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PORNOGRAPHY IS THE
THEORY, RAPE PRACTICE

WORLD 8
WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH MEMBER
STATES ON AF ISSUE: CHINA

SPORT 12
INDIA'S ODI TOUR OF NZ
POSTPONED TO 2022

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Late City Vol. 17 Issue 254
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

BHUBANESWAR, FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 17, 2021; PAGES 12 & 4

the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

CRITICISM IS
VALID AT TIMES:
JACQUELINE
10 VIVACITY



Mega bid to bail out ailing banks

Govt clears ₹36,000 cr to solve bad loans, plans speedy disposal of stressed assets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after imitating a major reform in the telecom sector, the Government on Thursday came out with a ₹36,000 crore package for acquiring stressed loan assets, paving the way for operationalisation of the bad bank. This will help ailing banks such as Yes bank.

While shares of Yes bank spiked by 16 per cent in stock market, Vodafone idea surged by 26 per cent on the back of the Wednesday announcement of relief measures for the telecom sectors.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that ₹30,600 crore Government guarantee for the National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited (NARCL) would be for a period of 5 years. The NARCL would have to pay a fee for this.

The NARCL will purchase bad loans from banks under a 15:85 structure, where it will pay up to 15 per cent of the net asset value in cash and issue Security Receipts (SRs) for the rest. The Government guarantee would be invoked if there is loss against the threshold value.

The NARCL has been incorporated under the Companies Act and has applied to Reserve Bank of India for license as an Asset Reconstruction Company. PSBs will maintain 51 per cent ownership in the NARCL.

The decision to provide



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during a Press conference at NMC in New Delhi on Thursday

sovereign guarantee for security receipts (SRs) issued by the NARCL was taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday. The FM in Budget 2021-22 announced setting up of a bad bank as part of resolution of bad loans

worth ₹2 lakh crore. The NARCL will pay up to 15 per cent of the agreed value for the loans in cash and the remaining 85 per cent would be Government-guaranteed security receipts. The Government guarantee would be invoked if there is loss against the thresh-



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- It will incentivise quicker action on resolving stressed assets thereby helping in better value realisation. India Debt Resolution Company Limited (IDRCL) will engage market expertise for value enhancement. This approach will also permit freeing up of personnel in banks to focus on increasing business and credit growth, the FM said

old value. "For the SRs to hold on and to have their value intact, there is a need for the Government to give the backstop arrangement and that's why ₹30,600 crore has been cleared by the Cabinet yesterday," she said.

"The SRs are getting the backstop through the Government funding only in as much as to pay the gap between the realised value (resolution/liquidation) and

face value of SRs and this will hold good for five years," Sitharaman said. The fee for the guarantee would be initially 0.25 per cent, which would progressively increase to 0.5 per cent in case of delay in resolution of bad loans, Financial Services Secretary Debasish Panda said. This would enable speedy disposal of stressed assets and clean up banks' balance sheets for further lending, he explained.

Madras HC stays IT rule clauses for media's freedom

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The Madras High Court on Thursday stayed the operation of certain sub-clauses of the recently introduced Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, holding there was prima facie substance in the petitioners' contention that a control mechanism would rob the media of its independence and democratic principles. Incidentally, the Bombay High Court had last month pronounced similar order on a related case.

The sub-clauses — (1) and (3) of Rule 9, which were stayed on Thursday, stipulated the adherence to the Code of Ethics. They were inserted to the original IT Rules in February this year.

The first bench of Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice PD Audikesavalu granted the stay while passing interim orders on a batch of PILs from carnatic musician TM Krishna and Digital News Publishers Association, consisting of 13 media outlets and another individual, challenging the constitutional validity of the new rules.

Prima facie, there is substance in the contention of the petitioners that the mechanism to control the media by Government may rob the



media, both print and electronic, of their independence and the democratic principles, the bench said. The court adjourned the matter to the last week of October, when it was informed that similar cases pending before the Supreme Court are scheduled to come up for hearing in the first week of next month.

The Bombay High Court, while granting the interim stay in August, had held that "disent" was vital for democracy. Sub-clauses 1 and 3 of clause 9 of the new Rules were, on the face of it, "manifestly unreasonable" and "the indeterminate and wide terms of the Rules bring about a chilling effect qua (regarding) the right of freedom of speech and expression of writers/editors/publishers" as they can be hauled up for anything if the authorities so wish, it had then said.

CAPSULE

INDIAN'S ABDUCTION IN AF: GOVT IN TOUCH

New Delhi: India on Thursday said it is in touch with all concerned following reports that an Indian national has been kidnapped from Kabul. According to reports, Bansri Lal Arendeh was kidnapped at gunpoint on Tuesday in the Afghan capital city.

DELHI: HIGHEST RAINFALL THIS MONSOON SINCE 1964



New Delhi: The monsoon this year has dumped a bounteous 1159.4 mm of rainfall in Delhi till Thursday afternoon, the highest since 1964 and the third-highest since the data has been maintained by the India Meteorological Department (IMD). Delhi's September rainfall has breached the 400 mm mark. At 403 mm till Thursday afternoon, it is the maximum rainfall recorded in the month since 417.3 mm in September 1944.

DELHI TO MUMBAI IN 12 HOURS VIA EXPRESSWAY

New Delhi: Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said the 1,380-km eight-lane Delhi-Mumbai Expressway — passing through Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat — will reduce travel time between the cities to 12-12.5 hours. Gadkari also announced a six-hour drive on the Delhi-Katra expressway in two years.

HC lifts stay on Char Dham Yatra with conditions

PNS ■ NAINITAL

The Uttarakhand High Court has lifted the stay it had ordered earlier on the Char Dham Yatra in the State. It has allowed the Government to facilitate the pilgrimage while also putting a cap on the number of pilgrims allowed to visit the shrines on a daily basis in view of the Covid-19 situation.

Hearing on the petition while considering the affidavit submitted by the State Government, the division bench of Chief Justice RS Chauhan and Justice Alok Kumar Verma directed the State Government to consider specific aspects before facilitating the Char Dham Yatra. The court has permitted 800 pilgrims to visit Kedarnath per day, 1,000 in Badrinath, 600 in Gangotri and 400 in Yamunotri per day. The pilgrims should either have an RT-PCR negative report or a double vaccination certificate.

Centre reinstates NCLAT chairman after SC warning

Justice Cheema to hold post till Mon; he was prematurely retired

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre and the Supreme Court literally went for a showdown on Thursday on the issue of appointment to various tribunals and premature retirement of NCLAT chairman Justice Ashok Iqbal Singh Cheema.

The Centre climbed down after Chief Justice of India NV Ramana warned Attorney General KK Venugopal that the court would quash the new Act regarding appointments to various tribunals. Facing the Supreme Court's ire, the Centre

said Justice Cheema would continue as NCLAT chairman till September 20.

The hearing reached a point when the bench headed by the Chief Justice warned the Centre that it would exercise its suo motu power to stay the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021, which was referred to by Attorney General K K Venugopal as empowering statute to retire the NCLAT head.

Justice Cheema, the former Chairperson of National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), was to superannuate on September 20, but Justice M Venugopal was appointed as the acting head of the tribunal with effect from September 11, creating a peculiar situation.

PM inaugurates Def Ministry buildings under Vista project

Ease of living, doing biz reasons for Central Vista project: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday inaugurated the new Defence Ministry buildings, which is a part of the Central Vista project, and slammed its critics saying ease of living and doing business is the main objective to undertake this initiative.

Making this assertion after inaugurating the two new multi-storey swanky office complexes at Kasturba Gandhi Marg and Africa Avenue, he also said those opposing the project never bothered to find out about the working condition of the armed forces personnel and others in the old buildings and hutments.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the inauguration of the Defence Offices Complex in New Delhi on Thursday

"Today, in the 75th year of Independence, we are taking another step towards developing the national Capital according to the needs and aspirations of the new India," he said. The two buildings will house more than 7,000

employees of the Defence Ministry and the armed forces. Modi said these new office complexes are going to "further strengthen our efforts to make the working of our forces more convenient and effective."

All 24 new faces in Guj CM's Cabinet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 24 "brand new" Ministers under Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel took oath at Raj Bhavan in Gandhinagar on Thursday. None of the Ministers from Vijay Rupani Cabinet got a berth in the Ministry.

This is for the first time that such an experiment has taken place in the Indian politics in the Government formation. The induction of all-new Ministers under the new Chief Minister shows a new approach by the BJP top leadership to tackle the anti-incumbency burden in the home State of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had surprised many by suddenly hand-picking a new Gujarat Chief Minister a year before State Assembly polls, congratulated all those who have taken oath as Ministers in the Gujarat



Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel with newly sworn-in Cabinet Ministers at their oath ceremony in Gandhinagar on Thursday

Government. "Congratulations to all party colleagues who have taken oath as Ministers in the Gujarat Government," Modi said in a tweet.

HC reserves verdict on idol height row

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Orissa High Court on Thursday completed hearing on a writ petition challenging the idol height restrictions of the State Government and reserved its verdict, which is likely to be pronounced on Friday. A Division Bench headed by Chief Justice S Muralidhar heard the petition.

Meanwhile, the Mahanagar Puja Committee and the Cuttack CityPeace Committee, which have written letters to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to have a relook at the restrictions, decided to wait for Friday to chalk out their next courses of action. The Government, in view of the pandemic, has restricted the height of the



idols to four feet. The Government has also ordered to have the puja rituals performed under the curtains at the mandaps.

BJD leader and Mahanagar Puja Committee secretary Pravat Tripathy said the committee has already urged the Chief Minister to reconsider the restrictions. Local MP and senior BJD leader Bhartruhari Mahtab said the puja committees should wait for the Chief Minister's decision.

Hirakud close to maximum water level

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

With the water level in the Hirakud Dam reservoir getting close to its maximum level of 630 feet, the dam authorities are in extraordinary alert to prevent floods downstream.

The incessant rains have posed a threat to the reservoir as it can't hold water beyond this point. So, the authorities have been compelled to open 28 sluice gates with an average outflow of 4.87 lakh cusecs of water to bring down the level as far as possible even as a forecast of another low pressure and further rains add to their worries. "The situation is not that much serious now as the coming low pressure will not be as active as the present one. At



the same time, the flow of water downstream is under control now," said Hirakud Dam Project Chief Engineer Anand Chandra Sahu. "We will do our best to control the floods and maintain the water level as per capacity," he said, adding that the inflow from upstream is decreasing gradually which is good news. "Now, we have kept the inflow and outflow almost the same and there is sufficient space for more water to preserve," Sahu informed and hoped that there would be no major flood threat.

Low to medium floods likely in State: Govt

9 killed due to rains; NDRF, ODRAF teams deployed

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Pradeep Kumar Jena on Thursday said low to medium floods in the Mahanadi system are expected as the upper catchment areas in Chhattisgarh have been receiving heavy rains due to the depression which crossed Odisha on Tuesday.

As per the information of the Water Resources Department, 8 lakh cusecs of water is expected to flow through Mundali barrage of Mahanadi between morning and noon on Saturday. The peak flow would pass through Kendrapada and Puri districts on Saturday evening and night. "We have alerted the district



administrations," the SRC said. "The floods will not have any major impact if embankments are strong enough. Officials have been asked to keep a close vigil and patrolling has already started," Jena said.

He further informed that as precautionary measures, 30 ODRAF teams, 12 NDRF teams and 10 Fire Services teams have been mobilised to Baleswar, Bhadrak, Kendrapada, Jajpur, Cuttack and Puri. "We also appeal to people living in riverside villages and near embankments to help the administration," Jena said. Sharing the latest data regarding human casualties

during the rains, he said nine persons have died, three in Kendrapada district, two in Jajpur and one each in Khordha, Ganjam, Keonjhar and Subarnarekha.

Incessant rains in the upper catchment of Hirakud Dam and heavy inflow of water into the reservoir have triggered flood fear among the residents of Sambalpur town also. In the Mahanadi system, 6.38 lakh cusecs of water was flowing at Khairmal while its volume was 4.64 lakh cusecs at Barmul and 5.96 lakh cusecs at Mundali near Cuttack, officials said. Water Resources Department officials have been

monitoring the water levels of the Mahanadi and its tributaries including Brahmani, Baitarani and Subarnarekha.

Floods in Jajpur district causing large-scale devastation in Dasarathpur, Korei, Bari, Binjharpur and Dharmasala blocks and thousands of people have been affected. In Kendrapada district, hundreds of villages have been affected due to rains and floods in the Brahmani river system. Three road beaches have occurred disrupting communication. In several villages, floodwaters are flowing above three feet high.

Odisha a lead State in RIDF utilisation: NABARD

Bank urged to enhance assistance to ₹10,000 cr

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha is a lead State in cent percent utilisation of the Rural Infrastructure Development Funds (RIDF), said NABARD Chairman Dr GR Chintala during an interactive session between the State Government and the NABARD held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary SC Mahaptra here on Thursday wherein Development Commissioner Pradeep Jena outlined the issues for discussion. Dr Chintala added, "Odisha grew to a place of big industrial and



business activities during the last decade." The Chief Secretary said, "Odisha has achieved the highest poverty reduction of 24 per cent in last decade resulting in liberation of around 8 million people from poverty net."

He added that the State became No. 1 in investment implementation rate as per an ASSOCHAM-2017 report. Odisha is now one among the

three top investment destinations in the country. Hundred per cent of the villages have been electrified.

The NABARD was urged to enhance its loan assistance to the State to a total of Rs 10,000 crore under different schemes like RIDF, Rural Infrastructure Assistance to States (RIAS), Long-term Irrigation Fund (LITF), financial inclusion, diary entrepreneurship development, agricultural marketing infrastructure.

In his response, Dr Chintala said, "As State has a strongly-motivated administrative machinery and a robust mechanism for project implementation, NABARD will do best in enhancing its involvement with State." The NABARD has enhanced its RIDF loan from around ₹2,500 crore in 2016-17 to ₹3,000 crore in current financial year.

'Spread Gandhi, Gopabandhu ideals'

Niranjan asks Sevadal workers

BHUBANESWAR: The third death anniversary of eminent Gandhian leader Dolagobinda Pradhan was held at the Congress Bhawan here on Thursday under the chairmanship of Odisha Sevadal chief Aryakumar Jnanendra. Inaugurating the programme, PCC president Niranjan Patnaik said the real tribute to

Pradhan lies with the spread of ideologies of Gandhi and Gopabandhu through the nook and corner of the State. He said Pradhan was a politician of honesty and principle and his book 'Gandhi Katha' is appreciated by one and all.

On the occasion, Patnaik felicitated 20 Sevadal workers, including Basudev Parida, Rabindra Kumar Devsharma, former MLA Chinmay Behura and former Minister Parama Pujari for their lifelong contributions to the Congress.



Student Parliament Tabrez elected State coordinator



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Tabrez Khan has been reelected as the State coordinator of the Indian Student Parliament. Tabrez is also the State secretary of the Biju Chhatra Janata Dal. He had represented the State at the national convention of the Indian Students Parliament held in New Delhi in 2020. He has thanked Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, State Organisational secretary Pranab Prakash Das, Rajya Sabha member Muna Khan, MLAs Byomkesh Ray, Pranab Kumar Balabantaray, Devi Ranjan Tripathy and Minister Pratap Jena for his position.

'Ensure 27% reservation for OBC' Samajwadi Party requests State Commission

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Samajwadi Party (SP) on Wednesday submitted a memorandum to the Odisha State Commission for Backward Classes for 27 per cent reservation of seats in education and Government jobs for Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

The memorandum said the Government of India has implemented 27 per cent job reservation for OBCs from August 7, 1990 in its offices and undertakings. Odisha implemented 27 per cent job reservation since 1994, but subsequently it has been reduced to 11.25 per cent as the SC & ST populations of the State get 38.75 per cent job reservation. SP State president Rabi Behera

said that as the State is going to fill up 1.31 lakh vacant Government posts, the reservation should be strictly implemented for the benefit of OBC students.

The party urged the commission to give direction to the State Government for strict implementation of reservation for OBCs in the admission in the State-run colleges and universities including medical, engineering and postgraduate institutions.

"If 27 per cent reservation for OBC students is not legally feasible then 11.25 per cent reservation in admission can be given to the OBC students from this admission session," Behera said. He also urged the commission to start a caste census in the State.

14 police posts for immigration check at Dhamra

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday approved posts for 14 new police personnel, including two Inspectors, eight Sub-Inspectors and four Constables, to be stationed at the Dhamra Port for immigration purposes. They would be appointed to the Immigration Check Post (ICP) at the Dhamra Port.

The State Government has created the new posts to take over the immigration functions after the declaration of the ICP at the port by the Government of India. Earlier the port authorities had requested the Government on May 6 for setting up the ICP. A similar request from the Gopalpur Port authorities has also been pending since February 8, 1996. A large number of foreign ships having foreign crews have been coming to these ports.

Engineer held taking ₹50K bribe

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Vigilance police on Thursday caught Iswar Das, Assistant Engineer (Electrical), Aska Lift Irrigation Sub-Division in Ganjam district, red-handed while accepting a bribe of Rs 50,000.

Das had demanded the bribe from a complainant for check measurement of his bill regarding construction of a river lift irrigation point located at Kotokola-IV Lift Irrigation Project under Buguda block in the district.

Following the trap, simultaneous searches were conducted on the rented residential house at Brahmapur and office chamber of Das at Aska and his house at native village Brundabanchandrapur Sasan in Kabisuryanagar of Ganjam district. Later, the accused was arrested and forwarded to court.

Withdraw RTO checking on NHs, says Govt

But Transport Dept raises questions

SAROJ MISHRA

BHUBANESWAR: Even as road accidents are on the increase in the State and casualties are on the upswing, two separate orders by the Transport Department have raised many questions on the functioning of the department and coordination among the top officials. While one order was issued by the Transport Commissioner, another has been issued by the Commerce and Transport Secretary.

In his order on September 3, the Transport Commissioner allotted specific slots (shifts) for conducting enforcement checking on National Highway-16 to the concerned RTOs. Accordingly, the checking was carried out. But the Transport and Commerce Department in a letter (7906/T, dated Bhubaneswar the 13.09.2021) on September 16

to the Transport Commissioner said, It has come to the notice that, specific slots (shift of checking) for conducting enforcement checking on National Highway-16 has been allotted to the concerned RTOs. Even some slots have been allotted to RTOs for checking during night hours.

Such allotment of slots defeats the very purpose of enforcement as the surprise element is lost. It is a fact that, more than 40 per cent of accidents and fatalities occur on NHs and especially NH-16 is a vulnerable stretch of road having a huge number of Black Spots with high vehicular flow.

The Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety have expressed their concern for growth in fatalities in the State over the years and specifically instructed to intensify enforcement on the NHs. "It is not understood why time slots (shift for checking) have been allotted to RTOs for conducting enforcement on NH-16. I

am directed to request you to intimate the reason for allotment of timeslot for enforcement and take immediate steps to withdraw the order."

"The issuing of two orders shows that there is no coordination among the top transport officials. Already the police are carrying out patrolling on the NHs as per the State Government orders and more than Rs 10 crore has been spent on it. If multiple agencies are involved and checking is

carried out at a number of places it would affect smooth communications on the NHs and ultimately people would be affected," said, All India Anti-Corruption Organisation State convener Subrat Nanda.

Besides, the rules are changing frequently with the change of guard in the department. There is no consistency. This is leading to chaos. But the Transport Secretary has taken the right decision, added Nanda.



Congress to support Sept 27 Bharat Bandh

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha unit of the Congress would support the Bharat Bandh call given by farmers' associations on September 27, informed Pradesh Congress Committee president Niranjan Patnaik on Thursday.

A decision in this regard has been taken at a meeting of various party leaders at the Congress Bhawan here on Wednesday.

Leaders of CPI, RJD, Samajwadi Party and NCP were present at the meeting. Notably, the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) has given a call for a complete Bharat Bandh in protest against the three con-

tentious farm laws. Patnaik further informed that the Congress would stage a dharna at Master Canteen Square here on September 23 over the State Government's lack of adequate response to the flood situation and the power tariff hike in the State.

The CPI(ML) Liberation also announced its support to the Bharat Bandh. The party said that as the Modi-led Central Government is blindly selling public properties to corporate houses at throw-away prices and bringing anti-people policies like three agricultural laws, labour codes and energy Bill, it's high time people from cross sections came to street and protest these moves.

State logs 580 new Covid cases, 4 deaths

77 more children among infected

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State registered 580 new Covid-19 cases in 22 districts and the State pool on Thursday, with which the total caseload increased to 10,18,298. Among the fresh cases were 77 children in the age group of 0 to 18 years.

On Wednesday, 457 positive cases had been detected in the State. In the last 24 hours, 60,722 samples were tested and the test positivity rate (TPR) was 0.95 per cent. The active cases stood at 5,963. Khordha district reported the day's highest 261 infections fol-

lowed by Cuttack with 87, Jajpur 29, Puri 18, Baleswar 17, Jagatsinghpur 13, Jharsuguda 11 and Kendrapada and Sundargarh 10 each.

The districts recording below-10 cases were Dhenkanal nine, Bargarh eight, Mayurbhanj, Nayagarh, Bhadrak seven each, Rayagada, Sambalpur six, Angul six, Koraput four, Deogarh two

and Keonjhar, Subarnapur and Malkangiri one each. Besides, 59 cases were reported from the State pool. Four more persons succumbed to the disease in last 24 hours, pushing the total death toll to 8,118. Cuttack district reported two deaths and Jajpur and Jagatsinghpur one each. So far, 10,04,164 patients have recovered from the disease in the State.

BBSR adds 213 new infections

BHUBANESWAR: Bhubaneswar on Thursday registered 213 Covid-19 cases. With this, the total tally in the State capital city increased to 1,10,186. Notably on Wednesday, 182 cases had been detected in the city. Out of the new cases, 167 were local contacts and 46 from quarantine. The active cases stood at 3,573. So far, 1,013 persons have succumbed to disease in city. However, 160 more patients recovered from the disease, increasing the total recoveries to 1,05, 579.

'Kidnapped' delivery boy brought back

Grilled by cops along with girlfriend

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Swiggy delivery boy Pratik Prusty had cooked up the kidnapping drama to elope with the girl with whom he was allegedly in a relationship.

Prusty along with the girl were tracked down at Katia railway station in Madhya Pradesh where Railway Protection Force (RPF) detained them on basis of information of Commissionerate police.

Notably, Prusty's wife and family members had filed an FIR with police on September 12 alleging his kidnapping by some miscreants from near Daya river road in the Lingpur area, on the outskirts of the

city. Prusty had sent a voice message to his wife at around 9 pm on September 11 about his kidnapping by some drunk youths. He lives with his wife and family at Nuagaon Bijayvihar area in a rented

accommodation. Following complaint, police launched a search operation and recovered his slippers, bag and knife from the roadside near the spot informed by Prusty in the voice message.



Swain presents book on Similipal to Naveen

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Lokayukta Member Dr LDebabrata Swain on Thursday met Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at the Naveen Niwas and presented him a copy of the book 'Secrets of Similipal: A Wonderland of Elephants and Melanistic Tigers' written by him. The Chief Minister, who has written a foreword for book, appreciated efforts of author for highlighting Similipal and its biodiversity. The book has many fascinating features of floral and faunal diversity of Similipal and would be useful for forest managers, researchers, scholars and nature lovers.

SOCIAL CANVAS

Review PVTG micro projects' efficacy in Odisha

Despite years of their implementation, not much development has taken place among primitive tribes



MANAS JENA

The makers of modern India wanted to build an inclusive society by minimising many forms of inequality across social groups and within communities through planned economic development. In order to address the development of the most vul-

nerable sections amongst marginalised sections such STs, the Central Government has implemented a slew of micro projects since 1975 for as many as 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) out of notified 700 ST communities in the country. The PVTGs are identified on the basis of stagnant/low population growth, low literacy, subsistence level of economic status and dependent on pre-agricultural level for livelihood. A majority of PVTGs are inhabitants of the Central India.

The largest number of communities in the country listed as STs and PVTGs are in State of Odisha. There are 62 tribes and among them 13 are PVTGs which include Chuktia Bhunnjia, Birhor, Bondo, Bidayi, Dangaria Kondha, Juanga, Kharia, Kutia Kandha, Langiasaura, Lodha, Mankidia, Paudi Bhuyan and Saura.

As per a State Government survey their population was about 90,000 in 2015 who were spread over 20 blocks of 12 districts. Though small in number, these PVTGs are with distinct culture, language and belief system but have been on the edge with low literacy, economic backwardness, isolation and distress condition.

There are as many as 17 micro projects started for the PVTGs between 1976 and 1995 and these schemes are still continuing with involvement of the Central and State Government, corporates, NGOs and international donors such as IFAD.

The State Government has taken a loan of Rs 312 from IFAD for its Rs 800 crore project for PVTGs empowerment and livelihood improvement. Recently, during the Covid pandemic the Government of Odisha has supported the

PVTG households with special Covid assistance, ration kit and labour assistance. There are a host of activities for education and economic development going on for a long time by the State department with support of the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA). There is a National Council for Tribal Welfare headed by the Prime Minister where the Chief Ministers having of 5th and 6th Scheduled areas in their States are members.

The Tribal Sub Plan has been implemented for last 40 years aiming to bridge gaps between the tribals and rest of the social groups. It is to bring larger socio-economic equality and building an egalitarian society but certainly not to appease the tribal community. They deserve all rights as fellow citizens and dignity as human beings.

The resources for tribal development comes from a host of sources which include special Central assistance to TSP, Articles 275(1), TSP component of the State and Central Governments ministries, institutional finance, CSR fund from corporate bodies, UNO, international agencies, District Mineral Foundation fund, OMBADC and CAMPA fund etc.

There are also a number of NGOs, religious bodies, private trusts and educational institutions engaged in tribal development for a long time. As per sources, the MoTA supports 200 NGOs with 300 projects. There are 38 Ministries and departments of the Central Government having Tribal Sub Plan component. The grant to the States under Article 275(1) of the Constitution of India is 100 per cent to States on the basis of the ST population of the State to the total tribal pop-

ulation of the country.

The micro projects in Odisha have almost completed about 30 years of its operation and no one knows how long they will go further, but in spite of spending a huge amount why the socio-economic indicators such as women literacy, child mortality rate, infant mortality rate, women with anaemia, children with sickle cell anaemia, student dropout rate etc do not improve is a moot question. The PVTGs are still below than other STs of the State and far below the State and national average and much below other social groups in all these indicators.

A majority of them have no basic amenities for life such as habitat rights, house, drinking water, sanitary facility and linking road to their hamlets. The vulnerable condition of PVTGs in Odisha has attracted national attention on the issues of

their extreme economic backwardness, malnutrition, diseases, hunger death, child labour, displacement due to mining and distress migration. There have been no sign of improvement in the standard of living and quality of life of these groups in spite of special projects and micro projects.

There may be examples of very insignificant success of a few individuals or households from among them but the socio-economic and educational status of the communities as a whole has not changed much at par with other social groups.

The approach of ongoing project model and cluster method must be relooked. In the changing condition slowly many of them are migrating from their homeland to outside in search of livelihood and mostly they get engaged in odd jobs, low paid works and join

in slums as scavengers and housemaids in the cities.

Unfortunately for a long time, they are being exhibited as museum materials in most vulgar and undignified manner in the State sponsored Adivasi exhibitions and Melas, wall paintings in the cities and decorated as statues in traffic islands.

It is decent to show a human beings—men, women and children—in such a fashion before others? How such exhibitions are going to help in building a positive image of such communities in public needs a pondering.

They struggle to cope with external changing conditions which are quite challenging for them. The fact is mostly non-tribal actors play a major role in the development of PVTGs of the State. The over domination of non-tribals persistently continue in all spheres.

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Nimantran restaurant in Sambapur heritage building opposed

NIMAI CHARAN SAHU ■ SAMBALPUR

The elite people of Sambalpur have strongly opposed the move to convert Rani Bakhri to a restaurant by the OTDC. "How can a heritage building be converted to a hotel?" many said here, venting their dissatisfaction before the local administration and the State Government. People from all walks of life met the Sambalpur Collector recently and submitted a memorandum addressing to the Chief Minister through him narrating the importance of the 400-year-old building. The building was constructed by King Baliar Singh for his daughter Jema Dei. But later, it remained unused and got dilapidated with a shabby look. But the State Department of Culture had renovated it and given to it a totally new look which was spectacular and even more beautiful than the original one. But, what worries people here now is the decision

of the Government to hand over it to the Tourism Department to open a restaurant 'Nimantran.' "This is nothing but a disgrace to a heritage building," said Bhakta Prasad Nanda, an educationist. "We welcome the decision of the State Government to open a restaurant in Sambalpur. But it could be opened somewhere else other than the Rani Bakhri," suggested Prangya Patnaik, a social activist cum academician. They suggested to utilise the age-old monument for a museum or an art gallery or a library. This will help people to connect with the culture and heritage of the land and revenue could also be generated from people who will come here, opined Prangya. But using it as a restaurant will defeat the very purpose of renovation and also bring in a lot of damages to it including spoiling the environment. The people here further demanded to declare the building a 'protected monument.'

No takers for Vishwakarma too; idol makers idle

ANIL DHIR ■ BHUBANESWAR

Lord Vishwakarma, the son of Lord Brahma, the chief architect of the world, is a divine craftsman who designed Dwarka, which is now submerged in the Arabian Sea, and the Maya Sabha for the Pandavas. The ancient cities of Indraprastha, Hastinapur and Lanka were designed by him. Another popular folklore related to him is that he sculpted the Jagannath Puri idols. He is also attributed to have designed and built several weapons for gods like Shiva's Trishul, Vishnu's Sudarshan Chakra, Ravana's Pushpak Vimana and Indra's Vajra (thunderbolt). While the god of architecture is worshipped all over India, it has always been a very popular festival in Odisha. In places like Paradip, Rourkela, Cuttack, Hirakud, Nalco Nagar at Angul and other industrial sites, it is a major festival with a lot of religious customs and traditions that lasts for a full week. For the locals, it is not an occasion to be missed at any cost as it is marked with many other celebrations and pro-

grammes. Gigantic gates, illuminated pandals and huge tableaux are seen in the industrial townships. Workers worship the mustachioed Lord Vishwakarma to increase their efficiency and productivity in the fields and factories on the occasion which is followed by two days of merriment and revelry. However, due to the corona pandemic, this year too, celebrations on Friday are likely to remain subdued. The authorities have mandated that the puja has to be conducted indoors. Besides, the size of idols shall be less than four feet and there would be no use of public address system. Even the

immersion procession has been prohibited. In the idol centre of Old Town of Bhubaneswar, the forlorn artisans await customers with the small-size idols. There are hardly any takers as community pujas are not allowed. The dwarf-size idols mounted on Lilliputian elephants are a far cry from the grand idols that were worshipped. "Every year, I used to get orders to make anything between 200 to 250 Vishwakarma idols. But this year, I have got orders for only 20 idols, that too only small ones of two to three feet," said Krushna Maharana. A meeting was held here between the district Collector and representatives of the cricket association, during which Minister Das directed to complete the stadium construction by 2022 and assured to extend all possible assistance on behalf of the State Government. Collector Saroj Kumar Samal informed the meeting about the arrangements and progress of the construction works.



Min for timely completion of Jharsuguda stadium

PNS ■ JHARSUGUDA

Minister and Jharsuguda MMLA Naba Kisore Das has directed officials to finish the ground and construction works of the proposed mega stadium here to make it ready for the upcoming Ranji Trophy Cricket Match in 2023. The technical team of the Odisha Cricket Association is now camping here to supervise the infrastructure requirements and suggest further development of the stadium. A meeting was held here between the district Collector and representatives of the cricket association, during which Minister Das directed to complete the stadium construction by 2022 and assured to extend all possible assistance on behalf of the State Government. Collector Saroj Kumar Samal informed the meeting about the arrangements and progress of the construction works.

INBRIEF

NALCO BAUXITE MINE GETS EXCELLENCE AWARD



Bhubaneswar: Nalco's Panchpatmali Bauxite Mine has been awarded the Pollution Control Excellence Award 2021 by the State Pollution Control Board for effective pollution control measures and sound environment management practices. State Forest & Environment Minister Bikram Keshari handed over the award. Nalco CMD Sridhar Patra congratulated the mines team and reaffirmed the company's commitment towards effective environment management.

SWACHHTA PAKHWADA AT PARADIP PORT



Paradip: Coinciding with Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Paradip Port Trust (PPT) began observance of Swachhta Pakhwada 2021 on Thursday with a Swachhta Pledge administered by Deputy Chairman AK Bose to HoDs and Dy. HoDs in front of the PPT Administrative Building. Due to Covid guidelines, Heads of Offices staffs took pledge in their respective office premises. Cleanliness activities were undertaken in the surroundings of the Administrative Building.

3 NDRF TEAMS DEPLOYED IN CUTTACK, K'PADA, PURI



Athagarh: Three teams of NDRF 03 Battalion of Mundali reached possible flood-affected areas of Cuttack, Kendrapada and Puri districts on Thursday on a requisition of the State Additional Relief Commissioner. Inspector Amit Gupta heads the team in Cuttack while Inspector SK Shanti leads the Kendrapada team and Inspector Narendra Kumar heads the Puri team.

TAFE LAUNCHES 4WD TRACTORS

Bhubaneswar: Indian tractor major and world's third-largest tractor manufacturer, TAFE - Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited, launched the Massey Ferguson 244 & 246 DYNATRACK - Four Wheel Drive (4WD) tractors in its popular DYNATRACK Series for Odisha and West Bengal. Massey Ferguson DYNATRACK is an advanced range of tractors that offers more power, dynamic performance, sophisticated technology, unmatched utility and versatility, all engineered into a single powerful tractor.

CM Naveen unveils Utkal Alumina expansion project

RAYAGADA: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday inaugurated the expansion project of Utkal Alumina Refinery at Kashipur in Rayagada. With this expansion, the production capacity of Utkal Alumina has been enhanced to 1.5 million ton to 2 million ton per annum. Speaking on the occasion, CM Patnaik said, "The economy of Odisha is bouncing back from adverse impacts of pandemic and we are back to track. Investors are expanding their existing projects in Odisha in spite of impact of Covid pandemic. We have attracted investments to tune of over Rs 4.5 lakh crore since pandemic." He further said that State's GST collection in July this year has also registered a 54 per cent growth during

corresponding period of previous year. Speaking on positive role played by Aditya Birla Group in development of Odisha, the CM said that it has been a key player in Odisha's journey of industrial development. The Chief Minister wanted Aditya Birla group to guide their ancillary units and associates to visit State and explore more opportunities to invest in State. This will certainly help build an industrial ecosystem that will benefit all stakeholders through improved efficiency and cost-effectiveness, he added. Joining the programme through virtual mode, Chairman Aditya Birla Group Kumar Mangalam Birla said Odisha has emerged as the top-most investment destination for his group. PNS

Even after a month Cops' inaction in Nimapara loot raises eyebrows

PURI: The Nimapara police's inaction in a highway loot incident has raised eyebrows here. In spite of CCTV footage made available to police, cops have washed their hands off the incident by merely registering a case only. As a result, the NH near Nimapara has become a soft target of a racket with people feeling unsafe to move, carrying money and gold with them. Sources said that loot incidents are on the rise along Nimapara-Pipili NH. The latest case pertains to one Dilip Patnaik, a veterinary medicine trader, who was looted of over Rs 1 lakh on August 6 near Bombay hotel at Khelar. While Patnaik was buying sweets from

a shop, an unknown youth suddenly came in a bike with a pillion rider and snatched his cash bag hanging on his motorcycle. The bag contained cash of Rs 1,01,300. The incident took place, when Patnaik was returning to Khelar from Nimapara after collecting cash. After an FIR by Patnaik, the police had come to spot and made investigations. To easily trace out the two bike-borne looters, a CCTV footage from a nearby shop was also provided. The CCTV footage clearly showed faces of two bike borne youths and registration number of motorcycle they used for crime. However, Police have not yet got any clues of miscreants.

In Sambalpur Lecturer held for sending fake e-mail

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

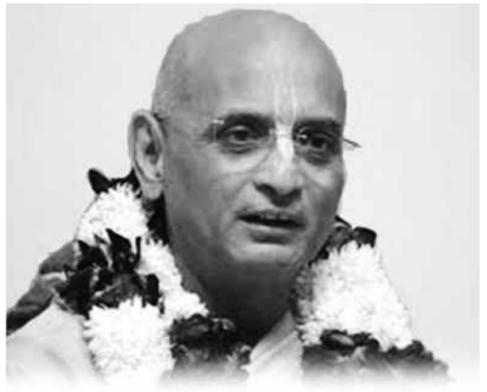
A Lecturer of the Dr Parmanpur in Sambalpur district was arrested by the Cyber police for allegedly sending an email to the college Principal from a fake ID in the name of the Higher Education Department. The accused, identified as Pares Bhoi, is an Economics Lecturer. A few days ago, he sent the mail to Principal Sandhyarani Mishra from the fake ID alleging corruption in the clerk appointment asking the for-

mer as to why action would not be taken against her for the irregularity. When the Principal directly contacted the Higher Education Department, she came to know about the fake email. She lodged an FIR at the Cyber police station here in this connection, based on which police conducted an investigation and arrested the accused. Police said the accused had learnt how to create fake email ID and deactivate the same to eliminate evidence by watching YouTube videos.

6th Appearance Day Charu Swami Maharaj was a great Krishna preacher

RADHAKANTA DAS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Srila Prabhupada has deep faith on Gaudiya Vaishnab tradition and established Iskcon to spread Vaishnabism all over the world with coordination of his followers and his disciples. Among his followers and disciples Sri Srimad Bhakti Swarup Damodar Swami Maharaj, Sri Srimad Gour Govind Swami Maharaj and Sri Srimad Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaj are most notable as they played an important role in spreading Bhagavat tatwa and vaishnabism all over the world in adverse situation. Today is 76th Holy Appearance day of Sri Srimad Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaj who is an international preacher, philosopher, Guru and great



Vaishnab Acharya. Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaj was born in the holy city of Kolkata in the year of 1945. He had proceeded to German in the year

1970 for higher qualification in Chemistry. When he was continuing his study in Germany he had been influenced by Indian spiritual culture. Later, he came back to India and moved from city to city to inquire his spiritual master. Lastly he had been influenced by an Iskcon devotee to read "Bhakti Rasamruta Sindhu" which had been written by Srila Prabhupada. He got attracted towards Iskcon and Srila Prabhupada and was eager to meet Prabhupada. After he met to Prabhupada, the latter directed him to join at Mayapur Iskcon center in the year 1976. Prabhupada directed him to translate his writings in English to Bengali language for the Bengali devotees. Prabhupada gave him in one time Harinam and Brahmna Diksha and appointed him as his personal secretary in Indian affairs. Prabhupada was overpleased with his seva and gave Sanyasa diksha to him

after three months. He proved his efficiency and better administrative capability when the prominent Iskcon centers all over the world like Mayapur, Manipur, France and South Africa centers were in beginning stage. He became Guru in the year 1997 and created lakhs of devotees all over the world through preaching of his Bhagavad Seva. When he was chief of Iskcon art and culture department, he had translated Bhagavad Gita, Srimad Bhagavatam, Chaitanya Charitamrita and Bhakti Rasamruta Sindhu that he translated into Bengali were deeply accepted by Bengali devotees. He was director and producer of weekly prashna picture of Abhyasa Charan in the national channel during the

year 1996. He constructed a nice temple only in ten months at Krishna Balaram Education center, Ujjain during the year 2004 by due invitation received from the then Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and he had also constructed many Gurukuls, Goshalas, Ayurvedic hospitals. He was also chief of Iskcon Annapurna Unit which distributes midday meals to lakhs of school going students. He is advisor of England Hindu Sanatan Vaidika Dharma preacher organization named 'T' foundation and he was identified personality of World Trade Organisation. He was recently awarded by the United Nation for his noble deed. His Holy Appearance Day is observed in many Iskcon centers all over the world.

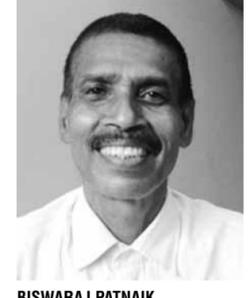
Dog sterilisation starts in B'pur

PNS ■ BRAHMAMAPUR

A camp for sterilisation of dogs started at the Veterinary Hospital premises here on Tuesday being inaugurated by Ganjam district Collector Vijaya Amruta Kulange in the presence of Berhampur Municipal Commissioner Siddheswar Baliram Bonder. The camp was conducted by the Animal Husbandry Department in association with the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC). Among others, Chief District Veterinary Officer Dr Debaraj Behera, Additional District Veterinary Officer Dr Rabi Narayan Panda, Sub-Divisional Veterinary Officer Dr Arabinda Behera and Brahmapur Veterinary Officer Dr Kiran Kumar Bisoyi were present. A total of 11 dogs were sterilised. There is a target to sterilise all street dogs within a stipulated time. The programme was started to control road accidents and stop spread of contaminated diseases.



Self-proclaimed rites interpreters be booked under law



BISWARAJ PATNAIK

A couple of days ago when the Odisha Special Relief Commissioner rightly restricted the Durga Puja idol size to a maximum of 4 feet, a hue and cry ensued as if heavens had come crashing down. The Cuttack city Puja organisers fumed and fretted, which was normal given their level of understanding the complexities of life. Routinely, BJP leader Samir Dey and Md Moqim, the incumbent local Congress MLA, have to thrive on making some noise against

For endangering public safety of mankind. When the corona pandemic struck India, Odisha was the first State to clamp lockdown in March 2020. Three days later, Prime Minister Modi locked down the whole country for nearly three months until slowly un-lockdown processes were begun after immeasurable death disasters had occurred. How people suffered then is ordinary history today. Odisha was also the first to install sophisticated testing equipments and organise maximum hospital beds and nursing health workers in record time. But because of the virus with strange powers was extremely difficult to contain, lives couldn't be saved easily as was happening all around the world. It took months to know how exactly the virus was invading the host, multiplying and causing damage at different organ locations. Medicos just managed to discover some basic behaviour of the

pathogen and picked some skills to save lives by managing on symptoms only without ever being able to know what drugs would prevent multiplication of the virus. By the end of September, the surge levelled and suddenly began declining rapidly. The world revelled believing the corona was gone. By December, like elsewhere, the common folks of India too went berserk. They proudly got off guard, merrily discarding the mask, laughing off social distance norms and deriding hand hygiene protocols. The virus, lurking coolly all around meanwhile, had comfortably mutated to become more lethal. No wonder, it struck like a nuclear bomb. The second wave did not give much time to the human species even to brace up. All the specially made Covid hospitals, having been closed days before, could not be put together to become functional in a hurry. Wits at all levels were com-

pletely lost. Around this time, frighteningly rising positive cases had literally driven authorities and experts blank in the head. The second corona wave has etched indelible history for posterity. Now even after huge seropositivity proof all over the world and widely-vaccinated people in most countries including India, the pathogen doesn't seem to have accepted defeat. It has mutated even faster and is even infecting immunised humans. The non-vaccinated kids now stand most vulnerable though they can fight back well. But what needs to be borne in mind is that vaccines lose efficacy after six months. And mildly sick kids are likely to make the elderly severely ill. So, the Americas, whole of developed Europe, Australia and the rest of the world including the declared Covid-free Israel and New Zealand are now back to masks, social distancing, hand hygiene and other stringent Covid-appro-

priate behaviours. The corona is still around. The extreme pain and pressure experienced by human species all over the planet in the first wave and, helplessly so, has created medical history. When corona kept playing around, every other medical activity, including cancer treatment and critical research, was abandoned only to devote all available time to scan the virus and get to know how it spread and killed human hosts in matter of only days. By the grace of the Almighty, they managed to see the pathogen through and succeeded in developing several effective vaccines in record time. Once the first surge of infection waned and people started getting vaccinated, Governments imagined the pathogen was vanquished forever. Naturally therefore, the world was flung open giving kind of an impression that the virus would never make a comeback. But the virus, lurking all this while, made a sec-

ond invasion, this time with much greater intensity and virulence. Bhartruhari Mahtab, doctor Siddharth Das, lawyer Dharanidhar and the opponents of the lifesaving safety measures would do good to know that in 2015, the Deshpriya Park had brought Kolkata to a standstill during the Pujas attracting lakhs of curious visitors that thronged to see the 88-foot Durga idol, nearly causing stampede because organisers had publicised the statue to be the tallest Durga in the world. So, the 2020 statue during the pandemic was purposefully reduced by the organisers to a 10-foot idol. The objective as they made clear was solely to scale down the celebrations which would not attract visitors in huge numbers that would make following Covid behaviour practically impossible. Similarly in Maharashtra, the size of Ganesh idols in public celebrations across the state has been restricted to four feet in view of the pandemic. So much

so that even the idols installed at home for private family puja were expected to be not taller than two feet, said a notification issued by the Home Department of Maharashtra. The notification also made it mandatory to use marble or metal idols during the Ganesh festival. And if clay or other materials were to be used, the 'visarjan' (immersion) ceremonies would have to be either at home or in artificial ponds if organised in the area by civic authorities. The guidelines further said public organisers should make arrangements possible to provide online Ganesh darshan, puja, aarti, etc., through cable systems, websites or social media. Under no circumstances would any visitor be seen around the Puja pandals, which could implicate organisers in criminal cases. So, the people of Odisha must begin to question the knowledge and intention of the MP, the MLA, the long-lost Samir Dey along with the medico and the legal brain.

Dhoni, Mahindra, Rathore part of NCC review panel



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former India cricket captain MS Dhoni, industrialist Anand Mahindra and Olympic medal winner and Member of Parliament Colonel (retired) Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore are part of a committee to suggest way to improve the functioning of the National Cadet Corps (NCC), which has more than 12 lakh cadets.

The Defence Ministry has constituted a High Level Expert Committee, under the chairmanship of former Member of Parliament Bajjayant Panda, for a comprehensive review of the NCC to make it more relevant in changed times, officials said here on Thursday.

The Committee also includes Rajya Sabha member Vinay Sahasrabudhe, Principal Economic Advisor in the Finance Ministry Sanjeev Sanyal and Jamia Millia Islamia Vice Chancellor Najma Akhtar, former SNTD Women's University vice-chancellor Vasudha Kamat, Maj Gen (ret'd) Alok Raj, National Organising Secretary, Bhartiya Shikshan Mandal, Mukul Kanitkar, Managing Director, SIS India Ltd, Rituraj Sinha and CEO of Databook Anand Shah.

Incidentally, Dhoni is an honorary Colonel in the Territorial Army and successfully completed parachute jumping course some years back.

The terms of reference of the Committee broadly provide for suggesting measures which can empower the NCC cadets to contribute more

effectively towards nation building and national developmental efforts in various sectors and propose measures for gainful engagement of its alumni for betterment of the organisation as a whole.

The panel will study and recommend best practices of similar international youth organisations for inclusion in the NCC curriculum.

The NCC is the largest uniformed organisation which aims at developing character, discipline, a secular outlook and ideals of selfless service amongst young citizens. It also aims to create a pool of organised, trained and motivated youth with leadership qualities in all walks of life.

Dhoni's inclusion in the high-level panel came days after he was appointed mentor for India's T20 cricket world cup team.

8-lane Delhi-Mumbai expressway to cut travel time by 12 hrs: Gadkari

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said the 1380-km eight-lane Delhi-Mumbai Expressway — passing through Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat — will reduce travel time between the cities to 12-12.5 hours. Gadkari also announced a six-hour drive on the Delhi-Katra expressway in two years.

The minister was addressing the Press in Lohatki, Sohna on Thursday after he reviewed the progress of a section of the Delhi-Mumbai expressway in Sohna. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and Union Minister Rao Inderjit Singh were also present at the occasion.

Calling it a matter of pride, Gadkari said the expressway will be the longest in India and connect urban centres of Delhi through Delhi-Faridabad-Sohna section of the corridor with a spur to Jewar Airport and Jawaharlal Nehru Port to Mumbai through a spur in Mumbai.

"The expressway will have wayside amenities — resorts, restaurants, food courts, fuel stations, facilities for truckers, logistics parks — at six points in Haryana. We have also envisaged a helicopter ambulance service for accident victims and there will be a heliport, which will use drone services for business as well. I

also want to build electric highways along the expressway," said Gadkari.

Developed at ₹98,000 crore, the expressway is expected to be completed by March 2023. The eight-lane access-controlled expressway can be expanded to a 12-lane expressway depending on the volume of traffic in the future.

The first phase from Delhi-Jaipur (Dausa)-Lalsot and Vadodara-Ankleshwar is expected to be open to traffic by March 2022. More than 160 km stretch of the expressway which passes through Haryana is being built at ₹10,400 crore, the minister said.

"This corridor will improve connectivity in Nuh and Palwal through multiple interchanges to connect the expressway with major highways like KMP and DND Sohna. To address the serious problem of air pollution and traffic congestion in Delhi-NCR, the ministry is undertaking 15 projects worth Rs 53,000 crore, of which 14 projects have been initiated. This expressway will lead to a reduction of 27 per cent in vehicular pollution in Delhi," he said.

He said that the soon to be opened Delhi-Meerut Expressway will reduce commute time between Delhi and Meerut to 40 minutes. "There was an issue with an overbridge, which has now been resolved. I will inaugurate it next month," he said.

On the occasion the Minister said another ambitious expressway is to connect the national Capital to Jammu and to reduce the distance from 727 to 572 kilometres to make you will reach Katra from Delhi in six hours. "We are also working on new roads from Delhi-Chandigarh, Delhi-Dehradun and Delhi-Haridwar, to take you there in two hours."

Gadkari said that the ministry had paid 1.5 times more than the market price to farmers for land acquisition, in a liberal approach. "I appeal to farmers to not sell their land to builders and developers, who usually profit when prices increase after road construction. They (farmers) will get more money if they develop the land," he said.

Responding to a question about toll taxes making travel costly on national highways, Gadkari said, "If you want good services, you have to pay for it. If one wants to conduct a programme in an air-conditioned hall, one will have to pay the rent (kiraya). Otherwise, a wedding can be conducted in a field (maidan) for free as well."

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, said, "With these road stretches being built, there will be economic prosperity in the region (Palwal, Nuh and Gurgaon) and bring employment opportunities, services and give a fillip to industry and growth. At least 73 villages in this region will benefit from this stretch."

'PLI scheme to create ₹900 cr turnover from drones manufacturing'



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The production-linked incentives (PLI) scheme will help create a turnover of ₹900 crores from drones manufacturing in the next three years, which would help in creating employment for 10,000 people in this sector. Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Thursday expects that the drone industry will have a total turnover of up to ₹15,000 crore by 2026.

Addressing a press conference, Scindia said that the current size of the drone manufacturing segment in India is around ₹80 crores and the Government will work towards making India a drone manufacturing hub by 2030. Scindia said that the drone sector will see investment worth Rs 5,000 crores in the next three years.

"Over a period of three years, Estimated investment

worth ₹5,000 crore for manufacturing sector drones will be done which in turn will bring a turnover of ₹900 crore, and 10,000 job opportunities will be created," Scindia said.

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a PLI scheme for drones and drone components with an allocation of Rs 120 crore spread over three financial years. The PLI scheme comes as a follow-through of the liberalised Drone Rules, 2021, released by the Centre on August 25.

Experts say Drones offer tremendous benefits to almost all sectors of the economy. These include— agriculture, mining, infrastructure, surveillance, emergency response, transportation, geo-spatial mapping, defence, and law enforcement to name a few. Drones can be significant creators of employment and economic growth due to their reach, versatility, and ease of use, especially in India's remote and inaccessible areas.

62% Indian adults have got at least 1 Covid shot

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Thursday said that at least three in five Indian adults—or 62%—have now been covered with at least one Covid vaccine dose and while one in every five—or 20%—of the adult population is now fully immunised.

The latest data provided by the Union Health Ministry showed Chandigarh entering the coveted league of states and UTs to have ensured inoculation of their entire adult population with at least the first shot against coronavirus.

Further, as the festival season nears, ICMR DG Balram Bhargava at a press conference here said the need of the hour is vaccine acceptance, maintenance of Covid-appropriate behaviour, responsible travel and responsible festivities.

He also ruled out the introduction of booster doses of the vaccine saying that "these were not a priority for the government at this moment."

The country, by Thursday evening, had seen a total of 77.1 crore Covid jabs administered in India of which 58.26 lakh were administered in a day.

Commenting on the scale of inoculation, the Centre said that in the first 15 days of September over 11 crore doses—or about 76 lakh vaccinations in a day on an average—have been administered which is double of the doses given through the entire month of May.

ED raids four firms in FEMA case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has conducted searches at the office premises of four firms, Paul Merchants Ltd, Quick Forex Ltd, Supama Forex Pvt. Ltd. and Curo India Pvt. Ltd., and residential premises of their directors and associates in Chandigarh, Panchkula, Mohali, Jalandhar and Delhi in a FEMA

case. The searches yielded foreign currency worth ₹3.88 crore and bullion worth ₹24.2 lakh besides incriminating documents, laptops, mobile phones and property documents. The ED had initiated an investigation under Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) on the basis of credible information.

During the course of investigation, it is revealed that the said entities have sent outward remittances over ₹475 crore to Singapore, Hong Kong and UAE on behalf of shell/dummy entities namely Triple Streak Dream Holidays, Wangester Travels Pvt. Ltd., Peripatizo Travels Pvt. Ltd., Himalaya Tourism, Ezax Holidays and Great Journey Tours among other such firms, the ED said.

Kerala gold smuggling case: ED attaches 30.24 kg gold

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has provisionally attached 30.24 kg gold valued at ₹14.82 crore in connection with a money laundering probe linked to Kerala gold smuggling case.

The seized gold belonged to accused in the gold smuggling case Aboobacker Pazhedath, Abdul Hameed P. M., Jalal A. M., Rabins K Hameed, Abdu P. T., Mohammed Shafi, Hamjad Ali K., P. T. Ahmedkutty, Hamjad Abdul Salam, Shaijal, Muhammed Shameer, Razal and Ansil. Cash amounting to ₹14.98 lakh belonging to Sarith PS and Swapna Prabha Suresh

has also been attached.

The ED had initiated money laundering investigation, on the basis of an FIR registered by the NIA under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act against Sarith PS, Swapna Prabha Suresh, Faisal Fareed, Sandeep and others.

The customs department had registered a case relating to the seizure of 30.24 kg of 24 carat gold worth ₹14.82 crore at Trivandrum International Airport. The said gold was camouflaged as diplomatic baggage to UAE Consulate, which has immunity from checking at airport as per Vienna Convention.

The consignment was to be received by the accused Sarith PS, who had worked in UAE Consulate earlier as Public Relations Officer in complicity with Swapna Prabha Suresh, Sandeep Nair and others.

In the NIA case, accused Sarith PS, Swapna Prabha Suresh and Sandeep Nair were arrested by the ED on July 22 last year and the PMLA Court had remanded them to ED custody from August 5 to 17, 2020. They were subsequently remanded to judicial custody.

Another accused M Sivasankar, IAS, then Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Kerala was also arrested by the ED on October 28, 2020 and was remanded to ED custody from October 29 to

October 12, 2020 and all four persons continue to undergo judicial custody.

"During the PMLA probe, it was revealed that accused persons had obtained the Proceeds of Crime in the form of 30.245 kg of smuggled gold valued at ₹14.82 crore. The accused/suspects illegally routed the sale proceeds of previously smuggled gold to Dubai which was further used for purchase of next consignment of gold intended to be smuggled into India and recycled this process throughout the operations and thereby proceeds of crime generated out of gold smuggling previously was used to purchase the said 30.245 kg gold," the ED said in a statement.

It was further revealed that the accused Sarith PS and Swapna Suresh had obtained the Proceeds of Crime to the tune of Rs 14.98 lakh.

3,631 oxygen PSA plants being installed in country, says Centre



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Learning lessons from the second Covid-19 wave when the country faced severe shortage of Oxygen resulting in several deaths and serious illness across the country, the Centre on Thursday said that 3,631 oxygen PSA plants are being installed in the country—nearly half of which will be installed through central resources, a move planned amid a looming threat of the third Covid wave in India.

These plants will have the capacity to generate about 4,800 MT of medical oxygen. "Of the planned oxygen plants to be installed in hospitals, 1,595 or about 47% have already been commissioned," Union health secretary Rajesh

Bhushan said in a press briefing on Thursday.

As per the details shared, of the total 3,651 PSA plants sanctioned with 4,751 MT capacity generation when commissioned, 1,491 plants with 2,281 MT have been commissioned with central support.

Nearly 2,140 with 2,289 MT capacity on the other hand are planned with the states and other sources such as states, urban local bodies, MPLAD, and through CSR activities.

Of the 1,595 PSA plants commissioned so far with a capacity of 2,088 MT medical oxygen generation, 731 (with 1024 MT) PSA plants have been set up with central resources.

importance given that the second wave of the pandemic had triggered a massive shortage of the crucial oxygen supply in most parts of the country during April-May this year.

The official, while noting that situation in Mizoram with Covid cases surging, also urged states to prepare ahead for any potential spike highlighting that as the situation is stable with cases reducing even in Kerala, the months of October and November would be critical given the festive season.

"The next quarter will be critical. We advise states and municipal corporations to prepare ahead to ensure best models of home care and also to prepare infrastructure," V K Paul, Niti Aayog member said.

Vitiligo patients finding succour in DRDO herbal cure

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Many patients with vitiligo, which is an autoimmune disorder characterised by the loss of skin colour in parts of a body, seem to be finding succour in herbal remedies like Lukoskin developed by the Defence and Research Development Organization (DRDO).

Till now, more than one lakh patients suffering from the skin condition, also known as leucoderma, have been treated with Lukoskin with an average success rate of 70 per cent, said Dr Nitika Kohli from AIMIL Healthcare which is manufacturing and marketing the drug. An ayurveda expert herself, Dr Kohli said, that after DRDO transferred the technology, clinical trials were conducted on the patients and then in 2011 it was launched in the market. "In these ten years, over one lakh patients have been treated with the drug. We found 70 percent success rate," she said.

An estimated four to five per cent of the Indian population suffers from leucoderma. The condition is characterized by patches of the skin losing their pigment.

The condition is noticeable in people with dark skin. For better success rate and with an aim to reach out to more patients, the AIMIL is in the process of launching the advanced version of the drug. DRDO is already working in this direction.

Dr Kohli was speaking at a conference "Clinical management of tough skin diseases" held online to mark the ten years of launch of Lukoskin as well as of AIMIL Healthcare.

Congress seeks probe into alleged data fudging by ICMR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday demanded that an inquiry should be conducted into the alleged data fudging by the ICMR to keep the political masters happy which led to the loss of human lives.

Addressing media persons, party's General Secretary Ajay Maken alleged that senior scientists, who worked with the ICMR, and other organisations, are now coming forward to point out serious irregularities in Covid management.

"The Congress demands a criminal investigation against the Prime Minister, the then Health Minister, and also against management of ICMR. The inquiry should be conducted by a sitting judge," Maken said.

He said that the party will raise the issue in and outside Parliament. "Now, as the time goes by, more and more scientists who worked with the Indian Council of Medical Research are coming forward with startling facts of political interference and arrogance which was not only against science and democracy, but also caused millions of preventable deaths. These scientists, to name a few, include Dr Anup Aggarwal, Dr Naman Shah, Dr Somdatta Sinha, Dr Shahid Jameel and some others, are gradually opening up in social media and foreign publications," Maken alleged.

"In June 2020, a study commissioned by the ICMR concluded that Modi's lock-



down had slowed but would not stop the virus spread. Within days, the authors withdrew it and ICMR tweeted the withdrawal. Some of the scientists now say that they were forced to withdraw the report. In July 2020, DG, ICMR, Dr Balram Bhargav forced ICMR scientists to withhold data, based on serological studies, which suggested that virus was spreading to 10 cities. This deliberate blunder led to loss of lakhs of lives."

Maken said, "The second Covid wave hit India severely in April 2021 and the Modi Government was caught unprepared, people of India were left to fend for themselves. "Black Marketing of drugs like Hydroxychloroquine, Ivermectin, Fabiflu, Dexona, Tocilizumab, Remdesivir, Paracetamol was galore. A single injection of Remdesivir was selling between ₹50,000 and ₹1 lakh, Tocilizumab injection for up to ₹10 lakh in black market."

"People gasped for breath and died as there was no oxygen. People died as there were no ventilators. People died as there were no hospital beds. Lakhs of bodies floated in the Ganga and other rivers. The Modi Government abandoned India as close to 50 lakh people died," he further said.

Country to see extended monsoon spell

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As rainfall activity is still continuing over north, northwest and central parts of the country, India will witness an extended monsoon spell and withdrawal is expected to be delayed by the end of September.

According to India Meteorological Department (IMD) Director General Dr Mrutunjay Mohapatra, "There are no signs of monsoon withdrawal from north India for the next 10 days. This means the monsoon spell will continue till the end of September. If low pressure forms, this will be further delayed."

The normal date for the monsoon's retreat from Rajasthan is September 17 but this may not be realised. In recent years, the overall completion of monsoon withdrawal from the entire country has shown a delaying trend. India received 781.4 mm rainfall as against the normal of 813.2, a deficiency of almost four per cent so far. At least 19 states and union territories have witnessed less rainfall this year.

According to the IMD, southwest monsoon withdrawal from northwest India takes place if there is cessation of rainfall activity over the area for continuous five days.

An anti-cyclonic wind has to form over the lower troposphere, and there should also be considerable reduction in moisture content. "The conditions are not likely to be favourable for the commencement of withdrawal of monsoon from parts of Northwest India before the end of the second week of this month (September 16-22).

SC allows symbolic immersion of Ganesh idols in Hyderabad's Hussain Sagar Lake

IAS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday allowed immersion of Lord Ganesh idols, made from Plaster-of-Paris (POP) in Hussain Sagar Lake in Hyderabad, during the Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations. A bench headed by chief justice NV Ramana made it clear that the court will allow it for the last time — the immersion of idols — this year, and no more immersion from next year. The bench also comprising justice Surya Kant asked the Telangana government to make certain arrangements from next year. The bench added to be idols should not be allowed to be left in the lake after immersion and they should be taken out immediately. The bench said: "Let them do symbolic immersion this year. A last chance for them. They say they will ensure no harm is caused to the pond."

Priyanka to finalise 'Pratigya Yatra' programme next week in Lucknow

IAS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will visit Lucknow next week to give a final shape to the "Pratigya Yatra" programme to be launched by the party unit ahead of the Assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh next year. She will have scheduled

meetings with the manifesto committee and with the election committee to assess the party's poll preparedness in the state, sources said.

Priyanka is likely to participate in one of the training programmes being organised by Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee.

On Thursday, she targeted the Yogi Adityanath gov-

ernment and said, "The government is doing drama ahead of polls while withdrawing cases of stubble burning."

The Congress in Uttar Pradesh will take out a 'Congress Pratigya Yatra' with the tagline — 'Hum Vachan Nibhayenge', ahead of the Assembly elections, due early next year.

CBI grills Didi's poll agent in murder case

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A team of CBI officials on Thursday subjected Mamata Banerjee's election agent at Nandigram Abu Sufiyan to four hours intense grilling in relation to a murder case that took place soon after the April-May Assembly elections.

The Agency to probe all the post-election murder cases.

Though the CBI has questioned many TMC district leaders during the investigation, this is the first time a leader known to be close to the Chief Minister was interrogated.

When contacted the Sufiyan denied his involvement with the murder saying "any death is unfortunate but implicating an innocent man for political mileage is no less deplorable... The BJP is implicating me in this case because they want to derive political mileage out of it... it is the handiwork of Suvendu Adhikari who has left the Trinamool Congress giving into the pressure of the central agencies whereas we have refused to get cowed down by the BJP and are continuing our

fight under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee... this is the reason we are being harassed like this."

Sufiyan a former protégé of Adhikari said "the harassment we are being subjected to is the result of keeping our spines straight and not giving into the pressure of the BJP which is threatening the entire country with agencies."

The CBI which has registered three dozen cases and filed charge sheet in at least three related to post-poll violence has formed several teams comprising DIGs and SPs --- forensic experts, CISF personnel --- from Delhi, UP, Punjab, Karnataka etc. The CBI team is headed by a joint director.

In an unrelated development a team of National Investigation Agency on Thursday reached the house of

BJP MP Arjun Singh at Jagaddal in North 24 Parganas to investigate bomb attacks on the parliamentarian's house.

Some NIA officers led by an SP-level officer "conducted investigations in my house at Jagaddal," the saffron MP who claimed to have been a target of the Trinamool Congress goons said adding he was cooperating with the investigating team.

The NIA officials also spoke to the local police officers, sources said. Crude bombs were hurled on two consecutive days at the Barrackpore MP's house a few days ago, Singh claimed adding he and his family members were under threat of being eliminated by the TMC "which is finding it difficult to wrest back its organizational in Barrackpore till I am there."

Two of Singh's close associates had been shot dead in the past less than two years.

"These attacks are being orchestrated by the Trinamool Congress and its leaders... they will kill me in the first instance and opportunity," the BJP strong man who left the TMC before the 2019 general elections --- after being denied nomination from Barrackpore by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee --- and went on to defeat the then sitting MP Dinesh Trivedi by about 15,000 votes said. Singh has been three-time TMC MLA before he quit that party.

Earlier the Union Home Ministry upgraded the BJP MP's security from Y+ to Z category following the bomb attacks and he is currently being protected by a posse of CISF personnel.

TMC MP resigns on 'personal grounds'

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Amid theories flying thick and fast in the Trinamool Congress over the sudden resignation of Arpita Ghosh a party Rajya Sabha MP the parliamentarian on Thursday said she had not been under pressure to put in her papers and that the "decision to resign was very much my personal decision."

The dramatist-turned-TMC leader was a two-time Lok Sabha MP from the party before she was defeated by the BJP candidate from Balurghat constituency in 2019. She was subsequently sent to the Rajya Sabha.

When asked to comment on the reason behind her sudden resignation, Ghosh said that she wanted to "concentrate more on the organizational work and my theatre which was getting hampered... and so I have tendered my resignation."

When asked as to whether she was forced to resign because the party leadership was try-

ing to vacate the seats for other bigger leaders from other States whom Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was trying to use for her national designs Ghosh said "the leadership will answer about the policy decisions... but as for my decision to resign it was solely based on my personal reasons."

After Ghosh's resignations there are talks inside the party that some more Upper House members may be asked to resign to make way for some national level names so as to afford the TMC and the Chief Minister a national image. Inside sources said that Ghosh was not happy at being robbed off the Rajya Sabha post. Sources also said that she had a conversation with party national secretary Abhishek Banerjee a day before the resignation.

The junior Banerjee is known to have promised a priced party post. When asked to comment on her future plans she said "in a few days you will get to know whether I am given any organizational post or not."

HC dismisses Mumbai ex-CP's plea seeking 2 probes launched against him

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a major setback to Mumbai's former Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh, the Bombay High Court on Thursday dismissed a petition challenging two preliminary inquiries launched against him by the Maharashtra Government for alleged violation of service rules and another for alleged corruption.

While dismissing Singh's petition on the ground that it was "not maintainable", a HC division bench comprising Justices SS Shinde and NJ Jamdar said that "it is a service matter" and asked him to approach the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT), which is an appropriate forum.

"(When) the petitioner approaches the appropriate forum, then the same shall be heard and decided without any prejudice to the HC's order," the HC bench said.

The HC had on July 28 reserved its order on Singh's petition seeking quashing of his petition challenging two preliminary inquiries launched against him by the Maharashtra Government on April 1 and April 20, 2021 respectively for alleged dereliction of duty and misconduct and for alleged corruption.

While Maharashtra's former Home Minister had on April 1, 2021 had passed an order launching a preliminary inquiry against Singh for alleged violation of some All India Services (Conduct) Rules, his successor and current State Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil had ordered another preliminary inquiry against the former police commissioner over the allegations of

corruption levelled against the latter by Inspector Anup Dange.

Describing himself as a 'whistle-blower' who had sought to highlight corruption in the highest public office, Singh had stated in his petition that the inquiries came to be launched against him a month after he had accused the then Home Minister Anil Deshmukh of allegedly extorting Rs.100 crore per month from Mumbai hoteliers through a dismissed Assistant Police Inspector Sachin Vaze.

Opposing Singh's plea, Senior Advocate Darius Khambata - representing the Maharashtra government - told the high court that the (CAT) was the "appropriate forum" for petitioner's grievances as the inquiries were of administrative nature pertaining to his conduct as the police commissioner.

However, senior Advocate Mahesh Jethmalani, representing Singh, argued that these were criminal inquiries as there was a reference to the section 32 of CrPC and hence he could expect a remedy only from the high court.

The inquiries pertain to alleged violation of services rules in the sensational Antilia case and allegations of corruption levelled by a policeman Anup Dange who accused Singh of shielding people with mafia links and that one alleging the top cop's relative of demanding a ₹2 crore bribe to reinstate him in the police force.

Khambata told the court that Singh's contentions on the maintainability ground as they contradicted his own plea in which he accepted that these are administrative

inquiries and said writing letters would not 'immunise' him from the same.

Khambata also said that Singh's primary grievance related to the Director-General of Police Sanjay Pandey conducting the inquiries and said that the IPS officer (Pandey) had recused himself from the enquiries which have been assigned to different officers now.

Among other things, Jethmalani contended that Pandey was an 'emissary' of the government trying to convince Singh to withdraw his complaint and offering to mediate on the issue.

It may be recalled that three days after he was shunted and posted in a relatively insignificant post as the Commandant General of Home Guards, Singh had in an eight-page sensational letter written to the chief minister Uddhav Thackeray On March 20 alleged that State Home Minister Deshmukh had asked now arrested and suspended police officer Sachin Vaze last month to "collect" a staggering Rs 100 crore per month from bars, restaurants and other sources.

Vaze -- who was on March 13 in connection with the gelatine sticks laden Scorpion recovery case and later booked for the murder of businessman and vehicle's owner Mansukh Hiran in March -- is being prosecuted in the sensational twin cases.

Vaze had allegedly parked the Scorpion car laden with 20 gelatine sticks near Mukesh Ambani's residence in Mumbai. He was allegedly involved in the conspiracy to murder Hiran.

IT conducts searches at Sonu Sood's Mumbai home for second day

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Income Tax (IT) department officials conducted searches at actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood's residence in Mumbai for the second consecutive day on Thursday ostensibly in connection with allegations of alleged tax evasion in a real estate deal.

A day after they conducted searches at six premises in Mumbai and Lucknow linked to Sood, the IT officials descended on the actor's Juhu residence in Mumbai to carry out what they called "survey" in connection with the alleged tax evasion.

The IT officials reportedly went through bank statements, books of accounts, documents and details of financial or other business transactions during the 'survey', for suspected tax evasion. However, there was no official statement from the IT department regarding the searches conducted by its officials for the second consecutive day.

The action against Sood has come on the heels of the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government declaring him as a brand ambassador for its mentorship programme for school students in Delhi.

On its part, the ruling BJP at the Centre has denied that the searches on Sood's premises had anything to do with politics.

Forty-eight year-old Sood, whose humanitarian work during the Covid-19 triggered lockdown period has earned him a lot of goodwill among the people across the country, has so far not commented on the raging speculations about his joining the Aam Admi Party (AAP) and contesting the Punjab Assembly elections next year.

It may be recalled that Sood had organised special flights and buses home for migrants stranded in Mumbai after the lockdown declared last year and he also organised Oxygen for Covid-19 patients at the peak of "second wave" in April-May this year.

17-year-old girl raped at gunpoint in Shamli



Muzaffarnagar (UP): A 17-year-old girl was allegedly raped at gunpoint by two people in a village in Shamli district, police said on Thursday. A case has been registered and one of the accused arrested, they said, adding that the minor was sent for a medical examination.

According to the complaint lodged by the victim's father, the two accused raped her at gunpoint on Wednesday and threatened to kill her, the police said. **PTI**

Man held for rape after teenage girl found pregnant

Palghar: A 15-year-old girl was allegedly raped repeatedly by a man residing in her neighbourhood here in Maharashtra following which she became pregnant, police said on Thursday.

The offence took place between January and May this year and the 20-year-old accused was arrested on Wednesday, they said.

The girl recently complained of abdominal pain following she was taken for a medical examination which revealed that she was pregnant, an official from Palghar district rural control room said.

Her parents filed a police complaint against the accused on Wednesday. **PTI**

Price rise continuous process, announce special financial package to people in distress: Kumaraswamy

Bengaluru: Terming price rise as a 'continuous process' JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy on Thursday urged the Karnataka government to announce a special financial package to those in distress, and announce relief to common man, who is finding it difficult to lead life.

He asked the government to use the revenue that was generated out of levying cess and taxes on petrol, diesel and others items, to come to the rescue of the people. "Price rise, according to me, is a continuous process.

Since independence, on several instances price rise has been inevitable to improve the financial condition of the government and to raise money for implementing programmes. Whichever party may be in power, it is natural," Kumaraswamy said.

Intervening during the debate on price rise in the legislature assembly, he said opposition parties protesting against price rise is also a continuous process in the democracy. Kumaraswamy, during his speech highlighting the trouble faced by common man, especially the poorer section, said it is a double whammy for them with both price rise and COVID-19 pandemic. "This is not the issue to be discussed in a partisan manner and to make allegations against one another to score political brownie points.

We should rather look at what can be done to get relief to those in distress from the government in power," he said. Asking Karnataka to become model for the entire country, Kumaraswamy urged the government to announce a special financial package and come to the rescue of poor and weaker

sections.

"The government has got revenue from the cess, people have filled your coffers. Now the same people and farmers are in distress. Announce a special financial package for the poorer and weaker sections, who are struggling to lead life. Announce 25,000 each to about 55 lakh such families."

The former Chief Minister also conceded that populist schemes announced by the governments to reach out to the common man with election in mind, without knowing about its financial implications, has led to loss of taxpayers money at several instances.

"It is the duty of the government to rebuild the lives of the common man, the taxpayers who fill the coffers of the government and now are in distress," he said, as he advised the government to postpone the schemes, including the Amrit schemes announced it recently, by a year, and come to their rescue.

"I'm not saying the BJP government has to do it, it is our government, the government of the 6.5 crore Kannadigas, all of us have the responsibility. We are ready to give all the cooperation, kindly come to the rescue of the poor and those in distress," he said, adding that government should also come to the aid of small scale industries that have given jobs to lakhs of people.

Hitting out his old alliance partner and Congress leader Siddaramaiah, who on Wednesday had claimed that the government led by him had given 7 kgs free rice to poor, Kumaraswamy said Siddaramaiah in his last budget had announced 7 kg, but had kept money only for 5kg.

AP logs 1,367 new cases

Amaravati: The Covid-19 caseload in Andhra Pradesh increased to 20,34,786 as 1,367 were added afresh on Thursday.

In the 24 hours ending 9 am today, 1,248 infected persons got cured while 14 succumbed, leaving 14,708 active cases, the latest bulletin said.

The total recoveries increased to 20,06,034 and deaths to 14,044, the bulletin said. East Godavari district reported 288 fresh infections and Chittoor 217 while six other districts added between 100 and 160 each. **PTI**

Sikkim reports 64 new corona cases, tally rises to 30,802

Gangtok: Sikkim reported 64 new coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours taking the state's tally to 30,802, according to a health department bulletin on Thursday.

The Covid-19 death toll remained unchanged at 379 as no fresh fatality was registered.

The State now has 775 active cases, while 29,343 people have recovered from the infection.

The bulletin said 305 Covid-19 patients have migrated to other states.

East Sikkim registered the highest number of new cases at 33, followed by West Sikkim (16) and South Sikkim (15).

The State tested 597 samples for coronavirus in the past 24 hours taking the total number of such tests to 2,41,289.

Sikkim's Covid-19 positivity rate and the recovery rate are 10.7 per cent and 96.2 per cent respectively. **PTI**

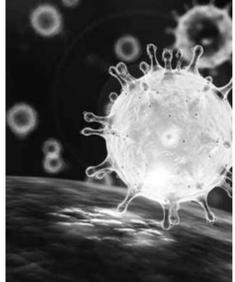
Kerala records 22,182 fresh cases

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala on Thursday reported 22,182 fresh Covid-19 cases and 178 deaths, which took the caseload to 44,46,228 and fatalities to 23,165.

The number of people who recovered from the infection since Wednesday was 26,563 which brought the total recoveries to 42,36,309 and the number of active cases to 1,86,190, a State Government release said.

While the release said that 1,21,486 samples were tested in the last 24 hours, it, again for the second day running, did not state what the Test Positivity Rate was. However, 22,182 fresh positive cases, reported in the last 24 hours, out of 1,21,486 samples tested during the same period, gives a figure of 18.25 per cent. Among the 14 districts,

Thiruvananthapuram recorded the highest with 3,252 cases followed by Ernakulam (2,901), Thiruvananthapuram (2,135), Malappuram (2,061), Kozhikode (1,792), Palakkad



(1,613), Kollam (1,520), Alappuzha (1,442), Kannur (1,246), Kottayam (1,212), Pathanamthitta (1,015) and Idukki (973).

Of the new cases, 105 were health workers, 89 from outside the state and 21,122 infected through contact, with the source of the contact not being clear in 866 cases. There are currently 5,54,807 people under surveillance in various districts, of whom 5,27,791 are in home or institutional quarantine and 27,016 in hospitals. **PTI**

Cops foil family's suicide bid outside Thane police station over 'inaction' in rape case

Thane: A woman and her parents tried to commit suicide outside a police station in Maharashtra's Thane district while alleging action by police in a rape case, but their attempt was foiled by security personnel, officials said on Thursday.

A video of the incident, which took place in front of the Ulhasnagar police station here on Wednesday, went viral on social media.

In the clip, the three family members were seen shouting and dousing themselves in kerosene. They were about to set themselves on fire, but some police personnel, including women security staff, took away their lighter and pinned them down. **PTI**

Notably, based a complaint earlier filed by the parents in connection with the alleged rape of their daughter, the Ulhasnagar police in July this year registered a rape case against two persons from the township.

In the video, the three family members were seen claiming that despite their repeated pleas, no further action was taken against the accused by police.

The video also showed the three being taken inside the police station where the security staff tried to pacify them. When contacted, local police inspector and other senior officials refused to comment on the incident, saying it was a sensitive matter. **PTI**



Devotees gather to offer prayers during Teja Dashami celebrations amid coronavirus pandemic in Beawar on Thursday



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Terror and hunger

Apart from the dread, hunger and lack of nutrition are gnawing at the Afghan people

It is time to strike a balance between terror and hunger in Afghanistan. Millions of lives are at stake as the UN organisations involved in relief activities say food stocks may last not more than a month in the vast rural stretches. Hunger and lack of nutrition are the bywords as the country's economy is in a downward spiral. Essential commodities are already out of stock in urban stores. Scarce vegetables are selling at double the prices. Panic buying in the aftermath of the Taliban takeover on August 15 cleaned up shelves in stores with no replenishing. Flour and oil are already out of limits for the poor. In the villages, the situation is worse as families are falling back on grain and wheat stored for future crops. Drought and famine have anyway hit the country for the umpteenth time. The risk of displacement adds to the pangs of hunger for a large section of the population. The fighting before August had made over 600,000 Afghans flee homes.



The UN agencies estimate that around 3.5 million people are internally displaced. At least 10 million children, a sizeable section of them malnourished, depend on humanitarian assistance just to survive. The UN's World Food Programme has said many Afghans did not have access to cash to afford sufficient food. That is because banks had closed down after August 15. The Taliban are now negotiating with banks for re-opening branches. However, they have set a cap on weekly withdrawal of \$200 to avoid a run on banks.

Afghanistan's economic experts, now in exile, insist that the situation will lead to a weaker currency, faster inflation and capital controls. Most civil servants have not been receiving salaries for months. Many more claim they have suffered pay cuts as high as 75 per cent since the Taliban took over. There is no indication that the Taliban are bothered about the dire straits. No proactive economic decisions have been forthcoming. Their contribution has been limited to appointing an obscure official to head the central bank to address the crisis. Little is known about his actions. The Taliban cadres though appear unfazed as it is rumoured that there is enough drug and opium money in their coffers. They are currently embroiled in internal squabbles that appear to have worsened after the interim set-up was announced. The Taliban are preoccupied with settling an existential debate — their Achilles' heel, actually — between their urban political face and orthodox armed command represented by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and Khalil-ur-Rahman Haqqani, respectively. The question is whether the Taliban are playing a blinking game with the rest of the world, holding the latter responsible for restoring economic order. Do they await the international community to pour money into rehabilitation works? Or expect it to recognise their interim governance apparatus? That is linked to lifting the freeze on Afghan assets worth billions of dollars; only a recognised government can take control of the funds.

PICTALK



Haitian migrants walk towards boats that will take them from Necocli to Acandí, Colombia

PTI

AAP eyeing UP

Can it alter the script and make a mark in the upcoming Assembly elections?

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is seriously trying its luck in the forthcoming Assembly election due next year. The party recently kicked off its campaign with a 'Tiranga Yatra' in Ayodhya. Enthused by the response, the party is likely to hold more such yatras in the coming months in other districts of Uttar Pradesh. Though the elections in Uttar Pradesh are a little away, most parties have already started activities to woo voters. And it makes sense as the stakes are high. Uttar Pradesh has 80 parliamentary seats. It is generally the Congress, BJP, Samajwadi Party and the BSP that fight the elections. But now the AAP is making inroads into the State. It has been consistently trying to make its presence felt in several States, including Punjab, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Goa. The party seems to be filling up the vacuum created by the missing Congress. The BJP and the BSP have their cadre on the ground in 'Jan Sammelan Yatras'. The SP is holding a 'Shiv Sevak Sammelan'. The Congress is conspicuous by its absence. Most of the parties are trying to woo the Brahmin voters who are disgruntled with the incumbent Government, which is seen favouring the Thakurs.

Brahmins, who make up 12 per cent of UP's population, are significant from the poll point of view. The AAP is also planning 'Chanakya Sammelans' to engage Brahmins. The 'Tiranga Yatra' in Ayodhya was led by Manish Sisodia along with the party's UP in-charge, Sanjay Singh. So far, the AAP has not had a very good response in Uttar Pradesh. Arvind Kejriwal fought against Narendra Modi and lost. During the 2014 Lok Sabha election, the AAP contested 77 seats and lost the deposit on 76. The party then contested the 2017 local body elections. It had 3,400 candidates in the fray but only 44 won. It was at number five. In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, the party failed to open its account and all its candidates lost their deposit. For the 2022 Assembly polls, it has decided to contest all the seats on its own. But the situation could change as the AAP is trying a tie-up with OP Rajbhar's Bhagidari Sankalp Morcha. Sanjay Singh is in talks with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav. He is also trying to build the party at the grassroots and strengthen the organisation. It might not win as yet but it can be a spoilsport for the ruling party.

Pornography is the theory, rape practice

The easy access to online obscene content is making an increasing number of people getting hooked on to the extent of perversion



HASAN KHURSHID

Online pornography has literally created a 'porn pandemic' as deadly as 'COVID-19'. Experts trace a marked correlation between watching pornography and sexual crimes. Pornography is a Greek word, which originally meant "writing about prostitutes".

Today, according to modified version of Kuhn et al-2007, "Pornography is a communication material provided for the purpose of arousing or gratifying a user in isolation from others or in company of others." Pornography is "perversion". It provides a field for deviant and violent fantasies to be developed eventually leading to some viewers acting out those fantasies in practice. Before the advent of online pornography, the compulsive voyeur used to haunt public places, parks and bedroom windows from where he could surreptitiously watch courting couples. Now the voyeur is privileged to watch couples on screen. After getting constantly aroused, he would prowl around in search of a soft target, mainly the tender-aged child, as many a time the voyeur has low level of sexuality and finds himself partially impotent with a grown up woman.

Alfred C Kinsey considered voyeurism to be limited solely to men, but in the US, the 1971 Commission of Pornography and Obscenity revealed that women responded to visual stimulation, pictures of nudes, in the same way as men do. According to a recent survey, a large number of users of these porn sites is not adults but adolescents.

Does online pornography have the destructive power to turn a simple normal, everyday man into rapist or murderer? Why this alarming question does not surface every time a rape with murder, especially of children and infants, hits the headlines. Ironically, there is no stringent law in India on full viewing of sexual acts online; whereas, on the contrary, the law of the land showed its utter sensitivity on obscenity under the provisions of Section 292 and 293 of IPC.

This is evident from the fact that Kamlesh Vaswani, Advocate,



filed in the Supreme Court a petition seeking to ban pornography in India and praying for direction to the Government to treat watching of porn videos and sharing as non-bailable and cognisable offence, but the Government supported pornography in the court.

The Attorney General submitted that if someone wished to watch porn within their bedroom, how can the State interfere with such an activity? The Government did not want to do moral policing and that we (India) cannot become a totalitarian State by banning all pornographic websites because clampdown would infringe the "Right to freedom". The State's action may raise issues regarding privacy rights.

Chief Justice HL Dattu, who had used a similar line during the previous hearing, interrupted and said: "Mr Attorney, why are you using our lines?" The Attorney General further contended: "Simply viewing an obscene object is not an offence. It becomes an offence only when someone has in possession such objects for the purpose of sale, hire, distribution, public exhibition or putting it into circulation."

Petitioner's counsel Vijay Panjwani argued that "criminal

activity is a criminal activity", whether carried out in private or public. Moreover, when the obscene object has come on the internet, it has already been circulated and automatically becomes "public". Subsequently, on February 26, 2016, Additional Solicitor General Pinky Anand told Justice Dipak Misra: "It is difficult to ban pornographic websites as they do not fall under any country's jurisdiction."

Differing, the Bench said: "When obscenity is an offence under the criminal law, then why can't you define it accordingly? It has already been decided that freedom of speech and expression is not absolute." The petitioner's counsel contended: "There is technology available to block such sites. In India, there are 11 towers which receive signals from under water cables of foreign countries. A technologist from Banaras Hindu University has undertaken to block all those 11 points that receive porn contents. It is a very low-budget technology, provided the Government agrees to it." A committee under the leadership of then Communications Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had been constituted to review this matter but he gave the statement: "We are not a control freak Government and

strongly object to the word 'Talibanisation'."

In fact, there is enough evidence available about the link between serial killers/rapists and their addiction to pornography. The accused of the Delhi gang rape case of December 2012, in their 164 Criminal Penal Code statement, had admitted that before committing the ghastly crime, they had consumed liquor, watched pornography, and then decided to have a party (they meant committing rape).

In his interview to Games C Dobson, notorious American serial killer Ted Bundy seven hours before his execution in the electric chair documented: "I was a normal person. I led a common life except for this one segment. Pornography can reach in and snatch a kid out of any house today. It snatched me out of my home 30 years ago. I deserve, certainly, the most extreme punishment society has. And I think society deserves to be protected from me and from others like me." According to Government's figures in December 2017, a child is sexually abused every 15 minutes, still the authorities are more concerned on 'naked capitalism'.

(The writer is a legal journalist and author. The views expressed are personal.)



THE ACCUSED OF THE DELHI GANG RAPE CASE OF DECEMBER 2012 HAD ADMITTED THAT BEFORE COMMITTING THE GHASTLY CRIME, THEY HAD CONSUMED LIQUOR, WATCHED PORNOGRAPHY, AND THEN DECIDED TO HAVE A PARTY

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SANSAD TV GOES ON AIR

Sir — The start of Sansad TV will mark another lesson in India's democratic history. Inaugurated on the day of International day of Democracy, the new media channel will voice out the truth of India's democratic system. We all know that Lok Sabha TV and Rajya Sabha TV have been dedicatedly telecasting relevant issues of our democracy with quality information and facts. In fact, both the LS and the RS TV are especially watched by UPSC aspirants for quality preparations. Both these channels have telecasted the functioning of the two houses of the Parliament individually.

Now with Sansad TV in the picture, we can expect more quality content and information on a single platform. Sansad TV will merge the quality and technology of India's two state of the art media channels, so as to deliver the best information to its viewers. We hope that with Sansad TV, every Indian is empowered to get faithful news and right information at the right time so that citizens do not get misled by false information. Right information will empower citizens to make better decisions over the issues of national, social, economic and political importance.

Dimple | Kanpur

RAHUL'S 'FAKE HINDU' JIBE

Sir — There is substance in Rahul Gandhi's statement that the RSS and its political arm the BJP, are 'fake Hindus' and 'brokers of religion'. The Congress leader has shown the courage to call a spade a spade. BJP's role in Indian politics validates Rahul Gandhi's charge of 'Dharam ki dalali'. The way he saw it, BJP is 'disrespecting and insulting goddesses 'Lakshmi and Durga'. He elaborated that the ruling party was busy transferring wealth from people to a few corporate houses and it did not believe in *nari shakti* (women's power). Rahul Gandhi's metaphorical speech provoked the BJP to call him the 'son of a Catholic mother and a Parsi father' and ask him 'to stop lecturing on Hinduism and hurting Hindu sentiment'.

The use of religion, a centre of devo-

Telcos get a respite



The Union Cabinet has cleared a set of structural and procedural reforms for the telecom sector in hope of rejuvenating its cash-strapped companies. The key measures announced by the Cabinet include a four-year moratorium on payment of statutory dues by telecom companies and a change in the definition of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) to exclude non-telecom revenue. The change in the definition of AGR

is momentous as it was at the centre of a long and arduous legal battle between the telecom companies and the Centre. The companies had disputed the Department of Telecommunication's definition of AGR as including revenue from non-telecom sources as well.

Since the licence fees and spectrum usage charges that the telcos have to pay the department are calculated based on AGR, there was much at stake. After nearly 15 years of legal battles, the Supreme Court upheld the DoT's definition, leading to a Rs.1.6 lakh crore payment backlog for the telcos. The change in definition does not wipe out these past dues as it does not have retrospective effect. The relief on this front is from the four-year moratorium on payments, though the companies still have to pay interest. It is a right step in the right direction. These fresh reforms will further boost efforts to invest in the digital future.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

overall number of days with temperature hitting the 50 degrees centigrade mark has risen. Urgent action must be taken by world leaders to control global temperature rises.

It must be understood that even below 50 degrees, high temperature and humidity could create severe health risks. As a consequence of extreme heat, disasters such as droughts and wildfires have become more frequent. Global warming, depletion of the natural sunscreen — the Ozone layer, and melting glaciers are more common than ever. Unless the countries wake up to the severity of the situation and adopt measures to mitigate global warming, our existence on this planet will be in peril. Reversing the already caused damage might be a lost cause but doing our bit can delay the onset of tragedies we're not prepared for.

Venu GS | Kollam

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

Within 24 hours of coming to power, the AAP will provide 300 units of free electricity for residential use to every single person in UP.



Delhi Deputy CM —Manish Sisodia



We were like a hired gun. We were supposed to make the US win the war in Afghanistan, which we never could.

Pakistan Prime Minister —Imran Khan



I lived alone so it was like cake, ice cream, anything crispy and then starving for a week. I had a terrible relationship with food.

Actor —Jacqueline Fernandez



We are excited to have fans back at the IPL. It's been too long to hear that roar of KKR fans at Eden Gardens.

KKR captain —Eoin Morgan

With the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, employment opportunities will increase in Haryana and its connectivity with other States will improve.



Haryana Chief Minister —Manohar Lal Khattar

FIRST COLUMN
BUILDING BLOCKS
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India has its task cut out to make itself heard in global affairs concerning its interests



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

A bunch of regional and multilateral dialogues are coming India's way between September and the last quarter of 2021. As a follow up to the BRICS summit, India participated in the Shanghai Cooperation organization (SCO) meeting in Dushanbe this week. External affairs minister S Jaishankar travelled there and Prime minister Narendra Modi addressed the meeting virtually.

In the wake of the developments in Afghanistan, any opportunity for India to spread its diplomatic clout on the events unfolding in Central Asia is crucial. The SCO has a formidable bunch of representation from nearly all countries that have a say in Central and South Asia. However, therein lies its biggest failure to develop as a regional dialogue platform for Central Asia.

The SCO has a whole laundry list of ambitious goals such as promoting mutual trust and neighbourliness among members, ensuring peace, stability and security in the region based on principles of non-



alignment and "non-targeting any third country and openness". The events in India's eastern border with direct military interventions by China in 2020 and the on-going tensions may seem contradictory to any of the goals. The SCO, like another regional platform BRICS, was primarily a body sponsored by China and Russia to challenge the US in a "unipolar" world and establish the centrality of these powers. When it was conceived, India was still aligning itself to the suddenly new unipolar world having been indecisive about the path it ought to choose for a prosperous future. However, in the last decade or so, a strategic shift has been made to migrate to a US-India strategic relationship based on mutual economic interests and security specially in the Indo-Pacific region. There is growing confidence among the two largest democracies to deal with the new challenges of the global order based on shared targets and economic prosperity.

Coming back to SCO, India focussed on the Afghanistan crisis during its dialogue with SCO leaders. It is significant since this is the second time in a fortnight that top leaders of Russia, China and India spoke to one another on Afghanistan and the overall security situation in the region. The External Affairs minister held bilaterals with his counterparts of Russia and Iran on the situation prevailing in the region. Earlier, India had reiterated its position on providing non-discriminatory and direct distribution of humanitarian assistance to all groups in Afghanistan under the UN banner.

It may be recalled India held the presidency of the security council in August and managed to get a resolution passed on Afghanistan with Russia and China abstaining. The pressure from China and some other SCO members to formally recognize the Taliban government exists. India needs to watch its step. The SCO in its current avatar also needs to bring in democratic reforms and work towards mutual trust of its member-states and dialogue partners before it can challenge alliances like Nato.

Next up in September is the high-level personal dialogue of Modi with President Biden during the Quad summit. In the wake of an aggressive China emerging as a threat for the four large economies of the US, Australia, Japan and India, the Quad grouping has significant potential. The agenda of the summit consists of dialogue on critical and emerging technologies, connectivity and infrastructure, cyber security, maritime security, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, climate change, and the Indo Pacific region. Any five of these strategic goals, if followed through, have a huge potential to create significant economic opportunities for Quad members. Its leadership needs to start publicizing its targets in their respective media for more broad-based participation.

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

Mighty challenges in Indian agriculture



SUBHASH CHANDRA PANDEY

India has all the means to become an agricultural power in the world but we are currently tapping only a fraction of our strength and letting the rest slide

Current focus of public discourse in agriculture is on marketing system in the backdrop of the three contentious farm laws enacted last year. Early this year, the Supreme Court ordered a temporary stay on their implementation and appointed an expert committee whose report is lying unactioned since March. The Government's offer to seek suggestions on specific changes in the law have fallen on deaf ears and the protests seeking outright scrapping of laws have now turned distinctly political.

This focus on marketing has eclipsed attention on important issues of growing water deficit, soil erosion and environmental degradation - particularly nitrogen pollution or air and water - caused by current farming practices. Here is a brief explainer of issues and concerns.

In a pandemic-stricken world, time-bound eradication of hunger and malnutrition by 2030 in an environmentally sustainable manner is an international priority and commitment under United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Food Systems Summit is due to be convened soon to review global preparedness. Action is required to ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all; shift to sustainable consumption patterns; boost nature-positive production; advance equitable livelihoods; and build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress.

India has offered to use its overflowing granaries to tackle extreme hunger but India can do much more and be an agricultural power but we are presently tapping only a fraction of our strength. Here are some suggestions to achieve this mission.

By the mid-1960s, hit by back-to-back droughts, India was a "ship to mouth" economy waiting for PL480 wheat imports from USA. Today, India is the largest exporter of rice and the second-largest producer of both wheat and rice, after China. Except for oilseeds and pulses, the country is now self-sufficient in foodgrain production.

This feat has been achieved by ushering 'Green Revolution' in the 1960s. One of the important fallouts of Green Revolution was increased use of chemical fertilisers, mainly urea for nitrogen and others to provide potassium and phosphorus.

Textbook science tells us that bacteria in the roots of leguminous plants (pulses) help in 'nitrogen fixation', conversion of atmospheric nitrogen into nitrogenous compounds that serve as fertilisers. These plants therefore naturally increase the nitrogen content of soil. Traditional agriculture practice of 'crop rotation' was to sow the legumes in between other crops to restore depleted nitrogen content of soil.

Green Revolution changed many of these practices. It boosted production with three major failings. First, its impact was confined to a few cereal crops - mainly wheat and rice - and to water surplus regions of Punjab, Haryana and parts of UP. These are no more water surplus and the water table has gone very deep. Further, the



THEN THERE IS THE ISSUE OF POLLUTION CAUSED BY CHEMICAL FERTILISERS AND PESTICIDES. SCIENTISTS FOUND THAT CROPS GENERALLY USE UP ONLY 30 PER CENT OF NITROGEN FERTILISERS SPRINKLED IN THE FIELDS; THE REST SEEPS INTO THE ENVIRONMENT, HARMING HEALTH AND ADDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

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



new varieties require chemical fertilisers and pesticides and there is a risk of the chemicals seeping into air and water.

Three crops (rice, wheat and sugarcane) corner 75 to 80 per cent of irrigated water. Diversification of cropping patterns towards millets, pulses, oilseeds, horticulture is needed for more equitable distribution of water, improving sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture and most important of all, addressing the problem of nutrition deficit. Too much of cereals and sugarcane at the cost of pulses, fruits and vegetables is not good for health.

At a time when some misguided environmentalists have aligned with misguided farmers in perpetuating over-production of cereals in an environmentally unsustainable manner, it is apt to recall the report released by UN agencies (FAO, IFAD, WHO, UNICEF, WFP) on State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World on July 13, 2020.

The UN Report has estimated that if last five years' trends persist, the number of undernourished people will exceed 84 crore by 2030 whereas the goal is to reduce it to zero under SDGs.

Then there is the issue of pollution caused by chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Nitrogen pollution has implications for global warming as well.

The farmers were initially impressed by four-to-ten-fold increase in productivity of wheat and rice. They kept on increasing fertiliser use, particularly of cheaper urea. The soil kept losing its natural health and became 'addicted' to urea. With the fertiliser use efficiency on the decline, farmers used more fertiliser (than minimum

required] in the hope of raising yield. Scientists found that crops generally use up only 30 per cent of nitrogen fertilisers sprinkled in the fields; the rest seeps into the environment, harming health and adding to climate change.

The "nitrogen use efficiency" of the global food system integrating crop and livestock production systems is very low, just about 15 per cent. This means that 85 per cent of nitrogenous chemicals used are lost to air, groundwater or surface runoff, threatening the quality of air, soils, and fresh waters, driving climate change, and thereby endangering ecosystems and human-health (2013 Study).

Nitrous oxide is a particularly potent greenhouse gas as it is over 300 times more effective at trapping heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide. Agriculture leads to about 70 per cent of nitrous oxide emissions in India. Of this, 77 per cent is contributed by fertilisers, mostly urea, according to the Indian Nitrogen Assessment published in 2017.

Cereals consume over 69 per cent of nitrogen fertilisers in India and fertilizer consumption shows a continuously growing trend, with a yearly increase of about six per cent since 1970.

Concerned about excessive use of urea and its adverse effect on environment, a major policy intervention has been introduction of neem-coated urea - coating of *Neem* on urea granules means the urea does not readily dissolve in water and the soil gets additional natural insecticide.

This should help but eventually we need to gradually return to chemical-free agriculture.

Obviously, we cannot proceed like Sri Lanka which banned import of chemical fertilisers in the face of a serious shortage of dollars with them. It has affected food production and supply leading to imposition of emergency.

Chemical-free farming or organic farming or zero budget natural farming is yet to pick up in a big way. Currently, 38 lakh hectares of cultivable area is organically farmed by 30 lakh farmers with an export and domestic demand of Rs.7,000 crore and Rs.4,400 crore, respectively. The domestic market is growing at 17 per cent and the projected demand of organic food market is likely to cross Rs. 87.1 crore by 2021 from Rs. 53.3 crore in 2016. The export market size of organic products has increased by 42 per cent during 2021 compared to last year and the volume of organic products exported from April 2020 to February 2021 was 819,250 MT with value of \$948 million.

'Sresta Natural Bioproducts' is a sustainable livelihood venture that has enabled 45,000 farmers turn to practicing organic farming across the country. The company has converted two lakh acres of land across 15 states. Over 200 products are sold in 10,000 stores and exported to 50 countries under the brand name 24 Mantra. A 'jaivik kheti' web portal in fact connects farmers to consumers for better prices. These are encouraging but still baby steps. Organic farming, perceived as a fad of the rich and expensive, cannot become a mass movement unless organic products are verifiable and affordable.

When shall we see a 'mahapanchayat' discussing these challenges before Indian agriculture?

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THEY (THE BJP) ARE FAKE HINDUS. THEY USE RELIGION, THEY ARE BROKERS OF RELIGION, BUT THEY ARE NOT HINDUS.

—CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI



RAHUL GANDHI SHOULD NOT MAKE THESE STATEMENTS. HE IS TOTALLY DISCONNECTED FROM THE GROUND AND HAS NO INFORMATION.

—BJP NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY ARUN SINGH

As NaMo turns 71, the world turns to him

The universal farsightedness of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his ability to foresee challenges places him well above others

On September 17 this year, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi turns 71, his fans cutting across political lines remind themselves how he has proved to be a visionary and charismatic statesman, a role model for others to follow.

Even his detractors have to acknowledge that his public image shines, as evidenced by a recent Morning Consult survey judging him the most popular among 13 world leaders.

With an acceptance rating of as high as 70 per cent, he was crowned as the tallest leader, followed by Mexican president Andres Manuel López Obrador with a score of 64 per cent. They were followed by Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi (63 per cent), German



JASIM MOHAMMAD

(The writer is Professor and Founder Chairman, Centre for Narendra Modi Studies, Aligarh. The views expressed are personal.)

Chancellor Angela Merkel (52 per cent), US President Joe Biden (48 per cent), Australian PM Scott Morrison (48 per cent), Canadian PM Justin Trudeau (45 per cent), UK PM Boris Johnson (41 per cent), Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro (39 per cent), South Korean President Moon Jae-In (38 per cent), Spanish PM Pedro Sánchez (35 per cent) and French President Emmanuel Macron (34).

No doubt, on September 24 when Modi visits the United States for a Quad summit, he is likely to meet President Biden for bilateral talks on subjects including Afghanistan for the first time after Biden rose to presidency.

There are many reasons why Modi has achieved globally what many other Indian



PMs failed to. One of them is universal farsightedness that he is credited with. He can foresee the challenges lying ahead and has solutions ready for them. This quality not only made him different from his predecessors but put him ahead of other top world leaders.

Take the case of the Covid-19 pandemic that brought the world to a standstill last year. Braving the criticism of the opposition parties at home,

Modi emerged as a global messiah by reaching out to other countries with vaccines while ensuring that the vaccine supply to Indians was not adversely affected. If this was not enough, he turned health into akey global agenda at the BRICS summit that he chaired on September 9.

He "stressed the need for accelerating 'buildback' by enhancing speed and accessibility of vaccination, creating 'resilience' by diversifying pharmaceutical and vaccine production capacities beyond the developed world".

Another major success of Modi as the host of the BRICS Summit was his affirmation in the presence of Chinese President Xi Jinping about the global stand against terrorism and the unprecedented situa-

tion that has dramatically unfolded in Afghanistan following the withdrawal of troops by the US.

In the wake of the stand of Communist China, which has decided to hobnob with the Taliban in league with Pakistan to expand its presence in Afghanistan not only for commercial interests but also for secret strategic purposes, a development that can pose a serious threat to India, Modi has been able to tie smartly four other countries to the New Delhi Declaration.

The joint resolution underlined: "We follow with concern the latest developments in Afghanistan. We call for refraining from violence and settling the situation by peaceful means. We stress the need to contribute to fostering an

inclusive intra-Afghan dialogue so as to ensure stability, civil peace, law and order in the country. We condemn in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks near the Hamid Karzai Kabul International Airport that resulted in a large number of deaths and injuries. We underscore the priority of fighting terrorism, including preventing attempts by terrorist organizations to use Afghan territory as terrorist sanctuary and to carry out attacks against other countries, as well as drug trade within Afghanistan. We emphasise the need to address the humanitarian situation and to uphold human rights, including those of women, children and minorities."

Significantly it also came a day after Russia and India discussed coordinating among

themselves on Afghanistan during NSA-level talks in New Delhi. The New Delhi declaration also carries a veiled yet strong warning from Modi to Pakistan, which is not part of BRICS but is aligned with China and has been chiefly responsible for overthrowing a democratically elected and India-friendly government in Afghanistan by supporting a terrorist outfit like the Taliban militarily.

If China, at the behest of Pakistan, dares to play any mischief from Afghanistan targeting India in future, Modi and leaders of the three other nations would have every right to confront Jinping for violation of the agreement. And that would certainly not be a good experience for the leaders either Beijing or Islamabad.

AHEAD OF SCO SUMMIT China says will work closely with member States on Af issues

Beijing: Ahead of the SCO summit, China on Thursday said it is ready to have close communication and coordination with the bloc's member states and jointly work on Afghanistan to build an open and inclusive political structure in the war-torn country controlled by the Taliban.

The eight-member Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) grouping of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan will hold its 21st summit on Friday at Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe.

Afghanistan is an observer in the SCO.

The SCO and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) comprising Russia and Central Asian States will hold a joint summit meeting on Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with Chinese

President Xi Jinping would address the summit via video link.

Asked about the SCO and CSTO summit on Afghanistan, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here that "the Afghan situation bears on regional security and stability".

"Members of the SCO and CSTO are all close neighbours of Afghanistan and they all actively support the peace and reconstruction and reconciliation process in Afghanistan," he said.

"China is a member of the SCO which is ready to have close communication and coordination with relevant countries, jointly work on Afghanistan to build an open and inclusive political structure, adopt moderate and prudent domestic and foreign policies, make a clean break with all forms of terrorist groups and live on friendly terms with other countries."

"We are ready to continue to have good neighbourliness and friendly cooperation with Afghanistan, and play a constructive role in its peace and reconstruction," he said.

China, which has kept its embassy open in Kabul along with Pakistan and Russia, has maintained close communication with the Taliban's interim government though it has not formally recognised it.

Beijing has announced a USD 31-million aid for the war-torn country.

The Taliban seized power in Afghanistan on August 15, two weeks before the US' complete troop withdrawal on August 31 after a costly two-decade war. This forced Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to flee the country to the UAE. **PTI**

Taliban hand over seized cash, gold to Af central bank

IANS ■ KABUL

The Taliban have handed over about \$12.3 million cash and some gold to Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB), the country's central bank, a statement said on Thursday.

The cash and gold bars found from the houses of former administration's officials and local offices of former government's intelligence agency have been returned to Da Afghanistan Bank's treasury, Xinhua news agency quoted the statement as saying.

"The officials of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan by handing over the assets to national treasury proved their commitment to transparency," it added.

Afghans long for better life as Taliban manage to run country

IANS ■ KABUL

While the security situation in Afghanistan has remained stable since the Taliban takeover in August, the country is now facing economic and humanitarian challenges, with its people longing for a better life and the new Government calling for international assistance.

There has been no major security incident or armed clashes since August 15 when Taliban took over 33 of the country's 34 provinces, except a deadly suicide bomb blast and shooting outside the Kabul International Airport, which killed over 170 Afghan civilians and 13 US soldiers, while injuring nearly 200 others, Xinhua news agency reported.

On September 6, the Taliban announced that its fighters had captured Panjshir, the only province that had remained out of the group's control, days after sporadic clashes were reported in the mountainous province.

There were no civilian casualties during the fighting in Panjshir, Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said, adding that electricity and internet service would resume in the province soon.

No major clashes have been reported in Panjshir since then, although the so-called National Resistance Front of Afghanistan led by Ahmad Massoud, the son of former anti-Taliban leader Ahmad Shah Massoud, has denied the Taliban's claim of capturing Panjshir.

"The war is over, and insecurity and fighting are not a concern among the Afghans anymore," Mujahid said.

Afghanistan would soon have a regular army to defend the country, Taliban's army chief of staff Qari Fasihuddin said Wednesday.

"Afghanistan would have a regular, disciplined and strong army in near future to defend and protect the country and consultations in this field continue," Fasihuddin said at a gathering in Kabul, adding members of the proposed army would be well-trained and disciplined to defend and protect Afghanistan.

Over 634,000 Afghans displaced this yr: UN agency

Kabul: More than 634,000 Afghans have been internally displaced by conflicts in 2021, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the war-torn nation said on Thursday.

A total of 634,800 people had been verified as having been displaced by conflicts as of September 12, 2021, out of which 282,246 displaced people had received assistance, Xinhua news agency quoted the OCHA as saying in a report.

The report came as the security situation in Afghanistan has remained stable since the Taliban's takeover of the country in mid-August.

Afghan officials and humanitarian agencies have expressed concern over the living condition of the displaced families in the country since it affected the life of women and children as they do not have access to health facilities and schooling.

More than 28,000 Afghans have been also affected by natural disasters across Afghanistan starting this year, according to the figures provided by OCHA.

On Monday, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the possibility of a complete economic collapse in Afghanistan was "serious" and highlighted an urgent need for funding support at a high-level ministerial meeting on Afghanistan's humanitarian situation in Geneva.

On Tuesday, the UN appealed to the countries pledging \$1.2 billion in relief for Afghanistan to take action quickly. **IANS**

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Dy. Chief Engineer/ Headquarter (Procurement Cell-1) GGSSTP, Roonagar invites E-Tender ID No. 2021_POWER_72014_1 for M/c. of railway track in GGSSTP railway yard (equated length 35.266 KM) and railway track from Ropar railway station to GGSSTP railway station (RTP Block Section) equated length 7.506 KM. For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from **17-09-2021/ 11.00 AM** onwards.
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Last date for submission of bids on website: 11.10.2021 upto 17:00 hrs.
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Email - cfmis.cg@gov.in Website - www.fmisonline.org, <https://www.cgforest.com>
No./FMIS/IT/Tender/2021/1086 Nava Raipur, Atal Nagar Raipur, Dt.14/09/2021

Tender in Envelopes super-scribing "Tender for Supply and Installation of IT & Electronic Goods" are Invited from reputed IT firms. The Tender document can be purchased from the office of DFO, FMIS by paying Rs.1000/- per form by DD in the name of DFO FMIS till 18.10.2021 during office hrs (If Tender is not finalized on due date 18.10.2021 then 2nd round of Tender will be on 25.10.2021, If 2nd round of Tender is not finalized then 3rd round of Tender will be on 01.11.2021). The document shall be received till 18.10.2021/25.10.2021/01.11.2021 at 12.00 PM and will be opened on same day at 2.00 PM

The bid document is available at www.fmisonline.org for viewing purpose only.

Sd/-
Conservator of Forest,
Ro. No. 63712/2 Forest Management Information System,
Ro. Date. 16/09/2021 Nava Raipur, Atal Nagar (C.G.)

MODERN COACH FACTORY, RAEBARELI
Tender No.: Re-CAMC-EOT-2021-22-8A Due on 04/10/2021
Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer/M&P, Modern Coach Factory, Raebareli for and on behalf of president of India, invites ONLINE open tender based on two packet system from reputed firms through Indian Railways portal www.irps.gov.in for Tender notice no. Re-CAMC-EOT-2021-22-8A. Due on 04/10/2021 on prescribed format for the under mentioned work- **Description of Work:-** Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract of 35 Nos. EOT cranes along with DSL for 02 year as per scope of work. **Approx. Value (in Rs.)** 1,14,24,750.00 (Rs. One Crore Fourteen Lakhs Twenty Four Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty Only). **Earnest Money :- Nil; Cost of Tender Document :- Rs.5,000.00 Completion period from the date of commencement of work:- 24 months (02 years) Date and Time of closing of tender - 04.10.2021 at 15:30 hrs. *Detailed Tender Notice, Eligibility criteria, Terms and conditions are available in tender document at Indian Railways portal : www.irps.gov.in.
Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer (M&P)**

e-Advertised Tender Notice No. 33/ET/2021-22 Dated: 13.09.2021

SN	Tender No.	Short Description	Qty.	Due Date
01	12211097	Brake Support	6799 Nos.	11.10.2021
02	12211069	Wear Plate	6852 Nos.	30.09.2021
03	05201033	LED Light Fitting for Doorway / Gangway Area	2944 Nos.	01.10.2021
04	15195229C	SMF VRLA Battery, Sealed MF Rechargeable	120 Nos.	11.10.2021
05	11211079	Stiffening Plate	6405 Nos.	11.10.2021
06	12211048	Roll Link	3801 Nos.	13.10.2021
07	11211167	End Construction for LHB High Capacity Parcel Van Coach	268 Nos.	11.10.2021
08	05211190	Led Light fitting for Toilet Indication in LHB AC Coaches.	2241 Nos.	08.10.2021

Corrigendum

01	Corrigendum No.03 Dated 01.09.2021	Tender No. 04211266	Due date may be read as 22.09.2021 instead of 08.09.2021
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e-Advertised Tender Notice No. 34/ET/2021-22 Dated: 15.09.2021

SN	Tender No.	Short Description	Qty.	Due Date
1	05211338	Aluminum Pipe	118605 MTR	18.10.2021
2	05211339	Battery Box Assembly (Installation and Commissioning Not Required)	984 Nos.	22.10.2021
3	12211035	Bogie Bolster Assembly for Air Spring Type Flat Bogie	723 Nos.	25.11.2021
4	05211362	Cable Duct L= 3 M	19440 Nos.	12.10.2021
5	05211371	Set of Panel (for LHB Non AC Coaches) Without LV Panel	129 Set	12.10.2021
6	05211376	Cable Duct as per Drg. No. LW44174 Item 6 ALT C with length 3 mtrs.	10591 Nos.	08.10.2021
7	12211146A	Male Stud Connector	4000 Nos.	07.10.2021

Corrigendum

01	33/ET/2021-22 Dated 13.09.2021	Tender No. 04211266	Due date may be read as 30.09.2021 instead of 22.09.2021
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Website Address: www.irps.gov.in & www.mct.indianrailways.gov.in
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Imran Khan: Pak had to endure 'terrible' relationship with US

New Delhi: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said that his country had to endure a "terrible" relationship with the US which turned out to be disastrous for Islamabad.

In an interview with CNN, Khan also called out the US for repeatedly accusing Pakistan of harbouring terrorists, Dawn news reported.

"What are these safe havens? The area of Pakistan along the border of Afghanistan had the heaviest surveillance by the US drones, surely they would have known if there were any safe havens?"

The premier said that Pakistan was unable to take military action against the Afghan Taliban because they were not attacking Pakistan.

"Pakistan had its own internal matters to look at, such as attacks from the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)" **IANS**

Killing of Islamic State leader big victory: France

Paris: France killed the leader of Islamic State in the Greater Sahara because the group attacked French aid workers, African civilians and US troops, French officials said Thursday, calling him "enemy No. 1" in protracted anti-terrorist efforts in the Sahel.

French President Emmanuel Macron announced the death of Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahrawi overnight. According to Macron's office, al-Sahrawi personally ordered the killing of six French aid workers and their Nigerian colleagues last year, and his group was behind a 2017 attack that killed US and Niger military personnel.

He was killed in a strike by France's Barkhane military operation "a few weeks ago," but authorities waited to be sure of his identity before making the announcement, French Defense Minister Florence Parly told RFI radio Thursday.

She did not disclose details of the operation or where al-Sahrawi was killed, though the Islamic State group is active along the border between Mali and Niger.

"He was at the origin of massacres and terror," French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Thursday on France-Info radio. He urged African governments to fill the void and seize back ground taken by the Islamic State extremists.

Rumors of the militant leader's death had circulated for weeks in Mali, though authorities in the region had not confirmed it. It was not immediately possible to independently verify the claim or to know how the remains had been identified.

Al-Sahrawi had claimed responsibility for a 2017 attack in Niger that killed four U.S. military personnel and four people with Niger's military. His group also has abducted foreigners in the Sahel and is believed to still be holding American Jeffrey Woodke, who was abducted from his home in Niger in 2016.

The extremist leader was born in the disputed territory of Western Sahara and later joined the Polisario Front. After spending time in Algeria, he made his way to northern Mali where he became an important figure in the group

3 dead, 60 hurt in 6.0-magnitude China earthquake

Beijing: Three people were killed and 60 others injured on Thursday after a powerful 6.0-magnitude earthquake jolted Luxian county in China's Sichuan province, authorities said.

China Earthquake Administration has dispatched a work team to guide on-site disaster relief work, reports xinhua news agency.

A total of 890 commanders and fighters from nearby fire-fighting and rescue brigades have been mobilised, while another 4,600 rescue workers are on standby.

There were a total of 737 collapsed houses, 72 houses with serious damage, while 7,290 with damage to some extent.

Collapsed walls and houses were seen on the way to rain-battered Jianning township in the epicentre area.

Electricity in most of the houses in the town has been suspended.

Amid heavy rain in Fuji township, rescue workers were going door to door searching for people in the damaged houses and moving them to temporary shelters.

More than 6,900 affected residents have been relocated, and over 10,000 people were shifted to temporary shelters as of early Thursday morning, according to the local government.

According to the China Earthquake Networks Centre, the earthquake occurred at 4.33 a.m.

The epicentre was monitored at 29.2 degrees north latitude and 105.34 degrees east longitude. The quake struck at a depth of 10 km.

Approved by the provincial government, the earthquake relief headquarters of Sichuan has activated a level-II response, the second highest in China's four-tier earthquake emergency response system.

Some telecommunication base stations and cables were damaged.

The Luzhou high-speed railway station has been closed, according to railway authorities.

All coal mines have been ordered to halt underground operations and evacuate miners in shafts. **IANS**

'New AI tool can help treat Covid patients globally'

PTI ■ LONDON

A team of international researchers has developed an artificial intelligence (AI) tool that can predict how much extra oxygen a Covid-19 patient might need during hospital care.

To check the accuracy of the AI tool, it was tested out in a number of hospitals across five continents.

The results showed it predicted the oxygen needed within 24 hours of a patient's arrival in the emergency department, with a sensitivity of 95 per cent and a specificity of over 88 per cent.

The outcomes of around 10,000 Covid-19 patients from across the world were analysed in the study published in the journal Nature Medicine on Thursday.

The technique, known as federated learning, used an algorithm to analyse chest X-rays and electronic health data from hospital patients with Coronavirus symptoms.

To maintain strict patient confidentiality, the patient data was fully anonymised and an algorithm was sent to each hospital so no data was shared or left its location.

Once the algorithm had 'learned' from the data, the analysis was brought together to build the AI tool.

"Federated learning has transformative power to bring AI innovation to the clinical workflow," said Professor Fiona Gilbert, from the University of Cambridge in the UK, who led the study.

"Usually in artificial intelligence development, when you create an algorithm on one hospital's data, it doesn't work well at any other hospital," said study first author Ittai Dayan, from Mass General Brigham in the US.

By developing the model using objective, multimodal data from different continents, the researchers were able to build a generalisable model that can help frontline physicians worldwide.

Bringing together collaborators across North and South America, Europe and Asia, the study took just two weeks of AI 'learning' to achieve high-quality predictions.

'Menstrual changes after Covid vax plausible, must be investigated'

London: A link between changes in the menstrual cycle and Covid-19 vaccination is plausible, and must be investigated, according to an editorial published in the peer-reviewed British Medical Journal today.

In the editorial, Victoria Male, a reproductive specialist at Imperial College London, UK noted that periods or unexpected vaginal bleeding are not listed as common side effects of Covid-19 vaccination.

Over 30,000 such reports had been made to the UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) surveillance scheme for adverse drug reactions by September 2, she said.

The expert, however, noted most people find that their period returns to normal the following cycle and, importantly, there is no evidence that Covid-19 vaccination adversely affects fertility.

"One important lesson is that the effects of medical interventions on menstruation should not be an afterthought in future research," Ms Male said. MHRA states that its surveillance data does not support a link between changes to menstrual periods and Covid-19 vaccines, since the number of reports is low in relation to both the number of people vaccinated and the prevalence of menstrual disorders generally.

However, Ms Male said the way in which data is collected makes firm conclusions difficult.

She argues in the editorial that approaches better equipped to compare rates of menstrual changes in vaccinated versus unvaccinated populations are needed.

Reports of menstrual changes after Covid-19 vaccination have been made for both mRNA and adenovirus-vectored vaccines, she said.

This suggest that, if there is a connection, it is likely to be a result of the immune response to vaccination, rather than to a specific vaccine component, Ms Male said.

The editorial also noted that the menstrual cycle may be affected by the body's immune response to the virus itself, with one study showing menstrual disruption in around a quarter of women infected with S-CoV-2. **IANS**

Countries in South Asia should make efforts to peace: China

PTI ■ BEIJING

China said on Thursday that all countries in South Asia should make efforts to maintain peace, security and stability in the region as it reacted to media reports on India's plan to test nuclear-capable ICBM Agni-V ballistic missile, which has a range of 5,000 kms.

"Maintaining peace, security and stability in South Asia meets the common interests of all, where China hopes that all parities would make constructive efforts," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here, replying to a question about reports that India plans to test Agni-V missile.

The missile, with a strike range of 5,000 kms, could reach several Chinese cities and was expected to significantly bolster India's military prowess.

The missile, which is capable of carrying nuclear warhead, has been successfully tested five times and is in the process of induction into the Army. All the five trials were successful.

Very few countries, including the US, China, Russia, France and North Korea, have intercontinental ballistic missiles.

"As for whether India can develop ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons, the UNSCR 1172 already has clear stipulations," he said.

The UNSC resolution of 1172 is related to 1998 nuclear tests by both India and Pakistan.

It condemned the nuclear tests conducted by India and by Pakistan and asked the two countries to refrain from further nuclear tests. It also urged India and Pakistan to cease development of ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

China has come up with similar reactions during past tests of Agni-V by India.

US, UK, Australia announce new security partnership

Washington: The US, the UK, and Australia have announced the creation of a new trilateral security partnership.

US President Joe Biden, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison made the announcement during a virtual event, reports Xinhua news agency.

In a joint statement, the three governments said the partnership, called "AUKUS", will help "significantly deepen cooperation on a range of security and defence capabilities".

The first initiative under AUKUS will be delivering a nuclear-powered submarine fleet for Australia and the three countries will spend as many as 18 months discussing how this capability will be delivered, according to the statement.

Australia intends to build the submarines in Adelaide, a coastal city in the country's south, in cooperation with the UK and the US, Morrison said in his remarks. **IANS**

New Zealand launches vaccine buses

Auckland: Three mobile vaccine buses launched in New Zealand's Auckland city on Thursday to help people fasten their Covid-19 vaccination.

According to local media, 12 such buses in total converted from airport Park and Ride vehicles will be provided to suburbs where access to vaccinations is more difficult, reports Xinhua news agency.

The converted black and orange airport buses have vaccination signs posted on their sides. One reads "Roll up your sleeves, Auckland", and another "Vaccinate for Auckland".

Auckland is experiencing the fifth consecutive week of Level 4 lockdown, the longest period since Covid-19 outbreak in the country. **IANS**

Several patients with Black Fungus detected in SL

Colombo: Sri Lanka's Health Ministry said patients with the Black Fungus had been detected from several areas of the country amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. Deputy Director General of Health Services Hemantha Herath told the media on Wednesday that the Black Fungus had been detected on patients infected with Covid-19, who were under treatment in the Colombo National Hospital, Kurnegala Hospital and Ratnapura Hospital, among others, reports Xinhua news agency.

"The symptoms of this disease develop depending on the place where the fungus appears on the body. The fungus can be found on the skin, around the eyes, nose, brain and lungs," Herath said. **IANS**

Markets maintain record run

SENSEX BREACHES 59K FOR FIRST TIME

Market benchmark Sensex scaled the 59,000-mark for the first time on Thursday as investors remained in risk-on mode following the government's policy support measures for various sectors.

Reddy's were among the laggards, slipping up to 1.32 per cent. "Driven by reforms, the Indian market kept raising its bar and traded to new record highs.

BSE bankex was the biggest sectoral gainer, jumping 2.12 per cent, followed by energy, finance, FMCG and oil & gas indices. Metal, teck, IT and basic materials were among the losers.

Rupee edges 2 paise lower at 73.52 against US dollar

Mumbai: The rupee closed marginally lower at 73.52 against the American currency on Thursday, tracking a rebound in the US dollar index.

GST Council to meet on Friday Rate review, tax concession to 11 Covid drugs on cards

The GST Council, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, will meet on Friday, which among other things may review tax rate of over four-dozen items and extend till December 31, tax concessions on 11 Covid drugs.

BRIEFS

DR SANJAY KUMAR LAL JOINS AS DIRECTOR (FIN) - DELHI TRANSCO LTD Dr Sanjay Kumar Lal, an officer of 2001 batch of Indian Revenue Services has recently joined Delhi Transco Limited as Director (Finance).



GOVT SEEKS ₹8-10 LAKH CRORE VALUATION FOR LIC New Delhi: India is seeking a valuation of between ₹8 trillion and ₹10 trillion for the state-backed Life Insurance Corporation in what's slated to be the nation's biggest initial public offering, Bloomberg reported.

LOWER GST ON TETRA PACKS CAUSED ₹948 CR LOSS: THINK TANK New Delhi: Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Smriti Manch, a Delhi-Mumbai based think tank, has highlighted that tetra pack is incorrectly categorised in the 12 per cent GST slab as a paper based aseptic packaging.

Shorter settlement cycle is in interest of all market participants: Sebi chief

Amidst concerns raised by brokers' association and FPIs over the implementation of the shorter settlement system, Sebi chairman Ajay Tyagi on Thursday said the T+1 (trade plus one day) settlement cycle is in the interest of all market participants.

Niti Aayog Vice Chairman emphasises need to reduce carbon footprint in urbanisation

Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar on Thursday emphasised the need to reduce carbon footprint in urbanisation and said urban India will be powering the country's economic growth.

PLI scheme for auto sector to build self-sustaining framework for e-mobility industry: SMEV

The Union Cabinet has on Wednesday approved a ₹ 26,058 crore PLI scheme for auto, auto-components and drone industries to enhance India's manufacturing capabilities.

PUBLIC NOTICE Be it known to all the concerns that my client VIMAL JYOTI S/O LATE SH. MURARI LAL R/O A-253-254, GALI NO. 5, WEST VINOD NAGAR, DELHI-110092 has severed all of his relation and debarred his unmarried Son MAYANK JYOTI From his moveable or immovable properties in Delhi due to disobedient attitude.

PUBLIC NOTICE Whereas my clients, (1) Mrs. Anju Sachdeva W/o Mr. Mahesh Kumar & (2) Mr. Mahesh Kumar S/o Sh. Tuls Das both R/O A-128, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi-68, hereby declare that they have disowned, disinherited & debarred their Son Mr. Mohit Sachdeva & their Daughter-in-law Mrs. Sakshi Arora from their Property No. A/E-108, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi-68, & all moveable, immovable & other properties w.e.f. from today & if anybody deals with them, shall do so at his/her/their own risk, cost & responsibility, my clients & their family members shall not be responsible in any manner.

PUBLIC NOTICE Whereas my clients, (1) Mrs. Karla Devi W/o Mr. Ved Ram & (2) Mr. Ved Ram S/o Late Neki Lal both R/O Jhuggi No. N-77/C-419, Sawan Park Extn, Asrok Vihar, Delhi-52 hereby declare that they have disowned, disinherited & debarred their Daughter Mrs. Armita W/o Mr. Raj Kumar and their Son-in-law Mr. Raj Kumar from their Property / Jhuggi N-77/C-419, Sawan Park Extn, Asrok Vihar, Delhi-52 & all moveable, immovable & other properties w.e.f. from today & if anybody deals with them, shall do so at his/her/their own risk, cost & responsibility, my clients & their family members shall not be responsible in any manner.

Prospects brightening for economy as 2nd Covid wave wanes: RBI bulletin

Prospects are brightening for the Indian economy achieving "escape velocity" from the pandemic as the second wave of Covid-19 wanes and preparedness for future remains on war-alert status, according to an RBI bulletin published on Thursday.

"In August, we believe that India passed a turning point which consolidates and thrives come September," said the article authored by a team lead by RBI Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra.

PUBLIC NOTICE General Public is hereby informed that Mrs. Neelam Arora W/o Late Sh. Inderjeet Singh R/o E-1/802, Kingsbury Tower, TDI City, Kundli, Razi, Sonapat, Haryana-131029 has applied for transfer of ownership of flat no. E-1/802 measuring 1930 sq.ft./sq.yd. approx & customer ID No. KFL-12492 TDI City, Kundli, Sonapat Haryana in her/his name claiming her/him self the legal heir of deceased Late Sh. Inderjeet Singh S/o Sh. Surat Singh as per document, dated in records of company i.e. TDI Infrastructure Ltd. having its office Vandana Building, 11, Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi-110001. Any person having any objection for transfer of the said flat in favour of Mrs. Neelam Arora W/o Late Sh. Inderjeet Singh may send at the above noted office of company with supporting documents or through email customer.care@tdiinfacorp.com within 15 days of the publication of this notice other wise it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the proposed transfer of the said flat in his/her name. After that company shall not be liable for any claim whatsoever after 15 days.

IMPORTANT NOTICE This is notified for the information of rail passengers that the railways have decided to extend the experimental stoppage of train no. 05955/05956 Kamakhya-Delhi Jn.-Kamakhya Special Express at Samsi station for period of another 06 months with immediate effect as under:-

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd. 3rd Floor, Plot No-23, Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005

E-TENDER NOTICE GUJARAT MARITIME BOARD "Sagar Bhavan", Sector 10/A, Chh Road, Opp. Air Force, Gandhinagar 382010 Phone 079-2323 8346/47/48/51

POLICE HEADQUARTERS, CHHATTISGARH, ATAL NAGAR, NAVA RAIPUR Re-tender Notice No. PHQ/Sec-10/Kit-Clo/3893/21 Nava Raipur, Dated: 14/09/2021

India second-largest technology hub for Amazon globally: India Head

India is the second-largest technology hub for Amazon globally and its teams are powering innovations not only for customers in the country but globally as well, a top company executive said on Thursday.

Amazon globally, with some of the most talented software developers, product managers, machine learning scientists, and research scientists as part of the team," he said.

उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान, कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, अनुसूचना खण्ड निकट विकास भवन लडाही, उत्तरकाशी-249193, दूरभाष नं०- 0137422206 (कार्यो) 01374222370 (फैक्स) ई-मेल: eeki-uj-s-uk@nic.in, ujsuttarkashi@gmail.com



Bollywood
 'Social media educated the mother in me. There are so many things we might not be aware of...'
 —Sameera Reddy

HAVE YOUR BACK

MEENAKSHI MOHANTY suggests nine easy stretches to relieve your backache

We all experience back pain and now it has become one of the most common issues especially due to the increased work-from-home situation. Also, continuously sitting in front of our laptops can further make your back feel sore. While many of us continue to live with back pain, the consequences cannot be good. It not only disrupts our daily lives but also holds us back from doing the things we love. The good news is there are some simple stretches that you can incorporate in your daily routine to help ease your back pain—

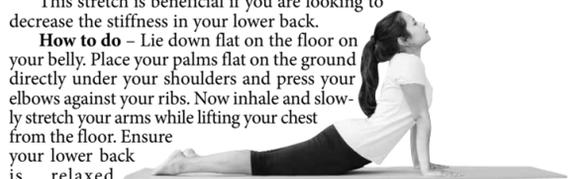
Child's pose/ prayer stretch
 Rejuvenating both the body and mind. Its great for relieving tension in the lower back and lengthening the entire spine.

How to do – Start on all fours. Ensure your knees are hip width apart and toes together. Now with palms facing towards the floor, extend your hands in front of you while pushing your hips back toward your heels until you feel a mild stretch in the back. Hold this position for 30 seconds.



Cobra stretch
 This stretch is beneficial if you are looking to decrease the stiffness in your lower back.

How to do – Lie down flat on the floor on your belly. Place your palms flat on the ground directly under your shoulders and press your elbows against your ribs. Now inhale and slowly stretch your arms while lifting your chest from the floor. Ensure your lower back is relaxed. Hold for 10 seconds and release.



Lower back rotational stretch
 This increases flexibility in your lower back.

How to do – Begin by lying on the floor with your knees bent. Now keeping your shoulders firmly on the ground, take both your knees and roll it over to the right side. Hold for a few seconds and return to the starting position. Repeat on the other side.



Cat/ cow stretch
 This pose is ideal for those dealing with back pain and helps to improve posture and balance.

How to do – Start on all fours with your hands in line with your shoulders and your knees beneath your hips. Now exhale and gently arch your back like a cat. Hold for 10 seconds and move back to normal position. Repeat 20 times and remember to move slowly in between movements.



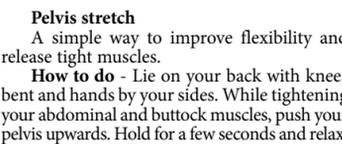
Knee-to-chest stretch
 Ideal for lower back muscles and helps relieve pressure on the spinal nerves.

How to do – Start by lying on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Keeping your core tight and back pressed against the floor, lift your right knee and press it towards your chest using both hands. Hold for a few seconds and return to the starting position. Now repeat with the other leg.



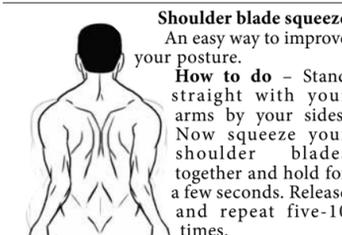
Bridge
 Benefits your hamstrings, lower back and abs. It is also great for people suffering from back, hip, or knee pain.

How to do – Start by lying on the floor with your knees bent. Now raise your hips till your knees to your shoulders are in line. Hold this position for five seconds and return to the starting position. Repeat three-four times.



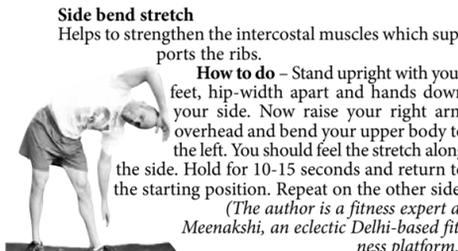
Pelvis stretch
 A simple way to improve flexibility and release tight muscles.

How to do – Lie on your back with knees bent and hands by your sides. While tightening your abdominal and buttock muscles, push your pelvis upwards. Hold for a few seconds and relax.



Shoulder blade squeeze
 An easy way to improve your posture.

How to do – Stand straight with your arms by your sides. Now squeeze your shoulder blades together and hold for a few seconds. Release and repeat five-10 times.



Side bend stretch
 Helps to strengthen the intercostal muscles which supports the ribs.

How to do – Stand upright with your feet, hip-width apart and hands down your side. Now raise your right arm overhead and bend your upper body to the left. You should feel the stretch along the side. Hold for 10-15 seconds and return to the starting position. Repeat on the other side.
 (The author is a fitness expert at Meenakshi, an eclectic Delhi-based fitness platform.)



Wait and watch

The Indian workforce is rebooting to find a work-life balance, says SUJIT PATIL

From an office built to bring people closer to collaborate and have an in-person engagement, the pandemic, by bringing work from home (WFH) in vogue, has apparently pushed organisations to rejig their working styles to meet social distancing norms. Virtual working has become the de-facto model. As the industry struggles to find a balance and experiments with hybrid models, on the brighter side, the Indian workforce has slowly started to adapt itself to strike a work-life balance with the new conditions.

A Godrej group's research, named 'The little things we do', revealed how professionals across all age-groups have balanced working from home with their personal lives. During the first nationwide lockdown, working professionals struggled to manage their work deadlines and household chores. For some, it was challenging, while others chose to adapt and adjust to it.

The study found that nationally on the personal front, working from home has helped more than one in three persons to spend more time with family due to the removal of the long commute time to their workplace. This trend wasn't far off from the expected lines in metros and tier one cities like Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune, and Kolkata. However, tier two cities such as Lucknow and Kanpur (56 per cent), Kochi (46 per cent) reported better figure than the national average.

Connect this insight with the MovelnSync study of 2018-19 which found that, on an average, Indians spend seven per cent of their day commuting to the office, and the picture becomes clearer. Similarly, Uber's Movement data in 2020 pointed out that an average Mumbaikar wastes about 11 days stuck in traffic each year. With working from home, these are the precious hours earned back by people. The choice, therefore, is between utilising this time for enhancing productivity, spending time with family and friends, or exploring creative pursuits.

It was also found that more than one in five have explored their creative side and nurtured it to become home-cooks, painters, sketchers and pursue other hobbies. But one of the most delightful insights was the movement towards freshly cooked food. Over 45 per cent of people said that now they loved indulging in little pleasures like freshly cooked breakfast every day. For mental health and stress management, 29 per cent of respondents took regular breaks throughout the day to de-stress themselves.

As we are at the crossroads of deciding whether work from home would continue or there would be a hybrid model as the impact of the pandemic wanes, we must take a pause and evaluate the benefits. As many as there are benefits of adopting a work from home model, there are also numerous impediments that it causes. For instance, circadian rhythms of co-workers is an inherent lacuna of the WFH model. People are susceptible to household distractions and it puts the onus on employees to create a conducive environment that helps them focus on their work goals.

With work from home becoming a day to day affair for the working force, only 19 per cent of people who participated in the research reported that they have improved at work efficiency and end tasks within the stipulated working hours. Additionally, only 16 per cent consider that working from home has assisted them in increasing their time-management skills.

For Asian countries, and especially India, perhaps WFH may not be a very conducive model. The Indian workforce, traditionally and culturally, has always valued social interactions. However, they were thrust involuntarily towards the model with little time to adjust to the changed environment, triggering a feeling of social isolation due to the touch-less and faceless work environment. An independent study, authored by Michael Gibbs from Chicago Booth, Friederike Mengel and Christoph Siemroth from University of Essex have validated this phenomenon. The team surveyed 10,000 employees of an unnamed major IT company based in Asia over 17 months before and during work from home trend set in. The primary finding was that total work hours by an employee surged by about 30 per cent in order to achieve the same goals set in pre-WFH period. Responsible organisations, therefore, are exploring a hybrid model or adopting a wait-and-watch policy towards resuming entry to offices. Meanwhile, they have stepped in with the necessary support for mental and physical health of their employees through various programmes and initiatives. Similarly, employees, too, are slowly adjusting to the changing environment by doing little things which can help them attain a work-life balance. But only time will tell whether the hybrid model will prove to be successful in India or will we revert to the traditional model of offline office environment. (The author is the vice president of Godrej Industries Limited and Associate Companies.)

Culture sees no borders

KAJAL NAINA discusses the social and cultural cross-border relationship between India and Nepal

Countries in South Asia, while having their own peculiarities, share common cultures and ways of life. The norms and values of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism are deeply rooted in South Asian societies. Although the number of followers of these religious and cultural mainstays vary from country to country, their presence and influence in local arts, cultures and traditions, are distinctly visible in every country and society in the region. Nepal, too, has its unique geography, history and cultural heritage, and still is an integral part of the broader cultural history and tradition of the Indian sub-continent.

While being parts of broader South Asian culture, Nepal and India share a special bond and similarity in cultural tradition. They are so closely knit by social life and cultural tradition that nobody can imagine them apart. Both have made great contributions in enriching religious and cultural heritage in this region, and beyond.

Lord Buddha for instance, born in Nepal, has left his footprints not only in South Asia but all over the world. Another example is Sita, the daughter of Nepal, who was married to Ram, the crown prince of Ayodhya in India, has made a special place in the hearts of Hindus living anywhere in the world. The contributions made by Indian philosophers and

saints need no further elaboration. It is these great personalities of this region that have helped evolve, develop and spread the cultural heritage that is proudly known today as South Asian culture.

The cultural links between Nepal and India have many facets. Religion is, perhaps, the most important factor, and plays a predominant role in shaping the cultural relations between these two countries. This is manifested in the large number of people from both countries visiting each other's countries for pilgrimage. Thousands of Nepalese nationals visit pilgrimage sites in India every year. The *char dham* yatra (visit of four dhams in India, viz. Badrinath/Kedarnath in Uttarakhand, Jagannath (Puri) in Orissa, Rameshwaram in Tamilnadu, and Dwarka in Gujarat) is a life-time aspiration of almost all Hindus. There are many other places in India which are considered sacred sites by Nepalese people. They include Haridwar, Rishikesh, Varanasi, Gaya, Vaishnodevi, and many more. Similarly, there are a number of religious sites in Nepal which are con-



sidered very sacred and important, and are attractions as 'must visit' religious destinations for Indian nationals. Such sites include Pashupatinath in Kathmandu, Lumbini (the birth-place of Buddha) in Rupandehi district, Ram-Janaki temple in Janakpur (the

birth place of Janak and Sita), and many more. As the people of both countries share common religious faiths and philosophies, and revere and worship the same gods and incarnations, their cultural ties are very strong and inseparable. Except for the seamless exposure to the cultures, these countries also share a lot of traditions and ways of doing things. Following Indian traditions, Nepal is catching up quickly on the use of ornaments that are given religious and symbolic importance like *rudraksha*, *mangalsutra*, et al. *Mangalsutras* are getting a lot of attention and being used in marriages across Nepal. The trend was started by a Nepali actress with a special piece designed for her wedding day to give a meaningful, unique and relevant touch to modern day brides that has changed the game for this piece of jewellery amongst Nepalese women and abroad. This tradition is riding a big wave in Nepal and will give rise for many more to come.

Another component of Nepal-India cultural relations is cinemas and music. Indian movies are popular in Nepal; and so is Indian music. Similarly, Nepali cinemas and music are popular in India, especially in places with concentration of the people of Nepalese origin, mainly in Northern and North-eastern India. (The author is the founder and CEO of Kajal Naina Jewellery, a Hong Kong-based jewellery store.)

Between Nepal and India,

TRENDBLAZER



'A SIMPLE YET MAGICAL STORY'

As his short film, *Shimmy*, releases today, actor **PRATIK GANDHI** expressed how deeply he connected with the story wherein he plays the father of a teenaged daughter.

"It is the story of an aloof father and a daughter with a secret and how they embark on a journey to some uncomfortable destinations. Disha Noyonika Rindani, the director, knows how to lend a magical touch to the simplest of moments," expressed Gandhi. You can watch *Shimmy* on Amazon Mini TV.

fairtalk

ZOYA HUSSAIN



'I think the toughest thing is to stay patient and motivated between projects, however, that is a choice you have to make as an actor. Thankfully, after my debut in *Mukkabaaz*, I have been working constantly. As a professional actor, it is important to keep on working, because which film will get what amount of visibility is not really in our hands.'

dailytalk

JACQUELINE FERNANDEZ



'I have come across numerous instances on social media where someone is saying something mean about me. It's ok we all get it. I have read accounts of how terrible I sound, how terrible my accent is and the way I speak Hindi, and some criticism on my appearance. I try to take it positively, at times I think that some of the criticism is valid.'

PAVING HER OWN PATH: BERRY

Oscar-winning actor **HALLE BERRY** has debunked the notion that she has had an easy life, suggesting people are quick to judge her on the basis of her good looks.

She shared, "This is another battle that I have had to fight my entire life. That because I look a certain way that I've been spared any hardship. I've experience abuse, loss and a lot of pain in my life."

"Despite winning the Oscar for *Monster's Ball*, I still had to fight to make my way in life," Berry further revealed.



My friend and I, over the weekend, decided to venture into DLF Saket and had the toughest time choosing what to eat — millennials, huh? We either didn't like the cuisine, or the air conditioner was not good enough, or it was too crowded. We went from one restaurant to another and couldn't pick one, until our eyes landed on a cute lil' corner, right across Om bookshop. A cafe with a panoramic view of books? My nerdy friend and I saw all our doubts vanish into thin air. We learnt that Cafe Tesu had been newly inaugurated and saw our decision being made for us — none of us had any reservations since we had no opinion, whatsoever, about the same.



A COSY CORNER

KHUSHBU KIRTI is tempted by the balance of flavours awaiting her at Cafe Tesu at DLF, Saket



The moment we entered the area, the aroma of coffee beans engrossed our attention and tickled our taste-buds. So, an order for *Cold coffee frappe* was placed immediately, which went without saying. The frappe, which was fundamentally espresso muddled with ice-cream and milk, provided a calming buzz I was anxiously awaiting. Once I had coffee and was soothed, I was able to pay attention to my surroundings. There were hardly eight-nine tables, with a visible kitchen-counter laden with pink tiles. The cushions of the sofas were flowery, the place embellished by pink flowers in the corners. The plants, although artificial, suited the aesthetics well. The coffee and eatery flaunted a well-set combination of beige pink and turquoise, something that suits the Instagram aesthetics of the modern audience?

Since we had spent so much time roaming around, wondering what to eat, we were starving already. The first dishes presented to us were *Chicken and chives dimsums*, along with *Asian vegetable dimsums*. The former encompassed well-cooked chicken mingled satisfactorily with slight vegetables. Though watery

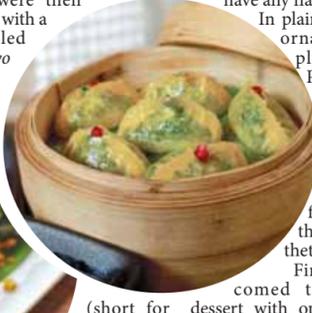
and soggy, it tasted good and was garnished with micro-leaves and beans. The *Asian vegetable dimsums* was an absolute treat for veggie lovers. The outer layer was super thin, intrinsically engulfing steamed vegetables that tasted rich and mild on the palate. Coupled with the sauce, it tasted even better. The blend was subtle. The stuffing was just the right amount, as reiterated by Chef Madhav, "If we went too crazy with the filling, the dumpling wouldn't have married with the sauce." My friend and I laughed heartily at this, going on doing what all food-lovers do — talk about and consume food (inserts innocent face emoji). I do want to, however, highlight the sauce specifically, for it was that good. It basically was a mouthful of all spices in a tiny dip. The chef filled us in on the information about its preparation that took two weeks. Like my friend said, perhaps, it tasted like a sophisticated version of home-

made *aam ka achar*. My friend, Neeraj, had an *Apple and cinnamon ice tea*, that he described as, "A little sweet and mildly tangy drink, refreshing and flavourful. It tastes like an apple squash mixed in soda and makes for a good beverage for hot weather."

We were then provided with a dish called *Sunny avo*



(short for avocado), which was an open-faced sandwich made of multigrain bread that would turn solid if left aside for long. It was enriched with guacamole spread topped over the sunny side up. The sandwich was ornamented with eggs that came with runny yolk. The eggs, however, were cooked satisfactorily, the stuff on top of it included chopped vegetables and



Even though we spent quite a lot of time at Cafe Tesu, my friend and I were full and content. Overall, it was a pleasant evening and I'd rate the cafe a 6.5 on 10.

sauses that were not exactly my cup of tea. While the food was adequate, the wait felt unpleasant. Probably owing to the nature of the size of the cafe and only the limited number of chefs the space could allow, the customers had to wait around for their orders to come. It had been two hours since we were at the eatery, and we realised it was a rather slow process.

Our penultimate dishes were *Asparagus tempura roll*, and the *Las Vegas roll*. The former incorporated salmon tuna and lettuce cream cheese. Outside, the orange and green *tobiko* provided a sophisticated and elegant touch. The sushi had a succulent sour flavour that lasted on the tongue. The *Asparagus tempura roll* was made of fried green chilli and plain *kew pie* mayo, topped with black sesame seeds. This vegetarian Japanese sushi did not have any flavour of its own.

In plain words, it was ornamented with plain rice. Perhaps, sushi was not our thing. Nevertheless, merely tasting the dish could make one feel fancy, thanks to the exquisite aesthetics around it.

Finally, we welcomed the chocolate dessert with open arms. The *Belgian chocolate tiramisu*, although so sweet that it could render sugar-rush, was chocolaty enough to stick in the mouth. It took time to melt and so the taste lasted for a while. Having said that, the cake could have been softer.



WHAT GOES IN, SHOWS OUTSIDE

RUBAINA ADHIKARI elaborates on some eating habits that can impart a healthy glow to your face

Deep down, every one of us yearns for healthy and glowing skin. To achieve this goal, we undertake various skin treatments and practise numerous home remedies, as well as other intensive skincare routines.

But what often goes unnoticed is that our internal health has a significant impact on some aspects of our body which are externally visible, especially our skin. This implies that what we eat eventually shows on our faces. Consuming junk, oily or spicy foods, irregular eating patterns, and not staying hydrated damage our skin. This is the reason why a healthy diet is extremely important if blemish-free, glowing and soft skin is what you wish to achieve.

Have a glimpse at some easy and effective tips that you can incorporate in your daily lives to reach one step closer to the best, possible skin you could attain:

The magic potion
 Staying hydrated is one of the most basic rules for having radiant skin. Drinking at least three litres of water daily is the key to healthy skin. Acting as a natural detoxifier, it flushes out the toxins and cleanses the skin naturally. Additionally, including water content rich foods such as citrus fruits, cucumbers, watermelon, coconut water and lemonade, among others, can also help fulfill the body's water requirements.

Eat those seasonal fruits and veggies
 Consuming fruits and veggies, especially the seasonal ones, help reap various benefits for the skin. Rich in antioxidants, along with essential vitamins and vital minerals, they prevent ageing while imparting a healthy glow to the skin.

Consuming a balanced diet
 This is one of the most common, yet essential, tips for maintaining your skin health. Intake of a balanced diet packed with all the essential nutrients will help keep your skin gleaming.

When your body obtains fiber, carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and other immunity-boosting foods in sufficient quantities, your vital statistics and overall health will be elevated. Be it fruits, veggies, nuts, seeds, grains, legumes, etc. include everything in the right quantities to your food and see how the diet works its magic on your skin!

Choose wisely
 If you want to have a radiant face and skin, then you will have to bid goodbye to the salty, sugary and spicy foods! They do not offer nutritional benefits and eventually damage our skin's health. Instead, try including healthy fats in your diet that would add to the glow and enhance your skin quality as well as complexion. Incorporate nuts, seeds, olive oil, avocado, eggs in your food that will prevent early ageing and wrinkling by rejuvenating your skin.

Probiotics and prebiotics
 Did you know that consuming probiotics and prebiotic-rich foods not only maintains gut health but also helps in having flawless skin? Probably not, right? While consuming such foods, like yoghurt, our gut stays healthy and this eventually paves the way for a glowing complexion and radiant skin. You can consume it as it is or transform it into fruit parfaits and smoothies to slowly, but surely, witness the change in your skin.

Green and herbal teas
 As much as reducing caffeine intake is important, substituting these with green tea and herbal tea is also essential. They protect our skin from harmful radicals, while preventing dark spots and acne as well as premature ageing and wrinkling.

Make a schedule and stick to it
 Amid our fast-paced lives, our eating patterns are usually erratic. If this sounds familiar, it's high time this needs to stop. Eating too little or in excess, at irregular intervals or simply skipping meals, consuming unhealthy food items -- all of these are bad eating habits. They don't just affect our health but also rob our skin of its glow! It would be ideal to formulate an eating schedule wherein you take five-six small meals that are balanced with the right food combinations. And don't forget, there should be adequate water breaks in between.

Summing up
 We need to understand that our diet is a critical element of our skincare regime. If you don't, all the efforts you put in to ensure your skin remains healthy and supple will go down the drain.
 (The author is a dietician and a wellness coach.)

India has been associated with good 'chai' for centuries. It is a tale of timeless romance. From a roadside 'kulhad' chai to a luxurious sip in a plush café — it is consumed by all. Today, consumers, including millennials, are looking for something fresh and interesting. Their tastes have evolved, and the exposure to different cultures has intrigued them to try different types of beverages. That's how infused flavoured tea has evolved as one of the latest trends. This is because people across all age groups can have it, based on their preferred taste and mood. They render a rich aroma and have a wide range of tastes along with abundant health benefits. It can be consumed either hot or cold, with or without honey, and can be consumed without milk. Irrespective of the way it's made, there's no compromise on the taste buds.

The rejuvenating and therapeutic wonders of tea are well known. But there is much more to tea. When infused with other ingredients, the functional benefits are heightened to a different level. Tea does not have an 'ego' — it is a versatile beverage and there aren't a lot of off-notes to mask, which makes it an attractive ingredient to work with. This concept slowly got incorporated into people's lives when they realised that it can be infused with a huge variety of ingredients like spices, fruits, flowers, botanicals or herbs and can

Not just another novelty

ADITYA AGARWAL explains why infused flavoured teas are trending

be hot or cold brewed. On top of it, more and more people are now choosing healthier options that are full of taste and flavor. No compromises, on that count. Age-old natural remedies like tulsi, moringa, cinnamon and turmeric can now be easily incorporated into our lifestyle, thanks to infused teas.

Keeping health and wellness in mind, infused flavored tea check all the right boxes. It is healthy, 100 per cent natural to consume, delicious and can be had all day in all seasons.

Kahwa in winters is the perfect drink to keep you warm and a fruity iced tea in summers is needed to keep one cool. There are many varieties of flavours one can enjoy, as per their preference. From dessert teas post-dinner, like *Crème brûlée* and *Lavender vanilla* flavour, to the classics before breakfast like *Pure Darjeeling* and *Himalayan green tea* and not to forget wellness teas like *Mellow hibiscus* and *Magical cinnamon*. Infused teas offer endless options for everyone to explore. Over the last year, against the back-



drop of the pandemic, many people have become more concerned about their physical health, and it pleases them to know that they don't need to consume unhealthy amounts of sugar and trans fats

to satiate their sweet tooth. They looked for alternatives which turned out to be plenty, one of them being dessert teas like *Sweet lavender vanilla*, *Toasty crème brûlée*, *Midnight mint* flavours. With high antioxidants and zero calories, these sweet teas won't leave you guilty as each cup contains zero calories.

The times we live in have given consumers the opportunity to cook their own meals, take control of their intake and make the process enjoyable. This includes experimenting, adding new flavors and infusions to try something new each day.

With new formats of tea like ready-to-drink, sparkling teas, dessert teas, and cold brews, it was about time infused teas became popular among the general populace. With its fascinating flavours, combined with various health benefits, infused teas' stock is on an upwards trend, and this may just be the beginning.
 (The author is the founder of CHAYAM, a brand which seeks to redefine the experience of tea.)

R E C I P E S

ENERGY BALLS

- WHAT YOU NEED**
- Rolled oats: 1 ½ cups
 - Dates (de-seeded): 7-8
 - Cashews: 20 gm
 - Flaxseed/ pumpkin seeds/ hemp seeds/ sesame seeds (ground): 1 tbsp
 - Coconut (shredded): 2 tbsp



- about 15 minutes.
- Remove from the freezer and roll into small bites with the palms of your hands.
 - Roll each energy bite in the shredded coconut.
 - Serve and enjoy or refrigerate for up to two weeks.
- Courtesy: Lakshita Jain, clinical dietician and diabetes educator

METHOD

- For cashew butter:**
- Soak cashews for two hours and grind it into fine paste.
 - Place the cashew paste in non stick pan.
 - Cook on a low flame till the oil tends to move on the sides.
- Final assembly:**
- Roast the oats on a low flame until it gets light-brown in colour.
 - Mix all the ingredients together except the shredded coconut.
 - Place the dough in the freezer for

SPAGHETTI WITH BLUE TRIBE PLANT-BASED CHICKEN BOLOGNAISE

- WHAT YOU NEED**
- Blue tribe plant-based chicken keema (BTPB): 1 packet
 - Spaghetti (dry): 1 packet
 - Onion (minced): ½ cup
 - Carrot (minced): ¼ cup
 - Celery stick: 1
 - Cloves garlic (minced): 3
 - Tomato puree: 400 gm
 - Mushrooms (sliced): ½ cup
 - Oregano (dried): 1 tbsp
 - Fresh basil (chopped): 2 tbsp
 - Salt
 - Black pepper
 - Olive oil: 1 tbsp



- METHOD**
- Defrost the BTPB chicken keema.
 - Cook the spaghetti as per instructions on the box (put aside a cup of the pasta water for cooking).
 - Heat the oil in a frying pan and cook the vegetables until soft and translucent.
 - Add the tomato puree and cook for five minutes.
 - Add the pasta water,

KESARI GUJIYA

- WHAT YOU NEED**
- Plain flour (*maida*): 2 cups
 - Semolina (*suji*): ¼ cup
 - Ghee: 5 tbsp
 - Milk: ¼ cup
 - Saffron: 1 gm
- For the stuffing:**
- Ghee: 2 tbsp
 - Sugar: 1 ¼ cup
 - *Khoya* (grated): ½ cup
 - Coconut (desiccated): ½ cup
 - Pistachio (chopped): ¼ cup
 - Almond (chopped): ¼ cup
 - Cardamom powder: 1 tsp

- METHOD**
- For the dough:**
- In a mixing bowl, add *maida*, *suji*, ghee and mix well.
 - Add milk with saffron and knead the dough till it gets

hard. Keep aside covered for five to 10 minutes.

- For the stuffing:**
- Heat the ghee in a pan, add *mawa* and all nuts and mix well.
 - Add the sugar and cook for six to seven minutes, add the cardamom, coconut and mix well.
 - Stir for another three to four minutes and turn off the flame.
 - Transfer this mixture to the bowl and keep aside.
- For final assembly:**
- Make round size dough sheet with the help of a round cutter.
 - Place the stuffing as shape of the round dough sheet.
 - Make a half moon shape and turn the edges of sheet to lock on both the sides.
 - Deep fry the *gujiya* in oil.

Courtesy: Chef Chetan at Godrej Veg Oils' Sahi Shuruat initiative of Godrej Vihkroli Cucina

DAHI KE ROTI KEBABS

- WHAT YOU NEED**
- Hung yoghurt: 200 gm
 - Paneer: 50 gm
 - Onion (small): 1
 - Capsicum (small): 1
 - Carrot (small): 1
 - Coriander: 2 tbsp
 - Salt to taste
 - Black pepper powder: 1 tsp



- METHOD**
- Green chili (chopped): 2
 - Bread: 6 to 7 slices
 - Corn flour: 2 tsp
 - Water: 4 tsp
 - Cooking oil
 - Take a thick and creamy curd (hung curd) and add one cup crumbled paneer.
 - Then, add onion, ginger, chili and coriander

- powder along with salt and crushed pepper.
- Then, add breadcrumbs to remove excess moisture.
 - Mix it well making sure the paneer and hung curd are combined well. Do not over-knead as the curd will start to release moisture.
 - Prepare small-sized

- kebabs and coat them with corn flour to remove excess moisture.
- Deep fry the patties in oil on medium flame while stirring occasionally till they turn golden brown.
 - Serve with pudina chutney or ketchup.
- Courtesy: Executive chef Satvir Singh at Anuraga Palace, Ranthambore





VIRAT KOHLI TO QUIT AS T20 CAPTAIN

PTI ■ DUBAI

Virat Kohli on Thursday announced he will step down as India's T20 skipper after the T20 World Cup in UAE but will continue to lead the side in ODIs and Test cricket, a decision that paves the way for Rohit Sharma to captain in the shortest format.

"I've decided to step down as the T20 captain after this T20 World Cup in Dubai in October," the 32-year-old Kohli, who is here to compete in the IPL that resumes on Sunday, said in a statement posted on his Twitter page. "Understanding workload is a very

important thing and considering my immense workload over the last 8-9 years playing all three formats and captaining regularly for last five to six years, I feel I need to give myself space to be fully ready to lead Indian team in Test and ODI cricket," Kohli explained.

For some time, there has been speculation surrounding Kohli's future as white-ball captain especially in the backdrop of Rohit's brilliant track record of winning five IPL titles for Mumbai Indians.

The 34-year-old Rohit is Kohli's deputy in the white-ball formats and is most likely to take up the leadership role when India clashes with New Zealand in a home series in November that will feature three T20 Internationals along with two Test matches.

BCCI Secretary Jay Shah, in a statement issued by the Board after Kohli's announcement, said the body has been in discussion with Kohli for a while now.

"We have a clear roadmap for

HIGHLIGHTS OF KOHLI'S T20 CAPTAINCY: SERIES WIN IN SENA COUNTRIES

India's winning percentage under Kohli is better than Mahendra Singh Dhoni's tenure during which the side won the inaugural T20 World Cup in 2007. India have won 27 out of 45 matches under Kohli with two tied games and as many abandoned, making it a healthy winning percentage of 65.11. India are yet to win an ICC trophy under Kohli but the team's series win under him in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, England and West Indies will remain the highlights of his leadership tenure starting 2017.

- India's first T20 bilateral series win came under Kohli in 2017 when the team won the one-off game in Sri Lanka.
- The first series win in SENA countries came in South Africa in 2018 when India won 2-1.

- In the same year, India managed to beat a formidable England team in its own backyard with the series result being 2-1.
- By far the biggest overseas triumph came in New Zealand in 2019-20 season with Kohli's team trouncing the Black Caps 5-0 before going on to lose the subsequent ODI and Test series.
- In 2020, India bounced back after losing the ODI series in Australia to win the T20 rubber 2-1.
- Most recently, India beat mighty England at home 3-2 and Kohli was named the player of the series.
- Kohli remains the leading-run scorer in T20s with 3159 runs at an impressive average of 52.65 and highest score of 94 not out.

SOURCE: PTI

Team India. Considering the workloads and ensuring that we have smooth transition, Mr Virat Kohli has decided to step down as T20 Captain after the upcoming World Cup," Shah said. "I have been in discussions with Virat and the leadership team for the last six months and the decision has been thought through. "Virat will continue to contribute as a player and as a senior member of the side in shaping the future course of Indian cricket," he added.

Kohli took over India's limited-overs captaincy in 2017, succeeding Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

"I have given my everything to the Team during my time as T20 captain and I will continue to do so for the T20 captain and will continue to do so for the T20 team as a batsman moving forward," he further added.

The decision, Kohli said, was taken after consulting head coach Ravi Shastri, his heir apparent Rohit, BCCI President Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah. The T20 World Cup starts on October 17 and Kohli will be

under intense pressure to deliver the trophy. "Of course, arriving at this decision took a lot of time. After a lot of contemplation and discussions with my close people, Ravi bhai and also Rohit, who have been an essential part of the leadership group..." Kohli stated.

"I have also spoken to the secretary Mr Jay Shah and president of BCCI Mr Sourav Ganguly along with the selectors about the same.

I will continue to serve Indian cricket and Indian cricket team to the best of my ability," Kohli said.

Kohli has played 90 T20 Internationals scoring 3159 runs with 28 fifties and captained India in 45 of those games winning 27 and losing 14.

He has a winning percentage of 65.11. "I have been fortunate enough to not only represent India but also lead the Indian cricket team to my utmost capability," the flamboyant star batsman said. "I thank everyone who has supported me in my journey as the captain of the Indian cricket team.

I have no idea about change in leadership: Babar



PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan captain Babar Azam has brushed aside the talk on impending changes in the team's leadership and said the focus is to win the ODI and T20 series against New Zealand. Babar told a virtual media conference on Thursday that he was completely backing the selected squad.

Asked about his alleged dissatisfaction over the selected team, Babar said that he had given his input as captain as usual and insisted this was not any individual's team.

"I think the board officials and chief selector have also clarified the position on team selection so for me I am completely backing the side and expect it to do well against New Zealand."

Babar also made it clear he had been told nothing or heard anything about captaincy changes. He pointed out that it was a normal thing in the cricket world that a captain had to meet desired goals and live up to expectations. PCB Chairman, Ramiz Raja, in his first press conference had made it clear that his expectations for Babar as captain were the same as he had with Imran Khan.

India's ODI tour of NZ postponed to 2022

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

India will not be touring New Zealand later in the year due to a packed calendar and COVID-19 related restrictions.

India would have had to quarantine for 14 days to play three ODIs as part of the World Cup Super League.

A New Zealand Cricket (NZC) spokesperson confirmed to Stuff that the India games will be played after the T20 World Cup in Australia

next year. New Zealand anyway are scheduled to tour India in November for two Tests and three T20s.

New Zealand will be hosting Bangladesh, The Netherlands and South Africa in the summer besides the seven teams in Women's World Cup in March-April.

The Tests against Bangladesh and South Africa are part of the World Test Championship. "We've got to be mindful of

players coming back from a long winter and we've got to give them time at home as well," NZC chief executive David White said.

The Black Caps will undergo 14 days of managed isolation and quarantine (MIQ) after returning from India just before Christmas. That won't allow NZC to host the Boxing Day Test on December 26 and the opener against Bangladesh could begin on December 28 or later.

Shastri, Arun, Sridhar awaiting 'fit to fly' certificate

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's head coach Ravi Shastri, along with bowling and fielding coaches Bharath Arun and R Sridhar, respectively, would need to undergo a "fit to fly" test post recovery from COVID-19, which led to the cancellation of the fifth Test against England in Manchester last week. The trio have completed a 10-day isolation as per

the UK Health Protocols but, to return home, they also need to pass a "fit to fly" test, apart from negative RT-PCR reports.

"Shastri, Arun and Sridhar are all doing well physically having recovered from COVID-19. They are out of isolation.

"However, as per health protocols they need to have a CT score of 38 plus which will ensure a fit to fly certificate for them. We expect them to fly out

in next two days if all goes well with CT score," a senior BCCI official told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

The CT (CT scan) score tells about the presence of viral load in a COVID-19 affected person and how much his lungs have been infected.

A higher CT score indicates recovery and it is believed that to take long flights, one needs to have a CT score of 40.

None of the three Indian coaches currently have any symptoms and are completely fit but can only avail the return flight once they get the certificate. Shastri tested positive on the third day of the fourth Test at Oval and Arun and Sridhar, deemed as close contacts, had to be isolated. The duo also later tested positive and all of them finished their 10-day isolation on Wednesday.

Davis Cup: Indian players need to give their all against Finland



PTI ■ ESPOO (FINLAND)

India's singles players will need to back their talent with some killer instinct for the team to emerge victorious against a reasonably strong Finland in the Davis Cup World Group I tie, starting here on Friday.

Prajesh Gunewaran and Ramkumar Ramanathan have the experience of playing the big matches. They have rubbed shoulders with better players but it's time for them to move forward from playing mere close matches. They need to deliver that knockout punch that will take India to the next year's Qualifiers.

It will be Prajesh (ranked 165) who will open the tie for India with a match against Otto Virtanen (ranked 419). It is a splendid opportunity for India to draw first blood as Prajesh is a superior player. Prajesh gets close to wins with his talent but

has the tendency of giving up advantageous positions, like the one against Borna Coric in the last tie against Croatia. Maybe it's the pressure of playing for the flag but the left-hander from Chennai insists it is not the case. "Matches against good players are always close if I'm playing well.

I have won matches against good players being in the lead and I have also lost matches being in the lead. That's just the way they go," Prajesh told PTI. "Matches which are closely fought can go either way. There is no pressure of playing for India that influences me... Sometimes there's more pressure, other times that's less.

"Again, just depends on how well I cope on that particular day," he added. But now is the opportunity for him to put India ahead.

If Ramkumar can play the same way he competed against 2014 US Open champion Marin Cilic in the previous tie against Croatia and does not miss the chances he gets, India will have a very good chance in the tie.

As the second-best ranked player from India, Ramkumar is up against Finland's number one player Emil Ruusuvuori, who is placed 74 in the world, on the opening day of the tie.

Ramkumar is taking the court for the second singles and will have a pretty good idea how he should approach the match against Ruusuvuori after Prajesh's game.

Delhi Capitals retain Rishabh Pant as captain



PTI ■ DUBAI

Delhi Capitals on Thursday announced that flamboyant wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant will continue to lead the side in the remainder of the IPL beginning September 19.

It was one of the most pre-

dictable decisions considering that Delhi Capitals did well under Pant despite the fact that Shreyas Iyer led them to their first final last year.

Delhi Capitals are currently leading the IPL points table with 12 points having won six games under Pant's captaincy earlier this

year after he was assigned the role in absence of injured Iyer, who had to undergo a shoulder surgery.

"JSW-GMR co-owned Delhi Capitals today announced that Rishabh Pant will continue as captain for the remainder of the IPL2021 season," franchise's official handle tweeted.

Advani manages to defend Asian title

PTI ■ DOHA

India's ace cueist Pankaj Advani on Thursday defended his Asian Snooker Championship title defeating Amir Sarkhosh of Iran here. The Indian great was competing in his first assignment in almost two years.

Advani had won the title in 2019 before the 2020 edition

got scrapped due to the pandemic. His tally of Asian titles across both snooker and billiards now stands at 11, apart from the two Asian Games golds of 2006 and 2010.

"I'm glad to defend this title and pick up from where I left off. The gap only increased the drive and hunger to compete and do well on return," said Advani.



AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Jagatsinghpur that I Subodh Kumar Nayak village - Gobindpur, Po- Somepur, Ps- Biridi, Dist- Jagatsinghpur, Odisha, at present Hav- 16 MED Rgt do hereby solemnly affirm and state that in my service records some names of my family members have wrongly mentioned which needs correction as follows. Namita wife will be corrected as Namita Nayak, Jyotishree Nayak Daughter as Jyotishree Nayak, and Divayam Nayak Son as Divayam Nayak. All the names of the family members which are stated in the affidavit are true and correct to the best of my knowledge. Sd/ Subodh Kumar Nayak.

Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No. : Online-AGL-09 of 2021-2022

- Name of the Work : Road Works (209no of Roads) (Routine Maintenance of RD Deptt. Roads for the year 21-22 Such as Procurement & Fixing of sign boards & road furniture etc.)
- Estimated Cost. : Rs. 21.22 lakhs to 26.37 lakhs
- Period of Completion : 1 (One) Calendar Month
- Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal : From 21.09.2021 to 30.09.2021 upto 5.00 P.M
- Last Date/time for receipt of bids : 30.09.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Name & Address of the OIT : Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Angul

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in

OIPR-25096/11/0005/2122 Executive Engineer R.W.Division, Angul

Messi and PSG held by Brugge

AP ■ GENEVA

Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappé and Neymar lined up together in the near-perfect attack for Paris Saint-Germain and still could not score or deliver a win in the Champions League.

Instead, it was low-key midfielder Ander Herrera who got PSG's goal in a 1-1 draw at underrated Belgian champion Club Brugge.

Though Messi saw a first-half shot strike the crossbar, he was later shown a yellow card for a foul and Mbappé went off because of an injured left ankle.

French forwards flourished elsewhere with Sébastien Haller scoring four for Ajax in a 5-1 rout at Sporting Lisbon and Christopher Nkunku netting all of Leipzig's goals in a 6-3 loss to Manchester City.

The English clubs in action combined for two wins in matches involving 14 goals as Liverpool beat AC Milan 3-2 in the storied venue that thrives on European nights.

Liverpool's early surge yielded only a Trent Alexander-Arnold-inspired opening goal and a penalty for Mohamed Salah saved by Milan goalkeeper Milan Sturmann as the hosts were stunned by two quick goals just before halftime.

but the lead lasted just a few minutes into the second half before Salah leveled.



AIFF president Patel meets Sports Minister Thakur

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Praful Patel on Thursday called on Sports Minister Anurag Thakur and briefed him about the upcoming international tournaments the country is hosting.

The AIFF president updated the honourable minister on the forthcoming major international events which are to be held in India in 2022 viz. The AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022 scheduled to kick off in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Pune from January 20 onwards and the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2022 to be held from October 11, 2022, the AIFF said in a release.

Sports secretary Ravi Mittal and Sports Authority of India's director general Sandip Pradhan were also present during the meeting alongside AIFF general secretary Kushal Das and his deputy Abhishek Yadav.

Golden sweep for Indian girls in Tunis

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's Swastika Ghosh defeated compatriot Yashaswini Ghorphade 3-2 in what turned out to be a gripping Under-19 girls final of the WTT (World Table Tennis) Contender event in Tunis.

A little while before, the silver medallist Yashaswini won gold in the Under-17 girls final, beating Egyptian Farida Badawy 11-6 14-12 11-7. In the Under-19 final, Swastika defeated Yashaswini 6-11 11-6 6-11 11-6 11-8.

These were not the only successes in Tunis as the Indian paddlers col-

lected all the gold on offer, besides some silver and bronze medals.

Suhana Saini accounted for Pritha Vartikar in the Under-15 girls final for her second international gold.

M Hansini was another Indian who excelled, winning gold in Under-13 girls event, beating Prisha Goel 11-5 11-8 11-8. In Under-11 girls category, Dhaani Jain emerged champion when she downed Ananya Muralidharan 11-4 11-6 9-11 10-12 11-7 in a tough final. They shared the next two games and, in the decider, Swastika proved a notch better.

Deepak eases into second round as SSCB boxers dominate at Nationals

PTI ■ BELLART

International-medallist Deepak Kumar (51kg) led the show as Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) boxers produced an impressive all-win performance on the second day of the men's National Championships at the Inspire Institute of Sports here on Thursday.

Deepak, who had upstaged the world and Olympic Games champion Shakhobidin Zoirov of Uzbekistan during his silver medal show at the Strandja Memorial earlier this year, started the domination for SSCB with a flawless 5-0 win against Bihar's Aman Kumar in



the 51kg opening round match.

Barun Singh (48kg) and Akash (54kg) further extended SSCB's winning momentum as they managed unanimous victories against Telangana's Donald Janumala and Rocky of

All India Police respectively.

Dalveer Singh Tomar (64kg) and Naveen Boora (71) were the other two boxers to progress into the second round as all the five SSCB boxers in action emerged victorious on the second day of the event.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, DEOGARH.
 E-mail Id - eerw_deogarh@yahoo.co.in
E-Procurement Notice
BID IDENTIFICATION NO. EEDGH-online- 07/2021-22

- Name of work Road work :- (01 No)
- Estimated cost:- Rs. 28,94 lakh
- Mode of submission of tender:- Tender shall be submitted online in www.tendersodisha.gov.in
- Availability of tender for online bidding:- 21.09.2021, 11.00 A.M to 30.09.2021 up to 5.00 P.M
- Date and time of opening of tender: - 01.10.2021, 11.00 A.M
- Other details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
- Corrigendum / Addendum if any shall only be published in the above website.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Deogarh

OIPR-25087/11/0005/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (AGRI.),
NORTHERN ZONE, AT/PO-REMED, SAMBALPUR-768006
 e-mail: senzsambalpur@gmail.com
 Notice No. 1661 dt.08.09.2021

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
 Identification No. 03 /Agril. / NZ / 2021-22 Dt.08.09.2021

01	Nos. of work	: 12 nos.
02	Tendered amount in Rs.	: Rs. 5,26,809/- to Rs. 21,96,308/-
03	Period of completion	: 90 days to 180 days
04	Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	: From 11.00 Hrs. of 17.09.2021 to 17.30 Hrs. of 27.09.2021
05	Last date/time of receipt of bids in the portal	: 17.30 Hrs. of 27.09.2021
06	Date & Time of opening of bids	: 11.30 Hrs. of 01.10.2021
07	Name and Address of the officer inviting bid	: Superintending Engineer (Agril.), Northern Zone, At/Po-Remed, Sambalpur, Pin-768006.

Further details can be seen from the web site www.tendersodisha.gov.in

OIPR-01033/11/0008/2122 Sd/- Superintending Engineer (Agril.), Northern Zone, Sambalpur