

China passes new land border law amid standoff with India

Beijing: Asserting that sovereignty and territorial integrity of China are "sacred and inviolable", the country's national legislature has adopted a new law on the protection and exploitation of the land border areas, which could have a bearing on Beijing's border dispute with India.

Members of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) approved the law at the closing meeting of a legislative session on Saturday, state-run *Xinhua* news agency reported.

India and Bhutan are the two countries with which China is yet to finalise the border agreements, while Beijing resolved the boundary disputes with 12 other neighbours.

Last week, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said the developments along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh have "seriously disturbed" the peace and tranquillity in border areas, and this has obviously had an impact on the broader relationship too. The Foreign Secretary, in his remarks at a seminar on "Leveraging China's Economy" on Oct 21, also referred to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's remarks that the ability of India and China to work together will determine the Asian century.

The law, which becomes opera-



tional from January 1 next year, stipulates that "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China are sacred and inviolable", it said. The state shall take measures to safeguard territorial integrity and land boundaries and guard against and combat any act that undermines territorial sovereignty and land boundaries, the report said.

The law also stipulates that the state shall take measures to strengthen border defence, support economic and social development as well as opening-up in border areas, improve public services and infrastructure in such areas, encourage and support people's life and work there, and promote coordination between border defence and social, economic development in border areas, it said.

The state shall, following the principle of equality, mutual trust and friendly consultation, handle land border-related affairs with neighbouring countries through negotiations to properly resolve disputes

and longstanding border issues, it said.

The law states that the Chinese military "shall carry out border duties" including "organising drills" and "resolutely prevent, stop and combat invasion, encroachment, provocation and other acts". A significant aspect of the new law includes state support for the construction of border towns, improving their functioning and strengthening supporting capacity for the construction.

China in recent years has been strengthening the border infrastructure including the establishment of air, rail and road networks. It also launched a bullet train in Tibet which extends up to Nyingchi, the border town close to Arunachal Pradesh.

Besides that, China also began constructing a number of villages close to the border with proper infrastructure in Tibet which have become an essential and effective part of border defence, state-run *Global Times* reported on October 19. "By the end of 2020, Tibet had built more than 600 well-off, high-standard border villages. The roads connecting border villages are also quite accessible. At least 130 border roads have been newly built or reconstructed with a total length of 3,080 km" it quoted a report by the state-run *Xinhua* news agency. **PTI**

Report: Facebook struggles to combat misinformation and hate speech in India

New York: Internal documents at Facebook show "a struggle with misinformation, hate speech and celebrations of violence" in India, the company's biggest market, with researchers at the social media giant pointing out that there are groups and pages "replete with inflammatory and misleading anti-Muslim content" on its platform, US media reports have said.

In a report published on Saturday, *The New York Times* said in February 2019, a Facebook researcher created a new user account to look into what the social media website will look like for a person living in Kerala.

"For the next three weeks, the account operated by a simple rule: Follow all the recommendations generated by Facebook's algorithms to join groups, watch videos and explore new pages on the site. The result was an inundation of hate speech, misinformation and celebrations of violence, which were documented in an internal Facebook report published later that month," the NYT report said.

"Internal documents show a struggle with misinformation, hate speech and celebra-



tions of violence in the country, the company's biggest market," said the report based on disclosures obtained by a consortium of news organisations, including the *New York Times* and the *Associated Press*. The documents are part of a larger cache of material collected by whistle blower Frances Haugen, a former Facebook employee who recently testified before the Senate about the company and its social media platforms. The report said the internal documents include reports on how bots and fake accounts tied to the "country's ruling party and opposition figures" were wreaking havoc on national elections.

The NYT said that in a separate report produced after the 2019 national elections, Facebook found that "over 40 per cent of top views, or impressions, in the Indian state of West Bengal were fake/inauthentic". One inauthentic account had amassed

more than 30 million impressions.

In an internal document titled 'Adversarial Harmful Networks: India Case Study', "Facebook researchers wrote that there were groups and pages "replete with inflammatory and misleading anti-Muslim content" on Facebook.

The internal documents also detail how a plan "championed" by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg to focus on "meaningful social interactions" was leading to more misinformation in India, particularly during the pandemic.

The NYT report added that another Facebook report detailed efforts by Bajrang Dal to publish posts containing anti-Muslim narratives on the platform. "Facebook is considering designating the group as a dangerous organisation because it is "inciting religious violence" on the platform, the document showed. But it has not yet done so," the NYT report said.

The documents show that Facebook did not have enough resources in India and was not able to grapple with the problems it had introduced there, including anti-Muslim posts.

SC slams U'khand Govt for 'frivolous' appeal challenging reduction of sentence

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has slammed the Uttarakhand Government for filing a "frivolous" appeal challenging reduction of sentence of a man in a case of attempt to murder.

A bench of Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Vikram Nath noted that the counsel for the accused did not challenge the conviction before the Uttarakhand High Court and only argued for reduction of sentence and the lawyer for the State did not oppose such a prayer for reduction of sentence.

The top court dismissed the petition filed by the Uttarakhand Government with a warning to the State that any other attempt of frivolous litigation in this court may be visited with penalisation of the officers responsible for sanctioning.

"It is rather disturbing to note that in such a matter, where the State's counsel before the high court did not even oppose the prayer for reduction of sentence and the high court made slight modification in the sentence considering the facts and circumstances of the case in totality, the State has chosen to approach this court seeking special leave to appeal without any justification.

"The present petition could only be said to be a frivolous litigation by the State," the bench said in its October 20 order.

RTS Commission may soon be renamed as Ministry of Happiness in Haryana

Chandigarh: Haryana may soon rechristen its Right to Service Commission as Ministry of Happiness, a first-of-its-kind initiative in the country.

"The best place to begin designing happiness-centric experiences is where the bureaucracy-citizenry interface takes place. A citizen-centric attitude of the system combined with the elimination of evils of red-tapism and bureaucratic procrastination or apathy will deliver the biggest rewards in the shortest amount of time. The Government may soon re-christen the Haryana Right to Service Commission as Ministry of Happiness," said TC Gupta, Chief Commissioner, Haryana Right to Service (RTS)

Commission.

He said that to bridge the gap between the promises made and actual delivery by the bureaucracy, the State Government had launched the "Auto Appeal Software (AAS) programme" of Haryana Right to Service Commission. With this, Haryana had become the first State in the country to introduce such a unique system, the spokesman said.

The appeal shall now be filed before the First or Second Grievance Redressal Authority by the AAS conceived by the RTS Commission and dedicated to the people of Haryana by the Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, he said.

Kashmiri Pandit community in US condemns targeted killings of civilians in Valley

Washington: The Kashmiri Pandit community here has strongly condemned the recent targeted killings of civilians in the Valley by the militants and urged the Indian Government to take steps to ensure the safety of the minorities there.

The community organised a two-day event at the popular National Mall where participants said that targeted killings have been especially gruesome, and the home-grown terrorist insurgency remains dependent on resources and inspiration from Pakistan.

"The killings of the minorities by the Pakistan-based terrorist in the Kashmir Valley needs to be stopped," said Dr. Shakun Malik, a Kashmiri Pandit activist from Washington DC area.

"Indian Govt must take steps to ensure the safety of local minorities of Kashmir valley who remain targets for the future," she said. **PTI**

MP: Bajrang Dal activists ransack set of 'Ashram-3' web series; allege wrong portrayal

Bhopal: Bajrang Dal activists allegedly ransacked the set of the third season of web-series 'Ashram' here and also threw ink on its producer-director Prakash Jha, accusing him of portraying Hindus wrongly, police said.

The windscreens of two buses of the crew were also broken in stone-pelting, they said.

Besides that, Bajrang Dal threatened that it would not allow the shooting of this web series further. Talking to *PTI*, Superintendent of Police (SP), Bhopal south, Sai Krishna Thota, said that some people raised objections and staged protest over the name of the web

series when it's shooting was underway at Old Jail Premises located in Arera Hills.

"Bajrang Dal activists objected that this web series hurt the sentiments of Hindus as it contains obscene scenes," he said. The protesters also threw ink on Prakash Jha and pelted stones, the officer added.

Thota said that the windscreens of two buses were damaged due to stone pelting and one person was injured.

He said that immediately after the incident, police personnel reached the spot and brought the situation under control. **PTI**

State must focus on real issues: Sidhu; never saw such 'anarchy' in Punjab Cong: Tewari

Chandigarh: Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu on Sunday said the State must concentrate on real issues that concern every Punjabi even as MP Manish Tewari said he never saw "such chaos and anarchy" being played out in the party's state unit. Critical of the infighting in the Punjab Congress, Tewari tweeted that party leaders are "squabbling publicly with each other like children", using "gut-tural language" that "even fish wives would not use".

The statements by both leaders have come amid the ongoing war of words between Congress leaders and former

Chief Minister Amarinder Singh over his friendship with Pakistani journalist Aroosa Alam, just months before the state Assembly polls.

Amarinder was replaced by Charanjit Singh Channi as the state Chief Minister after a power tussle with Sidhu and had said he will form a new party.

"Punjab must come back to its real issues that concern every Punjabi and our future generations. How will we counter the financial emergency that stares upon us? I will stick to the real issues and not let them take a backseat!" Sidhu tweeted earlier in the day. **PTI**



Fishermen and buyers busy at Kasimedu fish market in Chennai on Sunday

PTI

Modi to travel to Rome...

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The COP-26 is being held from October 31 to November 12 under the Presidency of the UK partnering with Italy. The high-level segment of COP-26, titled the World Leaders' Summit (WLS), will be held on November 1-2. Heads of State of more than 120 countries will attend the meet. The COP-26 was originally slated to be held in 2020, but was deferred to 2021 in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The UNFCCC embodies the global will and vision to combat climate change. The periodic Conference of Parties to this convention have emerged as global climate summits, providing an opportunity for stocktaking and for charting the way forward.

Modi last attended the COP-21 in Paris in 2015, when the Paris Agreement was concluded, and whose implementation commences this year. At COP-26, the Parties will work to achieve the completion of Paris Agreement implementation guidelines; the mobilization of climate finance; actions to strengthen climate adaptation, technology development and transfer; and keeping in reach the Paris Agreement goals of limiting the rise in global temperatures.

The Ministry said Modi will hold numerous bilateral meetings on the sidelines of COP-26, including with Boris Johnson.

Is the third Covid wave...

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According to reports, Dr Agrawal said further details and the exact number of AY.4.2 cases in India would be available soon.

AY.4.2 is a descendant of the Delta variant, which has so far been considered the most dangerous form, affecting millions. Delta has been studied closely using genome sequencing since early this year and its tribe has extended up to AY.39. The lineage AY.4 was considered the fastest growing in many continents, including India, in the last three months until the UK health authorities earlier this week announced the spread of AY.4.2. The UK health authorities have named AY.4.2 as a "variant under investigation" that "appears to have a modestly increased growth rate compared to Delta". The AY.4.2 lineage has mutations of Delta and Delta derivative AY.4 and has spike mutations A222V and Y145H that help the virus enter human cells more easily. The UK, which has the biggest database on AY.4.2 has started comparative analyses of 'Pandemic not over'

Recent studies have shown that the Oxford vaccine, sold as Covidshield in India, is effective against Delta. The third genomic sequencing report of the BMC in Mumbai showed that while breakthrough infections (getting Covid despite vaccination) have been noted, the vaccine has resulted in a lower number of hospitalisations, disease severity and deaths.

Pay ₹50L to man illegally axed: HC...

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Justice Prathiba M Singh directed that the man be paid ₹50,49,079 towards salary for the period from December 4, 1998, which is the date of award, and the date of superannuation, which is October 31, 2016, his leave encashment and his gratuity. It was directed that ₹19,900 be paid to him as monthly pension.

This amount was calculated by the authorities and the court was informed about it. However, the basis for the computation has still not been explained.

"However, considering that the petitioner (Singh) has been running from pillar to post since 2016 when the Supreme Court dismissed the SLP till date, the respondents (authorities) are directed to pay the amounts in terms of order dated March 9, 2021, on or before October 30, 2021, to the petitioner workman," the HC said in its October 12 order.

The court was also told by

advocate Sonali Malhotra, representing AIIMS officials, that the workman was also required to deposit ₹30,000 as a lifetime validation amount for being enrolled under the Employees Health Scheme.

To this, the court said that in view of the long duration for which Singh has been fighting the present litigation, the amount of ₹30,000 shall now be deposited on his behalf by AIIMS itself, in lieu of costs for the long-drawn litigation.

It said all the amounts due and payable shall be released by October 30 and a compliance affidavit giving the details of the computation and the manner in which it has been done, as also confirming the payment, shall be filed on or before November 15.

The court asked the petitioner's counsel to give details of the workman's bank accounts to the counsel for AIIMS for remitting the payment. (PTI)

Four JeM ultras planning attack...

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The other modus operandi of the terrorist pinpointed was not snatching weapons from the Special Operations Group (SOG) of the Jammu & Kashmir police as they fire back on the attackers. The terrorists were also instructed by the Pakistani masterminds not to fire on any party which is close to a bunker as the personnel inside the bunker may fire back on the attackers. Such detailed modus operandi of the terror groups suggest they have full assessment of counter action by various security forces. The ultras know to discriminate between the forces in terms of perceived retaliation by them to the attackers. The terrorists have clearly identified the soft targets primarily in the district police and CRPF which is a matter of concern for the agencies, sources said.

"The repeated inputs of CRPF being chosen by the terror groups for terrorist attacks pose a major challenge to the Central paramilitary to seek an image makeover by displaying itself to be having the potential to hit back hard against the ultras. There is also a need to review the current trend of CRPF relying mostly on the Jammu & Kashmir police for intelligence and acting as an adjunct of the police for security planning and counter-terror action," conceded a senior security official. Long-term security challenges need to be addressed through a mix of independent dynamic action against the terror groups on the ground and perspective plans for the long haul to contain terrorism being directed by Pakistan through the terror groups affiliated to the Pakistan army and ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence), officials added.

Mid-sea drug...

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Among other things, Sail has made a serious allegation that he "overheard" Kiran Gosavi, for whom he works as a personal bodyguard and who is also an "independent" witness in the case, while talking to one Sam D'Souza, as saying: "you put a bomb of Rs 25 crore, let's settle for Rs 18 crore and give Rs 8 crore to Sameer Wankhede."

Gosavi is one of the nine independent witnesses in the cruise ship raid and alleged recovery of drugs, in which Bollywood super star Shah Rukh Khan's eldest son Aryan Khan and seven others were detained on October 2 and formally arrested on October 3.

Gosavi is an "absconding accused" booked for allegedly duping a Pune-based man on the pretext of offering a job in Malaysia.

Sali also stated in his affidavit that he had seen Pooja Dadlani (Shah Rukh Khan's manager) talking to Gosavi. He also claimed that on being told

so by Gosavi, he went to a location sometime later to collect Rs 50 lakh cash and that he collected "two bags filled with it."

Sail claimed that he carried the two bags of cash and delivered them to Sam D'Souza near Trident Hotel in south Mumbai. "However, when he (Sam D'Souza) counted the case, it was only Rs 38 lakhs," he stated in the affidavit.

Alleging that Gosavi might have been either killed or abducted, Sail claimed in his concluding remarks of his six-page affidavit: "I say that KP Gosavi is missing now and I now fear that NCB officials and other persons involved may kill me or abduct me like KP Gosavi. As seen in big cases, witnesses are often killed or taken away and I therefore want to state the truth."

In his shocking revelations on the circumstances leading to the arrest of youngsters in the mid-sea bust case, Sail quoted Gosavi as saying that in all 13 people were arrested on October 2 (and not eight persons as claimed by the NCB).

Among other things, Sail

stated that he was told by Gosavi's driver Vijay Suryavanshi on the morning of October 2 to wait near the NCB's office in south Mumbai, "where Gosavi is in meeting with NCB official" and later at around 12 noon, Gosavi had asked him to come at "Green Gate."

From there, Sail and Gosavi bought a lot of foodstuff including Frankie rolls, cold drinks and water, which they took inside the Green Gate near the boarding pad of the cruise ship, and he distributed the eatables to Wankhede and other NCB staffers. Sail remained in the waiting area of the International Cruise Terminal and that afternoon Gosavi sent him a few photographs on WhatsApp with instructions to keep a lookout for them.

Sail identified one of the persons and informed Gosavi who replied to me "That person who I identified is caught and 13 people are arrested."

At 7 pm that day, Gosavi asked Sail to bring his Innova car inside after telling the CISF security personnel Sameer

Wankhede's name, but the security did not permit the vehicle, forcing him (Gosavi) to come out, change his clothes and again enter the Green Gate.

"At about 10.30 pm I was called by KP Gosavi to the boarding area. I saw Aryan Khan in one of the cabins at the cruise boarding area. I saw one girl Mumun Dhamecha and others in one of the cabins with the NCB sleuths," Sail stated, adding that NCB officer took Aryan Khan in the Innova car to the NCB office.

"At around 1 am, I received a call from Gosavi, instructing me to sign as a pancha and calling me to the NCB office. I reached there and Sameer Wankhede instructed the staff to take my signature and name. One Shekar from NCB told me to sign on ten blank papers," Sail stated, adding that he sent a copy of his Aadhaar card by WhatsApp to the NCB official.

In his affidavit, Sail subsequently goes on to talk about what he "overheard" Gosavi telling one Sam D'souza about the money deal.

Strengthening organisational infra
AAP to launch drive for civic polls after Diwali

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Asserting that people want a change at the helm in Delhi municipal corporations, the AAP on Sunday announced that it will launch a massive campaign after Diwali next month to oust the BJP in the 2022 civic body polls.

The party will also start a huge exercise to strengthen its organisational structure in the run-up to the MCD elections, senior Aam Aadmi Party leader and Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said.

The Delhi BJP hit back, saying that the AAP is free to make claims but the people have seen how the Arvind Kejriwal-led city Government failed them during the Covid-19 pandemic and the Centre came to their aid.

The BJP has ruled all three municipal corporations of Delhi - North, South and East - for three consecutive terms.

"People want a change this time as the BJP-ruled municipal corporations have completely failed in fulfilling their responsibility," Rai said during a press conference at AAP headquarters here.

There is no respite for the people of Delhi from dirt and garbage under the BJP regime. The MCDs also failed to take



preventive steps in time to check the spread of dengue this year, he alleged.

"To fulfil people's wish for a change, the party will start a much bigger campaign after Diwali.

Along with this, a huge exercise will also be carried out to strengthen the party's organisational structure," he added.

Rai claimed that people expressed their dissatisfaction with the performance of the BJP-ruled MCDs during 'Mohalla Sabhas' (Colony Meetings) organised by the AAP under its 'Aapka MLA Aapke Dwar' (Your MLA at your doorstep) programme.

As part of the programme, which was launched on September 1 and concluded on October 20, a total of 2,532

'Mohalla Sabhas' were organised across Delhi, he said.

"We heard the grievances of the people and work is on to address them at the government level," he said. Rai said that there was not a single 'Mohalla Sabha' where people did not raise the issue of dirt and garbage.

He said the AAP is preparing its plan of action for the civic body polls based on the report of 'Mohalla Sabhas'.

The party is also reviewing the performance of the organisation in holding 'Mohalla Sabhas', he said.

It seems that the BJP's farewell from the MCDs will be before the deadline it has set for the complete removal of the mountain of garbage at Delhi's border, the AAP leader said.

'AAP organised 2,532 Mohalla meetings from Sept 1 to Oct 20'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP State Convener and Cabinet Minister Gopal Rai said on Sunday the party organised 2,532 Mohalla meetings across Delhi from September 1 to October 20 under 'Aapka MLA Aapke Dwar' programme. "In every Mohalla Sabha, people have raised the issue of dirt and litter spreading throughout Delhi and it is evident that the BJP will be cleared off from the MCD before they clear the garbage they have left behind. People want a change in MCD this time," he said.

Rai said the people have continuously talked about how BJP and MCD have proved completely unsuccessful in cleaning the garbage of Delhi and have not even campaigned against dengue. He said that people of Delhi also want a change in MCD this time, so the party will start a campaign after Diwali to further strengthen the organisational structure.

The AAP leader further said, "From September 1 and October 20, 2,532 mohalla sabhas were organized in which 376 Mohalla Sabhas were held in the North East Lok Sabha, 358 in East Delhi Lok Sabha, 367 in West Lok Sabha, 338 in Chandni Chowk Lok Sabha, 345 in New Delhi Lok Sabha, 389 in South Lok Sabha and 359 in North West Lok Sabha



in which our MLAs communicated with the public about their problems. The problems of the people were heard in the Mohalla Sabhas and work is being done regarding their problems at the assembly level and also at the level of Delhi government."

Rai said the BJP has given three gifts of garbage to Delhi. "It has repeatedly missed deadlines to clear the garbage mountain.

It seems that the deadline of BJP's farewell from MCD will come even before the deadline for cleaning the garbage is over. We are making our action plan on the basis of the preliminary reports of our Mohalla Sabhas. At the same time, the party is also reviewing the performance of the party organisation from place to place in the Mohalla Sabhas," he said.

4 held in G'gram for betting on T-20 World Cup match

FIANS ■ GURUGRAM

Gurugram Police have arrested four men, who were allegedly involved in betting on a recent T20 World Cup cricket match between Australia and South Africa.

The four accused were identified as Laxman (53), Satpal (31) and Pradeep (31), all residents of Delhi and Neeraj (31) of Uttar Pradesh, the Police said on Sunday.

The accused were arrested by a crime branch team of Sector-17 from the DLF Phase-1 area in Gurugram after receiving a tip-off.

"Following a secret information, the Police raided the spot and nabbed the accused when they were placing bets on a T20 World Cup cricket match being played between Australia and South Africa on Saturday," said Subhash Boken, Gurugram Police Spokesperson.

The police have recovered 40 mobile phones, five laptops, two tablets, two LED TVs and other electronic gadgets from their possession.

A case under Sections 13A/3/67 of the Gambling Act has been registered against the alleged suspects at DLF Phase-1 police station in Gurugram.



AYURWALK to create awareness for stress-free lifestyle



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to promote physical activity and create awareness among people to live a stress-free lifestyle, Delhi Health minister Satyendar Jain kicked off the "AYURWALK" organised by the Department of Ayush on the occasion of the upcoming 6th Ayurvedic Day 2021.

Jain encouraged people to adopt a healthy lifestyle to prevent any kind of physical disorder arising out from living a sedentary lifestyle. The Health Minister said "Ayurveda, which is called the science of life, plays an important role in maintaining our physical well-being and disease resistance. Ayurveda and Yoga are such disciplines, which teach you to live in a healthy and in the right way." The walk started from Central Park, Connaught Place and ended at Ayurvedic and Unani Tibbia College, Karol Bagh. Medicinal plants were

distributed to the participants and their various benefits were discussed.

"To spread awareness about physical activity and walking among the people, participated in a program 'Ayurwalk' organized by the @doayush_delhi. On this occasion, distributed medicinal plants to the participants and discussed about its benefits with them," Jain tweeted.

The Health Minister further congratulated the Directorate of Ayush for their contribution to the Healthcare system through Ayurveda and for their valuable contribution during the first wave of Covid-19. Jain further added, "This time the theme of Ayurveda Day has been kept as Nutrition and Ayurveda. What food will be beneficial for an individual has also been clarified according to the nature of each person. The timing of meals and the rules for consuming food were also included.

20-year-old man arrested for raping minor girl

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested a 20-year-old man on Sunday for allegedly raping a minor girl in central Delhi's Ranjeet Nagar area.

The accused has been identified as Suraj, a resident of Raghunagar. Police said that the accused was nabbed from Kalanaur in Rohtak district, Haryana. He was previously arrested under the POCSO Act for allegedly harassing a minor under Khyala police station limits.

According to Shweta Chauhan, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Central district, police team checked footage from hundreds of CCTV cameras and obtained his photograph.

"The accused is in no way related to the victim and he is not a resident of that locality.

There was no phone number, no vehicle, etc. that could help police teams in identifying the accused. Several police teams from the central district worked tirelessly for 36 hours to nab him," said the DCP.

"When the accused realised that the police were looking for him, he tried to flee from Delhi. Police teams followed him and intercepted him at Kalanaur," said the DCP.

In a purported CCTV footage which has gone viral, the accused could be seen going with the girl. The incident took place on Friday when the girl was on her way to a place where food was being distributed for free. Police said the place was close to her residence.

It is suspected that the accused lured the minor and then raped her, police said, adding the girl is stable.



Over 17,000 Covid vaccine doses given to city prison inmates

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Prisons department on Sunday said that a total of 17,362 doses of Covid-19 vaccine have been administered to the inmates of three jails across the national Capital so far.

According to data shared by the prison department, by Saturday, 11,844 inmates of Tihar jail had been jabbed, with 9,028 of them getting their first and 2,816 their second doses.

"In Rohini jail, 1,073 inmates - 885 first dose and 188 second dose - were administered the vaccine, while in Mandoli jail, 2,794 inmates got their first, and 1,651 second dose," the data stated.

The prisons department launched a Covid vaccination drive for inmates over 45 years of age on March 18, while the inoculation of inmates in the 18-44 age group began on May 18.

Since March this year, about 383 coronavirus cases have been reported among inmates of these jails with eight of them succumbing.

A total of 225 prison staff members caught virus at some point since March with no casualty in the group.

The jail authorities are taking all precautions and following Covid-appropriate behaviour, including social distancing among the inmates, a senior jail official said.



ing among the inmates, a senior jail official said.

The official said that over 4000 inmates were released from the three jails this year.

"We started the process of releasing inmates from the second week of May. Around 3,800 under-trial prisoners were released on interim bail and around 840 convicts were released on emergency parole from the prisons," he said.

These include inmates who were released last year and surrendered with no adverse report, and also new prisoners who were eligible for interim bail or emergency parole in view of the pandemic, as per the criteria laid down by a high-powered committee on May 4 and May 11.

Last year, around 5,500 under-trial prisoners and 1,184 convicts were released on interim bail and emergency parole from these jails during the virus-induced lockdown.

4 Gogi aides arrested; gang war averted

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With the arrest of four alleged associates of Gogi gang, the Delhi Police claimed to have averted a possible gang war in the national Capital.

Jitendra Gogi, leader of the Gogi gang, was shot dead inside a Rohini courtroom on September 24 by two assailants at the behest of rival gang leader Tillu Tajpuriya. The duo was killed in retaliatory firing by police. Gogi and Tillu gangs have been at war with each other for years and their rivalry has claimed dozens of lives, police said.

Those arrested have been identified as Sumit (25), a resident of Rohtak district in Haryana, Kunal (25), a resident of Barwala, Karan Hans (22), a resident of Baprola, and Suraj Kumar (25), a resident of Sonapat in Haryana, they added.

On Saturday, information was received that two people wanted in the murder case will come near DTC Depot in Rohini sector 37 to commit a robbery. A trap was laid and Sumit was arrested. On his instance, his three associates were held from Rohini sector 34. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) Pranav Tayal said.

Discoms install pillar mounted power stations to beat space crunch

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In view of space crunch in congested areas, power giant BSES has installed first-of-its-kind 400 kVA pillar mounted, compact substation to a robust power distribution network in the national capital.

Delhi's power demand has touched to 7323 MW in 2021 compared to 7400 MW in 2019 and 2789 MW in 2002. "Discoms are often facing challenges in network augmentation, primarily on account of non availability of sufficient space for installing and laying new power infrastructure. It affects discoms' ability to meet the increasing power demand as the existing distribution infrastructure gets over-loaded," sources in power distribution companies said.

"The BSES has been regularly exploring all possibilities to find cost-effective, innovative and workable solutions for addressing the issues of space constraints.

Such innovations are expected to help the discom in maintaining reliable power supply even in congested areas with space constraints," a senior BSES official said.

"In the latest instance, it has



commissioned a first-of-its-kind 400 kVA pillar mounted compact sub-station, scalable to 630 kVA, in Vasant Kunj in South Delhi. This aesthetically designed distribution transformer takes almost 1/5th the space of a conventional transformer - 4.09 sq mts vis-à-vis 20 sq mts for a conventional transformer.

The official said that the second such pillar mounted transformer will be installed in Nehru Place. Developed in-house, over the next few months, around 25 such pillar mounted transformers will be installed in several congested areas, he added.

5-yr-old raped, murdered by neighbour; accused held

Gurugram: In a shocking rape and murder case, a five-year-old minor girl was allegedly raped and killed by a neighbour in a village under the jurisdiction of Police station Bhonsdi in Gurugram on Sunday.

Spokesperson of the Gurugram police, Subhash Boken said that the accused was arrested and the body of the girl has been sent for a post mortem. The accused was a migrant labourer from Bihar identified as Raja Kumar Mandal. The victim a native of Uttar Pradesh was currently residing with her family in a Gurugram's village.

According to the FIR, the accused had lured the victim from her house and took the girl to the field behind her house and raped and killed her on Sunday. On finding their daughter missing, parents looked for her in adjoining fields. Later they found her body and the accused was standing next to the body and after seeing the family of the victim he fled the spot. Later the family reported the matter to the police. "Following an immediate action initiated by the police the accused was nabbed," he said. A case has been registered against the accused under the POCSO Act and Sections 302 and other relevant sections of the IPC at Bhonsdi police station.

CEO Office gears up for special summary revision of Delhi's electoral roll from November 1

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The special summary revision of Delhi's electoral roll with January 1, 2022 as the qualifying date is all set to begin from November 1, and in the run-up to the exercise, the CEO Office has taken a number of initiatives to ensure no voter is left behind in the process.

From physically reaching out to the youth and others through various events to hosting meetings online with representative heads of various colleges and universities in the city, the poll body has made efforts to connect with as many electorate as possible, despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The office of the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), through its social media platforms has endeavoured to expand its outreach ahead of the latest special summary revision (SSR) of the election roll, and special digital posters

have been put up on its Facebook and Twitter handles to raise awareness about the exercise.

During this SSR, any person who would be 18 years or more on or before January 1, 2022 will be eligible to enroll as a voter. The final roll will be published on January 5, officials said.

Delhi's last electoral roll was published in January 2021, according to which the total number of eligible voters in the city had then stood at over 1.48 crore.

Special Summary Revision of electoral roll with respect to January 1, 2021 as the qualifying date, was done in all 70 Assembly constituencies of Delhi.

"In keeping with the vision of 'no voter to be left behind', a series of events and outreach programmes have been organised, and more will be held, to reach out to the masses, so that eligible people can get enrolled," a senior official said on Sunday.

Though NET min qualification for Profs' recruitment, PhD holders more in demand

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Eligibility Test (NET) of the the University Grants Commission (UGC) saw two postponements with the first in December 2020 and another in October. Though NET is a minimum qualification for Professors' recruitment, PhD holders are more in demand.

In fact, the Parliamentary Committee on Education is of the opinion that the NET should be modified to meet the new norms. The present assessment system is ineffective and has failed to bring the aspiring youths to the teaching profession, it opined.

Post the Parliamentary Committee's report, the Delhi University has communicated to the principals of its affiliated colleges seeking ad hoc professors' PhD status report.

The information which has been sought includes whether the professor is pursuing PhD

or has submitted the thesis, or the degree awarded to him in the past three years.

Hundreds of these Professors have been selected on the basis of NET, but now their PHD status is also being sought.

Former member of DU Academic Council Prof Hansraj Suman said, at present, either NET or PhD degree is needed for the post of Assistant Professor.

Technically, those who hold a PhD degree do not need to clear NET. However, candidate qualifying NET have less chance of getting appointed as Assistant Professor compared to PhD holders.

Moreover, after implementation of new rules of the UGC, prospects of NET candidates will dim, he said.

Prof Hansraj Suman said, for appointment of Professors in colleges, other conditions like holding PhD degree and publication of research papers are being added.



ITBP personnel perform stunts during the 60th Raising Day of Indo Tibetan Border Police in Greater Noida on Sunday

PTI

More drones to be used to help people in day-to-day work: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delivering his monthly radio talk ‘*Mann ki baat*’, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said drone technology would be increasingly used to help out people in their day-to-day work. While he informed that “Rangoli” , “Lori” and “patriotic song” competitions will form part of the celebrations of the 75th year of the country’s Independence, he also spoke about the rise of the ‘Nari-Shakti’ in the country.

Modi touched on a range of issues such as the vaccination drive against Covid-19, the United Nations Day, Centre’s new drone policy and women empowerment.

Modi lauded vaccination efforts acroos the country and said that healthcare workers left no stone unturned to inoculate

citizens and even walked long-distances in hills to accomplish the task as he spoke with a health worker at Bageshwar, in Kumaon hill region of Uttarakhand.

While asking people to enliven their lives with various traditional cultural forms, the Prime Minister also said that the modern drone technology should be increasingly used to make life easy for the people.

“Drone Technology. Up until a few years ago, when the name of Drone used to come up, what used to be the first feeling in the minds of the people?... Of the army, of weapons, of war. But today if we have any wedding procession or function, we see a drone shooting photos and videos”, he said.

“The spectrum of a drone’s usage and its capabilities is not just limited to that. India is one



of the first countries in the world, which is preparing digital records of land in its villages with the help of drones. India is working extensively on using drones for transportation.

Whether it is farming in the village or delivery of goods at home; Providing help in emergency or monitoring law and order”, said the Prime Minister.

“It is not long before we will see drones being deployed for all these needs of ours. Most of these have already started. Like a few days ago, nano-urea was

sprayed in the fields through drones in Bhavnagar, Gujarat. Drones are also playing their role in the Covid vaccine campaign. We got to see a picture of this in Manipur, where vaccines were delivered via a drone to an island. Telangana has also done trials for vaccine delivery by drones”, said Modi, elaborating on the potential future role of drones in the day-to-day life.

The Prime Minister also pointed out that the strength of women joining the police force has more than doubled and reached 2.15 lakh.

“Earlier it was believed that services like army and police are meant only for men. But today it is not so. The statistics from the Bureau of Police Research and Development show that in the last few years, the number of women police

personnel has doubled. In 2014, while their number was close to 1 lakh 5 thousand, by 2020 it has increased by more than double and this number has now reached up to 2 lakh 15 thousand”, he said.

Even in the Central Armed Police Forces, Modi said the number of women has almost doubled in the last seven years.

“And I’m not talking just about numbers. Today the daughters of the country are performing even the toughest duties with full force and zeal. For example, many daughters are currently undergoing one of the most difficult trainings, that of Specialized Jungle Warfare Commandos”, he said.

Steering his talk to Indian traditions and culture, Modi said ‘Rangoli’, ‘Lori’ and ‘patriotic songs’ competitions organised by the culture ministry

would form part of ‘Amrit Mahotsav’ of the country’s independence.

“A listener of “Mann Ki Baat” has suggested that Amrit Mahotsav should be connected to the art of Rangoli too. For centuries, we have had a tradition of lending colours to festivals through Rangoli. The diversity of our country is visible in Rangoli. Rangoli is drawn in different states with different names and on different themes.

“Therefore, the Ministry of Culture is also going to conduct a National Competition associated with this. Just imagine, when a Rangoli related to the freedom movement will be created”, wondered Modi while accepting new ideas to celebrate national independence”, he said.

Modi also touched on another art form known as ‘Lori’ where “sanskars are inculcated in young children through lullabies and they are introduced to the culture. Lullabies also have their own diversity”, he said.

“So why don’t we, in the Amritkaal period, revive this art also and write lullabies pertaining to patriotism, write poems, songs, something or the other which can be easily recited by mothers in every home to their little children. In these lullabies there should be reference to modern India, the vision of 21st century India and its dreams.

“The ministry has decided to organize a competition related to it after receiving suggestions from the listeners”, said the Prime Minister.

Modi, in his address, also

remembered freedom-fighter and warrior Birsa Munda and his great role in preserving local culture and forest.

“Next month, the birth anniversary of one such icon and a brave warrior, Bhagwan Birsa Munda ji is falling on the 15th of November. Bhagwan Birsa Munda is also known as ‘Dharti Aaba’. Do you know what this epithet means? It means the father of earth.

“The way Bhagwan Birsa Munda fought to protect his culture, his forest, his land, it could have only been done by ‘Dharti Aaba’! He taught us to be proud of our culture and roots. The foreign rule subjected him to countless threats and applied immense pressure, but he did not relinquish the tribal culture”, the Prime Minister said in his tribute to Munda.

INS Vikrant’s 2nd phase sea trials begin

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The second phase of sea trials of the first indigenously designed and built aircraft carrier Vikrant commenced on Sunday with the warship sailing out from Kochi. The maiden trials lasting more than a week were held in early August.

With the maiden trials completed successfully, India had joined the elite club of nations having the capability to build aircraft carrier. US, UK, France, China and Russia are other countries have this niche expertise.

Once it passes the sea trials, INS Vikrant is likely to be inducted into the Navy by the end of next year. It is the largest and most complex warship to be built within the country. The 40,000-tonne aircraft carrier set off on its maiden sea trials, 50 years after its namesake played a major role in the 1971 war. It was built at a cost of more than Rs 23, 000 crores by the public sector Cochin Shipyard.



als are over, the aircraft carrier will be put through the stringent aviation trials before induction into service.

The aircraft carrier is around 262 metres long and 62 metres wide. In June, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reviewed the construction of the aircraft carrier that will be able to accommodate up to 30 fighter jets and helicopters. The warship will have a fleet of Mig-29K fighter jets and Ka-31 helicopters.

There are 14 decks in all,

including five in the superstructure. The ship has over 2,300 compartments, designed for a crew of around 1,700 people, including specialised cabins to accommodate women officers.

The ship has been designed with a very high degree of automation for machinery operation, ship navigation and survivability, ‘Vikrant’ has a top speed of around 28 knots and cruising speed of 18 knots with an endurance of about 7,500 nautical miles

At present, India has only

one aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya. It was built by the Russians as per Indian specifications. The Indian Navy has been focusing on significantly bolstering its overall capabilities in view of China’s growing efforts to increase its military presence in the Indian Ocean Region. The Indian Ocean, considered the backyard of the Indian Navy, is critical to the country’s strategic interests.

In order to achieve self-reliance in shipbuilding, the Navy’s programme is rightly poised to provide requisite ‘Economic Stimulus’ with 44 ships and submarines on order being built indigenously.

After the completion of the first phase of trials, the Navy had said performance of the key systems was found to be satisfactory.

Navy spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal had said the ship’s performance, including of the hull, main propulsion, power generation and distribution (PGD) and auxiliary equipment were

tested during the sea trials.

“Trials, which were reviewed by Vice Admiral AK Chawla, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief Southern Naval Command on the last day, have progressed as planned and system parameters have been proved satisfactory”, Madhwal said.

The delivery of Vikrant is being targeted to coincide with celebrations to commemorate the 75th anniversary of India’s independence ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’, he said. The construction of the ship began in 2009.

Commander Madhwal said that the successful completion of the maiden trials, despite challenges faced due to the coronavirus pandemic, was a testimony to the dedicated efforts of a large number of stakeholders.

Around 550 Indian firms including about 100 MSMEs are registered with the Cochin Shipyard Limited(CSL) and they provided various services for the construction of the aircraft carrier.

them with better weapons and technology.

ITBP Director General Sanjay Arora also praised his troops for their gallant action during the clashes with the Chinese People’s Liberation Army last year in the Ladakh area.

He recounted the initiatives taken by the force to combat the coronavirus pandemic in the country by operating health facilities in the national capital region.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who is in Jammu and Kashmir, greeted the personnel and their families through a Twitter message.

“ITBP is well known for protecting the motherland in the toughest of terrains and serving the nation during natural calamities. India is proud of ITBP’s valour and determination,” he said.

PM GREETES ITBP ON FORCE’S RAISING DAY

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also greeted the ITBP personnel on the occasion of the force’s Raising Day. “From dense forests in Arunachal Pradesh to the icy heights of the Himalayas, our @ITBP_official Himveers have answered the nation’s call with utmost dedication. Their humanitarian work during times of disaster is noteworthy. Greetings to all ITBP personnel on their Raising Day,” the Prime Minister tweeted.

The about 90,000-personnel strong ITBP was raised on this day in 1962 in the aftermath of the Chinese aggression. PTI

Process for providing new battalions for ITBP in last stages: Min

New Delhi:The process to authorise new battalions for the Indo-Tiberan Border Police (ITBP), guarding the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China, is in the last stage and the Government is determined to provide transport and logistical support to all security forces, Union Minister Nityanand Rai said on Sunday.

Addressing the 60th Raising Day event of the mountain-warfare-trained ITBP, Mr. Rai said the Government had last year sanctioned 47 new border posts and a dozen staging camps (operational bases for troops undertaking border patrol) to the force.

“Deliberations for providing new manpower and battalions for the ITBP are in the last stages”, Mr. Rai, the Minister of State for Home Affairs, said.

Officials said the force is expected to get a sanction of

seven new battalions comprising about 8,000 personnel for its new border posts that will mainly come up in the Arunachal Pradesh sector of the LAC on India’s eastern flank.

The proposal for sanctioning new ITBP battalions and a sector headquarter in the north-east has been under the consideration of the Home Ministry for over two years now. But with the last year’s sanction of the new border outposts and staging camps, the proposal is expected to get approval soon, they said.

An ITBP battalion has a strength of just over 1,000 personnel.

At the rising day event, Mr. Rai lauded the ITBP for their bravery and for giving a “befitting reply” to their opponents during the clashes between Indian and Chinese forces in Ladakh during May-June last year.



He also decorated 20 ITBP officers and personnel as he pinned police medals for gallantry on their uniform for displaying bravery and courage during the clashes. These medals were announced by the Centre on Independence Day eve.

The Minister said the ‘Operation Snow Leopard’ conducted by the ITBP in Himalayan ranges gave a “big message that India will never compromise on its sovereignty and security”. The force proved it was “second to none” when it

came to guarding the country, Mr. Rai said, adding, “It is a matter of pride that the ITBP won these many bravery medals in one instance for the first time in its history.” Mr. Rai said the county’s security forces have got “independence to operate and decide” under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The minister said the Modi government was working to plug all gaps along India’s international borders and trying to enhance the capabilities of the security forces and also equip

‘Antidepressant mirtazapine not effective in treating dementia’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Antidepressant mirtazapine, a drug used to treat agitation in people with dementia is no more effective than a placebo, and might even increase mortality, according to a new study.

The research, led by the University of Plymouth and published in the journal The Lancet, has shown that mirtazapine offered no improvement in agitation for people with dementia - and was possibly more likely to be associated with mortality than no intervention at all.

Agitation is a common symptom of dementia, characterised by inappropriate verbal, vocal, or motor activity, and often involves physical and verbal aggression. Non-drug patient-centred care is the first intervention that should be offered but, when this doesn’t work, clinicians may move to a drug-based alternative.

Antipsychotics have proven to increase death rates in those with dementia, along with other poor outcomes, and so mirtazapine has been routinely prescribed. This study was designed to add to the evidence base around its effec-



tiveness.

Funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), the study recruited 204 people with probable or possible Alzheimer’s disease from 20 sites around the UK, allocating half to mirtazapine and half to placebo. The trial was double-blind; meaning that neither the researcher nor the study participants knew what they were taking.

The results showed that there was no less agitation after 12 weeks in the mirtazapine group than in the control group. There were also more deaths in the mirtazapine group (seven) by week 16 than in the control group (only one), with analysis suggesting this was of marginal statistical significance.

Lead researcher Professor Sube Banerjee, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health and Professor in Dementia at the University of Plymouth, explained why the results were so surprising but important.

“Dementia affects 46 million people worldwide – a figure set to double over the next 20 years. Poor life quality is driven by problems like agitation and we need to find ways to help those affected,” he said. In India, ilt is estimated that 5.3 million people above the age of 60 have dementia. This equals to one in 27 people, according to the Dementia in India 2020 report. Alzheimer’s dementia is the most common type of dementia.

“This study shows that a common way of managing symptoms is not helpful – and could even be detrimental. It’s really important that these results are taken into account and mirtazapine is no longer used to treat agitation in people with dementia.

“This study has added important information to the evidence base, and we look forward to investigating further treatments that may help to improve people’s quality of life.”

Centre’s CSC ties up with NCRB to provide NOC for sale of second-hand vehicles

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Centre’s digital kiosks, Common Service Centre (CSC), has tied up with the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) to provide No Objection Certificate (NOC) which is mandatory for sale of second-hand vehicles.

The NOC is mandatory for sale-purchase of second-hand vehicles. The NCRB has requested State governments to integrate CCTNS services with Digital Seva Portal so that these can be delivered and made accessible to citizens through the network of CSC.

Vehicle NOC allows citizens to ascertain the status of a vehicle before they go for second-hand purchase. The NOC certificate shows whether the vehicle for sale is in the police records for any reason. An NOC is also mandatorily required by the RTO before the transfer of ownership. With this partnership, citizens

citizens can visit their nearest CSC and easily generate and download the NOC, required by the RTO.

CSC will also create awareness about these services in the community they operate. The service will now be available from over 4-lakh CSC across India. CSC is an SPV under the Ministry of



Electronics & IT.

Commenting on the significant tie-up, CSC SPV Managing Director Dr. Dinesh Tyagi said: “There is a growing market for pre-owned vehicles for personal and commercial use. Mobility is an important part of commercial and entrepreneurial activities. Our extensive network of CSCs can capitalize on this demand and provide NOCs to vehicle owners. Citizens particularly in rural areas can benefit from this partnership as they don’t have to travel long distances to visit NCRB offices and can get NOC from their nearest CSC.”

“To extend this service to citizens, CSC Digital Seva Portal will relate to Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS). CSC VLEs will use the vehicle matching facility of this service to search vehicle details and generate NOC by providing Registration Number, Chassis Number and Engine Number,” Tyagi added.

Centre to hold meetings with States on its order to limit edible oil stock

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre will hold a meeting with State Governments to review action taken on the stock limit order on edible oils. In a letter written to all States by Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey, the department has outlined initiatives taken by the Centre to ease prices of edible oils for relief to consumers and in view of the festive season. Retail prices of edible oils are still high despite steps taken by the Government to reduce prices during the festive season.

The Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD) on Sunday said it is monitoring the prices of cooking oils as demand rises during the festive season and will hold a virtual meeting with States on October 25 to review action taken by them on its stock holding limit order. On October 10, the Centre had imposed stock limits on traders of edible oils and oilseeds, barring certain importers and exporters, till March 31, in a bid to control domestic prices and provide relief to consumers.

“The DFPD is monitoring the prices of edible oils and there availability to the consumers. This is especially important to the context of the upcoming festival season in which demand of edible oils will increase. Various steps have already been taken by the government like based on the interaction with all the states and edible oil industry associations, stock disclosure notification has been issued and DFPD has created a web portal to monitor the stock of edible oils/oilseeds on a weekly basis in the country,” the department said in a statement on Sunday.

It further stated that demand and consumption of edible is different for the different states/UTs as per the preference of the consumers. However, for finalizing the stock limit quantity of edible oils and oilseeds, the

states/UTs may consider/explore the previous stock limit imposed for edible oils and oilseeds by the state/UTs.

“It may be considered that any stakeholder (refiners, miller, wholesaler etc.) should not hold the stocks in excess two months of the storage capacity. For guidance states may prefer to indicative limits which may have been imposed by states earlier is enclosed for consideration. However, for other categories similar quantities as appropriate for the state may be fixed. For example: for refiners, stocks of maximum of 2 months of the average scale of last six months could be used. Similarly, quantities may be fixed for extractors/millers may be fixed,” the department said.

As an example, the Department said that, for refiners, stocks of maximum of 2 months of the average scale of last six months could be used. Similarly, quantities for extractors/millers should be fixed. On Friday, the Centre said it was hopeful that key oilseeds- and edible oil-producing states would start imposing stock limits from the next week.

The average retail price of mustard oil on Friday was ruling at Rs 185.55 per kg, groundnut oil at Rs 182.86 per kg, sunflower oil at Rs 168.21 per kg, soya oil at Rs 154.91 per kg, vanaspathi at Rs 138.31 per kg and palm oil at Rs 132.64 per kg. Prices have fallen by Rs 3-4 per kg following the recent cut in import duty.

During November 2020 to September 2021 (11 months), the imports of vegetable oils increased 2 per cent to 1,24,70,784 tonnes compared to 1,22,57,837 tonnes in the corresponding period of the previous year. Out of the total vegetable oil imports, edible oil imports rose to 1,20,85,247 tonnes from 1,19,50,501 tonnes. Non-edible oils rose to 3,85,57 tonnes from 3,07,333 tonnes. Vegetable oils marketing year runs from November to October.

FUEL PRICE HIKE

Cong slams Centre over rising fuel prices

Rahul alleges 'tax dacoity' on petrol prices

New Delhi: The Congress on Sunday slammed the Centre over rising fuel prices, with former party chief Rahul Gandhi alleging that the "tax dacoity" on petrol prices is rising and there would be some respite from it if elections take place somewhere.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also attacked the Centre over rising prices of petrol and diesel, alleging that the Narendra Modi Government has created records in "giving trouble" to people.

Taking to Twitter, the Congress general secretary tagged a media report which said this year, petrol prices have increased by a record ₹23.53. "Modi ji's Government has made big records in giving trouble to the public. Highest unemployment: in Modi Government. Government properties being



sold: in Modi Government. Petrol rates increased the most in a year: in Modi Government," she said in a tweet in Hindi.

Taking a swipe at the Government, Rahul Gandhi, in a tweet in Hindi, said, "Tax dacoity over petrol prices is rising. There would be some respite from it if elections take place somewhere."

He used the hashtag 'TaxExtortion' with his tweet.

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram also took a swipe at the Government, saying PM Modi led his Ministers

in celebrating 100 crore vaccinations and should also lead by example in celebrating other centenaries -- petrol crossed ₹100 per litre a few weeks ago and now diesel has crossed ₹100 per litre.

When a gas cylinder crosses ₹1,000 per cylinder, there will be another opportunity to celebrate, Chidambaram said.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala tagged the same media report shared by Priyanka Gandhi and tweeted, "Achche Din" (good days).

Petrol and diesel prices on Sunday were hiked for the fifth straight day by 35 paise per litre each, pushing pump rates to a new high across the country.

The price of petrol in Delhi rose to its highest-ever level of ₹107.59 a litre and ₹113.46 per litre in Mumbai, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. **PTI**

Modi Govt has created records in giving trouble to people, says Priyanka

New Delhi: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday attacked the Centre over rising prices of petrol and diesel, alleging that the Modi Government has created records in "giving trouble" to people.

Taking to Twitter, the Congress general secretary tagged a media report which said that this year petrol prices have increased by a record ₹23.53.

"Modi ji's Government has made big records in giving trouble to the public. Highest unemployment: in Modi government. Government properties being sold: in Modi government. Petrol rates increased the most in a year: in Modi government," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala also took a dig at the government by tagging the same media report and tweeting, "Achche Din"



(good days).

Petrol and diesel prices were hiked for the fourth consecutive day on Saturday by 35 paise per litre, pushing the total increase in rates on petrol to ₹36 per litre and on diesel to ₹ 26.58 since early May 2020 when taxes on the two fuels were raised to record levels.

Petrol in Delhi now costs ₹107.24 a litre and diesel comes for ₹95.97, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. **PTI**

TMC protests in Kolkata



Kolkata: The Trinamool Congress protested against the rising fuel prices in Kolkata on Sunday. Carrying an empty LPG cylinder decorated with flowers, TMC supporters burnt an effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, shouting slogans against the BJP-led government at the Centre.

"The country is reeling under an unprecedented rise in fuel prices for several months now, but the BJP government seems unconcerned about the plight of the people," TMC state general secretary Kunal Ghosh said.

The protest rally toured Raja Dinendra Street, APC Road and Sukia Street in north Kolkata with TMC supporters armed with placards, slamming the Centre.

Ghosh said the rise in fuel prices has triggered a cascading impact on the people of the country. Petrol was retailing at ₹108.11 per litre in Kolkata on Sunday, while diesel was being sold at ₹99.43 per litre in the city. Diesel prices have already crossed the century-mark in several districts of the State. **PTI**

Lakhimpur deaths: Min's son gets dengue; hospitalised

Lakhimpur Kheri (UP): Union Minister Ajay Kumar Mishra's son Ashish Mishra, arrested in connection with Lakhimpur Kheri violence, has contracted dengue and shifted to the district hospital, an official said on Sunday.

Ashish, who was taken in police remand, was sent to the district jail Saturday evening for treatment at its healthcare facility, Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Arun Kumar Singh said.

Ashish, along with three others, was taken in two-day police custody on Friday evening for further interrogation in the case.

Chief Medical Officer of Lakhimpur Kheri, Shailendra Bhatnagar along with his team examined Ashish.

"The samples (of Ashish Mishra) collected Saturday night tested positive for dengue. His sugar levels were found to be critical. Some changes were also observed in the ECG. This demands treatment under observation by expert doctors at the district hospital," he told reporters on Sunday. Eight people, including four farmers, were killed in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri on October 3 in violence that erupted during a farmers' protest.

Thirteen people, including Mishra, have so far been arrested in connection with the incident.

Three accused arrested on Saturday -- Mohit Trivedi, Rinku Rana and Dharmendra -- were produced before a magistrate. The investigators moved an application for their 14-day police custody remand. The hearing on the application will take place on Monday. **PTI**

Secularism constitutional, moral commitment for BJP, says Naqvi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Sunday alleged that "pseudo political champions of secularism" have deliberately neglected the socio-economic-educational empowerment of Minorities and sought minorities to be cautious of them.

As against the "fabricated secularism", he said the Modi-Government has carried-out genuine reforms for the well-being of the minorities

While inaugurating BJP Minority Morcha National Executive meeting here Naqvi said that secularism is "Constitutional and moral commitment" for the BJP but the "pseudo secular syndicate" have misused secularism as a "vote catching tool".

"They were involved in brazen and cruel political exploitation of the Minorities through their fake fabricated formula of "Secular Tomato in Communal Tiffin". Those political parties, who enjoyed power for the maximum time in the country, adopted the path of "divide and rule" by using secularism for their political convenience", Naqvi said without naming the Congress and other non-BJP parties.

He said that during the last 75 years of country's Independence, the "Political Merchants of Minority Votes" have

played "75 tricks" on their "Political Chessboard" to dupe the Minorities.

"They conspired to hijack votes of Minorities by creating atmosphere of fear, raising bogey of intolerance, spinning web of religion and spreading rumours", said the union minister.

Naqvi said that the Modi Government is committed to "Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas" to ensure "Development with Dignity" of all sections including the Minorities.

He said "pseudo political champions of secularism" deliberately neglected the socio-economic-educational empowerment of Minorities.

He said that the Minorities have to be remain cautious of such "political merchants" who are wearing a "veil of secularism" while roaming around with "cart of conspiracies".

The Minorities have now understood the reality of these "Merchants of Minority Votes" and they are now supporting the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and policies of the BJP, he said.

For the BJP, "Vikas ka Masauda, Vote Ka Sauda Nahin Hai" as it's "Draft of Development" is based on "Development with Dignity", "Development without Discrimination", he claimed.

Save rivers, win cash prizes drive launched

KOCHI: Know Your Rivers and win cash awards! This is an out-of-the-box nationwide campaign for the conservation of rivers launched by Nagpur based Research for Resurgence Foundation . The idea is to bring students and aged alike to be part of the Save the Rivers campaign in the backdrop of recent landslides and floods that caused havoc in States like Kerala and Uttarakhand.

Rivers and their tributaries are fast disappearing from the face of the earth due to a host of reasons. "The important factor is man's ignorance about the role played by rivers in sustaining our world. The moment a river is disturbed by encroachment and pollution, the dynamics between the landscape and humanity undergoes a drastic and irreversible change. This campaign will take the important message to people of all walks of life and create the awareness that rivers are everybody's business," said Mukul Kanitkar, trustee, RRF.

He said the campaign has been conceived in such a way that there are three categories of competition. "Students below the age of 18 years, those in the 18-25 age group and persons above 25 years and above could take part in the competition. All they have to do is to visit the nearest river in their locality and upload the data that includes name of

the location of the river that includes village, taluka, district and State and provide location coordinates," said Kanitkar.

The data should also include the names of the villages, towns from where the river is entering and leading towards, three photographs of the rivers taken by the participant with his/her mobile phone pr camera. Information about the river collected from literature (with citations) and also date/legends collected from local residents, different usages of the river water at present, economic activities linked to river, pollution aspects of the river, details about dams (upstream/downstream), floods that have occurred in the last three years and action that must be taken to rejuvenate the river.

The best entries stand to win cash prizes ranging from ₹5,000 to ₹1,00,000/. More than the literary content, the facts about the rivers that include information which threaten the existence of the river that would be taken into account. The nation-wide data thus collected would form the core of the planning which team of scientists and policy makers would device to rejuvenate the rivers, said Kanitkar. The last date for registration to be part of the event is October 31 while the last date for the receipt of entries is on December 31. **PNS**

We have not received enough vaccines from Centre: Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday launched her post Durga Puja tirade against the BJP Government picking out a host of issues including alleged peddling of "Jumlas" by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the Centre's success on vaccination programmes.

Saying that the Prime Minister once again started vapoing about the "so-called 100 crore vaccination", Mamata said "truth to be told only 29.51 crore people have been fully vaccinated whereas the population of the country including those below 18 years of age goes much beyond 140 crore ... if by fully vaccinating 29 crore with double dose you claim that you have vaccinated 100 crore it is no less than a lie ... it is another Jumla".

She said Bengal needed 14 crore dose to fully vaccinate its adults whereas it has been able to vaccinate only 7 crore people "as we have not received enough vaccine from the Centre". Out of the seven crore people "we have actually administered double doses to 40 percent people ... because we had that much vaccine available only ... I do not lie like many others on such things for

political gains," she said reminding "I have provided free vaccines to the people ... not Modi".

The Chief Minister was addressing a gathering at Siliguri in North Bengal where she was on a 4-day administrative visit --- which incidentally coincided with the Assembly by-elections for Dinhat seat in Coochbehar district. Taking a dig at the Centre for affixing the Prime Minister's photo on the vaccine certificates Banerjee said "if they have so much hunger for publicity then why don't they also attach the photograph of the Prime Minister on the death certificates of the lakhs of people who died in the pandemic".

Questioning the Centre's "true motive" behind expanding the jurisdiction of the Border Security Force to 50 km from the existing 15 km Banerjee said "I do not have anything to say about the BSF or any central agency but I definitely have grudge the political intention behind making such decisions ... Bengal has a very peaceful border with Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh but still they have expanded BSF's jurisdiction to 50 km ... which only manifests the BJP's hunger for more and more power ... they are trying

to usurp the States' authority through the backdoor ... they are doing so to incite riots in Bengal ... but remember Bengal is one place where no such things happen ... there was such a big festival like Durga Puja but not a single incident happened here."

Attacking the Centre for "doing nothing on the rising petro prices ... where the price of a gas cylinder has gone beyond Rs 900 and petrol is selling for more than Rs 100 and diesel is on the verge of breaching that mark," she said "it is more important to contain the petro prices than to advertise their Ujala and other schemes."

Attacking the BJP Governments of Tripura and Uttar Pradesh the Chief Minister said that in Bengal no political party or their leaders were attacked or stopped from political activities but "look at Tripura where our leaders are being attacked every day ... the daughter of Santosh Mohan Dev ((TMC Rajya Sabha MP Sushmita Dev) was attacked ... one our colleagues was injured so grievously that I had to bring him to Kolkata ... they are not even providing treatment to the victims of BJP attack ... look at UP where the opposition politicians are not allowed to enter ..."

Lashkar terrorist killed, three security men hurt in Poonch

Jammu: A Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist, serving a jail term in the KotBhalwal central jail for the last 14 years was killed while two jawans of Jammu & Kashmir police and one army jawan received injuries in the fresh round of engagement with the hiding terrorists in the Bhata Durian area of Mendhar tehsil in Poonch on the 14th day of the counter terrorist operations on Sunday.

A police spokesperson said two policemen and an Army jawan along with a prisoner Zia Mustafa, a Pakistani terrorist affiliated with the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) were injured in firing by terrorists in Bhatta Durrian forest this morning. Detenue Mustafa was taken to Bhatadurian for identification of terrorist hideout during the

ongoing operation in which three Army jawans and a JCO were martyred (on October 14).

"During the search when the team approached the hideout, terrorists again opened fire on the joint team of police and Army personnel in which two policemen and an Army jawan sustained injuries," the spokesperson said. The police said Mustafa also sustained injuries and he could not be taken out from the site due to heavy fire.

"During the subsequent operation additional reinforcements were sent and the body of Mustafa has been retrieved from the encounter site," the spokesperson said, adding the operation (to neutralise the hiding terrorists) is

in progress and legal process has been initiated in connection with the killing of the Pakistani terrorist.

Till date nine Army personnel including two JCO's have sacrificed their lives in separate ambushes in Surankote and Mendhar on October 11 and 14 respectively. According to police, Mustafa, a resident of Rawalakot in Pakistan occupied Kashmir, was lodged in Kot Bhalwal jail for the last 14 years and was shifted to Mendhar on police remand after investigation revealed his link with the hiding terrorists.

Mustafa had sneaked into this side from the same route before he was arrested from south Kashmir, the officials said. **PTI**

Mehbooba slams Rawat's remarks on curbs in Kashmir

Srinagar: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Sunday charged that "repression" was the Centre's only method to deal with the situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Reacting to the remarks by Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat warning of further curbs in Kashmir to tackle the recent violence, Mehbooba also said his statement "contradicts" the official narrative that all is well in the valley.

"Even after turning Kashmir into an open air prison, Bipin Rawat's statement comes as no surprise because repression is GOIs only method to deal with the situation in J&K. It also contradicts their official narrative

that all is well here," she alleged on Twitter.

While delivering the first Ravi Kant Singh Memorial Lecture in Assam on Saturday, Rawat said the freedom of movement that people in Jammu & Kashmir were starting to enjoy in recent times may be disrupted due to the current situation and urged for people's cooperation in tackling the situation.

The PDP chief wondered what more measures were left to be implemented after "stringent, harsh & repressive measures" like "mass arrests", suspension of internet at will, and setting up new security bunkers. **PTI**



Buddhist monks offer prayers under the sacred Bodhi tree in Bodhi Gaya on Sunday

PTI

Senior advocates must render pro bono legal aid to poor for quality access to justice: SC judge

New Delhi: Supreme Court judge justice U U Lalit on Sunday called upon senior advocates to render pro bono legal aid to the poor and marginalised sections to ensure that they get quality access to justice.

Justice Lalit, who is the Executive Chairman of the National Legal Services Authority, was speaking at a function organised by Karnataka State Legal Services Authority in association with the District Legal Services Authority, Kalaburagi on 'Actualisation of Rights and Entitlements in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals -2020'.

"Merely training the panel lawyers will not be sufficient. The solution to the problem is that some of the senior advocates must take legal aid as a matter of choice and keep on appearing for matters pro bono so that the man who comes through the door of legal aid service clinic is assured that it is not going to be a matter which is botched up and a quality legal aid will be extended to him," Justice Lalit said.

Stressing the importance of empowering the poor and downtrodden, he said legal aid to the poor does not mean it is of poor level and it has to be of better quality and standard. **PTI**

Social Justice Ministry for decriminalising possession of small amount of drugs for personal use

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry has recommended decriminalising possession of small quantities of drugs for personal consumption in its review of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act submitted to the Revenue Department.

Currently, there is no provision for relief or exemption under the NDPS Act and it only gives addicts immunity from prosecution and imprisonment if they volunteer for rehabilitation.

In its recommendations shared with the Department of Revenue last week, the ministry suggested decriminalising possession of small quantities of drugs for personal consumption, officials said.

Police: More Myanmar refugees entering Mizoram due to clashes

Aizawl: More refugees from Myanmar's Chin state are entering the southern and eastern border districts of Mizoram due to continuing clashes between the neighbouring country's army and rebels, a senior police officer said on Sunday.

At least 12,939 Myanmarers, including women and children, are currently taking shelter in different parts of Mizoram, he said.

Of them, the detailed information of 1,518 Myanmarers is yet to be recorded, the officer said.

The numbers keep changing as there are new entrants almost every day, while some who live near the international border enter and exit India on a regular basis, he said. The police officer said that Myanmar nationals are being provided with shelter and food by locals, community leaders, NGOs and churches.

As per Mizoram Police data accessed by PTI, six border districts Champhai, Lawngtlai, Siaha, Serchhip, Hnahthial and Saitual together housed 9,411 refugees. **PTI**

China does not have any right to choose next Dalai Lama: Head of Tawang monastery

Tawang (Arunachal Pradesh): China has no authority at all to get involved in choosing the next Dalai Lama as it does not believe in religion and the succession plan is entirely a spiritual matter and not a political issue for the Tibetan people, the head of the Tawang monastery in Arunachal Pradesh has said.

Gyangbung Rinpoche, the Abbot of the nearly 350-year-old monastery near India's border with China, also said that it is important to counter Beijing's "policy of expansionism" and New Delhi must maintain a strict vigil over the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with that country, in an oblique reference to the eastern Ladakh standoff.

Referring to China's aggressive

posturing along the LAC, Rinpoche said though India believes in peace and prosperity, its approach in dealing with such belligerence has to be based on the ground reality.

"It is important to counter China's growing assertiveness. It is necessary for India to keep a strict vigil over the border (with China)," he told PTI in an interview.

The head of the second largest monastery in the world after the Potala Palace in Tibet's Lhasa said only the current Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people have the right to decide about the successor to the Tibetan spiritual leader and China has no role to play in the matter.

"The Chinese Government does not believe in religion. How can a government that does not believe in religion decide the next Dalai Lama. The succession plan is a matter of religion and faith; it is not a political issue," Rinpoche said.

"China does not have any right to even get involved in the process of choosing the next Dalai Lama. Only the current Dalai Lama and his followers have the right to decide on the issue," he said.

The comments by the Abbot of the monastery that is located in a region claimed by China came amid strain in ties between the two countries following the eastern Ladakh border standoff. **PTI**

New Kashmir

Amit Shah has extended his hand; it's now time for the youth to reciprocate

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is on his first visit to Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370. From his point of view, he pressed all the right buttons on his first day in Srinagar. He wants calm in the region that is like a becalmed ship in the last two years. Shah kicked off the visit by chairing a security meeting. Two aspects of the Valley's disquiet were jarring: Continuing violence despite heavy security presence and radicalisation of local youth. The Minister was worried that the unending violence was undoing the Government's efforts to stabilise the situation. He was probably told in return that with the terrorists targeting ordinary individuals, it was difficult to give protection to every citizen. The toll has already crossed 30. Shah later interacted with people at the Raj Bhavan, addressed youth and visited the house of a slain police officer. His wife was given a Government job. As outreaches go, the visit is a serious outreach campaign of the Centre in Kashmir by the Home Minister himself. It comes at a time when recent violence is threatening to stall Delhi's attempts at rapprochement, the usual pressures from the international community and the snide remarks from Pakistan. The Government would not want the ongoing exercise of constituency delimitation to be delayed. It has perhaps set an agenda for itself wherein the constituencies would first be subjected to delimitation, favouring the Jammu region as Kashmir complains or rectifying its under-representation as Jammu counters, after which elections would be held.

The formation of the next Government will reveal which region has an edge and that may determine future State politics. Like he announced in the Parliament, Shah also said in Srinagar that the return of statehood would be taken up thereafter. The Government is of the view that the Kashmiri youth should be persuaded to join the national mainstream as the region returns to a new normal. Nearly 70 per cent of the State's population is under the age of 35. Shah said he was in Srinagar to make friends with the Kashmiri youth, assuring them of all help for education, employment and development. It is not yet known how these youth have reacted to the Home Minister's persuasion. That is the key. They are being asked to forget all of the past and embrace a "new era in Kashmir". The "era" was brought in on the back of decisions like the internet ban and curfew that were necessary to foil a plot to provoke Kashmiris, as the Home Minister explained. Tourism is flourishing and there is no curfew now, he said, even as Srinagar was enveloped in one of the toughest security blankets with the use of drone cameras, detention of hundreds of people, including youth, and seizure of hundreds of motorcycles in preparation for the Minister's visit. Shah amplified his aspirations in earnest. It is up to the aspirations of the youth to match his.



Women perform rituals to celebrate Karva Chauth, in Jammu

AP

Under fire

The Oppn is sharpening its claws to take on the BJP, especially in Punjab and Goa

The BJP is coming under increasingly ferocious attack from various quarters ahead of next year's Assembly elections in five States. The ruling party at the Centre has its Government in UP, Uttarakhand and Goa and is a governing alliance partner in Manipur while Punjab currently has the Congress Government at the helm. In Punjab's politics, there is a lot of churning going on, especially in the Congress. Going into the elections, it is one of the few States where the beleaguered party is still considered to be on a better footing than its rivals. The open, long-drawn power struggle between Navjot Singh Sidhu and then Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh has not really done the Congress any good turn. Following the acrimonious duel, the party high command was forced to opt for Dalit leader Charanjit Singh Channi as the Chief Minister. All eyes are now on the leadership to see how the forced change and the sulking Captain affect its fortunes: Will it manage to retain power despite the

bad blood within and anti-incumbency, or whether the AAP will concretise its hold or if the BJP will turn out to be the dark horse?

According to poll pundits, the BJP faces a tough competition only in Punjab and is set to romp home comfortably in the other four States. However, there is a silent storm brewing against it over the coastal horizon of Goa, too. While TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee has since July's 'Martyrs' Day' event started making an outreach to the electorate there, her nephew and TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee has now made a shriller pitch for the party's all-out debut in Goa, saying they will register a win in the State. The AAP is also pulling out all the stops in both Punjab and Goa to fulfil Arvind Kejriwal's aspiration to go national. However, all said and done, the impact of the BJP's mammoth poll machinery can't be underestimated, whenever it starts rolling full throttle. There already is speculation in the media that Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant may be replaced soon for the party to contest the election on a clean slate. Besides, hundreds of the RSS cadres have fanned across the State and are working silently to ensure that the BJP stages a comeback. Time will tell which party's calculations hit the bull's-eye at the hustings.

Educate to achieve attitudinal changes

The NEP 2020 recommends the integration of academic and vocational knowledge, which indicates the impact of Gandhian education philosophy

The strength and resilience of Indian democracy receive widespread appreciation. For the outside world, it is amazing that a Prime Minister loses House confidence by one vote, and accepts it without even asking for a recount. But the fading away of the Independence struggle-generation has led to severe erosion of values, the impact of which is visible all around. The violence and murder in Lakhimpur Kheri, lynching of a young Dalit person in Rajasthan and the barbaric killing of a young man at the Singhu border are among the instances of avoidable loss of life in a civilised society. Is it not a shame that blatant discrimination is practised even in *ex gratia* payment to victims? This is not the democracy that MK Gandhi and numerous other luminaries fought for. Selfish motives, shortsighted goals and vested interests are denting India's image globally. Gandhi found everything in India attractive as "India has everything that a human being with highest aspirations could aspire for". He found India "fitted for religious supremacy of the world", and that India is a *karmabhumi*, not a *bhogbhumi*. He was convinced that India's mission was different from that of others.

On October 20, 1927, he said about Hindu dharma: "I have found it to be the most tolerant of all religions known to me. Its freedom from dogma makes a forcible appeal to me inasmuch as it gives the votary the largest scope for self-expression. Not being an exclusive religion, it enables the followers of that faith not merely to respect all the other religions, but also to admire and assimilate whatever may be good in other faiths." Gandhi did not mean that "everything in India that attracted" him included abhorrent practices like untouchability, dowry, child marriages, and much more. He loved India, its diversity, its culture, and lamented its downfall over the centuries because of foreign invaders and internal deficiencies. He was very clear in his priorities for resurgence of a new India: Education for all, dignity for all. As one goes through his writings that indicate his vision for India, political freedom was only



one of the steps towards a new democratic India; freedom from hunger, poverty and ill-health was the prerequisite in the march towards equality, transparency, brotherhood and human dignity. His was a unique endeavour, the essence of which could be comprehended in that immortal sentence: "My life is my message."

This was the level of transparency he had set for those who were to take over the reins of power after India's Independence. He preached only what he could practice. His approach, as is well known by now, attracted global interest only because he became a unique example of courage, bravery and commitment to conviction. Billions the world over were convinced during his lifetime that only the Gandhian way could extricate mankind — and our planet — from the clutches of distrust, bigotry, racism, caste prejudices, terrorism, fundamentalism and much more that jeopardised the very human existence. The global foundation for a world of peace was to be laid in the pragmatic implementation of the universalisation of education which, Gandhi thought, was the only ray of hope for the suffering masses. The *Hind Swaraj* he penned in 1909 is now being perused with much

SADLY, NO EFFORT WAS MADE TO BRING FORTH A MODEL OF EDUCATION ROOTED IN INDIAN CULTURE AND, AT THE SAME TIME, COMMITTED TO NEW KNOWLEDGE. THIS FORMULATION WOULD BE COMPLETE WHEN SYNCHRONISED WITH GANDHI'S WRITINGS

more respect and sincerity. Violence must totally vanish from Gandhi's land. One is convinced that the solution lies in reverting to Gandhi and re-articulating his thoughts in the current idiom. While those in power have the obligation to find immediate solutions, the long-term strategy must focus on education, right from the early days to universities. Attitudinal transformation can be possible only through Gandhian vision, the essence of which he had presented to the nation in the 'Basic Education', which he thought was his most significant contribution. Why Gandhi was so enamoured by this idea? He wanted education to draw the best out of "head, hand and heart". This, he thought, was the best way to transform a lay learner into a full-grown personality. It is indeed laudable that with literacy below 20 per cent at Independence, India is touching 80 per cent and, that too, when population growth has been more than three times. It has also led to certain aberrations in teaching and learning, most prominent being the concentration on "head", and near-total neglect of "hand and heart". The consequences are before us. The 75-year experience must put the system on

the right path.

The manner in which the National Education Policy-2020 lays focus on character building, value inculcation and recommends the integration of academic and vocational education clearly indicates the impact of Gandhian education philosophy. Sadly, the philosophy that Gandhi and his colleagues had articulated was simply ignored by the earlier decision makers. No effort was made to bring forth a model of education rooted in Indian culture and, at the same time, committed to new knowledge. This formulation would be complete when synchronised with Gandhi's writing in the *Young India* issue of June 3, 1926: "The highest form of freedom carries with it the greatest measure of discipline and humility. Freedom that comes from discipline and humility cannot be denied; unbridled license is a sign of vulgarity injurious alike to self and one's neighbours."

To re-emphasise, education must concentrate on preparing men and women of character and commitment who practise integrity, honesty and selfless service as their dharma.

(The author works in education, social cohesion and religious unity. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AI CAN'T TAKE OVER JOURNALISM

Sir — As industries are being affected by the age of automation, it is feared that journalism could be next. But this ever-busy field needs more human power for reporting and publishing news and stories than machines. The profession involves much more than mechanisation. Publishing houses might soon opt to switch journalists with Artificial Intelligence robots and applications to minimise human hands. But clearly, AI involved works can account for only about 10 per cent of the total function in journalism. Another key aspect of journalism is that it involves a lot of emotional intelligence. For example, a journalist visiting a flood-ravaged area or a fire-affected spot and speaking to people who are rendered homeless, can never be compared with a robot's workmanship.

It is important to remember that journalism is more than just the sum of its parts and the profession's human character cannot be automated, as journalists provide more than just information. As former journalist and professor at the University of Minnesota Rodrigo Zamith aptly sums up, "Accuracy requires proper verification. Robots cannot get it right every time."

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

ALL EYES ON THE JUDICIARY

Sir — Eventually, a ray of hope came from the Supreme Court for Kavita Lankesh, who has been waiting since four years to get justice for her slain sister Gauri Lankesh from the judiciary in the cold-blooded murder case. The brave and outspoken Gauri Lankesh was silenced to death by perpetrators for her anti-Hindutva ideology and for her trenchant critics. It was also an attack on the freedom of speech and expression and fourth pillar of democracy — the media. The delay in the process of trial speaks volumes about the loophole in the lethargic police system and court proceedings which is an ordeal and complicated rigmarole.

The Supreme Court has definitely restored faith of people on judiciary, hav-

Centenary of an era



October 24, 2021, marked the birth centenary of the legend and master cartoonist RK Laxman. One of the greatest cartoonists of all times and a pioneer in satirical cartoon, Laxman's black and white strokes and wits remain etched in the hearts of Indians irrespective of generations and time. His subtle humour and remarkable cartoons remain a class apart and have been an inspiration for cartoonists in India.

ing rejected the Karnataka High Court order of the Karnataka Control of Organised Crimes Act (KCOCA) case against one of the prime accused, Mohan Nayak, who was a stooge of an organised crime syndicate masterminded by Amol Kale and Rajesh D Bhangra in the Kannada journalist's murder. Hope this case will now get a steady closure with course correction without any further delay, ensuring justice to Gauri Lankesh, her family and reinstate faith of the journalist fraternity in the judiciary.

Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Bagrakote

FARMERS' PROTEST OR FARM LEADERS'?

Sir — It refers to the suspension of Yogendra Yadav from the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) for a month for his meeting with the family of a deceased BJP worker who was among the eight killed in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident. Undoubtedly, meeting the family members of a deceased opponent is a part of human culture, which was not tolerated

Undoubtedly, he lived for the common man and sketched for the common man. He voiced his opinion through one of his eternal characters — *The Common Man* — who said nothing but his silence spoke volumes. The cartoons he drew, especially *The Common Man* series, are eye-openers for everyone. It depicted the follies and foibles of not just the politicians and bureaucrats but the society as a whole. No other cartoonist comes near RK Laxman when it comes to picturing the common man's difficulties. A recipient of the Padma Vibhushan, the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay, Lifetime Achievement Award for Journalism by CNN IBN and a long list of laurels and honours, it is high time that our Government honours this great Indian with something greater. A museum, an institution or an award in his name would be a very good tribute to the legendary cartoonist who lived and breathed for the commoner.

M Pradyu | Kannur

by the others in the SKM. It is time that the SKM makes it clear whether it has authorised Rakesh Tikait to negotiate with the State Government, or otherwise he should also be suspended from the SKM.

Firstly, any such agitation of farmers should be led only by those who are real farmers. If real farmers would have been involved in the agitation, no vegetables would have been available during such a long agitation. There would have been an acute shortage in food supplies and the prices of grains and pulses would have gone up drastically. The Central Government should access the details of assets and incomes of all those who are leading the farmers' agitation so that anything fishy may be exposed. The extra-luxurious mini-townships developed on the agitation sites speak volumes about the genuineness of the farmers' agitation.

Madhu Agrawal | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

India has always worked for world peace. This is seen in our contribution to the UN Peacekeeping forces.



Prime Minister —Narendra Modi



We urge the US side to be cautious in words and deeds on the Taiwan question.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson —Wang Wenbin

With our vaccination awareness drive, the agenda is to encourage maximum people to get their vaccine.



Actor —Sonu Sood



It is not something that we are proud of as a team. Obviously just plain to see, 55-odd for an international team is unacceptable.

West Indies skipper —Kieron Pollard


I have never seen such chaos and anarchy as what is playing out in the Punjab Congress today.



Congress leader —Manish Tewari

FIRST COLUMN

LEBANON IS A SHIP WITH MANY HOLES



GWYNNE DYER

Off the Lebanese coast about 60 km north of Beirut a 104-metre battleship stands vertically, with her bow and some 30 metres of her length plunged into the mud. The seabed is 140 metres down, but you can even scuba-dive on the stern if you are a technical diver. The ship is a bit like Lebanon, for reasons I'll explain later.

Five years ago Lebanon still looked like a middle-class country with a lot of poor people. Now it looks like a very poor country with a few rich people. Indeed, even the civil war of 1975-1990 did less damage to the economy, though it destroyed several hundred thousand lives and much of the country's infrastructure. The current disaster's roots are in that war. It drove the Lebanese back into the relative safety of their own sectarian communities, Christian, Sunni Muslim, and Shia Muslim, and warlords arose to protect those communities. By the end of the war in 1990, they were the new political and financial elite, with well-paid militias to enforce their will on their own communities — and they didn't go back to their day jobs. They became a corrupt and nepotistic club.

That system was visibly coming apart by the 2010s. There simply wasn't enough money to share out among the elites. Lebanon produces almost nothing, not even enough food for its own people, and its imports are paid for with remittances, foreign aid, and loans. With not enough money coming in to sustain their immense patronage networks, the elites started taxing the poorer sections, and in 2019 something snapped. Suddenly Beirut's streets were full of protesters demanding fundamental change.

Lebanon is a former French colony, so French President Emmanuel Macron flew in and offered the Lebanese government £11 billion in return for structural reforms that would root out the corruption at the heart of government. But the elites who benefit from that system are the government, in practice, so of course they said no, thanks. Then came the massive explosion in Beirut's port district last year. That got the International Monetary Fund involved, offering Lebanon huge loans if the corrupt system is reformed, but it's likely that the government will turn them away again.

It's getting close to the edge. Last Thursday Hezbollah staged a mass protest in Beirut, demanding the removal of the judge presiding over the inquiry into who was responsible for importing the 2,750 tonnes of fertiliser that caused last year's port blast. When the march entered a Christian district at least one sniper opened up on it. Seven Shias died, and the crowd (some of whom were armed) tried to storm Christian neighbourhoods in retaliation. And still the Lebanese political class refuses to bend.

So why does that political class resemble the captain of HMS Victoria, the defunct battleship that did a nose-dive in 1893? Because the officer commanding the British Mediterranean Fleet, Vice-Admiral Sir George Tryon, was one of the most stubborn men in history. He ordered a very complex manoeuvre in which two parallel lines of battleships would make simultaneous U-turns towards each other, winding up going in the opposite direction but with the parallel lines much closer together. And he got the distance wrong.

Everybody else on the bridge could see the ships were actually going to collide, and several of them spoke to Tryon about it, but he ignored their advice. The ship that was going to ram him also queried his orders, but he persevered. So they collided, and the admiral went down with his ship.

Think of Lebanon's political class as Admiral Tryon, and the country as HMS Lebanon. Technical divers only.

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

Artificial Intelligence in counter-terrorism

Security agencies need unhindered data access to predict future radicalisation apart from the spread of fake news that supplements ulterior agendas

In 2015, the IS declared its expansion to include the Khorasan region, which includes the modern political boundaries of Iran, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Since early 2020, the IS-K has been regularly publishing its 'Voice of Hind' in the Kashmir Valley to radicalise the youth and destabilise the Valley. The scope of the IS-K has expanded to India and Bangladesh. The killings of non-Kashmiris and Hindus in the Valley, apart from the pre-planned vandalising of the Durga Puja pandals in Bangladesh, point out the increasing tentacles of IS-K working in tandem with the Taliban. The developments call for the incorporation of new methods in the domain of counter-terrorism.

The most prominent measure that can be adopted is the pre-detection of the people with terror intent. The current usage of drones, sting operations and informants do not suffice under the prevailing circumstances. Artificial Intelligence (AI) can immensely help the forces and reduce their vulnerabilities. AI technologies are being used actively by many nations for policing and counter-terrorism operations with offensive weaponry. The objective here is to make accurate predictions and adopt an approach to 'what will happen' rather than 'what happened'? The government should recognise the legal entity of the AI technologies for counter-terrorism operations. It should become legally obligatory for the telecommunications service providers to mirror the conversations of suspected terrorists in sensitive zones such as Kashmir, Punjab and West Bengal, apart from the other border areas.

Security agencies should have unhindered data access to predict future radicalisation apart from the spread of fake news that supplements the ulterior agendas. Tracking the financial transaction information and the travel patterns of suspected individuals apart from identifying sleeper cells that purchase dual-use explosive materials are some of the methodologies followed. To enhance the efficacy of the existing methods and check further radicalisation apart from the exposure to other hybrid warfare tactics such as fake news, the surfing data of institutes of higher education should be monitored.

New indigenous platforms supporting the Google and Yahoo search engines that identify potential recruits through scanning their internet browsing history should be encouraged. These surveillance centers and their servers should be under the strict vigil of the central police forces or the armed forces. Google has developed the redirect method, which uses search algorithms, keywords, and phrases frequently used by people with violent tendencies.

The second step for pre-detection can involve reversal through psychological and mindset change through soft counter-radicalisation measures that can be locally tailored through AI. Such novelty has to be brought about in counter-terrorism operations. For instance, Saudi Arabia has



THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TECHNOLOGY IS BEING USED ACTIVELY BY MANY NATIONS FOR POLICING AND COUNTER-TERRORISM OPERATIONS. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO MAKE ACCURATE PREDICTIONS AND ADOPT AN APPROACH TO 'WHAT WILL HAPPEN' RATHER THAN 'WHAT HAPPENED'?

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



a holistic counter-terrorism program since 2005 that consolidates even the "correct notions and concepts of Islam". 'Sakina' programme is one such example of Saudi Arabia.

According to the reports, one of the most preferred recruitment platforms of IS is Facebook and Twitter, wherein the IS, through its tweets and re-tweets, can create a closed online micro-community around the recruit or the targeted recruit. As the communication between recruit and the handling agency develops, end to end encryption platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram are used for private 'dark' conversations to compel the individual to commit violent crimes.

The problem lies in 'one standard encryption' policy throughout the country, making no distinction between an 'operational' area and a 'peace' area. A counter move can perhaps be possible wherein sensitive areas are out of bounds for these encrypted platforms due to national security. Privacy perhaps should only be allowed in 'peace' areas where there are no immediate threats to national security. As new threats such as Talibanisation of Pakistan and re-radicalisation of the Valley emerge, it becomes imperative for the government to adopt novel law enforcement tools to counter them.

At the level of land-based counter-terror operations, where troops operate at the level of small teams, methods have to be revolutionised. Besides the satellite data providing real-time intelligence, thermographic cameras can be installed in the forests apart from

surveillance from UAVs. In the bordering villages, various AI-enabled cameras with monitoring at two undisclosed locations (to avoid sabotage) can immensely help the security forces. Cameras fitted with Facial Recognition (FR) features can help locate any suspicious 'entry' in sensitive areas.

In the cities, especially around the festivals, crowd scanning with multiple AI tools for locational tracking and thwarting terrorist attacks can be done. In some critical areas, the government can also introduce identity cards with biometric chips that have data of iris, facial expressions, and fingerprints.

The tools of AI can be customised even for regular policing in case the terrorists intermingle with the crowd. For instance, China uses Hikvision and Cloud Walk while the US depends upon Pred Pol in cities like Los Angeles for counter-terrorism and policing. Also, gunfire detection software-Shot Spotter is also used by the American agencies to detect shooting by using acoustic sensing technology to deter crimes.

Even the minute details of the number and the types of weapons in possession of the terrorists and other anti-national elements can be ascertained if specific biologically inspired AI surveillance mechanisms involving high-speed data processing can be used for preventive search operations and threat elimination. The same technologies can also be effectively used during counter-terrorism operations to overview, monitor and report the operational developments of the ter-

rorists to the security agencies.

Third, the Indian industries using 'dual use' AI should be brought within the domain of a new initiative of 'civil-military interface' in which certain companies can be roped into implanting AI technologies to the existing indigenous weapons under the supervision of DRDO. For instance, indigenous guns or rifles can be experimentally mounted with low weight AI cameras or biometric systems with an ability to detect and eliminate potential terrorists if they use a ring of human shields to escape or launch attacks on the forces.

For this, establishing an AI intelligence cell in the armed forces and civilian intelligence agencies with active coordination can probably solve the issues in implementing such novel methods. Agencies have to be working in tandem with detailed distinctions and overlaps of their duties and responsibilities to ensure that there is no 'conflict of interest' which can potentially hamper the counter-terrorism strategies. The larger aim of the AI intelligence cell of the Indian army should be to increase its own operability domestically and develop an ability to be able to work with the AI divisions of our allies such as Israel, the US, and Japan apart from the others. Finally, equal importance has to be given to the increasing role of perception management through regular media briefings by the army to raise the social acceptance of the government security measures. Citizen surveillance and alertness also have to be encouraged to thwart the terrorist attacks.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

VOTING FOR THE CONGRESS AND THE LEFT FRONT WOULD BE NO DIFFERENT FROM OPTING FOR THE NOTA (NONE OF THE ABOVE) BUTTON.

—TMC LEADER

ABHISHEK BANERJEE



THE TMC DOES NOT WANT TO FIGHT THE BJP, WHICH IS WHY IT IS ATTACKING THE CONGRESS. IT IS CLEAR NOW.

—CONGRESS LEADER

ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY

A new vision of the education system

New ways to improve the standard of education need to be adopted for a work culture of intimacy, involvement and best work practices



SUDHIR HINDWAN

The global education system has started respecting the level of insight our education system has. There have been attempts to find a common ground to solve upcoming global challenges. Perhaps the pangs of the pandemic hasmade the world realize the urgent need for an alternative to the particularistic grounds of prowess which so far resulted in the supremacy of the economically prosperous system over the rest.

(The writer is a professor and expert on strategic affairs. The views expressed are personal.)

Some important ways to improve the standard of education need to be adopted for a work culture of intimacy and involvement and best work practices. The best thing about the National Education Policy is that it has recognized the need to expand and equip for all the best practices by creating an umbrella of professional fair treatment and recognizing the diversities and thereby bringing everyone together.

The strength of higher education system lies in creating its internal dynamism by ensuring inclusive growth. Human and financial relations and dealings are not as simple as they appear and require constant monitoring by competent authorities. The provisions of Multidisciplinary

Education and Research Universities (MERUs) on par with IITs and IIMs, the National Research Foundation, the National Educational Technology Forum and Indian Institutes of Translation and Interpretation would create an environment for students to reach their best by encouraging academic excellence, embracing new information and opening new job-oriented courses. Besides, it would help in understanding social responsibility.

There is always a scope to improve course contents through academic discourse by bringing about changes through cognitive discourse. One is seeking multiple options in order to help form an integrated team consisting of meritorious members for holistic development of social sciences. Two, introducing new innovative mechanisms in social sciences designed to help students identify career goals available in that field.

Three, more integrated academic programs and services that provide supplemental support to both teaching and learning in diverse disciplines making it more relevant with present circumstances. Four, growth and enrichment of students and the community, both inside and outside of

the classroom through community development exercises. Five, more research centres to ensure academic excellence in all disciplines. Six, exclusive intellectual skills designed to prepare students to engage in nuances of socio-economic and political issues related to global order.

There is a need to link school education with college and thereafter, research. Students must be sensitized through webinars which are low cost and quite intense interactive experiences. The role of mass media in political and social mobilization can be ensured through active participation of students in communicating initially with fellow students and then with the masses at large. Increasing participating

of students through myriad baskets of activities has to be ensured. This practice can gradually be transformed into community-wide physical activity campaigns to help the new generation understand the benefits of physical activities and coordination and cooperation to make them strong, energetic and sensible.

There is a need to provide an ambience of contiguity, working in unison, harmony and critical thinking through multidisciplinary scholarly culture for educational impetus. It is expensive as it only requires a positive attitude towards contribution and reiterating our commitment towards the nation.

A new culture of liberal literature is necessary to nurture a feeling of self-less service.

This would ensure that students contribute ideas and engage with them in a creative environment.

Academicians are the epitome of sacrifice and inspiration whose relentless drive brings out the best in their students. Students can be taught how learning the essential precepts through practical teaching mechanisms can make them reflective. The philosophy of the academics should be to ensure that even the rural and left-out segments of the student population are guided to enter the mainstream of life. The mentors ought to broaden the horizon of comprehension and supplement the practice of argumentation with more inclusive and wholistic approach.

GLOBE TROTTER

TAIWAN SHAKEN BY 6.5-MAGNITUDE QUAKE

Taipei: An earthquake shook Taiwan's capital, Taipei, on Sunday and caused falling rocks that injured a woman and damaged a car. No deaths were reported. The 6.5-magnitude quake struck at 1:11 p.m. and was centered near Yilan, a city about 35 kilometers (22 miles) east of Taipei near the northeastern coast, according to the Central Weather Bureau. It was followed seconds later by a 5.4-magnitude quake. Buildings in Taipei swayed. The subway and some other mass transit services were suspended. A woman was injured by falling rocks in Taroko National Park in Hualien County, south of Yilan, the Central News Agency reported. It said one car on a highway was damaged also by falling rocks but no one was injured.

TEXAS DRAG RACE DRIVER SLAMS INTO SPECTATORS

Kerrville: A driver lost control during a Texas drag racing event on an airport runway and slammed into a crowd of spectators, killing two children and injuring eight other people, authorities said. A 6-year-old boy and an 8-year-old boy were killed in the crash Saturday afternoon at an event called "Airport Race Wars 2" at the Kerrville-Kerr County Airport, police said in a news release.

AFRICA TRIES TO END VACCINE INEQUITY

Cape Town: In a pair of Cape Town warehouses converted into a maze of airlocked sterile rooms, young scientists are assembling and calibrating the equipment needed to reverse engineer a coronavirus vaccine that has yet to reach South Africa and most of the world's poorest people. The energy in the gleaming labs matches the urgency of their mission to narrow vaccine disparities. By working to replicate Moderna's Covid-19 shot, the scientists are effectively making an end run around an industry that has vastly prioritized rich countries over poor in both sales and manufacturing.

PAK: ISLAMISTS SUSPEND MARCH UNDER PACT

Lahore: A radical Islamist party agreed Sunday to suspend for three days its march of thousands toward the capital Islamabad after Pakistan agreed to drop pending charges against the party's leader. Party supporters Saturday departed the eastern city of Lahore, clashing for a second straight day with police who lobbed tear gas into the crowd.

US sabotaging CPEC: Pakistan PM's aide

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Chief of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority has accused the United States of sabotaging the multi-billion dollar project, the economic lifeline of Pakistan, a media report said.

The ambitious CPEC was launched in 2015 when Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan.

It aims to connect western China with the Gwadar seaport in southwestern Pakistan through a network of roads, railways and other projects of infrastructure and development.

"From the point of view of the emerging geo-strategic situation, one thing is clear: the United States supported by India is inimical to CPEC. It will not let it succeed. That's where we have to take a position," Khalid Mansoor, the

Special Assistant to Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on CPEC affairs said while addressing the CPEC Summit at the Institute of Business Administration in Karachi on Saturday. Islamabad is the seventh largest recipient of Chinese overseas development financing with 71 projects worth USD 27.3 billion currently underway as part of the CPEC.

Many Western think tanks and commentators have termed the CPEC an economic trap that has already resulted in bloated public debt levels and disproportionately high Chinese influence in Pakistan's economy, a report in the Dawn newspaper said.

The premier's aide said the United States and India continue to "make attempts to manoeuvre Pakistan out of" China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) — a global infrastructure

development plan — under which the Chinese government has been investing heavily in about 70 countries, the report said.

"There's no way Pakistan will forgo any of its benefits. It has more than once burnt its fingers in (the Western) alliance in the past," he said, adding that their attempts to dilute China's strategic influence in the region will fail. Mansoor said the Western powers view the CPEC as a symbol of China's political ambition.

"That's the reason CPEC is seen suspiciously by both the United States and Europe... they view CPEC more as a move by China to expand its political, strategic and business influence," Mansoor said, noting that China has been able to allay that apprehension "to a great extent". The United States

is now "taking stock of the economic and political consequences" of withdrawing from the region, he reasoned.

"I had a detailed discussion with the people in the American embassy. I told them CPEC is available for them as well. They have also expressed their wish that they would like to develop some kind of involvement and see how it can be beneficial for both countries," he said.

Mansoor said Islamabad is seeking the expansion of the CPEC to Afghanistan and has discussed the possibility of Taliban-led Afghanistan joining the multibillion-dollar economic corridor.

He said there has been "deep interest" in developing economic connectivity between Afghanistan and Pakistan and with other neighbouring countries, including Iran.

Israel set to OK 3,000 West Bank settler homes this week

AP ■ TEL AVIV

Israel is expected to move forward with thousands of new homes for Jewish settlers in the West Bank this week, a settlement watchdog group said Sunday.

The plan for some 3,000 new settler units in the West Bank has already drawn calls for restraint from the U.S., which on Friday voiced "concern" over the expected approvals.

Hagit Ofra from the anti-settlement group Peace Now said a committee is set to meet Wednesday to approve 2,800 units deep in the West Bank, complicating any efforts to create a Palestinian state. More than half of those are receiving final approval, meaning construction could begin in the coming year.

On Friday, U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said the U.S. was "concerned" about the housing plans. He called on Israel and the Palestinians to "refrain



In this file photo, workers take a break before European Union officials visit the construction site for the Givat Hamatos Israeli settlement, in Jerusalem

from unilateral steps that exacerbate tension and undercut efforts to advance a negotiated two-state solution" to the conflict.

The Palestinians seek the West Bank, along with the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem — areas Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war — for their future state. The Palestinians view the settlements, which house some 700,000 settlers, as the main obstacle to peace. Most of the international com-

munity considers settlements illegal.

Israel views the West Bank as the biblical and historical heartland of the Jewish people.

Ofra said Israel is also set to approve 1,600 units for Palestinians in the areas of the West Bank that it controls. But critics say the move comes at the initiative of villagers and not the Israeli government and that the figure is a fraction of the building permits requested by Palestinians over the years.

US urges N Korea to stop missile tests, return to talks

AP ■ SEOUL

A senior US diplomat on Sunday urged North Korea to refrain from additional missile tests and resume nuclear diplomacy between the countries, days after the North fired-off its first underwater-launched ballistic missile in two years.

Sung Kim, the top US official on North Korea affairs, spoke after meeting with South Korean officials to discuss North Korea's recent missile tests that have come amid a long-running stalemate in nuclear diplomacy between Washington and Pyongyang.

"We call on the DPRK to cease these provocations and other destabilizing activities, and instead, engage in dialogue," Kim told reporters, referring to North Korea by its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"We remain ready to meet with the DPRK without preconditions and we have made clear that the United States harbours no hostile intent towards

the DPRK," he said.

Last Tuesday, North Korea fired a newly developed ballistic missile from a submarine in its fifth round of weapons tests in recent weeks.

South Korean officials said the submarine-fired missile appeared to be in an early stage of development. That marked the North's first underwater-launched test since October in 2019 and the most high-profile one since President Joe Biden took office in January.

Missiles fired from submarines are harder to detect in advance and would provide North Korea with a secondary, retaliatory attack capability.

Tuesday's launch violates multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions that ban any activity by North Korea in the area of ballistic missiles. Kim said the test poses a threat to the international community and is "concerning and counterproductive" to efforts to promote peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Kim's South Korean coun-

terpart, Noh Kyu-duk, said the two had an "in-depth" discussion on Seoul's push for a symbolic, political declaration to end the 1950-53 Korean War as a way to bring peace. Noh said he and Kim also reaffirmed that North Korea's issues of concern can be discussed once talks are restarted.

The US-led talks on ending North Korea's nuclear programme have been largely stalled since early 2019, when a summit between then President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un collapsed due to disputes over US-led sanctions on the North.

The Biden administration has repeatedly said it's ready to meet North Korea "anywhere and at any time" without preconditions. But North Korea says a return to talks is conditional on the US dropping what it calls a hostile policy toward Pyongyang, an apparent reference to the sanctions and regular military drills between Washington and Seoul.

Obama criticizes Youngkin in Virginia Gov's race

AP ■ RICHMOND, VA

Former President Barack Obama offered a sharp rebuke of the Republican candidate for Virginia governor, Glenn Youngkin, as he encouraged voters on Saturday to support Democrat Terry McAuliffe in the closely watched race.

Obama accused Youngkin of portraying himself as a friendly everyman while encouraging what Obama called "lies and conspiracy theories" about widespread voting fraud in the 2020 elections. Former President Donald Trump has continued to push the false narrative about election fraud, which fueled the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

"Either he actually believes in the same conspiracy theories that resulted in a mob, or he doesn't believe it but he is willing to go along with it, to say or do anything to get elected. And maybe that's worse ... because that says something about character," Obama said.



Youngkin, a former private equity executive and a first-time candidate, initially made "election integrity" the centerpiece of his campaign and refused for months to say whether President Joe Biden was legitimately elected. He has since said that Biden was, and that there was not widespread fraud in last year's elections.

Obama described McAuliffe — the state's governor from 2014-2018 — as an experienced, steady hand and told a crowd of what organizers said was 2,000 people gathered outdoors at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond that the Nov. 2 election would "show the country and the world that we're not going to indulge in our worst instincts."

The former president said he understood voters are worn down, both from the country's divisive politics and the strain of the pandemic. But he said there's too much at stake to not cast a ballot.

"We don't have time to be tired. What is required is sustained effort," he said.

Asked for comment, a Youngkin campaign spokesman called Obama's remarks "false statements" and accused The Associated Press of "indulging the fantasies of the Terry and the left because they can't run on their failed record and radical vision for the future."

Another country stops Sputnik jabs after South Africa HIV fears

AFP ■ JOHANNESBURG

Namibia has discontinued the use of Russia's Sputnik V Covid-19 vaccine following concerns raised by neighbouring South Africa, the health ministry said on Saturday.

Neighbouring South Africa earlier this week said it would not approve Sputnik V due to concerns it could increase the risk of HIV infection among men, a claim the vaccine's developer says is unfounded.

The Namibian health ministry said in a statement that following South Africa's decision it was suspending, with immediate effect, use of the shots until the formula is listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization.

"The reason for discontinuation of the administration of the vaccine is being done out of abundance of caution that men who received Sputnik V may be at higher risk of contracting HIV when exposed to it," said the ministry.

Over 2K migrants march out of southern city in Mexico



A caravan of migrants, mostly from Central America, heading north, stop to rest in the Alvaro Obregon community, Tapachula municipality, Mexico on Saturday

AP ■ TAPACHULA

Over 2,000 migrants, mainly Central Americans, began walking out of a city in southern Mexico on Saturday where they have essentially been trapped.

The migrants walked along a highway leading west and north toward the U.S. border, and pushed past a line of state police who were trying to stop them.

There were minor scuffles and a small child suffered a slight head wound, but the migrants continued on their way.

They made it only a few miles (kilometers) to the nearby village of Alvaro Obregon before stopping to rest for the night at a baseball field.

José Antonio, a migrant from Honduras who did not want to give his last name because he fears it could affect his case, said he had been waiting in Tapachula for two months for an answer on his request for some sort of visa.

"They told me I had to wait because the appointments were full," said the construction worker. "There is no work there (in Tapachula), so out of

necessity I joined this group."

He said he hopes to make it to the northern city of Monterrey to find work, adding "We'll go on, day by day, to get as far as we can."

Police, immigration agents and National Guard have broken up smaller attempts at similar breakouts earlier this year.

Tens of thousands of migrants from Honduras, El Salvador and Haiti have been waiting in the southern city of Tapachula for refugee or asylum papers that might allow them to travel, but have grown tired of delays in the process.

Unlike previous marches, the one that started Saturday from Tapachula did not include as many Haitian migrants, thousands of whom reached the U.S. border around Del Rio, Texas in September.

In August, National Guard troops in riot gear blocked several hundred Haitians, Cubans and Central Americans who set out walking on a highway from Tapachula.

Mexico requires migrants applying for humanitarian visas or asylum to remain in the border state of Chiapas, next to Guatemala, for their cases to be processed.

Pope Francis: Don't send migrants back to Libya and inhumane camps

AP ■ VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis on Sunday made an impassioned plea to end the practice of returning migrants rescued at sea to Libya and other unsafe countries where they suffer "inhumane violence."

Francis also waded into a highly contentious political debate in Europe, calling on the international community to find concrete ways to manage the "migratory flows" in the Mediterranean.

"I express my closeness to the thousands of migrants, refugees and others in need of protection in Libya," Francis said. "I never forget you, I hear your cries and I pray for you."

Even as the pontiff appealed for changes of migrant policy and of heart in his remarks to the public in St.

Peter's Square, hundreds of migrants were either at sea in the central Mediterranean awaiting a port after rescue or recently coming ashore in Sicily or the Italian mainland after setting sail from Libya or Turkey, according to authorities. Dozens of others sent out a plea for help from a flimsy rubber dinghy.

"So many of these men, women and children are subject to inhumane violence," he added. "Yet again I ask the international community to keep the promises to search for common, concrete and lasting solutions to manage the migratory flows in Libya and in all the Mediterranean."

"How they suffer, those who are sent back" after rescue at sea, the pope said. Detention facilities in Libya, he said "are true concentration camps."

Turkey decision on envoys regrettable, says Finland's PM

AP ■ HELSINKI

Finland's leader said Sunday that the Turkish president's decision to order that 10 foreign ambassadors, including the Nordic country's envoy, be declared persona non grata after calling for the release of a jailed philanthropist and human rights activist was a "regrettable situation."

Prime Minister Sanna Marin told public broadcaster YLE that "this is a tough reaction" from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who announced the move on Saturday.

A declaration of persona non grata against a diplomat usually means that the individual is banned from remain-

ing in their host country. The diplomats were summoned to Turkey's foreign ministry on Tuesday.

The envoys from the U.S., France, Germany, Netherlands, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway and New Zealand had issued a statement calling for a resolution to the case of Osman Kavala, a businessman and philanthropist held in prison since 2017 despite not having been convicted of a crime.

"This is a very regrettable situation. We've considered it important that the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights are respected and complied with, and therefore have called for the release of this human rights activist," Marin said.

Biden hosting budget talks in Delaware with Schumer, Manchin

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden was hosting two pivotal senators for meetings in Delaware on Sunday in hopes of resolving lingering disputes over Democrats' long-stalled effort to craft an expansive social and environment measure.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., were scheduled to attend the session, the White House said.

Manchin and Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., two of their party's most moderate members, have insisted on reducing the size of the package and have pressed for other changes.

Democrats initially planned that the measure would contain \$3.5 trillion

worth of spending and tax initiatives over 10 years. But demands by moderates led by Manchin and Sinema to contain costs mean its final price tag could well be less than \$2 trillion.

Disputes remain over whether some priorities must be cut or excluded. These include plans to expand Medicare coverage, child care assistance and helping lower-income college students. Manchin, whose state has a major coal industry, has opposed proposals to penalize utilities that do not switch quickly to clean energy.

The White House and congressional leaders have tried to push monthslong negotiations toward a conclusion by the end of October.

Cheaper Covid-19 tests in place for vaccinated travellers to England

PTI ■ LONDON

Fully vaccinated travellers returning to England from countries not on the travel ban red list can use a Covid-19 negative Lateral Flow Test (LFT) instead of the more expensive Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test, under the new rules effective from Sunday, which could boost the country's tourism sector.

Other parts of the UK — Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland — are also expected to follow similar LFT rules for vaccinated travellers in the coming weeks.

Travellers vaccinated in over 100 countries, including

India, will also be treated the same as returning fully vaccinated residents in England, the government said.

This means that travellers arriving in England from a non-red list country can use LFT instead of the PCR on or before day two.

"I'm delighted that from today eligible travellers to England, who've had the life-saving Covid-19 vaccine can benefit from a cheaper lateral flow test, providing faster results," UK Health Secretary Sajid Javid said.

"This huge boost to the travel industry and the public will make it easier and cheaper for people to book holidays

and travel abroad, and it is because of our incredible vaccine programme that this is possible. Anyone who tests positive must take a PCR test, which, if positive, may be genomically sequenced to check for variants and further help us fight this virus," he added. Travellers must take a photo of their LFT and booking reference supplied by a private provider and send it back for verification.

They will also be able to book a test which they can take on arrival at several testing centres located at certain airports in England.

"The change in rules for post-arrival tests will give pas-

sengers more options and faster results, just in time for many half-term holidays. It's thanks to the success of our vaccination programme that we can make this switch — giving the industry and consumers a much-needed boost," said UK Transport Secretary Grant Shapps.

Travellers who have already bought PCR tests for travel do not need to undergo another test.

"Testing and self-isolating if you are positive remain crucial steps to managing the pandemic and stopping the spread of Covid-19 in the community," Dr Jenny Harries, Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency, said.

China reports 43 new Covid cases

PTI ■ BEIJING

China reported 43 new Covid cases, including four locally transmitted infections in Beijing, health authorities said on Sunday.

The four new locally transmitted coronavirus cases detected in Beijing pushed the total infections in the city during the current outbreak to 13.

The four people, who live in the same residential community in Beiqijia Township located in the northern suburban district of Changping, are all close contacts of previously confirmed cases, the municipal health commission said.

They have been sent to a designated hospital for treatment and epidemiological investigation is underway, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

National Health Commission (NHC) said besides the four infections in Beijing, 39 other cases were reported from different parts of the country. This include 17 imported cases.

Of the new 26 local cases, seven were reported in Inner Mongolia, six each in Gansu and Ningxia, four in Beijing and one each in Hebei, Hunan and Shaanxi, the commission said.

WINTER SESSION OF PARLIAMENT Govt likely to introduce 2 key financial sector Bills

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government may introduce two key financial sector bills, including the proposed law for facilitating privatisation of public sector banks as announced by the Finance Minister in the Budget.

The Government is also likely to table amendments to the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Act, 2013, to enable separation of the National Pension System Trust (NPS) from the PFRDA for ensuring universal pension coverage.

The Government is likely to table amendments in the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, during the forthcoming Winter Session of Parliament, sources said. Apart from this, amendments would be needed in the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970, and the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1980, for privatisation of banks, sources said.

These Acts led to the nationalisation of banks in two phases and provisions of these laws have to be changed for the privatisation of banks, they said.

A month-long winter session of Parliament is expected to start by the end of the next



month. The second batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants, allowing the Government to undertake additional expenditure other than the Finance Bill, would also be introduced for approval.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the Budget for 2021-22 had announced the privatisation of public sector banks (PSBs) as part of disinvestment drive to garner Rs 1.75 lakh crore.

“Other than IDBI Bank, we propose to take up the privatization of two Public Sector Banks and one General Insurance company in the year 2021-22,” she had said.

For ensuring privatisation of a general insurance company, the government has already received approval from Parliament for the

General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 2021, in the

monsoon session ended in August 2021.

With the amendment in the PFRDA Act, sources said, powers, functions and duties of NPS Trust, which are currently laid down under PFRDA (National Pension System Trust) Regulations 2015, may come under a charitable Trust or the Companies Act.

The intent behind this is to keep NPS Trust separate from the pension regulator and managed by a competent board of 15 members. Out of this, the majority of members are likely to be from the government as they, including states, are the biggest contributor to the corpus.

The Trust was established by PFRDA for taking care of the assets and funds under NPS. The proposal to separate the two job roles has been under consideration for the last couple of years.

A country can provide fishery subsidies if it maintains stocks at sustainable levels: India's proposal in WTO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A member country of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) can provide subsidies to its fishermen if it maintains stocks at a biologically sustainable level, according to a proposal submitted by India last month.

India has also proposed that a country engaged in distant water fishing (fishing beyond 200 nautical miles from its sea shores) cannot provide fishery subsidies for 25 years from the date of entry into force of the fisheries subsidies agreement, an official said.

Fishing in distant waters or in some other country's territory is a major problem when it comes to maintaining fish stocks at sustainable levels. Such activities lead to depletion of fish stocks in the oceans and this happens because of use of highly mechanised vessels or boats for industrial fishing.

This agreement is under discussion among the 164 WTO members in Geneva.

The aim of these negotiations is to discipline subsidies with the overall objective to have sustainable fishing and to eliminate IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing subsidies and prohibit subsidies contributing to overcapacity and overfishing.

There are primarily three areas of fishing -- territorial waters (12 nautical miles from the sea shore), EEZ (exclusive economic zones - 200 nautical miles), and high seas. There are certain developed countries



which go into high seas for exploiting the fishing stock.

The current proposal submitted by India assumes significance as it has stated that the draft text which is at present under negotiations is unbalanced.

“The present text is unbalanced and only when Indian suggestions (from its proposal) are considered and incorporated suitably, then only it will be a balanced text for negotiations. The present text cannot form the basis of negotiations because it is not balanced.

Only when these suggestions are discussed, deliberated and in some manner incorporated in the revised text, then India can start the text-based negotiations,” the official said. In the WTO, member countries negotiate through a text to finalise an agreement.

The official added that the current draft text, which is under negotiations, does not provide a conducive policy space for developing and least

developed countries (LDCs) that are yet to develop their fishing capacities.

“Therefore, the principle of polluter pays and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities concept must be applied in line with the popular demand of developing countries made at a meeting on July 15 this year,” the official said.

The suggestion of India for a moratorium of 25 years on countries that are engaged in distant water fishing is based on FAO's (Food and Agriculture Organization) code of conduct for responsible fisheries, which was adopted in 1995. It has recognised the issues of overfishing and depletion of fish stocks.

Further, India has also proposed that member countries engaged in distant water fishing after this agreement comes into effect should have to reduce such activities by certain specified percent every year till overcapacity or overfishing persists.

Petrol, diesel prices hiked for 5th straight day DIESEL ABOVE ₹100 IN WEST BENGAL

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol and diesel prices on Sunday were hiked for the fifth straight day by 35 paise per litre each, pushing pump rates to new high across the country.

The price of petrol in Delhi rose to its highest-ever level of ₹107.59 a litre and ₹113.46 per litre in Mumbai, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

In Mumbai, diesel now comes for ₹104.38 a litre, while in Delhi, it costs ₹96.32 per litre.

This is the fifth consecutive day of the price hike. There was no change in rates on October 18 and 19, prior to which prices were hiked by 35 paise per litre each on four straight days.

While petrol has already hit the ₹100-a-litre mark or more in all major cities of the country, diesel has touched that level in over one-and-a-half dozen states and UTs from



Jammu & Kashmir to Tamil Nadu. West Bengal on Sunday became the latest state to have the nation's most used fuel above that level.

Purulia, Krishnanagar, Baharampur and Cooch Behar districts of the state had diesel above ₹100-a-litre mark.

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

Petrol price has been hiked on 21 occasions since September 28, when a three-week-long hiatus in rate revision ended. In all, prices have gone up by ₹ 6.4 a litre.

438 infra projects show cost overrun of ₹4.3 lakh crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 438 infrastructure projects, each worth ₹150 crore or more, have been hit by cost overruns totalling more than ₹4.3 lakh crore, according to a report.

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation monitors infrastructure projects worth Rs 150 crore and above.

Of the 1,670 such projects, 438 reported cost overruns and 563 were delayed.

“Total original cost of implementation of the 1,670 projects was ₹21,66,048.11 crore and their anticipated completion cost is likely to be ₹25,96,907.70 crore, which reflects overall cost overruns of ₹4,30,859.59 crore (19.89 per cent of original cost),” the ministry's latest report for September 2021 said.

According to the report, the expenditure incurred on these projects till September 2021 is ₹12,54,512.40 crore, which is 48.31 per cent of the anticipated cost of the projects.

However, the report said that the number of delayed pro-



jects decreases to 380 if delay is calculated on the basis of latest schedule of completion.

Further, for 808 projects neither the year of commissioning nor the tentative gestation period has been reported.

Out of the 563 delayed projects, 100 have overall delay in the range of 1-12 months, 120 have been delayed for 13-24 months, 216 for 25-60 months and 127 projects have delays of 61 months and above.

The average time overrun in these 563 delayed projects is 47 months. Reasons for time overruns as reported by various project implementing agencies include delay in land acquisition, delay in obtaining forest and environment clearances, and lack of infrastructure support and linkages.

Govt may raise over ₹10,000 cr via Bharat Bond ETF by Dec

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is likely to launch the next tranche of the Bharat Bond ETF by December and expects to raise over ₹10,000 crore to fund growth plans of central public sector enterprises, according to a senior finance ministry official.

The official added that the fund requirements of CPSEs are being worked out and the third tranche of the exchange-traded fund (ETF) will be launched by the end of the calendar year.

“We are finalising on the amount to be raised but it would be over ₹10,000 crore,” the official said.

Bharat Bond ETF is an exchange-traded fund that invests in debt of public sector companies. The ETF currently invests only in ‘AAA’-rated bonds of public sector companies.

The funds raised through the debt ETF helps in smoothening borrowing plans of the participating CPSEs or public sector banks. It also helps them in meeting their capital expenditure needs.

The second tranche of the Bharat Bond ETF, which was launched in July 2020, was oversubscribed more than three times, collecting about ₹11,000 crore. It had fetched about ₹12,400 crore in its debut offer in December 2019.



India to bargain for undelivered LNG cargo with Qatar

New Delhi:India will bargain for supply of undelivered gas quantities of past years when it negotiates renewal of its multi-billion dollar LNG import deal with Qatar, an official said. Petronet LNG Ltd's 7.5 million tonnes a year liquefied natural gas (LNG) import deal with Qatargas is ending in 2028. Renewal, if any, has to be confirmed 5 years ahead of that.Talks for renewal will start next year and will be conditioned on Qatargas delivering in 2022 the 50 cargoes or shiploads of LNG that weren't taken in 2015, Petronet Director-Finance V K Mishra said. India in 2015 had not taken delivery of the cargoes as it renegotiated the pricing of the long-term supply contract after prices hit double-digit. Qatar had then agreed to revise the pricing formula subject to India buying an additional 1 million tonnes per annum of LNG. As regards the cargoes that were not taken, it was decided that India can see the cargoes anytime during the remainder of the contract that ends in 2028.

PTI

Rent of retail space up 11-17% in Delhi's upscale mkts in July-Sep



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rentals of high-street retail Rare inching back to pre-Covid levels in Delhi-NCR on the back of revival in business, as rents in upscale Khan Market, South Extension and Connaught Place have risen 11-17 per cent during July-September compared to the previous quarter, according to Cushman and Wakefield.

“Rentals inching back to pre-Covid levels as market activity strengthens,” global property consultant Cushman and Wakefield (C&W) said in its report ‘Marketbeat- Delhi-NCR, Retail Q3 2021’ (July-September).

The Delhi-NCR market recorded improved retail activity during the September quarter, the consultant said, adding

that early signs of recovery could be seen with a pick-up in retail leasing.

“With rentals inching back to pre-COVID levels and accommodation on commercial terms narrowing, the only direction for retail in the coming months is upwards,” said Vibhor Jain, Managing Director, North, Cushman & Wakefield.

“Increased vaccination and a low caseload have certainly played an important role in the return to normalcy and higher consumer confidence,” the report said. On rent scenario, the consultant found that the rentals of high street location Khan Market increased 12.5 per cent to ₹1,350 per square feet during the July-September quarter as against the previous quarter.

Mcap of five of top-10 most valued firms down by over ₹1.42 lakh cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The combined market valuation of five of the top-10 most valued companies eroded by ₹1,42,880.11 crore last week, with Hindustan Unilever, Reliance Industries and Tata Consultancy Services emerging as major laggards. Last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex declined by 484.33 points or 0.79 per cent. Market benchmarks — Sensex and Nifty — declined for the fourth consecutive session on Friday.

The market valuation of Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) tumbled ₹45,523.33 crore to reach ₹5,76,836.40 crore. Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) valuation eroded by ₹ 45,126.6 crore to ₹16,66,427.95 crore and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) market worth tanked by ₹41,151.94 crore to ₹12,94,686.48 crore.

The market capitalisation (Mcap) of Bajaj Finance plunged ₹8,890.95 crore to ₹4,65,576.46 crore and that of HDFC Bank Ltd fell by ₹2,187.29 crore to ₹9,31,371.72 crore. In contrast, Kotak Mahindra Bank added ₹30,747.78 crore taking its valuation to ₹4,30,558.09 crore.

ICICI Bank's market valuation zoomed by ₹22,248.14 crore to reach ₹5,26,497.27 crore. The valuation of HDFC jumped ₹17,015.22 crore to ₹5,24,877.06 crore and that of State Bank of India gained ₹11,111.14 crore to ₹4,48,863.34 crore. Infosys added ₹1,717.96 crore taking its valuation to ₹7,29,410.37 crore.

According to the Crisil research report on economic recovery and pace of investment in the economy, the Industrial Entrepreneur Memorandum (IEM) filings with the Government, the pace of environmental approvals, and the surge in foreign direct investments (FDI), the investments have already crossed pre-pandemic levels, all clearly indicating and confirming a recovery in the economy.

India sees registration of over 16,570 new firms in September

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 16,570 new companies were registered in the country in September, taking the total number of active companies to more than 14.14 lakh, according to official data.

Data from the corporate affairs ministry showed that a total of 22,32,699 companies were registered in the country as on September 30.

Out of them, 7,73,070 companies were closed, 2,298 were assigned dormant status as per the Companies Act, 2013, 6,944 were under liquidation and 36,110 were in the process of being struck-off.

As per the ministry's monthly information bulletin for the corporate sector, there were 14,14,277 active companies as on September 30.

Citing an analysis registration of new companies during September 2019 to September 2021 period, the

ministry said the data indicates that monthly registration of companies has increased after hitting lowest of 3,209 in April 2020.

“A total of 16,570 companies were registered in September 2021 as compared to 16,641 in September 2020. An increase (24.68 per cent) in registration of companies has been witnessed in September 2021 over the previous month... A total of 4,535 LLPs were registered in September 2021 as compared to 4,016 LLPs in September 2020,” the ministry said. Out of the 14,14,277 active companies, the ministry said 14,05,098 were limited by shares, 8,872 were limited by guarantee and 307 were unlimited companies. Among the 7,73,070 closed companies at the end of September, 7,13,052 were declared defunct and struck-off after issuance of notice under the Companies Act.



PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice hereby given that my client intend to purchase **BUILT-UP PROPERTY BEARING No. 640, Land Area measuring 31.69 SQ. MTRS.** in Block & Pocket A-7, Sector-8, situated at Rohini, Delhi-110085 from **Ms. Geeta Gandhi** D/o Sh. Murari Lal Gandhi resident of 214-E, MG Green Flat, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi. Any Person or persons having any claim on the said property by way of Ownership, Tenancy, Licence, Sale, Mortgage, Exchange, Charges, Lease, Lien, Will, Inheritance, Maintenance, Possession, Gift, Trust, Govt. Duties, Levies, Easement, Encumbrances or otherwise are requested to inform undersigned at C-1/12, Sector-11, Rohini, Delhi within 7 days from the publication hereof.

Any claim received after the aforesaid period shall be deemed to have waived and the sale will be completed without taking any reference to such claim or claims.

GAURAV AGGARWAL (Advocate)
C-1/12, Sector-11, Rohini, Delhi-110085
Mobile: 9312590422

PUBLIC NOTICE

The company, **SNG Developers Ltd**, New Delhi proposes to execute and register the sale deed for shop no UGF-36 on the Upper Ground floor having a super area of 620 sq ft in **SNG Plaza** at Ansal Golf Links 1, Greater Noida, U.P in favour of **Shri Abhin Bhardwaj son of Late Shri Rajiv Kumar Bhardwaj**.

Any persons having any objection whatsoever to the said transaction may contact the company on the undemoted address within 15 days of the publication of this notice. In case no objection is received within the said 15 days, the company shall have full authority to execute and register the sale deed for the said shop in favour of **Shri Abhin Bhardwaj**.

Anshul Suryavanshi, Marketing Department, **SNG Developers Ltd**, Flat No.112, 1st Floor, 112, Indraprastha Building, 21, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi - 110001.

TENDER NOTICE

Appu Enclave CGHS Ltd. Plot No.3D, Sector -11, Dwarka New Delhi - 110075. Invites Bid From Architectural Firms for their Services for Preparation and Approval of Drawings for Additional FAR Expansion and Podium as per Rules. Relevant Information can be Gathered from Society through Email after Furnishing Profile, Similar Work Experience from **appuenclavecgshs@gmail.com** Completed Bid Alongwith Drawings must be filed within Ten Days of Publication.

FOR APPU ENCLAVE CGHS LTD.,
PRESIDENT

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR
Telefax No. :- 0194-2496089, Email Id:- xenmhchdk@yahoo.in

GIST of e-NIT No: MHCHD/TS /2021-22/162/e-tendering
Dated: 20.10.2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir state, e-tenders, valid for 180 days, are invited from the Registered , reputed & experienced firms as detailed in the NIT for below mentioned works:

Name of Work:- Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Helical Coil assembly of 20 Lac Kcal/hr Hot water Generator with allied works at Govt. SMHS Hospital, Srinagar.

Estimated Cost (In Lacs):- 20.00

Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees) :- 1000

Time of completion (In days):- 30

TS No: MHCHD/TS/125

A Accorded vide:- 52MCS of 2020, Dt: 15-09-2020

Position of Funds : Available

1. The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the **Govt. website www.jktenders.gov.in** from **21.10.2021 (18.00 hrs)**.

2. The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above **web site** from **22.10.2021 (10.00 hrs) to 29.10.2021 (14.00 hrs)** in two (02) covers.

3. The bid uploaded on the Web Site up to due date and time will be opened on **30.10.2021 (14.00 hrs)** or any date convenient to the department in the **Office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar.**

No. DIPK-11136/21 Dated:- 23.10.2021

Sd/- Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar



Bollywood
 'I would like to be known by the characters I portray, and not my name...'
 —Pratik Gandhi

ADDING EXTRA TO THE ORDINARY

Replicating his real life, actor-philanthropist SONU SOOD focusses on the impactful work by individuals through his forthcoming show, *It Happens Only In India*. He tells SAIMI SATTAR why it has become essential to narrate such inspirational stories

Sonu Sood had made a career of playing the antagonist after his debut in supporting roles in Tamil films *Kallazhagar* and *Nenjilile*. That was till the time the pandemic struck.

From distributing food packets and sending migrant labourers home to supporting students and providing employment, all it took was two years. The mere mention of his name is enough to evince widespread admiration all around. Not surprisingly, National Geographic Channel roped him for a new show, *It Happens Only In India*, where he narrates stories of people who have gone above and beyond the daily grind to leave a lasting imprint on lives around them.



♦ **It happens only in India is something we say a lot about this country. So, what was it that made you take the show up?**

The kind of social media madness that we are obsessed with means that we do not have time to tell stories. As children, we heard stories being narrated by our grandparents which have left an imprint on our minds. However, the younger generation does not have anyone to tell them stories and neither do they have the time.

Coming to this show, *It Happens Only In India*, on National Geographic, which features people who were unaware that they have a hero within them and unknowingly they tapped into it to do something that astonished and inspired the country. It was important to tell the world that rather than stories beginning from, 'Once upon a time', they are some that start with, 'There was this common man in Jharkhand who...' And when we tell the story of a common person to another of his ilk, it makes him/her special. It is important to narrate these incidents. I am happy that I can narrate these stories which happen to inspire me as well. It is striking that, with just an idea, a person can change lives and inspire people.

♦ **Why is India unique, in your opinion?**

If we talk about India, there are

so many people, religions, languages. We see everything changing every day. When we meet people abroad, they always react to us coming from the country and express a desire to visit India. They want to explore India. Even as an Indian, if you visit the four corners of our nation, it would appear as if you are in four different countries. Not just geographically, the people, attire, food, everything is starkly different. There is definitely a certain uniqueness. While we might be saying it because we are Indians, yet we can't dismiss the fact that there is something special about our country that exerts a sense of awe across the globe.

♦ **Do you believe in the power of one? That a single person can make a difference?**

I always believe that you can only fight battles alone. *Karwaan to baad me judta hai* (People joined me later). During the pandemic, when we were helping people and I told some friends who have settled abroad that

I am planning to send people to their homes. Their reaction was, "How is it even possible that when we can't even step out of our buildings, how can you send people in buses?" I told them, "Let me try." And when those 10 buses were leaving with 350 people on board for Karnataka, I did not know a single person. But the happiness on their faces and the thankfulness in their folded hands told me that this story is not restricted to these few. It is spread across the entire country. I still don't know how I was able to do this. It isn't about what's inside a person that propels him/her forward. It is the prayers and the blessings of the people that take this ahead. When I was sending people to their homes, it was the prayers of their parents and family members that enabled me to get permission from different authorities. I hope, the blessings will keep coming.

♦ **Initially, you started with distributing food packets, realised that people wanted to go home and**

then your focus shifted to generating livelihoods. Essentially, one thing has led to another.

To date, I have been able to employ 2.80 lakh people. Earlier we were assisting 2,000-2,200 students in education and now we are teaching around 22,000 children. We are distributing medicines to people... but I do not how all of this is happening. We start an initiative, people got motivated and got involved with it. In medicine, for instance, doctors, hospitals and pharmaceutical companies came forward to do their bit. It was a chain reaction which spread like a wildfire. I recall the CEO of a big hospital telling me, "We were doing a lot of charity work earlier as well but after getting involved with your initiative, we have seen the transformation in the doctors, staff, pharmaceutical companies who feel that you are doing this for people you don't know. As a result, doctors waived off their fee, pharmaceutical companies gave medicines for free, hospitals did not charge for beds." So, more and more

people became involved with the effort. The reaction was magical. I do not know how it happened. That is the biggest lesson of our life. We wonder how this will happen... and then it does. We often leave things midway but that is what we shouldn't be doing. We should persevere. We might fall or falter in the effort but we have to dust that off and move forward.

♦ **You played an anti-hero on screen but now you are perceived as a hero in real life. How do you bridge the gap between the two?**

I don't know. A number of times it has happened that brands have debated whether to take me on board for endorsing their products as I have played negative roles on screen. They wondered if the brand was in sync with my image. And then, there came a time when I signed every single brand. When you try to change your image, it might not happen. It does on its own, with the blessings of others. I can give examples of some iconic films which were not made but just came about. If you had asked me about this work earlier, I would not have been able to visualise it. Two years back if you had told me that, "Two hundred people would come to your house every day to ask for help," I would have replied, "You have lost your mind. How is that even possible?" You learn every day but you have to remember the lesson so that when you are put to test, you pass with flying colours.

♦ **On the professional front, do you have any projects in the pipeline?**

I completed a Telugu film, *Acharya*, with Chiranjeevi and it will release next year. There is a Yash Raj film with Akshay, Prithviraj and me. Then, there is a home production which will start next year. I have missed many big offers as I am caught up with meeting people and do not get the time to read scripts. But three-four films are up for release next year.

(The first episode of *It Happens Only In India* airs tomorrow at 8 pm, only on National Geographic Channel.)

WEBBED



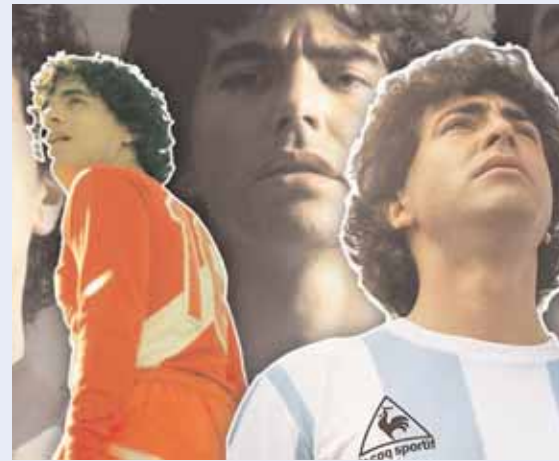
DYBBUK

Mahi, a newly married woman, brings an antique Jewish box into her home. When Mahi and her husband Sam begin to have paranormal experiences, they soon learn that the box is a dybbuk containing an evil spirit. It starts streaming on Amazon Prime Video from October 29.



HUM DO HAMARE DO

A comedy drama film directed by Abhishek Jain and produced by Dinesh Vijan, *Hum Do Hamare Do* features Rajkumar Rao and Kriti Sanon as a young couple who are keen to adopt parents. It starts streaming on Disney+ Hotstar from October 29.



MARADONA: BLESSED DREAM

The series depicts the life and career of football player Diego Maradona, from his beginnings in Villa Fiorito to achieving glory with Barcelona, Napoli and the Argentine team. It starts streaming on Amazon Prime Video from October 29.



Bollywood couple Neha Dhupia and Angad Bedi captured during the launch of Marks & Spencer's Indian Fusion Collection
 Photos by Pankaj Kumar

The sight of children in their uniforms, with bags on their shoulders and trooping into the school, has been a rare sight for a better part of the last two years. While children were forced to stay home in the wake of the pandemic, they gradually accepted a new way of schooling — online learning.

However, with the restrictions slowly easing out and things limping back to normal, schools are gradually reopening their gates and welcoming back their students.

However, there is a larger imperative in question. How do schools make the transition smooth for their students after a long time away?

□ **Be open to in-depth conversations**

Coming back to school after a long hiatus can prove to be a major change in a child's life. Many children may have receded into their comfort zones and shells, and may not find it easy to speak to people all over again. At such times, one can take small steps into making students feel comfortable and more aware. Teachers need to motivate students to speak up and share their emotions. Engaging in open conversations encourages students to express themselves better and provides reassurance that they are in a safe space.

□ **Organise ice-breakers**

A new beginning calls for newer measures. Orientation programmes for kids can be a great way to break the ice and

Getting back in the groove

Returning to school after an extended hiatus may be stressful for students. ROHAN PARIKH suggests ways to help facilitate learning and growing in the new normal



make students feel more at ease while they're at school. Through such a programme, students can get to know more about their daily learning schedule once again, meet and greet teachers, explore extracurricular activities, which gives them a better sense of belonging and adventure at school.

□ **Set small, achievable goals**

Change is a good thing when

it's balanced and calculated. But sudden change can often lead to anxiety. Switching from the world of online learning to a 'back-to-school' model might not be easy for a child. Hence, if students feel nervous about jumping back into school life, teachers can set micro goals and help by guiding their classroom, reconnecting students with old friends and making them more comfortable at their



desks through numerous activities.

□ **Prioritise mental health for children**

Lockdown has made everyone more anxious and stressed — especially children. This sudden shift in lifestyle has given rise to numerous mental health issues in children. At such times, instead of emphasising a child's learning gaps, teachers need to focus more on a student's growth over the past two years. With more openness about understanding a student's mental state, teachers can appreciate their grit and resilience in cruising through this challenging year.

□ **Engage with your students**

In the initial days of the school reopening, students might feel that they've fallen behind on their curriculum. Spending the whole year in front of the com-

puter can make them feel highly non-competitive. Thus, students need to be kept engaged through various activities and other learning initiatives. An excellent attendance record and active participation can be the key to bridging the prevalent learning gaps and strengthening the bonds.

□ **Ask for help if the going gets tough**

Managing students is not an easy feat; add the pandemic, and it's a different ball game altogether. Kids are still trying to make headway in a post-pandemic world and are highly dependent on their teachers to guide them. Hence, teachers need to take the reins and help students come to terms with these new changes. However, things can get overwhelming for a teacher as well. At such times, calling for additional help can assist help you become better at managing the students during these tough times.

Time can heal anything, so all we have to do is give things some time. Schools need to realise that students seek to experience a sense of normalcy when they return to school. By acknowledging the way they feel and giving them the space to come to terms with their feelings, schools can become an integral part of the students' emotional journey.

(The author is the MD of The Green Acres Academy, a school by The Acres Foundation.)

TRENDBLAZER



EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS: SAIF

Actor **SAIF ALI KHAN** has completed 28 years in the Hindi film industry. Looking back at his journey, he shared that it went better than what his parents had expected of him.

"When I was in school my parents used to worry about me, thinking that I might end up in a slightly destructive life. I am proud of the fact that life is going quite well, as of now, even though it has been hard work at times," shared Khan, who was recently seen in *Bhoot Police*.

fairtalk

AAHANA KUMRA



'Amal, my character, in *Call My Agent*, the forthcoming series, is a talent agent who has to go through a myriad of emotions everyday because getting actors jobs, or putting projects together is not everyone's cup of tea. I am overwhelmed by the positive reviews we have been receiving ever since the trailer was released and I am sure the show will be an absolute entertainer.'

dailytalk

PARINEETI CHOPRA



'I think I had a dream launch 10 years ago with *Ladies Vs Ricky Bahl* and when I look back, I cannot help but feel that I have had an amazing career. It's the same as an amazing life. You have to have high highs and low lows. You have to have successes and failures. Joys and pain. I wouldn't have been the actor that I am today if it wasn't for all of that.'

INSPIRING OTHERS LIKE HIM: ED SHEERAN

Grammy winning-singer **ED SHEERAN** hopes that his stint as a storyteller will help children, like him, who have a stutter.

He will be reading Jordan Scott and Sydney Smith's *I Talk Like A River* in a forthcoming episode of CBeebies' *Bedtime Story*.

"Growing up, I had a stutter like the boy from the story and, as a new dad, I hope it helps inspire and support other children," expresses Sheeran.



ONE STEP TOWARDS GOODNESS

Bank Sakhis travelled to the hinterlands to provide banking facilities to the villagers, thus, ensuring their financial inclusion during the lockdown. By SURYAKANT DEWANGAN

There are several inspiring stories of Covid-19 warriors from across the country that have helped society to overcome the hardships brought by the pandemic. This story is about the 'Bank Sakhis' from Kanker district in Chhattisgarh, who travelled far and beyond to provide banking facilities to the villagers and ensured their financial inclusion even during the lockdown.

The Chhattisgarh state government has been running the Bank Sakhi model under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), in which rural women, preferably from Self Help Groups (SHGs), are provided training to open bank accounts for SHGs, to assist transactions of different pension schemes like old-age pensions, widow pensions, social security pensions, and to facilitate credit linkages of these groups and other banking facilities. When the rest of the world was afraid to leave their houses, these Bank Sakhis were out there bringing banking services to the doorsteps of villagers.

Residents of isolated villages often find it difficult to avail banking services as the banks are often located in towns or cities at considerable distance. During lockdown, it had become even more challenging for the communities from low socio-economic background to avail benefits of government schemes which have turned digital in the recent years. It were the Bank Sakhis who came to the rescue of the rural communities.

Working as a Bank Sakhi in and around Murumtara village of Narharpur tehsil in Kanker, Sarita Katendra said, "Earlier, I would sew clothes for a living, but it wasn't enough to make ends meet. Being a member of the SHG, however, provided me an opportunity to work as a 'Bank Sakhi'. Currently, I am earning around ₹ 8,000-10,000 per month." Sarita is now known as the 'Bank Lady' in her village. Any woman who has completed education till class 10th is eligible to become a Bank Sakhi. After the selection, they are provided with basic computer knowledge and banking skills. Once they start working, they receive an honorarium through banks.

"I was always interested in the banking sector but owing to my poor financial background, I was unable to make a career out of it. As I was a member of an active SHG, I applied for the role and have been working as a Bank Sakhi since May 2020," shared Poonam Jain from Madabhari village in the same tehsil which has facilitated transaction of over



₹ 30 lakhs so far. According to her, with every transaction, the Bank Sakhis receive a commission through which they are able to earn around ₹ 8,000-10,000 every month.

Last year, when livelihoods were greatly affected due to the nationwide lockdown, Bank Sakhis went from door to door to provide beneficiaries their pension, MGNREGA payments and any incentive received during that period.

"I work in the Bhanupratappur area in the villages of Dumarkot, Bhainsakanhar and Narsinghpur. During the lockdown, we transacted ₹ 30,000-40,000 every day," informed Nimita Dhruv, another Bank Sakhi from Dumarkot village in Bhanupratappur.

Working as Bank Sakhis has also strengthened the economic condition of these courageous women. "I use the honorarium I receive working as a Bank Sakhi for my college expenses and to financially support my family," shared Dipika Bhuaria who works at Baansala and Junwani village. She added that ever since she started working as a Bank Sakhi, people seek her support to withdraw or deposit money from their account. The initiative has proved beneficial to both Bank Sakhis and villagers who are saved from undertaking long travels to access banking facilities.



Bridging the gap between banks and the rural areas, the Bank Sakhis appointed by different banks have emerged as a viable alternative for ensuring financial inclusion of the remote communities. Different types of Bank Sakhis have been appointed under this scheme. The Banking Correspondent (BC) Sakhi has a laptop and a printer to conduct banking transactions and even open a bank account. The ATM Sakhi has a swipe machine through which she can only transact, whereas the DIGI-Pay Sakhi has a mobile phone through which she can conduct transactions. She can process transactions from those accounts that are linked to Aadhaar without filling any forms.

Several government and private sector banks are operating in the Kanker district, but Chhattisgarh *Grameen* bank has maximum reach and also, the highest number of branches. This is why a greater number of Bank Sakhis are associated with the grameen banks. Currently, there are 113 Bank Sakhis working in all the seven blocks of Kanker district—16 in Narharpur, 22 in Charama, 17 in Kanker, 12 in Bhanupratappur, 14 in Durgukondal, 15 in Antagarh and 17 in Koyailbeda. Through the scheme, the BC Sakhi and ATM/DIGI-Pay Sakhis receive an honorarium of ₹ 2,500 and 1,000, respectively, and additionally earn commission from the bank based on transactions. They are linked to the nearest branch which provides them cash to conduct these transactions.

As expressed by Ravi Kumar Gupta, the Financial Institution (FI) manager of Chhattisgarh's regional office of *grameen* bank in Dhamtari, the selection of Bank Sakhis is done through the corporate business correspondent. "While the village panchayat also plays a role in selecting the candidates, preference is given to women associated with a SHG. Besides their designated tasks, they have been given responsibility of additional tasks such as insurance, loan recovery and KCC during the pandemic," said Ravi. Currently, 90 Bank Sakhis are a part of *grameen* banks in Kanker district.

During the last financial, despite the lockdown, 113 Bank Sakhis from Kanker district have carried out transactions of approximately ₹10 crores, ensuring financial assistance to the people and, at the same time, strengthening their own economic status while building an identity in their respective regions.

—Charkha Features



Defining social transformation

RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI asks people to inculcate a fresh and peaceful approach to resolving disputes in keeping with our spiritual heritage

RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI asks people to inculcate a fresh and peaceful approach to resolving disputes in keeping with our spiritual heritage

In his recent address, on the eve of 71st Indian Republic day, the President of India highlighted, among other things, the need to 'hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives' (in the words of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar). He also spoke of following the life and values of our father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi. He spoke at length about India's health-care and educational sector progress and expressed how in both these sectors, we have come a long way in the last seven decades. He showered words of praise for our armed forces, paramilitary and internal security forces and thanked them for their sacrifices to preserve the integrity and unity of our country. At the end of his address, he said that "When fighting for a cause, people, particularly the youth, should not forget the gift of Ahimsa that Gandhi ji gave to humanity. Gandhi ji's talisman for deciding whether an act is right or wrong also applies to the functioning of our democracy. Government and opposition both have important roles to play. While giving expression to their political ideas, both must move forward in tandem to ensure that development of the country and welfare of its people are promoted consistently."



After such encouraging and motivational words by the President, what did we see the next day on our television sets? Does it require any detailing? The pride with which we all saluted the Tricolour in the morning, it was demolished by our own fellow citizens within a few hours. Should we not find out what made this happen? What independence is this in which man is slave to such negative tendencies? The question, therefore, is: can't we have a system which reflects the will of the people for peace, prosperity and social justice and is also free from the aforesaid negativity?

On one hand, India is being revered by many nations for its large heartedness in times of the pandemic and many other calamities. And on the other hand, the whole world saw the disturbing scenes of what happened on January 26, 2021. There is nothing wrong with aspiring for social transformation. But 'social transformation' does not mean that we make progress only in terms of science and technology. If our ethical standards have fallen abysmally and the fissiparous forces are working to tear apart the society into bits and pieces, what kind of progress is it? and what kind of education are we giving? Where are love, unity, integrity, uprightness and sense of duty which are hallmarks of a really educated community? Let us, therefore, clearly define 'social transformation', supply the missing element in our education and gear up our universities so as to build up the national character as strong as rock.

In view of all this, one would like to know whether there is no peaceful method of resolving such disputes which cause great social upheavals and huge economic losses. It should, in this context, not be hard to appreciate that an emerging economy, like India, cannot afford to waste its energies on avoidable conflicts. Let us, therefore, have a fresh thought-process about all these national issues in the light of our ancient spiritual heritage. There, definitely, are solutions, provided we have not closed our minds and also have not built up walls of prejudices against the alternatives.

Most of us can vouch for feeling liberated and happy as soon as Friday rolls around. It brings with it the promise of an exciting and relaxing weekend that entices the mind. Conversely, enthusiasm soon dwindles as Monday approaches with its weeklong pledge of dreary chores, work, and tedious commitments. But why? The answer is simple — people need the external circumstances to be the way they desire and in their control in order to be happy. Else, misery, despair, and frustration take over their mind.

However, it doesn't have to be this way — we can be happy every day of the week irrespective of the circumstances. When our mind is controlled, it is our best friend, while an uncontrolled mind is our worst enemy. If we wish to always feel happy and positive, we need to harness the power of the mind. We must begin by improving the thoughts we harbour within the mind by learning the art of positive thinking.

Let us next look at effective techniques to always stay happy.

Assert positive thoughts

Positive thinking is the mental habit of harbouring happy thoughts and an optimistic attitude. Positive thinkers are always cheerful and do not seek preconditions to be happy. They are masters in the art of staying

A million reasons to be happy

H H SWAMI MUKUNDANANDA elaborates on the art of being positive every day by harnessing the power of the mind



elated even when life challenges them with sufficient reasons to make them feel miserable.

One powerful method is to focus your mind on an opposite, positive thought if a negative thought is disturbing you. For example, if thoughts of anger arise in the mind, think of love and patience; the positive thoughts don't have to be towards the same person or object at whom you are angry.

The repeated practice of asserting positive thoughts will foster a positive state of mind.

Be grateful

Though we may not realise it, we have all been bestowed with bountiful graces and blessings from God. The eyes with which we see, the ears with which we hear, the earth we walk upon, the air that we breathe, the food that we eat, and so on, are

all gifts from the Universe.

Unfortunately, due to our conditioning, we often highlight insufficiencies and scarcity. By doing so, we subject ourselves to various anxieties, fears, and worries. However, we can reverse that and break out of negative emotions by practicing gratitude. So, let us feel grateful for the countless graces that God has bestowed upon us, and with such positive sentiments,

eradicate any sense of deficiency. This attitude on its own can give us a million reasons to be happy.

Take responsibility for your emotions

No matter what the external situation, we are free to choose our emotional response. Understanding this gap between the circumstances and feelings provides us with a lever to con-

trol our sentiments. The vast majority of people focus on negative circumstances that are beyond their control. Thus, they fail to take responsibility for what they can change, which is their emotions, beliefs and behaviour. They develop the unproductive habit of playing the blame-game, and so they never feel they have any personal responsibility to improve their moods.

Instead, we can abide by the Bhagavad Gita that educates us to uplift ourselves by the power of our mind, and not to degrade ourselves by it. This ability to exercise our free will for choosing our attitude and emotions is the foundation of our growth. Hence, we must practice controlling our mind by taking the onus of its well-being upon ourselves.

Concluding remarks

If we search for happiness externally, we will be dependent on someone or something for the same. Instead, if we realise that happiness is an internal resource that lies in our thoughts and beliefs, we can naturally remain happy always. So, happiness is a choice we make. Let us use the techniques discussed today to enhance our happiness quotient in life.

(The author is a yogi, a spiritual teacher, an IIT and IIM alumnus, a bhakti saint, and the founder of JKYog.)

VAX PEOPLE SHOW LOWER NON-COVID DEATHS

People vaccinated against Covid-19 may have a lower non-Covid-19 death rates than people who are not inoculated, according to a new research.

The study, published in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, indicated that Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine recipients had a mortality rate of 4.2 deaths per 1,000 vaccinated people per year after the first dose and 3.5 deaths after the second dose. Meanwhile, Moderna Covid-19 vaccine recipients had 3.7 deaths per 1,000 people per year after the first dose and 3.4 deaths after the second dose. Both the unvaccinated comparison groups had a mortality rate of 11.1 deaths per 1,000 people per year.

Electronic health records of 6.4 million Covid-19 vaccine recipients compared to 4.6 million unvaccinated people with similar demographics and geographic locations from December 2020 through July 2021, were evaluated.



NEED TO USE ALTERNATIVE FINANCIAL MODELS

There is a need to incorporate alternative models to address financial gaps in health sector and to ensure mandatory health coverage for all to support the universal health coverage targets, said a report titled *COVID-19 Induced Healthcare Transformation in India*.

With a healthcare expenditure of 1.5 per cent of India's GDP in 2018-19, there is a need to increase the public health spending to 2.5-3.5 per cent to support the healthcare transformation, underlined the report.

The report has listed six thematic areas that require immediate deliberation and gives actionable recommendations, in view of need for greater investment in enhancing health outcomes and a strategic diversion of funds towards sustaining these outcomes.

The pandemic also paved way for India to demonstrate unprecedented resilience and dynamism in terms of system strengthening and rapid policy-making as well as unified efforts by all stakeholders, according to the report.



50 PER CENT RISE IN BREAST CANCER IN INDIA

In the last three years, there has been a 50 per cent rise in middle-aged women reporting cases of breast cancer in India. The estimates are based on OPD records by doctors, the Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals said in a statement.

"We have observed, in the last three years, that 50 per cent women reporting breast cancer and related manifestations have been between the age of 35-50 years," stated Dr Ramesh Sarin, senior consultant, Surgical Oncologist.

"With our hospital-based consultation data for breast cancer, it is found that 53 per cent of the reported cases are in the initial stages of cancer and 47 per cent in the advanced stages, by a total of 20 per cent in stage four and 27 per cent in stage three cancer," he added.

Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in women, and accounts for almost 30 per cent of the entire cancer burden reported among women. With limited awareness and hesitancy towards preventive diagnosis, one in every 20 women is diagnosed with this cancer.



MOLNUPIRAVIR MAY BE THE GAME CHANGER

Anti-viral drug Molnupiravir may emerge as the game changer in the fight against Covid-19 as studies suggest it can reduce the risk of hospitalisation or death in newly-diagnosed patients, an expert says.

Distinguished cardiologist and health systems expert, Dr Krishna Reddy Nallamalla, believes that Molnupiravir as an effective oral drug for treatment of Covid-19 assumes significance as cases are still being reported despite vaccination.

"Molnupiravir was earlier developed as an oral drug against influenza. It is also an analogue of ribonucleic acids, similar to Remdesivir. In a preprint of June, virus isolation was noted in 1.6 per cent of those patients receiving Molnupiravir, compared to 16.7 per cent of those receiving a placebo on day three, and zero per cent and 11.1 per cent, respectively, on day five," Reddy explains.



ARTHRITIS COULD AFFECT GIRLS MORE

While arthritis is not uncommon in children as everyone thinks, it affects girls more than boys, health experts said on Thursday.

Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune and inflammatory disease, which means that the disease is caused when the body's immune system attacks healthy cells by mistake. When this condition affects children, it is known as juvenile rheumatoid arthritis or juvenile idiopathic arthritis. Children suffer from joint pain, swelling, limited joint movement, and early morning stiffness lasting more than 15 minutes.

"It is the most common pediatric rheumatological disorder and affects about an estimated 350,000 to 1.3 million children in India," stated Dr Sanjeev Kapoor, senior consultant, Rheumatology, at the Indian Spinal Injuries Centre.



IT WAS NOT THE EASIEST TARGETS TO CHASE BUT ONCE BATSMEN ARE SET, ANY TARGET CAN BE CHASED

— DASUN SHANAKA, SRI LANKA CAPTAIN

India lose to Pak for first time in WC

PTI ■ DUBAI

A supremely stylish Babar Azam broke a 29-year-old jinx by guiding Pakistan to an emphatic 10-wicket victory over India in the ICC T20 World Cup here on Sunday, their first in 13 attempts against the bitter arch-rivals at a global event. The law of averages had to catch up with India sooner or later after having won seven ODI and five T20 World Cup games since they first met at Sydney in 1992.

It was also a day when Virat Kohli scored a half-century but was pale in comparison of Babar (68 not out off 52 balls), who looked regal in attack, elegant in defence and composed in a chase of 152, which was achieved in 17.5 overs. Worse, India haven't ever lost a T20 International by 10 wickets and Pakistan won by such a margin for the first time, and what an occasion to achieve the feat.

Babar had the exuberance of Mohammed Rizwan (79 not out off 55 balls) to match his



cool quotient as Pakistan, not for once during the entire match, looked like imploding.

In between them, they hit 12 boundaries and five sixes to make it a 'Super Sunday' for

Pakistan.

On the day, there was only one team that could have won

and that was Pakistan, who were better on a man-to-man comparison with each Indian player.

It started with the captains. On a track where Kohli struggled, Babar just effortlessly found the gaps and when required, hit those sixes as release shots. If India lost three wickets in power play, Pakistan literally humiliated their rivals with an opening stand, which will be billed as one of the best in this format for years to come. If Shaheen Shah Afridi was a rockstar with his searing pace and incisive swing, his new-ball counterpart Bhuvneshwar Kumar bowled at early to mid 120 kmph with no swing at all.

If Pakistan's spin troika of left-armner Imad Wasim (0/10 in 2 overs), leg-spinner Shadab Khan (1/25 in 4 overs) and off-spinner Mohammed Hafeez (0/10 in 2 overs) gave only 47 runs in their eight overs together, Varun Chakravarthy (0/33 in 4 overs) didn't have any 'mystery' about him as he and Ravindra Jadeja (0/28 in 4

overs) gave away 61 runs.

If there was one team that felt the pressure it was India as Babar seemed like a man who was sitting in that Indian dressing room that had no control over the proceedings.

In the chase, Pakistan looked in complete control and Bhuvneshwar's lack of pace and non-existent swing made it easy for Rizwan to effortlessly cart him over square leg for a six. Skipper Babar was also elegant as he punched Mohammed Shami off the back-foot and rocked back to pull Jadeja over deep mid-wicket for a six.

The 50 came in the 8th over and before India realised, the duo had taken the game away by posting the highest ever opening stand against India in T20 internationals.

When India batted, Kohli got support from Rishabh Pant (39 off 30 balls) during a 53-run stand but had to do the bulk of heavy lifting in a pressure cooker scenario, something he has been accustomed to for the past one decade.

► Scoreboard

BANGLADESH (BATTING)	SRI LANKA (BOWLING)
Mohammad Naim (62)	Chamika Karunaratne 3 (12, 1 wkt)
Mushfiqur Rahim (57)	Binura Fernando 3 (27, 1 wkt)
Liton Das (16)	Lahiru Kumara 4 (29, 1 wkt)
Total 171 (4 wickets, 20 overs)	

SRI LANKA (BATTING)	BANGLADESH (BOWLING)
Charith Asalanka (80)	Shakib Al Hasan 3 (17, 2wkt)
Bhanuka Rajapaksa (53)	Nasum Ahmed 2.5 (29, 2wkt)
Pathum Nissanka (24)	Mohammad Saifuddin 3 (38, 1wkt)
Total 172 (5 wickets, 18.5 overs)	

► Scoreboard

INDIA (BATTING)	PAKISTAN (BOWLING)
Virat Kohli (57)	Shaheen Afridi 4 (31, 3wkt)
Rishabh Pant (39)	Hasan Ali 4 (44, 2wkt)
Ravindra Jadeja (13)	Shadab Khan 4 (22, 1wkt)
Total 151 (7 wickets, 20 overs)	

PAKISTAN (BATTING)	INDIA (BOWLING)
Mohammad Rizwan (79)	Jasprit Bumrah 3 (22, 0wkt)
Babar Azam (68)	Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4 (25, 0wkt)
	Ravindra Jadeja 4 (28, 0wkt)
Total 152 (10 wickets, 17.5 overs)	

► points table

Team	Matches	NRR	Points
England	1	+3.970	2
Sri Lanka	1	+0.583	2
Australia	1	+0.253	2
South Africa	1	-0.253	0
Bangladesh	1	-0.583	0
West Indies	1	-3.970	0

Team	Matches	NRR	Points
Pakistan	1	+0.973	2
Afghanistan	0	+0.000	0
Namibia	0	+0.000	0
New Zealand	0	+0.000	0
Scotland	0	+0.000	0
India	1	-0.973	0

Shakib becomes T20 World Cup's highest wicket-taker



PTI ■ SHARJAH

Bangladesh's premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan on Sunday became the leading wicket-taker in the history of T20 World Cups, surpassing former Pakistan skipper Shahid Afridi when he dismissed Sri Lanka's Pathum Nissanka during their Super 12 match here.

Shakib entered the game with 39 wickets in 28 matches.

Having produced a match-winning spell (4/9) against Oman in the preliminaries, Shakib, one of the world's leading all-rounders, found himself among the wickets in the teams' first Super 12 game, against Sri

Lanka.

Afridi picked 39 wickets in 34 matches.

Shakib went past Afridi's record when he used his vast experience to get the better of Nissanka with a flighted delivery.

Two balls later, Shakib bowled Avishka Fernando for his 41st wicket in the tournament.

With Bangladesh having made the Super 12s and guaranteed to play at least five matches, it was only a matter of time before the left-arm spinner bettered Afridi's record.

Shakib is also the current highest wicket-taker in T20Is.



Match 17 ICC T20 WORLD CUP 2021			
Oct 25, 7:30 pm IST			
	Scotland vs		
Afghanistan			
Sharjah Cricket Stadium			
ICC Rank			ICC Rank
8			14
Head-to-Head in T20s			
Scotland	6	Played	6
	0	Won	6
	6	Lost	0
173		Highest Total	210/5
In T20 World Cup			
1	Played	1	
	Won	1	
	Lost	0	
156/5		Highest Total	170/5
KBK SportsGraphics			

Asalanka's unbeaten win against B'desh

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Young left-hander Charith Asalanka smashed an unbeaten 80 off 49 balls while fellow southpaw Bhanuka Rajapaksa made a quickfire half-century as Sri Lanka beat Bangladesh by five wickets in their T20 World Cup Super 12 Group 1 match here on Sunday.

Sri Lanka suffered a mid-innings mini batting collapse but recovered in time to chase down the target of 172 with seven balls to spare, thanks to brilliant half centuries from Asalanka and Rajapaksa (53 off 31 balls) with the duo stitching 86 runs in quick time for the fifth wicket in jus 8.4 overs.

The 24-year-old Asalanka, who has played just eight ODIs and four T20Is before Sunday's match, held the Sri Lanka innings together, hitting five

four and as many sixes in his entertaining unbeaten knock.

Coming in the 10th over, the 30-year-old Rajapaksa smashed three fours and as many sixes in his 31-ball innings as Sri Lanka reached 172 for 5 in 18.5 overs.

However Bangladesh would certainly be disappointed with their shoddy outfielding as Litton Das dropped regulation catches of both Rajapaksa and Asalanka denying his team a shot at victory.

Bangladesh got the breakthrough with the fourth delivery itself as left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed got rid of opener Kusal Perera (1) who failed to read a flatter and quicker delivery and was clean bowled.

Despite the early jolt, Sri Lanka were on the ascendancy with Asalanka getting the

boundaries with ease. He hoisted Nasum for two sixes in the third over and then punished Mahedi Hasan for another maximum to take Sri Lanka to 54 for 1 at the end of powerplay.

But Shakib Al Hasan triggered a mini batting collapse with two wickets — that of Pathum Nissanka (24) and Avishka Fernando (0) — in four balls.

Mohammad Saifuddin then dismissed Wanindu Hasaranga (6) as Sri Lanka lost three wickets in 10 balls for the addition of nine runs.

Sri Lanka were 80 for 4 at the halfway mark and set-batter Asalanka, who reached to his fifty off 32 balls, kept them in the hunt. He was going great guns by hoisting Mahmudullah for two sixes in the 14th over.

Sri Lanka needed 46 from

the final five overs but Asalanka and new batsman Rajapaksa decisively titled the balance of the game in their favour. Rajapaksa smacked three sixes in a sensational show of batting pyrotechnics in the 16th over bowled by Saifuddin from which Sri Lanka took 22 runs.

Earlier, opener Mohammad Naim and Mushfiqur Rahim cracked impressive half centuries to steer Bangladesh to a competitive 171 for four.

Joining forces in the eighth over when their side was struggling at 56 for two, Naim and Rahim stitched a quick 73-run stand in 8.3 overs to keep the momentum going.

Naim hit six boundaries in his 52-ball 62-run knock while Rahim remained unbeaten on 57 from 37 balls with the help of five fours and two sixes.



Chelsea, Man City win big without playing a striker in EPL

AP ■ LONDON

Chelsea and Manchester City didn't field a recognized striker between them for their Premier League games.

It didn't stop them combining for 11 goals in ominous displays by the two title contenders.

Missing injured strikers Romelu Lukaku and Timo Werner, Chelsea still powered to its biggest win of the season — 7-0 against Norwich — with playmaker Mason Mount scoring a hat trick.

City doesn't have an out-and-out striker in its squad after failing to sign a like-for-like replacement for Sergio Aguero in the offseason but that isn't stopping the champions scoring freely this season.

A 4-1 victory at Brighton, secured mainly

thanks to two goals by Phil Foden, followed a 5-1 win at Club Brugge mid-week in the Champions League. It was the sixth time in 14 games in all competitions that City has scored three or more goals.

Chelsea will spend another week leading the league — it is two points ahead of City and four clear of Liverpool, whose game in hand is at Manchester United on Sunday — and the strength in depth in the squad should ensure Thomas Tuchel's team maintains a title challenge this season.

There have been 16 different scorers for Chelsea in all competitions this season, with Callum Hudson-Odoi, Reece James and Ben Chilwell also netting against last-place Norwich alongside Mount's first Premier League hat trick.



OTHER SPORTS

Harmanpreet stars in Melbourne Renegades' win

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

India's T20 skipper Harmanpreet Kaur dished out an all-round performance to guide Melbourne Renegades to a comfortable seven-wicket win over Sydney Sixers in the Women's Big Bash league on Sunday.

The 32-year-old took two wickets for 17 runs in her four overs to restrict Sydney Sixers to 118 for 4 and then blasted an unbeaten 35 off 29 balls, studded with one four and two sixes, to script a successful chase in 17 overs.

Harmanpreet, who had recently returned to action after recovering from a shoulder injury, was adjudged the player of the match.

Young Shafali Verma, however, had a disappointing day as she



was dismissed for a golden duck by Melbourne skipper Sophie Molineux (1/18).

Shafali's teammate in Sydney Sixers Radha Yadav had a decent outing as she scalped one wicket for 12 runs in two overs but wasn't enough to stop the Renegades. Yadav also took a sharp

return catch to dismiss Courtney Webb (23).

In another match, Poonam Yadav endured a tough time as she bled 19 runs for no wicket in her 2 overs but her team Brisbane Heat won the match by 5 runs over Adelaide Strikers in a rain-hit game.

Vardhan, Balu qualify for main draw of tennis Nationals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former champion Vishnu Vardhan and Sharmada Balu recorded easy wins over their respective opponents to qualify for the men's and women's singles main draws of the Fenesta national hard court tennis championships, here on Sunday.

Vishnu foiled the bid of talented Ajay Malik 6-2 6-1 while Sharmada Balu beat Kiran Kalkal 6-1 6-2 in her match.

"It was a good match, I am very happy with the way I played. I think in the last three matches, this is the best I have played. Court 1 is my favourite here at the DLTA. I am indeed happy to be playing the Fenesta Open again, in the main draw," said Vishnu.

Also making it to the men's singles main draw were Parikshit Somnani and big-hitting Siddharth Vishwakarma.

Parikshit outplayed Jagmeet Singh 6-3, 6-2 while Lucknow's Siddharth got the better of Lohith Aksha Bathrinath 6-2 6-4.



Vishwakarma said he was taking it step by step.

"It was a good game. I was a bit nervous as I started playing after a long time," he said.

In other final round qualifying matches, Shruti Ahlawat beat Anjali Rathi 6-2, 6-1 while Sudipta Sen beat Ishwari Anant 6-3, 6-0.

Farhat Aleen Qamar won 6-3 6-3 against Sonashe Bhatnagar while Sehali Arora beat Radhika Yadav 6-4, 6-0.

"I struggled a bit in the beginning but was able to pull through. Overall, I am happy with my wins over the last two days and am in the main draw," said Sharmada Balu.