' be declared the national book of India and its teaching-learning made compulsory across all levels of education in the country "to stop the eroding of values". The saffron outfit also demanded that programmes on reading of the scripture be organised periodically at Government institutions.

35% Covid patients have at least 1 long symptom in 3-6 months: Study

Abnormal breathing, anxiety, cognitive problems among common symptoms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 35 per cent of people had at least one long-Covid symptom diagnosed in the 3-6 month period after Covid-19 infection, according to a team of researchers who investigated long-Covid in over 2,70,000 people recovering from infection due to the virus. The figures, based on self-reported symptoms, also suggest 3,84,000 people are still living with symptoms a year after infection.

Long Covid symptoms were more frequent in those who had been hospitalised, and they were slightly more common in the women, the study published in the journal PLOS Medicine showed.

According to the researchers, including Paul



Harrison from the University of Oxford, the most common symptoms were breathing problems, abdominal symptoms, fatigue, pain, and anxiety/depression.

"Research of different kinds is urgently needed to understand why not everyone recovers rapidly and fully from Covid-19. We need to identify the mechanism underlying the diverse symptoms that can affect survivors," Harrison, who headed the study, said in a statement.

For the study, the team used data from the US-based TriNetX electronic health record network.

The study reported on how commonly nine core long-Covid symptoms were diagnosed and how this rate compared to people recovering from influenza.

The nine core long-Covid symptoms, occurring 90-180 days after Covid-19 was diagnosed, comprise abnormal breathing 8 per cent, abdominal symptoms 8 per cent, anxiety/depression 15 per cent, chest/throat pain 6 per cent, cognitive problems ('brain fog') 4 per cent, fatigue 6 per cent, headache 5 per cent, myalgia (muscle pain) 1.5 per cent, other pain — 7 per cent, any of the above features 37 per cent.

Higher rates were seen if the whole 1-180 day period after Covid-19 infection was included.

Covid patients admitted to hospital were more likely to suffer cognitive problems like brain fog and fatigue compared with people who did not need to be admitted, the research found. People who did not need hospital care were more likely to have headaches.

These factors also influenced which of the symptoms people were most likely to experience. For example, older people and men had more breathing difficulties and cognitive problems, whereas young people and women had more headaches, abdominal symptoms and anxiety/depression.

Many patients had more than one long-Covid symptom, and symptoms tended to co-occur more as time progressed.

The study also looked at the same symptoms in people recovering from influenza. Long-Covid symptoms did occur after influenza, but were 1.5 times more common after Covid-19.

SC upset with farmers' blockade of highways

Implement laws to clear traffic, court tells Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday expressed displeasure over the prolonged blockade of highways in connection with the farmers' protest and told the Governments that it is their duty to implement the related law to clear the traffic.

The apex court was hearing petitions to remove the road blockades in the Delhi borders. "The redressal of problems can be through the judicial forum, agitation or through Parliamentary debates. But how can the highways be blocked and this is happening perpetually. Where does this end?" asked the bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and MM Sundresh.

The top court allowed the Centre to file a formal application to make farmer unions party to the plea seeking open-



ing of road blockade at Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border at UP Gate here.

The court was hearing a plea of a NOIDA resident Monica Agrawal, who has sought removal of blockade saying earlier it took 20 minutes to reach Delhi and now it is taking over two hours and people of the area are facing hardship due to protests at the UP Gate on Delhi border. At the outset, the bench asked Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj what the Centre is

doing in the matter.

Nataraj said they had convened a meeting with the protesting farmers and details have been mentioned in the affidavit.

The bench said, "We may lay down a law but how to implement the law is your business. The court cannot implement it. It is the executive who has to implement it."

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said it is the duty of the executive to implement it.

Continued on Page 2

Gorakhpur DM, SSP try to hush up trader's murder in viral video

PREETAM SRIVASTAVA ■ LUCKNOW

The sensational murder of a Kanpur-based businessman by Gorakhpur police took a new twist after a video went viral on Thursday. The video showed how senior officials of the district which included District Magistrate Vijay Kiran Anand and SSP Gorakhpur Vipin Tada allegedly tried to dissuade the family of the victim from lodging a case.

The video raised questions on the functioning of the top officials and pointed that instead of taking immediate cognizance and acting tough on the brutal act of the cops, the DM and the SSP were trying to bail them out by discouraging the victim's family

from taking any action.

"I am requesting you like an elder brother. After a court case, you will not believe, it takes years in court," one of the officials said to be the DM can be seen telling the victim's family.

Another official said to be the SSP Gorakhpur heard saying, "They did not have any previous enmity. They went in uniform and that is why I have been listening to you since morning. You asked for them to be suspended and I did that. They will not be reinstated till they get a clean chit."

Victim's wife Meenakshi replied in the video, "They should either be removed completely, or I want a life for a life."

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No hike in power rates for Delhiites in new tariff

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) on Thursday announced a new tariff without any increase in any rates, stating it did not see any good reasons to do so.

"After considering all the relevant factors, the Commission has come to the conclusion that there are no good reasons to make any increase in the existing tariff structure," DERC said in a statement.

However, the power bill for consumers may increase marginally from October first as the commission has raised the pension surcharge from five per cent to seven per cent.

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HC revises order on doorstep delivery

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has modified its earlier order regarding the implementation of the Kejriwal Government's doorstep delivery scheme.

The Lieutenant Governor (LG) had rejected the ration delivery scheme one week before its commencement. The court order came after an overwhelming majority opted for supply of rations at their doorstep.

The court on Friday ruled in favour of the Delhi Government's scheme in a case where the Delhi Sarkari Ration Dealers Sangh had gone to court against the scheme.

Continued on Page 2

No Chhath puja in public places in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Thursday announced that the Chhath puja celebration shall not be allowed in public places, public grounds, river banks and temples citing the Covid-19 pandemic in the national Capital.

An order issued by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) advised the public to celebrate Chhath puja at their homes.

The DDMA order stated that the Covid preventive measures in Delhi will continue till November 15. "Chhath puja celebration shall not be allowed in public places/public grounds/river banks, temples, etc in Delhi and the public is advised to celebrate the same at their homes," it stated.

"All event organisers will have to obtain requisite permissions from the district magistrate (DM) concerned for



organising festival events well in advance. No permission shall be granted by DMs or authorities for conducting any event in containment zones," it added.

The DDMA clarified that no standing or squatting will be allowed at festive events and only sitting on chairs with social distancing will be permitted.

"It may be noted that restrictions on gatherings and large congregations imposed earlier are being relaxed only to the extent of allowing celebrations of upcoming festivals till November 15," it added.

This comes after Delhi Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajaj earlier on Wednesday chaired the meeting of DDMA in the wake of the upcoming

festive season to prevent any resurgence of infection.

Delhi Government Ministers Satyendra Jain, Kailash Gahlot, AIMS Delhi Director Dr Randeep Guleria and senior officers of NITI Aayog, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) were present at the meeting.

SKIN-TO-SKIN CRITERIA NOT VALID

Definition of sexual assault in POCSO must be looked from victim’s perspective: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The provision defining the offence of sexual assault against children under the POCSO Act must be looked at from the “victim’s perspective” and if the “sexual intent” is present then the offence is made out even without “skin-to-skin contact”, the Supreme Court Thursday orally observed.

A Bench headed by Justice U U Lalit stressed on the intent to commit the sexual offence and said the results would be “disastrous” if the term “physical contact” in the provision is interpreted in a way where the skin-to-skin contact becomes necessary for constituting the offence.

The top court reserved its verdict on two appeals filed against the Bombay High Court verdict, which had come under intense scrutiny, and had held that no offence of sexual assault under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act is made out if there is no direct “skin-to-skin contact between accused and the victim.

The bench, also comprising Justices S Ravindra Bhat

and Bela M Trivedi, discussed threadbare the definition of section 7 of the POCSO Act which deals with the offence of sexual assault against the children.

The provision says: “Whoever, with sexual intent, touches the vagina, penis, anus or breast of the child or makes the child touch the vagina, penis, anus or breast of such person or any other person, or does any other act with sexual intent which involves physical contact without penetration is said to commit sexual assault.”

“So, therefore, the primary thing is that if the sexual intent is proved then everything will fall in place,” the bench orally observed while expressing its reservation on the interpretation made by the high court.

Senior advocate Siddhath Luthra, appearing for the convict in the case as an amicus curiae, referred to the contents of the provision and said that there were issues with the first part of the provision which said if an accused, with sexual intent, “touches the vagina, penis, anus or breast of the child or makes the child touch the vagina, penis, anus or breast

of such person or any other person” then the offence of sexual assault is made out.

However, the second part of the provision said that for constituting the offence of sexual assault, an accused has to commit an act “which involves physical contact without penetration” and here the “skin-to-skin” interpretation creeps in.

Luthra said the second part “requires sensitive interpretation”. One must rely on different situations to see whether a given interpretation logically holds and when an offence has been clearly laid down then if there was any need to stretch one’s reasoning and rely on other provisions, the bench said.

“One must look at things from the victim’s perspective. If a pen is used to poke a person, there is no skin-to-skin touch and according to arguments advanced there is no sexual assault. But there is an invasion of privacy and violation of modesty of the child,” it said.

“If we accept the submission (on physical contact without cloth), what kind of results will we get. According to us, the results will be disastrous,” it observed.

Dabholkar murder case: CBI submits list of documents, witnesses to special court

Pune: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Thursday submitted to a special court here a list of documents and witnesses that it would like to rely upon in the trial of rationalist Dr Narendra Dabholkar murder case.

The list was submitted to Additional Sessions Judge S R Navandar (special judge for UAPA cases).

On September 15, the court had framed charges against the five accused in the case. While it had charged four accused under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), the fifth accused was charged only with the destruction of evidence.

“As charges have been framed, we submitted a list of documents and witnesses related to the case in the court that the prosecution would like to rely upon,” special public prosecutor Prakash Suryawanshi said.

The defence would file its say on the submitted list of documents and witnesses, he added.

Dabholkar (67), who headed the Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti, an anti-superstition

outfit, was shot dead in Pune on August 20, 2013, allegedly by members of a right-wing extremist group.

The CBI has been conducting a probe into the case which was earlier with the Pune police. Virendra Sinh Tawde, Sachin Andure, Sharad Kalaskar, Sanjeev Punalekar and Vikram Bhawe are five accused in the case.

The court framed the charges against Tawde, Andure, Kalaskar and Bhawe under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 302 (murder), 120 (B) (criminal conspiracy), 34 (common intention), relevant sections of the Arms Act and section 16 of the stringent UAPA (punishment for terrorist act). Besides, charges were framed against Punalekar under IPC section 201 (causing disappearance of evidence or giving false inform to screen offender).

Meanwhile, the defence moved a plea before the court along with an article published in a Marathi daily seeking to initiate a process to issue a contempt of court notice against the author, editor and the publication for publishing the article. **PTI**

Guj HC suspends life term awarded to Dinu Solanki in RTI activist murder case

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

S tating that his conviction was not likely to be sustained, the Gujarat High Court on Thursday suspended the life sentence awarded to former BJP MP Dinu Bogha Solanki by a special court in the murder case of RTI activist Amit Jethwa.

Granting bail to Solanki, Justice Paresh Upadhyay said the special CBI court’s judgement was “erroneous and unsustainable” as the trial was based “on assumptions and presumptions and also conjectures and surmises”. The trial against Solanki was largely based on circumstantial evidence, the high court said, adding that this evidence “not only leads to many other hypothesis than that of the guilt of the accused, (but) even false implication of the applicant can not be ruled out.” RTI activist Amit Jethwa was shot dead outside the Gujarat High Court in 2010. In July 2019, the trial court here sentenced Solanki and six others to life imprisonment for killing Jethwa after he tried to expose the illegal mining in the Gir forest region.

Solanki, currently lodged at the Sabarmati Central Jail here, challenged the CBI court’s verdict, and sought suspension of his sentence while his appeal was heard. The high court took into consideration the fact that Solanki, who was a sitting MP of the BJP in 2010, was named as prime accused only in 2013 after the CBI took over the probe.

Neither the Special Investigation Team nor state CID-Crime had named him as an accused earlier, the HC noted. “We have no hesitation to arrive at the conclusion that, the conviction under section 302 (murder) of IPC with the aid of section 120-B (conspiracy) is less likely to be sustained. For all the above reasons, the sentence imposed by the CBI Court needs to be suspended and the applicant needs to be granted bail, during pendency of appeal,” the high court said. The CBI court “fell in error by taking into consideration irrelevant aspects... The conviction recorded by the CBI court is principally based on assumptions and presumptions and the same is ex-facie (on the face of it) unsustainable,” it added.

Amit Khare, Secy Higher Education, felicitated in event at AICTE

New Delhi: Amit Khare, IAS, Secretary, Higher Education, was felicitated by Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan on eve of his super-annuation during an event organised at All India Council for Technical Education.

Khare is an Indian Administrative Service officer (1985 batch) from Bihar/Jharkhand cadre. He assumed the charge as Secretary, Ministry of Education (Department of Higher Education) in Dec 2019.

Within a short time thereafter, the National Education Policy 2020 was approved by the cabinet on 29 July 2020.

Speaking on the occasion, Pradhan said, “Amit Khare has set a benchmark in field of higher education with his expertise and wide range of experience in various domains. He has been instrumental in guiding me on the various aspects of National Education Policy 2020. I have been fortunate to have him as my Secretary because of which I could comprehend the larger picture of school, skill and higher education toward fulfilling the objectives of NEP. **PNS**

No change in circle rates for properties in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Reduction in circle rates for all categories of properties has been extended, the Delhi Cabinet decided on Thursday. Circle rates are the minimum price at which a property can be bought or sold. At present it is 20 per cent.

The proposal for extending the scheme was approved in the Delhi Cabinet. The move will

boost the real estate market and will increase government revenue.

On February 5th, Delhi government reduced circle rates for all categories of properties for a period till September 30. Circle rates were reduced by 20% for residential, commercial and industrial properties across all categories of localities.

G23 stands by...

From page 1

Other senior party leaders who came out in support for Sibal are Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Vivek Tankha and Raj Babbar.

Former Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh who had to make an humiliating exit from the Punjab Government last week also criticised what he said was an “attack” at the house of Sibal by Congress workers only because he “chose to express views that

were not palatable to the party leadership”.

This does not augur well for the party, Singh said, adding that it is unfortunate that the seniors are being “completely sidelined”, which is not good for the party.

Terming the senior Congressmen as “thinkers”, who were important to the future of the party, the former Chief Minister in a statement said the younger leadership should be promoted to implement the plans, which the senior leaders are best equipped to formulate.

SC upset with...

From page 1

The bench said, “When we lay down the law, you will say it is encroachment and we trespassed into the domain of the executive. This has ramifications but there are also grievances that need to be addressed. This cannot be a perpetual problem.”

Mehta said when it is invited then it will not be encroached upon.

He said at the highest level a three-member committee

was formed to address the grievances but the farmers’ representatives who were invited refused to join in the discussions.

Mehta said the court should allow the petitioner to make the farmers union party to the petition so that later they don’t say that they were not made parties in the matter.

The bench told Mehta that he will have to move an application for making farmers a representative party as the petitioner, a private individual may not know who their leaders are.

Plea in SC seeks direction to permit farmers’ body to stage ‘satyagrah’ at Jantar Mantar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A protesting against the three farm laws passed last year, has approached the Supreme Court seeking directions to the concerned authorities to allow it to stage ‘Satyagrah’ at the Jantar Mantar here.

The plea, which is scheduled to be taken up for hearing on Friday by a Bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar, has sought the apex court’s direction to the concerned authorities to provide space to at least 200 farmers or protestors of ‘Kisan Mahapanchayat’ at the Jantar Mantar for organising peaceful and non-violent ‘Satyagrah’.

The plea, filed through advocate Ajay Choudhary, has arrayed the Centre, the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, and the Police Commissioner of Delhi as respondents.

The petition filed by ‘Kisan Mahapanchayat’, a body of farmers and agriculturists, and its president has said that rep-

resentation made by them to the concerned authority to permit them to hold a peaceful protest at Jantar Mantar has been rejected.

“The action of the respondents is also discriminatory and arbitrary as permission to protest has been granted to another farmer body while denying the petitioner to organise staggered ‘Satyagrah’, which is the most non-violent, peaceful, and truthful form of protest perfected and practiced by father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi,” the plea has alleged.

It claimed that the action of concerned authorities in permitting similar protests at the same site is “unfair” and violative of the Right to Equality.

The plea has also sought a direction to the authorities not to stop the petitioner body and its members from proceeding towards Jantar Mantar to carry out indefinite ‘Satyagrah’.

The farmers are protesting against the passage of three laws.

Jakhar accuses...

From page 1

Hitting out, Jakhar had tweeted that Sidhu has compromised the “faith” reposed in him by the Congress high command, and no amount of grandstanding can justify this breach of trust.

“It’s just not cricket! What stands compromised in this entire ‘episode’ is the faith reposed in the (outgoing?) PPC president by the Congress Leadership. No amount of grandstanding can justify this breach of trust placing his benefactors in a peculiar predicament,” he tweeted.

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

SIGNAL & TELECOMMUNICATION BRANCH

OPEN TENDER

Invitation Of E-tender On Behalf Of

The President OF India acting

through Sr. Divisional engineer

Signal & Telecom (Co-Ordination),

West Central Railway, Jabalpur

NIT No. JBP_N-Telco-Tender-

2021-14, Name of work with

location - Madan Mahal-howbagh-

Development of Madan Mahai

station as coaching terminal &

Howbagh Station as coaching

complex. Approx cost of the work

- Rs.6076072.59 Cost of Tender

Form (In Rs.) - Nil Address of the

office of Railway- DRM (S&T's)

Office, 1st Floor, DRM Building,

Jabalpur, Earnest Money In Rs. -

Nil, Completion Period (In

months)- 06 (Months) Date & Time

for closing & opening of tender-

Closing on 15.00 Hrs on

28.10.2021 & Opening after 15:00

hours. The complete information of

the above e-tender is available on

website "https://ireps.gov.in" and

also placed on notice board of the

Divisional Railway Manager (S&T)

Office, West Central Railway,

Jabalpur. Tenders other than in the

form of e-bids shall not be accepted

against above tender.

Divn. Sign & Telecom Eng. (Wks)

West Central Railway, Jabalpur

कोरोना को है हराना,

तो दीकारण जरूर कराना

Gorakhpur DM, SSP...

From page 1

Further, in another video that went viral, Meenakshi is seen crying at the hotel where the incident took place, alleging that the hotel cleaned all the blood,

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Lalita Rani is the absolute owner of House No. 138/15, measuring 34.62 sq. yds., situated at waka abadi nai basti Gurgaon, Andrun Nagar Nigam, Tehsil & Distt. Gurgaon by virtue of Sale Deed dated 15.02.2021 (Doc No. 6004), lost one of the recital bearing Registration No. 8484 dated 14/7/14 in the name of Shakun Rani, an FIR has already been lodged in lieu of that on dated 30/9/21 All person/s having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, loan, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan against the said Property and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.

Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)
Shop No. 5 & 6, Pkt-E, CSC, Mayur Vihar-II, Delhi-91, Mob. 9810063351

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Ratnawali Devi, W/o Shri Binesh Kumar, R/o B-3/801 Experion, The Heartsong, Sec-108, Dharampur(59) Gurugram-122006, state that both the names Ratnawali Devi and Ratnawali Kumariare of the same person and I shall there after be known as RATNAWALI DEVI for all future purposes.

PD(9085)A

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

Notice inviting application for Empanelment/ Registration of consultants to undertake private siding works over South East Central Railway.

- South East central Railway, and on behalf of the President, of India are invited application for Empanelment /registration of consultant in connection with survey and construction management of private sidings works to be submitted latest by **28.10.2021** up to **16.00** hrs. from interested Consultants/Consulting firms with eligible documents i.e Form for empanelment ("FFE") documents No. SECR/HQ/Engg/FFE-1 of 2021.
- The FFE document can be downloaded from the SECR website (<http://www.secr.indianrailways.gov.in>) from **27.09.2021**.
- The FFE document will be submitted with document fee **Rs.1000/-** (Rupees one thousand only) in the form of Demand Draft in favour of PFA/SECR/BSP issued by nationalize Bank, which will be non - refundable.

(Yuganter Kumar)
Executive Engineer (Genl.)
For Principal Chief Engineer

Winter Action Plan to fight pollution delayed

DELHI GOVT INVITES SUGGESTIONS

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

While the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) delayed the launch of its Winter Action Plan to combat air pollution this year, the city Government sought active participation of stakeholders and invited their suggestions on Thursday.

The suggestion for an action plan can be sent to greenwarroom@gmail.com within two days.

As per the schedule, the action plan was about to launch on September 30 however it was delayed as the nodal agency DPCC sought changes.

Environment Minister Gopal Rai said the Delhi Government will promote public participation and he will meet RWAs, NGOs and Ecoclubs.

Rai said, "All the studies regarding the pollution problem in Delhi are pointing out two factors. First is the vehicular pollution, dust pollution and biomass burning within Delhi. And the second one is the pollution that is coming from out-



side. Today we talked to the Resident Welfare Associations, Eco Clubs and various other environmental and social groups. We discussed how despite the Delhi Government bringing in rules, regulations and policies to curb pollution, the pollution is still being created. We have discussed how to stop Delhi from pollution."

He explained further, "A basic example is how people take multiple trips to the markets to buy groceries and household items. The solution is to go to the market once a week and get all your stuff. We discussed how people react to such ideas and how social groups are working to curb pollution."

He said, "Most of the people supported the 'Red Light

On, Gaadi Off' campaign. Another suggestion came up that the RWAs should organise carpooling. We will also work on issuing guidelines to the RWAs, NGOs and construction agencies and other agencies who employ workers, especially the ones working at night like security guards to provide them with heaters so that they do not burn wood and other biomass to stay warm. Subsequently, a suggestion came up to make WhatsApp groups of RWAs so that the message of controlling pollution could be promoted in people of Delhi. Also, the Resident Welfare Associations are showing interest in organising workshops for increasing awareness."

AAP gives 6 guarantees in healthcare sector for Punjab

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI/LUDHIANA

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday announced six guarantees in the healthcare sector for Punjab if the party came to power in the state after the next Assembly elections.

Kejriwal announced that every person of Punjab would get free treatment, medicines, and operations in the State. "No one will be deprived of healthcare services and everyone in Punjab will be issued a health card on which all information will be completely digital. Further, 16,000 Pind and ward clinics will be established all over Punjab on the lines of Mohalla Clinics," he said.

The Delhi Chief Minister added that the healthcare system of Punjab will be revamped, made world class like Delhi and new hospitals will be developed on a large scale. He further said that road accident victims will be given free treatment irrespective of the hospital and cost of treatment; and every person will get quality treatment completely free in Punjab and will not need to rush to private hospi-



tals for good treatment.

Talking about the looming political crisis of Punjab, he said that there is no sign of power or government in Punjab today while everyone in Congress is busy fighting over the CM seat. He stressed upon the fact that AAP is the only hope in the state now.

The AAP National Convenor also took a dig at the ongoing political crisis in the state, saying that the people of Punjab showed a lot of hope in the Congress and brought them into power five years ago but got disappointed.

"We are putting in day and night to make a plan to bring prosperity to Punjab. We are now at a juncture where everyone believes in and supports the Aam Aadmi Party. Everyone in Punjab is saying AAP will form the next government. We are working on an

elaborate plan to list out the things we will do after coming into power in Punjab," he added.

"Every citizen of Punjab will get free treatment of the quality that private hospitals provide. Medicines will be provided at the hospital itself. We will ensure machines in hospitals will function at full capacity," he said.

"In Delhi, we brought forth a 'Farishtey' scheme to make sure anyone who suffers from a road accident can be saved. In this scheme, anyone can take a road accident victim and get them admitted to any hospital and they will be given free treatment. It does not matter how expensive the hospital is or how expensive the treatment is, the person will be given free treatment and their life will be saved. The same will be done in Punjab," he said.

Officials told to digitise verification process of caste certificates

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Minister of Social Welfare Rajendra Pal Gautam on Thursday asked officials of the Divisional Commissioner's Office to digitise the process of verification of caste certificates.

The direction came after the Minister conducted a surprise inspection at the Divisional Commissioner's Office on Thursday to look into the cases of pendency in issuing caste certificates. This problem was faced mostly by students who require the caste certificates to ensure admission in schools and colleges.

He said "Many citizens are facing the problem of delay in getting these caste certificates issued. After inspection, I have found out that the staff is not performing up to their full capacity and is delaying the process."

Upon inspection, the minister found out that the officers were delaying the process and he personally verified the record room data and found that records which could have been disposed of in the matter of 3-4 days were kept there for 15 to 20 days, office of social



welfare minister said in a statement.

"I have issued strict orders that the staff should be sensitised regarding this matter. Not more than 2-3 days shall be taken in disposing of these cases. If anyone cannot follow these orders, then strict action will be initiated against them by the department," he said.

Gautam also suggested that the process of verification of caste certificates should be digitised so that the time taken to send out hard copies to the respective district magistrate is reduced. He also added that the staff should be sensitised about this process through regular training.

The minister also issued a whip to all the officials to streamline and expedite the process or face action.

Capital logs 47 Corona cases, positivity rate stands at 0.06%

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital reported 47 new cases on Thursday while the positivity rate stood at 0.06 per cent, according to a health bulletin issued by the health department of the Delhi Government.

As per the bulletin, the Covid case tally in Delhi reached 14,38,868 of which over 14.13 lakh patients have recovered. The death toll has risen to 25,087.

Two deaths were reported in Delhi due to Covid-19 on Tuesday. The national capital has recorded seven fatalities due to the viral infection in September this year.

According to figures, the city has 400 active COVID-19 cases and 109 patients are in home isolation. The number of containment zones in the city stands at 97, according to the bulletin.

At least 72,386 tests were conducted a day ago, including 50,425 RT-PCR ones. The rest were rapid-antigen tests, it said.

Delhi battled a brutal second wave of the pandemic in April and May that claimed a massive number of lives with the issue of oxygen shortage in hospitals adding to the woes.

On April 20, Delhi had reported 28,395 cases, the highest in the city since the beginning of the pandemic. On April 22, the case positivity rate was 36.2 per cent, the highest so far. The highest number of 448 deaths was reported on May 3.

The Delhi Government has been ramping up its health infrastructure to prevent a repeat of the crisis witnessed during the peak of the second wave of the pandemic.

SDMC launches first RFID-based parking in Dwarka sector 14 Metro station

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) inaugurated the first Radio-frequency identification (RFID) based parking operation at Dwarka Sector-14 Metro Station.

Elaborating about the RFID based parking operation, SDMC Commissioner Gyanesh Bharti, said that the newly inaugurated RFID based operation of a parking lot is 'first of its kind' facility for the people living in the area.

Bharti said that when a vehicle comes out from the parking lot, parking fee will be

deducted automatically from the RFID Tag mounted on the glass. "The system is paperless and cashless, parking users will avoid payment of fees in the form of cash. Additionally, it will reduce time while parking the vehicles," he said.

SDMC Mayor Mukesh Suryan said that this is the first parking lot where the FASTag system is being implemented to ensure smooth transactions.

"The SDMC will launch the facility of paperless and cashless parking in its jurisdiction. The Indian Highways Management Company Limited (IHMCCL) will incur

expenses related to setting up of structures for toll collection and the SDMC will not bear any cost related in this regard," he said.

The SDMC has implemented the system of collection of parking charges through RFID to encourage online payment of parking fees. "The civic body has authorized NHAI's IHMCCL to collect parking charges from Dwarka Sector-14 Metro Station parking lot and will remit the same with the civic agency. The SDMC will reimburse the agency charge at the rate of 1 percent of the transaction value to the IHMCCL," a senior SDMC official said.

4 auto thieves held; illegal arms, 10 bikes recovered

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Four vehicle thieves were held after an encounter from the Sector-50 police station area in the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday. 2 pistols, 3 bullets, 7 used cartridges and 10 stolen motorcycles were recovered from their possession, police said.



On the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday, police teams of Sector-50 police station and the crime unit Sector-39 of the Gurugram police received information about the movement of the accused in the Sector-50 police station area.

"We deployed a team to check the criminals. Four suspects on two separate motorcycles reached the spot but tried to flee after opening fire at the police teams. The police return the fire and overpowered and nabbed four criminals, Preet Pal Sangwan, assistant commissioner of police (crime) said. The arrested accused have been identified as Shahabuddin alias Bhola (19), Thaun Singh alias Manish (19) of Bharatpur in Rajasthan, Jamshed (24) of Alwar and Taufiq (25) of Nuh district in Haryana.

"During interrogation, the accused disclosed that they used to sell theft motorcycle is Rs 5 to 10 thousand. Taufiq was also involved in the cow slaughter case and three separate cases were registered against him in Rajasthan," Inspector Rahul Dev, station house officer (SHO) of Sector-50 police station said.

A case under relevant section of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered against the culprits.

Burglars steal from temple's 'daanpatra' in Punjabi Bagh

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Three unknown persons allegedly committed a theft at a temple in west Delhi's Punjabi Bagh area on early hours of Thursday.

According to a senior police official, on Thursday at 6.54 am, police received information regarding burglary from a temple's 'daanpatra' at Aggarwal Bhawan, road number 10 near SD Public School, East Punjabi Bagh following which a police team was dispatched for the spot.

"During enquiry, it was found that three unknown persons with muffled faces entered temple premises from back side of the Aggarwal Bhawan. They broke open the daanpatra and burgled Aggarwal Bagchi Trust Mandir.

They took an unknown amount of cash between 1 AM to 1.30 AM," said the senior police official.

The guard of the temple, Santal Tiwari (51), was present there at that time, but he didn't notice anything unusual. Incident was first noticed by priest Jai Bhagwan Sharma around 5.30 AM when he opened the temple, police said. A case has been registered and investigation is underway, police said.

Delhi court discharges AAP MLA in case of abetment of suicide of party worker

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi court on Thursday discharged AAP MLA Sharad Chauhan and five others in a case of abetment of suicide of a woman party worker in 2016.

Special judge M K Nagpal, however, directed to frame charges against one of Chauhan's associates, Ramesh Bhardwaj, saying there was sufficient prima facie evidence to hold him responsible. Bhardwaj was also accused in a sexual harassment case filed by the deceased.

According to the complaint, the main accused Bhardwaj was a close associate of Chauhan and, therefore, the politician always protected and sheltered him in the sexual harassment incident.



DELHI POLICE
SHANTI SEWA NYAYA



International
Day of
OLDER PERSONS





WE CARE FOR YOUR SAFETY

On this day,
we recognize and show appreciation for the value and contribution of older people to home, family, communities and the society



Delhi Police Senior Citizen App



Home Visits to check on their security



Police Verification of domestic helps



Identity cards to ensure close monitoring



Regular Advice on Safety & Security measures



Regular interaction over phone

OUR INITIATIVES TOWARDS SECURITY OF OLDER PERSONS

Senior Citizen Helpline 1291



Year	Crimes
2018	63
2019	42
2020	34

33.3% reduction from 2018 to 2019
19.04% reduction from 2019 to 2020

Reduction in Heinous Crimes against Senior Citizens

E-mail to CP, Delhi at: cp.rakeshasthana@delhipolice.gov.in | Write to CP, Delhi at P.O. Box No. 171, GPO, New Delhi

FOR IMMEDIATE POLICE HELP CALL 112 **FOR HELPLINE SERVICES CALL 1090**

PIC TALK



An auto drive past the mural of a young girl reading a book on the wall of ISBT Flyover in Kashmir Gate

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Army keeping tabs on Af situation: Gen Naravane



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Incidents at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) will continue to take place till India and China arrive at an agreement regarding the boundary, Army Chief General M M Naravane said here on Thursday. He also said the Army is keeping tabs on the situation in Afghanistan and likely threat perceptions to India.

Naravane’s observations about the LAC came in the backdrop of stand-offs still on at three points at the LAC in Eastern Ladakh since May last year. The intrusions’ attempt by China last year led to a bloody clash between the two armies in the Galwan valley in June. Twenty Indian army personnel including the commanding officer were killed in the brawl and more than 40 Chinese troopers were also killed. However, Beijing has, so far, not confirmed the



number of casualties on its side.

Addressing a gathering at the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry here, Naravane said “We have an outstanding border issue. We are again well prepared to meet any misadventure that may occur as we have demonstrated in the past. Such kinds of incidents will continue to occur till such time that a long-term solution is reached, and that is to have a boundary agreement. And that should be the thrust of our efforts so that we have lasting peace along the northern (China) border.”

More than 50,000 troops from both the sides are now

India gets new Air chief

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari on Thursday took over as the new IAF chief here after incumbent R KS Bhadauria retired.

An alumnus of NDA, the new chief was commissioned in 1982 in the fighter stream of the IAF. He has flown more than 3, 800 hours on multiple fighter and trainer aircraft.

Flying for the country runs in his family as his son is also a Rafale fighter jet pilot.

In his address, Chaudhari said he was honoured and privileged to have been entrusted with the responsibility of leading the Indian Air Force. He expressed absolute faith and confidence in the ability of his force to accomplish all assigned tasks with resolute dedication while maintaining the IAF’s operational capability at an all-time high.



Outlining the focus areas for Commanders and personnel, Chaudhuri said, “Protection of our Nation’s sovereignty and integrity is to be ensured at any cost”.

He said enhancement of operational capability through integration of newly inducted platforms, weapons and equipment with existing assets and dovetailing the same in concepts of operations would remain a priority area.

He spoke on aspects of acquisition of new technology, promotion of indigenisation and innovation, strengthening of cyber security, rapid adaptation of training methods to meet future demands and sustained

work to nurture human resources.

During his career spanning almost four decades, the new chief has tenanted many significant command and staff appointments. He has commanded a MiG-29 Squadron, two Air Force Stations and Western Air Command. His staff appointments include Deputy Chief of Air Staff, Senior Air Staff Officer at HQ Eastern Air Command, Assistant Chief of Air Staff Operations (Air Defence), Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Personnel Officers), Deputy Commandant of Air Force Academy and Air Assistant to Chief of the Air Staff.

A Category ‘A’ Qualified Flying Instructor, he has served as an instructor at Flying Training Establishments and has also been an Air Force Examiner. He was a pioneer member of the Suryakiran Aerobatic Display Team.

ER Sheikh assumes charge as first DG of Ordnance Directorate

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) reconstituted into seven defence public sector undertakings from Friday, ER Sheikh on Thursday assumed charge as first Director General of the Ordnance Directorate (Co-ordination and Services). It is the successor organisation of Ordnance Factory Board (OFB).

An Indian Ordnance Factory Service (IOFS) officer of the 1984 batch, he has been a spearhead of modernisation.

In particular, he has contributed to the establishment of the modern production line system for the manufacture of small arms ammunition at the Ordnance Factory Varangaon. A graduate of IIT Kanpur,



he has served in various Ordnance Factories. He also led the successful indigenous development of Bi-Modular Charge System (BMCS) for artillery ammunition.

He is also the recipient of the Ayudh Ratna Award, 2020, conferred on him in recognition of his exemplary services

to the organisation.

The seven new entities will be styled as Munitions India Ltd, Armoured Vehicles Nigam Ltd, Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Ltd, Troop Comforts Ltd, Yantra India Ltd., India Optel Ltd, and Gliders India Ltd.

Cong’s troubles in Chhattisgarh set to multiply soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

At a time when its affairs are getting murkier in Punjab and the Rajasthan crisis remains unresolved, the Congress’ troubles in Chhattisgarh look set to increase in the coming days.

Amid speculation over the possibility of a leadership change in Chhattisgarh, a group of Congress MLAs known to be close to Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel are camping in Delhi to oppose any move to replace him. In fact, one of them asserted that there was no question of a change at the top in the state and Baghel would complete his full term.

AICC sources said around 15 party MLAs are in Delhi and they want to meet AICC in-charge Chhattisgarh P L Punia to convey that former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi should extend the duration of his proposed tour to the state so that all MLAs can get benefit of it.

Punia, however, is in Lucknow till the end of this week, sources in party said.

Brihaspat Singh, the Ramanujganj MLA, said that they were waiting for Punia and would speak with him when he would return.

“The situation in Chhattisgarh is not like that of Punjab. Our party has 70 MLAs (in the 90-member state assembly), of whom 60 legislators had last time conveyed their views to Punia and the high command,” Singh told the media.

“The high command gave a chief minister from the OBC community with 54 per cent

OBCs in the state. The high command gives the example of Chhattisgarh government’s policies during elections in other states, so there is no such question (of leadership change),” Singh said.

As far as the BJP people are concerned, if they think they can make the government fall by misleading “Maharaja of Sarguja” (reference to T S Singhdeo) as they did in Madhya Pradesh by misleading “Gwalior Maharaja” (a reference to Jyotiraditya Scindia), they will not be successful, Singh said.

“Our Maharaja of Sarguja is very intelligent, very knowledgeable and has himself stated that he will never leave the party. So there is no possibility and under the leadership of Bhupesh Baghel, together with T S Singhdeo, the government will continue to work for the development of the state,” the MLA said.

Baghel is doing a great job and “we will work under his leadership for five years and will fight elections under his leadership in the future with the blessings of Rahul Gandhi,” he added.

The buzz in political circles in Chhattisgarh over legislators having gone to express their support to Baghel comes in the wake of the Punjab political crisis for the party.

The demand for a change of guard reared its head in Chhattisgarh after Baghel completed two and a half years as chief minister in June 2021. The Singhdeo camp claimed that the high command in 2018 had agreed to hand over the post to him after the government com-

PM thanks Gehlot for faith in him

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot tries to ‘fortify’ himself in his own State in the wake of the ongoing political changes and developments in Punjab, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday in a virtual programme sought to ‘thank’ the former for reposing “so much of confidence” in him in seeking help for the development projects in his State with an “open heart”.

“Ye dosti, ye vishwas, ye bharosa, ye loktantra ki badi taakat hain,” Modi said while addressing a gathering through video conferencing. He said “mutual trust” despite different ideologies is the strength of democracy.

Responding to Gehlot’s requests regarding a few projects for the development of the state during a virtual programme, Modi thanked the veteran Congress leader for having faith in him.

“I was listening to the Chief Minister of Rajasthan. He has given a long list of projects. I thank the Chief Minister of Rajasthan that he has so much faith in me. His ideology, (political) party are different and my ideology, party are different but this friendship, trust and faith is a big strength of democracy,” he said.

“Ashokji ka mujhpar jo bharosa hai, usi ke karan aaj unhone dil khol kar bahut si batein rakkhin,” Modi said



while thanking him for giving a list of development projects in his state unhesitatingly.

Gehlot has been keeping a close watch on the developments in Punjab where Congress has effected leadership change and removed 79-year-old veteran Amarindar Singh.

Recently, Gehlot had also called a meeting of MLAs ‘loyal’ to him with reports that his arch rival in the party and deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot is again trying to upstage him and lobbying with former Congress president Rahul Gandhi.

Singh has decided to quit the Congress after feeling “humiliated” and may float his own outfit, something Gehlot has to watch out for and be apprehensive, given the running turmoil in his party.

Prime Minister was speaking after virtually Inaugurating Institute of Petrochemicals Technology, Jaipur,

He also laid the foundation stone for four new medical colleges in the Banswara, Sirohi, Hanumangarh and Dausa districts of Rajasthan.

Modi informed that after 2014, 23 medical colleges have been approved by the central government for Rajasthan and



7 medical colleges have already become operational.

Prime Minister said the biggest pandemic of 100 years has taught a lesson to the health sector of the world. Every country is engaged in dealing with this crisis in its way. India has resolved to increase its strength, self-reliance in this disaster.

Gehlot said 30 of the 33 districts in the state will have medical colleges by 2023. Fifteen medical colleges are already there and 15 more will be ready by 2023, the Chief Minister said.

“Today we can say with satisfaction that India is moving beyond 6 AIIMS to a strong network of more than 22 AIIMS,” the PM said adding in the last 6-7 years, more than 170 new medical colleges have been set up and rapid work is going on with more than 100 new medical colleges.

In 2014, the total seats of medical undergraduates and postgraduates in the country were about 82,000. Today their number has increased to 140,000. In the field of regulation and governance also, the Prime Minister said that with the advent of the National Medical Commission, problems and questions of the past have been addressed.

pleted half its term.

Congress in-charge of the state Punia has time and again denied that any such deal was struck in 2018 when the party came to power by dislodging the BJP.

The Congress high com-

mand summoned both Baghel and Singh Deo to Delhi in August to resolve the feud. It appeared that Baghel had managed to avert for the time being a leadership change when he told reporters upon return that party leader Rahul

Gandhi had agreed to visit the state ‘on his invitation’, and those talking about rotating the CM’s post were promoting political instability. However, there has been constant speculation over the matter.

Govt declares 30.97 lakh tonnes of pulses in stock

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Food on Thursday said that the pulses industry has declared 30.97 lakh tonnes of pulses stock on a Government portal and this data can be used for taking steps to ensure smooth supply of the key commodity at affordable rates.

As part of its measures to control rising prices of pulses and check hoarding, the ministry had in July directed states to ensure stockists, millers and traders provide details of the stock they are holding on any given date on portal https://fcainfoweb.Nic.In/psp.

“At least 11,635 stockholders have registered declaring 3097694.42 tonne of stock of pulses on the official portal of



Department of Consumer Affairs as on September 20, 2021,” the ministry said in a statement. Digitization of pulses stock is in full swing, it added.

According to the ministry, stock declaration through traders, millers, importers, and warehouses which are both public and privately owned will create a data bank. This will enable the Government to understand which states are producing and keeping a stock

for milling purposes.

It will also help keep a check on undesirable practices of hoarding and artificial scarcity creation through stock declaration and real time verification of the same, it said. The portal can also be accessed by any citizen. Privacy of data is maintained. The data declared by any stockholder will be visible to them besides the state and central governments.

Further, the ministry said the data helps them in knowing the movement of stocks and the quantum of stocks with them on any given date. State governments can monitor the registrations done and stocks declared by various stakeholders pertaining to their own states. This gives the data of the quantum of stocks of various pulses available in their states.

Covid not yet over, avoid non-essential travel: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Thursday warned people that it is still not time to lower the guard and it will be prudent to avoid non-essential travel and observe low-key festivities. It pointed out that despite an overall declining trend in India’s weekly positivity rate since last five months, some districts are continuing to report positivity higher than 10 per cent led by Kerala, which has a TPR of more than 15 per cent.

“Increased population density raises chances of Covid spread so it will be prudent to avoid non-essential travel and observe festivity at low key,” Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said at a press conference here on Thursday.

Ahead of the festive season, the Centre has asked State Governments and Union territories to take adequate measures to ensure that a surge in Covid-19 cases is not seen after the celebrations.

The Union Home Ministry has already warned against complacency due to the recent drop in the number of cases. The Health Secretary said 18 districts in India are reporting a weekly positivity between 5 per cent and 10 per cent.

“Active cases are going down across the country, cumulative recovery rate rising. The country has a recovery rate of almost 98%,” Bhushan said.

India also reported 23,529 new Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours, an increase of 24 per cent from Wednesday when the country had recorded less

than 20,000 cases. At least 311 deaths due to the coronavirus were also reported in the last 24 hours. The country had been reporting less than 20,000 cases for the last two days since Monday, which has resulted in a drop of active cases in the country to 2.82 lakh.

The total number of coronavirus cases rose to 3,37,39,980 with the new infections, while the death count has reached 4,48,062. The active cases comprise 0.82 per cent of the total infections, the lowest since March 2020 — the active caseload at present is 2,77,020.

The number of Covid-19 tests has not reduced as 15-16 lakh tests are being done every day, added the Union Health Secretary.

Zydus Cadila's Covid-19 jab to hit market soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan on Thursday said that the much-awaited needleless three-dose Zydus Cadila’s Covid-19 vaccine would be introduced in the national vaccination programme “very shortly”.

The ZyCoV-D vaccine, manufactured by Ahmedabad-based Zydus Cadila, is the first vaccine in the country that has received emergency use authorisation (EUA) for being administered in the 12 to 18 age group.

The health official said that it will not be available in the market now but will be included in the Covid vaccination programme.s

Southwest monsoon likely to withdraw from October 6

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The southwest monsoon rains are likely to start withdrawing from the northwest region from October 6, marking one of the most delayed retreats of the seasonal rainfall. The normal date for the commencement of monsoon withdrawal is September 17. Last year, the monsoon started withdrawing from western parts of northwest India on September 28. The southwest monsoon, which is vital for India’s farmers, usually arrives at the southernmost Kerala coast around June 1 and starts retreating in mid-September from the north-western state of Rajasthan bordering Pakistan.

As per the IMD data, India received 87.4 mm rainfall as against the normal of 880.6 mm, a deficiency of one percent so far. Of the 694 districts across the country, 161 districts spread in nine sub divisions have faced deficient rainfall this year.

In its latest forecast, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Thursday said the conditions are favourable for commencement of withdrawal of southwest monsoon from some parts of northwest India from October 6, 2021. The movement of the depression away from the Indian coast along with a barrage of monsoon winds will allow drier westerly to north-westerly winds to establish over North-West India and trigger the commencement of the withdrawal process.

“Quantitatively, the 2021 all India monsoon seasonal rainfall during June 1 to September 30 has been 87 cm against the Long Period Average of 88 cm of 1961-2010 (99 per cent of its LPA),” IMD Director General M Mohapatra said.

The southwest monsoon starts withdrawing from west Rajasthan first. The southwest monsoon saw delayed withdrawals in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. In the year 2019, the southwest monsoon commenced withdrawal rather late on October 9 and got completed in the shortest record time of 8 days, on October 17. During last year 2020, the process started late yet again, on September 28 and delayed withdrawal completes a hat trick with 2021 following the same track.

This year cyclones delayed the retreat and most parts of the country received heavy rainfall this week, which damaged summer-sown crops ready for harvesting. A delayed withdrawal of monsoon also means a delayed onset of winter.

Currently, there is a low-pressure area and its associated cyclonic circulation prevailing over east Rajasthan and the neighbouring areas, which is keeping rainfall activity steady over Maharashtra and parts of central India.

CONGRESS LEADERSHIP IN KERALA

Against all odds, leaders confident of party unity

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCCHI

As prominent leaders leave the party one by one, there is a fear in Kerala whether the Congress in the State is withering away.

This is being discussed hotly following the decision of V M Sudheeran, former president of the KPCC and who has adorned all positions except that of the Chief Minister tendering his resignation as chairman of the political affairs committee as well as the membership of the All India Congress Committee.

Besides Sudheeran a number of local leaders of the Congress have quit the party in disgust as they were overlooked while appointing the office bearers under K Sudhakaran, who was appointed president of the Kerala unit in the aftermath of the debacle suffered by the party in the 2021 assembly election.

Former Chief Minister Oommen Chandi and former Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala are sulking alleging that they were not consulted while appointing the

new office bearers. “Why should they be consulted for each and every decision being made by the KPCC president? Had they consulted their peers while they were occupying the posts?” asked T H Mustafa, former minister and septuagenarian Congress leader. Mustafa said the need of the hour was to give elbow room for Sudhakaran and his team to work independently.

“If Sudhakaran fails to deliver the result, he too should be replaced. But he should be allowed space to work,” Mustafa added.

K C Joseph, former minister, said that efforts were on to check the exit of more leaders from the party.

“Tariq Anwar, who has been deputed by the Congress High Command was in the State for the last couple of days and he had met Sudheeran. We are confident that the party would tide over the present crisis,” Joseph told *The Pioneer*.

Hari S Kartha, former chief editor, Janmabhumi, who is a leading political commentator said the resignation of Sudheeran was mere saberrattling and part of political

bargaining.

“He is almost 75 and where will he go? Same is the case with other senior leaders in the party. Their time is out and they should give way to new leadership. The leadership in Kerala failed in 2016 and 2021 and even during the local body election. Let Sudhakaran try his luck while the High Command can elevate the so called seniors to some kind of Marg Darshak Mandal,” said Kartha.

Interestingly, ordinary Congress workers are thrilled over the prospectus of Rahul Gandhi, who represents Wynadu in the Lok Sabha, becoming the Congress President.

“Till now we did not have anyone from this part of the country becoming All India Congress Committee (AICC) president other than Sir C Sankaran Nair who headed the party for a year in 1897. We are confident of Congress coming back to power in the 2024 Lok Sabha election a la the 2004 experience,” said Ashok Kumar of Angamali, a Congress activist for the last 50 years.

RSS chief Bhagwat kickstarts 4-day maiden visit to J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Chief Dr Mohan Bhagwat Thursday arrived here on a four day long maiden visit to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir after the Abrogation of Article 370 and 35-A.

The official handout issued by the RSS termed it a 'routine' visit.

During his stay Dr Bhagwat is expected to take stock of the organisational achievements and chalk out the future road map for RSS Pracharaks and volunteers (swayam sevaks).

citizens from different walks of life are also expected to interact with him during his stay at highly fortified Keshav Bhawan premises, RSS nerve centre in Jammu.

The high point of his stay would remain his interaction with the volunteers from over 600 centres (shakhas) spread across J&K.

Since Assembly elections are scheduled to take place soon after the completion of the ongoing Delimitation process, Dr Bhagwat is also expected to strategise with the members of the BJP's Core group in Jammu.

Dr Bhagwat is also expected to review performance of the local BJP leaders in a separate meeting where he is expected to discuss the prevailing political situation post Abrogation of Article 370 and 35-A.

Inside reports revealed RSS volunteers have already tipped the senior RSS functionaries about the constantly declining popularity graph of local BJP leaders and increasing disenchantment among the local residents in Jammu.

On October 2, Dr Bhagwat is scheduled to address a public gathering in the General Zorawar Singh Auditorium of Jammu University.

Besides this he is scheduled to meet surviving freedom fighters who participated in the Praja Parishad Movement, Goa Liberation Movement etc.

BENGAL POST-POLL VIOLENCE PROBE

CBI files chargesheet against 20 accused

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Thursday filed a chargesheet against 20 accused in one of the cases related to post-poll violence and other offences in West Bengal.

The chargesheet was filed in the court of ACJM, Sealdah (West Bengal)

The CBI had registered the case on August 25 on the orders of Calcutta High Court and took over the investigation of the case, earlier registered at Police Station Narkeldanga, Kolkata May 2 on a complaint against unknown seven/eight accused persons on the allegations that the accused attacked the victim with sticks and also broke the household articles of his house.

The victim was rescued but due to being beaten brutally; he was shifted to hospital.

Those chargesheeted in the case are Sanjay Samanta, Samir Samanta, Sankar Das alias Buno,Arun Dey, Rahul Dey, Sourav Dey, Sukhdeb Poddar, Amit Das, Arup Das, Biswajit Das, Sanjay Barik, Amit Das, Tumpa Das alias Kali, Gopal Das, Papiya Barik, Sanjay Basak, Sufal Bose, Sanjay Dey alias Suvo, Abhijit Dey and Kajal Das.

Brisk polling in Bhawanipore Assembly by-election

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The high-tension Bhawanipore by-elections passed off peacefully with little more than 53 percent voter turnout --- a shed higher than 2011 by-polls --- even as the BJP alleged “scientific rigging” by the Bengal ruling outfit Trinamool Congress.

By scientific rigging the

BJP apparently meant capturing booths peacefully “simply by jamming them and disallowing genuine voters to come and vote.”

TMC's Firhad Hakim however said “we don't capture booths... we have captured the hearts of the people.”

Voter turnout in other two constituencies of Shamsherganj and Jangipur in Murshidabad district recorded about 78 per-

cent polling till 5 pm on Thursday.

Amid reports of some stray incidents the elections to Bhawanipore seat passed off peacefully

Election Commission sources said adding all the complaints lodged by the opposition outfits were thoroughly scrutinized and issues were resolved amicably.

By 5 pm Bhawanipore

from where Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is seeking election to the State Assembly recorded 53.32 percent polling. ECI officials said the total percentage could go up by another 3-4 percent.

Similarly till 5 pm Samshterganj witnessed about 78.60 percent voters' turnout while in neighbouring Jangipur 76.12 percent voters exercised their franchise.

SC collegium recommends 16 names for elevation as judges of four HCs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court collegium, headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) N V Ramana, has recommended 16 names for elevation as judges of the High Courts of Bombay, Gujarat, Orissa and Punjab and Haryana.

In its meeting held on Wednesday, the collegium approved the proposal for elevation of 16 names — six judicial officers and 10 advocates – as judges of these four high courts.

As per the statements uploaded on the apex court website on Thursday, the collegium has approved the proposal for elevation of four judicial officers — A L Pansare, S C More, U S Joshi-Phalke and B P Deshpande— as judges of the Bombay High Court. Similarly, the collegium has recommended names of advocates Aditya Kumar Mohapatra and Mruganka Sekhar Sahoo and judicial officers Radha Krishna Pattanaik and Sashikanta Mishra for their elevation as judges of the Orissa High Court. For the Gujarat High Court, the collegium has approved the proposal for elevation of seven advocates -- Mauna Manish Bhatt, Samir J Dave, Hemant M Prachchhak, Sandeep N Bhatt, Aniruddha Pradyumna Mayee, Niraj Rashmikant Mehta and Nisha Mahendrabhai Thakore -- as judges there.

“The Supreme Court collegium in its meeting held on September 29, 2021 has approved the proposal for elevation of Sandeep Moudgil, advocate, as judge in the Punjab and Haryana High Court,” said one of the statements.

Besides the CJI, the three-member collegium which deals with the appointment in high courts includes Justices U U Lalit and A M Khanwilkar. The collegium has been taking steps by recommending names to fill up a large number of vacancies in higher judiciary in the country.

After assuming charge as the CJI in April this year, Justice Ramana has recommended nearly 100 names for appointment to different high courts, besides filling up nine vacancies of judges in the Supreme Court in one go. The 25 high courts in the country have a combined sanctioned strength of 1,080 judges and on May 1, 2021, they were functioning with 420 judges only.



CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL DAY of OLDER PERSONS

For this occasion, the Delhi Government is making Bus Rides Free on October 1, 2021, for Senior Citizens.



110 new +ve cases, 153 recoveries in J&K

Srinagar: Recoveries outpaced new cases in J&K on Thursday where 153 patients recovered while 110 new cases were reported during the last 24 hours.

Officials said that 26 recoveries and 26 cases were reported from the Jammu division and 127 recoveries and 84 cases from the Kashmir division. There was no fresh fatality.

As many as 329,430 people have been infected with coronavirus out of which 323,663 have recovered, while 4,422 people have succumbed. A total of 46 black fungus cases have been recorded. The total number of active cases is 1,345, out of which 299 are from the Jammu division and 1,046 from the Kashmir division.

ANS

The Delhi Government's efforts for the Welfare of Senior Citizens:

At present there are 4,32,961 Senior Citizen Beneficiaries under Financial Assistance Scheme of the Delhi Government who are paid Rs. 2000/2500 per month.

Deptt. of Social Welfare runs 3 Old Age Homes providing free of cost services to citizens. Also 10 Old Age Homes are at different stages of construction for all Districts of Delhi.

For quick disposal of cases of maintenance claimed by senior citizens or parents from their children who are not taking care of them, the Delhi Government has constituted 11 each of Maintenance and Appellate Tribunals district wise adjudicating grievances of maintenance and property disputes.

On May 25, 2021, the Delhi Government in partnership with NISD and HelpAge India, has operationalized the Elderline – 14567, a helpline dedicated to provide Information, Guidance, Emotional Support and Field Intervention Services to the Elderly on all days of the week between 8am and 8pm. Since May 2021 more than 18000 calls have been attended through this helpline with facilitation of required services.

The Delhi Government supports 150 Recreation Centers for Senior Citizens for social and cultural engagement of senior citizens, promoting active ageing.

Minister of State for Social Welfare, Government of NCT of Delhi

DIP/Shabdarth/D/0086/21-22


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PAPER WITH PASSION

Be realistic

COP26 must keep practical aspects of developing countries in mind before setting up targets

Octoberfest in 2021 is about fossil fuel, not beer. The world is gearing up for the 26th UN Climate Change Conference, COP26, in Glasgow from October 31. The advanced countries may decry the developing world's inability to cut down on emissions to keep global warming change limited to 1.5 degrees by 2030. They will set up targets like making a faster switch to electric cars, cutting down on coal power, minimal deforestation and protecting more people from the impacts of climate change. Sadly, and the developed world knows this, these targets have already divided the world into those who can meet these targets and are meeting them and those who cannot. COP26 would be effective if it desists from setting up universal targets. The divided regions of the world are poles apart economically and it is simply not possible for one half to deliver. The developing countries do not want to set

up zero-emission targets because they are only now increasing their economic, construction and developmental activities for their populations hitherto deprived of even basic needs. These countries are caught in a bind: They know they have to cut down on their emissions but that would be at the cost of not fulfilling the desires of their people. The question that COP26 should seek an answer to from the developed world, or the OECD countries of the West, is how to bridge the economic gap between the two halves so that the poorer half can set practical and reachable emission goals for itself.

Otherwise, the conference will remain a calendar occasion where the gap between the first and the developing world would only be climactic at best, not climatic. The OECD world is mostly covered by net-zero targets and moving towards a low carbon future. Their source of power is mostly clean energy. They use electric and hybrid cars. And they are already into nurturing nature back to its original shape. The non-OECD countries are far removed from this reality. The Oil Producing and Exporting Countries have released the World Oil Outlook 2045 in time for COP26 that says oil will be the primary energy source for decades. It says that 70 per cent of future global energy demand will come from non-OECD countries, growing to 250 mboe/d in 2045. For the OECD region, the demand is set to flatten in the long term. It expects OECD oil demand to peak at around 46.6 mb/d in 2023, before declining consistently. In contrast, the non-OECD region with an expanding middle class, high population growth and stronger economic growth potential, will see its oil demand rise by 25.5 mb/d between 2020 and 2045, reaching 74.1 mb/d in 2045. As a result, per capita, fossil fuel emissions in both worlds will be high in the medium term even as they are forecast to come down in the OECD region. This is a good enough starting point for COP26 to pursue realistic targets.

PICTALK



The swollen Godavari after heavy rains in Nashik

PTI

Balancing act

The recent UP Cabinet expansion is an exercise to set right the caste equation perception

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath recently carried out a Cabinet expansion, the third, of his 54-month Government. Rather than administrative, it was political compulsion that forced the BJP Government to go for the expansion, particularly when the Assembly election is just five months away. It is a fact that before these Ministers can understand the working of their departments or get familiar with officials, the election notification would be issued. The expansion is seen



as an attempt to balance the caste equation because the Yogi Government has been branded as anti-Dalit, anti-OBC and anti-Brahmin. Therefore, among the new faces in the Cabinet, three belong to Other Backward Castes (OBCs), two Dalits and one each are ST and Brahmin, respectively. With this expansion, the strength of the Council of Ministers in Uttar Pradesh goes up to 60. Yogi now has 24 Cabinet Ministers, nine Ministers of State (independent charge) and 27 Ministers of State. Of these, there are 27 upper castes, 23 OBCs, eight SCs, and one each from the

Scheduled Tribes and Muslim. These Ministers now represent 41 of the 75 districts and offer a diverse caste bouquet. In the expansion, the Government has also taken great care of the regional equation with social engineering. It is also an attempt to create homegrown leadership among the marginalised castes such as the most backward of the OBCs and Dalits. Take the case of Sanjay Nishad, of the NISHAD party, an ally of the BJP. Instead of making him a Minister, the party preferred to appoint Sangeeta Balwant Bind, a 41-year-old woman politician from the riverine community, as a Minister of State. This had happened earlier, too. In July, while appointing Apna Dal leader Anupriya Patel as a Minister of State in the Narendra Modi Government at the Centre, the BJP also appointed its own Lok Sabha MP from Maharajganj Pankaj Choudhary, who too is an OBC (Kurmi), as Union Minister. The search is on in the party to look for an alternative of Om Prakash Rajbhar, an estranged ally. The party has made Anil Rajbhar a Minister but he does not carry the same weight as Om Prakash. Apart from preferring its own leader in the UP Ministry, the BJP also appointed its lawmaker from Baheri, Bareilly, Chhattapal Gangwar, a Kurmi (OBC). It's being seen as an attempt to balance the exit of party veteran and Bareilly MP Santosh Gangwar, from the Union Government.

Why is Kerala in a moribund state?

The Malayali may laze around or indulge in trade unionism in the State but has the propensity to work beyond belief once he goes out of Kerala



PRAFULL GORADIA

As the news goes, 20,000 of COVID workers in Kerala, including doctors and nurses, are being suddenly laid off effective October 1. It is possible that they were informed earlier but we read the news on September 30. This comes as a shock in three ways: One, COVID is not over and the third wave is feared before long. Two, to be suddenly laid off after working on a dangerous mission for, say, a year-and-half sounds unkind. Three, I find it difficult to believe as I have experienced when I worked in that lovely State.

There was then a tradition, unbreakable, of 'Good Morning' money of ₹50. Cochin, especially the Willingdon Island, had a significant cargo traffic. If an exporter engaged a porter for even a day or two, the latter was entitled to ₹50 every morning for saluting the exporter. He had to be paid the money in cash every day the men turned up. Otherwise, many port workers would surround the exporter's office and a gherao took place.

Once talking to a tea trader from Malabar, I sought his advice for a suggested diversification in addition to tea. The Malabari's response was uncanny. In Kerala, there can be seven trade unions for every six workers. One of the most intelligent people in India, the Malayalis allowed very few industries to survive and allowed almost no new ones to come up. West Asian employment saved the Malayalis to an extent, apparently every urban street has about three gold jewellery shops, shining if not dazzling. The explanation must lie in the Malayali's propensity to work beyond belief once he goes out of Kerala.

In Delhi, I have come across several Malayalis who work on three jobs in 24 hours. Seven to 9 am typing assignment at a lawyer's house/office, 10 am to 6 am a normal full-day employment. Then overnight work as a telephone operator who is allowed to doze off but is sensitive to the telephone bell, which is essential for a nursing home or a small hospital. This is an incredible paradox: Working incredibly hard away from home but a lazy, cantankerous workman in Kerala.

Does the explanation lie in the



Communist virus? From "each according to his ability to each according to his need" was a slogan of Karl Marx. Every human being has an equal need, hence all must be paid an equitable wage. With intelligent work came recognition in terms of promotion to higher rank but the pay packet should be similar. The average worker or officer may take the view, why work hard? Do the minimum and go home. In the Soviet Union, you could do so but not agitate. Outside the already Communist society, the red trade unions were formed originally to bring down the capitalist order by continual demands, higher wages, fewer hours of work whose corollary was the employment of more workers for the same quantum of work. A cigarette factory 16 km from the Writers Building, the central secretariat of West Bengal, had 2,380 workers with 119 different designations when 800 or so workmen and 10 designations were sufficient. The trade union was honest but unimaginably unreasonable. Today, West Bengal is a graveyard of industry. In British times, it was the paradise of factories. Perhaps, something similar bugs Kerala.

Communism, in fact, came



IN KERALA, THERE CAN BE SEVEN TRADE UNIONS FOR EVERY SIX WORKERS. ONE OF THE MOST INTELLIGENT PEOPLE IN INDIA, THE MALAYALIS ALLOWED VERY FEW INDUSTRIES TO SURVIVE AND ALLOWED ALMOST NO NEW ONES TO COME UP

to the State much earlier than in Bengal where a United Front Government was formed first in 1967. However, in Trivandrum, a Left Front Government was dismissed in 1960 by Indira Gandhi as a Congress leader with the blessing of her father. Nevertheless, it can be said that the genes of these States lent their people to communism from much earlier! Less work, more play until they went to work outside their States.

There is no doubt that ideologies, whether religious or socio-political, do affect the ethics of people who believe in them. The theory of Max Weber on the Protestant work ethic is famous. The Catholics are believed to be comparatively more easygoing than the Protestants. There is no doubt that communism finished Russian civilisation.

There was another fundamental of communism that kept people from working harder. The first was the theory of equal needs, the second was the complete neglect of productivity. Karl Marx and his followers took it for granted that the capitalist economy overproduced and wasted the excess of production over consumption. Therefore, there was a tendency amongst Marxists to take

production for granted. The focus of the Communist was on distribution which made the leaders and their followers neglect productivity and concentrate on incomes and wages. Above all, employment of all available was their constant concern.

Vote-seeking politicians did correct the neglect of agriculture. Say, West Bengal attended to land reforms when the Left Front came to power in 1977. But Joseph Stalin onwards, right until 1991, farm produce was neglected in the Soviet Union. Collectivisation of farms made the peasants enemies of all farmers, big, medium and small.

Kerala does not produce much food crops. It grows proprietor-owned spices, coconuts, rubber and so on. And, of course, plantation crops like tea and coffee. This was also because there was nothing like collectivisation in the State.

(This is part of an ongoing series on India making multi-dimensional advancement across States and nations).

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A DIGITAL COUNTERPART

Sir — With the launching of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission by PM Narendra Modi, the burden of carrying medical reports is set to be replaced by IT-enabled tools to share prescriptions, X-ray diagnostics and blood test reports with doctors. It is yet another positive step to provide a unique health ID to every citizen in the direction of digital healthcare. However, inadequate public healthcare infrastructure along with a digital divide is likely to pose challenges in India's healthcare transformation. In developed countries like the US and Australia, it is already in progress, while in the UK, it failed to win the trust of the doctors and resolve issues related to data privacy.

For the mission to succeed in a populous and diverse country like India, issues like chronic shortage of doctors, poor internet speed, absence of data protection laws and asymmetrical relations between healthcare services providers, doctors, hospitals, pharma companies and insurance companies must be addressed with the seriousness they deserve. While the rural hospitals lack basic amenities, their urban counterparts are dominated by corporate hospitals governed only by the motive to make profits. In such a scenario, how will the Government curb the arbitrary working of such hospitals? To gain citizens' confidence and bridge the urban-rural divide, the system must be made more accountable to the public at large, if it is to realise its true potential.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

DANGEROUS CHEAP THRILLS

Sir — The festival of Diwali, which is around the corner, is incomplete without bursting firecrackers. But, as we all know, firecrackers pose grave health hazards. The crackers that flood the markets constitute 75 per cent saltpetre (potassium nitrate), 15 per cent carbon, and 10 per cent Sulphur. When lighted, the combination of these chemicals generates poisonous oxides. Studies claim that during Diwali, the level of

A free-falling Congress party



Going by cricketer-turned-politician Navot Singh Sidhu's mantle on a comedy show, all his fans take him for a jocund personality who misses no opportunity to make them amuse and laugh, even if by his doggerel. But contrarily, his tantrums are welling up tears in his own party's leadership given the waywardness, explicit in his abrupt decisions and changes of mind at the drop of a hat, flies in the face of his public persona. His out-of-the-blue decision to put in his papers as the Punjab Pradesh Congress

Committee (PCC) chief at this crucial juncture when the Assembly polls in six States, including Punjab, are around the corner.

In effect, the Congress high command is on its toes, rushing the Punjab elections in-charge Harish Rawat, senior leader KC Venugopal and CM Charanjit Singh Channi to mollify Sidhu. To rub it in, Amarinder Singh and Union Home Minister Amit Shah have also had a brief meeting in Delhi, stirring rumours of him joining the BJP. This internecine bickering in the Congress will simply take an adverse bearing on the party's electoral prospects during the upcoming polls. Or otherwise, the grand old party enjoys many reasons to smile, for instance, enjoying the agitating farmers' support, the SAD on a sticky wicket, a disintegrated Aam Aadmi Party and the sidelined BJP — a perfect recipe for the party's electoral success.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

these oxides rises more than 100 per cent. Exposure to such chemicals is a threat even due to storage.

Records across India show that during Diwali, the presence of suspended particles shoots up by 90-150 per cent, which reduces visibility and causes severe suffocation. Also the noise of firecrackers, well beyond the threshold of human tolerance, traumatises the young, old, sick and pets. One can no longer buy the argument of children cherishing firecrackers as the younger generation has greater awareness of the serious hazards the crackers pose. In fact, in the times of COVID-19 pandemic, bursting firecrackers is certainly not advisable given the significant relationship between air pollution and respiratory infections. The fireworks that lit up the night sky during Diwali may be a feast to our eyes, but they poison the environment and the ecosystem.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

MELODIES NEVER GET OLD

Sir — There may not be a moment when somebody, somewhere is not listening to

a song sung by Lata Mangeshkar. It has been so for more than six decades. Music fans may be divided when it comes to choosing their favourite male singers — some might swear by Mohammed Rafi, others by Kishore Kumar, and some others by KJ Yesudas — but the majority of them may pick Lata, the female voice they want to listen to the most.

It is a blessing to have a repetition of the same voice in the present days of modernisation where the city is devoid of trees and nightingales and perhaps for these reasons alone god blessed the great soul, the personification of Nightingale, the queen of melody and a great motivator in music. Lata's performance, at the National Stadium in New Delhi on the Republic Day in 1963, in the presence of President S Radhakrishnan and PM Jawaharlal Nehru, had the audience in tears. We hope you to inspire more celebrities and awardees to follow your footsteps.

Subramaniam Iyer | Ghaziabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Ashok Gehlot ji's political ideology and party is different; my political ideology and party is different; but because he trusts me, he opened his heart.

—Prime Minister Narendra Modi

The Doha agreement meant that the Islamist group got stronger and increased its offensive operations against Afghan security forces.

—US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin

I was very scared. My father told me that I know you want to be a director and an actor.

—Actor Randhir Kapoor

This ICC #T20WorldCup, each one of us is going to give everything to repeat history. We're coming for it. India, let's make it happen.

—India batsman Rohit Sharma

Whoever is party president is head of the family. I had called him (Sidhu) and told him that the party is supreme.

—Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi

FIRST COLUMN

RISING AMBITIONS OF THE BIG ‘C’

Military alliances like the Quad mark the US’ keenness to stay relevant in the Asian region



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The first in-person Quad summit of leaders from US, Japan, Australia and India focused on using technology to keep the Indo-Pacific region safe, secure, fair and accessible while making similar commitments towards cooperation in space. In more ways than one this marks a new era of partnership and narrative shift for the global order playing out in India’s vicinity. It marks the US’ willingness to stay relevant in the Asian region, Australia’s shift towards more partner countries like India for future growth and reaffirming its commitment towards an US-centric foreign policy, Japan and India playing a decisive role in shaping the global order. Looming against this theatre of strategic partnerships and multilateralism is the shrewd military power of China which forced all these nations to regroup with fresh energy. If one were to read into the India US joint



statement released after the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden, a clear direction for the strategic partners emerges. The two nations committed to enhancing deep collaborations in critical emerging technology such as AI, space, semiconductors, cybersecurity, 5G and upcoming next-generation mobile communication technologies, blockchain, etc., all of which are critical drivers of 21st century world. The Quad statement made immediately after this bilateral begins by reaffirming “the ways in which technology is designed, developed, governed, and used should be shaped by our shared democratic values and respect for universal human rights”. It further adds that Quad members commit towards “fostering an open, accessible, and secure technology ecosystem, based on mutual trust and confidence”. The verbiage placed right in the beginning of the statement, and the principles focusing on “universal values, trust integrity, resilience, fostering healthy competition and international collaboration to advance frontier of science and technology” are in some way the draft preview to a world for the next century. These Quad nations representing a quarter of the human population and GDP have enough money between them to take on the might of an assertive China in the region.

As some policy makers will point out, China’s increased unilateral militaristic attitude post-2017 led to the rebirth of Quad. China, on the one hand, started tying its military ambitions with aid diplomacy (Belt and Road Initiative) while following a similar principle of monopoly in the emerging technology such 5G. It is here that the four countries’ interests converged on strategic, military partnerships. The Quad summit in Washington last week focused on the three Cs — COVID, Climate change and critical technologies - with another big C (China) threatening the emerging consensus in the Indo-Pacific region. It would also be worthwhile mentioning here that a formal statement emerging from Quad has laid a solid foundation for recognition of the Indo-Pacific region as a key gateway for global cooperation and development. The Indo-Pacific is a vast stretch of oceans peppered by some of the largest and prosperous nations in the world. This is a bold new frontier for India, which till a few years back was a silent observatory political and economic groupings similar to Quad. It is only after a bitter military standoff with China, that India warmed up and came on board the Quad group negotiations. Another significant aspect of the multilateral group Quad is that it lays down a template for future global cooperation framework at bilateral, multilateral, regional and plurilateral levels. The last century international collaborations were defined by sharing military intelligence and equipment. The new century has new and emerging technologies threatening not just the sea but also space.

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

New alliance in the Asia-Pacific

The tussle between the US and China seeks a formal garb after the AUKUS was formed, and now the US wants more micro engagements in the region

The United States is fully engaged in shifting its unsuccessful strategic workshop from Afghanistan to the East. That is what Joe Biden implied in his justification behind the withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan during the first week of this month. Followed by this statement, Vice President Kamala Harris visited Southeast Asia, an indication that the US was now permanently seeking serious engagement in the East against rapidly increasing Chinese belligerence.

The US has already made a strong military base with a substantial number of troops in the region since the Vietnam War: it has amassed fifty thousand troops in Japan, twenty-eight thousand five hundred in South Korea and five thousand in Guam, its own small island territory in the Micronesia subregion of the western Pacific Ocean. The presence of the US military in the Philippines has its own history depending upon the type of government the latter had.

The western powers (read US) had miserably failed to counter China from the initial stage of its claim on the entire South China Sea (SCS). It is a marginal sea of the Western Pacific Ocean, deriving its name by touching the shores of South China. China cites this as the main reason for claiming the sea in its entirety. The SCS, rich in natural resources, has archipelagos comprising uninhabited islands. It is surrounded by the Indochinese Peninsula, islands of Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Sumatra (Indonesia) and sharing its water with the East China Sea, via 7 Straits, namely, Taiwan, the Philippine Sea via Luzon Strait, the Sulu Sea via the Straits around Palawawan, Straits of Malacca via Straits of Singapore, Java Sea via Krimata and Bangka Strait. Two Gulfs, the Gulf of Thailand and the Gulf of Tonkin, are also part of the SCS. It is a passage to one-third of the global shipping valued at \$ 3.37 trillion (2016 data). Hence the sea is touching almost all the parts of the ASEAN countries. China has already installed lighthouses, radars, communication facilities, hangars, and numerous other military establishments on the artificial islands it has erected.

The geopolitical tussle between the two powers has obtained a formal garb after the formation of AUKUS, and the US wants to get more micro engagement with the powers in the region, and empower them to protect their sovereignty. The tactic of China, though is very clear; to engage economically with the states and push its hidden agenda to grab the water/land as collateral. In doing so it also leverages its influence on the individual governments in the region to extend its interest.

There have been formations and activations of some geo-strategic groupings consolidating their power in the eastern part of the Indo-Pacific region. Five



IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE SOUTH CHINA SEA HAS MORE THAN 11 BILLION BARRELS OF OIL DEPOSITS AND 190 TRILLION CUBIC FEET OF NATURAL GAS. THESE ARE THE TWO TREASURES IN THE SEA THAT THE DRAGON HAS BROUGHT UNDER ITS CONTROL AND CLAIMS THE ENTIRE SEA AFTER ANTAGONISING AND THWARTING OTHER CLAIMANTS

(Gautam Kumar Jha is Assistant Professor, Centre for Chinese & Southeast Asian Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, JNU. Saumyajit Ray is Assistant Professor, United States Studies in the School of International Studies, JNU. The views expressed are personal.)



Eyes, ANZUS, Asia Pacific (now Indo-Pacific) Quad, and now AUKUS, are strategic groupings formed to counter China. This is evidenced by the changing terminology from Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific and the subsequent formation of QUAD which in its last meeting in March affirmed the rules-based maritime order in the East and the SCS under the “The Spirit of the Quad”. It was a clear message to China’s belligerence and its aggressive manoeuvres in the region.

Australia has gained a mixed image among the Oceanic and Southeast Asian countries as it is located in the middle of the smaller nations. The Oz never showed enthusiasm in terms of engaging itself inclusively among smaller states and there have been instances it bullied one or two on some petty issues and till recently it had bonhomie with the PRE under Prime Minister Tony Abbotts.

China went ahead and invested heavily among the oceanic tiny states creating an economic corridor primarily aimed at making these countries debt-ridden and flooding them with Chinese industrial products. Completely oblivious to Chinese growth in the region, Australia increased its trade with China and gradually China emerged as its largest two-way trading partner in goods and services accounting for nearly one third (31 percent) of its global trade till 1999 according to a website of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia. This continues till today. Not content with bilateral trade, China grew its influence on Australia’s media and

higher education system and to some extent its defense and strategic establishment as well.

The relationship between the two countries deteriorated primarily because China started interfering in the domestic affairs of Australia and continued creating fear in and bulldozing smaller nations having a direct stake in the SCS i.e., the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia, and Taiwan. The major grouping in the region, the ten-member ASEAN, could not muster one voice against Chinese aggression and undue interference.

It is estimated that the sea has more than 11 billion barrels of deposit of oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. These are the two treasures in the sea that the Dragon has brought under its control and claims the entire sea after antagonizing and thwarting other claimants. The Philippines, one of the largest losers in the immediate region went to the International Court of Justice against Chinese grabbing of its legitimate territory, and it also received favourable verdict under UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) However, China disputed the ruling, saying that the ICJ had no say in the matter. On the other hand, other countries like Indonesia and Malaysia kept conveying their grievances to China from time to time. The overall scenario is that the ASEAN is a silent spectator in the region. It was left to Australia to make a move.

Now AUKUS (Australia, UK, and the USA) is viewed by experts of international relations as an attempt to create a solid power bloc in the Indo-Pacific purely target-

ing China. However, the implications of a strong militarily equipped Australia will be far and bring their defense and strategic setup into immediate focus. The recent AUKUS deal will empower Royal Australian Navy with the nuclear-powered submarine. Though the submarine is not a nuclear weapon it can be equipped with them, and accordingly, can have wide ramifications in the region. Unlike the conventional submarine, the new nuclear-powered submarine technology offered to Australia will be far ahead in terms of speed, storage of weapons, durability under the depth of the sea, etc.

It is not that the United States had always gone to the various corners of the world on invitation. But AUKUS is a genuine case in which Australia had voiced its insecurity with regard to the South China Sea and made easy American intervention in the region by way of the trilateral alliance. Not only is it meant to ward off Chinese belligerence in the South China Sea, but an attempt to tell the world that US-led military alliances still remain relevant. AUKUS is completely in line with President Biden’s promise not to allow China to dominate any region of the world till he was in office.

Not only have the defense expenditures of ASEAN countries not expanded despite getting their doors knocked by China at an alarming rate, ASEAN countries do have numerous maritime disputes among themselves. AUKUS, while augmenting western military presence there, also provide the ASEAN nations with a sense of security from China.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

I FEEL THAT AN IDEOLOGY IS TRYING TO RUIN THE VALUES, CULTURE, HISTORY AND FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY.
— CONGRESS LEADER KANHAIYA KUMAR



IT WAS KANHAIYA WHO EARLIER SPOKE OF BREAKING THE COUNTRY. TODAY THE GANDHIS ARE WELCOMING HIM WITH A GARLAND.
— BJP NATIONAL YOUTH WING SECRETARY TAJINDER PAL SINGH BAGGA

Landslides in Himachal linked to power projects

Heavy construction in the eco-fragile Kinnaur and Lahaul and Spiti regions is destabilising slopes, making them more susceptible to slippage

The recent devastating flash floods and landslides in Lahaul Spiti and Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh have once again compelled the locals to agitate against the high-handed policies of the Union and State Governments of constructing dozens of power projects on river basins to generate electricity.

Kinnaur has some of the biggest hydel projects including the 1,000 MW Karcham Wangtoo and 300 MW Baspa project which has disturbed the ecology of the region. Protesting villagers holding banners, “Save Kinnaur: No means No” have made it clear that they would not allow the construction of the proposed 804 MW Jangti Thopan hydel project. Social and cultural



BRIJENDER SINGH PANWAR

(The writer is a senior journalist and Chairman, Panwar Group of Institutions, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)

organisations, panchayati raj institutions and mahilaman-dals have come forward to register protest environmental degradation, especially through hydel power generation.

According to experts, India accounts for about 18 per cent of the total global fatalities due to landslides in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. This region has witnessed over 65 per cent of the landslides in the country followed by the North-eastern Himalayas and the Western Ghats.

Traditionally, rain and earthquakes are known to cause a large movement of rock, soil and debris, but the construction of roads and buildings, mining and



hydropower projects are now increasingly destabilising slopes, making them more susceptible to slippage. Experts have cautioned that the tribal districts of Kinnaur and Lahaul Spiti are eco-fragile and setting up of power projects there may prove disastrous for the entire region. They pointed out that Uttarakhand too has experienced the adverse effects of power projects where landslides and flash floods are a

normal occurrence now. More than 16 mega and 30 micro power projects have been proposed in Lahaul Spiti on the banks of Chenab and other rivers. These power projects will also result in the melting of glaciers at a faster pace.

Till now, the toll in rain-related incidents since June 13 climbed to 381, and more than 55 persons have lost their lives in 39 landslides during this monsoon season. The maximum casualties were reported in Kinnaur (38) followed by Kangra (10), Solan (two) and Shimla (three) and Lahaul and Spiti (one each). As per the data shared by the Disaster Management Cell of the Revenue Department, 16 slides occurred in Lahaul and Spiti district, five each took

place in Mandi and Shimla, three each in Solan, Kinnaur and Chamba while two landslides occurred in Sirmaur and Kangra districts. The major slides included one at Nugalsari in Kinnaur district on August 11 in which 28 persons lost their lives while 13 sustained injuries. Massive boulders triggered by landslide hit a Tempo Traveller killing nine persons and injuring three near Batseri village on Sangla-Chitkul road in Kinnaur on July 25.

Another reason for environmental degradation in the hills is due to the construction of roads and highways which, ironically, are necessary. According to KK Kapila, President Emeritus, International Road Federation, “While planning

the repair of affected areas in the hills, it needs to be remembered that the outer and lesser Himalayas comprised unstable strata owing to the young folded mountains and these sections have very weak to poorly cemented sedimentary rocks that lack inherent strength”. The construction of roads, dams, and other infrastructure in such ranges and strata, regardless of extreme precautions and environment-friendly techniques that are least invasive, does not guarantee adequate protection to the foundation or the slopes; blasting, which is used as a faster and economical method of infrastructure construction, and should be avoided, he added.

Unfortunately, India is still short of a robust mecha-

nism to respond in advance to natural disasters such as landslides and flash floods. It explains so many casualties due to these disasters. India Meteorological Department (IMD), DG, Dr Mrutyunjay Mohapatra says “There has been some progress in providing flash flood data since last year after the department inked a collaboration with the US based Hydrological Research Centre and World Meteorological Organisation”. Some baby steps have been also been taken on landslide forecasting.

The Government need to invest more on the research projects in universities which may lead to making the forecasting of landslides and flood floods possible and prevent the loss of life and property.

GLOBE TROTTER

‘AT LEAST 20 PEOPLE DIED IN SOUTH SUDAN FLOODS’
Juba: At least 20 people have died in flooding in recent months amid torrential rains that are still afflicting a remote part of South Sudan, an official said on Thursday. The deaths between July and September occurred in one county of Warrap State, Gorial West County Commissioner Victor Wek Koor said. Among the victims are children who drowned when a house collapsed, he said.

GLORIA ESTEFAN SAYS SHE WAS MOLESTED AT 9
New York: Gloria Estefan has revealed that when she was 9 years old she was sexually abused by someone her mother trusted. The Cuban-American superstar spoke for the first time publicly about the abuse and its effects on her during an episode of the Facebook Watch show “Red Table Talk: The Estefans” that aired on Thursday. “He was family, but not close family. He was in a position of power because my mother had put me in his music school and he immediately started telling her how talented I was and how I needed special attention, and she felt lucky that he was focusing this kind of attention on me,” the singer said.

ISRAELI TROOPS KILL GAZA MAN NEAR BORDER
Jerusalem: Israeli troops shot and killed a 40-year-old Palestinian man in the Gaza Strip on Thursday as he was setting bird traps near the Israeli border, his family said. The military said it was investigating. The shooting came hours after two other Palestinians were killed in separate incidents in Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank.



Farkhunda Muhtaj, centre, the captain of the Afghanistan women's national team, hugs one of the team members as they meet at a park by the Tagus river in Lisbon. Muhtaj, who lives in Canada, flew to Lisbon and surprised her teammates at the park. The girls and their families arrived in Portugal September 19 after an international coalition came to their rescue

AP

US general says Af collapse rooted in Trump-Taliban deal

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Senior Pentagon officials said on Wednesday the collapse of the Afghan Government and its security forces in August could be traced to a 2020 US agreement with the Taliban that promised a complete US troop withdrawal.

Gen. Frank McKenzie, the head of Central Command, told the House Armed Services Committee that once the US troop presence was pushed below 2,500 as part of President Joe Biden's decision in April to complete a total withdrawal by September, the unraveling of the US-backed Afghan Government accelerated.

“The signing of the Doha agreement had a really pernicious effect on the government of Afghanistan and on its military — psychological more than anything else, but we set a date-certain for when we were going to leave and when they could expect all assistance to end,” McKenzie said.

He was referring to a Feb. 29, 2020, agreement that the Trump administration signed with the Taliban in Doha, Qatar, in which the US promised to fully withdraw its troops by May 2021 and the Taliban committed to several conditions, including stopping attacks on American and coalition forces. The stated objective was to promote a peace negotiation between the Taliban and the Afghan Government, but that diplomatic effort never



Marine Corps Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie, commander of US Central Command, testifies before the House Armed Services Committee on the conclusion of military operations in Afghanistan on Capitol Hill in Washington

AP

gained traction before Biden took office in January.

McKenzie said he also had believed “for quite a while” that if the United States reduced the number of its military advisers in Afghanistan below 2,500, the Kabul Government inevitably would collapse “and that the military would follow.” He said in addition to the morale-depleting effects of the Doha agreement, the troop reduction ordered by Biden in April was “the other nail in the coffin” for the 20-year war effort because it blinded the US military to conditions inside the Afghan army, “because our advisers were no longer down there

with those units.”

Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, testifying alongside McKenzie, said he agreed with McKenzie's analysis. He added that the Doha agreement also committed the United States to ending airstrikes against the Taliban, “so the Taliban got stronger, they increased their offensive operations against the Afghan security forces, and the Afghans were losing a lot of people on a weekly basis.”

Wednesday's hearing was politically charged, with Republicans seeking to cast Biden as wrongheaded on Afghanistan, and Democrats pointing to what they called ill-

advised decisions during the Trump years.

Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had said a day earlier in a similar hearing in the Senate that the war in Afghanistan was a “strategic failure,” and he repeated that on Wednesday.

Milley told the Senate committee, when pressed Tuesday, that it had been his personal opinion that at least 2,500 US troops were needed to guard against a collapse of the Kabul government and a return to Taliban rule.

Defying US intelligence assessments, the Afghan Government and its US-trained army collapsed in mid-August, allowing the Taliban, which had ruled the country from 1996 to 2001, to capture Kabul with what Milley described as a couple of hundred men on motorcycles, without a shot being fired. That triggered a frantic US effort to evacuate American civilians, Afghan allies and others from Kabul airport.

This week's House and Senate hearings marked the start of what is likely to be an extended congressional review of the US failures in Afghanistan, after years of limited congressional oversight of the war and the hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars it consumed.

Taliban order fighters out of Afghan homes they took over

AP ■ KABUL

The Taliban on Thursday ordered their fighters to leave private homes they had taken over during last month's blitz when the group seized control of Afghanistan, an apparent effort to impose order among Taliban ranks.

Meanwhile, in the capital of Kabul, the Taliban fired shots to disperse a women's rally demanding equal rights while the regional chief for the International Federation of the Red Cross warned that Afghanistan was sliding into a deep “major humanitarian cri-

sis” with the coming winter and severe financial shortfalls.

The order by Taliban Prime Minister Hasan Akhund followed recent public statements by Taliban officials hinting at plans to improve organisation and marshal fighters. It said Taliban members belonging to the militant group's defense, interior and intelligence agencies who are living in private homes need to “report back to military bases” across the country.

In recent weeks, the Taliban abandoned their traditional, civilian dress and

donned military fatigues to project an air of authority. Bilal Karimi, a Taliban security official, confirmed the directive to *The Associated Press*.

The Afghan army abandoned most of its positions or surrendered to the Taliban during the August blitz, allowing Taliban fighters to take over military bases as well.

In Kabul on Thursday, the Taliban fired shots to disperse a small rally of six women outside a local school, demanding equal rights to education. They confiscated posters held by the women that read: “Do not burn our books!”

Gunmen kill Sikh ‘hakeem’ in Pak

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

A well-known Sikh ‘hakeem’ (Unani medicine practitioner) was shot dead by unidentified gunmen inside his clinic on Thursday in Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar, police said.

‘Hakeem’ Sardar Satnam Singh (Khalsa), 45, was at his clinic when attackers barged into his cabin and opened fire at him, police said. Singh, who received four bullets, died instantly, they said. The killers managed to escape from the crime scene.

Police team rushed to the site and encircled the area to nab the culprits. The reason behind the murder was not ascertained yet. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

Singh, a well-known figure in the Sikh community, was running his clinic ‘Dharmadar Pharmacy’ on Charsadda Road in Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. He had been living in the city for the past 20 years.

About 15,000 Sikhs live in Peshawar, mostly in the Jogan

Shah neighborhood of the provincial capital. Most of the Sikh community members in Peshawar are involved in business, while some also run pharmacies. The police is investigating the matter from different angles and possibility of terrorism is also being probed.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan strongly condemned the killing of Singh and directed the police to take immediate steps arrest the killers.

In 2018, Charanjit Singh, a prominent Sikh community member, was killed by unknown men in Peshawar. Similarly, news channel anchor Ravinder Singh was killed in 2020 in the city. In 2016, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf National Assembly member Soreen Singh was killed in Peshawar.

According to the 2017 census, Hindus constitute the largest religious minority in Pakistan. Christians make up the second largest religious minority. The Ahmadis, Sikhs and Parsis are also among the notable religious minorities in Pakistan.

Ethiopia kicks out 7 UN officials for ‘meddling’

AP ■ NAIROBI, KENYA

Ethiopia said on Thursday it is kicking out seven United Nations officials whom it accused of “meddling” in the country's internal affairs, as pressure grows on the Government over its deadly blockade of its Tigray region.

The expulsions are the most dramatic move yet by Ethiopia's government to restrict humanitarian access to the region of 6 million people after nearly a year of war. The UN has been increasingly outspoken as the flow of medical supplies, food and fuel has been brought to a near-halt for weeks.

A Foreign Ministry statement said the officials must leave Ethiopia within 72 hours. They include five people with the UN humanitarian agency, one with the UN human rights office and the UNICEF repre-

sentative in the country. The statement did not give details of their alleged interference.

A spokesman for the UN humanitarian agency did not immediately comment. Foreign ministry spokesman Dina Mufti did not immediately respond to a request for details.

The UN humanitarian chief, Martin Griffiths, this week told *The Associated Press* that the crisis in Ethiopia is a “stain on our conscience” as children and others starve to death in the Tigray region under what the UN has called a de facto Government blockade.

It was one of the most sharply worded criticisms yet of the world's worst hunger crisis in a decade after nearly a year of war in the country. Memories of the 1980s famine in Ethiopia, which killed some 1 million people and whose images shocked the world, are

vivid in his mind, “and we fervently hope is not happening at present,” Griffiths said.

The AP last week, citing witness accounts and internal documents, reported the first starvation deaths since Ethiopia's government imposed the blockade in June in an attempt to keep support from reaching Tigray forces, who have been fighting its soldiers and allied forces since November. Thousands of people have died in the conflict.

Ethiopia's Government has accused humanitarian workers of supporting the Tigray forces, which aid workers have denied. Earlier, it suspended the operations of two major international aid groups — Doctors Without Borders and the Norwegian Refugee Committee — accusing them of spreading “misinformation” about the war.

Public Notice
It is hereby informed to public at large that my client intends to acquire undivided one-fourth share in H-42, Kirti Nagar, New Delhi-15 from Sh. Surinder Kumar Bhasin, legal heir of late Sh. Anup Chand Bhasin. If any person/ entity has any claim or interest in the legal title of above-said subject property, must inform the undersigned within 5 days from the publication of this notice.
Purshotam Singh (Adv)
Enrl D383/78, M. 9910984157

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male **Age:** Approx 30-35 years, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Height:** 5'6", **Built:** Medium, **Face:** Round, was wearing Black & White Checkdar Shirt and Blue Jeans Pant, was found in unconscious condition at Ghash Mandi, Jafrabad Road, Seelampur, Delhi. He was admitted in JPC Hospital during the treatment he was declared brought dead by doctor. In this regard a FIR No. 351/21, dated 25.09.2021 has been registered at P.S. Seelampur, Delhi. His dead body has been preserved in GTB Hospital Mortuary. Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.
SHO
P.S. Seelampur, Delhi
Ph.: 011-22562989, 22562053
DP/1087/NE/21

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PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET
[See proviso to rule 8(6)]
Notice for sale of immovable assets
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd. will be sold on “As is where is”, “As is what is”, and “Whatever there is” as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

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(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Abha Jain (Borrower), Raj Kumar Jain (Co-Borrower), Aditya Jain (Co-Borrower)	Unit No. DPT 340, Parking No. 2254 In DLF Prime Towers, Okhla, New Delhi and/ or Flat No-DPT 340, 3rd Floor Prime Tower, Plot No-79 And 80, Block-F, Okhla Industrial area, Phase-1, Delhi area 750 Sq Ft	Rs 91.24, 083.74/- as on 20th September 2021.	Rs. 82,00, 000/- Rs. 8,20, 000/-	October 20, 2021 From 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	November 01, 2021 From 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link-<https://disposalhub.com>) of our auction agency **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited**. The Mortgagors/ notecee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till **October 30, 2021** before **05:00 PM** else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.
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Date: October 01, 2021
Place: Delhi NCR
Authorized Officer
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Biden plan at stake, Pelosi pushes ahead for \$3.5T deal

AP ■ WASHINGTON

With President Joe Biden's Government overhaul at stake, Democrats charged into trouble on Thursday as a promised vote on the first piece, a slimmer \$1 trillion public works Bill, faltered amid stalled talks on his more ambitious package.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi assembled her leadership team for an early morning meeting and emerged determined to push ahead, strike a deal with Biden and avoid what would be a high-profile setback if voting on the public works bill fails or has to be scrapped.

Democrats are deeply at odds with trust torn, as progressive lawmakers threaten to withhold votes on the roads-and-bridges infrastructure bill they view as insufficient unless it is paired with Biden's broader vision. In the narrowly controlled House, Pelosi has no



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif. speaks during her weekly press briefing on Capitol Hill on Thursday

AP

votes to spare.

All this on a day that should be a win for Biden and his party with Congress poised to quickly usher through legislation to keep government running past Thursday's fiscal year-end deadline and avert a federal shutdown that had been threatened by Republican blockades.

“Step by step,” Pelosi said at the Capitol, suggesting a deal with Biden was within reach.

Bahrain, Israel cement year-old accord, open new embassy

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel and Bahrain cemented their year-old agreement to establish diplomatic ties on Thursday, with the king of the small Gulf Arab state hosting Israel's Foreign Minister who for the first time opened an embassy in the capital of Manama.

Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid met with King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa on the same day as the first direct flight from Manama touched down in Tel Aviv. The top Israeli diplomat later called

the visit “warm and optimistic.” Bahrain's carrier Gulf Air was met at Ben Gurion International Airport with a water salute and a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The festivities reinforced the accord between Israel and the island nation, one of four Arab states that signed onto the US-brokered “Abraham Accords.” Lapid has already visited the United Arab Emirates and Morocco and opened Israel's diplomatic offices in those two countries since he became foreign minister in June.

During his meeting with Lapid, King Hamad hailed the normalisation agreement as a “historical achievement on the road to just and lasting peace in the Middle East,” state-run Bahrain News Agency reported. “The launch of the first flight brings new and exciting opportunities between our countries and allows our peoples to finally meet and build connections that will create a brighter future,” said Undersecretary of Bahrain Civil Aviation Affairs, Mohammed Tamir Al Kaabi.

As deaths rise, vax opponents find a foothold in Bosnia

AP ■ SARAJEVO

Hospitals across Bosnia are again filling with Covid-19 patients gasping for air, and the country's pandemic death toll is rising. Yet vaccination sites are mostly empty and unused coronavirus vaccines are fast approaching their expiration dates.

When the European Union launched its mass vaccination campaign, non-member Bosnia struggled along with most other Balkan nations to get supplies. By late spring, however, hundreds of thou-

sands of doses started pouring into the country.

But after an initial rush of people clamoring to get jabbed, demand for shots quickly slowed. It is now down to a trickle even though Bosnia has Europe's highest coronavirus mortality rate at 4.5%, according to Johns Hopkins University data.

Dr. Edin Driljevic, an infectious disease specialist at one of Bosnia's largest hospitals, in Sarajevo, thinks the disconnect is partly a result of authorities failing to properly promote vaccination against Covid-19.



Aiding tech-savvy boomers

The senior living industry is on the brink of a technological revolution, says

KANISHKA ACHARYA

In 2021, technology and adaptation have become intrinsic to having a higher quality of life. Senior citizens can now upload prescriptions, speak to doctors, and stay in touch with family and friends at the touch of a button. However, these small adaptations are only beginning to scratch the surface of what technology can do for senior living.

This may sound dramatic, but it's not an overstatement — senior citizens as a whole community have been among the slowest to adopt new technology, and unlike other branches of the industry, senior living or eldercare as it is referred to in India has not historically been pushed by its customer base to adopt a better tech, largely due to the small user base and a largely fragmented service offered by players, most of them with simple band-aid solutions to existing pain points. That's a problem. Senior-care providers can only deliver on wellness to the extent that they're able to get a complete view of their clients to make decisions based on the whole person.

But the tides are turning. As tech companies recognise the huge potential to transform the \$740 billion senior-care market and tech-savvy boomers enter retirement in growing numbers, the stage is set for a total industry revamp.

The big hurdle most technologies that can make a difference to senior living face now is unifying their many siloed systems. While we are capturing data from multiple devices, these technologies aren't talking to each other — EHRs, for example, that don't take to a calendar system or medical records systems. More importantly where is all this data going? The need



for a robust data analytics platform that is training an AI /ML engine to create patterns and detect anomalies is critical.

IOT will play a big role in creating meaningful solutions to later life living — devices that can detect sleep patterns, resting and variable heart rates through embedded chips in mattresses to co-relate it with day-time data, that is being non-intrusively being captured, can help clinicians and care companies make better decisions and improve overall health. Devices that help with navigation for those affected with diabetes related partial or complete blindness, equipped with embedded triple layer chip designs with gyros and sensors, can change the quality of life dramatically.

Since the start of the pandemic, there has been a 20 per cent increase in falls for seniors living in unsupervised conditions. With social distancing guidelines in effect and a limit on visitors, seniors are spending more



time alone and unsupervised in their homes. This is especially problematic for seniors with neuro degenerative conditions, who were already falling twice as often as seniors without dementia.

As we look ahead to 2022, fall prevention will continue to be a top concern in senior living. More often than not, this is a sentinel event that changes the course of life. To help solve this challenge, an AI-enabled sensor and beacon system to detect falls of individuals with dementia is set up. It will result in up to 40 per cent fewer falls and up to a 80 per cent reduction in fall-related ER visits.

What is often lost in the in this maze of technology innovation is the need to develop and implement tech that makes an actual difference in daily living, whether it's improving the quality in performing activities of daily living (ADLs) or restoring the dignity to seniors in the entire caregiver-care receiver interaction. This is something that not much attention has been given to so far. A big issue with the pre-baby boomer generation is the reluctance or inability to tech adoption. Trying to force adoption through wearable health devices, trackers, and so on, seldom achieve the desired outcomes. Technology will have to be seamlessly woven into their lives to make a credible difference; another important case can be seen in the instance of adult incontinence. This affects nearly 51 per cent of seniors aged 65 and older, and the only existing solution has been invasive surgeries or adult diapers to navigate daily living. If we could create a sensor-based patch that can record and communicate, in advance, that an individual's bladder or bowels are full, it would restore agency to both the individual and their caregiver.

Hence, it is vital to develop non-intrusive tech that can dramatically improve the quality of life and restore dignity in later life living, monitor client health, and deliver better care.

(The author is the founder and CEO of Wellercare, lifestyle as service retirement model for senior living.)



Fashion designers Rohit Bal, Madhu Jain, and Samant Chauhan captured at the second edition of the India Fashion Awards in New Delhi

Photos by Pankaj Kumar

Fit doesn't always mean healthy

DR MOHIT GARG states the difference between internal and external fitness

Fitness is a buzzword nowadays, and we live in an age where everyone wants to be fit. A lot of Indians are hitting the gym with an aim of gaining well-toned muscles and a lean six-pack, apart from staying fit and maintaining a healthy weight. With information freely available on the internet, people are also adopting various types of diets. To act as a catalyst, various fitness apps on your phone, fitness bands, health start-ups and other technologies have been driving the market.

However, just because someone looks fit on the outside, does it mean that the person is healthy on the inside, too? Fitness and health, though closely associated and often used synonymously, should not be confused to be the same. Even if you are fit, you may not be healthy.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as a state of physical, mental, and social well-being, and not only merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

A slim and muscular body signifies that a person is physically fit. However, if the person is eating lots of unhealthy food and burning calories with a disciplined exercise regime to maintain their physique, or being a chain smoker or consuming high levels of alcohol, it is not an indicator of good health.

Too much exercise is also not good for the body as it may lead to injuries, exhaustion, depression and anxiety, apart from possible cardiac arrhythmias or sudden cardiac arrest.

So how often should one workout? Studies have shown



that 30 minutes of moderate aerobic physical activity each day, totaling a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week with one day's break, or a minimum of 75 minutes of intense exercise each week is ideal. Moderate aerobic exercise includes activities such as brisk walking or swimming. Vigorous aerobic exercise includes activities such as running and aerobic dancing. Strength training can include use of weight machines, your own body weight, or activities such as rock climbing or trekking.

Even in patients with pre-existing heart diseases, regular exercise is extremely important. Apart from making heart muscles stronger, it may also help patients become more active without chest pain or other symptoms. Exercise helps lower down the blood pressure, lower blood cholesterol levels, control blood sugar, and in reducing weight, thereby, controlling most major risk factors



associated with heart diseases.

Along with regular physical exercises, nutrition plays an extremely important role in having a healthy heart. Healthy food choices can reduce your risk of heart disease, heart attack and stroke, as well as food related risk factors like obesity, high blood pressure and uncontrolled diabetes.

If one is planning a healthy diet, one must have fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds which are low in saturated fat and sodium. Also, cutting back on unhealthy food is one of the essential things one will need to do as they are filled with many kinds of preservatives, added sugars and are high in salt content.

A regular exercise routine along with a healthy diet can substantially reduce the risk of developing heart diseases.

(The author is the consultant and head of Accident & Emergency department at Global Hospital, Mumbai.)

When it comes to companies adopting a mobile-first approach, they are essentially shaping their business model to be more user-friendly. And why not? The smartphone penetration rate in India stood at 54 per cent in 2020, and it is expected to reach 96 per cent by 2040. With the increased use of mobile phones across the country, they have become the go-to tools for almost everything, right from ordering food to managing your business and personal data.

Mobile phones are the future. Small businesses are shifting their data management model to a mobile-first one, and the reasons are simple — the on-the-go availability and reduced expenses.

Different cases of mobile-first data management usage are:

Customer Management

It's a no-brainer that providing users with a personalised experience will help businesses improve customer retention. To analyse the insights, small business owners need to collect customer data such as demographics, gender, age, and behavior, to name a few. The tool that's currently used to manage customer data is a CRM (customer relationship management) portal.

However, most CRMs are expensive and small businesses would want to avoid this extra expenditure. Moreover, they are desktop-optimised. Since sales representatives are always on the move, it might not be an efficient option to write it manually and upload it on the CRM later. A mobile-first approach to add, edit and access customer details will be pretty handy.

In addition, businesses might have to invest a lot of time in training their employees to use CRMs as the learning curve for such portals can be steep. Therefore, CRMs are not viable for small businesses with a lower customer-base of a few hundred.

With innovation and tech advancements, companies are engineering a better customer experience, maintaining good user retention. Many of them have switched to a mobile CRM,

Developing user-friendly models

ANUPAM VIJAYVERGIA discusses how small businesses are digitising their data in a mobile-first way



which works on spreadsheets.

Finance management

Financial management is one of the main avenues to succeed, especially when it comes to small businesses. Effective management of finances helps the business owners build a better financial future, thus, keeping them afloat in the market.

From cash flow management to incomes and expenses, businesses have to calculate everything. Many companies use ERP (enterprise resource planning) tools to come up with insights. However, such products usually require software experts and affording one can be tricky for small businesses.

These tools cannot be operated on the go, and only a limited number of users can be accommodated. Therefore, several small companies started employing easy-to-use spreadsheet tools. Not only are they mobile-friendly, multiple associates can also work on

them simultaneously.

With mobile-based tools, small businesses can eliminate the need to place certain employees in front of the computer to know the changing database. A mobile-first approach enables the round-the-clock availability of businesses.

Employee management

Digital tools are built to make life easier. And since everyone has a smartphone in their pockets today, employee management software solutions are the staple that companies use.

From attendance to tracking employee hours, multiple managers must have access to real-time oversight. And a mobile-first attendance management system does just that.

Many companies are using spreadsheet tools that can be accessible to multiple stakeholders at once, thus, massively reducing the time, effort, and cost associated with employee management.

Inventory management

Inventory is managed in large warehouses where accessing a computer to make regular updates is difficult.

These systems are inefficient and increase your work. With them, it is impossible to go paperless, and the dependency on the labour rises, too. Moreover, the inventory visibility and editing are restricted as it is not possible to access it on the go.

A mobile-first inventory management system lets employees/employers add, edit and manage stock value in a centralised cloud-based system. Employees can feed the data directly into the spreadsheet-based tools while walking around the warehouse with smartphones in their hands.

Conclusion

From cutting costs and enhancing productivity to high revenues and effective employee management, this is the basic checklist for any company to survive and thrive. However, doing all of this and competing against larger companies is another uphill task for small companies.

Digitalising data management using the mobile-first approach is one revolutionary process that will enable small businesses to stay afloat in the competition. In today's time, mobility should be considered a key strategy for handling the company — be it streamlining various processes or effective time management. All in all, adopting a mobile-first strategy will enable small business owners to transform their business and make it user-friendly and more efficient.

(The author is the co-founder and CEO of Lio, a mobile application that simplifies the process of recording and data management.)



VICKY KAUSHAL IN HIS NEW AVATAR

The makers of the forthcoming film, *Sardar Udham*, unveiled its trailer where the actor **VICKY KAUSHAL** looked convincing in the title role.

He shares, "The story of Sardar Singh is one that enthralled and inspired me. It represents strength, pain, extraordinary courage, sacrifice, and many such values. I look forward to sharing an intriguing page from the history of India's freedom struggle."

fairtalk

VAISHNAVI GANATRA



'Watching a good actor is the best way to learn. I observed and learnt from Kunal Khemu sir throughout the shoot of *Abhay 2*. He reprises his role as the brilliant investigating officer. The intensity that I have seen him putting in each one of his scenes left me awestruck. As a child artiste, I feel these are exactly the things that you absorb from your senior co-actors.'

dailytalk

SHARAD MALHOTRA



When any character has a huge potential, the job of an actor automatically becomes a huge responsibility. An actor is greedy for good content and a show like *Vidrohi* doesn't happen every day. But what drew me towards the story was the selflessness of the character Buxi Jagabandhu. I wanted the nation to know about this legendary hero from the land of Odisha.

KATY PERRY ON PARENTHOOD

Singer **KATY PERRY**, who welcomed her daughter, Daisy, with fiancée, Orlando Bloom, last year, says that parenthood has given her a new perspective on life

She shares, "I never really truly knew about unconditional love. Obviously, my mother has that love for me, but I didn't really experience it in the first-person until I had my child. It was just a whole another level. It feels amazing to be able to relate to kids even in your deep 30s."





CHRISTY VARGHESE visits Green Mantis to sample some of their mouth-watering (mostly) vegan fare

It was a rainy day and we were cursing our luck because of all the days when we could have left our trusty umbrella at home, it had to be on the day that it rained.

We were at Khan Market, New Delhi, and we had our back to wall, quite literally, as we sought shelter from the sudden downpour beneath one of the many recesses that are spread across the sprawling marketplace. As our stomach grumbled for some much-needed grub after all that aimless walking around, we spotted a recess which stood out among the hustle and bustle.

Green Mantis, announced the humble signage. Since we respect research, we did some quick reading on the place before we stepped in. And from what we read, the establishment was declared as 'a pan-Asian restaurant unlike any other'. Well, we chanced upon some glowing reviews and had to verify whether the place was worth the hype, first-hand.

In hindsight, if it was not raining we would not have gained admission so easily, as it would have been hard to find an unreserved table. However, we were in without much hassle and it was only after

we were done figuratively gallivanting across the cuisines of several countries that we came to appreciate how the rain way-laid our plans. Goes to show that at times what might seem like an inconvenience, is probably the universe conspiring for you. But that's enough of beating around the bush, and on to the 'plant-forward fare' that we were treated to.

As soon as we sat down, the diligent staff brought out a platter full of chana crackers and an assortment of various freshly-made sambals. We scratched our head for a bit, since we had barely sat down and had not ordered anything, before proceeding to sample each one of them. That is when the establishment's partner, chef and co-founder, Honey Piyush Mishra appeared right on cue to explain that serving the crackers and sambals is a custom they religiously follow with every patron, encouraging us to try each one out.

While the sambal is traditionally an Oriental hot relish, Green Mantis had some desi alternatives too. Along with the delectable *Sambal olec* and somewhat chili *Sambal balado*, we also partook of the sambals that were based in black peas (this was overloaded with garlic) and sweet onion.



We highly recommend the *Sambal olec*, as we felt it goes with everything you order from the establishment.

Mishra set the ball rolling with *Laphings*. We know what you are thinking, that word conjures some really spicy memories from Majnu Ka Tila, right? But these looked, and tasted, starkly different from the ones we were used to cautious-



ly eating. These were cold mung bean rolls, with peanuts, tomatoes and chili sauce. Yes, it was chili, but to an extent that we could bear, and relish. We scarfed the whole lot in no time, and we bet you would not be able to restrain yourself from doing the same.

Moving on, we were served three variants of dim sums. Once again, *Sambal olec* went really well with each one of them. The pan-seared *Pumpkin pot sticker* was our hot favourite, with its curried pumpkin and cream cheese overwhelming our palate with its rich flavours. Simply munching on them felt like a gross injustice, hence we took our time with the dumplings, allowing each one to melt in our mouth slowly after the initial bite. The assorted *Mushroom* dumplings and *Ginger shiitake gyoza* were also worth mentioning, with their respective distinct flavours. But they were no match for the *Pumpkin pot stickers*.

Along with the main course, Mishra also sat at our table, enquiring how good

the food was. Well, we were busy stuffing ourselves, which served as an appropriate response, to his delight. As we helped ourselves to the Indonesian *Rendang Bao*, our conversation drifted to the cosy setting that we were seated in. Mishra shared that when they sat down with the proprietors of the place to discuss the possibilities of the establishment, they were not open to the idea that the restaurant's menu would be primarily plant-based. However, they relented, and are now reaping the rewards.

"Yes, we took a bold risk. The entire idea was to be a little different from other pan-Asian establishments. We did not want to play with hot and sour soup or manchurian, for that matter. We don't do any of that, all our dimsums are absolutely different from what you would get anywhere else. We play with the flavours and while taking inspiration from other cuisines, we have come up with our own distinct taste. Go on and help yourself to the *Rendang Bao*, how does it taste? Let me tell you, it tastes a lot different back home," expressed Mishra.

To the unwary, the dish might almost seem like chicken. Similarly, he cautioned us that some dishes are not vegan, like the *Vegan 'scallop' motoyaki*, which contained some mozzarella cheese. However, we had no such reservations and did not have to tread carefully with the dish made of king oyster mushrooms.

A healthy change

AKSHAY MODI believes we all need to make some proactive choices for our health, starting from the oil we cook our food in



Several studies demonstrate that olive oil provides heart health benefits such as favourable effects on cholesterol regulation.

Rice bran oil is extracted from the outer bran or husk of rice grains. It has a high smoke point and is useful for high-heat cooking. Rice bran oil is a good source of Vitamin E, Vitamin K, and good fats like polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. Consuming these unsaturated fats can improve blood cholesterol levels, which can decrease the risk

of heart disease.

Several studies have proved that rice bran oil has oryzanol and is effective in lowering cholesterol. This effect may be due to the high concentration of Vitamin E in rice bran oil. Besides this, rice bran oil also helps lower blood pressure and is effective against high blood sugar.

Owing to various number of benefits, a blend of olive oil and rice bran oil is perfect for everyday cooking for people who believe in adopting a proac-

tive approach and are concerned about their heart health:

- ❖ It contains essential fatty acids along with linoleic acid- scientifically known for preventing and treating diseases of the heart and blood vessels.
- ❖ It has an extremely high smoke point that makes it excellent for frying and deep frying. This prevents fatty acid breakdown at high temperatures, thus making food healthier.
- ❖ It contains oryzanol, a powerful natural antioxidant that protects against heart disease by maintaining optimum cholesterol levels (reducing LDL and increasing HDL).
- ❖ It gives the combined benefits of both Rice bran oil and Olive oil in one bottle. Rice bran oil has been proved to be the best oil for blending due to its nutrient composition and olive oil provides heart health benefits that prevents buildup of cardiovascular diseases.
- ❖ It can also help prevent other lifestyle conditions such as diabetes and obesity.

With the current times, the eating patterns tend to keep changing and upgrading. Hence, it is fundamental to choose the right oil that widely contributes to the body's nutritional needs in the right manner. According to nutritionists and cooking experts, a healthy multisource cooking oil provides the combined nutrients and boosts immunity which keeps you active throughout the day. So, before you fall prey to cardiovascular disease, it's time to take a proactive approach to prevent your heart health by making the right choice.

(The author is the joint MD of Modi Naturals, a leading FMCG company in the healthy cooking oil sector in India.)

R E C I P E S



POMEGRANATE & ALOE VERA LEMONADE

WHAT YOU NEED

- Pomegranate juice: 60 ml
- Pomegranate seeds: 2 tbsp
- Aloe vera juice: 30 ml
- Lemon juice: From ½ a lime
- Water: 100 ml

METHOD

- Combine everything together and stir well.
- Time within preparation and consumption should not exceed by 10 minutes.
- Serve chilled.

Courtesy: Nutritionist Aakriti Arora



DOLCE CHOCOLATE LATTE

WHAT YOU NEED

- Espresso (moka pot coffee): 30 ml
- Milk: 60 ml
- Cream: 60ml
- White chocolate: 20 gm
- Vanilla syrup (optional): 10ml

METHOD

- In a medium sized

pan heat milk, cream, white chocolate and espresso until the chocolate has melted, stirring occasionally.

- Add vanilla syrup and heat it as per your preference.

- Pour into coffee mugs and top with some grated white chocolate.

Courtesy: Head trainer Abdul Sahid Khan, Lavazza India

CHICKEN IN COCONUT MILK WITH SESAME NOODLES

WHAT YOU NEED

- Chicken breast (cut into strips): 450 gm
- Sesame oil: 1 tsp
- Chinese dark soy sauce: 1 tbsp
- Root ginger (peeled and roughly chopped): 55 gm
- Garlic (peeled and crushed): 3 cloves
- Lemongrass (hard outer layers removed and core cut into pieces): 1 stick
- Mild red chilli (deseeded and roughly chopped): 1
- Groundnut or vegetable oil: 1 tbsp
- Full-cream coconut milk: 400 ml
- Thai fish sauce (extra for seasoning): 1 tbsp
- Palm sugar or light soft brown sugar: 1 tsp
- Lime leaves (torn): 2

- Bean sprouts: 200 gm
 - Sugar snap peas: 100 gm
 - Lime juice (freshly squeezed): 1 tbsp
 - Fresh coriander (roughly chopped): Small handful
- For the noodles:**
- Dried medium egg noodles (cooked as per pack instructions): 4 portions
 - Sesame oil: 1 tsp
 - Sesame seeds (toasted): 2 tbsp

METHOD

- Combine the chicken with the sesame oil and soy sauce, cover and set to one side to marinate for 30 minutes.
- Place the roughly chopped ginger, garlic, lemongrass and chilli into a mini food processor or small blender with three-four tablespoons of cold water and process to a smooth paste or alternatively chop very finely.



- Heat the tablespoon of oil in the wok, add the chicken and stir-fry in the hot oil for two-three minutes. Use a splatter guard to prevent oil splashes whilst frying.
- Add the spice paste and stir-fry for a minute or two. Stir in the coconut milk along with the fish sauce, sugar and lime leaves, bring to a simmer, put on the lid and cook for six-eight minutes.
- Stir in the bean sprouts with the sugar snap peas and continue to cook for three-four minutes.

- Finally, adjust the seasoning to taste with a few drops of the extra Thai fish sauce and stir in the lime juice and chopped coriander.

For noodles:

- Heat the sesame oil in a medium sized non-stick frying pan, add the cooked noodles and stir-fry until heated through.
- Serve the chicken with the hot noodles and the toasted sesame seeds sprinkled over.

Courtesy: Le Creuset India



- Taste and add more spices if required.
- Mix everything together to form a dough.
- Divide this dough into equal portions.
- Roll each portion to form a ball.
- Press the ball and flatten it to give a *tikki* shape.

- Take a non-stick pan and heat it well.
- Add ghee on the hot pan.
- Place the paneer *tikkis* and cook until the side touching the pan turns golden brown.
- Flip over and cook the other side as well.
- Serve the paneer *tikkis* warm with pudina chutney.

Courtesy: Dietician Rubaina Adhikari

CSK SAIL INTO IPL PLAY-OFFS

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Chennai Super Kings produced a convincing performance against Sunrisers Hyderabad to maintain their remarkable consistency this season and sail into the Indian Premier League play-offs here on Thursday.

The bowlers, led by Josh Hazlewood (3/24) and Dwayne Bravo (2/17), restricted SRH to 134 for seven after M S Dhoni opted to bowl first on a slow surface.

Chasing the total, in-form openers Ruturaj Gaikwad (45 off 38) and Faf du Plessis (41 off 36) shared a sublime 75-run stand to give CSK an ideal start.

A mini collapse in the middle overs made the chase interesting before CSK got the job done in 19.4 overs with Dhoni (14 not out off 11) hitting the winning six and bringing back memories of his hey-days.

The three-time former champions thus ended the chase, scoring 139 for four, for a convincing six-wicket win.

With their fourth win in as many games since the tournament's resumption, CSK showed not making the play-offs last season was just a blip in their successful IPL history.

The Sharjah pitch, which produced high-scoring games last year, has been a complete contrast this season with its slow nature making stroke making difficult.

Batting in the second innings got easier with the fast-



rising Gaikwad displaying supreme skills. The confidence with which he played star SRH spinner Rashid Khan was most impressive.

He charged down the track on Rashid's second ball and dispatched it for a straight six. He also used his feet well against left-arm spinner Abhishek Sharma for another crisp boundary.

Du Plessis too hit some

cracking boundaries before falling to a tired shot.

From a commanding 103 for one, CSK slumped to 108 for four, making the dressing room slightly nervous.

However, Ambati Rayudu (17 not off 13) avoided a tense finish for his team with a six and four off Bhuvneshwar Kumar in the 19th over. M S Dhoni remained unbeaten at the other end.

Earlier, SRH innings never got the momentum it needed.

Wriddhiman Saha played some delightful shots in his 46-ball 44 but the majority of the SRH batsmen struggled to get going.

Saha's two sixes off Deepak Chahar in third over were the highlight of his innings. The first one was a hoick over midwicket and the second one was more like a

IPL points table			
	M	P	NRR
CSK	11	18	+1.002
DC	11	16	+0.562
RCB	11	14	-0.200
KKR	11	10	+0.363
MI	11	10	-0.453
PBKS	11	8	-0.288
RR	11	8	-0.468
SRH	11	4	-0.490

lofted straight drive that cleared the ropes comfortably.

His opening partner Jason Roy fell cheaply, caught behind off Josh Hazlewood as he went for a wild slog.

Skipper Kane Williamson struck two fours in his run-a-ball 11 before he was trapped in front by Dwayne Bravo with a full ball that swung away slightly to thud into the New Zealander's pads.

SRH were left reeling at 74 for four after a well-set Saha top-edged one off Ravindra Jadeja to be caught by Dhoni. SRH, who reached 97 for four in 15 overs, badly needed a final flourish in the last five overs.

Abdul Samad (18 off 14) and Abhishek Sharma (18 off 13) hit a few sensational shots before Hazlewood removed them in the 17th over. CSK were brilliant in the death overs conceding only 37 runs.



Mandhana scores career-best 80

PTI ■ GOLD COAST

Smriti Mandhana's career-best 80 not out had elegance written all over it as the Indian women's cricket team reached 132 for 1 at tea during a rain-hit stop-start second session on the first day of the one-off Day/Night Test against Australia here.

Mandhana, who peppered

the off-side field repeatedly with some gorgeous shots to reach 80 off 144 balls with 15 boundaries, added 93 for the opening stand with Shafali Verma (31 off 64 balls), who played the second fiddle during their partnership.

Most of the second sessions play was washed out but Mandhana added another 16 runs to surpass her previous best of 78.

She pulled Tablia McGrath for a six over deep square leg and also carted the same bowler over mid-wicket for a boundary.

Giving her company is Punam Raut (16 batting, 57 balls) and they have added 39 runs for the unbroken second wicket stand.

The Australian team's decision to field first after laying a green strip for the visitors did seem to have backfired as Mandhana attacked them straightaway during the first hour of play.

In fact, it was a case of

role reversal which perhaps caught the Australians off-guard as Shafali was more intent on playing a defensive game while her senior partner attacked with great gusto.

Debutant Darcie Brown got some special punishment as Mandhana hit her for a number of boundaries both on the off-side as well as a few whip shots on the leg-side.

Ellyse Perry also took a few overs to find the right length. The elegant Indian left-hander reached her run-a-ball fifty in no time with a cover drive of McGrath.

Whenever Mandhana bisected between point and cover or cover or mid-off, it was the most pleasant sight.

In case of Shafali, she did hit four boundaries but also looked a bit scratchy and offered a couple of chances — one to Meg Lanning in the slips which was a reflex catch and the other to



A n n a b e l Sutherland stationed at mid-on.

Finally she was gone trying to hit left-arm spinner Sophie Molineux against the turn and offered a sitter to McGrath at mid-off.

Brief Scores: India 1st Innings 132/1 in 44 overs (S m r i t i Mandhana 80 batting, Shafali Verma 31; S o p h i e Molineux 1/18) vs Australia.

SINGLES

BCCI DELIGHTED WITH IPL VIEWERSHIP

BCCI secretary Jay Shah is overwhelmed with TV viewership in the ongoing Indian Premier League and thanked fans for their support to the tournament, which has witnessed a disruption earlier this year owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The IPL 2021 was postponed in May due to several COVID cases inside the tournament's bio-bubble in India.

The second leg of the event started in the UAE this month, and has seen a growing interest among fans, leading to an increase in viewership. "I am delighted to share that #IPL2021 continues to register significant growth in viewership. Chart with upwards trend: 380 million TV viewers (till match 35) 12 million more than 2020 at the same stage. Thank you, everyone. It will only get more exciting from here on @IPL @StarSportsIndia @BCCI," Shah tweeted. The IPL is being telecast live on Star Sports in India.

AIBA PROMISES TO CLEAN UP HOUSE

More than 10 bouts in the 2016 Rio Olympics boxing competition were manipulated for "money" and other "perceived benefits", an independent investigation has revealed, prompting the International Boxing Association (AIBA) to promise a "tough" selection process for referees and judges at the upcoming men's world championship.

The first phase report of the McLaren Global Sport Solutions' independent investigation into boxing, which was accessed by PTI, has been handed to AIBA and revealed that "a system for the manipulation of bouts by officials existed at Rio". In all, 14 bouts came under the scanner, including two finals. "It was a complete reversal of Santa Claus's myth of the naughty and the nice.

VERMA EXITS IN FIRST ROUND WC FINAL

Ace Indian compound archer Abhishek Verma endured a rare medal-less outing at World Cup Final as he went down to eventual silver-winner Braden Gellenthien of the USA in his first-round match here. After a quiet start, the American world number four fired in five perfect 10s in a row, leaving the Indian to play a catch up game before losing by four points (142-146).

The 2014 Asian Games gold-medallist Verma, who qualified after winning the third stage of the World Cup in Paris, had won a silver in the 2015 edition. In his previous World Cup Final appearance in 2018, Verma had clinched an individual bronze and a silver with Jyothi Surekha Vennam in mixed pair event. All eyes would now be on the star couple of Deepika Kumari and Atanu Das who will begin their respective campaigns later on Thursday.

12 INDIANS MAKE FINALS OF JWC

Twelve Indian shooters qualified for the final round in their respective events on the opening day of the Junior World Championship in Lima, Peru. Qualification rounds of six individual events, all Olympic disciplines, took place on on Wednesday and the finals are scheduled to be held later on Thursday, where India is expected to fetch at least four gold medals in the corresponding team events. Rudranksh Patil, Dhanush Srikanth and Paarth Makhija made it to the junior men's 10m Air Rifle finals with scores of 630.2, 629.6 and 629.2 respectively in the qualification round, finishing overall second, third and fourth with top eight making the cut. Similarly in the junior women's 10m Air Rifle event, Mehuli Ghosh led a trio of Indians into the finals.

DOPING COSTS WEIGHTLIFTER KOSTOVA

Former world champion weightlifter Boyanka Kostova was banned for eight years for doping on Thursday after making her comeback from an earlier sanction for performance-enhancing drug use at the Olympics. The International Testing Agency said Kostova tested positive for traces of the steroid stanozolol on her way to winning the European championship title in the 59-kilogram category in April.

She was born in Bulgaria but later switched allegiance to Azerbaijan, which lavishly funded her bids for Olympic medals. Kostova was banned from 2016 through 2018 after a reanalysis of her sample from the 2012 Olympics, where she placed fifth, found the steroid turinabol. Kostova was the 2015 world champion and world record holder in the old 58-kilogram category but was prevented from competing at the Olympics the following year in Rio de Janeiro amid her first doping case. The cases were based on re-examining evidence of past doping and cover-ups within Russia. None of the three had competed recently.

Agencies

PTI ■ DUBAI

An angry Ravichandran Ashwin on Thursday asked Eoin Morgan and Tim Southee to not use "derogatory" words and lecture him on 'Spirit of Cricket' by taking a moral high ground after their on-field bust-up over an extra run during an IPL game.

During Tuesday's IPL match between Delhi Capitals and Kolkata Knight Riders, Ashwin tried to take a run after a throw from the deep by Rahul Tripathi had ricocheted off his partner Rishabh Pant's body.

Morgan and Ashwin then had an altercation with the England white-ball skipper calling the Indian a "disgrace" and accusing him of not adhering to the 'Spirit of Cricket' despite MCC rules allowing runs after rebound from a batsman's

body.

England were also awarded four runs after a throw from the deep had rebounded off Ben Stokes' bat during the 2019 World Cup final, and the umpire had signalled overthrows, leading to their title triumph. On Tuesday, after Ashwin was dismissed by fast bowler Southee, the bowler had apparently rebuked the senior India star by saying, "That's what happens when you cheat".

Soon Ashwin was seen charging towards Morgan and Southee, prompting Dinesh Karthik to intervene and douse the fire. In a series of tweets, Ashwin clarified his stand and



made it clear that he would again run if the ball hit a fielder's body.

"1. I turned to run the moment I saw the fielder throw and dint (didn't) know the ball had hit Rishabh. 2. Will I run if I see it? Of course I will and I am allowed to. 3. Am I a disgrace like Morgan said I was? Of course NOT," Ashwin said. He then told Morgan and Southee that 'Spirit of Cricket' can't be different strokes for different folks. "Did I fight? No, I stood up for myself and that's what my teachers and parents taught me to do and pls (please) teach your children to stand up for

Rupinder, Birendra hang up boots

IAN S ■ MUMBAI



Rupinderpal Singh and Birendra Lakra, two members of the Indian mens hockey team that won a bronze medal in the Tokyo Olympics, have decided to hang up their sticks, calling time on an illustrious career as the Indian team remains on a break after the Olympics due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Drag flicker and defender Rupinderpal made the announcement first and Lakra followed suit. Both Rupinder

and Birendra were brought back into the team in the last two years after a couple of ye's gap. They played a stellar role in Tokyo, helping the team win an Olympic medal in hockey after a gap of four decades.

The indian team was to participate in the Asian Champions

Trophybut that was postponed due to the pandemic. The players also seem to have realised that they have achieved all the major things that the sport has to offer. Their decision will impact the Indian team as it loses two key defenders.

Rupinder, who made his international debut in 2010, scored four goals in the Olympics

and was the second-highest goalscorer in the team. Overall, he has scored 119 goals in 223 senior international matches. After a break in 2018-19, the lanky drag-flicker made a strong comeback in the 2020 Olympic Qualifiers and scored his first hat-trick since the 2018 Asian Games.

Lakra was the joint vice-captain of the team at the Tokyo

Olympics and a key defender. Lakra has represented India in 201 matches, scoring 10 goals.

A product of SAIL Hockey Academy Rourkela, Lakra has represented India at the 2009 Youth Olympic Festival held in Sydney, the 2009 Junior World Cup, the 2010 SAAG Games in Dhaka, and the 2011 Champions Challenge tournament in South Africa.

Having progressed through the ranks, Lakra made his debut for the senior national team in the 2010 South Asian Games and has been part of India's various memorable moments such as the 2014 Asian Games glory, bronze medal feat in the World League Final 2015 in Raipur, silver medal-winning campaign at the 2014 Commonwealth Games and FIH Men's Series Finals Bhubaneswar Odisha 2019.

Qatar to host F1 race for first time in November

AP ■ DOHA

Qatar will host a Formula One race for the first time in November and for 10 years from 2023.

Qatar takes the remaining slot left vacant on this year's reshuffled calendar. The race will start under floodlights at 6 p.m. Local time on Nov. 21 at the Losail International Circuit.

As the 20th of 22 races this season, it will be followed by the inaugural Saudi Arabian GP in Jeddah on Dec. 5 and the season-ending Abu Dhabi GP on Dec. 12.

"There was a strong will from Qatar to be helpful to F1, and in the course of this process, the vision for a longer partnership was discussed and agreed," F1 said in a statement on Thursday.

"The vision for F1 to be the showcase for Qatar after the (soccer) World Cup in 2022 was the driving force."

There will not be a race in Qatar next year because of the World Cup so the 10-year deal starts the following year.

The 5.4-kilometer (3.4-mile) circuit, which holds 8,000 fans, is north of Doha and has hosted the MotoGP series since 2004.

It is not yet clear whether Losail will continue to host F1 from 2023, as the circuit will need to be altered, so there is a strong possibility another location could be chosen. F1 said only that it was in discussions.

The cancellation of the Japanese GP set for Oct. 10 amid the government's coronavirus concerns triggered off changes.

Dahiya named UP head coach



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Indian wicketkeeper Vijay Dahiya was on Thursday named head coach of the Uttar Pradesh cricket team.

Uttar Pradesh Cricket Association (UPCA) made the announcement via social media. "We look forward to a fantastic journey for achieving all our dreams under his proven mentorship," UPCA tweeted.

Dahiya has coached Delhi in the past and in the IPL, he has been assistant coach with Kolkata Knight Riders and Delhi Capitals. The 48-year-old played two Tests and 19 ODIs for India.

Ronaldo scores late winner for United in CL

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Cristiano Ronaldo removed his Manchester United jersey, flexed his muscular physique and soaked in the acclaim of the fans after his winning goal in the fifth minute of stoppage time. Not a bad way for the Portugal superstar to mark another record-breaking night in the Champions League.

On his record 178th appearance in the competition, Ronaldo made his most decisive intervention with virtually the last kick of the game at Old Trafford to complete United's dramatic comeback in a 2-1 victory over Villarreal on Wednesday.

After winning a header from a hopeful cross into the area, Ronaldo showed his sprightliness at the age of 36 by then reacting to a loose ball after a touch by substitute Jesse Lingard and shooting underneath Villarreal goalkeeper Geronimo Rulli from a narrow angle. "It's just what he has done throughout his career," United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said.

"He is so strong mentally. He stays in the game. I have seen him all day, the way he has worked, built himself up for



this game and how focused he has been.

"And when he gets that one chance, it's a goal." Old Trafford erupted, with sprint great Usain Bolt — draped in a red-and-white United scarf — among the home supporters celebrating as chants of "Viva Ronaldo" swept around the stadium.

It was Ronaldo's fifth goal in five games since joining from Juventus for a second spell at United, and definitely his most important.

Oh, and make that 136 goals in the Champions League — a record, naturally. That Ronaldo had a quiet game, by his standards, might get overlooked because of his late goal.

"A true mark of a very, very good finisher that he keeps calm when the chance arrives," Solskjaer said. Where would Solskjaer be without Ronaldo? It was looking like another chastening result for the Norwegian coach, who was starting to come under pressure with United having started Group F with a shocking 2-1 loss at Swiss outsider Young Boys and then losing back-to-back games at Old Trafford on the domestic front — one in the Premier League and another to get eliminated from the English League Cup.

Villarreal looked like handing United a second straight group loss by going in front in the 53rd through Paco Alcacer, who poked in a finish through the legs of United goalkeeper David De Gea following a cross by Arnaut Danjuma.

Ranveer is NBA brand ambassador for India

IAN S ■ MUMBAI

Ranveer Singh on Thursday was named as the National Basketball Association (NBA) brand ambassador for India. The Bollywood star says he has loved basketball and the NBA since childhood.

"I have loved basketball and the NBA since my childhood and have always been fascinated with its influence on popular culture including music, fashion and entertainment," said Ranveer. In this capacity, Ranveer will work with the NBA to help grow the league's profile in India throughout its landmark 75th Anniversary Season in 2021-22.

The 'Gully Boy' star will attend NBA All-Star 2022 in Cleveland, where he will post behind-the-scenes social media content and meet NBA players and legends. Ranveer previously attended NBA All-Star 2016 in Toronto, where he sat courtside at the NBA All-Star Game. NBA Deputy Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer Mark Tatum said: "A Bollywood icon, Ranveer is also a dedicated NBA fan who is passionate about the league and its players."

