





WORLD BANK ON REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

‘No extensive vaccination needed to open schools’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Evidence suggests that young children are less likely to contract Covid-19 and given the "safe" school reopening experiences in various countries prior to vaccine development, education systems do not need to wait for widespread vaccination before returning to offline schooling, according to the World Bank.

In a new policy note, the World Bank's Education team has noted that the experiences from countries around the world where schools have reopened suggest that with adequate mitigation strategies, schools pose low risks for disease transmission among students, staff, and communities.

The team has also noted that one year after the pandemic hit, we know much more about both the virus and the disease and how to mitigate transmission and health authorities like the WHO recommend school closures only as a "last resort".

"Available evidence suggests that young children are less likely to contract Covid-19, less likely to become seriously ill or die and less likely to transmit the disease to others. Transmission within schools has been low, particularly for pre-primary and primary schools, and staff in schools are more likely to get the virus from other staff, not from stu-

dents," the World Bank said.

"Given the safe reopening experiences in countries prior to vaccine development, often in the midst of high community transmission, education systems do not need to wait for widespread vaccination of school staff or other adults in the community before reopening, although prioritizing school staff for vaccination may allay fears of returning to schools for in-person instruction," it added.

The note said that keeping schools closed eliminates the risk of disease transmission at school, but it also imperils children's learning, psychosocial health, and overall development.

"School reopening decisions should reflect evidence-based estimates of the risks associated with reopening schools and the risks associated with keeping schools closed. Experiences from countries around the world where schools have reopened suggest that with adequate mitigation strategies, schools pose low risks for disease transmission among students, staff, and communities," it said.

According to World Bank's statistics, 80 percent of schools worldwide are in regular session. Out of those, 54 percent are back to in-person instruction, 34 percent are relying on mixed or hybrid instruction

while 10 percent continue remote instruction and 2 percent offer no instruction at all.

"Schools have remained closed where Governments, communities, teachers, or parents fear that reopening schools poses too great a risk for disease transmission. In each context, it is important to quantify the risks associated with reopening schools, as well as the risks of keeping schools closed, so that reopening decisions can be based on risk assessments informed by evidence.

"In particular, we need evidence for both students and school staff on their susceptibility of getting Covid-19 and the ease of transmitting the disease to others, and whether reopening schools contributes to the spread of Covid-19 within communities. Finally, we need to quantify the losses associated with school closures. A year and a half into the pandemic, such evidence is increasingly available, suggesting that the costs of school closures far exceed the risks associated with opening schools with adequate mitigation strategies in place," it said.

Last year, the Covid-19 pandemic led to a global shut down of schools in more than 188 countries, leaving 1.6 billion children -- 75 percent of enrolled students -- out of school.



People participate in a cycling event of Green and Clean India to celebrate 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', in Bikaner on Sunday

PTI

Sadhvi allegedly commits suicide at Patanjali's Gurukul

**Haridwar:** A young Sadhvi at the Vaidik Kanya Gurukul of Patanjali Yogpeeth in Haridwar allegedly committed suicide by jumping off the fifth floor of the Vaidik Kanya Gurukul hostel building on Sunday. According to sources, she also left behind a suicide note in which she has purportedly talked of some spiritual matters.

Panic spread at the Patanjali Yogpeeth in Bahadradab area of Haridwar on Sunday morning after news spread about a Sadhvi reportedly jumping to her death from the fifth floor of the Vaidik Kanya Gurukul hostel. Reaching the site after the police were informed about the incident, Circle Officer (trainee) Parvez Ali informed the media persons that at about 4 AM on Sunday, 24-year old Devagya jumped to her death from the

fifth floor.

Others in the hostel spotted her body on the ground and took her to a hospital where she was declared dead. She had also left a suicide note in which she has purportedly talked about spiritual matters and immersing herself in devotion.

The Bahadradab police have seized the suicide note and sent it for forensic examination. Devagya hailed from Madhya Pradesh and had been staying here for nearly the past six years. Her body was sent for post mortem examination and her family in Madhya Pradesh was also informed about the incident. The family was expected to arrive in Haridwar late by Sunday night.

The police are probing the death from all angles, official sources said.

PNS

Pandora Papers...

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Detailing the difficulties encountered in contacting the people named in the investigation Cheema said that written questions were first sent. Some were contacted by phone, who would hang up when told what the probe is about, some refused to give their email addresses, others were also contacted through WhatsApp.

It must be noted that establishing and declaring an offshore company, which is not involved in any illegal practices, is permissible by law.

Speaking of Prime Minister Khan's Lahore residence, 2 Zaman Park, he said that International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), the non-profit newsroom and

over my health.

Shivrajji is saying that Kamal Nathji is sick and old. Shivraji, I throw a challenge to you, come let us have a race," Nath, who is also the leader of the opposition, said in a media statement.

"I did go for my post Covid-19 check up because I had pneumonia - which anyone can have. I got all the tests done. All reports came out good. Covid-19 are of two types - one of short duration and another of a long duration. I faced the long duration one," he added.

Mamata wins the ...

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Praising the people of Bhawanipore and Bengal the Chief Minister, who got 85,263 votes, said that "in the last elections the BJP had trailed in two wards winning from six wards but this time round we have taken a handsome lead from all the eight wards which is an additional encouragement for the Government."

Congratulating the non-Bengali speaking community in Bhawanipore that comprises about 46 per cent, Mamata said, "Though the Bengali-speaking people have voted for me I must thank the 46 per cent non-Bengali voters for reposing their faith in me ... I am happy that the people have recognised the good works in every respect done by our Government."

Like Bhawanipore two other constituencies --- where elections were held --- of Jangipur and Shamsherganj,

too, brought huge victories for Bengal's ruling outfit. While at Jangipur former State Minister and TMC leader Zakir Hussein won by a margin of more than 92,000 votes, at Shamsherganj Trinamool's Aminul Islam humbled his nearest BJP rival by about 26,000 votes.

The BJP candidate, however, alleged "rampant false voting by the TMC" for her loss. "I acknowledge that we have a weak organisational base in Bhawanipore but the fact that we have a good vote base here cannot be ruled out ... On the election day we caught many people red handed casting false votes ... We have lost not because the people love Mamata Banerjee but because we were simply outdone in the art of rigging ... there are many multi-storey buildings where I have friends and BJP supporters who would vote for us while even in sleep ... but in those buildings too we have lost ... this shows the amount of rigging that took place.

Cross-LoC trade...

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LoC trade was started in 2008 as a part of a confidence-building measure between Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.

The trade was based on a barter system and third party origin goods were not allowed. The case is related to the large scale transfer of funds from Pakistan to India through the import of California Almonds (badam-giri) and other items via the cross-LoC Trade Facilitation Centres (TFCs) located at Salamabad, Uri, Baramulla and Chakan-Da-Bagh Poonch. These funds were purportedly being used for fomenting terrorism/separatism in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Investigation into the case revealed that some of the traders having excess imports were channelising the surplus profit generated to terror organisations while others are suspected to have links/connections with

proscribed terrorist organisations," the NIA said in a statement.

During the searches, documents, digital devices and other incriminating materials have been recovered from the premises of the suspects, it further said.

Further investigation in the case is continuing, it added.

On April 18, 2019, India indefinitely suspended cross-LoC trade at two points along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, following reports that it was being "misused" by elements from across the border to smuggle weapons, narcotics and fake currency.

The LoC trade across Chakan-Da-Bagh in Poonch district of Jammu region and Salamabad in Baramulla district of north Kashmir was intended as a confidence-building measure (CBM) for the population living in Jammu and Kashmir and across the LoC in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK).

Opp parties hit out at BJP Govt

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the BJP leaders will not be able to move around in the State in their vehicles."Akshilesh Yadav will visit Lakhimpur district on Monday and meet the families of the farmers who died and were injured during the violent clashes on Sunday. The SP had earlier announced to send a party delegation to enquire into the incident.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who is likely to visit Lakhimpur Kheri on Monday, launched a blistering attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government for suppressing the voice of the farmers.

"How much does the BJP hate the farmers of the country? Don't they have a right to live? If they raise their voice, will you shoot them, trample under the car? Enough. This is a country of farmers, not a fiefdom of BJP's brutal ideology. Kisan Satyagraha will be strengthened and the voice of the farmer will be louder," she tweeted.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi also lashed out at the BJP post the Kheri incident.

"The one who is silent even after seeing this inhuman massacre, he is already dead. But we will not let this sacrifice go in vain -- Kisan Satyagraha Zindabad! #FarmersProtest," he tweeted.

Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee president Ajay Kumar Lallu shared a video of the farmers burning the cars in Tikunia on Twitter and said that the BJP was suppressing the voice of protests with "Hitler-like" anarchy and hooliganism.

"Modi government has

become so thirsty for the blood of the farmers that in Lakhimpur Kheri, the son of the country's minister of state for home, ruthlessly killed many farmers. He trampled them under his car. From Karnal to Lakhimpur Kheri, your power has created a "bloody dance of fury". The photos are gruesome but show the truth of BJP," the Congress leader tweeted in Hindi.

Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati blamed the BJP government for the Lakhimpur incident and demanded a judicial probe under the supervision of the Supreme Court.

In a couple of tweets on Sunday night, Mayawati said, "The killing of several farmers, allegedly by the son of a Union minister, on the farmers protesting for the withdrawal of 3 agricultural laws in Lakhimpur Kheri district of UP... shows the dictatorship and cruelty of the BJP government, which is also their real face" She further said, "In relation to this incident also the victims are not expected to get proper justice from the government. Therefore, the Supreme Court itself should take cognisance of this incident, which is the demand of BSP. Along with this, the local delegation of BSP has been instructed to go to the spot."

Rashtriya Lok Dal president Jayant Chaudhary, on the other hand, directly attacked Home Minister Amit Shah. He alleged that the home minister was "conspiring to suppress" the protest by farmers. RLD national secretary Anil Dubey also condemned the incident and

demand a Rs 1-crore compensation to the families of each deceased farmer and also compensation for those injured in the incident.

Aam Aadmi Party Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh also condemned the incident and demanded an inquiry by the CBI into the incident and arrest of the culprits. "No one has either seen or heard such arrogance of power. Three farmers were killed by the son of the Union minister of state for home under the wheels of his vehicle," he tweeted.

Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party founder Om Prakash Rajbhar also condemned the incident and hit out at the BJP. The Communist Party of India state unit passed a resolution on the Lakhimpur incident during a hurriedly called meeting on Sunday.

The party said it strongly condemned the incident in which Union Minister of State for Home Vijay Mishra's son crushed the farmers to death in the district. The party demanded compensation to the families of the deceased farmers and also to those injured in the incident.

The CPI said the ruling dispensation was opting "killing" tactic to suppress voice of dissent now. It demanded registration of the minister and registration of a case of murder against Mishra's son and others involved in the crime and a judicial probe into the incident.

The CPI leaders said they were with the farmers come what may and the party would oppose BJP's attempt to give a communal hue to the incident.

Farmers' fury...

From Page 1

of Union Minister of State for Home and MP Ajay Kumar Mishra. The violence broke out after two SUVs allegedly ran over a group of anti-farm law protesters, who were demonstrating at the Tikonian-Banbirpur road.

Farmers alleged that the Union Minister's son was in one of the vehicles, a charge denied by Mishra. The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) that the growers were fired upon by the men too.

According to the BKU office-bearers, three farmers died on the spot while seven-eight were rushed to hospital. Ajay Mishra on Sunday said that three BJP workers and a driver were beaten to death by "some elements" in the protesting farmers after a car in which they were travelling turned turtle following pelting of stones. Mishra told PTI over the phone that two farmers had died after coming under the car. Mishra said neither his son nor he was present at the site when the incident occurred.

He said the incident happened when some BJP workers were going to receive UP Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya who had come to attend an event at Lakhimpur Kheri.

"Some elements in farmers, who were protesting, showed black flags and pelted stones on the car which turned turtle. Two farmers came under the car and died. Three BJP workers and the driver of the car were beaten to death by some people present there," he said, adding he was on his way to get their postmortem done. Mishra said his son was not present at the spot as alleged by some farmer leaders and he has photographic and video evidence to prove it.

Even as the accusations and counter-accusations fly thick and fast, the situation is said to be extremely tense in Lakhimpur Kheri as thousands of farmers reached the place after the incident.

State DGP Mukul Goyal has confirmed that two farmers have been reported dead and one injured in this incident. He said that in view of the prevailing situation there, ADG Law and Order

Prashant Kumar, has been asked to reach the spot immediately.

At the same time, the police administration has increased security as a precaution. SP City Second Gyanendra Singh and station in-charge Sachin Malik along with the force were talking to the farmer leaders.

BKU leader Rakesh Tikait said that hundreds of farmers were returning from Lakhimpur after attending a programme when a vehicle of a BJP leader rammed into the crowd. This was followed by firing, he said.

Reports from Kheri said that after hearing about this incident, a large number of farmers from nearby areas reached the spot and started shouting slogans. The vehicle of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Ajay Mishra's son Monu was burnt along with a few others by the agitated mob.

A large number of farmers had started assembling from the morning in Lakhimpur Kheri district for a black flag protest against Deputy Chief Minister and Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, for the open threat issued against farmer leaders in a public meeting. Thousands of farmers with black flags had occupied the helipad at Maharaja Agrasen Ground to prevent the Deputy CM from landing there. As reported earlier, the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra had issued an open threat to farmer leaders in a public meeting recently.

Meanwhile, in a Press release SKM said that in a brutal attack on peacefully protesting farmers in Lakhimpur Kheri, a convoy of vehicles associated with the BJP's Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra, his son, his uncle and other goons ran over several protestors. They claimed that one of the farmers was shot dead by Mishra's son. At least two other farmers were killed in the incident (one on the spot, and another in a hospital), and around ten others injured seriously. It is reported that Terai Kisan Sanghathan's leader, and SKM leader Tajinder Singh Virk have also been injured.

Bomb targets Kabul ...

From Page 1

Although he did not provide a figure for the number killed and said an investigation was going on, later five deaths were confirmed. Emergency NGO, an Italian-funded hospital in Kabul, tweeted it had received four people wounded in the blast.

The area around the mosque was cordoned off by the Taliban, who maintained a heavy security presence.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. However, since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in mid-August, attacks by Islamic State (IS) group militants against them have increased. The rise has raised the possibility of a wider conflict between the two extremist groups. IS maintains a strong presence in the eastern province of Nangarhar and considers the Taliban an enemy. IS has claimed several attacks against the Taliban, including several killings in the provincial capital of Jalalabad. Attacks in Kabul have so far been rare, but in recent weeks IS has shown signs it is expanding its footprint beyond the east and closer toward the capital. On Friday, Taliban fighters raided an

IS hideout just north of Kabul in Parwan province. The raid came after an IS roadside bomb wounded four Taliban fighters in the area.

Remove Punjab...

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Channi's statement was in response to Sidhu's tweet pressing the State Government to replace the DGP and AG, saying otherwise "we will have no face". Sidhu's tweet came three days after he and Channi held a detailed meeting wherein it was decided to set up a coordination panel consisting of the Chief Minister, State party chief and a member of high command, for prior consultation on all major decisions of the State Government. The efforts of the party's top leadership to strike a chord by appointing the panel to take key decisions were virtually brought to a naught after Sidhu reiterated his demand to replace the two saying the appointment of IPS officer Iqbal Preet Singh Sahota as the State police chief, and senior advocate Amar Preet Singh Deol as the State's top law officer are "salt on the wounds of the victims" of the 2015 sacrilege cases.

Sidhu on Sunday tweeted, "Demand for Justice in Sacrilege cases and for arrest of main culprits behind the drug trade brought our Govt in 2017 & Due to his failure,

People removed the last CM. Now, AG / DG appointments rub salt on wounds of victims, they must be replaced or we will have No face (sic)!"

The appointments of Sahota and Deol as DGP and AG, respectively, was a major bone of contention between Channi and Sidhu, that led to the latter's sudden resignation from the post of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) president - only 72 days after taking over the party reins. Sidhu has all along been opposing Sahota and Deol's appointments as the senior IPS officer was appointed head of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe sacrilege incidents by the erstwhile SAD-BJP government; while the senior advocate has been representing former police chief Sumedh Singh Saini who was named an accused in sacrilege and related police firing cases. Deol had also secured blanket bail for Saini in all the cases, just about a fortnight before his appointment, with the Punjab and Haryana High Court observing that Saini's involvement in multiple cases could be a "political ploy in the wake of the coming State Assembly elections".

NCB busts...

From Page 1

In such a case, the punishment offence under section 8(c) read with Section 27 of NDPS deals with consumption of drugs which invites imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to Rs 10,000 or with both. Munmun and Arbaaz have been charged with purchase and consumption of drugs.

Opposing a longer period of bail for his client, Aryan's lawyer Satish Maneshinde said that no drug was found on the person of Aryan nor was any incriminating chat found on the latter's mobile which was examined by the investigators. He also told the court that Aryan had not bought a ticket for the party on his own, but had been invited to the cruise as a guest.

The NCB officials, who

had reportedly been working on a tip-off received a fortnight ago that there would be a rave party on board the cruise ago, had booked tickets and boarded the ship posing as customers. They busted the rave party soon after the ship left the Mumbai shores. Earlier, confirming the detention of eight from the Goa-bound Cruise ship, NCB Zonal head Sameer Wankhede in his initial statement: "On the basis of specific information, the officials of NCB Mumbai conducted a raid on Cordelia cruise which was bound from Mumbai to Goa on yesterday (2.10.2021). During the operation, all suspects were searched various drugs like MDMA (Ecstasy), Cocaine, MD (Mephedrone) and Charas has been recovered.

"Eight persons, two women have been apprehended and their role being investigated in connection with the recovery of

drugs," Wankhede said.

Significantly enough, the tourism firm in-charge of Cordelia Cruises has distanced itself from the drug bust that took place on Saturday night "By means of this statement, I wish to express that Cordelia Cruises is in no way, directly or indirectly, connected to this incident. Cordelia Cruises had chartered its ship for a private event to a Delhi-based event management company," Jurgen Bailom, CEO and President, Waterways Leisure Tourism Pvt Ltd, said.

Condemning Saturday's incident and maintaining that the firm will strictly refrain from letting the ship out for similar events in the future, Bailom said: Cordelia Cruises is extremely mindful of providing wholesome entertainment to families who choose to travel with us. This incident is contrarian and far from the culture

that Cordelia Cruises represents..... Cordelia Cruises is extending our full support and cooperating with the authorities". Unconfirmed reports said that the rave party was organised by FTV India which had hired the services from Namas' Cray, an event organiser company named as Canepulus Trading Private Limited which was established in October last year.

Aryan's arrest created as much of a sensation as it happened in the case of actress Rhea Chakraborty, who was arrested in the Sushant Singh Rajput death-related drug case on September 8, 2020.

More than 25 people including Rhea and her brother Showik were arrested last year and a large number of persons were questioned in connection with a case registered by the NCB on August 28 last year.







# TMC spent ₹154.28 cr in Bengal Assembly polls



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Trinamool Congress (TMC), which returned to power in West Bengal in the Assembly polls held earlier this year, spent over ₹154.28 crore for campaigning in the State. The Congress spent ₹84.93 crore in Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Assam. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), which snatched power from arch rival AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, spent over ₹114.14 crore (₹1,14,14,08,525) in electioneering in the State as well as in the adjoining Union Territory of Puducherry.

According to the Election Expenditure details available on the Election Commission's website, the TMC spent

₹154.28 crore on the Assembly campaign. The TMC's expenses were divided into spending by the central party office (₹79.66 crore) and expenditure on candidates (₹74.61 crore). Of the expenditure by the party headquarters, ₹33.02 crore were on travel expenses of star campaigners and ₹11.93 crore on advertisements.

The Congress spent ₹84.93 crore in Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Assam.

The DMK spent ₹114.14 crore for the Tamil Nadu and Puducherry elections. It spent ₹39.78 crore on media advertisements and ₹54.47 crore on candidates, which includes money given to candidates and expenditure incurred on publishing their criminal antecedents.

The AIADMK, which ruled Tamil Nadu before the last assembly polls, had spent ₹57.33 crore (₹57,33,86,773) for campaigning in the state and the UT of Puducherry.

The Congress spent ₹84.93 crore (₹84,93,69,986) for electioneering in Assam, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal during the assembly elections.

The CPI spent the least by incurring an expenditure of ₹13.19 crore (₹13,19,47,797) for campaigning in the four States and one UT.

While the Trinamool Congress, CPI and Congress are recognised national parties, the DMK and AIADMK are recognised state parties. The expenditure incurred by the BJP is not yet available.

# Google says it removed 93,550 posts from users in August

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Google received 35,191 complaints from users and removed 93,550 pieces of content based on those complaints in August. In its monthly transparency report, Google revealed that in August, the tech giant removed 651,933 posts as a consequence of automatic identification, in addition to user reports. Google is required to disclose these disclosures in order to comply with India's new Information Technology regulations, which took effect on May 26, 2021. The action taken by Google shows that the crackdown on those who use dubious methods to publish their information online will continue.

The content removal was done under several categories, including copyright (92,750), trademark (721), counterfeit (32), circumvention (19), court order (12), graphic sexual content (12) and other legal requests (4).

In addition to user reports, Google claimed it invests substantially in combating dangerous information online and employs technology to detect and remove it from its platforms.

Google explained that a single complaint may specify multiple items that potentially relate to the same or different pieces of content, and each unique URL in a specific complaint is considered an individual "item" that is removed. Google further said in addition



to reports from users, the company invests heavily in fighting harmful content online and use technology to detect and remove it from its platforms.

"This includes using automated detection processes for some of our products to prevent the dissemination of harmful content such as child sexual abuse material and violent extremist content. "We balance privacy and user protection to: quickly remove content that violates our Community Guidelines and content policies; restrict content (e.G., age-restrict content that may not be appropriate for all audiences); or leave the content live when it doesn't violate our guidelines or policies," it added.

Google said automated detection enables it to act more quickly and accurately to enforce its guidelines and policies.

These removal actions may result in removing the content or terminating a bad actor's access to the Google service, it added.

Recently, Facebook and WhatsApp have also released their compliance reports for the month of August. Facebook said it had "actioned" about 31.7 million content pieces across 10 violation categories

proactively during August in the country, while its photo sharing platform, Instagram took action against about 2.2 million pieces across nine categories during the same period proactively.

"Actioned" content refers to the number of pieces of content (such as posts, photos, videos or comments) where action has been taken for violation of standards. Taking action could include removing a piece of content from Facebook or Instagram or covering photos or videos that may be disturbing to some audiences with a warning.

Also, Facebook said it had received 904 user reports for Facebook through its Indian grievance mechanism between August 1-31. Instagram had received 106 reports through the Indian grievance mechanism during the same time frame.

In its report, WhatsApp said it had banned over two million accounts in India, while 420 grievance reports were received by the messaging platform in the month of August.

India's desi social media platform Koo in its monthly compliance report said it has proactively moderated 38,456 content pieces, while 4,493 posts were reported by its users during the month of August. Koo said it had steps to proactively moderate 38,456 posts, of which 1,220 content pieces were removed while 'other action' was taken against the balance 37,236.

# Plea in SC seeks probe into non-supply of med oxygen to Covid patients

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking a high-level inquiry by a commission into the alleged non-supply and non-availability of medical oxygen for Covid-19 patients during the second wave of the pandemic from March to May this year.

The petition, which is scheduled to be taken up for hearing on Monday by a bench of justices D Y Chandrachud and B V Nagarathna, has alleged that non-availability of medical oxygen during the second wave of the pandemic had resulted in the death of several patients in various parts of the country.

The plea, filed by a Delhi resident, has also urged the apex court to direct a court-monitored inquiry by the CBI or any other investigating agency in the matter relating to non-availability of medical oxygen in the months of March to May this year.

It has sought a high-level inquiry by a commission headed by a retired judge of the apex court or retired chief justice of any high court in the matter.

It said that the inquiry would identify negligence on the part of officials, if any, that had led to the shortage of medical oxygen supply.

The plea has arrayed the Centre and others, including the National Disaster Management Authority and health departments of several

**The plea has arrayed the Centre and others, including the National Disaster Management Authority and health departments of several States, as respondents.**

states, as respondents. "This court through its various judgements has logically extended the interpretation of the right to life to include the right to health.

"Therefore, it is the fundamental duty of the State to care for the health of the public at large," the petitioner has said in his plea filed through advocate Rajeev Kumar Dubey.

It has also referred to media reports about the death of Covid-19 patients allegedly due to the shortage of medical oxygen.

The plea said medical oxygen is an essential and critical life-saving drug and its shortage had resulted in several untimely deaths in the country during the second wave of the pandemic.

In May this year, the apex court, which hearing a separate matter, had constituted a 12-member National Task Force of top medical experts to formulate a methodology for allocation of oxygen to states and union territories for saving lives of Covid-19 patients and to facilitate a public health response to the pandemic.

# ISI moles threat as 700 Af evacuees leave US bases

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

With 700 Afghan evacuees leaving the American military bases hosting them even before availing resettlement services from the US Government, apprehensions of Taliban and Pakistan's ISI planting jihadis in the guise of refugees has come to the fore.

As many as 1.26 lakh Afghans have been evacuated alongside the withdrawal of allied forces from Afghanistan, mostly by the US and its allies.

Many of the evacuees could be Taliban or ISI moles who could initially lobby in favour of Taliban and subsequently be used for radicalisation activities in the host countries for perpetrating terror blasts.

Earlier, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Pak Army had infiltrated over 50,000 jihadis in the Afghan national defence forces who ultimately compromised the fellow soldiers leading to the meltdown of the forces amid



Taliban's swift takeover of provinces in Afghanistan.

The US was taken aback due to the dual policy of the Pakistan Government-military complex and swift capture of Kabul by Taliban belied the Pentagon estimates of fall of Afghanistan between 18 to 24 months.

While the massive evacuation exercise was undertaken by the allied forces in chaotic withdrawal in the midst of rapid advances by Taliban, a detailed scrutiny and background checks were not under-

taken.

The suspicious Afghan evacuees could also be soft targets for recruitment by ISIS in Europe and America.

In the Indian context, Afghan nationals have already been suspected for the mega drugs haul at Mundra port and the possibility of such people with radical background for terrorism cannot be ruled out.

Experts said such radicalised Afghans could also be used for lone wolf attacks and their presence in the host countries could also fuel right wing

radicalisation.

Founder of Afghanistan Republic Salvation Front and counter terrorism expert of Afghan origin Dr Ajmal Sohail said, "The US and its allies should speed up scrutiny of all Afghan evacuees in their respective jurisdictions to pinpoint the radicals and isolate them in order to check them from indulgence in subversive activities."

Counter-Terrorism Dr Rituraj Mate said, "Apart from indulgence in narco trade and radical activities of their parent terror outfits, such radicalised Afghans disguised as refugees or evacuees, could also be exploited by their handlers for espionage and networking with local radical outfits as part of Al Qaeda's Barre Saghir movement for large scale radicalization in the Indian subcontinent."

The presence of radical Afghans could also lure a section of over ambitious police officers to falsely implicate innocent people as suspects linked to ISIS or Taliban. There is a need to keep a close watch on all such activities to check radicalisation of all hues and check any resultant damages, Dr Mate added.

# CSC-KRIBHCO tie up to help farmers get access to fertilisers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Common Services Centres (CSC), an SPV under the Ministry of Electronics & IT, has tied up with the Krishak Bharati Cooperative Ltd. (KRIBHCO) to provide access to fertilisers and agricultural inputs to farmers through the network of around 4 lakh Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) at the last mile.

CSCs will facilitate the sale and distribution of KRIBHCO products which include fertilisers like imported urea, DAP, NPK/NPS, bio-fertiliser, city compost, zinc sulphate, certified seeds, hybrid seeds and potash derived from molasses, a statement said. KRIBHCO is engaged in the business of manufacturing, importing and marketing of fertilisers, agri inputs and seeds.

Early this year, CSC set up an agri services platform to facilitate agri inputs like seeds,



manure, and pesticides, rent and hire of farm machinery and implements, and trading of agri produce etc through its VLEs and farmer producer organisations (FPOs). Elaborating on the partnership, CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd Managing Director Dinesh Tyagi said in the statement, "Our alliance with KRIBHCO is a step ahead in furthering the agenda of the government in serving the farmers and agricultural community."

The last mile delivery of fertilisers, seeds and other agri products is "an important aspect of our activities at CSCs

and the partnership will help us reach out to farmers and citizens in the villages with timely supply of reliable and quality agri inputs," he added.

Rajan Chowdhry, Managing Director, KRIBHCO, said in the statement that this partnership will usher in a new era where farmers can get cost effective agri inputs at the click of mouse and smartphones, thereby promoting 'Digital India'.

FPOs as agribusiness retailers will help the farming community become "agricultural entrepreneur" from "agriculture producer", he added.

# Nadda to meet national office bearers of BJP youth wing today



IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Chief Jagat Prakash Nadda will meet the national office bearers of the party's youth wing on Monday (October 4).

In a statement, the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) said that its national office bearers meeting will be held on October 4 at party headquarters in the national capital.

"The national office bearers will receive guidance from the BJP chief Nadda," it said.

Following this, on October 5 a meeting with all the national office bearers, national executive members, all state presidents and general secretaries will be held at the NDMC Convention Centre in Delhi.

"The agenda of the BJYM's national executive meeting is to discuss roles and strategies for the upcoming state elections in several states due next year, to delegate responsibility for election campaigns and other events lined up and further discuss the role of today's youth in nation-building. The future road-map on various issues will be thoroughly discussed and delivered in this meeting," it said.

The Assembly polls are likely to be held in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Goa and Manipur in February-March next year.

This would be the first national executive meeting of BJYM since Lok Sabha member Tejasvi Surya assumed charge as the national president in September last year.

"It is expected that some key points related to further strengthening the organisational work will be delivered in this meeting. The Yuva Morcha will talk about numerous government schemes that have successfully benefitted millions of people and also further brainstorm to suggest new policies and schemes that would prove to be supportive and encouraging for the youth," the statement added.

The BJP leadership has asked all its morchas to conclude their national executive meetings by October. A 2-day executive meeting of the Scheduled Caste (SC) Morcha was held in Varanasi and the Scheduled Tribes (ST) Morcha organised its national executive on September 23-24 in Jharkhand's Ranchi.

The BJP Mahila Morcha held its national executive in Dehradun on September 26-27.

# Covid may bring high risks of severe disease, death by disrupting key metabolic signals



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Covid-19 may bring high risks of severe disease and death in many patients by disrupting key metabolic signals and thereby triggering hyperglycemia, according to a new study published in a journal Cell Metabolism.

Researchers at Weill Cornell Medicine and NewYork-Presbyterian found that hyperglycemia—having high blood sugar levels—is common in hospitalized Covid-19 patients and is strongly associated with worse outcomes. The researchers also found evidence suggesting that SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes Covid-19, can induce hyperglycemia by disrupting fat cells' production of adiponectin, a hormone that helps regulate blood sugar levels.

who have no history of diabetes. To better understand this important but mysterious aspect of Covid-19, Dr. Lo and colleagues analyzed the records of 3,854 patients who were hospitalized with Covid-19 at NewYork-Presbyterian /Weill Cornell Medical Center, NewYork-Presbyterian Queens and NewYork-Presbyterian Lower Manhattan Hospital, in the first few months of the pandemic in the United States.

They found that a remarkably high proportion (49.7 percent) of these patients presented with hyperglycemia or developed it during their hospital stays.

Hyperglycemia in these Covid-19 patients was also strikingly associated with worse outcomes. Compared to patients with normal blood sugar levels, the patients with hyperglycemia were 9 times more likely to develop severe lung dysfunction (acute respiratory distress syndrome, or ARDS), 15 times more likely to be given mechanical ventilation, and 3 times more likely to die.

Further tests revealed that the Covid-19 ARDS patients had severe declines in blood levels of adiponectin, a hormone produced by fat cells which normally has a protective effect against diabetes by enhancing insulin sensitivity.

# Pvt sector needs to partner with Govt to treat cancer in rural areas: Naidu



IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday called upon the private sector to come forward and partner with the State Governments to provide modern cancer treatment facilities in the rural areas.

The Vice President, who embarked on an eight-day tour of the northeastern states, while inaugurating a PET-MRI wing at the state Cancer Institute in Guwahati, said that it would not only greatly help in more accurate diagnosis, but will

also reduce patients' exposure to radiation. It is only the 4th such machine in India and the first in the country, which is based on Time-of-Flight technology.

The Vice President lauded the Assam government and the state's medical fraternity for the services rendered during the pandemic. He also called for making healthcare more accessible and affordable to the common man. In this regard, he reiterated the Prime Minister's statement that there is a need to have at least one medical college in each district of the country.

Under the Distributed Cancer Care Model, it is planned to have one Apex Referral Centre called L1, Comprehensive Cancer Hospitals attached to Government Medical Colleges called L2s and Diagnostic and Day Care Centres with Radiation adjacent to District hospitals called L3s.

Referring to the aim to create patient-centric cancer institutions to deliver standardized and affordable care closer to the patients' homes, instead of a single apex hospital handling a cancer patient's

# Naidu also urged all the State Governments to include lessons on the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles in the school curricula

treatment, Naidu noted that they would provide high-quality cancer care closer to home and reduce out-of-pocket expenses for cancer patients.

The Vice President said palliative care was a crucial area that required greater attention of the governments and health professionals. "Palliative care is basically supportive care and seeks to improve the quality of life of patients," he added.

Naidu also urged all the state governments to include lessons on the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles in the school curricula to make children aware of the need to prevent non-communicable diseases. He called for a national campaign to bring awareness among people about 'lifestyle diseases'.

As per the Indian Council of Medical Research report, there were 14 lakh new cancer cases in 2020 and this number is estimated to rise to 16 lakh by 2025. "I am told that the north-eastern region of India has a huge burden of cancer with Papum Pare district of Arunachal Pradesh reporting the highest incidence of the disease in India.



# Rahul slams Govt over Chinese incursions

**New Delhi:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday hit out at the Government over alleged Chinese incursions in Ladakh and Uttarakhand.

He also took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi using his 56-inch chest remark that he made at rallies in the run up to the 2014 Lok Sabha polls.

"China plus Pakistan plus 'Mr 56 inch' is equal to Increasing Chinese occupation of India's land," he said in a tweet in Hindi, while referring to Ladakh and Uttarakhand.

Close to 100 soldiers of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) transgressed the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Barahoti sector in Uttarakhand on August 30. The Chinese troops returned from the area after spending few hours, people familiar with the development had said.

There was no official comment on the Chinese transgression.

The incident came amid a continuing standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in a number of areas in eastern



Ladakh though both sides completed disengagement in two sensitive locations.

The Chinese side has also significantly ramped up infrastructure development along the LAC in the sector. India has been maintaining a strict vigil along the nearly 3,500-km LAC following the eastern Ladakh standoff.

The border standoff between the Indian and Chinese militaries erupted on May 5 last year in eastern Ladakh following a violent clash in the Pangong lake area. Both sides gradually enhanced

their deployment by rushing in tens of thousands of soldiers as well as heavy weaponry.

In February, the two sides completed the withdrawal of troops and weapons from the north and south banks of the Pangong lake in line with an agreement on disengagement.

Each side currently has around 50,000 to 60,000 troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the sensitive sector. Gandhi and his Congress party have been attacking the government over alleged Chinese incursions in Ladakh.

## 664 Covid-19 cases, 8 deaths in Karnataka

**Bengaluru:** Karnataka added 664 fresh Covid-19 cases and eight deaths on Sunday, pushing the caseload to 29,77,889 and the toll to 37,819. The day also saw 711 people being discharged, taking the total number of recoveries to 29,27,740, leaving 12,301 active cases, a health department bulletin said. Bengaluru Urban accounted for the maximum number of 196 cases and three deaths, it said.

After several weeks, Dakshina Kannada district, which was the second major Covid hotspot, saw a decline in numbers.

However, Mysuru on Sunday reported 101 fresh infections and one death. Other districts too reported fresh cases, including 77 in Dakshina Kannada, 52 in Kodagu, 45 in Hassan, 43 in Uttara Kannada and 33 in Udipi.

Bagalkote, Bidar, Gadag, Kalaburagi and Raichur reported zero infections and no Covid-19 related deaths. Twenty four districts reported zero fatalities, the bulletin said. A total of 1,26,386 samples were tested in the State on Sunday, taking the cumulative number of specimens examined so far in Karnataka to 4.80 crore. The number of vaccinations done so far in the State rose to 5.69 crore, with 21,971 people being inoculated on Sunday.

PTI

## ₹15.30 cr distributed among 306 Covid orphans in Maha

**Mumbai:** A sum of ₹15.30 crore has been deposited in the bank accounts of 306 children orphaned by Covid-19 in 24 districts of Maharashtra, State Women and Child Development Minister Yashomati Thakur said on Sunday.

The money was disbursed as part of the State Government's decision to give ₹5 lakh each to such children, who number around 600, she said. The rest of the children would also get money in their accounts soon, the minister added.

Efforts were on to help these with children with education and other welfare measures, Thakur said.

PTI

## Drugs worth ₹20-25 crore recovered along LoC in Uri



**Jammu:** Narcotics with Pakistani markings worth ₹20-25 crore have been recovered by the alert troops of the Indian Army in the Uri sector of North Kashmir's Baramulla district.

According to a Defence spokesman, "two bags were recovered by the Indian troops after noticing the suspicious movement along the line of control in the Uri sector on October 2, 2021". The bags contained a large amount of contraband material weighing approximately 25-30 kilograms. The packages recovered by the troops had Pakistani markings.

The spokesman said the exact nature of drugs like substance is being ascertained through concerned authorities. The value of the suspected contraband is around ₹20 - 25 crores in the black market, he added.

According to a Defence Spokesman, the huge drug haul along the Line of Control showcases the nefarious design of Pakistan based

narco - terror nexus and its inimical intent to finance and abet terror in India. This drug bust is a huge setback to the Pakistan narco-terror nexus.

Meanwhile, Jammu & Kashmir Police recovered an AK-47, a night vision device, three magazines and ammunition, which were dropped by a drone as was evident from the packing, from Phallian Mandal in Jammu late Saturday night.

"One AK-47, a night vision device, 3 magazines and ammunition that were dropped by a drone as evident from packing were recovered at Phallian Mandal in Jammu last night," J-k police spokesman said in a written statement.

The drone dropped the consignment shortly after LG Manoj Sinha inaugurated the Retreat ceremony at the Octroi post in Suchegarh area along the International border in RS Pura.

PNS



Women participate in Dandiya competition organised by Maitreyee-Pahachaan Mithila Ki ahead of Navratri festival, in Patna, on Sunday

### INTELLECTUALS, ACADEMICIANS GATHER

## Reviving tradition of Kashmiriyat in Valley

**Srinagar:** Taking a leap from virtual to the real world, a group of intellectuals and academicians gathered here on Saturday in an attempt to revive 'Kashmiriyat', a tradition of unity and communal harmony in the strife-torn valley.

The group known as "Samanbal" (a place where people meet) was initiated on a new social media platform where voices from the valley and displaced Kashmiri Pandit community were conversing often about reviving the centuries-old culture of religious syncretism in Kashmir.

The group was initiated by Javed Dar from Baramulla, a post-graduate in political science, along with Maier Majeed from Ratnipora, who is also a post-graduate in the same subject, and Dr Nusrat Amin, an assistant professor in the

Kashmir University who teaches Urdu.

Renowned artist Inder Salim, a member of the displaced community, said, "It is history which is repeating itself. Pandits and Muslims belong to the same milieu. The desire to communicate with each other is there despite political narratives. There will be an urge between the two communities to create new dynamics of reaching out to each other."

Inder Salim, who wears his name as a badge of 'Kashmiriyat' as it includes a Pandit and a Muslim name, had specially flown from Delhi for this gathering.

Mohd Amin Bhat, a renowned writer and TV personality, who broke down many times during the get-together, said, "The circle of life was complete when I met my brothers.

It was a reunion of detached parts of myself."

Dar and Maier said they were pained by whatever happened in 1990s and this group's creation was a part of their desire for the truth and to work out in a way to bring the displaced community back or at least understand an unbiased narrative.

"We were guided by Dr Nusrat and some others and today we are happy that finally we are meeting physically," says Dar. The meeting was graced by senior IAS officer Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Secretary of Tribal Affairs Department and holding charge of Chief Executive Officer of Mission Youth, who said it was a nice attempt by the organisers to host such an event and urged them to hold many more such meets in remote areas of

the valley.

"It is good that people have moved away from their comfort zones in holding such a unique meeting and I am glad to be present here," he said.

Mantasha Binti Rashid, a Kashmir Administrative Service officer of 2011 who is currently posted with the Srinagar Development Authority, said the meeting was a demonstration of power of the virtual world.

"From the boundaries of the Internet, we met physically only to understand the connection that Muslims and Pandits share in the valley. Irrespective of difficulties, Kashmiri Pandits and Kashmiri Muslims are inseparable," she said. Dr Nusrat Amin said that there is a narrative being built on some social media platforms that the entire Kashmiri

Muslim community was responsible for the 1990 exodus which had stirred animosity between the two communities. "The aims of this group was to find voices which will bridge the divisions between Kashmiri Muslims and Kashmiri Pandits and I am glad that we have achieved it," she said and pointed that some Kashmiri Pandits had joined the event through video-conferencing.

Inam-ul-Nabi, a renowned political and social activist, spoke about his association with Kashmiri Pandits and said, "The two communities have been banks of the same river since 1990 and there is a need to build broken bridges and bring our brothers and sisters back to the valley. We are all sons of the same soil and this truth needs no political narrative."

PTI

## Zydus Cadila proposes ₹1,900 for 3-dose Covid vaccine for 12+

### Govt negotiating to bring it down

**New Delhi:** With talks underway between the Central Government and Zydus Cadila over the pricing of the Covid-19 vaccine ZyCoV-D, the pharma company is learnt to have proposed a price of ₹1,900 for its three-dose jab that can be given to those above 12 years of age.

However, the Government is negotiating for a reduction in price and a final decision on it is likely to be taken this week, sources in the know of the developments told PTI. The Government had on Thursday said that the indigenously-developed, world's first DNA-based needle-free Covid-19 vaccine by Zydus Cadila will be introduced in the nationwide anti-coronavirus vaccination drive shortly.

"The company has proposed a

price of ₹1,900 inclusive of taxes for its three-dose jab.

"Negotiations are on. The company has been asked to reconsider all the aspects regarding the cost of the vaccine. A final decision on the price of the vaccine is likely to be taken this week," a source said.

Another source said the ZyCoV-D has to be differently priced than Covaxin and Covishield as, apart from being a three-dose vaccine, there is a needle-free jet injector used for administering the vaccine that costs ₹30,000. That jet injector can be used for administering around 20,000 doses.

The vaccine is to be given on days zero, 28 and 56. According to sources, around three rounds of meetings have taken place so far between the Centre and the company, the last one on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the ministry is also waiting for the recommendations

from the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) for introducing ZyCoV-D in the inoculation drive and prioritising beneficiaries focusing on those aged 12-18 years with comorbidities.

The NTAGI will provide the protocol and framework for the introduction of this vaccine in the Covid-19 immunisation drive, an official source said.

As far as the price of the vaccine at which it will be procured is concerned, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, at a press conference on Thursday, said the Government is in conversation with the manufacturers.

"Since this is a three-dose vaccine and comes with a needleless delivery system, it would have a differential pricing than the existing vaccines which are being used in the Covid-19 vaccination programme," he said.

PTI

## BJP MP reiterates demand for REET cancellation

**Jaipur:** BJP's Rajya Sabha MP Kirodi Lal Meena on Sunday reiterated his demand for the cancellation of the recently held Rajasthan Eligibility Examination for Teachers, alleging that the paper had been leaked before the examination.

He alleged that not only the question papers but the answer sheets too were leaked before the exam in Sawai Madhopur district.

Meena said question papers can be leaked from the exam centres but the leaking of the answer sheet is not possible without the involvement of the secrecy wing officials of the Board of Secondary Education which conducted the exam last Sunday across the state. "There is evidence that both the papers and answer sheets were leaked before the exam started. The answer sheets cannot be there at the exam centres and it can be leaked only with the involvement of secrecy wing official," he told reporters here.

Meena said it is REET candidates' demand that the exam should be cancelled and a CBI inquiry should be ordered. After several irregularities and negligence came to light in the conduct of the exam, the state government suspended one RAS officer, two RPS officers, one head constable, two constables and over a dozen personnel of the Education Department.

The exam, for which 16.51 lakh candidates had enrolled, was held for the recruitment of over 30,000 teachers.

PTI

### ASSEMBLY BYPOLL

## Maha: Ex-Sena MLA to contest on BJP ticket

**Aurangabad:** Former Shiv Sena MLA Subhash Sabne has decided to quit the Uddhav Thackeray-led party and said he would join BJP.

The BJP has declared Sabne's candidature for the upcoming assembly byelection to the Deglur seat in the Nanded district. Sabne had represented Deglur and Mukhed constituencies in his previous three terms as an MLA. The candidature of Sabne for the October 30 Deglur bypoll was declared by BJP general secretary B L Santosh through a tweet on Sunday.

Sabne, meanwhile, said the former chief minister and Congress leader Ashok Chavan enjoys a "monopoly" in the Nanded district.

The Sena shares power with the NCP and Congress in Maharashtra. Chavan is a cabinet minister. "I am going to join BJP tomorrow (October 4). I have no complaint

against Shiv Sena president and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. He gave me everything. I am fed up with the monopoly of Nanded guardian minister Ashok Chavan. Our party workers were beaten up in the Biloli police station," he alleged.

Speaking to a news channel, he alleged that Sena members in the district planning committee didn't get any funds. "Ashok Chavan is trying to finish Shiv Sena in Nanded. I had told Sena leaders to keep Deglur seat with the Sena as I was the first runner-up in the 2019 assembly polls from that seat," Sabne said.

The byelection for the Deglur-Biloli constituency was necessitated after the death of sitting MLA Raosaheb Antapurkar. Voting will take place on October 30. Counting of votes will be taken up on November 2, an official said.

PTI

## Mentally ill woman kills 8-year-old son in Jhalawar, flees home

**Kota (Rajasthan):** A mentally challenged woman allegedly killed her eight-year-old son by slitting his throat with a knife in Sunel town of Rajasthan's Jhalawar district, police said on Sunday.

The accused woman, Mamta Gurjar (32) was reported to be mentally ill and had been living separately from her husband for the last six years at her maternal home, SHO of Sunel police station Mansiram said.

The deceased boy was identified as Vijay Kumar Gurjar.

The woman executed the heinous crime on Saturday night when her son was asleep in the veranda while her father and brother were sleeping inside, he added.

The woman took her son to another room where she allegedly slit his throat with a knife and escaped, the SHO said.

When the woman's father and brother woke up early Sunday morning, they found the boy lying dead in a pool of blood following which they informed the police, he further said. On a complaint lodged by the boy's maternal uncle, the police lodged a case of murder under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code against Mamta Gurjar and began an investigation, he added.

The body was handed over to the family members after a post-mortem on Sunday morning and efforts are underway to arrest the boy's mother, he said.

PTI

## Dombivli gangrape case: Athawale demands capital punishment for culprits

**Thane:** Union Minister Ramdas Athawale on Sunday said the people accused of gang-raping a 15-year-old girl from Dombivli in Thane district must be given capital punishment for the heinous crime.

After meeting the victim and her kin and donating ₹1 lakh collected by his RPI(A) workers, Athawale also said he would ask MHADA officials to provide the family a house. Athawale said he would write to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to increase the compensation given to the victim's family from ₹10 lakh to ₹20 lakh.

"The accused must be given capital punishment. The case must be tried in a fast track court and a special public prosecutor must be appointed. Trial must be completed in six months," he told reporters here. The family faces threat from those connected with the accused and, hence, the police should give them proper protection, Athawale demanded.

A 15-year-old girl had alleged that she was raped several times between January 29 and September 22 this year by 33 youth, all of whom have been arrested.

PTI

## Mehbooba: Welcome Centre's decision to start retreat ceremony at Suchetgarh

**Srinagar:** PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Sunday welcomed the Centre's decision to start the Beat the Retreat ceremony at Suchetgarh on the Indo-Pak border, saying it will give a fillip to tourism and also improve cross-border ties.

Jammu & Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday inaugurated the retreat ceremony at the Octroi Post, Suchetgarh, on the international border.

"Welcome GOIs decision to start Beat the Retreat ceremony at Suchetgarh. Will certainly give a fillip to tourism and hope its taken further by using it as a trade and travel route between Suchetgarh and Sialkot," Mehbooba wrote on Twitter.

The former Chief Minister of the erstwhile State said such confidence building measures improve cross-border ties and benefit both the sides economically too.

PTI



Women labourers return home with grass to make broomsticks at Krishnanagar in Nadia district on Sunday

PTI





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Yesterday once more?

The wedding of Russia's Grand Duke is simply an event, with no real significance

Grand Duke George Mikhailovich Romanov got married on Saturday in St Petersburg, Russia. A conservative newspaper said of the wedding, "*The Romanovs are back*". The use of the word "back" may have embarrassed the 40-year-old great-grandson of a cousin of Russia's last Czar, Nicholas II. His marriage, coming a century after the Czar and his family were killed, may have kindled memories of the Romanovs and nothing more. The Russian Orthodox Church may have since recognised them as near-martyr saints in 2000. The Russian Supreme Court may have rehabilitated the family in 2008 by ruling they were victims of political repression. However, these attempts were meant only to rehabilitate the Romanovs, not restore them. There was no will of the dynasty backing the Czar's descendants or George's marriage. It was an event, that is all, even though a part of Europe's royalty and aristocracy was present at the cathedral, using the opportunity to dress in all their splendour, recounting how their world of pomp and ceremony looked all those years ago. The world has since passed them by. To be fair to them, the current Romanovs never sought to return either to Russia or to the throne. Most Russians of this generation may not even recognise the name. However, whenever the history of communism is written, and every time it is rewritten, it will begin with the Romanovs who, for Lenin, symbolised everything that the new, people's world he was about to create would not be about.



The Russian Revolution shocked the Czarists. How can the Russian people run a Government by themselves when only the king or Czar has the "Divine Right" to rule? Lenin delegitimised the Czar's legitimisation. That is what happened in 1917. If the association of the Czar, the Sultan, the Kaiser, or a Maharaja in India, with a Pope or the Patriarch of Constantinople or a God, gave them an unchallenged right to rule, Lenin's populism erased it all, allowing for the assertion of the right of the masses to appoint, change or endorse their administrators. Russia is not rigidly Communist today, it's a liberalised economy with a few vestiges of the Soviet era. The Revolution took it out of the feudal lag and catapulted it into modernity. Lenin's success is installing a regime while having no battalions. His older brother was executed by the Czarist authority for dissidence. While that strengthened Lenin's resolve to dismantle the monarchy, he had a larger ideological motive to put a participative, political order in place. Would George Romanov see it that way? His return to St Petersburg is as a private person. However, his elitist trappings were intact, stuck with the caprices of the rich, the shine of the diamonds, and the glow of the tiaras. Did he know that his great aunts, the daughters of the Czar, survived the first spray of bullets because they were protected by diamonds, collectively weighing over a kilo, sewn into their clothing?

### PICTALK



An EgyptAir aircraft at the Ben Gurion International Airport in Lod, Israel

AP

## Penny wise

The Government's obsession with tackling COVID-19 is hurting other health fronts

The Coronavirus pandemic has not only played havoc with the lives of people but also impacted the minds of policymakers. The Corona 'fixation', as we may call it, is now proving to be a fatal error of judgement. A severe health crisis may be on its way if the policymakers do not take into account a broader overview of the nation's health care system. Recent research by Ficci has revealed that it would be a grave mistake to ignore other diseases and take eyes off the diseases caused by other viruses and bacteria that are equally dangerous as COVID-19, if not more. The Ficci-Elsevier research said there could be a 20 per cent increase in deaths due to tuberculosis alone. The paper also estimated that another 10 per cent rise in mortality could occur due to HIV over the next five years. If the data of deaths due to non-COVID diseases is collated, the number would be significantly high. This is indeed a cause for concern and a wakeup call for the policymakers who have been managing only Corona and diverting funds and priorities for tackling it.



Shockingly, the obsession with Corona has led to increased misery of patients suffering from cancer. An estimated 51,000 cancer-related surgeries were either cancelled or put on hold during the second wave of Corona in April and May. True, the situation was grave at the time but the Government should have made arrangements for the critically ill patients. Not only was this not done but private hospitals were instructed not to entertain patients without the RT-PCR test report. Many people who tried to visit hospitals for other ailments at that time complain that these hospitals did not start treatment before seeing the COVID negative report, even from people with accident-related injuries. It was gross mismanagement by the health care system. Apart from this, over 22 lakh infants have missed their mandatory vaccines due to a shift in the priorities of the Government. It makes them vulnerable to many diseases that could have been avoided by the time-tested vaccination programme. No denying that Corona is a pandemic and needs to be given utmost importance but the policymakers have a bigger responsibility towards people — they ought to ensure that every citizen is given her/his due. Caring for Corona patients cannot be an excuse for ignoring non-Corona sufferers.

# Ideology a must for unity in any party

The Congress was founded basically to rally against the British but the party lost its compass and the moorings after Independence



PRAFULL GORADIA

It is desirable for every political party to be wedded to an ideology, a comprehensive belief to hold it together. There are times when the party may be in Opposition, with its leaders having few fishes and loaves of power to distribute to members and cadres. Even when in Government, not every member can be included among the beneficiaries. In all such events, an ideology acts as a binding or uniting factor.

The Congress is a useful example to illustrate this phenomenon. It was founded in 1885 to enable leading Indians to voice their grievances. Before going much further, emerged MK Gandhi. By 1919/20, he had espoused the cause of saving the throne of the Sultan of Turkey (who lost in World War I) and of retaining his title as the Caliph of all Sunni Islam. Caliph in Arabic was Khilafat and, therefore, this movement was named the Khilafat movement. Gandhi and his senior colleagues, the Ali brothers, considered religion as an attraction superior to a civilian emperor.

Gandhi soon gave a call for non-cooperation against the British to awaken Indians to the value of freedom. Soon enough, a police station at Chauri Chaura was set on fire by some agitators.

While the British ruled, the Congress did not need any ideology. It was free to respond to all and any call of British provocation, until they left India in 1947. The question of ideology should have arisen after that but the party made do instead with programmes like the 'socialistic pattern of society', which it coined at Avadi in 1955, besides Panchsheel, Non-alignment and Indira Gandhi's 20-Point Programme. In the bargain, the Congress ship had no compass and was, to that extent, like an ancient European ship.

To get back to the general sphere, an ideology should preferably be indigenous and not foreign. Surprisingly, many or most political parties follow ideologies of foreign origin. The new ideas called Marxism gave birth to a new Russian



empire in 1917 and misled it to its breakup and demise by 1991. The core of Marxism, contained in *Das Kapital*, was largely written in the British Museum and parts of it in Europe; its formation had nothing to do with Russia. In fact, Karl Marx had contended that a large and strong proletariat was necessary to engineer a workers' revolution. Uncannily, Russia had a very small working class and a large peasantry living in villages with fears that the Communists would collectivise their land.

China is also on the Communist path. Neither Germany nor Britain went Communist. During the regime of Adolf Hitler, Germany followed Fascism as its ideology which was innovated in Italy. It represented class collaboration rather than class exploitation of capitalism and class conflict of communism.

The US has two parties: The Republicans are more capitalist and the Democrats less, rather like the Liberals. The Scandinavian countries practise socialism or welfareism. In India, we practise 'dynamic socialism', in Nehru's words. It is only since 2014 India is practising



WHILE THE BRITISH RULED, THE CONGRESS DID NOT NEED ANY IDEOLOGY. THE PARTY WAS FREE TO RESPOND TO ALL AND ANY CALL OF BRITISH PROVOCATION, UNTIL THEY LEFT INDIA IN 1947. THE QUESTION OF IDEOLOGY SHOULD HAVE ARISEN AFTER THAT

its own indigenous ideology namely Hindu nationalism. Call it Hindudom, if you like. Its emphasis is on dharma. It is not that India has abandoned the rule of law; it still prevails. The rule of dharma has an ethical element in it; it is defined at length in the *Bhagwat Gita* by Krishna. Veer Savarkar added to the concept in his lucid but brief book. The latest effort is a volume called *The Grammar of Hindudom*.

An Indian would grasp the contents of the *Grammar* quickly because the ideas are native to his land. But ask an Indian to understand Marxism and it would be a tough going; merely because the ideas are foreign. This question was best illustrated by BR Ambedkar. He decided that he would not die a Hindu; then which faith to convert to? He rejected Islam and Christianity because he felt that they would be denationalising; they were founded in West Asia, far away from India.

After much thought and consultation, the learned Ambedkar opted for Buddhism; primarily because it was first preached in India. It was in India to the extent that its founder, Gautam

Buddha, was adopted to be the ninth avatar of Vishnu. The message of Buddhism would be easy to understand by most common folk. Ambedkar died a Buddhist.

For an election, when a candidate for a constituency is selected, the first question every party asks is whether he belongs to the voting area, so that the voters can relate to her/him immediately. And equally, s/he can relate to them. A candidate from another province would be at sixes and sevens and would take a long time to get familiar with the constituency. There would also be a factor of *apnapan*. Naveen Patnaik may or may not address his people in Odia but he belongs to Odisha and everyone knows it. A Bengali grown up in Bhubaneswar would not have the same effect. What is true of a candidate should be true of an ideology. What is true of a teacher should ideally apply to the lesson.

(This concludes the 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

### KHELA HOBE DONE RIGHT

Sir — West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's win with a thumping majority was a forgone conclusion. The BJP's fight was only nominal; it was not so much to secure a victory as much as to reduce the margin of loss. Her victory by a margin of over 58,000 votes — an all-time record — meant a crushing defeat for the BJP in the crucial by-polls. Bhabanipur is a stronghold of the TMC and Mamata Banerjee is a charismatic leader and the sitting Chief Minister for the result to be any different.

The significance of Mamata Banerjee's election as an MLA is that it will ensure her continuance as the Chief Minister. The TMC's victories in all the three constituencies — Bhabanipur, Jangipur and Samserganj — reinforce that the BJP is no match for the TMC for all its wish to extend its reach to West Bengal. The TMC's political jingle, *Khela hobey* (Game on), captures the political lines drawn not just in West Bengal, but across India too. It resonates with people across the country. Those who want India to stay secular are heartened that West Bengal has rejected the BJP and all that it stands for, in particular virulent nationalism and ill-concealed crony capitalism.

G David Milton | Maruthancond

### LITTLE HUMANITY AMONG HUMANS

Sir — It is amazing to wake up and have jovial mornings by seeing stray dogs wait their tail out of love for food and play. October 4 is considered the World Animal Welfare Day to look forward to the welfare of our fellow beings and make this world a harmonious place. The burgeoning magnitude of cruelty towards animals is despairing. In the hope of fathoming the curse of fatal diseases by vivisections, what we also get are counterproductive results because a culture of indifference and hopelessness is created as people learn to ignore lifeless bodies on roads. What we are creating for our fellow beings is a dystopian world and an unsustainable future in which we are doomed to fail. I got to meet amazing people who at

## You go, girls!



World records show the rising and shining of women's cricket in all formats. Women players around the world are playing like champions and displaying all-round skills. A few examples are Australia winning 26 ODI games continuously, till India put brakes on it by winning the 3rd ODI in a series in September 2021. Indian women batter Smriti Mandhana created several records as she scored her maiden Test century in the ongoing series against Australia. Mandhana became the first Indian woman cricketer to score a ton on

Australian soil and the second woman to reach triple figures in a pink-ball Test match. She also held a record partnership of 102 runs for second wicket with Punam Raut (for India).

Belinda Clark of Australia scored the first double century of WODI (Women's One Day International) with 229 not out versus Denmark in 1997 (13 years before Sachin Tendulkar scored the first ODI double hundred). New Zealand's Amelia Kerr holds the record for the highest individual score in a WODI with 232 not out scored against Ireland in June 2018. Ellyse Perry (Aus) became the first woman to score 5,000 runs and take 300 wickets in international cricket. More matches across all formats have to be played to take it even ahead. Cricket tournaments like Women's IPL can earn more revenue for it to build better infrastructure and encourage more women players with all types of facilities.

Nivriti Sreelekha | Secunderabad

a really early age have found their purpose in serving animals. A significant proportion of their earnings is spent to aid the lives of stray animals and, not to mention, this task takes commendable efforts from a big work force, finance, transport and mutual cooperation. I wonder how people commit brutal acts towards other living beings, believing in the false superiority of their own. I often witness acts of cruelty against animals and also against those who try to protect them.

Anushka Jaiswal | Ujjain

### WALK THE TALK, BEIJING

Sir — The 13th-round talk between India and China is soon to be initiated. The agenda is to build consensus and start the disengagement process. The number of Chinese troops is increasing fast, especially after the formation of the Quad & AUKUS. Though India is not a member of AUKUS, its formation has made China tense. From our side, where we are trying to pull

back from the Hot Springs area, the Chinese are increasing their strength with continuous deployment.

It is a matter of concern that the progress of such bilateral talks between India and China is too little. But thankfully, both are at least engaging for a constructive dialogue. It is possible that what we are expecting is a clear solution for Panging Iso and Ladakh, China may never do so. Perhaps, it's just keeping us busy in talks and is hatching a conspiracy in the backyard against us. It is essential to be prepared at all fronts all the time. If China increases troops and artillery deployment along with the dialogue, we must also do the same, or more, for the sake of protecting our national interests. We must value the situations right now and be fully prepared to meet any adversary.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUND BITE

Welcome the GOI's decision to start 'Beating Retreat' ceremony at Suchetgarh. Such measures improve cross-border ties.



Former Chief Minister

—Mehbooba Mufti



I have initiated a dialogue with the Taliban for an inclusive Government to include the Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks.

Pakistan Prime Minister

—Imran Khan

For the first time on Indian screens. Joining our mass spectacle #LIGER. IRON MIKE TYSON. #Namaste TYSON.



Telugu actor

—Vijay Deverakonda



I would advise that, two to three days before, especially around the India match, the players should avoid social and conventional media.

Former Pakistan bowler

—Umar Gul

The problem in the age of PM Narendra Modi is that they are not ready to accept others' views.



Congress leader

—Kapil Sibal



FIRST COLUMN

UNIVERSAL RICE FORTIFICATION POLICY

Fascination with technology is in contrast to diversity and community-owned methods



The biggest contradiction, or oxymoron, in nutrition policy today must be the juxtaposition of the terms 'universal fortification' and 'diverse diet'. However, universal cereal (rice) fortification will promote even more eating of rice, killing any hope of diversifying the diet. How does the 'push' for fortified rice fit into a diverse food plate? According to the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, a 'diverse' and healthy plate of food should contain no more than 40n per cent of the total calories from cereals. A middle-aged sedentary woman-should have no more than 200 gm of rice on her daily plate. Yet, the proposed universal rice fortification is likely to ask people to eat 250 to 300 gm rice per day, which is contrary to the requirement for diet diversity. This is an oxymoron indeed. What will the health message be: eat more rice as it is good for you? Or eat less rice and more diverse food?



Rice fortification is exceedingly complex, at many levels. The regulatory requirement for the level of iron in fortified rice is very wide, set at 28-42.5 mg of iron per kilogram of rice. Setting an exact value will depend on habitual rice intake which varies very widely in India, from negligible in the Western and Northern states like Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab, to greater than 425 gm per day in North-Eastern and Eastern states like Odisha, Nagaland, Tripura and Manipur. There is a deeper problem: there are 1000s of varieties of rice grown in India. On the technical and quality-control side, it is important that the fortified rice kernel matches the color and shape of the rice kernels it is fortifying, otherwise, odd grains may be picked out while cleaning the rice when it is dry. When washing the rice, the fortified kernels should behave exactly like the other kernels- not float differently, as this will result in their being discarded in the wash. It may be convenient to reduce the diversity of rice grains that are grown and procured. The tail will wag the dog. Can we improve diet diversity by community level agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry? Recently, researchers from the MS Swaminathan Foundation, ICAR and the Borlaug Institute for South Asia, reported on an approach that was designed with community inputs in Koraput and Wardha. They aimed to increase the availability of nutrient-dense cereals and pulses by on-farm crop interventions, promotion of nutrition gardens with nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables, increasing access to animal food sources through fishery and poultry, and nutrition awareness. They even aimed to introduce new vegetables into the horticultural space, like the Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato. This was the 'Farming System for Nutrition', as envisioned by the MS Swaminathan Foundation: note the simplicity in the approach. They describe how this approach, over three years, was able to quantitatively improve by up to two-fold, the intake of diverse high-quality foods in households of Koraput and Wardha. Indeed, the improved diet was able to meet greater than 90 per cent of most micronutrient requirements. All with community involvement and ownership, with no need for global technological solution.

The fascination with technology and 'scaling up' is in direct contrast to diversity and local, community owned methods. As policies, they are inherently contradictory. The reductionist techno-food approach is an alluring and dangerous siren song, less compelling than the expansionist view of dietary diversity, food exploration, and the freedom to eat whatever one wants. It also has not worked. (Prof Anura Kurpad is Professor of Physiology and Nutrition in St John's Medical College, Bengaluru. Prof Harshpal Singh Sachdev is Senior Consultant in Paediatrics and Clinical Epidemiology, Sitaram Bhartia Institute of Science and Research, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)

Yuva shakti: Sports to start-ups

The National Centre of Sports Sciences & Research envisions to promote sports education for a physically and emotionally healthy youth



NISITH PRAMANIK

(The writer is Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports and Minister of State for Home Affairs, Government of India. The views expressed are personal.)



conflict resolution, discipline, time management, leadership, tolerance, and decreased risk for anxiety and depression. To create a physically and emotionally fit future generation, the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has come up with the National Youth Policy. Despite various challenges of COVID-19, India has made a mark in sports by securing seven medals in the Tokyo Olympics and a remarkable tally of 19 medals in the Paralympics. With a view to identify and train young sports personalities, the Government is setting up the National Centre of Sports Sciences & Research (NCSSR) in New Delhi to promote education, research and innovation in sports science for enhancing performances

Bio-Chemistry, Sports Physiology, Sports Biomechanics, Sports Physiotherapy, Training methods and Sports Nutrition, Sports Psychology and Sports Medicine in six Universities across the country. To ensure delivery of services, the NCSSR will adopt a holistic and integrated approach in enabling the elite athletes to outperform by nurturing sports talents and capabilities, reducing the rate of injury and evolving a swift rehabilitation model by applying techniques of sports science and sports medicine based on a Hub and Spoke model. This initiative will create a pool of highly proficient manpower to reduce dependency on foreign experts, alongside improving sports

research in the aforesaid universities. This is a definite step towards Atma Nirbhar Bharat in field of sports. The Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD), in Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, an Institution of national importance under the Ministry will be offering a specialised two-year Masters Degree program in sports science. This will encompass specialised courses in sports psychology, sports physiology, sports medicine and sports management by providing hands on practice to cater to the futuristic requirements of the sports industry from the ensuing academic year (2022). Today, thousands of Indians have become successful in the profession of sports.

Sports industry is expected to offer lucrative career options such as team managers, tacticians, fitness and dietary advisors, personal trainers, referees, umpires, psychologists, physiologists, sports physicians among many others. The sports sector contributes to India's economy by providing sizable employment and various commercial activities related to the sports ecosystem. With a worldwide value of almost \$500 billion, the sports industry is growing by offering innumerable entrepreneurial opportunities. Those pursuing programmes through the NCSSR and the RGNIYD will have increased demand in sports besides embarking on start-ups and other professional roles in the open job market. Some of the possible start-ups include: photography, media and event management, retail stores, sports writing, sports club, sports radio, sports coaching, personal trainer, fitness expert, academies, sports schools, sports infrastructure, equipment manufacturer, sports restaurants, consultancies, camps, sports app and website developers, magazine publisher, YouTube trainer, garments and accessories manufacturer, partnering with corporates to promote sports activities as employee engagement activity among others. These efforts will provide excellent opportunities to youth who wish to become sportspersons or take up a career in the field of sports and can educate and train themselves under these initiatives.

Maritime concerns with the ‘big fish’

The presence of Chinese trawlers in the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal jeopardises India’s maritime security by fishing in India’s EEZ

China happens to be the largest fishing nation producing approximately one-fifth of the global catch. Apart from freshwater fish, a vital part of the Chinese exports also come from the oceanic fish found in the deep sea. Interestingly, as per available reports, no fish are left in the South China Seadue to over-consumption. On the other hand, India occupies the second largest position (6.3 per cent) in producing fish that sustain 14,500,000 fishers. China does eye these fish not only for its domestic consumption but also for exporting them to support its fisheries sector. Beijing's illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in other countries' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) hasso far been overlooked.

According to the 2020 FAO report, "The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture", in 2018, China reported about 2.26 million tonnes from its "distant-water fishery" but provided details on species and fishing area only for 40 % of its "distant water catch". Thus, it has not divulged 60 per cent of its catch from the "distant waters" data. A significant part of this 60 per cent probably comes from its illegal fishing in the Indo-Pacific region, Eastern Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea in particular and is at the economic cost of other nations. The IUU Fishing Index', a civil society organisation headquartered in Geneva, ranked China first in its 2019 index.

China heavily subsidises to the extent of 94 per centof its fishing trawlers to encourage shipping in the international waters. Further subsidies and tax benefits on selling the "distant water" catch to the foreign markets apart from various medical benefits in case of injuries while fishing provides enough incentives to its people to carry out fishing activities. It comes as no surprise that China has the world's largest fishing fleet.

Beijing's illegal "fishing vessels"are equipped with state of the art 'catch and pack facilities'and are commonly sighted in the Eastern and Western Indian Ocean near the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, apart from the Arabian Sea. The 572 islands of Andaman and Nicobar witness the Chinese fishing trawlers carrying out illegal fishing as most of the islands are uninhabited. The Chinese trawlers make their way through the Coco and Greater Coco Islands and fish in the dark pitch hours, assuming that the Indian Coast Guard and Navy would not be alert.

The presence of the Chinese trawlers in the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal is a violation of India's sovereignty, as the fishing zones of these seas and ocean comes under India's EEZ, a rule well outlined by the UNCLOS in Article 56. The issue holds relevance to the national security narratives because of the following factors. First, it jeopardises India's maritime security by fishing in India's EEZ. Secondly, overfishing, especially in the regulated months when breeding happens, affects the



AS A THUMB RULE, CIVILIAN TRAWLERS CANNOT BE CARRYING EITHER THE ELITE IRREGULAR FORCES, LIVE AMMUNITION OR SURVEILLANCE MECHANISMS. CHINESE TRAWLERS HAVE PROVISIONS FOR ALL THREE. BESIDES THAT, THE NEXUS OF CHINA, PAKISTAN AND THE TALIBAN POSES SERIOUS DRUG TRAFFICKING ISSUES FOR INDIA

(The writer is an Assistant Professor at Central University of Punjab, Bathinda. The views expressed are personal.)



marine environment. Moreover, India's economic and cyber security can be exposed to sabotage.

From a geopolitical perspective, these "civilian" trawlers violate India's EEZ as People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia(paramilitary forces)accompanies them in the guise of civilian fishermen. These fishing vessels do not keep their automatic identification systems transmitter/responder activated, which is a mandatory requirement by the international agencies for fishing. Reports of 2020 suggest that around 450 such research vessels and fishing trawlers had entered various sectors of the Indian Ocean Region.

The role of Chinese maritime militiain fishing camouflage is well established. It was recognised by the PLA Daily in 2014 when it quoted that, 'Putting on camouflage, they qualify as soldiers; taking off the camouflage, they become law-abiding fishermen". The PLA controls these "fishermen", and their objectives overlap with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) agenda of "ocean grabbing", a method of fishing in which the small fishers of the victim countries are denied the marine resources of their own EEZ.

As these trawlers have space for storing live ammunition, a condition made mandatory for being called "Chinese fishing trawlers" and are equipped with sophisticated intelligence and surveillance systems, they amount to incremental strategies of asymmetrical advantage in order to have a gradual maritime foothold in the water bodies surrounding India. It blurs the distinction between combatants and non-combatants, a necessary condition for hot pursuits in UNCLOS and the International Humanitarian Law

(IHL). As a thumb rule, civilian trawlers cannot be carrying either the elite irregular forces, live ammunition or surveillance mechanisms. Chinese trawlers have provisions for all three. Besides that, fishing trawlers can potentiallybe used for trafficking drugs and arms from the Arabian Sea. The nexus of China, Pakistan and the Taliban poses serious drug trafficking issues for India. Maritime security is hence at threat because of IUU.

Militarisation of the Chinese artificial islands either in the SCS or in Feydhoo Finolhu Island can provide its militia with the possible support to accomplish the agenda of the CCP. In such a case, can the Chinese trawlers or research vessels then speak for its 'right of innocent passage'?An objective of the Chinese trawlers and militia is to regularise the Chinese presence in the "distant seas" to project power that helps Beijing in both peacetime and wartime. Maritime security and the freedom of high seas thus are hence strongly co-related with Chinese illegal and unregulated fishing.

China's illegal and unregulated fishing amounts to economic plunder of a nation's resources as they deplete the fishery resourcescan result in food and employment deprivation of the people of the coastal areas of India. The fishing industry provides employment to three critical sectors- catching, processing and marketing and contributes 1.07 per cent to the country's GDP. Fishes and Prawns are an essential source of protein in India's coastal areas. The demand for 'blue food' has increased due to an increasing population worldwide and in India. Any food resource depletion would increase prices

and affect the fiscal budget. Adverse effects on any of these sectors can hinder rural development and food security, thereby having the potential to cause social unrest.

From an environmental security perspective, the coral reefs near the Andaman and Nicobar Islands constitute a part of the world heritage and should be protected from the perils of IUU. Further, the use of LED lights and squid jigging equipment can eventually result in overexploitation leading to a scarcity of fish. There have been reports that illegal fishing is also done by dynamite blasts as well as bottom trawling. The Indian government also bans such materials and hence it requires more stringent measures by the necessary agencies. With an active policy of fusion of military and civilian facilities, Beijing's shipping trawlers can also damage India's undersea cables and cyber security.

Adoptingthe Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Bill of 2019 and the National Fisheries Policy of 2020 have introduced novel measures such as the mandatory requirement for trawlers to have suitable transponders and communication systems. Nevertheless, Chinese IUU has not stopped and still poses a danger to the maritime security of India and other coastal states. In the above context, both Quad and European Union's future Indo-Pacific policy have included IUU as an agenda for cooperation. Its strategic frustration related to Quad and AUKUS, apart from the EU's Indo-Pacific policy, is also related to its future control of its IUU, apart from its expansionist policies.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF CONSPIRACY TO DEFEAT ME. BUT PEOPLE HAVE VOTED AGAINST THIS CONSPIRACY. — WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE



IF PEOPLE WERE ALLOWED TO VOTE, THE RESULT WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT. IN SEVERAL BOOTHS, THE POLLS WERE RIGGED. — BJP LEADER PRIYANKA TIBREWAL



GLOBE TROTTER

**FIRST OFFICIAL EGYPTAIR FLIGHT LANDS IN ISRAEL**  
**Jerusalem:** Egypt's national carrier on Sunday made its first official direct flight to Israel since the two countries signed an historic 1979 peace treaty as an EgyptAir jet landed at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport. The airline's affiliate, AirSinai, has for decades operated flights to Israel without the company logo, out of fear of public backlash. The national carrier will now run three weekly flights between Cairo and Tel Aviv with the EgyptAir markings. The Israeli Embassy in Cairo tweeted that direct flights are "an important and welcome sign of strengthening bilateral ties between the two countries, especially economic relations."

**YEMEN: CLASHES AMONG SEPARATISTS KILL 10**  
**Sanaa:** Clashes between Yemeni separatists backed by the United Arab Emirates and a rival splinter group in the southern port city of Aden killed at least 10 people including four civilians on Saturday, security officials said.

**ITALIANS VOTE FOR MAYORS OF KEY CITIES**  
**Rome:** Millions of people in Italy started voting Sunday for new mayors, including in Rome and Milan, in an election widely seen as a test of political alliances before nationwide balloting just over a year away. The two days of voting end on Monday and the first results are expected afterwards. But many voters will have to wait two weeks to learn who their mayor will be. Runoffs will be held October 17-18 in municipalities with more than 15,000 people between the top two vote-getters if no single candidate garners more than 50% of the ballots.

**UN: ABOUT 500 MIGRANTS INTERCEPTED OFF LIBYA**  
**Aboard Geo Barents:** Libya's coast guard on Sunday intercepted a wooden boat carrying around 500 European-bound migrants off the country's shore, the UN refugee agency said. It marked the latest sea interception amid a surge in crossings and attempted crossings from the North African nation to European shores in recent months. It took place two days after a massive crackdown on migrants in a western Libyan town that resulted in the roundup of 4,000 migrants.

**ISRAEL ENLISTS ARMY TO HALT CRIME WAVE**  
**Jerusalem:** The Israeli Government on Sunday said it was enlisting the military and the Shin Bet internal security agency as it tries to rein in a wave of violence in the country's Arab sector. The Arab minority, which makes up around 20 per cent of Israel's population, has been convulsed by violent crime in recent years, with a murder rate that far exceeds its share of the population. The wave is driven by criminal gangs and family disputes. Israeli officials have touted a number of initiatives in recent years, including larger budgets for law enforcement.

# Mass protests in Brazil call for Bolsonaro's impeachment

AP ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

With Brazil's presidential election one year away, tens of thousands of demonstrators marched on Saturday in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and dozens of other cities around the country to protest President Jair Bolsonaro and call for his impeachment over his Government's handling of the pandemic.

The protests, smaller than those in support of Bolsonaro last September 7, were promoted by leftist parties and some union movements linked to the former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's Worker's Party. Da Silva is widely expected to run against Bolsonaro in Brazil's October 2, 2022 presidential election.

Saturday's protest targeted the president for his mishandling of the Covid-19 pandemic. Bolsonaro, who is not vaccinated and doesn't usually wear a mask, has underestimated the severity of the virus and promoted crowds during the pandemic. Some 597,000 have died of Covid-19 in Brazil, a country of 212 million people. Demonstrators also protested surging inflation in main-stays like food and electricity.

"It is very painful to see that health and education are being destroyed, and there are many starving people in the



Demonstrators rally alongside a large inflatable doll depicting Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro as the Grim Reaper, during a protest against him, calling for his impeachment over his Government's handling of the pandemic and accusations of corruption in the purchases of Covid-19 vaccines in Sao Paulo on Saturday

**Over 130 impeachment requests have been filed since the start of Bolsonaro's administration, but the lower House's Speaker, Arthur Lira, and his predecessor have declined to open proceedings**

country," Marilena Magnano, a 75-year-old retiree, told *The Associated Press*. "We need Bolsonaro out of the Government, his time has passed."

The President's approval ratings have steadily declined throughout the year, but he remains far more popular than prior Presidents who were impeached — most recently Dilma Rousseff of the Workers Party in 2016.

Over 130 impeachment requests have been filed since the start of Bolsonaro's administration, but the lower house's speaker, Arthur Lira, and his predecessor have declined to open proceedings. Division among the Opposition is the key reason analysts consider it unlikely there will be enough pressure on Lira to open impeachment process.

# Algeria blasts French leader, bans flights, recalls diplomat

AP ■ ALGIERS

Algeria has refused permission for France to fly military planes in its airspace and announced the recall of its ambassador from Paris in the wake of what it said were "inadmissible" comments attributed to French President Emmanuel Macron.

This weekend's sharp escalation in tensions also follows a French decision to slash the number of visas issued to people in North Africa — including Algeria — because governments there are refusing to take back migrants expelled from France.

A French request that two military planes be allowed to fly Sunday over Algerian territory was rejected, French military spokesman Col. Pascal Ianni said. One plane was meant to depart from France, the other from Chad, he said.

Ianni said it isn't clear whether Algeria is closing its airspace completely to the French military or whether Sunday's flights will be the only ones affected.

"We haven't had official notification, so we will see," he said. "The planners are thinking about how we will adapt."

Algeria had approved previous French flights in recent months, he said.

The flight ban followed the immediate recall of Algeria's ambassador from France for "consultations" — announced



Saturday evening by the Algerian presidency.

The statement said the diplomat's recall was motivated by recent comments about Algeria that were attributed to Macron. The comments amounted to "inadmissible interference" in Algeria's affairs and were "an intolerable affront" to Algerians who died fighting French colonialism, the Algerian presidency said.

"The crimes of colonial France in Algeria are innumerable and fit the strictest definitions of genocide," its statement alleged.

French media reported that Macron spoke recently about Algeria's post-colonial system of government and its attitudes to France. The newspaper *Le Monde* said Macron made the comments Thursday in a meeting at the presidential palace with French and Algerian grandchildren of former combatants in Algeria's 1954-62 war of independence from France

and people affected by the conflict's aftermath.

In its report from the meeting, *Le Monde* said that Macron accused Algerian authorities of stoking hatred for France. The French leader also spoke about his government's tightening of visas for North Africans, saying the visa reduction would target "people in the area of governance, who had a habit of asking for visas easily," the newspaper reported.

French officials announced the number of visas given to Algerians and Moroccans would be cut by half, and to Tunisians by 30%. The government said the decision responded to refusals from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia to provide consular documents for their citizens who were being deported from France after arriving illegally. The three countries were part of France's colonial empire, and many Europe-bound migrants and other visitors coming from those North African nations have family or other ties in France.

The Algerian presidency said in its statement that Macron's remarks were "an intolerable affront to the memory of the 5,630,000 valiant martyrs who sacrificed their lives in their heroic resistance of the French colonial invasion." There was no explanation of how Algerian authorities came up with such a large number.

# N Korea threatens top UN body after emergency meeting

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea has warned the UN Security Council against criticizing the isolated country's missile program, in a statement Sunday that included unspecified threats against the international body.

During an emergency closed-door meeting of the top U.N. body Friday, France circulated a proposed statement that expresses concern over North Korea's missile launches and calls on it to fully implement council resolutions that ban its ballistic missile firings.

On Sunday, Jo Chol Su, a senior North Korean Foreign Ministry official, warned the U.N. council it "had better think what consequences it will bring in the future in case it tries to encroach upon the sovereignty" of North Korea.

Jo also accused the U.N. body of a "double-dealing standard" because it doesn't equally take issue with similar

weapons tests by the United States and its allies, according to the statement circulated by state media.

After a six-month hiatus, North Korea resumed missile tests in September, launching newly developed missiles including nuclear-capable weapons that place South Korea and Japan, both key U.S. allies, within their striking distances. The country still offered conditional talks with South Korea, in what some experts call an attempt to pressure Seoul to persuade Washington to relax crippling economic sanctions on it.

Under multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions, North Korea is banned from engaging in any ballistic missile activities as the country aims to mount nuclear weapons on its ballistic missiles. North Korea has argued its nuclear program is meant to cope with U.S. military threats, though Washington has said it has no hostile intent toward Pyongyang.

# Expose of financial secrecy will hurt Panama, says Govt

AFP ■ PANAMA CITY

Panama fears the publication Sunday of a new expose about financial secrecy in global tax havens could again taint its reputation, which was seriously damaged by the "Panama Papers" scandal, according to a Government letter released by local media.

"The damage could be insurmountable," the Panamanian Government said in the letter, sent through a law firm to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).

The letter warns that "any publication" reinforcing "a false perception" of the country as a possible tax haven "will have devastating consequences for Panama and its people."

The ICIJ tweeted that it would release Sunday 1630 GMT its "most expansive expose of financial secrecy yet," based on the leak of 11.9 million documents "covering every corner of the globe."

**The letter from the Panamanian Government also references some of the reforms that the Central American country has made in recent years, although it remains on the EU list of tax havens. It also indicates that since 2016 the registration of more than 3,95,000 companies and foundations has been suspended, around half of those existing at that time**

ICIJ said.

The letter from the Panamanian government also references some of the reforms that the Central American country has made in recent years, although it remains on the EU list of tax havens.

It also indicates that since 2016 the registration of more than 395,000 companies and foundations has been suspended, around half of those existing at that time.

The government fears that Panama will again be the epicenter of a new global tax havens scandal like the one that followed the ICIJ's disclosure of the "Panama Papers" in 2016.

That massive data leak exposed widespread tax avoidance and evasion using complex structures of offshore shell

companies and caused an international outcry.

The leak, linked to the Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca, damaged Panama's international image, despite the fact that most of the companies involved were overseas.

The investigation revealed the concealment of properties, companies, assets, profits and tax evasion by heads of state and government, political leaders and personalities from finance, sports and the arts.

Since then, Panama has carried out various legal reforms to strengthen banking controls and penalize tax evasion with jail time.

The Panama of 2016 "is nothing like the Panama of today," the government said in its letter.

# China's think-tank casts doubt on Taliban's unity, ability to form Af Govt

PTI ■ BEIJING

A Chinese think-tank has said that the Taliban face a series of severe challenges, including those relating to unity and ability to establish an open and inclusive government, calling for a close cooperation between "all-weather" allies China and Pakistan to persuade the Afghan militant group to implement its commitments.

As the Taliban's interim government failed to win a global recognition, an article in the state-run *Global Times* on Saturday said: "China and Pakistan must cooperate closely on the Afghan issue to persuade the Afghan Taliban to establish an open and inclusive government and implement a moderate domestic and foreign policy."

Written by Liu Zongyi, secretary-general of Research Centre for China-South Asia Cooperation at the government-run Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, the article said: "at present, the verbal expression of the Afghan Taliban is very different from that in the past, but we do not know what specific policies they will champion in the future."

"The Afghan Taliban are now facing a series of severe challenges. First, the unity of Afghan Taliban itself. Second, whether the Afghan Taliban can establish an open and inclusive government.

"Third, food shortage is likely to lead to humanitarian disasters and refugees. Fourth, they hope to win the recognition and assistance of the international community, but at the same time, they also face the hatred, blockade, sanctions and even subversion of some hostile forces in the world," it said.

The article said that China and Pakistan, as "all-weather strategic partners", must work together to maintain and promote regional security and stability.

Titled "Why is it essential for China, Pakistan to enhance coordination against terrorists, safeguard regional stability", the article also criticised the premise among the strategic analysts that the seizure of power of the Taliban is a success for China and Pakistan.

"They believe that the successful seizure of power by the Afghan Taliban is a success of China and Pakistan, but a strategic failure of the US, the West and India.

# Chinese warplanes fly toward Taiwan for 2nd straight day

US raises concern

AP ■ TAIPEI

China flew more than 30 military planes toward Taiwan on Saturday, the second large display of force in as many days, as the US expressed concern about what it called China's "provocative military action" near the self-governing island that China claims.

A statement from US State Department spokesperson Ned Price warned that China's military activity near Taiwan risks miscalculation and undermines regional peace and stability.

"We urge Beijing to cease its military, diplomatic, and economic pressure and coercion against Taiwan," the statement said.

It added that the United States, Taiwan's biggest supplier of arms, would continue to help the government maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. Taiwan's Defense Ministry said 39 aircraft entered Taiwan's air defense identification zone in two sorties, one during the day and one at night. That followed a similar pattern on Friday, when 38 planes flew into the area south of the self-governing

island.

China claims Taiwan, which lies off its east coast, as its territory. The two split in 1949 during a civil war in which the Communists took control of mainland China and the rival Nationalists set up a government on Taiwan. The Communist Party marked the 72nd anniversary of its rule on Friday.

Taiwan's premier, Su Tseng-chang, spoke out on Saturday against the first day's flights.

"China has always conducted brutal and barbarian actions to jeopardize regional peace," he said.

# Delta variant of Covid tearing through some states despite high vaccine rates

**Washington:** Despite having the highest vaccination rates in the country, there are constant reminders for most New England states of just how vicious the delta variant of Covid-19 is.

Hospitals across the region are seeing full intensive care units and staff shortages are starting to affect care. Public officials are pleading with the unvaccinated to get the shots. Health care workers are coping with pent-up demand for other

kinds of care that had been delayed by the pandemic.

"I think it's clearly frustrating for all of us," said Michael Pieciak, the commissioner of the Vermont Department of Financial Regulation who monitors Covid-19 statistics for the state. "We want kids to be safe in school, we want parents not to have to worry about their child's education and health."

Even though parts of New England are seeing record case

counts, hospitalizations and deaths that rival pre-vaccine peaks, largely among the unvaccinated, the region hasn't seen the impact the delta variant wave has wrought on other parts of the country.

According to statistics from *The Associated Press*, the five states with the highest percentage of a fully vaccinated population are all in New England, with Vermont leading, followed by Connecticut, Maine, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. New

Hampshire is 10th. According to the AP data, full vaccination rates across the six New England states range from a high of 69.4per cent in Vermont to 61.5per cent in New Hampshire.

Despite the relatively high vaccination rates — the US as a whole is averaging 55.5per cent — there are still hundreds of thousands of people across the region who, for one reason or another, remain unvaccinated and vulnerable to infection.

# Small plane crashes into building in Italy

8 reported dead

**Rome:** A small private plane carrying six passengers and a crew of two crashed Sunday into a vacant, two-story office building in a Milan suburb, and Italian news reports said all aboard perished.

The LaPresse news agency initially quoted firefighters at the scene saying the pilot and all five passengers aboard were killed. But later LaPresse and other media said there were

eight people aboard the flight, including a boy. Rai state TV said the passengers were believed to be French. Fire officials couldn't immediately be reached to confirm the nationalities or the number of people aboard the plane.

Firefighters tweeted that no one other than those aboard were involved in the early afternoon crash near a subway station in San Donato Milanese, a small town near Milan.



# Petrol, diesel at all-time high

## OIL COS MODERATING PRICES TO SAVE CONSUMERS: GOVT



**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Petrol and diesel prices were hiked again on Sunday to send rates soaring to new record high Government officials insisted oil companies haven't passed on the entire increase warranted from international oil and gas rising to three-year highs and have ensured UK-like situation of pumps going dry isnt seen anywhere in India.

Petrol price for the third straight day hiked by 25 paise a litre and diesel by 30 paise, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

This sent petrol price in Delhi to its highest ever level of ₹ 102.39 a litre and to ₹ 108.43 in Mumbai. Diesel rates too touched a record high of ₹

90.77 in Delhi and ₹98.48 in Mumbai.

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

Petroleum Secretary Tarun Kapoor said oil companies are taking their own decision on aligning retail rates with the cost but they are ensuring extreme volatility is avoided.

“We are watching the situation and trying to ensure the impact of global volatility is moderated to a large extent,” he said.

The basket of crude oil India buys has jumped to a near three-year high of USD 76.71 per barrel. International prices of petrol, against which local rates are benchmarked, have risen from USD 85.10 per barrel to USD 87.11 in just one day while diesel has gone up from USD 85.95 a barrel to

## After oil, gas price may see surge upsetting CNG, PNG rates

**IAN S ■ NEW DELHI**

After the crude oil surge, a global gas prices are expected to soar this year, putting consumers in India at the risk of inflated CNG and PNG rates.

As per an assessment of the gas market done by Kotak Institutional Equities (KIE), domestic gas price are expected to more than double to \$6.6-7.6/million BTU in 1H FY23E from the current level of \$3.2/million BTU available during 2H FY22.

“We compute a steep increase in domestic gas price to US\$6.6-7.6/mn BTU for 1H FY23E, driven by the recent steep increase in global gas prices and anticipated higher futures curve in the coming months,” KIE said in

its report.

Benchmark gas prices have increased further in September 2021- with Henry Hub gas price increasing to \$5.1/mn BTU from \$4.1/mn BTU in August (\$2.6/mn BTU used in the calculation for 2H FY22 prices), and UK NBP jumping to 15.4 pounds/mn BTU from 10.9 pounds/mn BTU in August (5.9 pounds/mn BTU used in the calculation for 2H FY22 prices).

Moreover, Alberta hub gas price also increased to \$3.1/mn BTU from \$2.8/mn BTU in August (\$2/mn BTU used in the calculation for 2H FY22 prices).

Asian spot LNG prices increased further to \$22.8/mn BTU from \$16.7/mn BTU in the previous month.

“Just look at LPG rates. They have gone up from USD 665 to USD 797 in one month but oil companies haven't passed on the increase warranted from that,” he said adding state-owned companies were absorbing a lot of volatility.

USD 87.27.

This sudden spike in international oil prices follows global output disruptions but the entire increase in retail rates necessitated by such an increase is not being effected, another official with direct knowledge of the matter said.

# Three-tier GST rate structure likely by next fiscal

**IAN S ■ NEW DELHI**

The next few meetings of the GST Council would take the country's new indirect tax regime closer to the goal of providing a transparent tax system with minimal exemptions and fewer rates.

Sources working on the GST rate rational said that a three rate tax structure may become a reality early next fiscal after the views of a group of ministers (GoM) set for purpose is presented before the GST Council.

The idea is, sources said, to move away from the present broad five rate structure of zero, 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent to just three of 5, 18 and 28 per cent. There would be a small list of exempted items while certain demerit goods could continue to attract higher duty levels.

The lowering rates into three slabs would be done by merging two existing slabs (12-18 per cent), and progress in this direction would be made in phases with rate changes cleared by the GST Council before a three rate structure is placed for all items.Chief Economic Adviser in the Union finance ministry Krishnamurthy Subramanian has also said that the big reform



in GST rates would be undertaken soon as was envisaged earlier.

India has four primary GST rates of 5 per cent, 12 per cent, 18% per cent, and 28 per cent. There is also a cess on luxury and demerit goods such as automobiles, tobacco and aerated drinks. On precious stones and metals, special rates of 0.25 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively, are applicable.

A proposal to merge the 12 per cent and 18 per cent slabs into a single rate has been discussed for several years. It was expected that a move in the direction would be taken in FY21. But Covid disruptions and sharp fall in collections and relief measures derailed the plan on rate rationalisation. With GST collections again going up over Rs 1 lakh crore mark, the thinking is that three rate structure should be out at the earliest.

# RBI may again opt for status quo on key policy rate next week, say experts

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

Amid rising global commodity prices and the need to contain inflation at home, the Reserve Bank is likely to maintain status quo on interest rates for the eighth time in row in its upcoming bi-monthly monetary policy review later in the week, according to experts.

The Reserve Bank had last cut repo rate by 40 basis points in May 2020 to 4 per cent to spur demand in the Covid-hit economy. Since then, the RBI has refrained from taking any action on interest rates.

The RBI Governor headed six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is scheduled to meet for three days from October 6. The decision taken at the meeting would be announced by Governor Shaktikanta Das on October 8.

A Morgan Stanley research report expects the RBI to continue to keep rates on hold and retain its accommodative stance in the upcoming policy review.

“We opine headline CPI to remain range bound around the 5 per cent mark in the current fiscal year, even as core inflation remains sticky and pressures emanate from higher global commodity prices. We will remain watchful of the



RBI's tone and guidance regarding the likely path of policy normalisation.

We see the risks of a rate hike (base case in 1Q22) as skewed to delay as growth concerns might dominate given that inflation will likely track below RBI's forecast,” it said.

SBI Chairman Dinesh Khara had recently said that it looks like that interest rate should remain as it is.

“Growth is only showing green shoots. So, I think perhaps, rate may not really go up, but commentary could talk about inflation.

To my mind inflation is essentially on account of the supply chain disruption and once this disruption gets addressed, inflation may not really raise its head, as much as it was seen at the time of the last policy decision,” he had said.

# NTPC chalks out ₹15K cr divestment plan, to list arms NTPC REL, NEEPCO, NVVNL



**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

State-run power giant NTPC has drawn a ₹15,000 crore divestment plan which includes a listing of its arms NTPC Renewable Energy, North Eastern Electric Power Corporation and NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam, a source said.

The source stated that besides listing of the three firms, the plan to meet its divestment target of ₹15,000 crore also includes sale of its stake in NTPC-SAIL Power Company Ltd (NSPCL), which is expected this fiscal year.

The NSPCL is a joint venture company of NTPC and SAIL (50:50 equity) was incorporated on February 8, 1999. It was formed to own and operate power plants for SAIL's steel manufacturing facilities located at Durgapur,

Rourkela and Bhilai.

According to the source, the ₹15,000 crore divestment plan is as per agreed targets of performance set by the company with the Ministry of Power which includes listing of NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd (NTPC REL), North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd (NEEPCO) and NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Ltd (NVVNL) by March 2024.

The source said that the listing of NTPC REL is expected by October next year. NTPC REL, a 100 per cent subsidiary of NTPC Ltd, currently has a renewable project portfolio of 3,450 MW of which 820 MW projects are under construction and 2,630 MW projects have been won for which PPAs (power purchase agreements) are pending to be executed.

# Over 2.5 cr informal workers registered on e-Shram portal

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

More than 2.5 crore unorganised workers have registered on the e-Shram portal, the Labour Ministry said.

The e-Shram portal was inaugurated on August 26, 2021. In a statement, the labour ministry stated, “More than 2.5 crore registrations have been done so far on the portal.”

The portal is the first-ever national database of unorganised workers including migrant workers, construction workers, gig and platform workers.

Labour and Employment Minister Bhupender Yadav also informed that the fourth week was marked by a galloping registration of unorganised workers, crossing over 1.71 crore, this (5th) week more than 2.51 crore workers in total are registered on this portal as on date.

An estimated 38 crore workers are engaged in the unorganised sector and employment (Economic Survey, 2019-20).

Earlier in the day, the union minister flagged off the field work of the Area Frame Establishment Survey (AFES) at Shram Bureau Bhawan,

Chandigarh on the occasion of 101st Foundation Day of Labour Bureau.

Yadav said that following the motto of “Mehnat Ko Samman, Adhikar Ek Saman”, the Government is focused on the welfare of workers through evidence-based policy making.

During the event, he mentioned that data on all aspects of labour is crucial and scientifically collected data is bedrock for any evidence-based policy making.

With the increasing importance of data in the time to come coupled with the fact that India is a labour abundant nation, a dedicated organization for labour and price statistics like the Labour Bureau merits strengthening and full support, said the minister.

The minister also held discussions with the State Labour Ministers, Labour Secretaries & Commissioners of States of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh & UTs of Chandigarh, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh regarding progress with respect to registration of unorganised workers under e-Shram portal and preparedness of States/UTs on implementation of various schemes and reforms.

# BSE ready with tech for launching electronic gold receipts: Patil



**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Leading stock exchange BSE is ready with its technology to introduce electronic gold receipts (EGRs) on its platform, which will help in creating uniform price structure of the yellow metal across the country, its chief business officer Sameer Patil said on Sunday.

The exchange will take the required internal approvals and apply to markets regulator Sebi for the launch of the new class of security on its platform, he added.

This comes after the Sebi board on Tuesday cleared a proposal for gold exchange, wherein the yellow metal will be traded in the form of EGRs and will help in having a transparent domestic spot price dis-

covery mechanism.

Currently, India allows trading only in gold derivatives and Gold ETFs, unlike several other countries which have spot exchanges for physical trade in gold.

The instruments representing gold will be called Electronic Gold Receipts (EGRs) and it will be notified as securities.

EGRs will have trading, clearing and settlement features akin to other securities that are currently available in India.

“BSE, which is well known for its technological prowess, has been the main proponent of creating a transparent and efficient spot market for gold as it is very important commodity for Indian consumers,” Patil told PTI.

# FPIs net buyers for 2nd consecutive month; invest ₹26,517 cr in Sept

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) were net buyers for the second month in a row in the Indian market with an investment of ₹26,517 crore in September.

As per depositories' data, FPIs pumped in ₹13,154 crore into equities and ₹13,363 crore in the debt segment during September 1-30.

The total net investment stood at ₹26,517 crore.

This comes after an investment of ₹16,459 crore by FPIs in August. Most of the major emerging markets witnessed FPI inflows in September with India reporting the highest FPI inflow, noted Shrikant Chouhan, executive vice-president (equity technical research) at Kotak Securities.

South Korea saw an FPI investment of USD 884 million, Thailand USD 338 million, and Indonesia USD 305 million, he said.

“The current trend indicates that FPIs are now willing to look beyond these short-term challenges and focus on the larger and long-term picture,” said Himanshu Srivastava, associate director (research), Morningstar India.

# Proposed e-commerce policy to be robust, balanced, says Goyal

**PTI ■ DUBAI**

Union minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday assured that every stakeholder's interest will be taken into consideration while framing the e-commerce policy which would be robust and in the interest of every Indian.

Goyal, who heads commerce and industry as well as consumer affairs ministries, also said that he welcomes all the feedback on the draft e-commerce rules but comments about inter-departmental issues on the draft rules are totally unwarranted.

The minister's comments have come following reports that the Department for Promotion of Internal Industry and Trade (DPIIT), the Corporate Affairs Ministry and the Niti Aayog have objected to some provisions of the draft e-commerce rules.

The report citing an RTI reply has claimed that Niti Aayog has expressed apprehensions that the draft rules may harm ease of doing business.

Goyal said that the whole purpose of an inter-ministerial consultation was to get views and comments from different



quarters.

“I do believe that I welcome all the feedback and look forward to a very robust and healthy consultations with all the stakeholders...We are trying to balance everybody's interest and come up with a robust framework in which this (policy) can be implemented in the interest of all Indians,” Goyal told PTI. The very purpose of releasing draft rules is to elicit public opinion, ideas from other departments, from stakeholders, encourage feedback, he said, adding the government has always believed in engaging with all the stakeholders before taking a final decision on any policy.

Citing example of data privacy law, national education policy and jewellery hallmarking norms, he said the government conducts stakeholder consultation to arrive at a good decision.

# Centre notifies new rules providing easier access to electricity transmission network

**IAN S ■ NEW DELHI**

Power Ministry has promulgated the Electricity (Transmission System Planning, Development and Recovery of Inter-State Transmission Charges) Rules 2021. This paves the way for overhauling of transmission system planning, towards giving power sector utilities easier access to the electricity transmission network across the country.

At present, generating companies apply for long-term access (LTA) based on their supply tie-ups, while medium-term and short-term transmission access is acquired within the available margins. Based on LTA application, incremental transmission capacity is added. A number of sector developments, such as the increasing focus on renewable energy, and the development of the market mechanism, necessitated a review of the existing transmission planning framework based on LTA.

The rules underpin a system of transmission access which is termed as a General Network Access (GNA) in the inter-state transmission system. This provides flexibility to the States as well as the generating stations to acquire, hold and transfer transmission

capacity as per their requirements.

In a major change from the present system of taking transmission access, power plants will not have to specify their target beneficiaries. The rules will also empower state power distribution and transmission companies to determine their transmission requirements and build them. Also, states will be able to purchase electricity from short term and medium term contracts and optimise their power purchase costs.

Apart from introducing GNA, the rules also specify clear roles of various agencies involved in the transmission planning process. The Central Electricity Authority shall prepare a short-term plan every year on rolling basis for next 5 years and prospective plan every alternate year on rolling basis for next 10 years. The Central Transmission Utility shall prepare an implementation plan for inter-State transmission system every year on a rolling basis for up to next 5 years which will take into account aspects such as right-of-way and progress of the generation and demand in various parts of the country.

The rules specify how the existing LTA would be transitioned into General Network Access. The rules also outline

the recovery of GNA charges from the users of the transmission network and assign the responsibility of billing, collection and disbursement of inter state transmission charges to the Central Transmission Utility.

PUBLIC NOTICE	
The general public is hereby informed that Plot No. 2793, Sec-9A, Bahadurgarh was reallocated by Estate Office HUDA Bahadurgarh vide Memo No. Zo005/E0003/ UC006/REAL/0000000220 Dt. 5/11/2014 in favor of Sh. Vinod Kumar Gupta S/o Late Sh. Triok Chand Gupta R/o 1306-A/90, Tri Nagar, Delhi-35. Now, re-allocotee Sh. Vinod Kumar Gupta has expired on 17-03-2021. Now Prashant Gupta S/o Late Sh. Vinod Kumar Gupta has moved an application in the office for transfer of above-mentioned plot in his name due to death of his father. Now above-mentioned plot is to be transferred in favor of Sh. Prashant Gupta S/o Late Sh. Vinod Kumar Gupta R/o 3rd Floor, GD-90, Pitampura, Delhi-34. In case any person having any claim, right, title or interest in the above said property in any manner whatsoever shall bring the same to the notice of the Estate Officer, HUDA, Bahadurgarh in writing with supporting documents/evidence within a period 30 days from date of this notice failing which such claim, if any, shall be considered to be waived, abandoned and it shall be presumed that no person has any claim of any nature in respect of the above said plot and any subsequent claim shall not be a binding in any manner whatsoever and the plot will be transferred in the name of applicant after completion of formalities as per HUDA policy.	
Prashant Gupta S/o Late Sh. Vinod Kumar Gupta R/o 3rd Floor, GD-90, Pitampura, Delhi-34.	Sd/- Kamal Singh (Advocate) Chamber No. 512, 5th Floor Dist. Court Rohini, Delhi-110085 Office: QU-259-A, Pitampura, Delhi-88 Mob.: 9213157728

FORM G - INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST	
(Under Regulation 36A (1) of the IBBI (Insolvency Resolution Process of Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016)	
RELEVANT PARTICULARS	
1 Name of the Corporate Debtor	Mitashi Edutainment Private Limited
2 Date of incorporation of corporate debtor	21-09-2000
3 Authority under which corporate debtor is incorporated / registered	Registrar of Companies – Mumbai
4 Corporate identity number / limited liability identification number of corporate debtor	U92110MH2000PTC128809
5 Address of the registered office and principal office (if any) of corporate debtor	505-508, Bhaveshwar Arcade, LBS Marg, Ghatkopar (west), Mumbai – 400 086, Maharashtra, India
6 Insolvency commencement date of the corporate debtor	20th July 2021
7 Date of invitation of expression of interest	04th October, 2021
8 Eligibility for resolution applicants under section 25(2)(h) of the Code is available at:	Information can be sought from the Resolution Professional at the following email ID: mdsah0211@gmail.com or cirp.mitashi@gmail.com
9 Norms of ineligibility applicable under section 29A are available at:	Available on the website www.ibbi.gov.in. Can be sought by e-mail at mdsah0211@gmail.com or cirp.mitashi@gmail.com
10 Last date for receipt of expression of interest	19th October, 2021
11 Date of issue of provisional list of prospective resolution applicants	29th October, 2021
12 Last date for submission of objections to provisional list	3rd November, 2021
13 Date of issue of final list of prospective resolution applicants	13th November, 2021
14 Date of issue of information memorandum, evaluation matrix and request for resolution plans to prospective resolution applicants	3rd November, 2021
15 Manner of obtaining request for resolution plan, evaluation matrix, information memorandum and further information	Prospective resolution applicant may contact the Resolution Professional at the contact details mentioned at sr. no. 21. IM shall be obtained after giving Undertaking of Confidentiality under section 29(2) of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016
16 Last date for submission of resolution plans	3rd December, 2021
17 Manner of submitting resolution plans to resolution professional	The Resolution Plan may be submitted electronically at the following email ID mdsah0211@gmail.com or cirp.mitashi@gmail.com or in password protected pen-drive or by speed post or hand delivery at the address mentioned at sr. no. 21.
18 Estimated date for submission of resolution plan to the Adjudicating Authority for approval	2nd January, 2022
19 Name and registration number of the resolution professional	Name- Manish D. Shah Registration Number- IBBI/IPA-001/IP-P00094/2017-18/10194
20 Name, Address and e-mail of the resolution professional, as registered with the Board	Name- Manish D. Shah A/502, Krishna Palace, Thakur Complex, Kandivli (East), Mumbai – 400 101 mdsah0211@gmail.com
21 Address and email to be used for correspondence with the Resolution Professional	A/502, Krishna Palace, Thakur Complex, Kandivli (East), Mumbai – 400 101 E-mail: mdsah0211@gmail.com or cirp.mitashi@gmail.com
22 Further Details are available at or with	Resolution Professional through the following email ID mdsah0211@gmail.com or cirp.mitashi@gmail.com
23 Date of publication of Form G	4th October 2021
Sd/- Signature of the Resolution Professional Registration Number: IBBI/IPA-001/IP-P00094/2017-18/10194 A/502, Krishna Palace, Thakur Complex, Kandivli (East), Mumbai – 400 101 For Mitashi Edutainment Private Limited 4th October 2021 Mumbai	



There are certain moments in life that seem to take your breath away, that define you in a way nothing has done in the past. I'd like to pull your attention from the doubts boiling in you. No, I'm not talking about the first love, or love at first sight — nothing romantic, yeah? There are moments when you're glad you decided to do something because even though it might be short lived, you learn and live tremendously in that short span of time. For me, it was meeting these stars that rendered to me hope of surviving in the machinations amidst the monotony of the world.

For the athletes, the transformative click was the moment they had made their decision of joining their respective sport and competing on the international level. It might have taken time, but they made it.

"My seniors encouraged me to play and when I went to the stadium, I saw discus-throw practise going on. The moment I saw it, I fell in love and knew I had to do just that," Yogesh Kathuniya, who won silver in men's discus throw F56 event at Tokyo Paralympics, shared his defining moment.

"I had failed twice in class 10 and my family had lost all hopes. They would call me the black sheep. In our district Karauli in Rajasthan, no one knew about sports. There was no concept like that. It was 2008 and Sushil Kumar, Vijendar Singh and Abhinav Bindra had won medals at 2008 Olympics. They garnered a lot of attention, fame and praise. I thought to myself, perhaps, I'm not made for academics. That was the moment I felt I can shine somewhere else, which is when I started training in para-sports. Thankfully, I proved myself right," Sundar Singh Gurjar, who won bronze in men's javelin F46 event, expressed.

The reason the Paralympics 2020 is on everyone's tongue and mind is that the players not only made India proud by bringing home a total of 19 medals but also created history with their stupendous feat. For the Rio Paralympics 2016, India had sent a total of 19 athletes. Back then, it was a record in itself. Every Indian would be proud to know that to mark the end of the Tokyo Paralympics 2020, coincidentally, India won a total of 19 medals — five gold, eight silver and six bronze — yet another record. It's high time we provide them the attention and respect that they have deserved all this while.

There is no doubt about the fact that the para-athletes do not have it easy. They face way bigger obstacles than any other person. They've bat-

# CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN

Khushbu Kirti meets Paralympic winners at Radiant In Quest Of Gold, where silver medalist, YOGESH KATHUNIYA, shares that his mother still scolds him for missing exams



tled with the difficulty they were born with or accidentally had all their life, along with fighting and competing at such high levels against the absolute best. Their constant fight is a testimony to infallible strength and their efforts have not been futile.

In 2017, through the unique campaign, Radiant In Quest Of Gold, by Shirdi Sai Baba Foundation (SSBF), Johnson Controls-Hitachi Air Conditioning India Ltd had undertaken the responsibility of sponsoring 10 para-athletes who had achieved significant success at national and international games. They focussed, majorly, on faring well at the Tokyo Paralympics 2020. The success of the initiative was reflected in three out of 10 of their sponsored players shining at the Tokyo Paralympics 2020 — Sumit Antil winning the gold medal, Kathuniya bagging the silver medal and Gurjar bringing home the bronze medal. Gurmeet Singh, the chairman and managing director of Johnson Controls-Hitachi was also present at the event.



Even though Antil could not appear physically at the event, he sent a heartfelt video message from Dehradun where he was supposed to be for work. "Our Paralympic stars have ushered a new chapter of para-sports fame and success in India at the Tokyo Paralympics and the day is not far off when every Indian Paralympics player will return home with gold," he expressed.

A feature film called *Chal Jeet Lein Ye Jahan* is being made where the

Paralympics winners get to make their first feature film screen guest appearances. "This is going to be a very big step towards motivating other para-athletes. I feel great that the level is increasing now," stated Kathuniya.

"To inspire more and more *divyang* people to adopt para-sports at an early stage, an 11 episodes series *Mission Made Possible* has been shot with these athletes on their life history, their trials, tribulation agony and victory," the Shirdi Sai Baba actor Aushim Khetarpal said.

I got the opportunity to have a conversation with the former Asian para-gold-medallist, Neeraj Yadav, who confessed that winning an Olympic medal is the greatest and only dream of every athlete. On talking about funding and the support and importance not being the same as given to Olympic players, he admitted, "Most of the winners from India did not have a strong financial support in the beginning, and rose from the ground-level itself. Ever

since the para-athletes won medals, companies have begun to notice us. However, if we talk about equality, I'd say we're still not quite there yet. Modi ji addressed us as the *divyang*, instead of disabled. I believe the same *divyang* should get equal opportunities as the abled in all aspects, be it scholarship, job opportunities, sports, and more."

Kirorimal College, Delhi University, has produced a number of big shots like Amitabh Bachchan, Naveen Patnaik, Sandeep Maheshwari and so on, but little do people know that it has also honed the Paralympic champion Kathuniya. Not only is the athlete a sports champion, but also a scholar. "My mother wants me to complete my post-graduation," he laughed heartily.

I joined him, "Wait, what? You've just got home an Olympic medal! I guess all Indian moms do this..."

"Oh, yes. I've got to keep studying always and that's okay. I enjoy that sport, too," he chuckled. "I was pursuing CA at the time, and had cleared CPT. I could not gather the strength to tell Papa I wanted to go into sports but I'm glad he later came around. I have always had the dream to win medals for my country," he added.

The athletes have proved time and again that their disabilities don't define them. India stood on the 24th spot, all thanks to the medal tally of 19, achieved by the team's efforts. Yet Paralympics is not so much talked about as Olympics. On asking him why he thinks that is and whether the scenario is improving, Kathuniya said, "I do not, honestly, care a lot about funding. It gets difficult for many of us, yes, but I've managed by applying for loans, et cetera. I've only focussed on winning medals. However, this year the situation improved immensely. There is no difference in the cash award either, between the Olympic winners and Paralympic winners. So, I do think the scenario is improving. This time, the love I received from India and the media has been extremely fulfilling and wholesome. It is enough to get me going," the athlete shared in a heart-to-heart.

## WEBBED



### MUPPETS HAUNTED MANSION

It is a forthcoming American puppet comedy. This was one of Ed Asner's final works before he passed away. After surviving each of his daredevil performances, Gonzo accepts the biggest challenge, yet, of spending one night at the haunted mansion. The Halloween special is set to be released on October 8 on Disney+.



### THE CONVERSION

The romantic film, directed by Vinod Tiwari and written by Vandana Tiwari, is a love triangle set in the beautiful ghats of Banaras. It exposes the dilemma of religious conversions during love marriages in India. The film will release on October 8 on Hungama TV.



### JUSTIN BIEBER: OUR WORLD

Directed by the filmmaker, Michael D Ratner, and produced by Ratner's OBB Pictures, Bieber Time Films, and Scooter Braun Films, the forthcoming documentary is based on the pop star's life and his first full concert in three years. It will release on October 8 on Amazon Prime Video.

The fact is that no species has ever had such wholesale control over everything on earth, living or dead, as we now have. That lays upon us, whether we like it or not, an awesome responsibility. David Attenborough once said, "In our hands now lies not only our own future, but that of all other living creatures with whom we share the earth."

The above lines instill a sense of pride in me. It is a privilege to know that man has the responsibility to maintain healthy ecosystems and conserve nature's wonders for future generations. However, our disregard for the environment and depletion of natural resources has led us to abuse this advantage, robbing our wildlife of their natural habitat and disturbing the ecological balance.

The modern era is primarily dominated by humans and the adverse effects of human activities are felt across the globe in the form of climate change and global warming. It is for the same reason that scientists have named this era Anthropocene. Humans have altered natural ecosystems through rapid urbanisation, greenhouse gas emissions, pollution, habitat fragmentation, and destruction. According to recent studies conducted by conservation organisations and the United Nations, human activities have led to a 60 per cent decline in animal populations worldwide, and roughly one million of the species known to science are on the brink of extinction.

Animals and birds are just as important as humans in preserving the planet's natural equilibrium. Every organism on our planet has a unique place in the food chain and contributes to the ecosystem in its own manner. The ecosystem consists of interactions between species linked by food webs and food chains. Even the extinction of a single animal species can disrupt the entire food chain, resulting in horrifying repercussions.

When urbanisation drove wildlife out of their natural environment, they were

# Sustaining people and planet

Bikrant Tiwary underlines the importance of coexistence between man and environment while emphasising that it is the ultimate solution to ending the conflict between the two



viewed as a nuisance or superfluous beings, and man-animal conflict arose. For example, baboons and mongoose are seen as bothersome crop-raiders, the advantages of carnivores in reducing herbivore pressure on plants by restricting their number are underappreciated, and the role of decomposers in releasing nutrients into the soil is neglected. Furthermore, carnivores are targets of illegal actions because they are seen as rivals or dangers to food supplies. Needless to say, the environmental harm produced by this cruel and barbaric attitude towards our species has ren-

dered environmental deterioration so obvious that it cannot not be ignored. As a result, activities that promote habitat restoration and wildlife preservation have spared a few species from extinction. However, the dwindling animal population raises an important question — why are we at odds with nature and its inhabitants when coexistence between man and the environment is the answer to all problems?

Robust wildlife populations play an important role in human well-being by improving mental health, ecological health, tourism, and related local economies,



outdoor recreation sectors, and livelihoods. While certain species help with nutrient extraction from the cycle, others speed up decomposition and the carbon and nitrogen cycles. We will observe huge advances in ecosystem health, agricultural stability, and food security, and encourage the formation of new sustainable economies when humans coexist with wildlife. Cohabitation with nature is critical for all living things, including people and animals.

To reduce conflicts between human populations and wildlife and promote the

coexistence of man and animals, the destruction and divergence of forest land need to be prevented at all costs. Loss of habitat and fragmentation of forests is the root cause of man-animal conflicts. When we invade natural habitats for commercial purposes, we fail to realise that we're uprooting an entire ecosystem. We seem to turn a blind eye to environmental health and the wide variety of plants and animals that will be severely affected because of these activities.

In addition to this, the rural and tribal communities also face the brunt of our insensitive approach towards the environ-

ment. When wildlife corridors are blocked, animals stray into neighbouring human settlements which results in the destruction of crops and livestock and increases the chances of conflict with the villagers. Thus, educating local communities on how to tackle such situations is also an efficient way to handle the increasing problems of man-animal conflict.

Wildlife corridors are often threatened by linear infrastructure and other anthropogenic activities. Tigers and other wildlife populations will not be jeopardised by modern development if thoughtful spatial planning is constructively used to avoid encroaching on natural habitats and their linkages. The creation of no-go zones and strict consequences for the construction of infrastructure in wildlife areas must be observed.

Planting a barrier of crops that repel wildlife associated with causing property damage or other barrier measures can be devised to keep them away from human settlements. For instance, barriers made of wooden poles, wire mesh, and nylon have been installed to prevent tigers from entering the villages in Sunderbans.

'Forests and livelihoods: Sustaining people and planet' is the theme for World Animal day 2021. I believe that we can live up to this theme all round the year by establishing afforestation drives that benefit socio-environmental systems. While these significant days serve as a reminder of our environmental responsibilities, our ecosystems can only be healed through a long-term commitment to the planet.

Our responsibility is to learn how to coexist with our natural environment and wildlife. Coexistence does not include indiscriminate killing. Killing wildlife that share landscapes with us is neither sustainable nor in our best interest.

(The author is the CEO of Grow-Trees.com, a website which has created the concept of 'Greet with Trees', where one can plant trees to support projects like Trees for Tribals, Trees for Tigers, and so on.)

## TRENDBLAZER

### WAR DIDN'T EXCITE ME AT FIRST: HRITHIK

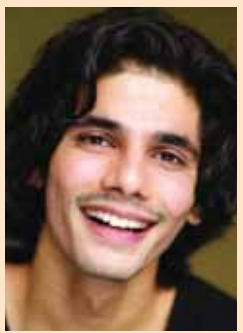
Bollywood actor, **HRITHIK ROSHAN**, said that he was not excited when he first read the script of *War* as he thought it was too frivolous and superficial.

He expressed, "When I read the script, I didn't see anything in it that excited me. It was too frivolous and superficial, and I was into real cinema like *Super 30* at the time."

"On hearing my reaction, the director Siddharth Anand and the producer Aditya Chopra rushed to my house, and they reframed the storyline in an appealing manner before I said yes to the project," he added.

#### fairtalk

NAKUL ROSHAN SAHDEV



'The world of *Girgit* is surreal. Everyone is twisted and weird in some certain way; you will like their weirdness. It is a fast-paced series. Each one of us has a side that we hide in society, but what happens when we put it out in front of society, that is what *Girgit* is all about, and that has been my stance from the beginning. Since the beginning of the series, there is restless energy of excitement more than nervousness.'

#### dailytalk

ADARSH GOURAV



'Earlier, I used to look for scripts, but post *The White Tiger*, the scripts are coming in search of me. I am extremely humbled and excited that some great work has come my way from across the globe. The roles that are being offered to me are relatable and I can be myself. I am looking forward to giving my best to each of the forthcoming projects.'

### BATTLING WITH SENSITIVITY: CHRIS

Goldplay frontman, **CHRIS MARTIN**, has said that he used to battle with his sensitivity shortly after his daughter Apple was born, which would cause him to become grumpy and sulky.

"I think sensitivity can be a superpower, if you're in the business of songs, where you are trying to relate yourself to someone else. However, I realised that my sensitivity was coming out in really bad ways with the rest of the band. I'm still trying to work on this as I don't want my daughter to feel like she can't be herself in case her dad gets upset," the singer said.





# AGONY ANT VS SHARKS

This month on the frightfully fractious, alarmingly alliterative animal complaints column, ELLIOT CONNOR siphons shark science from stories.

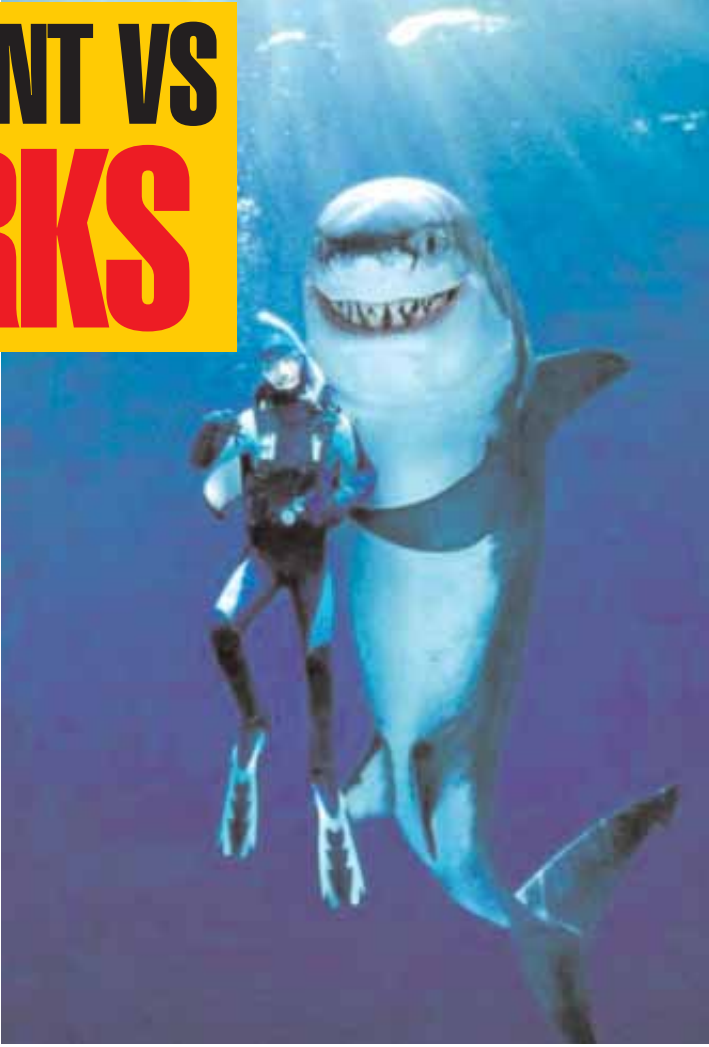
Dear Anthia,

When a shark bites a person, it's called a vicious attack. When a person bites a shark, it's called dinner, fin soup, or fish and chips. Who can I blame for that misbranding? And when did these fin-tastic creatures become public enemy number one? Don't coconuts kill more people? LOL- Toothy Tim McToothface

Hello Toothy,

What a question! A true double standard hit upon by you, my double-barrelled friend. In the most sane and simple terms, humans bully sharks — a state of affairs you undoubtedly are used to with a name like yours. That said, bullies rarely pick on victims that can bite their head off (I can't imagine why) so for that very reason, we must dig a little deeper to pick our original culprit and their cause from the line-up of shark bullies through time. Here's my two cents on the matter, my evidence for the jury...

We humans are simple crea-



tures; we haven't heard of 99 per cent of animals and frankly don't give a monkey's arse about. These are the likes of the ugly worm lizard and the slimy boring sponge, rarely given enough attention for us to pass judgement on them. Or indeed spend much time naming them, as you can tell.

The one per cent of creatures that remain, hog the spotlight and fall into three classes — cute, charismatic, and creepy. Guess where sharks land? An excess of sharp, pointy teeth sees them flop the cuteness score, a rather repetitive underwater prowling knocks charismatic from the running, but the unblinking dead-eyed stare scores sharks top marks on the creepy scale. Creepy and deadly are not a good combo.

Snakes, spiders, scorpions, sharks — all are creepy, all are deadly, all are hated by humans. Unlike the Australian man whose genitalia was bitten twice in six months by venomous spiders, this is NOT a coincidence. So while flowerpots, lawnmowers and coconuts each kill more people than sharks, none of these three are creepy enough (or alive enough) to get bullied. And aside from death by lawnmower, which could be messy, being eaten by a shark is a rather less attractive way to go. It tends to make headlines, whereas deaths by flowerpot do not.

That's the philosophical side of things. Unhelpfully, it doesn't offer any obvious candidates to blame, apart from the press and human nature. One of those is quite hard to



criticise in a newspaper column thanks to its censors editors. The other is equally hard to criticise without offending vain, narcissistic, emotionally insecure, stupid, ugly readers.

What about Steve Spielberg, creator of the epic *Jaws* which terrified a generation and sparked four sequel films with slightly higher budget shark models? Surely he deserves a place on the blame boat? Perhaps. But the tale Spielberg told was a true one of a shark dubbed the Matawan Man-Eater which managed to maul 3 separate people in the space of 30 minutes and plagued the American East coast for several weeks in 1916. The great director merely dramatised the story of the first shark celebrity and created a classic.

You might as well blame Ian Fleming who wrote James Bond into existence fighting maniacs with pools full of hungry bull sharks. Or blame modern filmmakers for inventing zombie sharks and reviving extinct mammoth shark species blown up to ten times their actual size. Blame the spear-fishers who go after the creatures with whopping great harpoons and then complain when their prey turns the tables. The critic cruise is filled with guilty culprits — in short, we're going to need a bigger boat.

I'm blaming the English language itself. Because whilst we don't know where exactly the word 'shark' came from, none of the options are good.

It might have been taken from the Dutch word *schurk* meaning villain, or further back from the Greek word *karcharos* meaning sharp tooth. It might have come from the Saxon word *scearan* meaning cut to pieces. But either way, if you started calling your pet dog Meathook or Ripper, would you still expect visitors to rub his belly?

Believe it or not, sharks have less teeth than slugs. However, slug teeth are somewhat smaller. And with a 420 million year ancestry, sharks pre-date slugs and everything else but the very earliest of trees. Long-toothed indeed. This perhaps hits closest to the mark in terms of why humans bully sharks — because they are the most successful predators evolution has produced, and we feel threatened by them. Even a blindfolded shark with a blocked nose and a bad cold could hunt you down from the far side of a public pool. That ability has earned them a fear-tinted respect from people throughout history.

Throughout history, across many cultures, people have held that eating animals gives you some of their power and vitality. Asian tradition continues this, and Chinese cuisine specifically. 100 million sharks are killed each year for shark fin soup because the wealthy see it as a status symbol and many still believe it holds medicinal properties. In the end, after surviving four mass extinctions, success has come back to haunt the 500-odd shark species. We fear them so we eat them, and once in a while, they bite back.

Recently, the Australian government has stated that its media will no longer be using the term 'shark attack'. Such incidents will be referred to henceforth as negative encounters, despite the number of 'negative encounters' with sharks continuing to rise. Changing sea temperatures and booming coastal populations are bringing sharks and people into contact more often, putting strain on the already shaky public image of these sharp-toothed critters. Will this new shark-friendly branding take hold and spread? It's too early to tell. But one thing is sure — I'm going to be far more wary of deadly flowerpots in future.

(The author is a wildlife carer, naturalist, researcher, writer, scientist, host of the *Animalsense* podcast and a TEDx speaker.)



## Keeping it simple

RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI feels that matters related to law and justice have become convoluted across the globe and need a straightforward, spiritual overhaul

The very purpose of law, in a layman's language, is to regulate the affairs of society and the state within a specified jurisdiction. In other words, one can say that one of the main objects of the law is to regulate the social, economic, political, cultural, religious, administrative, educational and physical atmosphere of a society and the relations and interactions between individuals, institutions and communities and the means of expression and mass communication. We could also say that the main aim behind all the rules and the regulations or acts and ordinances is to enable every individual to live with a feeling of security of life and property, to enjoy health, wealth, harmony and happiness and have basic freedoms and rights in a reasonably civilised and co-operative manner. In order to fulfil this object, the law has to take steps to prohibit, discourage, reduce or prevent crime, punish the criminals and to enable the aggrieved to have justice.

Since the law is aimed at maintaining an atmosphere that the society considers congenial for the growth and development of the nation's citizens, every citizen is expected to know his rights and also his duties. This is necessary so that, while making efforts for his peace and progress, an individual does not obstruct the fulfilment of similar aspirations of others, and, thus, not invite punishment by violating the law. But if legal acts roll out from the legislative bodies as products roll out from a big industry and amendments and additions to or replacements of the existing legal provisions become too frequent, unwieldy and abundant, then it becomes impossible for a citizen to keep abreast with the law and to completely avoid violation of law. It has often been found that even the brilliant professionals in Law and Justice are unaware of updated information wherein new acts or clauses, related to their own special field, have come into effect. To understand the aforesaid situation, if out of hundreds of books on civil, criminal, constitutional or company law, we take just one very well-known book, the Indian Penal Code, we will find that many of the provisions that existed earlier as mere clauses or sub-clauses have, during the last few decades, been replaced by comprehensive acts. As new kinds of crime come up and new situations arise because of the likes of industrialisation, urbanisation, commercialisation, new acts are passed. The law has now become like an ocean and even the eminent and successful professionals in the field know only a limited part of it so that one is remind-



ed of Newton's statement that he had been able to get only a few words out of the ocean of Knowledge. Today, we have reached a stage that if a boy, in his teens, goes to a lawyer's study-room and glances at the volumes of the yearly All India Reporter, he will surely tell himself and his parents and friends that he will never choose law as his profession. Add to this, the fact that because of the ambiguity in the wording of the acts and their clauses, and also because of the absence of clear definitions of those crucial words in the act. There are so many interpretations and, based on them, so many different judgements and precedents that, in many cases, there is not much pleading on the point of law and much efforts of the defence lawyer are made to escape punishment by finding the flaw, the loophole or a convenient precedent or by building a new interpretation of a vague term. This, therefore, makes the whole process labyrinthine and cumbersome and causes notorious delays that one comes across news-reports every now and then that a PIL against an illegal land-grabbing was decided after the whole township came up and sold out, or that compensation to an aggrieved individual or reinstatement of a government servant was decreed after the person had died.

So, seeing this situation, the society must now try to find a new paradigm, have new concepts and adopt new ways that that humankind marches towards lesser crime rates and there is need of fewer and fewer laws that are without lacuna or flaw. This is possible only through spiritual and moral education. If only society had cared to take this step instead of having more and more crimes, laws, litigants, lawyers and jails. If only the society had realised that there are no crimes outside the Five Evils (lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego) that spirituality alone can effectively deal with, then Jurisprudence and spiritual prudence together would have ushered in a new era with a new paradigm.

# Birthing in the mountains

ANJALI and SAPNA NEGI shed light on the plight of mothers-to-be residing in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand

roads to give birth at a hospital or resort to home delivery, both being extremely unsafe. On several occasions, women have given birth on roadsides or in forests.

In October 2017, Binita, a resident of Ishali Thunara village in Uttarakashi district, was brought to a PHC at Tiuni in Dehradun's Chakrata block for delivery. Due to the absence of the doctor, the staff did not even allow them to enter the building. To make matters worse, no ambulance could be arranged to take them to another hospital. Family members decided to take Binita to the nearby city of Rohru in Himachal Pradesh and started walking from the PHC towards the Tiuni market. Binita's pain escalated on reaching a suspension bridge approximately 300 metres away from the centre. With the help of local women, a closed area was set up using bed sheets. These women helped Binita deliver her child. Despite the testing situations, both the child and the mother were healthy.

According to the Healthy States Progressive India Report, 2019, published by Niti Ayog, the state of Uttarakhand was relegated to the 17<sup>th</sup> rank out of 21 states, from the 15<sup>th</sup> rank in the previous year's report. The state has performed badly in



most aspects, including infant mortality rate (IMR) and neonatal mortality rate (NMR). However, a report by the National Health and Family Welfare-4, Uttarakhand, states that 69 per cent of births take place in a health facility, mostly in a government facility. But

the Pipleth village of Henwal Ghati, pointed out that health check-ups and vaccinations of pregnant mothers are done regularly. While another ASHA worker, Usha Negi from Than gram panchayat in Narendra Nagar Block in Tehri Garhwal district, said, "Health facilities are available but due to the distance, pregnant mothers have to travel more than 6-7 kms from their villages to get medical facilities."

Dr Sandeep Gurjar, the medical officer-in-charge of the Community Health Centre in the Khari region in Tehri Garhwal district's Narendra Nagar Block, informed about the facilities available in the medical centre. "Despite being a new hospital in a remote area, we do provide delivery facilities. Resources are being mobilised right now. Serious deliveries that require an operation have to be referred to a specialised centre through the 108 ambulance service," shared Dr Sandeep. While narrating his experience, he mentioned that their team tries to facilitate delivery services for the village women so that they are not forced to go to nearby cities to avail these services.

According to Dr Rajeev Negi, the Maternal Health in-charge of Tehri Garhwal, a death audit is also conducted when a woman dies during pregnancy and childbirth or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy at the village or household level. Arrangements

have been made by the government to give an incentive of ₹1,000 to those who inform about the death of a pregnant woman. On receiving the information at the district level, the Chief Medical Officer's office appoints a team of senior doctors to investigate the cause of the death of the pregnant woman at the village level through a death audit.

Reflecting on the reasons for the death of pregnant women, Dr Negi said, "In most of the cases, neglect of medical advice, negligence in taking medicines due to heavy workload and anaemia have been observed."

All the health workers also stressed on the availability of 108 free ambulance services in the state which facilitates institutional delivery. But how will the villagers make use of this service without proper telecommunication and road infrastructure. Also, why are women in these remote areas deprived of proper care and facilities during their pregnancy despite the presence of several health provisions?

In the current times of Covid-19, women in these areas are facing double challenges. While most of the health centres have been converted into Covid-19 facilities, we can only imagine the pain of the pregnant women coming from these far-flung, remote, and hilly areas!

—Charkha Features

“Get busy with life’s purpose. Toss aside empty hopes and get active in your own rescue.”  
—Marcus Aurelius

### HIGH BP AT NIGHT SPELLS TROUBLE

Adults with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes whose blood pressure increased at night had more than double the risk of dying compared to those whose blood pressure “dipped” during sleep, according to a 21-year study presented recently at the American Heart Association’s Hypertension Scientific Sessions 2021.

Blood pressure normally declines, or dips, during sleep. If blood pressure does not adequately decrease during the night, it is called “non-dipping.” If blood pressure increases at night relative to daytime levels, the phenomenon is referred to as “reverse dipping.” These abnormal blood pressure patterns are associated with increased risks of cardiovascular complications and death in adults with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes.

Researchers studied 349 adults with diabetes in Pisa, Italy, beginning in 1999. Researchers found more than half of the participants had non-dipping blood pressure during the night, and 20 per cent were reverse dippers.



### LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF COVID

Over 35 per cent of people had at least one long-term Covid symptom diagnosed in the 3-6 month period after Covid-19 infection, finds a new study.

According to 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 mechanisms underlying the diverse symptoms that can affect survivors,” Harrison, who headed the study, said in a statement.

For the study, the team investigated long-Covid in over 2,70,000 people recovering from Covid-19 infection, using data from the US-based TriNetX electronic health record network.



### DETECT HEART ATTACK IN 30 MINUTES

A team of researchers has developed a sensor that could diagnose a heart attack in less than 30 minutes.

The study showed that, by targeting three distinct types of microRNA or miRNA, the new sensor can distinguish between an acute heart attack and a reperfusion -- the restoration of blood flow, or reperfusion injury and requires less blood than traditional diagnostic methods to do so.

“The technology developed for this sensor showcases the advantage of using miRNA compared to protein-based biomarkers, the traditional diagnostic target,” said Hsueh-Chia Chang from the University of Notre Dame.

“Additionally, the portability and cost efficiency of this device demonstrates the potential for it to improve how heart attacks and related issues are diagnosed in clinical settings and in developing countries,” Chang added.



### CLIMATICALLY TOUGH TIMES AHEAD

During his or her lifetime, a child born in 2021 will experience twice as many wildfires, between two and three times more droughts, almost three times more river floods and crop failures, and seven times more heatwaves on an average, compared to a person who's 60 years old today, researchers have said.

This will be the situation worldwide climatically under the current greenhouse gas emission reduction pledges by governments across the world, a topic for negotiation at the forthcoming world climate summit COP26 at Glasgow in the UK. World leaders will be discussing mitigation and adaptation measures to be taken to keep the global temperature rise to less than 1.5° Celsius compared to the pre-industrial era.

Based on data from the Inter-sectoral Impact Model Intercomparison Project (ISIMIP), researchers have shown in the journal *Science* how today's children will be hit much harder by climate extremes than today's adults.



### AIR POLLUTION AFFECTING NEWBORNS

Air pollution likely contributed to almost 6 million premature births and almost 3 million underweight babies in 2019, according to a study.

The study, led by the University of California-San Francisco and the University of Washington, quantifies the effects of indoor and outdoor pollution on several key indicators of pregnancy, including gestational age at birth, reduction in birth weight, low birth weight, and pre-term birth.

The analysis, published in the journal *PLOS Medicine*, stated that the global incidence of pre-term birth and low birthweight could be reduced by almost 78 per cent if air pollution were minimised in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where indoor pollution is common and pre-term birth rates are the highest in the world.

But it also found significant risks from ambient air pollution in more developed parts of the world. In the US, for example, outdoor air pollution is estimated to have contributed to almost 12,000 pre-term births in 2019.





# GILL, BOWLERS GUIDE KKR TO 6-WICKET WIN

PTI ■ DUBAI

Young Shubman Gill hit a fine half century after an impressive display by the bowlers to guide Kolkata Knight Riders to a six-wicket win over Sunrisres Hyderabad and keep their IPL play-offs hopes alive here on Sunday.

KKR first produced a clinical bowling effort to restrict SRH to a below-par 115 for eight and then rode on Gill's 57 off 51 balls to reach home comfortably.

The win consolidated KKR's position at the fourth place in the standings with 12 points from 13 games.

With three play-off berths already taken by Chennai Super Kings, Delhi Capitals and Royal Challengers Bangalore, the race is on for the fourth and final spot between KKR, Rajasthan Royals and defending champions Mumbai Indians while Punjab Kings are all but out of the tournament.

Defending a small total, SRH bowlers were right on their money from the word go as KKR batsmen struggled to force the pace of the innings.

The opening duo of Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Jason Holder were accurate upfront, while debutant Umran Malik's raw pace troubled Gill and



Nitish Rana (25) in the middle overs.

Rashid Khan too created enough problems for the KKR batsmen, while Siddharth Kaul was incisive with his line and length, making it difficult for opposition batsmen to open their arms.

Venkatesh Iyer (8) and Rahul Tripathi (7) fell to Holder and Rashid in quick succession after which Gill and Rana found it difficult to rotate the strike as the asking rate climbed up with KKR reaching 44 for 2 at the halfway mark.

With Rana struggling to get going, Gill took the onus on himself to break the shackles and he did it by smacking Holder for

two boundaries in the 12th over to bring down the equation to 53 off 42 balls.

The match witnessed some tense moment when Rana was dismissed in the 18th over but Dinesh Karthik (18 not out) and Eoin Morgan (2 not out) closed down the chase with two balls to spare.

Earlier, SRH skipper Kane Williamson's decision to bat first backfired as they lost wickets at regular intervals, failing to counter KKR's incisive bowling, especially of Tim Southee and the spin duo of Varun Chakravarthy and Sunil Narine.

Already out of contention for a play-offs berth, SRH witnessed a

horrible start to their innings, losing Wriddhiman Saha for a duck in the second ball, LBW to Southee.

Jason Roy (10) was the next to follow, caught by Southee off Shivam Mavi in the fourth over.

Skipper Williamson (26 off 21) tried to resurrect the innings and was looking good before he was run out by Shakib Al Hasan with SRH scoreboard reading 38 for three in 6.5 overs.

Once Williamson departed, it was a struggle for SRH batsmen even though Priyam Garg (21) and Abdul Samad (25) tried to forge a partnership.

Garg was holed out at

IPL pointstable			
	M	P	NRR
<b>CSK</b>	12	18	+0.829
<b>DC</b>	12	18	+0.551
<b>RCB</b>	12	16	-0.157
<b>KKR</b>	13	12	+0.294
<b>MI</b>	12	10	-0.453
<b>PBKS</b>	13	10	-0.241
<b>RR</b>	12	10	-0.337
<b>SRH</b>	12	4	-0.475

deep midwicket to Rahul Tripathi off Chakravarthy, while Jason Holder (2) fell to the same bowler in his next over.

Samad tried his best to pick up the tempo in the last five overs, hitting three lusty sixes but eventually perished in search of quick runs, caught by Shubman Gill of Southee's bowling.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar (7 not out) and Siddharth Kaul (7 not out) remained unbeaten in a 12-run ninth-wicket partnership.

The spin duo of Shakib (1/20) and Narine were brilliant in the middle overs as SRH batsmen found the going tough against them.

While Narine returned wicketless, he was economical, finishing with impressive figures of 4-0-12-0. Southee (2/26), Mavi (2/29) and Chakravarthy (2/26) shared six wickets among them.

## RCB beat Punjab Kings by 6 runs

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Glenn Maxwell smashed 57 and then Yuzvendra Chahal spun a web around Punjab Kings as they once again bungled a chase allowing Royal Challengers Bangalore book a play-off berth with a six-run victory in an IPL game on Sunday.

Maxwell's 34-ball-57 propelled Punjab Kings to 164 for 7 which is the highest team total in Sharjah this season and then Chahal owned the middle-overs with another game-changing spell of 3/29 which saw KL Rahul's team finish at 158 for 6.

With 16 points from 12 games, RCB thus became the third team after Chennai Super Kings and Delhi Capitals to make it to the last four stage.

Punjab Kings with 10 points from 13 games can reach 12 points but with a net run-ree of -0.241 and having played one match more than Rajasthan Royals (10 points), Mumbai Indians (10 points) and KKR (10 points before evening game), they are all but out of the competition.

It was another close match that Punjab Kings couldn't finish off and their skipper Rahul needs to take a lot of responsibility as his 39 off 35 balls did more damage than help to his teams cause. Match after match, Rahul has been taking the game deep and then



frittering away the advantage after which, the below-par middle-order of Punjab Kings, arguably the worst in this edition is bungling up big time.

Punjab Kings were 91 for no loss in the 11th over before Rahul's indiscreet shot selection trying to hit left-arm spinner Sahbaz Ahmed against turn changed the course of the match.

His opening partner Mayank Agarwal (57 off 42 balls) was more attacking but was fooled by Chahal's cleve variation of pace as he

top edged a sweep shot.

Punjab needed 27 runs from the last two overs and Mohammed Siraj (0/33 in 4 overs) bowled an impressive penultimate over to bring down the equation to 19 runs off the final over and Harshal Patel (0/27 in 4 overs) defended well by taking the pace off his deliveries.Opting to bat, RCB suffered a middle order collapse after openers Devdutt Padikkal and Virat Kohli added 68 runs for the first wicket. But Maxwell, who is in the midst of one of his best IPL seasons, hit four

sixes and three fours, to complete 50 off 29 balls.

He and AB De Villiers (23 off 18 balls; 1x4; 2x6), the two best T20 batters, conjured 73 runs for the fourth wicket and brought their side back on track.

Kohli started with a four, while Padikkal hammered Arshdeep Singh (0/42 in 3 overs) for a back-to-back six, over deep mid-wicket and a boundary, an elegant cut, in the third over, in which RCB fetched 13 runs.

Padikkal then launched into leggie Ravi Bishnoi (0/35 in 4 overs), striking two boundaries, in similar fashion, over his head.

Kohli, who got a reprieve in the fifth over as young Sarfaraz Khan, dropped a tough chance at short-mid wicket, then was in his element. The duo tore into the Punjab Kings attack, as they raced to 55/0 after Powerplay.

In the eight over, Padikkal was given not out, despite a wiggle, which was seen off his glove, by the third umpire, off Bishnoi.

But Punjab pegged back RCB by picking three quick wickets, all by Moises Henriques (3/12 in 4 overs). He first cleaned up Kohli and off the next ball forced Dan Christian, to give a regulation catch to Sarfaraz Khan. Henriques then dismissed Padikkal, who nicked one to Rahul, as RCB was tottering at 73/3. Maxwell then too charge and took theteam past 160-run mark.



## Indian eves beat UAE in friendly match

PTI ■ DUBAI

The Indian women's football team beat lower-ranked UAE 4-1 in an international friendly match here on Saturday.

Manisha (20th minute), Pyari Xaxa (27th), Sweeti Devi (41st) and Anju Tamang (75th) scored for India in a match that was played behind closed doors at the UAE FA Stadium here.

India are currently ranked 57th in the FIFA chart while UAE are placed at

100th spot.

The friendly match was a part of preparations for the AFC Asian Cup, which will be hosted by India in January-February.

This was India's first win of the year. The Blue Tigers have been winless in the five matches played so far this year, though all of them were against higher-ranked European sides.

They play against Tunisia, ranked 77th in the FIFA list, on Monday at the same venue.

## India, Australia play out a draw

IAN S ■ GOLD COAST

India tried to force a result on Day Four of the one-off pink-ball Test at Metricon Stadium. But with not much time left due to rain in the first two days, the tourists' attempts to force a win against Australia were futile and the match ended in a draw on Sunday. Both teams pocketed two points from the drawn Test, which keeps Australia in the lead in the multi-format series 6-4. But it was India who gave a better account of themselves in their first-ever pink-ball Test with both bat and ball.

Starting the day at 143/3, Ellyse Perry and Ashleigh Gardner went on to share an 89-run stand before Meghna Singh and Pooja Vastrakar triggered a batting collapse. With the new ball just nine deliveries away, Ashleigh, given a life at 20, was out with Mithali Raj pulling off a diving catch at mid-off off Deepti Sharma. Meghna took her maiden Test wicket with a lovely outswinger to get Annabel Sutherland caught behind. Four overs later, Meghna had her second wicket of the day with an inswinger trapping Sophie Molineux lbw.

Amidst the wicket-taking spree, Ellyse was the lone ranger with the bat with luck on her side. She was first dropped by Deepti at gully on 58. Then, on 61, a healthy edge off her bat was shelled by Taniya



Bhatia. After Darcie fell lbw to Deepti, captain Meg Lanning declared the innings at 241/9 with Ellyse unbeaten on 68, giving India a lead of 136 runs.

India began their second innings well as Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma put 70 runs for the opening partnership. Smriti, the centurion of the first innings, fell to a splendid catch in the deep by Ashleigh running to her right from deep mid-wicket off Sophie.

Yastika Bhatia's promotion to number three to up the scoring rate lasted for 12 balls as Ashleigh disturbed her stumps through the gate. Shafali was undeterred and marched to her third half-century in just her second Test match with

a four down the ground. Four overs later, Shafali was trapped lbw by leg-spinner Georgia Wareham for her first Test wicket.

Punam Raut raced to her 41 runs in 62 balls before India declared their second innings at 135/3 in 37 overs, setting Australia a target of 272 in 32 overs. The hosts lost openers Alyssa Healy and Beth Mooney in the first ten overs. While Alyssa chopped on to her stumps off Jhulan Goswami, Beth's top-edge on the pull lobbed to deep backward square leg off Pooja. It took effort from Meg and Ellyse to take Australia to 36/2 in 15 overs before both captains shook hands, signalling the end of the Test in a draw.

## Dube terms it ‘much-needed knock’

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

Rajasthan Royals all-rounder Shivam Dube, who hit a match-winning unbeaten 64 against Chennai Super Kings in his first match of IPL's UAE leg, said that this knock was "much needed" not only for him but also for his team.

"Obviously, this knock was much needed for me as well as my team at this moment. And this knock is totally for my team.

"Because we are on number seven right now and we need to qualify and if we play really well (in) the other two matches, we gonna



qualify, so it was important...," Dube said at the post-match press conference.

Yashasvi Jaiswal timed it beautifully while Shivam Dube

deflated Chennai Super Kings with brute power as Rajasthan Royals kept their play-off hopes alive with a seven-wicket victory on Saturday. Jasiwal smashed 50

off 21 balls which included some delectable sixes off star Australian pacer Josh Hazlewood while Dube sent the likes of Moeen Ali and Ravindra Jadeja into orbit en-route his unbeaten 64 off 42 balls as Royals made a short work of a victory target of 190 in just 17.3 overs.

"And talking about (being) benched, yeah, it is about the team, what combination the team goes on, it is on the coaches and the support staff and the captain and I was waiting for my chance and I got the chance and I performed well," the hard-hitting southpaw noted.

## BEATING INDIA IN INDIA WILL BE BIGGER CHALLENGE: CONWAY

PTI ■ CHIRSTCHURCH

New Zealand batsman Devon Conway feels defeating India in their home conditions will be would be a bigger challenge than beating them in the World Test Championship final.

New Zealand will be touring India in November to play three Twenty20 Internationals and two test matches after the

T20 World Cup.

Conway, who is returning to action after recovering from a finger fracture, said winning the Tests in India remains a "massive goal" for the team.

"Definitely. That's a massive goal that we'd like to achieve. To beat India in their home conditions is probably a bigger challenge than beating them in England. It would be a serious achievement, if not as big as the

World Test Championship final," Conway told stuff.Co.Nz.

"That will be a very important series to try and prove that."

"Travelling to the subcontinent and being presented with surfaces that turn, that's where you've got to be really strong mentally within your defence, trust your defence, and you've got to have a method in which you can score," said Conway.

### SINGLES

#### India surge to top of standings

**Lima:** Olympian Manu Bhaker was at the heart of India's outstanding performance with two more gold medals, as the country surged to the top of the junior world championships standings here. India collected four gold medals out of the six on offer on competition day three, along with two silvers, to claim the top position in the ISSF event. India swept the 10m air pistol medal events, including the mixed, women's and men's team competitions as well the 10M air rifle men's team gold, to end the day with six gold, six silver and two bronze medals. The USA are lying second with four gold, four silver and two bronze. The 19-year-old Bhaker now has a total of three gold from the championship.

#### Ravinder reaches play-off

**Oslo (Norway):** Showing nerves of steel, Indian wrestler Ravinder pulled off a sensational come-from-behind victory by fall' against Bulgaria's Georgi Valentinov Vangelov after trailing by a huge 0-8 margin in the World Championship repechage round to enter the 61kg bronze play-off here on Sunday. Ravinder's victory was similar to Ravi Dahiya's incredible semifinal win at the Tokyo Olympics when he trailed 2-9 but eventually pinned his rival.The Bulgarian dominated the bout by clutching Ravinder's right arm, making moves after moves to pull away. Ravinder, though, was unperturbed and changed the complexion of the bout with a single-leg attack move and got himself into a position from where he could press Vangelov's back on the mat towards the end of the first period.

#### Sabalenka tests positive for virus

**Indian Wells:** Second-ranked Aryna Sabalenka says she has tested positive for the Coronavirus and will miss the upcoming BNP Paribas Open .The Belarusian player was due to be top-seeded for the Oct. 4-17 tournament at Indian Wells after No. 1-ranked Wimbledon champion Ash Barty withdrew to rest at home in Australia. "Unfortunately I've tested positive at Indian Wells and won't be able to compete," Sabalenka wrote on Instagram on Saturday. "I've started my isolation and I'll be staying here until I'm cleared by the doctors and health officials. So far I'm feeling OK but really sad to not be able to play this year."

#### Tvesa top Indian at Estrella

**Barcelona:** Tvesa Malik and

Diksha Dagar made the cut at the Estrella Damm Open, while four other Indians exited early on the second day of the Ladies European Tour event here.Tvesa, who had three birdies against three bogeys, dropped a shot on par-5 which must have hurt her. Yet at even par with rounds 72-72 she is T-22 and the top Indian in the field.Diksha Dagar, who is returning to action on the LET for the first time since the Olympic Games in August, added 74 to her first round 72 and at two-over 146 she is T-39.Tvesa, who had a runner-up finish at Gant Ladies Open, is looking to get into Top-10 of the Race to Costa Del Sol, which is the Order of Merit rankings list for LET.

#### Bhaker claims 3rd gold medal

**Lima:** Olympian Manu Bhaker was at the heart of India's outstanding performance with two more gold medals, as the country surged to the top of the junior world championships standings here. The 19-year-old Bhaker now has a total of three golds from the championship. India collected four gold medals of the six on offer on competition day three, along with two silvers, to claim the top position in the ISSF event. India swept the 10M air pistol medal events, including the mixed, women's and men's team competitions as well the 10M air rifle men's team gold, to end the day with six gold, six silver and two bronze medals. The US are lying second with four gold, four silver and two bronze medals.

#### India begin SAFF C'ship campaign

**Male:** Title favourites India begin their SAFF Championships campaign against a plucky Bangladesh on Monday, knowing fully well that they are just "a little bit superior" than their opponents despite the domination in this regional tournament. India have won the tournament seven times out of the 12 editions but by the own admission of their talismanic captain Sunil Chhetri, every match will be like a "war to fight". Bangladesh have been tough customers for India who had needed a late equaliser in the first leg of the 2022 World Cup qualifiers match in Kolkata to draw 1-1. The Blue Tigers had though won the second leg 2-0. "Bangladesh are very difficult side. In the two matches we played against Bangladesh in the last few months, it has been very tough," Chhetri had said.The five-team tournament began on Friday with Nepal and Bangladesh beating Maldives and Sri Lanka by identical 1-0 margins, respectively.