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NO STOPPING
WOMEN:
LARA DUTTA
10 VIVACITY



Cong plays Dalit card in Punjab

Names Channi as CM to secure Sikh, Dalit votes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Eyeing Assembly elections in the crucial States of Punjab, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh (UP) in the next few months, the Congress on Sunday played a "surprise" Dalit card by naming Charanjit Singh Channi as the next Punjab Chief Minister.

Channi, the outgoing Technical Education Minister, is also one of those leaders who had rebelled against the party's old warhorse Captain Amarinder Singh.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi congratulated Channi after he was picked as the next Punjab Chief Minister, and said the party must continue to fulfil the promises made to the people of the State. Rahul said "history had been created by the party after choosing a Dalit face" to head the Congress Government in Punjab.

The entire Congress leadership including party chief Sonia Gandhi, Rahul and his sister Priyanka Gandhi besides seniors like Harish Rawat, Adhir Ranjan Chaudhary, Pawan Bansal, Ajay Maken and Randeep Surjewala, were involved in setting the Punjab unit in order.

Channi, 58, a three-time MLA from Rupnagar's



Punjab Chief Minister-designate Charanjit Singh Channi submits a letter to Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit after being named as the next CM, at the Raj Bhawan in Chandigarh on Sunday

Chamkaur Sahib will be sworn in as Punjab's first Dalit Chief Minister on Monday. His elevation is significant given the fact that Dalits form around 31 per cent of Punjab's population. The Dalit population is in the same range in neighbouring States of UP and Uttarakhand.

Party sources said Channi's deputies may be from the Sikh and Hindu communities.

"The poll calculus behind the choice of Channi appears simple. The Akali Dal (earlier in power with the BJP) has joined hands with Mayawati's BSP to tap the Dalit vote, hence the Congress anticipat-

ed that Channi, who is a Dalit as well as a Sikh, will counter all other political combinations brewing in the State," they said.

Political leaders, however, said that the Congress' choice for Chief Minister may trigger criticism, given that Channi was accused of sexual harassment by a woman IAS officer. Channi allegedly sent an inappropriate text in 2018, but the officer never filed a complaint. The claim resurfaced in May after the State's Women's Commission sent a notice asking for the State Government's response.

Hurt by events of last 5 mths: Capt tells Sonia

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Hours before he formally submitted his resignation to the Punjab Governor, Captain Amarinder Singh had on Saturday written to the Congress president Sonia Gandhi, apprising her of his decision, while expressing anguish at the political events of the last about five months, which he said were clearly "not based on full understanding of the national imperatives of Punjab and its key concerns."

In his letter, Amarinder also listed his achievements as the Chief Minister since March 2017 while claiming that 89.2 per cent of the poll promises were fulfilled.

"Notwithstanding my personal anguish, I hope this will not cause any damage to the hard-earned peace and developmental in the State, and that the efforts I have been focusing during the last few years, would continue unabated, ensuring justice to one and all," Amarinder wrote, indicating his apprehensions of instability



in Punjab as a result of the political developments in the State unit of the Congress.

Amarinder also expressed his personal satisfaction at having done his best for the people as Chief Minister of Punjab, which, as a border State, "has many geopolitical and other internal security concerns, which I tried to handle effectively without any compromise." He said that he was happy that the State remained fully peaceful, and there was complete communal harmony with no ill-will towards anyone.

Afghan boys stand up for girls' right to study

Won't attend classes till schools for girls reopen

AGENCIES ■ KABUL

In a country that has seen the human rights of women being trampled ever since the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan, there is a sliver of hope that there is still some resistance left in the people of the embattled country. This resistance to the regressive ways of the Taliban has come from a group of Afghan boys who have refrained from going to school in solidarity with the girls of the country who have not yet been recalled to school.

This startling development comes at a time when women employees in the Kabul city Government have been told to stay home, with work only allowed for those who cannot be replaced by men.

This announcement detailing the latest restrictions on women by the new Taliban rulers, was made by the interim Mayor of Afghanistan's capital on Sunday.

While most of the boys went to school, some boys



stayed home to express solidarity with the girls and said that they wouldn't show up until the schools for girls were opened.

"Women make up half of society... I won't show up at school until the girls' school opens," Rohullah, an 18-year-old student in class 12, reportedly told the *Wall Street Journal*.

The Taliban Ministry of Education had on Friday ordered the reopening of secondary school for boys while the reopening of girls' schools was still a mystery. "All male teachers and students should attend an educational institution," said a statement released late on Friday.

Taliban spokesman

Zabihullah Mujahid told the local Bakhtar News Agency on Saturday that an arrangement was underway to reopen girls' secondary school, but he did not give a date.

Meanwhile, the United Nations has stated that it is "deeply concerned" about the future of girls' school education in Afghanistan. "It is important that all girls, including older girls, be able to resume education without further delay. To do so, female teachers need to resume education," he said. The Taliban said it would not implement fundamentalist policies like the last rule, but the future of women's rights and freedoms in Afghanistan remains questionable.

CAPSULE

'BJP RAKING UP OUTSIDER CARD WITH EYE ON POLLS'

Mumbai: Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday hit out at the BJP for opposing Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's directive to State police to keep a record of migrants coming here from other States, claiming the BJP was raking up the 'outsider' card with an eye on the Uttar Pradesh Assembly and Mumbai civic elections due next year.

DELHI-MUMBAI E-WAY TO FETCH ₹1.5K CR/MTH: MIN

New Delhi: The Centre will get toll revenues worth ₹1,000 to ₹1,500 crore every month once the much-awaited Delhi-Mumbai Expressway becomes operational in 2023, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Sunday and described State-owned NHAI as a "gold mine" for generating income.

TRAILBLAZING TOURIST TRIP TO ORBIT ENDS

Cape Canaveral: Four space tourists safely ended their trailblazing trip to orbit on Saturday with a splashdown in the Atlantic off the Florida coast. Their SpaceX capsule parachuted into the ocean just before sunset, not far from where their chartered flight began three days earlier.

9 OF FAMILY KILLED IN AUTO-SUV COLLISION

Raipur: Nine members of a family, including four women and a one-year-old girl, were killed and seven others injured on Sunday after the autorickshaw they were travelling in collided with an SUV in Chhattisgarh's Kondagaon district, police said. The accident occurred near Borgaon turn under the Farasgaon police station limits, over 200 km away from Raipur.

Aao hamare desh, India to tell tourists

5L visitors to get free visas in bid to help tourism, aviation sectors

7PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a decline in Covid-19 cases in the country, India may soon reopen its doors for foreign tourists for the first time in one-and-a-half year. The first five lakh foreign tourists will be issued visas free of cost in an attempt to revive the tourism, hospitality, and aviation sectors hit by the pandemic since March 2020, when a nationwide lockdown was announced.

Senior Home Ministry officials are in talks with the stakeholders to decide the expected date and modalities for reopening of the borders for foreign tourists. A formal announcement is expected to come within the next ten days. The decision is due to the declining Covid-19 cases in the country.

The officials said free visa to the tourists will be issued till March 31, 2022 or the issuance of five lakh visa, whichever is

earlier. The total financial implication for this would be ₹100 crore. "The free visa move is expected to incentivise short-term tourists visiting India," officials said.

"The cost for a month-long e-tourist visa is country-specific but is around \$25. A year-long multiple entry e-tourists visa charge is around \$40," it further reported. The e-tourists visa remained suspended from March 2020 due to the Covid pandemic.

The Home Ministry officials also said the tourists will be allowed with certain conditions — like those vaccinated will be allowed to enter the borders. The reopening will take place in a phased manner to understand the response and implications of the move, another official said. India is among many countries that have started opening up for tourists.

Scheduled international



Tourists walk on the premises of Taj Mahal during the rain in Agra

File photo

passenger services have been suspended in India since March 23, 2020, due to the pandemic. But special international flights have been operating under the Vande Bharat Mission since May 2020 and under bilateral "air

bubble" arrangements with select countries since July 2020. India has formed air-bubble pacts with around 28 countries, including the US, the UK, the UAE, Kenya, Bhutan, and France. The Union External Affairs

Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday urged his Saudi Arabian counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud to resume direct flights between India and Saudi Arabia, which remains suspended owing to the pandemic.

'1L jobs, 80% reservation in Govt sector to youth'

PNS ■ HALDWANI/DEHRADUN

In a big push for the Assembly elections in Uttarakhand next year, the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced to provide one lakh Government jobs and 80 per cent job reservation for Uttarakhand's youths if the AAP comes to power in the State next year.

Kejriwal unveiled these populist promises in Haldwani on his third visit to Uttarakhand in the last three months to mobilise support for his party in the run up to the Assembly elections early next year.

While addressing a Press conference on Sunday, Kejriwal said that if the party comes to power next year, it will provide jobs to every youth in the State. He stated that 80 per cent of the Government jobs will be reserved for the State's people in order to provide them maximum employment opportunities. He said that an unem-



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal with AAP's CM candidate for Uttarakhand Colonel Ajay Kothiyal, during a 'Tiranga Sankalp Yatra' in Haldwani on Sunday

Pioneer photo

employed youth from every family will receive ₹5,000 unless s/he gets the job. He also announced that one lakh Government jobs will be generated in the first six months and added that since there are great job opportunities in the private sector, the party will launch a job portal where job seekers and job providers can interact with each other.

Kejriwal asserted that the party will also constitute a separate Ministry to specifically tackle two prominent issues —

migration and unemployment. This Ministry will also work on providing employment opportunities to those who have migrated to other States for jobs but want to return.

The Delhi CM said that the successive Governments here have destroyed the State's condition in the past 21 years, but the AAP will make it better in 21 months after winning the Assembly elections.

"Migration has increased to such a level in Uttarakhand that it has become a 'Palayan

Pradesh'. We have researched and discussed all these issues and we found out that all the government needs here is a clear intention to work for the public," he said.

On the question of how the party will fulfil all its mega promises as the State is not doing well financially, Kejriwal said they are making announcements after proper planning and they will fulfil them with proper execution. He said there is no lack of revenue in the State but a lack of proper intentions of the Government.

"AAP's Chief Ministerial candidate Ajay Kothiyal has experience in providing jobs to youth and the public should give him a chance here. If the public gives votes to BJP they will get a new CM every month but if they choose Kothiyal, they will get development with the same CM they elected," Kejriwal said.

After addressing the media persons, Kejriwal along with other party members also participated in AAP's roadshow Tiranga Yatra too.

Jaishankar, Saudi Foreign Min discuss ties, developments in Afghanistan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and Saudi Arabia on Sunday reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral ties and the current situation in Afghanistan during External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's talks with his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud.

The two leaders also took stock of the situation in the Gulf and the Indo-Pacific during the extensive talks besides India urging early resumption of flights to Saudi Arabia, the External Affairs Ministry (MEA) said later.

The visiting dignitary will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday before ending his three-day visit to New Delhi. Al Saud arrived here on Saturday evening. It is the first ministerial visit from Saudi Arabia to India since the outbreak of the pandemic.

Given the strong ties between the two countries, the two Foreign Ministers, mean-



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar welcomes Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud during his visit to India

PTI

while, also explored ways to further expand bilateral ties in areas of Defence and security, trade, investment and energy. Incidentally, Army chief General MM Naravane became the first Indian Army head ever to visit Saudi Arabia last year, thereby signifying the growing relations between the nations.

On the talks between Jaishankar and Al Saud, sources

said the former called for further relaxing restrictions on travel from India to the Gulf nation while appreciating the country for the support provided to the Indian community during the pandemic.

The MEA said both Ministers discussed issues related to their bilateral relationship and regional and international issues of mutual interest.

MARKETS
SENSEX 59,015.89 (-125.27)
NIFTY 17,585.15 (-44.35)
GOLD 46,190.00 (+114.00)
SILVER 61,535.00 (+458.00)

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Women artistes regale with Pandav Leela

PNS ■ NEW TEHRI

The folk dance of Pandav Leela was performed by artistes from seven districts with a team from Rudraprayag at an Ashram in Madan Negi area of Tehri district. The highlight of the event was that most of the parts were enacted by women thus breaking the usual prac-

tice where only males take to performing the musical ballads in the region.

Lakshmi Shah, who played the part of Draupadi in a performance said that they started performing with the all-women team in 2014 from Rudraprayag and are planning to perform in Ayodhya this year.

District Panchayat presi-

dent Sona Sajwan praised the artistes and urged the women to come forward in every field.

She also distributed citations and awards to the performers. Former Pramukh, Khem Singh Chauhan encouraged the artistes and appealed to the youth to launch a campaign against drug abuse.

CBI court awards 3 years imprisonment, ₹50 L fine to Binay Prakash in coal block scam

PNS ■ RANCHI

The special court of Arun Bhardwaj, New Delhi has awarded three years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 50 lakh to Binay Prakash, the then managing director and proprietor of Jharkhand based M/s Domco Smokeless Fuels Pvt. Ltd in the coal block allotment scam case. To other convict Vasant Diwakar Manjrekar (director of company) the court awarded three years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 20 lakh. Paramananda Mondal is the director of the company whom the court awarded three years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 10 lakh. Similar punishment was awarded to Sanjay Khandewal, who is a Kolkata based chartered accountant. Earlier on Tuesday, the court had held all four as well as the company for committing crime and observed

that guilty persons had hatched systematically conspiracy to cheat both the ministry of coal and steel to secure allocation of the Lalgarh (North) coal block in West Bokaro Coalfield in Jharkhand on the basis of false and fabricated documents. The coal block was allotted to the company on 8th July, 2005. Binay Prakash had also obtained pecuniary benefit of Rs. 7 crores by offering to sell the shares of the company on premium after he secured an allocation of the coal block for the company. The CBI had registered the case in this matter in July 2014 under section 120-B, 420 of the IPC. Prior to this the agency carried a preliminary enquiry on the directions received from CVC related to coal blocks allocated during the period from 1993 to 2005. As per the enquiry report the Lalgarh (North) Coal block was identified in favour of the

company by the 19th Screening Committee for the captive use on November 24, 2003. But on 13 September 2012, the ministry of coal cancelled the allocation when the fraud was discovered.

Notably, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is also prosecuting them under provisions of the prevention of Money Laundering. ED has filed the chargesheet before the PMLA court of Bharat Parashar in New Delhi. It also attached movable and immovable properties of the company, promoter and his relatives. The property includes amounts parked in the Axis Bank account of Ranchi based Hotel Le Lac. The hotel is said to be owned by Binay Prakash.

As per the ED Binay Prakash had invested proceeds of crime to develop one of the government plots in NCR through M/s Kamakhya Builders.

NH-44 Blockade: Farmers didn't attend meet with Hry high-powered committee

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The farmers' leaders did not attend the meeting convened by Haryana Government's high-powered committee on Sunday over clearing the blockade on national highway-44 on the Kundli-Singhu border.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha had on Saturday announced to boycott the meeting and said that they have not blocked any road. The farmers' leaders had said that it is the Delhi police that installed the barricades on the highway to halt the farmers' movement in November 2020.

hold talks with the farmers' representatives to clear the blockade on national highway due to the ongoing protest for about ten months now.

ACS Home, Rajeev Arora while talking to the mediapersons on Sunday said that the farmers representatives did not turn up for the meeting but some business-related organizations met the committee and apprized the problems faced by them due to the road blockade.

Following the directions of Supreme Court, Haryana Government had last week constituted a state-level committee comprising Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Rajeev Arora as chairman and Director General of Police PK Agrawal; Additional Director General of Police, Law and Order, Navdeep Singh Virk; Secretary, Home-I Department, Dr Balkar Singh to

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that the coaches, who groom the medallists, also deserve a reward. Therefore, the State Government has decided that in the Olympics and Paralympics, Rs 20 lakh will be given to the coach of the gold medallist, Rs 15 lakh to the coach of the silver medallist and Rs 12.50 lakh to the coach of the bronze medallist.

The Chief Minister said that the Paralympians are a source of inspiration for the society. Everyone should take inspiration from these players that while fighting the challenges in life, one can achieve a milestone on the strength of their talent, he said.

Prize money worth ₹27 crores distributed amongst 19 Paralympians from Haryana

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Congratulating Haryana's Paralympians for their exemplary performance in Tokyo Paralympics 2020, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday complimented the State Government for taking several policy initiatives to facilitate the sportspersons.

Naidu was addressing a gathering in Gurugram during the felicitation ceremony of Haryana's medallists and participants in Tokyo Paralympics 2020. The Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar presided over the function.

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Praising the Haryana Government for supporting and promoting the sportspersons in a big way in the state, the Vice President said that this example would also inspire other states for the same. Urging the youth to focus on their physical fitness, he underlined the importance of eating habits and living in harmony with nature.

During the ceremony, the Vice President and Chief Minister distributed prize money of more than Rs 27

crores among 19 medallists and participants of Haryana in Tokyo Paralympics.

Recognising that these achievements were not easy, the Vice President mentioned that the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics were organized in very unusual circumstances. There were miscellaneous restrictions on the players. And, these achievements of the players in such unusual circumstances are even more spectacular. Athletes' achievements in the Paralympics will create a new sporting culture in the country, he added.

He also said that the performance of Team India in this year's Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics has been excellent. The country has won the maximum number of 19 medals in various sports at Paralympics, which includes 5 gold medals, 8 silver medals, and 6 bronze medals. A total of 6 medals have been won by 5 players from Haryana, which includes 2 gold, 2 silver and 2 bronze medals.

CM announces rewards for coaches

CM announces rewards for coaches

85,00 nodal officers deputed at hotspot villages in Punjab to ensure zero stubble burning

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a bid to curb the menace of stubble burning during the paddy harvesting season, Punjab Government has appointed 85000 nodal officers in all paddy growing villages of the state, identified as hotspots, where paddy stubble was being traditionally put on fire.

each district has also been set up for monitoring the stubble burning incidents, uploading of the data to mobile apps to the dashboard and preparation and submission of action taken reports to different quarters.

He informed that these nodal officers have been deputed for each affected village to create awareness amongst the farmers to refrain them from stubble burning besides keeping a strict vigil over the post-harvesting operations.

According to the Member Secretary, Punjab Pollution Control Board, Krunesh Garg, the necessary directions have already been issued to the concerned Deputy Commissioners to give a special attention to the hotspot villages as each of such villages had witnessed more than 25 fire incidents during the last season.

Patiala, Sangrur, Barnala, Bathinda, Ferozepur, Sri Muktsar Sahib, Tarn Taran, Moga and Mansa were identified as hotspot districts, where more than 4000 active fire incidents of paddy stubble burning cases were reported in each of these districts in the past.

Pointing out further, Garg said that a control room in

crop residue management (CRM) machines, distribution of pamphlets etc. in villages besides taking other measures of disseminating information to educate them against the harmful effects of stubble burning, he added.

Notably, the State Government has embarked upon a massive program for management of paddy straw, without burning, by the farmers. As many as, 76626 subsidized agro-machines or equipment have been supplied to the farmers, Cooperative Societies, Panchayats and Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs) under the Crop Residue Management (CRM) scheme in the last three years.

During this year, the Punjab Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Department has already sanctioned more than 31,000 machines against the applications received from the farmers, PACSS, Panchayats and CHCs for purchasing agri-machinery on 50 percent to 80 percent subsidy for in-situ and ex-situ management of paddy residue.

Personalities of various fields felicitated

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

An award show to felicitate prominent personalities from various fields was organised on the weekend by a magazine along with the

Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board. The Tourism and Culture minister Satpal Maharaz along with former cabinet minister Amrita Rawat were also present on the occasion. The Uttarakhand icon

award was presented to personalities from various spheres by the minister after which he released the September edition of Discover Uttarakhand magazine dedicated to tourism in Uttarakhand.

Sad at not being able to hand over job letters to next of kin of 150 deceased farmers personally: Cap

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab, "who have sacrificed their lives in our collective fight for justice".

Day after he quit as Chief Minister after being "humiliated" by the party amid the Punjab Congress crisis, Capt Amarinder Singh on Sunday expressed sorrow at having to cancel the scheduled disbursement of appointment letters to families of 150 farmers who had lost their lives in the ongoing agitation against the farm laws.

The former Chief Minister said that with the new CM-designate already announced, he would unfortunately not be able to personally hand over job letters to the next of kin of the deceased farmers even though his Council of Ministers had already accorded approval to the proposal. He hoped the new Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi would carry out the task at the earliest to provide relief to the affected families.

the former Chief Minister made it clear that he would continue to support the farmers in their battle for survival and justice. "Every Punjabi, in fact every Indian, is morally bound to stand with the farmers in their hour of despair," he said, asserting that even though he was no longer holding the State's reins, his heart remained with the farmers and their families and he would do everything in his power to ensure that they get their due. Capt Amarinder, whose government had also released Rs 14,85,50,000 in compensation to the next of kin of the 298 deceased farmers, said that he would not allow the sacrifices of India's annadaats to go waste. It was the responsibility of every government and political dispensation, be it in Punjab or any other state, as well as the Centre, to ensure that the farmers get their due, said the Chief Minister, adding that cases of 51 more families were under process.

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IDFC FIRST Bank

**APPENDIX IV [Rule 8(1)]
POSSESSION NOTICE
(For immovable property)**

Whereas the undersigned being the authorised officer of the **IDFC First Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited)** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 01.06.2021 calling upon the borrower, co-borrowers and guarantors **1.Amrit Sahi, 2.Pooja Sahi, 3.Rama Auto, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.44,98,235.01-(Rupees Forty Four Lakhs Ninety Eight Thousand Two Hundred Thirty Five And One Paise Only) as on 05.05.2021** within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub - section (4) of Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this 17th day of **September 2021**.

The borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **IDFC First Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited)** for an amount of **Rs.44,98,235.01-(Rupees Forty Four Lakhs Ninety Eight Thousand Two Hundred Thirty Five And One Paise Only)** and interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub - section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Immovable properties.

All The Piece And Parcel Of The Property Consisting Of All That Shop Comprising Of Land Bearing Khata No. 756 (Fasi 1399 To 1404) Khasra No. 795/1 Area Measuring 35.13 Sq. Mtrs., With Totally Built Up, Situated At Mauza Raipur, Pargana Parwa Doon, Dehradun And Bounded As: East: 19 Mtrs Wide Passage, Side Measuring 31.8 Ft. West: Land Of Others, Side Measuring 30 Ft. North: Property Of Shri Vijay Thapiyal, Side Measuring 20 Ft. South: Land Of Shri Jyoti Prasad Badoni, Side Measuring 20 Ft.

Date: 17-09-2021
Place: Dehradun
Loan Account No: 14335970.

Authorised Officer
IDFC First Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited)

**Office of Superintending Engineer
Civil Circle, P.W.D., Devpura Haridwar**

http://pwd.uk.gov.in Fax/Phone No.: 01334-221407 E-mail: sepharpwduk@gmail.com

Letter No.:2269/06C-Civil Circle/21 Date 18/ 09/ 2021

National Competitive Bidding (E-Tendering)

The Superintending Engineer, Civil Circle, PWD, Haridwar on behalf of "Governor of Uttarakhand" invites item rate tender through Short term E-tendering under Two Bid system. All information will be available from date 25-09-2021 and onwards on website <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>.

Sr. No.	Name of work	Earnest Money (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of Tender (Rs.)	Time of Completion of work (Months)	Validity of Tender (Days)	Category of Contractor
1	Construction of road from NH-73, Dehradun- Roorkee highway to Nanhera via Mallabpur Industrial area Madhopur in Jhabreda constituency of district Haridwar Under state Sector year 2021-22 (Honorable Chief Minister Announcement No.-122/2021).	4.96	Rs. 5000.00 + 18 % GST	12 Months	120 Days	Category A/A+ for Road work in any State Govt./ Central Govt./any Govt. undertaking.

Note:-Submission of following documents in original is essential in office of undersigned upto/before the last date and schedule time of uploading tender by the bidders.

- 1- Cost of tender document Rs. 5000.00+G.S.T. as applicable only in the from of demand draft in the name of Executive Engineer, Construction Division, PWD, Roorkee. Bank Draft for Rs. 5000.00 + GST Rs. 900.00 to be submitted separately.
- 2- Rs 100.00 Non Judicial stamp affixed with duly signed Rs. 1.00 Revenue stamp for the validity of the Tender including certificate for validity up to 120 days.
- 3- Earnest Money to be pledged in the name of Superintending Engineer, Civil Circle, PWD, Haridwar.
- 4- Attach Copy of Registration.

**Superintending Engineer
Civil Circle, PWD, Haridwar**

Know Charanjit Singh Channi

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Channi rose up to become the Chief Minister of the border-state after starting as a grassroots-level leader.

ing Sunil Jakhar. He was appointed a Minister in Capt Amarinder Singh's Cabinet on March 16, 2017.

Indian National Congress, failed to clear it. Later, Panjab University authorities allegedly relaxed norms and slashed passing marks for SC/ST students, just to accommodate the Minister.

Starting his political career as a municipal councillor in early 2000s, a law-graduate and an MBA Charanjit Singh Channi would take over Punjab's reins on Monday when he would take oath as the state's 16th Chief Minister.

Three-time MLA from Chankaur Sahib constituency, Channi has an impressive academic and political career, coupled with a combination of Sikh and a Dalit leader, that worked in his favour for his elevation to the top job.

A law graduate and also an MBA, Channi is currently holding the charge of Technical Education and Industrial Training, Tourism and Cultural

Affairs departments.

In nothing short of a real life story of a rise from rags to riches, Channi rose up to become the Chief Minister of the border-state after starting as a grassroots-level leader.

He won the local bodies polls on a Congress ticket from Kharar in the early 2000s. Being a Municipal Councilor for three terms and then becoming the president of Kharar Municipal Council for two terms, Channi was elected to the Punjab Vidhan Sabha for the first time in 2007 but as an independent.

Channi completed his law graduation while being a member of the legislative assembly. He has also vociferously lent voice to the Dalits' cause while being in opposition and also in power.

Despite being a member of the Cabinet, Channi has often criticised the style of functioning of the government on various issues. He has been an open critic of the government on the issues concerning the Dalits and has accused the government of neglecting the community in the government appointments.

He was also among the four ministers who have been vocal about their criticism for the government and its inaction in 2015 when Sikh religious text Guru Granth Sahib was desecrated, and police personnel open-fired during peaceful protests.

2018 : In another case, he was accused of sending lewd messages to a female IAS officer under the #MeToo movement. The complaint was never filed, and the Chief Minister claimed that the issue was amicably resolved. The case resurfaced three years with the Punjab Women's Commission sending a notice to the state government, asking for a response to this allegation.

2018 : Caught on camera flipping a coin to decide between two candidates for the post of lecturer. The incident brought much embarrassment by Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and regular sanitization of the premises.

Mr Mukesh Kumar S/o Shri Jaipal Singh Resident ast Ward No-7 Kandi, Athoorwala, Distt Dehradun

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS PUBLIC NOTICE

That in my daughter's education records my name mentioned Mukesh Kumar Masih and wife's name is Smt Monika Masih which are not correct where as the correct name of the individual and his wife is Mukesh Kumar and Smt Monika Dyid which is true and correct.

He rebelled after the Congress denied him the party ticket in 2007, and contested the polls against the party nominee, and won as an independent. He then became an associate member of the Shiromani Akali Dal in the Assembly, which was in power at that time.

In 2010, Channi returned to the Congress with Capt Amarinder's help. In 2012 and then again in 2017, Channi was elected MLA from Chakaur Sahib.

He was the Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha from 2015 to 2016, after the Dalit factor worked in his favour and he was elected the Congress Legislative Party leader, repress-

BRUSH WITH CONTROVERSY

2017 : Few days after he was inducted into the State Cabinet, Channi, on the advice of an astrologer to have east facing entry to his house for political gains, illegally constructed a road from a park outside his official residence in Sector 2, Chandigarh. Within hours, the road was razed by the Chandigarh Administration

2017 : In October 2017, Channi, who took an entrance test to pursue PhD on the

the order said "Colleges and Polytechnics are allowed to re-open for students with strict adherence of requisite social distancing norms, regular Covid appropriate behavioural norms, the guidelines as indicated in the SOPs released by Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and regular sanitization of the premises."

"Vice-Chancellors of residential universities however should continue conducting classes online till October 15. The decision to allow students to attend classes physically in residential universities shall be taken on October 15, after assessing the prevalent COVID situation then," the order said.

"Meanwhile, the University administration may strive to ensure to get all students, faculty members and staff (including the outsourced ones) fully vaccinated and share the progress with the Department of Higher Education, Technical Education and Medical Education & Research as the case may be," the order added.

Colleges, polytechnics allowed to reopen for students in Haryana

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Government on Sunday extended Covid-19 lockdown until October 4 while allowing colleges and polytechnics to reopen for students. An order issued by Chief Secretary Vijai Vardhan said, "The Mahamani Alert-Surakshit Haryana is extended in the state of Haryana along with guidelines to be implemented during this period issued vide earlier orders till October 4. The relaxations permitted earlier will continue in the state."

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42K e-passes issued for Char Dham Yatra

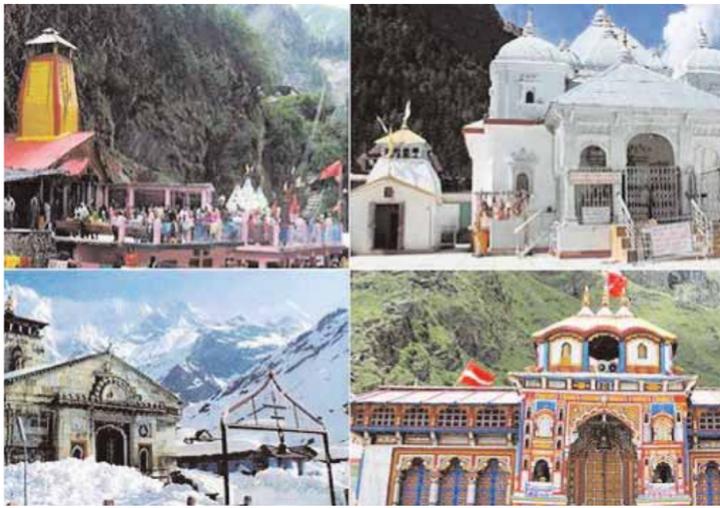
PNS ■ DEHRADUN

A day after the start of the Char Dham Yatra, more than 42,000 e-passes have been issued to pilgrims from the official website of the Char Dham Devasthanam Management Board. More than 2,530 people had visited the Char Dham shrines till Sunday evening.

It will be recalled that after the Uttarakhand high court vacated its stay on the pilgrimage on September 16, the State government issued standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the Yatra as per the court orders and started the pilgrimage on September 18.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has expressed happiness at the successful start of the Char Dham Yatra. The State's Tourism and Culture minister said that the pilgrims are also enthusiastic about the start of the pilgrimage and for undertaking the Yatra.

The Tourism secretary Dilip Jawalkar said that the



conduct of the Yatra will also give a boost to tourism in the state. The Badrinath MLA and Devasthanam Board member Mahendra Bhatt along with other members of the board have expressed hap-

piness at the start of the Char Dham Yatra.

It will be recalled here that as per the SOPs, a total of 800 visitors are allowed to visit Kedarnath per day, 1,000 are allowed to visit Badrinath

daily, 600 in Gangotri and 400 in Yamunotri. The pilgrims coming from outside Uttarakhand are required to register on the Dehradun smart city portal <http://smartcitydehradun.uk.gov.in> and secure the e-pass from the Devasthanam Board website www.devasthanam.uk.gov.in or <http://Badrinath-Kedarnath.uk.gov.in>.

Garhwal commissioner and Devasthanam Board chief executive officer Ravinath Raman informed that 1,645 e-passes were issued for Badrinath, 2,160 for Kedarnath, 788 for Gangotri and 598 for Yamunotri on Sunday.

A total of more than 42,000 e-passes have been issued to people wanting to visit the Char Dham shrines. These include- till Sunday afternoon- 9,899 for Badrinath, 18,934 for Kedarnath, 4,727 for Gangotri and 4,361 for Yamunotri. All necessary Covid protocols and other aspects in the SOPs are being observed in the pilgrimage.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Char Dham shrines are closed to the public for the winter by the middle of November.

Had become difficult to remain in Cong: Rajkumar



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Purolo MLA Rajkumar and his supporters were welcomed into the Bharatiya Janata Party here by the party's state president Madan Kaushik and Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami among others on Sunday. The MLA said that it had become difficult to remain in the Congress anymore.

Speaking on the occasion, Kaushik said that the manner in which former Punjab CM Amarinder Singh spoke in front of the media about the manner in which he had been humiliated by the Congress only confirms the dynastic attitude in that party. While the Congress means, Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka, the BJP is a party based on its organisation, he said.

Welcoming Rajkumar to the BJP, Chief Minister Dhami said that the whole world has acknowledged the work done by Prime Minister Narendra Modi which had raised the prestige of the nation. Modi has always had special affection for Uttarakhand and he remains especially concerned about aspects of the state. In the coming times, Uttarakhand will be known as an economic, cultural and religious capital in the world.

Speaking on the occasion, Rajkumar said that he had joined the BJP after getting impressed by works of Modi and Dhami while also being fed up with the dynastic politics in the Congress.

Recalling his experience in the party, he said that he was sad that fulfilling the aim of

serving the public is not possible now through the Congress party organisation.

The condition in the Congress now is not what it was in the past, he said.

He said, "It had become tough to remain in the Congress on seeing it strongly opposing the works being undertaken by the Central and State governments for the welfare of farmers. While corruption was at its peak during Congress rule, it is now at the lowest in the nation and state. The BJP state government has effectively clamped down on the transfer business thriving under the Congress government. I decided that BJP is the only organisation which will enable me to serve the people and help take the nation further towards progress."

Covid-19: Only six new cases reported in U'khand



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The state health department reported only six new cases of the novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) and 15 recoveries from the disease in Uttarakhand on Sunday. No death from the disease was reported on the day in the state. Incidentally nine districts of the state reported no new case of the disease on Sunday.

The cumulative count of Covid-19 patients in the state is now at 3,43,382 while a total of 3,29,634 patients have recovered from the disease so far. In the state, 7,390 people have lost their lives to Covid-19 till date. The recovery percentage from the disease is at 96 while the sample positivity rate on Saturday was 0.04 per cent.

The state health department reported three new patients of Covid-19 from Dehradun and one each from

Haridwar, Nainital and Pithoragarh on Sunday. No new cases of the disease were reported from remaining nine districts of the state on the day.

The state now has 273 active cases of Covid-19. Dehradun with 132 cases is at the top of the table of active cases while Pauri has 31 active cases. Tehri now has no active case of the disease.

In the ongoing vaccination drive 48,798 people were vaccinated in 550 sessions in the state held on Sunday. As per the data of the state health department 72,19,539 people in the state have received the first dose of vaccine while 27,34,882 have received both doses of the vaccine. In the week ending September 18, the authorities reported 165 cases of the disease but during this period only 1,25,576 tests were carried out which is 55 per cent less than the weekly target.

MCD to discourage pet owners leaving pet droppings in open



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Considering the good response received by the Municipal Corporation of Dehradun (MCD) for pet dogs' license registration in the last financial year, the officials are expecting at least 10,000 registrations this year.

Besides this, the corporation is also working on discouraging pet owners from letting their pets defecate in public places. In the year 2019-20, the MCD had issued about 540 pet dog licenses which was the highest till then as per the officials.

In the last financial year, the corporation issued more than 4,000 pet dog licenses which is still

the highest number in the history of the corporation. The corporation has issued about 500 licenses this year so far.

The officials stated that the situation has improved a lot since the last year as people in the city are more aware of the need of having a dog license. "Most of the people applied after August last year and we issued licenses to about 4,000 dog owners."

To make the process easy this time, we launched a portal for dog licenses a few months ago through which people can apply online for license registration. In a day or two, we will upgrade our portal where people will be able to make direct payments too and will be able to get their license at their

doorstep," stated Tiwari. He said that with all the provided facilities this year, it is expected that at least 10,000 people will apply for dog licenses. He also informed that the corporation will soon start sending notices and issue penalties on those who have failed to get a dog license.

He also informed that the corporation will also start a campaign to raise awareness among locals to clean after their pet dogs that they let defecate in public places.

"We are working on plans to discourage people to let their dogs defecate in public places and encourage them to pick the droppings if they do and hopefully, it will be executed well by the next year," stated Tiwari.

₹65,000 refunded to cyber crime victims

PNS ■ PAURI

The Pauri district police cyber cell has refunded Rs 65,000 in the accounts of three victims of online frauds. On the instructions of the Pauri senior superintendent of police, P Renuka Devi to sort out the cyber crime cases, the cyber cell in-charge inspector Vijay Singh, sub-inspector Rafat Ali and three constables took swift action in the three cases. According to the police, Kotdwar resident Subash Chandra Dhasmana in his complaint had stated that an unknown person giving his identity as an army man, had defrauded him online of Rs 43,000. The cyber cell refunded Rs 40,000 in Dhasmana's account. Dhumakot resident Sohan Singh had complained that an unknown person had duped him of Rs 31,998 online, the police managed to get Rs 10,000 refunded. On the complaint of Kotdwar resident Sumit Verma that an unknown person taking information of bank account, had duped him of Rs 40,000, the cyber cell facilitated the refunding of Rs 15,000 to Verma's account. Considering the rise in cases of cyber crimes, the police have appealed to all citizens to desist from sharing account details, OTPs and other important information with callers on the phone.

AAP should fulfill promises in Delhi first: BJP

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The BJP State president Madan Kaushik said that the Aam Aadmi Party should talk at the ground level instead of making announcements aimed at appeasement. He said that the Delhi model had failed in Delhi but the AAP is talking of implementing in other states. Kaushik said one needs to consider the development achieved in Delhi considering its area and population while also ascertaining AAP's role in the same.

While the AAP is talking of providing jobs and unemployment allowance in Uttarakhand, how many jobs and allowance it has provided in Delhi should also be checked. He said it is easy to make announcements but difficult to execute work on the ground. The BJP believes in announcements and execution. "Instead of coming to another state and making some promises, it would be better if the AAP first focused on Delhi as the reality is known to all," said the BJP state president.

Five suspended for negligence on duty

The action was taken by on the basis of a video which had gone viral on social media.

PNS ■ PAURI

The Pauri district hospital medical superintendent Dr PK Jain suspended five employees of the hospital for negligence during their time of duty. This action was taken by the medical superintendent of the hospital on the basis of a video which had gone viral on social media. The video

showed these five employees dancing to the tune of a song during their duty time. The medical superintendent Dr Jain suspended these employees for five days and warned employees that negligence on duty will not be tolerated in the future. The district hospital in district headquarter Pauri is being managed under the Public Private Partnership mode by Mahant Indresh Hospital, Dehradun. The locals alleged that this is the second case of negligence within the duration of one week.

Guest Column

Afghanistan—devastated by war, united by Indian entertainment industry



■ ASHISH KAUL

It was the Indian entertainment industry that had kept the flame of hope alive in Afghanistan. In every song and in every Indian artist they see peace and happiness. Amidst devastation, I saw gleaming hope in every Afghan eye and a smile on their faces. There was undoubtedly courage, valour and honour spread everywhere and in every soul. They look you in the eye and touch your heart with their simplicity and Shreen Choi (local version of Kehwa). It was during the trip, I felt this great desire to talk to them and I walked up to a dry fruit vendor. I started asking for prices and told him that his stuff was expensive. With a smile he explained in broken Urdu/Hindustani with a Dari accent that it was a poor coun-



try. I asked him for how much was he willing to sell Kishmish and Pista to a 'mehmaan' in his country. He was quiet for a while and then asked me if I was Hindustani and I said yes. I was experienced multiple and overwhelming feelings of joy, pride and honour at the same time when he said "Hindustani mehmaan ke liye to sab muft me dega. I am confident that it was a reflection of what Afghans feel for India. All those days I kept on experiencing their love and passion for India and the Indian entertainment. One of the journalists with a TV channel told me that he feels uneasy if he doesn't watch Shahrukh's Devdas

three to four times a week and then there is this unparalleled pride they have for megastar Amitabh Bachchan who immortalised the Afghan Pathan as Badshah Khan in his magnum opus Khuda Gawah. They don't refer to Amitabh Bachchan as an Indian but as one of their own and regale the stories of his stay in Afghanistan during the shooting of the film. India literally rules the hearts of Afghans and I was quite proud of the fact that we have conquered the world, this far, with our artists and love.

Indian entertainment industry was present in every nook and corner of Kabul.

Even Khalid (name changed) the driver of our car was a fan of Indian music and would always have Hindi films songs playing in the car. He even managed to sing quite a few of them amidst the tales he told us about Taliban and the horrid six months he had spent in their captivity. The torture marks on his body that narrated the story of his captivity were nothing less than battle glories for him. It is amazing to see how I could effortlessly converse and relate to all of them and that too in a land so far away and separated by a vindictive neighbour. Perhaps the answer lies in history, in the times when India and

Afghanistan were neighbours. Anyone having seen the famous serial Mahabharat would know that the mother of Kauravas hailed from Kandahar. Sikhs too had woven themselves perfectly into the social system as a minority. From a distance, it is extremely difficult to tell one from an Afghan on the streets of Kabul. India means a dream to Afghans. The very mention of India lights up their eyes and immediately they all want to know of a city called 'Bambai'. In one of the pressers the week after that was hosted by the then Information and Broadcasting minister of the Afghan government we expressed our desire to strengthen the presence of a certain cluster of channels, offer programmes in Pashto and Dari language and eventually be able to offer local programming through a dedicated channel for Afghanistan. Afghan officials lauded the role of India in development of Afghanistan and also shared with great affection the role Indian media and entertainment played in their land. I was also surprised when I was politely briefed in private to abstain from praising Pakistani artists. For a change Pakistan was a hated word in an Islamic country. People of Afghanistan are much wiser today and two decades of war has taught them

the difference between religion and terrorism against mankind of which they too are a part. Back then, though Afghanistan was limping back to normalcy, it was much mature in its worldly affairs as one can see even condoms being sold in the streets of Kabul, perhaps a rarity in an Islamic country and then there was, probably the largest ever money changing market on the roadside stretching to a mile. Afghans in torn clothes with heaps of currency notes changing and exchanging dollars and other upwardly mobile currency in a fear-free environment and without even a security person in sight. Something like this was unimaginable in India or anywhere else in the world. Another important surprise was to see numerous computer institutes painted all over the city reflecting the craze for learning English the American way. I also realised that Afghans can speak good English with a typical American accent. It comes naturally to them. I was very hopeful that Kabul could be to central Asia what India was to the world.

Then it was the gala that evening in Kabul where Jagjit Singh was to perform. We were escorted to Kabul Polytechnic's famous auditorium which was made by

Russians. It can accommodate about 2,500 people and by god, it had more than that and double the number of people waiting outside willing to pay anything to get inside. Each and every Ghazal sung by Jagjit Singh was popular and I was stunned to see a group of women take centre stage, singing along with him. The evening was rocking and so was I and largely because this was the Afghanistan that not many people would know of. A land that was part of my childhood memories and full of tales by my illustrious grandfather who managed a thriving Persian carpet manufacturing facility in Kandahar, Peshawar and Ranchi—all of that was lost to the excruciating partition and ensuing devastation of 1947. The penultimate day in Kabul also took me to the great Behzad cinema—a ghost from the past that used to premiere French cinema in the 50s through to the 70s.

The flight back to Mumbai next day was fun as usual, this time not because of the generosity of the crew but a technical failure in the AC of aircraft and we kept on pulling up the crew with our fast ones. Perhaps, I knew the answer why my friend Jitendra Bhargava had not acknowledged my previous SMS full of praise - he wouldn't have believed it. However, in those

few peaceful moments on the plane I was sure that I was proud to be a part of this great nation and have been here among the people who have lived in man-made hell for decades and yet not forgotten to smile. I also kept weighing how different would the geopolitical situation be for the troika of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan had Rajiv Gandhi supported Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in forming the government in Kabul. He had assured Rajiv Gandhi that he would in turn ensure that no foreign/Afghan terrorist would venture into Kashmir.

It was eventually the Afghan terrorists who unleashed the first terror wave in Kashmir in 1989 / 90. Having said that, it is in such great lands that one feels ashamed to abuse the freedom that we have in India. Personally, I have felt this way before when we lost the right to live peacefully back home in Kashmir and Kabul brought back all those memories and above all a reassurance of my personal belief - peace shall win one day. As for my friends in Kabul - I do say my prayers until I return to this great land soon enough.

(The writer is a media veteran and bestselling author. Views expressed are personal. Concludes)

India becoming destination for healthy food items

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is becoming the destination country for healthy food items like millets and the Government is promoting bio-fortified varieties to address malnutrition. Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Sunday made this point as he participated in the G-20 agriculture meeting virtually.



Tomar said the United Nations (UN) has accepted India's proposal and declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets and urged the G-20 nations to support the celebration of the millet year to promote nutrition and sustainable agriculture.

The G20 Agriculture Ministers' Meeting is one of the Ministerial meetings organised as part of the G20 Leaders Summit 2021 to be hosted by Italy in October. "The Government of India has emphasised on re-introducing traditional food items including millet, other nutritious cereals, fruits and vegetables, fish, dairy and organic products in the diet of the people. Their production has been phenomenal in India in recent years and India is becoming a destination coun-

try for healthy food items," an official statement quoted Tomar having said in his virtual address.

Tomar said biofortified-varieties, which are the source of staple diet rich in micro-nutrients, are being promoted to remove malnutrition. About 17 such varieties of different crops have been developed and released for cultivation.

The Government has also taken steps to increase the optimal use of water resources, create infrastructure for irrigation, conserve soil fertility with balanced use of fertilizers, and provide connectivity from farms to markets, he added.

The minister was addressing a session on "Working

Govt promoting biofortified varieties to address malnutrition

together to achieve the Zero Hunger goal: successful projects implemented by the Ministries of Agriculture". Stating that Indian agriculture has achieved great success after the country's independence, Tomar said, "The Indian agriculture sector remained unaffected even during the COVID pandemic.

Highlighting measures taken towards sustainable agriculture, the minister said the 'Per Drop-More Crop' scheme for irrigation and 'Pamparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana' for organic farming is being successfully implemented. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana is being implemented to provide insurance cover for the

farmers.

To address the malnutrition problem, India is running the world's largest food-based safety net programme, which includes the Public Distribution System and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, he added.

The government is also providing an annual income support of Rs 6,000 under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana. So far, Rs 1.58 lakh crore has been deposited in the bank accounts of more than 11.37 crore farmers under this scheme. Further, Tomar assured that India will share best practices and build capacities of other developing countries.

BJP questions choice of Channi as Punjab CM

Recalls 'MeToo' charges against him

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Punjab CM-designate Charanjit Singh Channi along with Navjot Singh Sidhu and other Congress leaders outside the Governor's residence in Chandigarh on Sunday.

The BJP on Sunday lost no time to fish in the troubled 'Congress waters' in the border State of Punjab and sought to gleefully muddy it further by questioning the credentials of the party's new pick as State Chief Minister, Charanjit Channi, who, it said, was facing a "MeToo case" and the trustworthiness of an "anti-national" State Congress president Navjot Singh Sidhu.

BJP's IT cell head Amit Malviya came on Twitter and sought to report an alleged past case of misappropriate behaviour of the new Punjab CM against a lady IAS officer.

"Congress's CM pick Charanjit Channi faces action in a 3-year-old #MeToo case. He had allegedly sent an inappropriate text to a woman IAS officer in 2018. It was covered up but the case resurfaced when Punjab Women's Commission sent notice. Well done, Rahul", Malviya tweeted.

He also picked up th Sidhu issue on his Twitter account saying, "Punjab, a border state, which sees regular infiltration, smuggling of illegal arms and narcotics from Pakistan, can't be trusted with Navjot Singh Sidhu, who has ties with Pak PM and Army Chief, says Capt

Amarinder Singh, an Army veteran. But then why are the Gandhis pushing Sidhu?"

Earlier, senior BJP leader Prakash Javadekar also the Congress top leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi to explain their stand on former Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh calling Congress State President Navjot Singh Sidhu an "anti-national".

Addressing a press conference here, Javadekar questioned the Congress on the party's "silence" over "very serious allegations" against Sidhu made by Amarinder Singh.

"Captain Amarinder Singh has levelled very serious allegations against Navjot Singh Sidhu. He has called him anti-national. Navjot Singh Sidhu had visited Pakistan and greet-

ed (Pakistan Army Chief) Bajwa after Pakistan had attacked us. The country knew this, but yesterday Amarinder Singh Sidhu has highlighted this," said

"Our (BJP) question to Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi is why are they silent? This is a huge allegation. This is why we demand Congress should speak out and clear their stand."

"Will Congress take stock of these allegations and initiate an inquiry on Navjot Singh Sidhu," he asked.

After resigning from the post of the Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said he would oppose Sidhu if nominated as Punjab CM and described him as irresponsible and dangerous.

"I will never allow that

man to come. He is an anti-national element. I will not allow him. He is too mixed up with Pakistan," Captain Amarinder Singh said.

The former CM pointed out Sidhu's speech at Kartarpur where he praised Pakistan Prime minister Imran Khan as well as his controversial hug to Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, Qamar Javed Bajwa. Sidhu had then defended his actions.

The former CM has said he would decide his future course of action in consultations with his supporters. Amarinder dismissed speculations of him cosying-up to the BJP saying his earlier meetings with Prime Minister Modi and Union Minister Amit Shah were linked to the important issues including those pertaining to the internal security.

Ration card-related assistance now available at common services centres

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution has tied up with common services centres' (CSCs) e-Governance Services India Ltd, a special purpose vehicle under the Ministry of Electronics & IT, to streamline ration deliveries and strengthen public distribution system (PDS) in semi-urban and rural areas across the country, according to a statement by CSC.



In other words, services related to ration cards, such as applying for a new card, updating details and seeding with Aadhaar, will now be available at over 3.7 lakh common services centres (CSC) across the country. The move is expected to benefit 23.64 crore ration card holders across the country.

According to officials, a memorandum of understanding has been signed between the food & public distribution department and CSC, to enable ration card services through 3.7 lakh CSCs across the country. The partnership is expected to benefit over 23.64 crore ration card holders across the country who can now visit their nearest CSC and update their card details, do Aadhaar seeding, get a duplicate print of their card, check the status of avail-

ability of ration and register their grievance, it said.

Apart from the existing ration card holders, citizens who want to apply for a new ration card can also now visit their nearest CSC to put in the request application.

CSC e-Governance Services India Managing Director Dinesh Tyagi said, "Following our partnership with the department of food and public distribution, our village-level entrepreneurs (VLEs) who run CSCs will be able to reach out to those without

India logs 30,773 new Covid cases, 309 fatalities

PTI ■ JAIPUR



India has reported 30,773 new Covid-19 cases, 13.7 per cent lower than Saturday and 309 deaths in a span of 24 hours, the Union Health Ministry said on Sunday. The current recovery rate is 97.68 per cent, it added.

With a decline of 8,481 active cases, the country's active case load stands at 3,32,158, the ministry data showed. Active cases currently account for 0.99 per cent of the total cases in India.

The death toll has further climbed to 4,448,38 with 309 daily fatalities, while active caseload declines to 3.32 lakh. Meanwhile, 38,945 more people were discharged in the last 24 hours, taking the total

recoveries in the country to 32,671,167.

Also, 15,59,895 tests were conducted on Saturday, taking the total cumulative tests conducted so far to 55,23,40,168 the government said. The daily positivity rate has been recorded at 1.97 per cent. It has been less than 3 per cent for the last 20 days, according to the ministry data.

The weekly positivity rate has been recorded at 2.04 per cent. It has been below 3 per cent for the last 86 days, the ministry said.

A total of 80,33,75,147 vaccine doses have been administered so far, said the Union health ministry in an official statement released on Saturday. It further stated that out of these 80 crore, the last 10 crore Covid-19 vaccine doses were

administered in just 11 days.

More than 77.25 lakh (77,25,076) vaccine doses were administered till 7 pm on Saturday. From these, 40,87,704 were inoculated as first dose and 36,37,372 were administered as second dose to eligible beneficiaries.

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7 last year, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19 last year.

India recorded two crore cases on May 4 and three crore cases on June 23.

Rajasthan CM's OSD resigns after tweet sparks row

PTI ■ JAIPUR



Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's OSD Lokesh Sharma submitted his resignation on Saturday night, hours after he posted a tweet which was seen as an indirect criticism of the Congress over the change of leadership in Punjab.

The tweet appeared to refer to a strong person being made helpless and a mediocre person being elevated.

The officer on special duty to the Rajasthan Chief Minister submitted his resignation on Saturday night, seeking an apology for his tweet.

Sharma has been associated with Gehlot for over a decade now and he has been looking after his social media. He was made the OSD after Gehlot came to power in December 2018.

"Majboot ko majboor, mamuli ko magroor kiya jaye... baad hi khet ko khaay, uss fasal ko kaun bachaye!" Sharma had tweeted after Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh resigned on Saturday.

In the resignation letter, the OSD said he has been active on Twitter since 2010 and has not tweeted beyond party lines.

Sharma said he never posted any political tweet after being given the responsibility of OSD by Gehlot.

However, he sought an apology if his tweet hurt the party high command and the state government in any way.

The Delhi police had registered a case against Sharma in March on Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat's complaint.

During the political crisis in Rajasthan due to rebellion by deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot and 18 other MLAs last year, purported audio clips of conversations between Shekhawat, BJP leader Sanjay Jain and Congress MLAs Bhanwarlal and Vishvendra Singh were leaked. They were allegedly discussing a plan to topple the Congress government in the state.

It was alleged that Sharma had circulated the audio clips, a charge denied by him.

Deferments by courts causing unnecessary burden on us: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has observed deferments by courts cause unnecessary burden on it as it granted interim protection from arrest to a man whose anticipatory bail application is pending before the Allahabad High Court for the past seven months.

A Bench of justices S K Kaul and M M Sundresh granted the relief while noting that the Allahabad high court has not taken any view on the anticipatory bail application pending before it.

"We do believe that such deferments are only causing unnecessary burden on this Court rather than being dealt with at the appropriate level."

"The petitioner was never arrested during the investigation, however, he joined and cooperated with the investigation. In such a scenario, on the charge-sheet being filed, there is no need to arrest the petitioner and produce him before the Court in view of the legal position now enunciated by us," the bench said.

The top court made the observation while hearing a plea by an accused seeking anticipatory bail in a criminal

case. In pursuance to cognisance taken by the Special CBI Court Ghaziabad against the petitioner, a summons was issued against him.

On receiving the summons, the petitioner applied for anticipatory bail on January 16, 2021 which was declined on January 28.

The petitioner then filed an application for anticipatory bail before the High Court on February 3, 2021.

The top court noted that the order-sheet shows that various proceedings have been held before the High Court, counter filed by the CBI, yet no view has been taken by the Court on the anticipatory bail application necessitating the petitioner to approach the highest court.

"We, thus, grant interim protection to the petitioner against arrest till the next date of hearing before the Trial Court and stay the operation of the Order dated August 3, 2021 directing process under Section 82 (Proclamation for person absconding) of the CrPC on the petitioner appearing before the Trial Court he will be dealt with in accordance with law," the bench said.

Govt yet to take call on 68 names sent by SC collegium for appointment as HC judges

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is yet to take a call on the recommendations made by the Supreme Court collegium on appointing a total of 68 judicial officers and advocates as judges of various High Courts, sources aware of the procedure for appointment to the higher judiciary have said.

Between August 8 and September 1 this year, the apex court collegium had processed over 100 names recommended by various high courts and had finally sent 68 names to the government for appointment as judges to 12 High Courts.

The Government is yet to take a call on the names recommended by the SC collegium headed by Chief Justice of India N V Ramana, the sources said.

Out of the 68 names, two from Karnataka and one from Jammu and Kashmir have been sent for a third time, while 10 others have been recommended for a second time. The rest are fresh recommendations.

Prior to these recommendations, in a historic decision on August 17, the SC collegium had sent nine names, including three women, for elevation as judges of the Supreme Court.

The names were cleared



with significant pace by the government leading to their swearing-in as apex court judges on August 31.

On Friday, the Supreme Court collegium is learnt to have recommended eight names of judges, including acting chief justice of Calcutta High Court Justice Rajesh Bindal, for their elevation as chief justices of different high courts.

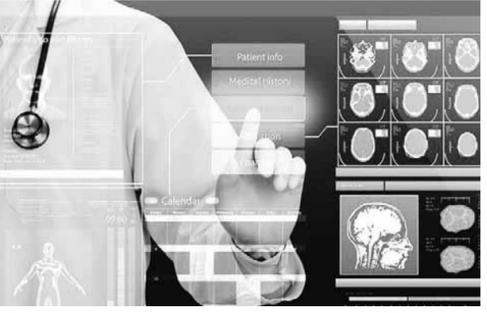
Besides, the marathon col-

legium meetings on Thursday and Friday have led to recommendations of transfer of five high court chief justices, including Tripura High Court Chief Justice Akil Kureshi, and 28 other high courts judges.

The combined sanctioned strength of the 25 high courts of the country is 1,098 judges. As of September 1, there were 465 vacancies, according to data put in the public domain by the Law Ministry.

Govt to launch telemedicine project at AIIMS, Raipur

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



With Covid-19 pandemic accelerating the adoption of digital health technologies, the Government will on Monday launch a telemedicine project at AIIMS, Raipur in Chhattisgarh to ensure safe access and deliver specialized medical services right at the doorsteps of the members of the fisheries cooperatives in the State.

Union Minister for Fisheries, Parshottam Rupala, will inaugurate the telemedicine facilities to be implemented under the central sector flagship program Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) through the National Cooperatives Development Corporation (NCDC), for members of the

fisheries cooperatives in the Northern State.

Proposed as a startup activity by AIIMS, Raipur for next three years, the project which is a joint effort of the Centre, the State, NCDC and AIIMS Raipur, is being launched in a pilot mode from five centres - PHC Patan (Durg district), PHC Saja (Bemetara), PHC Ratanpur (Bilaspur), PHC Dhamtari (Chamtari) and AIIMS Raipur (Raipur). Later, it will cover more districts.

NCDC MD Sundeep Nayak said that in the pandemic, it's a difficult time for the people particularly poor who are not able to access healthcare. However, "the use of telemedicine has emerged as a critical tool to improve the provision of health services.

With the launch of the facilities, the Government aims to bridge health disparities among fishermen and fisherwomen communities associated with their respective cooperatives in the State," he said.

The decision to launch the telemedicine facility was taken after it was found that many members from the cooperatives were shying away from availing medical services either because of living in far off areas, poverty or due to Covid fears.

Dr Nitin Nagarkar said that AIIMS, Raipur had already been conducting teleconsultation services for the benefit of the public, mainly residing in the tribal regions of the State. This activity was also further enhanced during this ongoing Covid pandemic.

'BJP will cross 350 seats in UP polls'

Yogi says UP has seen complete transformation under BJP rule

Lucknow: Asserting that Uttar Pradesh has undergone a complete transformation under his Government, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Sunday that there have been no riots since 2017, strict action has been taken against the mafia and the State is in the frontline of implementing welfare schemes, ensuring the ease of doing business and fighting the Covid-19 pandemic.

Making public his Government's report card months before facing the assembly polls, the chief minister also hit out at the opposition, saying they were busy building their houses when they were in power, indulged in corruption and nepotism, caused suffering to the sugarcane farmers and used to see centres of faith like Ayodhya from a communal point of view.

"In the 2022 Assembly elections, BJP will cross 350 seats (out of 403 seats), and



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath releases a book on completing 4.5 years of his Government at Lok Bhawan in Lucknow on Sunday

there should be no doubt on this," the chief minister said at a press conference and stressed that his Government has fulfilled every promise mentioned in the Lok Kalyan Sankalp Patra in 2017.

"The Opposition should read it. Had the opposition attended our training camps, they would have learnt some-

thing, and would have got wisdom," he remarked.

Uttar Pradesh is now number one in implementing 44 central schemes be it the PM Awas Yojna or construction of toilets in the households and its image is no longer liked with riots and lawlessness due to effective and transparent governance,

Adityanath said.

"Unlike them (previous governments), we did not make luxurious houses for ourselves. Our government focused on building houses for the poor," he said, taking a veiled dig at his predecessor Akhilesh Yadav.

"Government bungalows were demolished, and there was a competition to build houses for themselves as well as huge 'havelis' (mansions). But the four-and-half years were dedicated to good governance. And we did not build houses for ourselves, but for 42 lakh poor people of the state," he said. He said criminals were firmly dealt with irrespective of their caste, religion and social status to provide a safe and secure environment in the state.

"UP remained free from any riots during four-and-half years unlike in the past when there used to be communal clashes every 3-4 days," the Chief Minister said. **PTI**

Mamata a national leader, to lead Opp in its fight against BJP, says Supriyo

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Clearing linking his displeasure at being dropped from the Union Ministry and his joining the Trinamool Congress on Saturday former BJP leader and Union Minister Babul Supriyo on Sunday said that he was not used to sit in the reserved benches and had always preferred playing in the playing eleven which explained his joining the Bengal ruling outfit.

"I have been an ardent supporter of Mohun Bagan but tomorrow if I am reduced to playing for a junior team then I will obviously have to look towards some other team ... Maybe the rival East Bengal ... this is because I have never wanted to sit in the reserve benches ... that is not my style of doing it ... I had always preferred being in the playing eleven and hence I am here," Supriyo a two-time MP from Asansol said.

Saying that Mamata Banerjee had offered her the opportunity to be a part of the playing eleven Supriyo — who earlier got "inspired" by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to join the BJP before a similar inspirational pull from the Bengal Chief Minister sucked him into the Trinamool Congress on Saturday — said, "the life had become a kind of retired hurt for me ... Mamata didi has changed it ... she has given me an opportunity..."

He said, "I was talking to Derek ... I had a long discussion with Abhishek ... I felt a lot of love and support for a party with which I have had an

association. I have responded to a huge opportunity. I am grateful to Mamata ji for she thought about me. I am thankful she felt I was leaving some unfinished work in politics."

On Banerjee's ability to lead the nation Supriyo said a national leader as she had transformed into Mamata Banerjee was destined to lead the opposition forces in its fight against the BJP. "Surely she is a national leader now and she is definitely ahead in the leadership race as she has proved her mettle ... her credibility has gone up ... and I think she is India's hope in 2024."

Supriyo was likely to go to Delhi to tender his resignation to Speaker Om Birla. "I am likely to go to Delhi on Wednesday ... there if the honourable Speaker gives me time then I will tender my resignation to him."

On BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari's claim that as "Babul Supriyo is not a mass leader ... his leaving the party will not affect its fortunes," the singer-turned-politician said "if that was it ... if I have no mass base then why I was used for maximum number of campaigns by the BJP ... In fact I broke the record of Shehnaaz Hussein in that respect."

On campaigning for Mamata Banerjee against BJP candidate Priyanka Tibrewal he said "I think Mamata didi will not put me in an embarrassing situation as Priyanka has been like my sister and she had handled all my cases in the High Court ... I know her family very well."

UP now allows 100 people gathering in non-containment zones

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Government has relaxed the COVID-19 lockdown norms from Sunday by allowing a maximum of 100 people to gather at a place outside COVID-19 containment zones.

In a letter addressed to police and administration officials in the state, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi said, "In closed and at open places, a maximum of 100 persons have been allowed to gather at a place, while following COVID-19 protocol. Earlier, as per June 19 government order, a maximum of 50 persons were allowed to gather at open and closed places."

A distance of two yards will have to be maintained in seating arrangement for guests.

Toilets should be adequately cleaned and sanitised, the statement said.

1.20 L deaths due to negligence in road mishaps in 2020: NCRB

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India recorded 1.20 lakh cases of "deaths due to negligence relating to road accidents" in 2020 -- 328 people losing their lives every day on an average -- despite Covid-19 lockdowns, according to Government data.

As many as 3.92 lakh lives have been lost in three years in deaths due to negligence related to road accidents, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) revealed in its annual 'Crime India' report for 2020.

While 1.20 lakh such deaths were recorded in 2020, the figures stood at 1.36 lakh in 2019 and 1.35 lakh in 2018, the data showed.

The country also logged 1.35 lakh cases of "hit and run" since 2018, the report of the NCRB, which functions under the Union Home Ministry, showed.

In 2020 alone, there were 41,196 cases of "hit and run"

while there were 47,504 such cases in 2019 and 47,028 in 2018, the report showed.

On an average, there were 112 cases of "hit and run" reported across the country every day in the past year, according to the data.

The cases of causing "hurt" by rash or negligent driving on public way stood at 1.30 lakh in 2020, 1.60 lakh in 2019 and 1.66 lakh in 2018, while the cases of "grievous hurt" stood at 85,920, 1.12 lakh and 1.08 lakh, respectively, the data showed.

Meanwhile, 52 cases of deaths due to negligence relating to rail accidents were recorded across the country in 2020, from 55 in 2019 and 35 in 2018, the report showed.

During 2020, India also logged 133 cases of "deaths due to medical negligence", up from 201 in 2019 and 218 in 2018, the NCRB data showed.

There were 51 cases of "deaths due to negligence of

civic bodies" in 2020 while there were 147 cases in 2019 and 40 in 2018, according to the report.

Another 6,367 cases of "deaths due to other negligence" were reported across the country in 2020, up from 7,912 in 2019 and 8,687 in 2018, it showed.

The NCRB stated in the report that the country remained under complete lockdown from March 25, 2020 till May 31, 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic during which the movement in public space was "very limited".

"The cases registered under crimes against women, children and senior citizens, theft, burglary, robbery and dacoity have therefore declined, whereas Covid-related enforcement has resulted in increase of cases registered under 'disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant (Section 188 IPC)', under 'Other IPC Crimes' and under 'Other State Local Acts'," it noted.

Security forces to use pump action guns to kill low-flying drones

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Security forces that guard vital installations, airports and even their own camps have been directed to use rubber bullets bearing pump action guns to neutralise low-flying drones till an appropriate technology is found to thwart such aerial attacks, official sources said.

Also, forces like the Border Security Force (BSF) have recently installed an improvised iron pole mounted light machine gun (LMG) observation post at some of its border deployments against Pakistan to take a 360 degrees aim and shoot down drones or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) flying at a high altitude, they said.

A latest blueprint prepared by central security agencies to counter the emerging drone threat has been reviewed by PTI and it directs security forces to use PAGs (pump action guns) that are already available in their armoury for "neutralising any

low-flying UAV".

Following the directive, the central forces deployed for internal security have begun allocating PAGs to their units vulnerable to drone threats, including those deployed for anti-Naxal operations.

"Till a complete technology solution is found for effectively checking and neutralising a drone attack, the security forces have been asked to use what is available with them, like the PAGs.

Those who do not have adequate numbers of these non-lethal weapons have been asked to procure them," a senior Union home ministry officer said.

He said the security units deployed for counter-terrorist duties in Kashmir and those guarding airport boundaries have also been asked to provide these arms to their sentries deployed for observation and protection of the campus.

'Instal statue of Ezhuthachan, father of modern Malayalam, in his native village'

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

An on-line conclave on Sunday attended by nearly 200 literary and cultural icons drawn out from all over the country passed a unanimous resolution asking the Government of Kerala to install a larger-than-life size statue of Thunchath Ramanujan Ezhuthachan, the Father of Modern Malayalam, in his native village of Thunchath in Malappuram district.

Thunchath Ezhuthachan, believed to have lived during the 16th century was the spiritual scholar who gave Malayalam language its current form. Till his entry into the literary landscape of Kerala, Malayalam was more of a mixture of Sanskrit and Tamil and was known as Mani Pravalam.

Ezhuthachan not only perfected the Malayalam language to its present position but also translated some of the all-time epics like Adhyatma Ramayana into Malayalam. Hindus in Kerala observe the month of Karkkadaka (Sraavan) as Ramayana month with the entire households reverberating with the lyrics from the Indian epic.

Political parties controlling the local

self-bodies in Malappuram cited religious sentiments and dismissed the pleas seeking permission to set up the statue. Prof P G Haridas, the newly elected president of Tapasya, the State's oldest socio-cultural movement, said that the resolution demanding the setting up of Thunchath Ezhuthachan's statue was sent to Kerala Government for necessary action. "It is injustice of the highest order to deny the Father of Malayalam language his due recognition. Political leaders belonging to various parties have their giant statues installed in all districts. Isn't the scholar who moulded Malayalam language is worthy of having his statue in his birthplace?" asked Prof Haridas.

Religious zealots in Kerala's northern districts have declared their opposition to instal statues because they term it as idolatry. "The demand for installing Thunchath Acharya's statue is not going to be forgotten with the submission of this memorandum. The month of July saw a group of religious workers staging demonstrations all over Malappuram district demanding the carving out of a separate district as part of their long term agenda.

BSY cautions party workers against taking Opposition lightly

Davangere (K'taka): Former Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Sunday cautioned his party colleagues against taking the Opposition lightly in the upcoming elections.

"I have a suggestion to all of you. None of you should take the opposition lightly. They have their own calculation and strengths," Yediyurappa said at the BJP Core Committee meeting here. The Lingayat strongman claimed that a few Congress leaders are in touch with some BJP leaders.

"You need to tread with confidence without giving chance to such incidents (defection). We have to make a sincere effort for the BJP to come back to power with 140 seats in the next Assembly elections," Yediyurappa, who stepped down as the Chief Minister on July 26, said here. He said the party can be strengthened by inducting into the BJP leaders from SC/ST and OBC communities.

Further, he asked to include a team of 20 to 25 women and the BJP youth wing leaders at the booth level organisation.

Yediyurappa also appealed to the party functionaries to make the welfare programmes of the Centre and the State Government reach every household. He also told the gathering that he would take up a state-wide tour shortly to strengthen the party base.

Yediyurappa reminded the core committee members that the BJP has to win both Hanagal and Sindagi assembly bypolls because its failure will send the wrong signals. No one here should assume that Hanagal and Sindagi are easy turfs," Yediyurappa said. Speaking about the demolition of temple in Nanjangud in Mysuru recently, which drew widespread criticism, Yediyurappa said a decision has been taken not to allow destruction of any temples anywhere. **PTI**

Centre seeks report from AP on ₹960 cr loans from foreign agencies

Amaravati: The Centre has sought a report from the Andhra Pradesh Government on ₹960 crore received as loans from foreign agencies for various Externally-Aided Projects (EAPs) remaining unutilised.

The departments that are supposed to get these funds for executing the projects have drawn a blank, while payments running into hundreds of crores of Rupees are yet to be made to contractors on works done so far.

The EAPs now remain derailed because the state is unable to draw further loan amounts from the external agencies due to poor progress of the works and non-clearance of payment (dues).

The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) under the Union Finance Ministry has taken a strong view and written a letter last week seeking an explanation from the state Finance Department on the issue.

"The overall position of utilisation of advances extended by various authorities is not so encouraging as a very heavy amount of advance is lying in the accounts of Government of Andhra Pradesh.

As on September 7, the amount released as advance is USD 124.65 million, roughly equivalent to ₹ 960 crore," the DEA pointed out in its letter to the Principal Finance Secretary.

The DEA also noted that utilisation of the loan amount "is not so high", which indicated a "situation wherein the interest cost is increasing but the project execution is at a slow pace".

Also, officials of the DEA personally called up top officials of different state departments and "gave us an earful" over the sorry state of affairs, a senior bureaucrat said.

"We are being bombarded with queries on the status of works and utilisation of funds (advanced by foreign agen-

cies), but our report card is filled with only blanks. They gave us money but we can't tell them we actually don't have it," the bureaucrat observed.

On the one hand, the state government has been scampering for loans but, on the other, the loans secured were obviously not being spent for the intended purpose, he told PTI.

Efforts to contact the Principal Finance Secretary for clarification on the subject did not bear fruit. There are 14 EAPs in execution in AP now, with loans from foreign lenders like World Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, International Fund for Agriculture Development, Asian Development Bank, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Japan International Cooperation Agency, New Development Bank and KfW of Germany. **PTI**

YSRCP registers landslide win in Parishad polls

SNV SUDHIR ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YS Jaganmohan Reddy led YSRCP's victory march that had begun in 2019 polls, by bagging 151 out of 175 Assembly segments and continued in the polls for urban and local bodies, Tirupati Lok Sabha bypoll two years later is near complete on Sunday as the ruling party registered a historic and landslide win in the Parishad Polls while crushing Opposition TDP and the BJP-Jana Sena combine.

While the polls for MPTCs and ZPTCs were held on April 8, results could not be announced as scheduled on April 10 as counting was stayed by the state high court that had heard petitions filed by the leaders of TDP, BJP and Jana Sena. After the nod from a division bench of the state High Court counting of votes took place on Sunday.

While the counting is still going on as per the latest reports the YSRCP has won 4,430 seats out of 4,741 declared seats in MPTCs. Around 248 seats out of the 641 ZPTCs were also

bagged by YSRCP.

The resounding victory in the Parishad polls could not have come at any other time for the YSRCP cadre and leaders as they have been facing flak from the opposition TDP and also a section of media over financial crisis being faced by the state and the alleged mishandling of the situation by the Jagan government.

The win is sweeter to YSRCP as Jaganmohan Reddy didn't campaign for any of these polls, didn't conduct a press conference, didn't release any video message seeking votes as he was confident that performance fetched votes, as it did.

For TDP which has been facing humiliation since 2019 polls had once again these Parishad polls rendered embarrassment as the YSRCP won more than majority of the ZPTCs and MPTCs that come under TDP supreme and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu's home constituency Kuppam in Chittoor district.

However on paper and for

the record TDP announced it had boycotted the parishad polls a week before the polls were to be held on April 8.

YSRCP decimates TDP in home turf Kuppam

Vijayawada: For TDP which has been facing humiliation since 2019 polls was once again rendered embarrassed in Parishad polls as the YSRCP won all the four ZPTCs and 98 percent of the MPTCs that come under TDP supreme and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu's home constituency Kuppam in Chittoor district.

TDP backed candidates also lost more than 90 percent of the panchayats that come under Kuppam to YSRCP supported candidates in the polls held for rural local bodies in February.

Most importantly MPTCs that come under TDP founder and considered as Telugu pride NT Rama Rao's native village

and his in-laws that were adopted by TDP scion Nara Lokesh and his mother Nara Bhuvaneshwari in Krishna district also went to YSRCP.

According to the results announced on Sunday, YSRCP candidates won Gudipalle, Kuppam, Santhipuram, Ramakuppam ZPTCs.

Out of the 19 MPTCs in Kuppam, 17 and TDP won 17 and TDP won 17 and Gudipalle and Ramakuppam mandals YSRCP bagged all the 12 and 16 MPTCs respectively. In Shanthipuram mandal YSRCP bagged 17 MPTCs out of 18. Naidu's native village where he was born Naravaripalle TDP candidate lost and YSRCP candidate R Rajaiiah won with 1,000 votes majority.

Indian industry to produce 2 more entire rockets: DoS

Bengaluru: The Department of Space (DoS) plans to realise entirely-built rockets — GSLV-Mk III and SSLV — from Indian industry partners, in addition to PSLV, according to a top official of its commercial arm NSIL.

NSIL (NewSpace India Limited) has received three bids -- HAL-L&T, BEL-Adani-BEML, and BHEL, in response to the request for proposal (RFP) floated by it for end-to-end production of PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle).

"We are now going through the techno-commercial evaluation (in respect of the three bids)", NSIL Chairman and Managing Director, Radhakrishnan D, told PTI here. He said the process will be completed within the next two months with one of the

bidders bagging the contract. The selected bidder will be responsible for realisation of five numbers of PSLV. Immediately after selection of the bidder to produce the entire

PSLV, NSIL will release Expression of Interest (EOI) for end-to-end production of another operational rocket -- GSLV-Mk III

(Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle) -- in a similar fashion, Radhakrishnan said.

"I am targeting before the end of this year (to release EOI for GSLV-Mk III)", he said. NSIL also has plans to realise SSLV (Small Satellite Launch Vehicle), being developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) with the first development flight expected by this year-end, through Indian industry part-

ners. "We are waiting for the first mission (of SSLV) to happen successfully", Radhakrishnan said. "This (SSLV) will be an ideal candidate for industry production".

SSLV is a three-stage all solid vehicle and has a capability to launch up to 500 kg satellite mass into 500 km low earth orbit (LEO) and 300 kg to Sun Synchronous Orbit (SSO).

The new generation compact rocket has been designed to meet "launch on demand" requirements in a cost-effective manner for small satellites in a dedicated and redishare mode, according to officials of Bengaluru-headquartered ISRO.

Industrialisation of space activities is gaining momentum in India.

About 40 space startups and industries are in consultation with ISRO for support related to various domains of space activity such as development of satellites, launch vehicles, develop applications and provide space-based services.

India's Foreign Direct Investment policy in the space sector is also getting revised which, the ISRO Chairman and DoS Secretary K Sivan believe, will open up huge avenues for foreign companies to invest in the country.

Earlier this month, the DoS entered into a Framework MoU with two spacetech startups -- Skyroot Aerospace and Agnikul Cosmos -- for access to ISRO facilities and expertise towards the development and testing of subsystems/systems of space launch vehicles. **PTI**



Immersion of an idol of Lord Ganesha on the last day of the Ganesh Chaturthi festival, in Mumbai on Sunday



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Uncertainty

The Chief Ministers in several States are a harried lot, unsure of their longevity in office

Most Chief Ministers in India today are a harried lot. Captain Amarinder Singh, for instance, felt "humiliated" by the way he was told to go. He resigned as the Punjab Chief Minister but is still with the Congress. Now "they can name as CM anyone they want", he said, betraying his hurt. He is the first Congress Chief Minister in recent years to be sacked in a machination typical of the party. It is *déjà vu* of the 1980s and 1990s when the Chief Ministers in Congress-ruled States called themselves State guests, certain that the "high command" would any day parachute their replacements. The *modus operandi* has not changed. The only difference today is that the Congress is left with very few Chief Ministers to replace. Three, to be precise. Such is the fear of the parachuting business, even the Chief Ministers with the majority of MLAs supporting them are apprehensive. The Punjab example would surely have stirred some fears in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan. The BJP is not far behind when it comes to playing the replacement game. Vijay Rupani, Trivendra Singh Rawat, Tirath Singh Rawat and BS Yediyurappa were asked to resign in Gujarat, Uttarakhand and Karnataka. In Assam, Sarbananda Sonowal was asked to shift to Delhi, giving the job to Himanta Biswa Sarma after the Assembly elections. After Narendra Modi came to power, as many as 22 Chief Ministers were handpicked and sent to the BJP-ruled States, confirming who the Chief Ministers are beholden to.



A Chief Minister's post, as these incumbents would have realised by now, is not dependent on their abilities to govern or garner the backing of legislators. It entirely depends on the party leadership's primary intent of winning elections and, thereafter, tackling dissent. Many of these Chief Ministers share certain characteristics. Not all of them are leaders in their own right or have a mass base or caste-based support the party cannot ignore. Many are novices where party politics is concerned. Nearly all of them are of seasonal utility for their leadership. On the other hand, those who have these abilities make Chief Ministers of a different kind. Two kinds, actually. One, like the late YS Rajasekhara Reddy of Andhra Pradesh, the mass-based leader who was not overawed by the "high command" because he wielded the power to singlehandedly deliver the State to the Congress in two successive elections. He made a satrapy of the party in the State, took care of the party's national coffers and brooked no interference from Delhi. The other kind is the regional satrap, who branched out from a national party only to wipe its presence from a State, introduced a brand of individualised politics and who is her/his own "high command". These Chief Ministers, whether in Telangana, West Bengal, Odisha or Tamil Nadu, are in a position to eventually introduce the principle of heredity in their States; thus no less powerful or dynastic than their former "high commands".

PICTALK



Devotees carry idols of Lord Ganesha to immerse them to mark Ganesh Chaturthi, in Ahmedabad

AP

Jumping ship

Babul Supriyo joining the TMC is likely to boost the party's prospects rather than his own

It happened rather suddenly, with nobody even in the BJP's Bengal unit and political pundits knowing about it. The BJP's star campaigner and once Prime Minister Narendra Modi's blue-eyed boy joined the Trinamool Congress. He joined the party in the presence of its national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee and sent shockwaves in the Bengal BJP. Though he had withdrawn from "active politics" after being removed from the Environment Ministry, no one anticipated such a move. He had hinted that he would also resign his Parliament seat. This, however, was averted after JP Nadda persuaded him to continue as the Member of Parliament from Asansol. More than anything else, it is going to cause a demoralising effect on the BJP. The TMC hardly gains anything from inducting Babul Supriyo in its ranks. Reason — Babul may have overshot his political expiry. He lost by over 50,000 votes in the recent Bengal elections when he fought on the BJP's ticket. Nevertheless, the TMC might be thinking of sending him to the Rajya Sabha.



Arpita Ghosh, a Rajya Sabha member of the TMC, has been made to resign by the party. Babul Supriyo might be the new TMC entry into the Rajya Sabha.

After a spectacular victory in the Assembly elections, the TMC's ambitions are soaring and it is spreading its wings to fly higher. On the one hand, it is trying to make a mark in national politics by courting various national parties and, on the other, it is making inroads into nearby States like Assam and Tripura. Babul Supriyo may not be important for the TMC in the byelections for vote-catching where Mamata Banerjee would be seeking people's mandate but he can certainly be a trigger for others to leave their party and join the TMC. Four MLAs have already left the BJP and joined the party. It is a huge perception victory and morale booster for the TMC's workers. It could even boost the party's prospects in Assam and Tripura, where the TMC wants to fan out. An additional advantage is Babul's Asansol parliamentary seat which, after his resignation, is going to fall into the lap of the Trinamool Congress. However, this 'shifting loyalty syndrome' does no good to the people or the cause of democracy. It shows the leaders in poor light; actually, it is tantamount to cheating and stealing people's mandate.

Building defence of peace in mind

Several philosophical ideas have deep roots in Indian soil, and stand dynamically enriched by the great tradition of quest for knowledge



JS RAJPUT

The creation of the UN on October 24, 1945, was an outcome of aspirations of anguished humanity that has suffered WWI and WWII, and gone through unprecedented sufferings, devastation and destruction. Humanity needed a healing touch and a forum for civilised discourse and, above all, articulation of creating a value-based society that would strive to give due dignity to every human being, that would emphasise the equality of all human beings irrespective of race, colour, caste, creed, affiliation, religion, or any other diversity. This could be possible only when an empathetic human community is created globally, one that acknowledges the core human values: Truth, peace, nonviolence, righteous conduct and love. The essence was well articulated in Unesco's emblem: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of man that defence of peace must be constructed." Truth, or the search for truth, is just not possible unless the other four of the five values mentioned above are also accepted and put to practice in daily life.

After over seven decades of the UN's establishment, the mandate to achieve an attitudinal transformation amongst humanity seems to have been forgotten. It is violence, terrorism, fundamentalism, distrust and a vulgar pursuit of destructive weaponry all around. The human mind has been studied seriously by modern sciences; it has its intuitional comprehensions contained in ancient treatises. Swami Vivekananda was perfectly logical and scientifically accurate when he mentioned: "The true basis of education is the study of the human mind — infant, adolescent and adult. Any system of education founded on theories of academic perfection, which ignores the instrument of study, is more likely to hamper and impair intellectual growth than to produce a perfect and perfectly equipped mind." Obviously, the damage has been inflicted on generations that have been educated and evaluated on much sought after academic excellence, confined to a curriculum, textbooks and examinations that expect reproduction of the answer as "given in the textbook". The pragmatic



objectives of education were limited to rote learning and learning for examinations, and marks were the only measure of the level of the learner's excellence. It has to be replaced by conceptual understanding and critical thinking in a learning environment characterised by nourishing of inherent curiosity and creativity.

The National Education Policy (NEP-2020) in the third decade of the 21st century derives its sustenance from the philosophical ideas that have deep roots in India, and stand dynamically enriched by the great tradition of knowledge quest that evolved in the Gurukul system and led to the creation of institutions like Taxila, Vikramshila and Nalanda. These could set the highest standards of multidisciplinary teaching and research which attracted seekers of knowledge from various countries. Effortlessly, though very clearly and from the beginning, the Indian tradition of education and learning entrenched the importance of man-nature mutuality in the mind of the learner. The rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge has been the guiding light for this policy. The pursuit of knowledge (*Jnan*),



THE AIM OF EDUCATION IN ANCIENT INDIA WAS NOT JUST THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE AS PREPARATION FOR LIFE IN THIS WORLD, OR LIFE BEYOND SCHOOLING, BUT FOR COMPLETE REALISATION AND LIBERATION OF THE SELF

wisdom (*Pragya*) and truth (*Satya*) was always considered in Indian philosophy as the highest human goal. The aim of education was not just the acquisition of knowledge as preparation for life in this world, or life beyond schooling, but for complete realisation and liberation of the self. The depiction of divinity in nature, a great strength of the Indian tradition and unique to it in several ways, is being viewed with considerable awe by those willing to find solutions to global concerns like pollution, climate change and the impending water crisis. The symphony of the process of education, creation and generation of knowledge and its use were so established that the essence of it reached everybody in society. At the highest level of intellectual effort, the knowledge on trees and plants was created, keeping in view its utility in public welfare. Even today, one can see how people are conscious of such classifications. And all this is found scientifically accurate!

The challenge emerges from the realisation that the traditional knowledge transfer was disturbed for various reasons, coupled with the shameless plundering of natural resources. The globalised world is now

facing its consequences. India accepts the need to relate its education system to homegrown philosophy and practices that, in this specific context, includes "Aparigraha", re-articulated by Mahatma Gandhi as an eternal truth that could save mankind: "Nature has sufficient resources to meet the need of everyone, but not the greed of anyone."

Wars begin in the minds of human beings; the initiatives for "constructing the defence of peace" must begin in the early years and continue all along. The realisation of this aspect is one of the most outstanding inclusions in NEP-2020. For the first time in contemporary education, the importance of the first eight years in schools beginning from 3+ has been acknowledged, and the entire school system shall be reorganised accordingly. India shall prepare a generation of young persons whose mind "would not be a dustbin to keep anger, hatred and jealousy". It would be filled with love, nonviolence, empathy, compassion and dharma. That could attract the whole world towards Indian institutions once again.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COLD SHOULDER TO AN ALLY

Sir — The recent formation of AUKUS, where Australia is thrilled to get strategic technology transfer from the US and UK, has surprised the world and angered France. The trio of Australia, UK and the US is strategically significant for the Indo-Pacific region. But the disregard of France by Australia on the sidelines of AUKUS may develop a rift in the relationship of like-minded countries. Almost all major powerful nations in the world, especially the western, are worried about China's growing influence.

Australia's admission into the AUKUS is questionable in geopolitical relevance. France is also one among the major countries who strictly took actions against terrorism, radical Islamist views, expansionist ideology, and bodies that are against free and open Indo-Pacific. The US must rethink which nations must be included and which must be excluded. In the same way, Australia must also negotiate with France with respect to the economically important deals. The world today needs collaboration, not isolation or backstabbing an ally. It is welcoming that new partnerships are being created for international development, but geopolitical rift must also be avoided for sustainable development for all.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

LURES WORTH FALLING FOR?

Sir — It refers to pre-poll announcements about free electricity upto 300 units, cancellation of all pending electricity bills and free electricity for agriculture in Uttar Pradesh and some other States by the Aam Aadmi Party. But in practice, this results in heavy electricity bills for others out of which the worst sufferer is the mute category of honest middle-income taxpayers because any such heavy dose of electricity bill does not affect the affluent section of society. On the contrary, many take different electricity connections in the name of different members of the family to get free electricity in multiples of 300 units. The Election Commission should take such pre-poll announcements as

Rift within consumes the Captain



It is hard to believe that Captain's position became untenable because a majority of MLAs have turned against him. More than the infighting, it was the high command's preference for the maverick cricketer-turned-politician, his elevation as the PCC president and freedom given to him to undercut the Chief Minister's authority that cost Captain the job. Captain preserved his dignity and reputation; he paled visibly at his forced exit; he had reason to feel wronged and hurt, more so when he per-

formed well, even if not outstandingly and prevented anti-incumbency perceptibly setting in; his grievance that he was 'humiliated' might win him public sympathy.

The ouster of the Punjab satrap just four months before the election has created a fluid political situation in Punjab. Sidhu's popularity in electoral terms remains untested so far. How things will pan out with Sukhinder Randhawa as the next Chief Minister remains to be seen. The BJP has angered farmers by passing the three farm laws so much that it is in no position to take advantage of the present political turmoil. It is hard for the Akali Dal to emerge as a choice for being voted to power when its loss of favour with the electorate is so complete. Perhaps the AAP stands to gain from the turn of events in Punjab; it can now fancy its chances. But then it too is not free from the bane of internal squabbles.

G David Milton | Maruthancode

unfair practice to lure voters.

It is unfair that people with large families take advantage of free medicines in hospitals of Delhi Government while middle-income small families bear additional tax-burden because of such freebies enjoyed by those with large families. Instead, social and religious organisations like the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, Rotary Clubs etc. should be provided space to open shops of generic medicines to be sold at a no-profit, no-loss basis. If the Government is unable to stop such freebies, it is for the Supreme Court to stop such schemes.

Subhash Chandra Agrawal | Delhi

THE SHASTRI SAGA COMES TO AN END

Sir — Hats off to R J Shastri for his role as India's chief cricket coach as he helped improve the attitude and performance of Indian players and turned them into a world-class team. He made the likes of R Ashwin work hard in multiple home series with long bowling spells, which helped the

SOUNDBITE

I hope that Captain Amarinder Singh ji will not take any such step which will harm the Congress party.

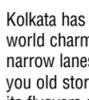


Rajasthan Chief Minister —Ashok Gehlot



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

Pakistan Prime Minister —Imran Khan



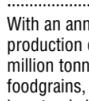
Kolkata has an old-world charm...its narrow lanes tell you old stories, and its flyovers show how modern the city is.

Actor —Yami Gautam



Disappointed waking up to the news of the cancellation of the Pakistan Vs New Zealand series because of security issues.

Former West Indies captain —Darren Sammy



With an annual production of 308 million tonnes of foodgrains, India is not only in the realm of food security, but is also catering to the needs of other countries.

Union Agriculture Minister —Narendra Singh Tomar

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN
CONSUMERS EASY PREY TO FOOT THE BILL

A reduction in retail fuel prices is possible if additional excise duties are rolled back



AMIYA KUMAR SAHU

Petrol and diesel prices have remained close to Rs. 100 for about 10 weeks since July 8, 2021. The impact of this has been on fuel inflation (Wholesale Price Index) which averaged at more than 25 percent for the last five months.

The international crude oil price, however, reveals a different picture. Brent crude oil prices fell from \$77.16 to \$65.18 between July 5 and Aug 20, a reduction of over 15 percent. In layman's terms, the price of petrol in India could have been decreased to ₹85.

Back in 2017, the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) were given a free hand to follow dynamic fuel pricing to make their operations more efficient. Why the OMCs have stopped daily price revisions is a mystery. Is it because they are still controlled by the government which has a majority stake in them?



The RBI has also warned that high prices would trigger higher inflation which would affect growth. But it seems the government has decided to continue milking the cash cows — the consumers.

While protection of consumers' interests necessitates government interventions, a reduction of the high prices seems to be far from reality. In May last year, the government imposed additional excise duty on both petrol and diesel, which included road and infrastructure cess - an additional revenue worth ₹1.6 lakh crore. Since the country was forced into a pandemic-induced lockdown, it made commonsense as well as economic sense, then. The fiscal situation was expected to be tight.

However, since May 2020, the total taxes on petrol have crossed ₹50 per litre. It was a paltry ₹9.48 per litre when the BJP government replaced UPA II in 2014. Is the government still expecting the fiscal situation to be similar to last year's? Let's look at the GST data which might give a clue in support of this.

Back in April 2020, when India was under a complete shutdown, the GST revenue collections fell to ₹32,294 crores from ₹97,597 crores. However, from March to August 2021, the GST collected has been ₹6,98,257 crores. This was a jump of more than 50 percent compared to the same period in the previous year.

The USD/INR exchange rate also has been favourable to import bills of crude oil. The exchange rate corrected from a peak of ₹77.10/USD in April 2020 to ₹72.26/USD in March 2021. It now is ranging between ₹73 to ₹75.

A reduction in retail prices is unquestionably possible. All that needs to be done is to roll back additional excise duties. At present, the total excise duty on petrol exceeds ₹37 per litre. The other alternative is to bring the petroleum products under GST.

Since the government has remained stubborn after numerous pleas for a reduction in the petrol and diesel prices, a set of new questions arise: Is the government planning to put up a surplus budget in February 2022? Is it anticipating a severe third wave and lockdown similar to last year? Larger subsidy amounts are likely to be given to the poor?

Let's evaluate another argument. Higher prices would reduce consumption of the fossil fuel and help reduce global warming. But we need to reduce dependency on personal vehicles and move to large-scale adoption of public transport. But mass-rapid transport systems are not effective. If the government wants to promote electric vehicles, then we don't have the technology, capacity to produce in large quantities, and required infrastructure for re-charging battery-run vehicles.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Goa Institute of Management, Goa. The views expressed are personal.)

'Cabbage tactic' to seize waters

India should be wary of China using the 'cabbage tactic' in the Indian Ocean region the same way it tries to grab islands in the South China Sea



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI

This week will witness Prime Minister Narendra Modi meeting in person with the leaders of Australia and Japan, apart from the US, a move that holds significant importance and may perhaps change India's foreign policy contours. The meeting comes in the backdrop of Australia's alliance with the UK and the US - AUKUS -- which aims to provide nuclear submarines to Canberra.

Quad and AUKUS objectively overlap with India's maritime security interests in the South China Sea (SCS). Almost 50 per cent of India's global trade transits through the SCS region. The governments of Quad focus on the freedom of navigation on high seas as a legitimate right. Beijing has actively adopted a "cabbage tactic", which is multi-layered, to increase its leverage by capturing the SCS. This vital trade route also happens to be a potential source of natural resources such as hydrocarbons. For this purpose, it builds artificial islands by claiming its "historic rights" and then legislates unusual domestic laws on it to exercise its "sovereignty" over them. The "cabbage tactic" is used to take control of an island by surrounding it in multiple layers of fishing boats, coast guard ships and Chinese naval and military ships to cut off the island from outside support. The more significant motive, of course, is occupying as much space as possible by threatening other countries.

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) does not have a provision to address the issues regarding construction, maintenance and militarization of artificial islands beyond a state's "territorial waters". Article 60 (1) of the UNCLOS allow for artificial islands only in the Exclusive Economic Zone. Artificial islands of China beyond its territorial waters are thus farcing.

The International Court of Justice asserted the same in its 2016 arbitration, which Beijing refuted. The Chinese maritime domestic laws conflict with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and sharply violate the maritime rights of the other states. The UNCLOS provides the vital 'freedom of navigation' and 'right to innocent passage' on the high sea, i.e., area outside internal waters, the territorial sea, the contiguous zone, the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf of a state to regulate their maritime trade and movement for peaceful purposes such as helping the other states in distress, scientific exploration, etc.

Chinese intentions can be ascertained by examining its 1992 Law of the PRC. Article 14 emphasized the option of using a "hot pursuit" against a foreign ship if it enters its territorial waters or the contiguous zone. Further, Article 15 insists that baseline of its territorial sea would be "established" by itself, a move



CHINA DEFENDS ITS PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION WITH A LAME EXCUSE OF COUNTERING PIRACY IN THE GULF OF ADEN. WHILE IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA, IT EXPLICITLY MAINTAINS THAT ALL THE NAVAL VESSELS OF THE OTHER COUNTRIES MUST SEEK PRIOR PERMISSION BEFORE ENTERING THE WATERS

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



hinting towards its future expansionism.

Later, in 2011, China submitted in the UN a Note Verbale on the SCS speaking about its "indisputable sovereignty over the islands in the South China Sea and the adjacent waters". Nonetheless, the terms "historic rights" and "adjacent waters" do not appear in UNCLOS, and there is no recognition. Further, the use of illegal terms serves the purpose of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) by expanding the scope of its 'grey zone tactics' and hence are a distraction to the well-established international norms and principles. China zealously guards the SCS, which was recently evident when China illegally stopped a German warship from entering it.

Accompanied by the regularisation of such words, its mention of phrases like 'offshore defence', 'distant sea defence' and its 'interests aboard' truly reflect its hegemonic behaviour that is set to expand to the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Its nuclear submarines are regularly sighted in the IOR and the Arabian Sea by the Indian Navy. The presence of Chinese submersibles is a clear-cut violation of Article 20 of UNCLOS, which states that "in the territorial sea, submarines and other underwater vehicles are required to navigate on the surface and show their flag". China may be collecting critical under-sea hydrological data from the IOR to plan action in case of a limited conflict or a full-blown open war with India. Such moves are a detriment to India's core security objectives. China counters its presence by putting forward a lame excuse with its nuclear submarines to counter the piracy in the Gulf of Aden. One can only wonder how a nuclear submarine can counter piracy.

On the contrary, in the SCS, China explicitly maintains that all the naval vessels of the other countries and research ships seek prior permission before they enter the territorial waters of China. The same duplicity has been evident in its recent amendment to China's Maritime Traffic Safety Law. It now includes five types of vessels- "submersibles, nuclear-powered vessels, ships carrying radioactive materials, ships carrying bulk oil, chemicals, liquefied gas or other toxic substances" that need to report minute details to the Chinese authorities. The cargo ships are thus now questionable and more prone to sabotage through "hot pursuits".

Further, Article 11 of the same law asserts that "Non-military vessels of foreign nationality may not enter the internal waters". Additionally, the "military vessels of foreign nationality may not enter the territorial waters". The pertinent question that arises is what are the limits of its "territorial waters"? As per the UNCLOS, it extends upto 12 nautical miles from the baseline of a coastal state. In the case of Beijing, will it start measuring such limits from the artificial islands that it has built in the SCS? Then in such a case, the Spratly and Paracel Islands represent a "sea grab", similar to a land grab. Does it not then amount to infringing the freedom of navigation of other states? Such illegal occupation affects the trade routes and supply chain lines. Such dual standards need to be exposed and at various regional and multilateral levels.

China's land reclamation activities in Feydhoo Finolhu Island leased out to Beijing by the Maldives in 2016 are China's emerging footprints in the IOR. This comes in addition to its military intelligence and surveillance activities in the Coco Islands and Greater Coco islands of the Eastern Indian Ocean. The existing geostrategic realities of Chinese hegemonic intentions in the IOR are visible through China's OBOR and its attempts to remould the Asian security order in its favour. China's recent outreach to the Taliban in Afghanistan can increase its tactical manoeuvrability on land. On the other hand, Chinese nuclear submarines, illegal fishing, and surveillance activities in the IOR are set to become a significant threat to Indian security interests.

Suppose China would be successful in having land-sea dominance encircling India, in such a case, it will not only threaten India's immediate and long-term security interests, but it will also adversely affect India's economic and cyber security. China might use the "cabbage tactic" in the Indian Ocean Region in the same way as in the South China Sea. In this direction, the nation should appreciate the establishment of the Andaman Nicobar Command and the re-orientation of the battle commands, which will have joint operability of the Army, Navy and the Air Force. In the present circumstances, India's further shift towards QUAD and AUKUS shouldn't be a surprising development and should be welcomed by the nation.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

SIDHU IS AN INCOMPETENT MAN. HE HAS A CONNECTION WITH PAKISTAN. IT WILL BE A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY.
—FORMER PUNJAB CM CAPTAIN AMARINDER SINGH



SIDHU IS NOT A TRAITOR. IF AMARINDER SINGH CALLS SIDHU A TRAITOR, THEN I WILL OPEN THE WHOLE BOOK.
—ADVISOR TO NAVJOT SIDHU MOHAMMAD MUSTAFA

Why do we need nurses with disabilities?

Misconceptions about the capacity of students with disabilities to function in the clinical components of nursing education deter such applicants

From this year onwards, B.Sc.(Nursing) admissions will be made through NEET, which were conducted last Sunday. I received a panic call from the father of a young girl who was considering nursing admission but she had three missing fingers in her non-dominant hand and a curvature in her spine. The father was concerned about the National Testing Agency's urgent public notice for B.Sc. (Nursing) course aspirants in NEET 2021, which cited an Indian Nursing Council (INC) letter stating that disability reservation is only allowed for physical disabilities of 40-50 per cent and of the lower extremity. It is strange, because how could this be possible after the enactment of the Rights of



SATENDRA SINGH

(The writer teaches at University College of Medical Sciences, Delhi, and is a disability rights activist. The views expressed are personal.)

Persons with Disabilities Act (RPDA), but INC has published a gazette notice announcing this clause as well as revising its nursing curriculum for the first time since 1947. It will be implemented beginning with the new batch.

Unfortunately, the discriminatory National Medical Commission (NMC) standards for applicants with disabilities were framed by a single, non-disabled expert from this subject from a premier institution in India, who decided the ablest requirement of "both hands intact" as a must-have for MBBS admission. The Delhi High Court will be hearing a case of a girl with an amputated arm who passed the NEET exam last year but was denied MBBS admission to Lady Hardinge Medical



College, causing her to lose an academic year. Thankfully, the Supreme Court and the Goa High Court have already granted MBBS admission to girls with an amputated arm in Gujarat and Goa, respectively. The INC does not need to repeat NMC's embarrassing gaffes. The INC's new curriculum mentions the keyword "dignity" six times, whereas NMC's patented competency-based Medical Education Curriculum does not. In the

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which India has ratified, and in the preamble of the RPDA, dignity is a key component.

Learning disability is now a specified disability under the new law, and it is included in the 5 per cent reservation in higher education. But where are the dyslexic doctors and nurses in India? In India, you will only see nurses who are "one-legged" or "both legs disabled." Yes, this is the vocabulary used by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Ministry of Health to identify, stereotype, and 'otherize' us in employment.

After my litigation in the Delhi HC, which pushed NMC to allow persons with disabilities of more than 80 per

cent, INC's counterpart has accepted disabilities other than lower limb and surely those above 50 per cent (INC's benchmark).

In a recent SC decision on reasonable accommodation in the instance of a doctor with dysgraphia, Dr Vikash Kumar v. UPSC, the highest court criticised an earlier order that barred blind and deaf candidates with a disability of more than 50 per cent from becoming judges. The statutory Councils are still unaware of this historical judgment on substantive equality in the RPDA era.

Leslie Neal-Boylan who has written multiple books and journal articles on nurses with disabilities has defied the myth that there are patient safety concerns. The same

myth has been refuted in 2014 by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's white paper which identified outdated admission standards; misconceptions about the capacity of students with disabilities to function effectively in the clinical components of nursing education; and, lack of a comprehensive understanding of issues related to patient safety as barriers that deter applicants with disabilities. The Royal College of Nursing in the UK too also issued a range of employment options for nurses with severe ill health or disabilities in 2020.

We don't need superhuman robots in health care; instead, we need compassionate and caring nurses with disabilities who understand what it is like to live with a chronic

illness or disability. They adapt in unconventional ways, they demonstrate empathy and are brilliant co-workers. We may be rejecting many brilliant applicants who could be outstanding nurses like the renowned Florence Nightingale if we limit our profession to those without disabilities. I hope the INC will look into the representation of health professionals with disabilities which are endorsed by 22 nurses with disabilities from AIIMS New Delhi, Bhopal, Jodhpur, Jhajjar, NIMHANS and Delhi Government hospitals. If INC is serious about implementing the high pedestal ethos of diversity indicated in their new curriculum, they must act and collaborate with nurses with disabilities.

France knew of our sub concerns: Morrison

AP ■ CANBERRA

France would have known Australia had "deep and grave concerns" that a submarine fleet the French were building would not meet Australian needs, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Sunday after the contract's cancellation set off a diplomatic crisis.



Morrison said. "They would have had every reason to know that we have deep and grave concerns that the capability being delivered by the Attack class submarine was not going to meet our strategic interests and we have made very clear that we would be making a decision based on our strategic national interest," he added, referring to the French government. France responded to the contract cancellation, which Morrison has said will cost his government at least USD 1.7 billion, by recalling its ambassadors from Australia and the United States. French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian on Saturday denounced what he called the

'Explosion targeted Taliban, 2nd in as many days'

KABUL: Witnesses say an explosion targeted a Taliban vehicle in the provincial city of Jalalabad, the second such deadly blast in as many days in an Islamic State stronghold.



The Taliban and IS extremists are enemies, and fought each other even before the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan last month. Witnesses say Sunday's blast targeted a vehicle of the border police, which is now run by the Taliban. Initial reports said five people were killed, including two civilians, among them a child. The Taliban were not immediately available for comment about possible casualties among their ranks. Female employees in the Kabul city government have been told to stay home, with work only allowed for those who cannot be replaced by men, the interim mayor of Afghanistan's capital said Sunday, detailing the latest restrictions on women by the new Taliban rulers. The decision to prevent most female city workers from returning to their jobs is another sign that the Taliban, who overran Kabul last month, are enforcing their harsh interpretation of Islam despite initial promises by some that they would be tolerant and inclusive.

In their previous rule in the 1990s, the Taliban had barred girls and women from schools, jobs and public life. In recent days, the new Taliban government issued several decrees rolling back the rights of girls and women. It told female middle- and high school students that they could not return to school for the time being, while boys in those grades resumed studies this weekend. Female university students were informed that studies would take place in gender-segregated settings from now on, and that they must abide by a strict Islamic dress code. Under the U.S.-backed government deposed by the Taliban, university studies had been co-ed, for the most part. On Friday, the Taliban shut down the Women's Affairs Ministry, replacing it with a ministry for the "propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice" and tasked with enforcing Islamic law. On Sunday, just over a dozen women staged a protest outside the ministry, holding up signs calling for the participation of women in public life. "A society in which women are not active is (sic) dead society," one sign read. The protest lasted for about 10 minutes. After a short verbal confrontation with a man, the women got into cars and left, as Taliban in two cars observed from nearby. Over the past months, Taliban fighters had broken up several women's protests by force. AP

Trailblazing tourist trip to orbit ends with splashdown

AP ■ CAPE CANAVERAL

Four space tourists safely ended their trailblazing trip to orbit Saturday with a splashdown in the Atlantic off the Florida coast.

Wednesday night's liftoff. Surpassing the International Space Station by 100 miles (160 kilometers), the passengers savoured views of Earth through a big bubble-shaped window added to the top of the capsule.

Their SpaceX capsule parachuted into the ocean just before sunset, not far from where their chartered flight began three days earlier. The all-amateur crew was the first to circle the world without a professional astronaut. The billionaire who paid undisclosed millions for the trip and his three guests wanted to show that ordinary people could blast into orbit by themselves, and SpaceX founder Elon Musk took them on as the company's first rocket-riding tourists. "Your mission has shown the world that space is for all of us," SpaceX Mission Control radioed. "It was a heck of a ride for us ... Just getting started," replied trip sponsor Jared Isaacman, referring to the growing number of private flights on the horizon. SpaceX's fully automated Dragon capsule reached an unusually high altitude of 363 miles (585 kilometers) after

The four streaked back through the atmosphere early Saturday evening. The first space travellers to end their flight in the Atlantic since Apollo 9 in 1969. SpaceX's two previous crew splashdowns — carrying astronauts for NASA — were in the Gulf of Mexico. Within a few minutes, a pair of SpaceX boats pulled up alongside the bobbing capsule. When the hatch was opened on the recovery ship, health care worker Hayley Arceneaux was the first one out, flashing a big smile and thumbs up. All appeared well and happy. Their families were waiting near the scene of Wednesday night's launch from NASA's Kennedy Space Center. This time, NASA was little more than an encouraging bystander, its only tie being the Kennedy launch pad once used for the Apollo moonshots and shuttle crews, but now leased by SpaceX.

Israeli Army arrests last 2 of 6 Palestinian prisoner escapees

AP ■ JERUSALEM

The last two of six Palestinian prisoners who escaped a maximum-security Israeli prison two weeks ago were rearrested early on Sunday, the Israeli military said.

father, told The Associated Press that his son had called him when the Israeli troops surrounded the house and said he will surrender "in order not to endanger the house owners." The escapes set off a massive pursuit operation that captured the first four inmates in two separate operations in northern Israel. All six inmates come from Jenin.

Five of the prisoners are from the Islamic Jihad militant group, with four of them serving life sentences, and the sixth is a member of the secular Fatah group of President Mahmoud Abbas. For the Palestinians, the prisoners who dug the tunnel for months and escaped were "heroes". For Israel, they were "terrorists" who took part or planned attacks that targeted the Israeli military and civilians. Fouad Kamamji, Iham's



Haitians on Texas border unfazed by US plans to expel them

AP ■ DEL RIO

Haitian migrants seeking to escape poverty, hunger and a feeling of hopelessness in their home country said they will not be deterred by U.S. plans to speedily send them back, as thousands of people remained encamped on the Texas border Saturday after crossing from Mexico.



Scores of people waded back and forth across the Rio Grande on Saturday afternoon, re-entering Mexico to purchase water, food and diapers in Ciudad Acuña before returning to the Texas encampment under and near a bridge in the border city of Del Rio. Junior Jean, a 32-year-old man from Haiti, watched as people cautiously carried cases of water or bags of food through the knee-high river water. Jean said he lived on the streets in Chile the past four years, resigned to searching for food in garbage cans. "We are all looking for a better life," he said. Biden Administration Plans Mass Deportation of Haitian Migrants In Del Rio, Texas

removal from the U.S. Its statement also said it would have 400 agents and officers in the area by Monday morning and would send more if necessary. The announcement marked a swift response to the sudden arrival of Haitians in Del Rio, a Texas city of about 35,000 people roughly 145 miles (230 kilometers) west of San Antonio. It sits on a relatively remote stretch of border that lacks capacity to hold and process such large numbers of people. A U.S. official told The Associated Press on Friday that the U.S. would likely fly the migrants out of the country on five to eight flights a day, starting Sunday, while another official expected no more than two a day and said everyone would be tested for COVID-19. The first official said operational capacity and Haiti's willingness to accept flights would determine how many flights there would be. Both officials were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on

the condition of anonymity. Told of the U.S. plans Saturday, several migrants said they still intended to remain in the encampment and seek asylum. Some spoke of the most recent devastating earthquake in Haiti and the assassination of President Jovenel Moise, saying they were afraid to return to a country that seems more unstable than when they left. "In Haiti, there is no security," said Fabricio Jean, a 38-year-old Haitian who arrived with his wife and two daughters. "The country is in a political crisis." Haitians have been migrating to the U.S. in large numbers from South America for several years, many having left their Caribbean nation after a devastating 2010 earthquake. After jobs dried up from the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, many made the dangerous trek by foot, bus and car to the U.S. border, including through the infamous Darien Gap, a Panamanian jungle.

Climate change focus of PM Boris at UNGA, says UK

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will call upon world leaders to take a "concrete action" on climate change during his meetings at the high-level United Nations General Assembly in New York this week, according to Downing Street on Sunday.

26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) UN climate summit, to be hosted by the UK in Glasgow in November. "World leaders have a small window of time left to deliver on their climate commitments ahead of COP26," Johnson said ahead of the UNGA.

More than 100 Heads of State and Government as well as Foreign Ministers and diplomats will participate in person in the annual General Debate, beginning September 21 through September 27. Prime Minister Johnson, who will also visit the White House for the first time since Joe Biden became the US President, will be joining Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the UNGA meeting among the world leaders scheduled to attend the meeting in person. The visit is seen as an important precursor to the

"My message to those I meet this week will be clear: future generations will judge us based on what we achieve in the coming months. We need to continue to make a case for a sustainable recovery from coronavirus rooted in green growth. "And we have a responsibility to ensure the benefits of that growth extend to all, no matter where they are born," he said. According to the UK media reports, Johnson intends to push for an action on coal, climate, cars and trees in particular.



Voters choose new Hong Kong electors under pro-Beijing laws

AP ■ HONG KONG

Select Hong Kong residents voted for members of the Election Committee that will choose the city's leader in the first polls Sunday following reforms meant to ensure candidates with Beijing loyalty.

The Election Committee will select 40 of 90 lawmakers in the city's legislature during elections in December, as well as elect the Hong Kong leader during polls in March next year. In May, the legislature amended Hong Kong's electoral laws to ensure that only "patriots" — people who are loyal to China and the semi-autonomous territory — will rule the city. The committee also was expanded to 1,500 members, from 1,200, and the number of direct voters for committee seats was reduced from about 246,000 to less than 8,000. The restructured electoral process guarantees a vast majority of the Elections Committee will be largely pro-Beijing candidates, who are likely to choose a chief executive and nearly half of lawmakers who are aligned with the ruling Chinese Communist Party. Today's Election Committee elections are very meaningful as it is the first elections held after we have improved the electoral system to ensure that only patriots can take office," Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said.

Vladimir Putin's party set to retain parliamentary majority after polls

AFP ■ MOSCOW

President Vladimir Putin's party was set to retain a majority in parliament as Russia Sunday concluded a three-day election in which most Kremlin critics were barred from running.



The vote comes in the wake of an unprecedented crackdown on the opposition this year, with Russian authorities jailing Putin's best-known domestic foe Alexei Navalny and banning his organisations as "extremist". In the lead-up to this weekend's vote, all of his top allies were arrested or had fled the country, with anyone associated with his groups kept from running in the parliamentary and local polls scheduled to close at 8:00 pm Sunday across 11 time zones. "These essentially aren't elections. People in effect have no choice," 43-year-old businessman Vladimir Zakharov told AFP in Russia's second city Saint Petersburg. The elections were also marred by claims of censorship

and rampant ballot stuffing. As voting kicked off Friday, Apple and Google caused an uproar among Russia's opposition after they removed Navalny's "Smart Voting" app, which showed supporters which candidate they should back to unseat Kremlin-aligned politicians. Sources familiar with Google and Apple's decision told AFP the move was taken under pressure from Russian authorities, including threats to arrest the tech giants' local staff. By late Friday, the popular Telegram messenger had also removed Navalny's "Smart Voting" bot, and by Sunday Google Docs and YouTube videos containing the lists of the recommended candidates had also been blocked. Navalny's team, which promptly made new Google Docs and YouTube videos with the lists, said that Google had complied with demands made by Russia's media regulator Roskomnadzor. In a final pitch to voters from behind bars on Sunday, Navalny wrote on Instagram: "Today is a day when your voice truly matters."

Radical Pak cleric booked after Taliban flags hoisted at women's seminary

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan police have registered a case against a prominent radical cleric and several others after the flags of the Afghan Taliban were found hoisted on the top of a women's seminary here run by him, according to a media report on Sunday.

Officers of the capital administration said Aziz openly threatened the police, who arrived at the seminary to remove the flags, with dire consequences by using the name of the Afghan Taliban. Some people affiliated with the seminary, including Aziz, also displayed weapons. The seminary students and teachers also challenged the police and taunted them with remarks, sparking tension in the area. "Area cleared, flags removed, case registered," the deputy commissioner Islamabad wrote on his Twitter handle. This was the third time since August 21 the Afghan Taliban flags were hoisted on the seminary. Earlier, at least five white flags were found installed on the rooftop of the seminary. Hoisting of any flag is not a crime, as no law addresses the issue or under which legal action can be taken, the officers said, adding that the cleric took advantage of the legal lacuna.

After receiving information, the district administration sent a police contingent, including an anti-riot unit, which cordoned off the seminary. A case was registered against Maulana Abdul Aziz - who is the cleric of the famous Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) - his collaborators as well as seminary students under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) and different sections of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), the report said.

Policeman escorting polio workers killed in Pakistan

AP ■ PESHAWAR

Unidentified gunmen shot dead a police constable escorting a team of polio workers in northwest Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Sunday.

Leader of ISIS-linked terror group shot dead in Indonesia's jungle

AFP ■ PARIGI

The body of Indonesia's most wanted militant with ties to the Islamic State group and a follower, who was killed in a jungle shootout with security forces, were evacuated early Sunday to a police hospital for further investigation, police said.

Several pictures obtained by The Associated Press from authorities showed an M16 rifle and backpacks laid near their bloodied bodies. The Central Sulawesi Police Chief Rudy Sufahriadi told a news conference on Sunday that security forces also seized two ready-to-use bombs from their backpacks, which also contained food and camping tools. He said the bodies of Kalora and his follower have been evacuated to a police hospital in Palu, the provincial capital, after the rugged terrain and darkness hampered earlier evacuation efforts from the scene of the shootout in the forested village of Astina. "We urged the other four wanted terrorists to immediately surrender and dare to take responsibility for their actions before the law," said Sufahriadi, referring to remaining members of the East Indonesia Mujahideen who are still at large in the jungle on Sulawesi island.

The constable was killed by the gunmen riding a motorcycle while he was joining the polio workers in the tribal district of Dhal Behzadi of Kohat district, about 75 kilometres south of provincial capital Peshawar. Members of the vaccination party are said to be safe. No group has yet taken responsibility for the attack. Police teams rushed to the area and started a cordon and search operation for the attackers. Chief Minister Mehmod Khan condemned the attack and vowed to nab the perpetrators. Such acts of cowardice cannot deter our resolve to wipe out this crippling disease, he said.

'Delhi-Mumbai E-way to fetch ₹1,500 cr per month'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre will get toll revenues worth ₹ 1,000 to 1,500 crore every month once the much-awaited Delhi-Mumbai Expressway becomes operational in 2023, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Sunday and described state-owned NHAI as a "gold mine" for generating income.



he told PTI in an interview.

Steering the ambitious drive to expand the country's road infrastructure for the past seven years, a confident Gadkari also asserted that National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) will rake in annual toll income to the tune of ₹1.40 lakh crore in the next five years from the current level of ₹40,000 crore.

The Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is likely to be completed by March 2023 and is being built as part of the first phase of the 'Bharatmala Pariyojana'.

The eight-lane expressway, covering Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, is expected to halve the commute time between the national capital and the country's financial hub from nearly 24 hours to 12 hours.

Against the backdrop of concerns being flagged about NHAI being saddled with high level of debt, the Union Road Transport and Highways Minister pointed out that the nodal agency has received 'AAA' rating and all its road projects are productive.

Recently, the minister informed Rajya Sabha that total borrowings of NHAI increased to Rs 3,06,704 crore at the end of March this year from Rs 74,742 crore in March 2017.

"Once the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is completed and opened for the public, we will get at least ₹1,000-1,500 crore as toll revenues every month,"

While noting that investments in the infrastructure sector will create employment and accelerate the country's economic growth, Gadkari said, "We (NHA and the ministry) are working on projects worth lakhs of crores."

"AAA" is one of the highest credit ratings and indicate robust financial position.

When the economy is on a decline, "then economics tells us that there is a need to increase investments in infrastructure", he added.

PM will take a call on further infra investments in Afghanistan: Gadkari

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With Afghanistan coming under the control of the Taliban, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday said a final decision on continuing infrastructure investments in the war-torn country will be taken by the Prime Minister along with the External Affairs Minister after considering the prevailing situation.

Gadkari, who is helming the Road Transport and Highways Ministry, also said that while many infrastructure projects in that country have been completed by India, some are yet to be completed.

Last month, the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan ousting the previous elected leadership which was backed by the West.

"We have built a dam (Salma dam)... We have worked in areas of water resources in Afghanistan," Gadkari said while responding to a query on whether India will make further investments in the now Taliban-controlled country.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will take a decision on whether India will now invest in infrastructure projects in Afghanistan or not, Gadkari said.

"As a friendly country, we had discussions with Afghanistan government officials for building some roads (also)... Good that I did not start construction of roads (in Afghanistan)... The situation there is of concern," he told PTI in an interview.

India has invested around USD 3 billion in different welfare and infrastructure projects in Afghanistan.

On Friday, Modi said the global community should decide "collectively" and "thoughtfully" on recognising the new setup in Afghanistan in view of questions over its acceptability as the change of power was not "inclusive".

Small cars too need adequate number of airbags to ensure safety, says Min

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday said that small cars, mostly purchased by lower middle-class people, should also have an adequate number of airbags and wondered why auto makers are providing eight airbags only in big cars bought by rich people.

In an interview to PTI, the Road Transport and Highways Minister also emphasised that his appeal for more airbags in small economy cars was to ensure safety and prevent possible deaths in accidents.

His remarks come against the backdrop of the automobile industry raising concerns that high taxation and stricter safety and emission norms for vehicles have made their products expensive.

Mostly, lower middle-class people buy small economy cars and "if their car won't have airbags and when accidents happen, then it may result in deaths. So, I appeal to all car manufacturers to provide a minimum of six airbags across all variants and segments of the vehicle," he said.

While acknowledging that additional airbags in small cars will increase their cost by at least Rs 3,000-4,000, Gadkari also said, "in our country, poor should also get protection (in case of road accidents)".

RBI decision to allow NBFCs apply for Aadhaar-e-KYC Authentication Licence to promote digitisation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reserve Bank's decision to allow NBFCs and payment service providers to apply for obtaining Aadhaar e-KYC Authentication Licence will promote digitisation and check frauds, opined Fintech players.

The RBI has said NBFCs, Payment System Providers and Payment System Participants desirous of obtaining Aadhaar Authentication Licence - KYC User Agency (KUA) License or sub-KUA License, may submit their application to the central bank for onward submission to Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).

The Reserve Bank's initiative will also help in improving trust levels among customers because only licensed entities will be permitted to conduct eKYC, said Ankit Bhatnagar, Head of Product, Mswipe.

"Now with eKYC, non-banking entities offering financial services can improve compliance and also ensure that the popular mechanism of customer on-boarding for which they had to depend on third party players can be offered directly through a KUA licence," said Bhatnagar.

Manoj Chopra, Head Innovation and Product Development, Infracore Technologies Limited, was of the opinion that the move will simplify customer onboarding for NBFCs, NBFC-Micro Finance Institutions (NBFC-MFI), payment system operators and payment system participants.

NBFCs are reliant on offline Aadhaar validation or paper-based authentication mechanisms like PAN verification. Since such methods involved sharing pictures of physical documents, it made the process slightly cumbersome and prone to rejections as the quality of pictures shared may not be up to the mark, Chopra said.

"Now, by availing Aadhaar Authentication License - KYC User Agency (KUA) license or sub-KUA License these NBFCs can directly leverage an online database in Aadhaar and verify the identity including the photograph seamlessly," Chopra said.

Commenting on the RBI's decision, Gurjodhpal Singh, CEO, Tide (India), said it is a welcome move for the fintech ecosystem.

According to Singh, this will promote digitisation, resulting in a forward thinking approach to ensure fast delivery of financial products in the sector and thus improve experience for many customers who had been facing a lot of issues.

"This is one of the most positives moves for players in the ecosystem, and will help make the onboarding journey less bumpy for customers," Singh said.

Arpit Ratan, Co-founder and Chief Business Officer, Signzy, termed the RBI's decision "a truly democratic" move to power NBFCs, payment system providers and participants to make the digital journey of customers faster, simpler and secure.

Moratorium on telecom dues allows time to transform, repair; tariff wars unlikely: Deloitte India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The four-year breather from payment of regulatory dues offered as part of the telecom relief package allows operators time to transform and repair, and may cool off price wars, according to a senior analyst at Deloitte India.

acquired in future spectrum auctions. "The four-year time-frame is good enough period to sort out industry's issues on pricing," Vaish told PTI.

The reforms send out a strong message to the global community, and are expected to bolster confidence of investors and lenders in the telecom sector, Peeyush Vaish, Partner and Telecom Sector Leader, Deloitte India said.

Operators have four years to transform themselves, which is significant. Players are competent enough to transform themselves, he said.

"I expect that all operators will be able to sort out their costs and margins, over the next four years," he said.

Telcos will "shape up" in coming years, and go in for course correction, where needed.

"Total of four-year moratorium means, about three years post 5G launch and that is a good enough period for any organisation to transform, restructure and come out of current challenges," he said.

Telecom Minister Ashwin Vaishnav recently said the 5G spectrum auctions will "most probably" be held in February 2022, and the government may even try for a January timeline.

Deloitte's Vaish believes that the slew of reform related announcements have now significantly lessened the chances of duopoly in the market.

Deloitte's Vaish believes that the slew of reform related announcements have now significantly lessened the chances of duopoly in the market.

Labour codes unlikely to be implemented this fiscal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The four labour codes are unlikely to be implemented this fiscal in view of slow progress on the drafting of rules by the States and also for political reasons like elections in Uttar Pradesh, a source said.

relations, wages, social security and occupational health safety & working conditions from April 1, 2021. These four labour codes will rationalise 44 central labour laws.

The implementation of these laws assumes significance because once these are implemented there would be reduction in take-home pay of employees and firms have to bear higher provident fund liability.

The ministry had even finalised the rules under the four codes. But these could not be implemented because many states were not in a position to notify rules under these codes in their jurisdictions.

"The Ministry of Labour is ready with the rules under the four labour codes. But the states have been slow in drafting and finalising those under new codes. Besides, the government is not keen to implement the four codes due to political reasons, which are mainly elections in Uttar Pradesh (due in February 2022 onwards)," the source said.

Labour is a concurrent subject under the Constitution of India and therefore both the Centre and states have to notify rules under these four codes to make them the laws of the land in their respective jurisdictions.

Under the new wages code, allowances are capped at 50 per cent. This means half of the gross pay of an employee would be basic wages. Provident fund contribution is calculated as a percentage of basic wage, which includes basic pay and dearness allowance.

According to the source, some states have worked on draft rules for four labour codes. These states are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Odisha, Punjab, Gujarat, Karnataka and Uttarakhand.

The employers have been splitting wages into numerous allowances to keep basic wages low to reduce provident fund and income tax outgo.

The new wages code provides for provident fund contribution as a prescribed proportion of 50 per cent of gross pay.

It is likely that the implementation of the four labour codes may be dragged beyond this fiscal year," the source said.

The labour ministry had envisaged implementing the four codes on industrial

IDBI Bank strategic sale: Most merchant bankers indicate 52 weeks' time

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Most of the merchant bankers who had submitted bids for facilitating strategic sale of LIC-controlled IDBI Bank indicated a timeframe of one year to complete the elaborate process, sources said.

During a presentation before the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) held recently, most of the eligible transaction advisers gave a timeframe of 50-52 weeks to undertake several stages of the privatisation process of IDBI Bank, market sources said.

However, the Government intends to complete the transaction during the current fiscal itself. Thus the merchant banker has to find a buyer in about 26 weeks or six months.

According to market sources, as many as seven bids -- Deloitte Touche Tomhatsu India LLP, Ernst and Young LLP, ICICI Securities Ltd, JM Financial Ltd, KPMG, RBSA Capital Advisors LLP and SBI Capital Markets Ltd -- were received.

DIPAM on behalf of Government of India had floated a tender in June inviting bids from transaction advisors from reputed professional consulting firms or investment bankers or merchant bankers or financial institutions for facilitating and assisting strategic divestment of IDBI Bank. The last date for submission of bids was July 13. KPMG placed the lowest bid of Re 1, and was selected as the transaction adviser, market sources said, adding, the firm will assist the government in the sale for Re 1.

However, the Government intends to complete the transaction during the current fiscal itself. Thus the merchant banker has to find a buyer in about 26 weeks or six months.

Vi claims to record peak 5G speed of 3.7 gbps during trials in Pune

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Debt-ridden telecom operator Vodafone Idea on Sunday claimed to have recorded a peak speed of 3.7 gigabit per second (gbps), highest by any operator in India, during 5G trials in Pune.

M-cap of four of top 10 most-valued cos jumps ₹65,464 cr; Airtel, SBI lead gainers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Four of the top-10 most-valued companies together added ₹ 65,464.41 crore to market valuation last week, with Bharti Airtel and State Bank of India emerging as the biggest gainers.

Decision to correct inverted duty structure to cut tax burden of leather industry: CLE

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The decision of the GST Council to correct inverted duty structure on leather footwear from January 1, 2022, would help reduce tax burden of the sector and boost domestic manufacturing of manmade fibre (MMF) fabrics and garments, CLE said on Sunday.

Govt receiving max FDI proposals in 3 depts from nations sharing land border with India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has received maximum foreign direct investment (FDI) proposals in three departments -- electronics and IT, industry and internal trade, and heavy industries -- from countries sharing land border with India, an official said.

Global trends to influence trading in domestic equity market this week: Analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With no major domestic macroeconomic data announcement this week, equity markets would keenly track the US Fed interest rate decision and other global trends to decide its further movement, analysts said.

Amazon adds 3 Indic languages for seller registration, account mgmt services

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

E-commerce major Amazon Sunday said sellers will now be able to register on the Amazon. In marketplace and manage their online business in three more Indic languages - Malayalam, Telugu and Bengali.

The company also claimed to have recorded 1.5 gbps download speed in the mid-band spectrum in Gandhinagar and Pune.

During the last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark jumped 710 points or 1.21 per cent. Market benchmark Sensex scaled the 59,000-mark for the first time on Thursday.

Council for Leather Exports (CLE) Chairman Sanjay Leekha said GST (goods and services tax) on leather footwear worth less than ₹1,000 is 5 per cent and over that value, the tax is 18 per cent, but the GST on inputs for these footwear ranges up to 18 per cent.

In April 2020, the Government had made its prior approval mandatory for foreign investments from countries that share land border with India to curb opportunistic takers of domestic firms following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Equity benchmarks surged to their fresh lifetime peaks on Friday. Analysts said positive economic data and Government reforms in telecom, banking and automobile sectors helped in boosting market sentiments.

The move comes ahead of the festive season and will benefit thousands of existing Amazon sellers, many potential and new sellers from markets across tiers to run their business on Amazon. In marketplace in a language of their choice and preference, a statement said.

Vi (Vodafone Idea) has deployed its 5G trial in a lab set-up of an end-to-end captive network of Cloud Core, new generation Transport and Radio Access Network.

From the top-10 list, Reliance Industries Limited, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever Limited, HDFC, ICICI Bank and Bajaj Finance were the laggards, whose cumulative erosion was at Rs 43,746.79 crore.

The GST Council in its meeting on September 17 agreed to correct inverted duty structure on footwear and textiles from January 1, 2022.

Other than the US Federal Reserve, the Bank of Japan will also come out with its monetary policy on September 22, said Santosh Meena, head (research) at Swastika Investmart Ltd.

The movement of the dollar index and US bond yield will play a key role in the behaviour of emerging markets like India, Meena added.

With this launch, Amazon. In now allows sellers to manage their online business in eight languages including Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Malayalam, Telugu, Tamil and English.

"In Pune city, Vi has deployed its 5G trial in a lab set-up of an end-to-end captive network of Cloud Core, new generation Transport and Radio Access Network.

The valuation of Bharti Airtel jumped Rs 22,984.14 crore to reach Rs 3,99,091.97 crore.

He said that the inverted duty structure has been an issue with the industry and that the Council had made recommendations to the government for the elimination of this anomaly that has been resulting in input tax credit accumulation blocking crucial working capital for businesses.

Using any of the regional languages, sellers can do everything from registering as an Amazon seller for the first time, to managing orders, inventory and accessing performance metrics -- all in the language of their preference, the statement said.

Amazon has about 8.5 lakh sellers on its marketplace in India.

This experience has been made available on the Amazon seller Central as well as on the mobile app, it added.

The DoT had approved applications of Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone in May, and MTNL later. The permission has been granted for six-month trials with telecom gear makers Ericsson, Nokia, Samsung and C-DOT.

The valuation of Tata Consultancy Services climbed Rs 14,315.33 crore to Rs 14,16,903.13 crore and that of HDFC Bank jumped Rs 6,664.66 crore to Rs 8,76,597.86 crore.

It creates a tax structure where the rate on inputs is higher than that on the outputs and this increases the effective rate of taxation of the sector.

Besides, the ministry of new and renewable energy and department of pharmaceuticals have also received several proposals from these countries, the official added.

During the last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark jumped 710 points or 1.21 per cent. Market benchmark Sensex scaled the 59,000-mark for the first time on Thursday.

SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd. PUBLIC NOTICE. This is to inform the Public that Auction of pledged Gold Ornaments will be conducted by SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd. on 29th September 2021 at 10:00 AM at O-7, 1st Floor, above Look Salon, Lajpat Nagar-2, New Delhi-110044. Contact: +91 22 67875334 | www.sbfc.com



Bollywood
 'I am not defined by things I've done in my past. My future will be how I want it to be.'
 —Shilpa Shetty

ON BOTH SIDES OF THE LINE

KHUSHBU KIRTI remembers the renowned Hindi poet and writer **KUNWAR NARAYAN** on his 94th birth anniversary

'Jab bhi maine vidroh kiya aur apne chotepan se upar uthna chaha, Mujhe laga ki apne ko bada rakhne ki choti se choti koshish bhi, Duniya ko bada rakhne ki koshish hai.'

(Whenever I protested and tried to lift myself from my inferiorities, I realised the smallest attempts to uplift myself... were a step in the direction of elevating and inspiring the entire world.)

The Hindi poet, who was intricately linked to the New Poetry Movement of the 20th century, was born in the pre-independent India's Faizabad. The poet would have turned 94 yesterday. Often called the 'meditative poet' for his deep rumination on the present with regard to myth and history, Kunwar Narayan is highly regarded for his poetry that is a unique amalgamation of the simple and the complex.

His intellectual calibre was par excellence, clearly evident from the fact that he translated works of French symbolists like Mallarme, Valery, and poets like Cavafy, Borges.

Not many of modern Indian readers would know this but the seminal writer was an ardent traveller who also met high dignitaries like Pablo Neruda, Nazim Hikmet Ran, and Anton Slonimskie on his first trip to Europe, China and Russia in 1955 itself. He is read widely and is famous for blending an international modern sensibility with a deep grounding in Indian history, thought and tradition.

Narayan, thus, won numerous prestigious awards in his lifetime like the Sahitya Akademi Award, Jnanpith award in 2005 and the Padma Bhushan in 2009, and so many more. The writer was internationally recognised as he won the Warsaw University's honorary medal, Italy's Premio Feronia, et al.

The litterateur, who studied English Literature at Lucknow University, has a *nazaqa* and *nafasat* that can be spotted in his writings, very native to Lucknow. He wrote for almost six decades and his poems are



a testament to the development of social awakening. His poems like *Jade Ki Ek Subah*, *Basant Ki Leher*, *Basant Aa*, *Suryast*, and so on, are embodiments of nature itself. One of his favourite lines '*Life has many sides, and time's eternal siege sides with none*' conveys what was a dictate he earnestly followed by him in his life.

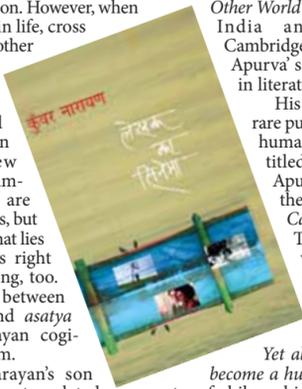
His poem *Rekha Ke Dono Or* (English: *On Both Sides Of The Line*) is a highly complex poem, with metaphorical geometrical and mathematical references that one is surrounded by. In a manner, it becomes philosophical poem, too. '*Ek bindu se dusre tak, ek seedhi rekha me agar we daudta chala jata toh bhi jagah do saaf hisso me bati hui dikhti...*' (From dot to dot, if he ran in a straight line, the space would seem split into two clear halves...). He conveys that, ultimately, we start from one point, which is

our own perception. However, when we move ahead in life, cross the line, and see other perspectives, we begin to understand the other side and find ourselves in absolutely new places and circumstances. There are certain crossroads, but there is an idea that lies between what is right and what is wrong, too. Mithya lies in between *satya* (truth) and *asatya* (untruth), Narayan cogitated in the poem.

Kunwar Narayan's son Apurva Narayan translated numerous poems of his into English. Apurva's book of translations *No*

Other World was published from India and England. A Cambridge University alumni, Apurva's personal interest is in literature, too.

His poems embody a rare purity and a profound humanism. In a section titled *Humanesque*, by Apurva, is highlighted the poem *When One Can't Remain Human*. Therein, the poet writes about the limits of being human, '*If times are bad, one can't remain human. Yet all he aspires to is to become a human being.*' A master of philosophical poems, Narayan ventured the realm of universal thought. In the poem called *Medium*,



he transcends his personal limitations as a human being. It is not surprising to learn that one of his major themes is about becoming human. In his popular poem *Falcon*, he describes the falcon who has a God-like view, who analyses how futile human activities are, and how insecure humans are even while living out of danger, on the still ground, unlike the falcon.

Since his first book in 1956, his personal qualities that of nobility gentle nature, are reflected in his characters. His oeuvre spans across various genres — stories, criticism, translations, jottings and writings on cinema and art, essays, poetry, and epic poems.

There can be witnessed a healthy outlook towards love in his poetry. The poet used vivid, simple, and emotional imagery, and figures of speech. He also made natural use of *Khadi boli* in his writings. He was fond of exploring the absurd, and touching upon intimate details in his work.

What characterises Narayan's poetry is the graceful and delicate balance between thought and language, structure and content; his fluent words render meaning to abstract ideas. His themes also engulf social reality. In poems like *Ayodhya*, he wrote of the city of Ayodhya that he knew very well, having spent some part of his precious childhood there and witnessing the Hindu-Muslim riots in 1992. '*O Ram! Life is a bitter fact and you are an epic,*' he expressed. Narayan shared about places like *Kafka's Prague*, and *Krakow Zoo*. In *Nalanda* and *Bakhtiyar*, he mentioned the tyrant and conqueror who destroyed the renowned Buddhist centre of learning.

When Narayan was once asked by an interviewer about the role of thought and intellect in poetry, he is reported to have said, '*Pretty much the same as in our life, namely, to enhance a better understanding of life, sensitivity and a sense of justice.*' He claimed in his poem *Amir Khushro* that he wanted to be '*free like the thoughts of a poet.*'

WEBBED



BIRDS OF PARADISE

The film is based upon the 2019 novel *Bright Burning Stars* by A.K. Small. Two dancers at Paris' elite ballet academy compete for a contract to win an opportunity to join the highly coveted Opéra national de Paris. It releases on September 24 on Amazon Prime Video.

40 is the new 20

LARA DUTTA BHUPATHI loves the fact that she is in her early mid-age and can still come back

Lara Dutta Bhupathi has been in the Hindi film industry for 18 years and she says she is having more fun now than she did in her 20s as an actor.



Talking about her almost two decade-long journey in Bollywood, Dutta expressed, 'I am very content with what my journey has been like. I have seen all phases and angles of the industry. I came in from being a Miss Universe to having an opportunity to work in a film like *Andaaz*.'

'Having success from right at the start and just having the opportunity to work with some of the best names in the industry... it's been incredible to have that kind of a repertoire,' she continued.

The 43 year old actress felt grateful to the filmmakers she has got a chance to work with. She felt she found success in the comedy genre with films such as *No Entry*, *Bhaagam Bhaag* and *Partner* among many others. She said, 'I found my genres that I preferred quite early in my career and comedy really worked for me. It has been tremendously fulfilling.'

Dutta, who is married to tennis player Mahesh Bhupathi, is thankful that the industry gave her the opportunity to pause when she needed to when she had her daughter.

The actress is also happy about women of all age groups getting meaty roles in Bollywood.

'I love the fact that today I am in my early 40s and you can come back. There is no stopping women today. The parts that are written and the opportunities that are available are just incredible and when I look at actors like Neena Gupta ji and all of them are like rocking it in their 50s and early 60s,' she noted.

'It brings me so much excitement that I know at the end of the day, things will keep getting better with every decade that I enter into. I am having so much fun in my 40s. I am actually having more fun now than I did in my 20s as an actor because I am doing the kind of roles that I am excited about. I am playing actors that are closer to my age and I am playing characters that are older than I am,' Dutta concluded.

The *Bell Bottom* actress feels that the writing is so much better now for the women in the industry and that it is an exciting time to be an actor in the business. —IANS

A smooth switch

ASHISH FERNANDO suggests a six-step guide on how to get a work permit after graduating from a university abroad



need a residence permit. Students from a third-world country, however, need to obtain a work visa before entering Germany. So the first

step is figuring out if a student falls into a category that exempts them from applying for a work visa.

◆**Find out which work visa to apply for.** Most countries offer more than one type of work visa, depending on factors such as the applicant's skills, the nature of the job, the purpose behind working there, et al. In Canada, for instance, if a student is aiming to pursue a reg-

ular job, she/he will need to apply for an employer-specific work permit. But if she/he wishes to freelance, they're going to need an open work permit.

◆**Make sure you fulfill the eligibility criteria.**

Getting a work visa after graduation is not a cakewalk. These eligibility requirements ensure that. But being aware of these conditions and confident about being able to satisfy them makes the application process a lot smoother. For example, if a student wishes to work in the UK after graduation, knowing that she/he must have a confirmed job offer before applying for the visa, make sure you work for a UK employer that's been approved by the home office, have a 'certificate of sponsorship' from the employer, and be paid a minimum salary to qualify for a skilled worker visa. This will help immensely.

◆**Find out where you need to submit your application.**

This will depend on whether the applicant is in the country and switching from a different visa or applying from outside the country.

◆**Collect all the required documents.**

Go to the official government website and find out which documents are required in order to support the work visa application.

◆**Pay and submit your application.**

The information on the amount can be easily located on the official government websites.

In certain cases, applicants might be asked to share additional data, appear for an interview, provide biometric information, and so on. It's essential to be aware of these procedures before initiating the application process.

Applying and getting a work visa is a significant step in securing a successful career abroad. Most countries ease this process for students by allowing them to apply for a transitional visa which helps them stay back and look for a job in the country after graduation. Students possessing the kind of caliber international organisations are looking for can rest assured that securing a work visa won't be as much of a hassle.

(The author is the founder and CEO of iSchoolConnect, an online platform that makes university admission-process simpler.)

TRENDBLAZER

IT'S HIGH TIME WE OPEN UP: JANHVI

Youth icon and actor **JANHVI KAPOOR** expressed, 'It is high time that we speak openly and freely about feminine hygiene care, and I think that's the first step in making sanitary pads more easily accessible to a larger number of women in our country.' Janhvi, who is face of the brand *Paree Sanitary Pads*, concluded, 'Accessibility to sanitary pads is extremely important to a woman's physical and mental health. Periods are natural and healthy and I strongly advocate the need to encourage educational conversation around it.'

fairtalk VARUN SOOD



'I think what Divya (Agarwal) did in *Cartel* was a dream role for a lot of actors. She gave her best to each character and performed it to the fullest. Not only her prosthetic makeup but her body language for every character was perfect. Watching my girlfriend on screen was an emotional moment for me. It is difficult to pick a favourite character, but if I had to choose one, it would be the character of old man. I was in shock.'

dailytalk RENUKA SHAHANE



'My sole purpose as an anchor and a mother of two children is to encourage people to understand what goes on in the minds of teenagers and to recognise the warning signs that can be addressed in time. Every episode (of *Crime Patrol Satark: Gumraah Bachpan*) aims to educate the audience, especially parents on how they can stop their kids from committing such inevitable crimes.'

ENRIQUE RELEASES ALBUM AFTER 7 YEARS

ENRIQUE IGLESIAS has returned with part one of his *Final* album after releasing *Sex & Love* in 2014. The Spanish pop-star released the much-awaited 11th studio album on Friday night. He announced the second part could be his last album.

'It's not something that I have been thinking about for a few months but something I've been planning for the past few years. There's going to be vol. one and two, but they're final. I'm in that moment, that chapter in my life, where I think it's the right time to put it out,' the singer said.





nomadic populations. Poonch-based Sarimastan Tribal Gurjar Welfare Foundation, which works for the welfare of the Gujjar Bakarwal tribe in Jammu and Kashmir, supported them during the lockdown. "We made every effort to provide rations and medicine to these people. Our volunteers travelled several kilometres on foot to reach their camps," Asad Nomani, the president of the organisation, expressed.

The pandemic has affected each member of the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities equally. According to Asad, the government authorities have extended immense support to provide relief to the people of the community. For those unwilling to visit hospitals or Covid care centres, 'corona care' kits were distributed door to door. Although the health department made efforts to conduct tests, distribute Covid relief hampers and create awareness about the virus, they had to face strong resistance from the tribe.

Challenges in establishing vaccine centres

While the vaccination drive has been launched in every nook and corner of the country, reaching out to the nomads residing in the higher altitude of Jammu and Kashmir is difficult. So, conducting tests and establishing vaccination centres is quite challenging. It is also not feasible for them to travel long distances for tests or vaccination at the health centres. On the other hand, vaccine hesitancy among the tribal population has exacerbated the problem.

"For vaccination, when we reached Murrah, a remote area in Surankote tehsil of Poonch, the women started running away. They believed that the vaccine would lead to death within two years or might cause infertility. The unmarried girls feared they would never conceive after the vaccination," Dr Nusrat Bajad, who is currently serving at a primary health centre in Chandimarah in Poonch, shared.

She shared that the healthcare workers were attacked and intimidated by the locals when they tried to address their concerns. Under such dire circumstances, it gets difficult to persuade young girls and women for vaccination. "All these problems occur due to lack of awareness among tribal people, especially women," Dr Bajad added.

It is important to safeguard these nomadic tribes from the outbreak of Covid-19. One cannot be sure that they have access to various government programmes such as immunisation drives and other development plans. It is important to make the vaccination centres available to them at higher altitudes. —Charkha Features



Education: A tool for social change

RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI elaborates on the one thing that can eliminate all problems from the face of Earth

It has been widely recognised around the world that social services — in areas such as health, education, water and sanitation — can enhance individual well-being and contribute to overall quality of life. Now, no one would deny that providing food, shelter, clothing and health-care to the needy are various kinds of social service and that these are needed to relieve a person from the pain of starvation or some ailment. Similarly, no one can deny that along with this short-term remedy, we also need to find a long-term cure to human sufferings. This was true and is still true but, gradually, public opinion is giving more and more importance to short-term and long-term measures.

It is now being realised that mere immediate remedies, however necessary, are not enough, for it does not eradicate the problems which ultimately go out of hand or do not abate in occurrence, extent and acuteness. Furthermore, an important development that is now taking place is that opinion-leaders are speaking of how education in values, and for proper diet and behaviour, is the most important and effective — if not the only — ultimate remedy. It would be noticed, in this connection, that in recent past, persons of the stature of the director general of the World Health Organisation, the surgeon general of the United States, as well as the secretary general of the United Nations have made statements which clearly indicate these trends. Statements along the lines of, "Most of the world's major health problems and premature deaths are preventable through change in human behaviour and at low cost," clearly show that the problem of disease is not being looked at in this new light and it is now being increasingly realised that education is the main tool to prevent disease and to eliminate them. Top-ranking health-scientists across the globe have been highlighting how most of the world's major diseases are preventable through changes in human behaviour.

It is a fundamental thing for all to realise that almost all problems that we are experiencing currently, have been created by human action. So, in order to set right the situation, human behaviour will have to be changed. Let us be clear in our mind that all kinds of sufferings are a kind of punishment for our misdeeds, misbehaviour or anti-nature acts. So, the real remedy for the eradication of such problems lies in imparting the right type of education which will result in people changing their ways. If a person continues to have mental and physical lethargy to action or is confused and incompetent to do something which can enable him to earn for his livelihood, how can poverty be removed from the face of the earth? It is in this context that the utmost importance of education — that cultivates values — can be realised. And, finally, that is when the importance of education as a tool of social change and social service can be properly understood.



Every summer, Jetun Bibi, who is 70 years-old, and several other people migrate from Kalakote tehsil, Rajouri district of Jammu to the higher altitude pasturelands of Sonamarg, Ganderbal district of Kashmir, which is at 8,960 feet.

"Chettiar and Deghani villages in Kalakote tehsil are home to about 50 families from the Gujjar-Bakarwal community. Every year, in March, we start our trek towards Sonamarg along with our livestock. We carry our belongings and pass through the Pir Panjal range while making several stops en route. Around late October, we start returning to the plains," Jetun said.

While seasonal migration is the lifestyle of such nomadic tribes, these six months are a difficult time for the community as it affects their development. They live in pasturelands without basic amenities. During the monsoon, they take shelter under trees in the forest or tarpaulins/polythene. They face threats from wild animals. Moreover, staying away from populated regions means that their children will not get any education. They face the challenges of a low literacy rate, lack of livelihood options due to limited skills and knowledge, poor sanitation, vulnerable weather conditions, low social and economic status. The complexities have

WRECKING LIVES

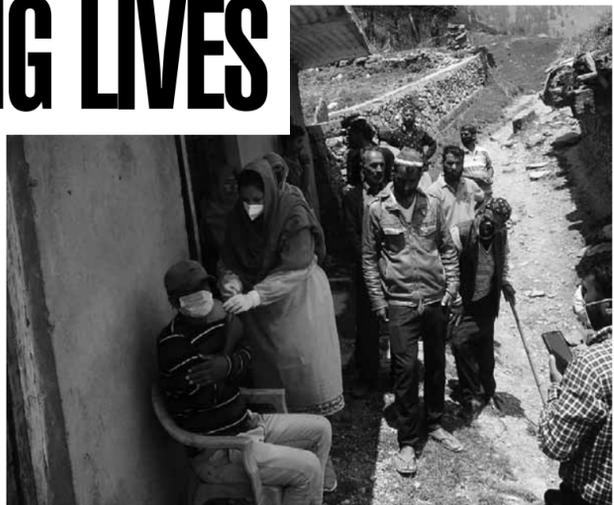
SHAZIYA CHOWDHARY shares how Covid-19 is affecting the nomadic tribes residing in the remote regions of Jammu and Kashmir

increased in the last 19 months due to the pandemic.

Whatever their children could avail from seasonal/ mobile schools is no longer accessible. Without smartphones or access to the internet at higher altitudes, they are unable to attend online classes. According to census-2011, up to 1.5 million Gujjars and Bakarwals live in Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh. Most of them are deprived of basic facilities.

Dwindling livelihood

As these nomadic tribes largely



depend on pastoral farming and small-scale agriculture, they earn by selling leather, wool, meat, and dairy products. However, due to Covid protocols, these communities have been struggling to survive. They hardly manage to sell their animals at a lower price. The

nationwide lockdown has affected their traditional businesses. Now, they are more prone to food deprivation and other essential commodities.

During these dire times, some welfare organisations in the union territory have attempted to assist several

"How can I say no?"
 "What if they feel bad?"
 "I cannot say no to my boss..."
 "My children need me."

"I have done it for my spouse for so long; now it feels like a habit." While you are stuck with your commitments or someone else's additional work that you took on unwittingly, do these excuses cross your mind?

Many of us struggle to say 'no' in our daily lives. Perhaps, because we are afraid of rejection, anger, or the other person's reaction to our refusal; and often, we find ourselves taking on more than we can manage. We can get so used to saying yes and pleasing others that we don't even know what we want or need. This people-pleasing is often rooted in childhood, where we are raised to be good children by helping others. And in the future, we sometimes do so even at the expense of ourselves.

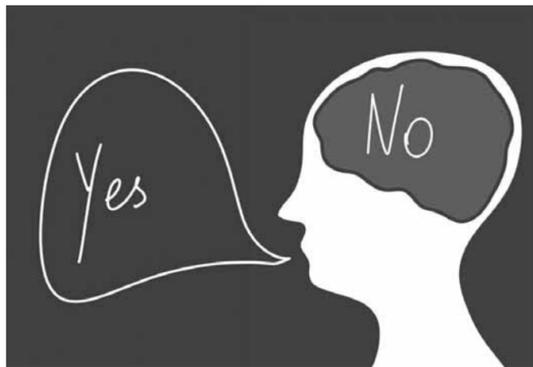
But if your schedule is tightly packed with others' requests to an extent where you don't have time for what is important to you — or worse, where your mental and physical wellbeing is at risk — it is time to make some changes.

Why do we say 'yes'?

There are several reasons why we say yes rather than no. To keep people happy, buy peace in the present (although it will surely come back to bite you in the future) or because we think that saying no makes us look weak. Culture also plays a vital part in saying yes to requests you actually don't want to. In many cultures, saying no can be considered rude and graceless. Sometimes, people say yes because

Breaking free from the loop

GEETA RAMAKRISHNAN shares why learning to say 'no' means saying 'yes' to a healthy lifestyle



the one who is asking is a good friend they don't want to let down, while others are just pleasers by nature who like saying yes all the time, even if they cannot handle it later.

How it becomes a harmful pattern

While fear, temporary peace and avoiding confrontation are reasons why we say yes, we must ask ourselves, "Does it help in the long run? Or will it pull down my confidence level?"

For example, your colleague wants you to finish their work because 'something else' that is more important has come up.

And you oblige. Now, you notice that 'something important' is coming up more often, but you still cannot say no. You may think, "What if they feel bad?" or, "It is okay. It's just ten more minutes of my time." And, "Let me do it one last time." and then another, and it goes on. Soon, it has become a pattern which you cannot break.

Repercussions

When people say yes, they think they are trying to be kind and accommodating. But this accommodation costs them their time and efficiency. Often, we say yes to people despite our busy schedules or even if we do not wish to take

on others' work. This reluctance to voice an assertive 'no' adds to an already existing stressful workload — neither helping yourself or the person to whom you said yes.

The inability to say no, when it turns into a vicious cycle, comes at a price. You might start complaining and whining, and at that time, nobody wants to listen to you. This pattern of self-sabotage makes one resentful and more stressed, taking a toll on their confidence level and productivity.

How to say 'no' assertively

To start reclaiming your time and your wellbeing by saying "no" more, tune into what it is that you

really want. Instead of impulsively saying yes, develop a habit of asking yourself, "Am I agreeing to do this for me?" Start with small things, such as when you are offered a drink or if someone asks you for a trivial favour.

When put on the spot and asked to help with something you don't have the capacity to and the thought of saying no to their face fills you with dread, buy yourself some more time. Ask people to text or email their requests to you so that you can get back to them. It's absolutely reasonable for you to say that you need to check your calendar before answering, allowing you to check in with yourself

about what you want. Once you do that, find the right words with which to decline them. You can be polite and say, "I wish I could help you, but I have this bit of work that needs my attention. I am so sorry." And gracefully navigate your way out.

If a senior at work requests something from you, you can choose a time when they are more relaxed and explain your pressure to them as they might understand. Eventually, people will realise that you are no longer a soft target. Speaking up for yourself might earn you more respect than just doing favours and extra work for others.

When it comes to family, sometimes, you have to say yes whether you like it or not, which is okay. But one has to learn to draw boundaries. Define in your head the extent to which you will stretch yourself to help them, as well as the limit when you will say 'no' assertively and nicely. It will help you feel more confident and strong.

Nobody wants to overwork and stress themselves to a point where they have no energy left for themselves nor others. Saying no allows you to say yes to what really matters to you. It lets you be a better person — because when you say yes, it comes from a place of genuine care and not from resentment or fear. Rather than drowning in a busy schedule, it creates more space for you physically and mentally.

Saying 'no' more often means saying yes to more self-care, better health and your overall well being.

(The author is an ontological coach and author.)



The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled.
 —Plutarch

BACK TO SCHOOL — GOOD FOR HEALTH

Students returning to their morning school schedule might have an unintended positive lifestyle impact as a new study has found that more teenagers will obtain the recommended amount of sleep as compared to pre-pandemic sleep patterns.

According to the researchers, encouraging better sleeping habits could help reduce teenagers' stress and improve their ability to cope in times of crisis.

The findings indicated that the elimination of the morning commute, a delayed school start-time and cancellation of extracurricular activities allowed teens to follow their 'delayed biological rhythm' or natural tendency to wake up and go to bed later.

"The pandemic has shown that delayed school start times should be implemented by schools interested in supporting the mental health of their students," said the lead author of the study, Reut Gruber from McGill University.



GREEN TEA AND COCOA TO TACKLE SARCOPENIA

Drinking green tea and taking a cocoa-rich diet may reduce age-related neuromuscular alterations that occur with sarcopenia — the progressive loss of skeletal muscle mass and function — as per a mice study.

Sarcopenia is one of the main reasons for loss of muscle mass. On an average, it is estimated that 5-13 per cent of elderly people aged 60-70 years are affected by sarcopenia. The numbers increase to 11-50 per cent for those aged 80 or above.

"Sarcopenia is considered the main causative factor of the physical performance decline in the elderly. The compromised muscular function associated with sarcopenia has a negative impact on the life quality of older adults and increases the risk for adverse health outcomes including disability, fall-associated injuries, morbidity, and mortality," said Jordi Caldero from the Universitat de Lleida in Spain.



INDIA PLANS TO ELIMINATE COAL

India is home to seven per cent of the global coal project pipeline, which is 56 per cent of South Asia's total, a study reveals. The country is slowly moving away from coal at a national level, but considerable progress is being made at the state level.

Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka together account for 13 per cent of the global pre-construction pipeline, states a new report by climate change think tank E3G that assessed the global pipeline of new coal projects.

The report says Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan are showing leadership in cancelling projects and making political statements that they will no longer pursue new coal power.

While, India has not engaged in discussion on moving away from coal for multiple reasons, progress is being made at the sub-national level, with several states considering pivoting away from new coal.



INTERVENTIONS FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Covid caused major changes in the work-life environment of healthcare workers (HCWs) including excessive workload, extended time, erratic timings, separation from family, and inconvenient PPEs which have led to psychological impact on them, and raise the need for interventions at various levels, as per an ICMR study.

The Indian Council of Medical Research study, conducted on 967 participants across 10 sites and covered six broad issues — work, family, societal, and individual related issues, coping mechanism, and suggesting the way forward.

Healthcare personnel experienced the fear of infecting themselves due to the constant exposure to Covid-infected individuals, as per the study. It found that the pandemic has brought out different expressions of the stigma that HCWs face with experiences of verbal and physical abuse reported to a large extent on social and print media platforms.



MICROPLASTICS FOUND IN SAL RIVER

A study reveals that water, sediments and biota (animal and plant life) in the Sal river, a water body in South Goa, are contaminated with microplastics (MPs).

The study states that MPs found in water, sediment and biota from the Sal estuary are dominated by fibres (55.3 per cent, 76.6 per cent and 72.9 per cent, respectively), followed by fragments, films and other plastics.

The prominent ubiquity of fibres in all three matrices suggests a variety of sources of MPs, including domestic sewage, effluents from industries and laundry.

The research also found transparent spherical beads in the water of the river along with sediments containing polypropylene, polyamide, polyacrylamide and polymers. The most commonly found MPs were plastics which were black in colour that may have come due to abrasion of tyres on the road surfaces as regular wear and tear.



CSK SET MI 157-RUN TARGET



Ruturaj Gaikwad of Chennai Super Kings hitting a boundary during match 30 of the Vivo Indian Premier League between Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians held at the Dubai International Stadium in the United Arab Emirates. BCCI

Gaikwad rescues side with fiery 88

CSK set MI 157-run target as Gaikwad rescues side with fiery 88 Dubai, Sep 19 (PTI) Electing to bat, Chennai Super Kings scored 156 for six against defending champions Mumbai Indians in the first match of the second phase of the Indian Premier League (IPL), here on Sunday. CSK were 44 for 4 at half-way mark after a horrendous start but Ruturaj Gaikwad rescued the side with his blistering unbeaten knock of 88 runs along with Ravindra Jadeja (26) and Dwayne Bravo, who scored 23.

Brief Scores: Chennai Super Kings: 156 for 6 in 20 overs (R Gaikwad 88 not out, R Jadeja 26, D Bravo 23; A Milne 2/21, J Bumrah 2/33, T Boult 2/35). PTI

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS:		
Ruturaj Gaikwad	not out	88
Faf du Plessis	c Milne b Boult	0
Moeen Ali	c Tiwary b Milne	0
Ambati Rayudu	retired hurt	0
Suresh Raina	c Chahar b Boult	4
MS Dhoni	c Boult b Milne	3
Ravindra Jadeja	c Pollard b Bumrah	26
Dwayne Bravo	c Pandya b Bumrah	23
Shardul Thakur	not out	1
Extras: (LB-3, WD-8)		11
Total (For 6 wickets in 20 overs)		156
Fall of wickets:	1-1, 2-2, 3-7, 4-24, 5-105, 6-144	
Bowling:	Trent Boult 4-1-35-2, Adam Milne 4-0-21-2, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-33-2, Kieron Pollard 2-0-15-0, Rahul Chahar 4-0-22-0, Krunal Pandya 2-0-27-0. More PTI	



Jasprit Bumrah of Mumbai Indians during match 30 of the Vivo Indian Premier League between Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians held at the Dubai International Stadium in the United Arab Emirates. BCCI

Struggling KKR look to script turnaround against RCB

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

Enduring a forgettable outing in the first half of this year's IPL, two-time former champions Kolkata Knight Riders would look for reversal of fortunes when they resume their campaign against Royal Challengers Bangalore in the second phase of T20 league here on Monday.

While Virat Kohli's RCB is third in the eight-team standings with 10 points from seven games, 2012 and 2014 champions KKR are languishing at the seventh spot with just two wins out of seven ties.

And Eoin Morgan-led KKR would be hoping to make a turnaround, just like 2014 edition when they won nine games in a row to claim the title.

KKR chief mentor David Hussey also exuded optimism about scripting a turnaround, despite a nightmarish first half.

"All we have to do is win this... We have done it before and so we can do it again... I feel we have the squad to do it also. You qualify for the finals and whole competition starts again," the Australian said.

But it would be easier said than done for KKR as they face RCB, a formidable outfit, whose captain Kohli would be gunning for success with the bat after announcing his decision to quit as India's T20 skipper following the T20 World Cup which will be held after the IPL in UAE.

Even though KKR leads in head-to-head record against RCB, winning 18 and losing 13 out of 28 fixtures played between the two sides, the 38-run defeat against Kohli's team in the first half of the event in Chennai would be fresh on their players' minds.

KKR's two wins earlier this year came against two under-



performing sides — Punjab Kings, who are placed just a rung above them, and bottom-placed Sunrisers Hyderabad.

KKR would be relying heavily on the pair of Subhan Gill and Nitin

Rana to deliver the goods in their batting department, even though the duo did not have the best of outings in the first leg.

While Gill scored just 132 runs, Rana managed 201 runs in the first seven games for KKR in this year's IPL, which was postponed in April following multiple COVID-19 cases inside the bio-bubble in India.

Besides, Morgan will need to let his bat do the talking and lead from the front.

Dinesh Karthik, Andre

Russell, Rahul Tripathy and Shikhar Dhawan too need to come good for KKR if the team harbours any hopes of making it to the play-offs.

KKR's bowling department will be on the shoulders of Kiwi Tim Southee, who came in as a replacement for Pat Cummins for the second half.

RCB, on the other hand, are currently placed in a comfortable position and would be hoping for Kohli to play freely and score big runs, especially after taking the big call of relinquishing T20 captaincy.

With Glenn Maxwell (223 runs from 7 games) and AB de Villiers (207 runs from 7) leading the run scorers chart till

now for the team, RCB's batting unit looks ominous.

Kohli (198), by his own standards, has been a little disappointing and Devdutt Padikkal (195) too would be looking for a consistent show.

On the bowling front, Mohammed Siraj and Kiwi Kyle Jamieson would lead the attack which also has Harshal Patel, Navdeep Saini and Yuzvendra Chahal, who would be desperate to answer the selectors after being ignored from India's T20 World Cup squad.

The additions of Sri Lanka duo of Wanindu Hasaranga and Dushmantha Chameera, who replaced Adam Zampa and Kane Richardson, will also hold the team in good stead as they have a good understanding of the UAE conditions.

Teams (from): KKR: Eoin Morgan (capt), Dinesh Karthik, Gurkeerat

Singh Mann, Karun Nair, Nitish Rana, Rahul Tripathy, Shubman Gill, Harbhajan Singh, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Kuldeep Yadav, Lockie Ferguson, Pawan Negi, M Prasadh Krishna, Sandeep Warrier, Shivam Dube, Tim Southee, Vaibhav Arora, Varun Chakravarthy, Andre Russel, Ben Cutting, Shikhar Dhawan, Sunil Narine, Venkatesh Iyer, Sheldon Jackson, Tim Seifert.

RCB: Virat Kohli (capt), Navdeep Saini, Glenn Maxwell, Dan Christian, Rajat Patidar, Dushmantha Chameera, Pavan Deshpande, Mohammed Siraj, Harshal Patel, Mohammed Azharuddeen, Sachin Baby, Wanindu Hasaranga, George Garton, Yuzvendra Chahal, Shahbaz Ahmed, Devdutt Padikkal, Kyle Jamieson, Suyash Prabhudessai, KS Bharat, Tim David, Akash Deep, AB de Villiers. Match starts at 7:30PM IST.



Gracia Raina with kid during match 30 of the Vivo Indian Premier League between Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians held at the Dubai International Stadium in the United Arab Emirates. BCCI

Gill and Rana are quality players: David Hussey

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the second phase of the IPL 2021, Kolkata Knight Riders' mentor David Hussey believes openers Shubman Gill and Nitish Rana will "shock the world" with their batting in UAE. KKR did not have a successful opening leg of IPL 2021 and the reason was the failure of their opening pair.

Gill scored just 132 in the first seven games. His partner Rana was not a lot better, scoring just 201 runs before the season was declared postponed due to a Covid-19 outbreak in multiple team bio-bubbles.

Hussey pinned his hopes on the duo, calling them the 'next generation of Indian players'. "They both are quality players, they are determined to do very



well for the team and for themselves and they have a taste of international cricket now," Hussey told ESPNcricinfo.

"I think they are about to shock the world that they are the next generation of Indian players,

not just for one or two series but for perhaps a decade, so if they get going look out for them in the IPL." The Kolkata franchise is currently placed seventh in the points table. Hussey, however, believes his team can script a turnaround.

PATEL: WE'LL LOOK TO BUILD ON OUR HAPPY MEMORIES FROM IPL 2020 SEASON

FIANS ■ DUBAI

Delhi Capitals all-rounder Axar Patel believes that his team will look to build on its happy memories from the IPL 2020 edition ahead of the second half of the IPL 2021 starting September 19. Patel had taken nine wickets in 15 matches in the 2020 edition of the IPL, where Delhi finished as runners-up.

"When it was announced that the second half of the tournament will be held in the UAE, I thought about our performance the last time we were here. We have happy memories from that tournament as we reached our first-ever IPL final. We are looking to repeat our performance and hopefully, just go one step further in the final this season," said Patel in a release by the franchise on Sunday.



Patel, who was part of the Indian squad for the Test series in England, pointed out the massive difference in weather conditions between UK and UAE.

"It's been a drastic change for us as far as the weather is concerned. It was quite cold in England and now we are getting used to the heat here. When we stood on our balconies during quarantine, we got an idea about the heat, but we got to know the full extent of the weather conditions when we started practicing in the nets. We are looking to get used to the conditions in the next 2-3 days."

When asked about his personal goals for the remainder of the IPL 2021, the 27-year-old said, "My personal goals are always aligned with the team goals. I always think about what the team needs and then set my personal goals accordingly."

TEAM	PLD	NET RR	PTS	FORM
1 DC	8	+0.547	12	W W L
2 CSK	7	+1.263	10	L W W
3 RCB	7	-0.171	10	L W L
4 MI	7	+0.062	8	W W L
5 RR	7	-0.190	6	W L W
6 PBKS	8	-0.368	6	L W L
7 KKR	7	-0.494	4	L W L
8 SRH	7	-0.623	2	L L L

India win silver in Asian U18 Girls' Rugby Sevens Championship

FIANS ■ MUMBAI

India on Sunday won a silver medal in the Asia Rugby U18 Girls Rugby Sevens Championship 2021, losing 21-17 to the United Arab Emirates in a well-fought final held at Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

In the final, Nandini topscored for India with seven points while Aditi Kumari and Tarulata Nair contributed five points each to the Indian score. Both teams scored three tries each. For UAE, Carmela Morralla scored nine points while Hannah Lear added seven, and Lara Botha contributed five.

India had reached the final by beating Kazakhstan 24-7 in

the semi-final with Sapna Kumari topscoring with 10 points including two tries. Tarulata Naik scored nine points while Arti Kumari added five points.

In the two-day tournament that had five teams — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, UAE, India, and hosts Uzbekistan -- and played in an all-play-all round-robin format, India started with a 12-10 defeat to Kazakhstan on Saturday. The girls came back strongly to blank Kyrgyzstan 63-0 with Vaishnavi Dattatray Patil scoring 15 points from three tries and defeated hosts Uzbekistan 20-5.

On Sunday, they lost to UAE girls 20-12, thus finishing third in the five-team league and qualifying for the semi-finals.

Speaking on the occasion, Rahul Bose, actor, director, philanthropist, and a board member of Rugby India, said, "This is a great moment for Indian Rugby. Both teams (UAE and India) scored three tries in the final. No disgrace losing like that"

"For our U18 girls' team to perform as well as they did is all the more remarkable because they were 15 years old when the pandemic struck. They have never played a

National tournament, leave alone an international championship. For them to come so far is a testament to their skill, grit, and fire to make their country proud. Our thanks to the coaching and support staff. Only rugby players know how important they are in this sport. This is a new day for Indian Rugby. We go onward and upward from here," Bose was quoted as saying in a release by Rugby India.

Vikram Ahuja, President, Rugby India said, "Heartiest congratulations to our U18 Girls team, their performance has been sensational - they displayed courage, skill, and mental toughness far beyond their years."

Shocked with Kohli's decision : Lara

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

West Indies cricketing legend Brian Lara is "shocked" with Indian skipper Virat Kohli's decision to step down as the T20 skipper after the ICC T20 World Cup scheduled to be held in the UAE and Oman in October-November this year.

In a statement issued on social media recently, Kohli had said, "Understanding workload is a very important thing and considering my immense workload over the last 8-9 years playing all 3 formats and captaining regularly for last 5-6 years, I feel I need to give myself space to be fully ready to lead the Indian Team in Test



and ODI Cricket."

"I was in shock because I think he's (Kohli) done a tremendous job, played against all the big countries -- South Africa, England, New Zealand, Australia -- beating all of them, and for me he has done a

McClenaghan to Hafeez: Don't blame players for cancellation

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

tremendous job," Lara said during a video interaction with cricket.com on Saturday. "This is actually his first (T20) World Cup as a captain so this will end his career as a captain after that. It's a big shock. But the kind of intensity that he plays with, I feel that sometimes it might sometimes be good to take a step away, concentrate may be on another format of the game," said Lara, one of the most charismatic cricketers of modern era.

"I have had these issues as well when I was playing? when a couple of times I stepped down as captain as it became very, very stressful," added the West Indian.

New Zealand players shouldn't be blamed for the cancellation of the tour of Pakistan as they were just following the advice of their government, said Kiwi pacer Mitchell McClenaghan. The 35-year-old pacer was reacting to a sarcastic tweet by batsman Mohammed Hafeez on Saturday on eve of the departure of the New Zealand team from Pakistan.

"Come now bro. This has a bad taste to it... Don't blame the players or the organisation... blame our government. They have only acted on the advice they have received. I'm absolutely certain these young men -- all wanting to prove themselves wanted to play. They had no choice," McClenaghan wrote on his twitter handle. On Saturday, Hafeez had taken a dig at New Zealand Cricket (NZC) for calling off their tour of Pakistan citing security threats. "Thanks to the security of Pakistan forces to make arrangements to @BLACKCAPS to reach at airport Safe & sound. Wonder same route & same security but no threat today???" Hafeez had tweeted. New Zealand had arrived in Pakistan on September 11 for a white-ball series after 18 years and were scheduled to play three ODIs and five T20 Internationals.

Atletico Madrid held by Athletic Club Bilbao in La Liga

FIANS ■ MADRID

Atletico Madrid went to bed as league leaders in Spain on Saturday night, but Diego Simeone's side will be frustrated after being held to a 0-0 draw by an effective and disciplined Athletic Club Bilbao side that had the best chances to win the match.

Atletico Madrid's best and virtually only chance was a Marcos Llorente shot which bounced off the post in the second half and the visitors would have taken all three points if Inaki Williams, who was making his 200th consecutive league appearance, had been able to finish when one on one with Jan Oblak, or Asier Villalibre had been able to hit the target in injury time with



just Oblak to beat.

Atletico's frustration was compounded when Joao Felix was sent off with 13 minutes left to play after saying "you are crazy, you are crazy" to referee Gil Manzano, while Athletic remain unbeaten and have conceded just once in their first five games.

Pakistan will overcome crisis: PCB chairman after NZ tour pullout

FIANS ■ LAHORE

New Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ramiz Raja has emphasised that the country's cricket had gone through experiences similar to the one when the New Zealand team pulled out at the last minute but it had "always moved forward".

Raja posted a video on the PCB website after the New Zealand team pulled out hours before the start of the three-match One-day International series at Pindi Cricket Ground in Rawalpindi on September 17 citing security concerns.

The chief executive of New Zealand Cricket (NZC) David White had said it was simply not possible to continue with

the tour given the advice he was receiving.

"I understand this will be a blow for the PCB, who have been wonderful hosts, but player safety is paramount and we believe this is the only responsible option."

Raja said in a video message to cricket fans that, "Our pain is shared. Whatever happened isn't good for Pakistan cricket.

But one point that needs to be emphasised is that we have gone through such experiences in the past and we always move forward.

"So I urge our fans to stand behind the Pakistan team and be its strength at the (T20) World Cup. To my team, I would like to say take out your

frustrations on the field because that is the only remedy. When you become the world's best team then everyone is queuing up in line to play series in your country. So I want everyone to take this as a lesson and move on and not be disappointed."

The PCB is reportedly planning to take up the issue with the International Cricket Council (ICC) after Raja tweeted following the cancellation of the series that, "Crazy day it has been! Feel so sorry for the fans and our players. Walking out of the tour by taking a unilateral approach on a security threat is very frustrating. Especially when it's not shared!! Which world is NZ living in? NZ will hear us at ICC."

Indian paddlers shine in ITTF Kazakhstan Open

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian TT pairs of Siddhesh Pande and Mudit Dani, and Fidel R Snehit and Sudhanshu Grover ended their campaign with mens doubles bronze medals at the 2021 ITTF Kazakhstan International Open in Karaganda.

Both the pairs displayed a great show throughout the tournament before suffering defeats in their respective semi-finals. Maharashtra duo Mudit and Siddhesh suffered a 0-3 loss against the Saudi Arabian pair of Ali Alkhdrawi and Abdulaziz Bu Shulaybi.

In the second men's doubles last-4 clash, Snehit and Sudhanshu too went down fighting 2-3 against tough

Kazakh pair of Alan Kurmangaliyev and Kirill Gerassimenko.

The Hyderabad paddler Snehit was equally impressive in the singles category as he entered the final after defeating Pavel Platonov of Belarus 4-1 comfortably in the semifinal. The world No. 405 Indian will take on world No. 46 Kirill Gerassimenko of Kazakhstan in the gold medal match.

The pair of Kaushani Nath and Prapti Sen too stormed into the women's doubles final as they outclassed the Uzbek duo of Kamila Khalikova and Mekhriniso Norkulova 3-1 in the last-4 match. They will now face Valeria Kotcyur and Valeria Shcherbatykh of Russia in the final.