

**WORLD 7**  
UN CHIEF TO HOLD  
MEETING ON AF FUNDING

**MONEY 8**  
SUPERTech TO FILE REVIEW  
PETITION AGAINST SC ORDER

**SPORT 10**  
TEENS SHOCK  
OSAKA, TSITSIPAS

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# sunday pioneer

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# 17 killed in Taliban's celebratory gunfire

## Panjshir gains disputed by Resistance Force

AGENCIES/REUTERS ■ KABUL

Celebratory gunfire resounded in Kabul on Friday as reports spread of the Taliban's takeover of Panjshir, and news agencies said at least 17 people were killed and 41 hurt in the firing.

Sources in the Taliban told news agency Reuters on Saturday that its fighters had taken Panjshir Valley, the final holdout in its quest to seize Afghanistan. "By the grace of Allah Almighty, we are in control of the entire Afghanistan. The troublemakers have been defeated and Panjshir is now under our command," one Taliban commander was quoted as saying. Heavy fighting continues in the valley and has left hundreds dead till now.

However, resistance leaders denied the claim to Reuters. "News of Panjshir conquests is circulating on Pakistani media. This is a lie," said Ahmad Massoud, who is leading the rebels.

Meanwhile, former president Hamid Karzai in a statement has asked the Taliban and the "resistance front" in Panjshir to stop the fighting and resolve their issues through talks, *TOLO news* reported.

The Taliban source also

said the announcement of a new Government would be pushed back to the next week.

Taliban co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, reported by some Taliban sources to be in line to lead the new Government, said in remarks on Qatar's *Al Jazeera* channel that the new administration "will include all factions of the Afghan people".

"We are doing our utmost efforts to improve their living conditions. The Government will provide security, because it is necessary for economic development," he said.

Meanwhile, some signs of normality returned to Kabul.

Qatar's ambassador to Afghanistan said a technical team was able to reopen Kabul airport to receive aid, according to *Al Jazeera*, which also cited its correspondent as saying domestic flights had restarted.

The airport has been closed since the United States on August 30 completed the evacuations of more than 1,20,000 US citizens, other foreigners and Afghans deemed at risk from the Taliban, and withdrew the last of its troops.

The Taliban's main spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, also said one of the main foreign exchange dealers

in Kabul had reopened.

Afghanistan's economy has been thrown into disarray by the Taliban's takeover. Many banks are closed and cash is scarce.

The United Nations said it will convene an international aid conference on September 13 to help avert what UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called a "looming humanitarian catastrophe".

Western powers say they are prepared to engage with the Taliban and send humanitarian aid, but that formal recognition of the Government and broader economic assistance will depend on action — not just promises — to safeguard human rights.



Taliban fighters stand guard by a black market currency exchange at Sarai Shahzada market in Kabul on Saturday

AP

## ISI chief rushes to Kabul before Govt formation

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

In a surprise move, Pakistan's powerful intelligence chief Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed on Saturday dashed to Kabul, according to media reports here, amidst the Taliban struggling to finalise and install an inclusive Government in Afghanistan that would be acceptable to the international community.

A delegation of senior Pakistani officials led by Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Director General Lieutenant General Hameed arrived in Kabul to conduct discussions with the incoming Taliban Government, the *Pakistan Observer* newspaper reported.

The ISI chief is expected to meet top Taliban leaders and commanders.

"Issues relating to Pakistan security, economy, and other matters will be taken up with the Taliban leadership," the report said, quoting sources.

According to the *Express Tribune*, Hameed will also meet Pakistan's envoy in Kabul to



discuss the matter of repatriation and transit through Pakistan of foreign nationals and Afghans fleeing Taliban rule.

"The issue of pending requests from countries and international organisations for the repatriation/transit through Pakistan and the need to determine the mechanism through which Pakistan could allow these, in coordination with the ground authorities in Afghanistan will be discussed during the meeting with the Taliban officials," it said, quoting sources.

*Continued on Page 4*

## Modi to meet Biden this month, to discuss Afghanistan, Covid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The situation in Afghanistan and the ongoing fight against the corona pandemic will figure prominently during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's talks with President Joe Biden during his visit to the USA at end of September. Modi is also likely to address the annual United Nations General Assembly session.

This will be Modi's first visit to the USA since Biden



became President earlier this year. Moreover, it will be the first face-to-face meeting between the two leaders,

sources said here on Saturday. Details and schedule of Modi's visit to New York and Washington were now being worked out, they added. He last visited the USA in 2019 when Donald Trump was at the helm.

Sources said the two have met virtually on at least three occasions, including the Quad summit in March, the climate change summit in April, and the G-7 summit in June this year.

*Continued on Page 4*

## Taliban indicated they'd be reasonable in addressing Indian concerns: Shringla

**Washington:** India and the United States are closely watching Pakistan's actions in Afghanistan, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said on Friday. In the limited engagement that India has had with the Taliban, the new Afghan rulers have indicated that they would be reasonable in addressing New Delhi's concerns, the foreign secretary added.

# Shooter Narwal, shuttler Bhagat scoop a Gold each

PTI ■ TOKYO

Shooter Manish Narwal smashed a Paralympics games record while shuttler Pramod Bhagat yet again asserted his supremacy with his Gold-winning performance as India's tally swelled to 17 after a four-medal show on a memorable penultimate day at the Tokyo Paralympics, here on Saturday.

The 19-year-old Narwal shot a total of 218.2, a Paralympic record, for Gold in P4 Mixed 50m Pistol SH1 event while Bhagat humbled Great Britain's Daniel Bethell in the men's singles SL3 class final for a historic yellow metal.

India now have four Gold, seven Silver and six Bronze medals to be placed 26th with one day left in the Games.

India had won just four medals in the last edition in Rio while the total count from the 1972 edition when the country competed for the first time till these Tokyo Games was 12.

More medals are in store for India on the final day with shuttlers Suhas Yathiraj and Krishna Nagar sailing into the men's singles finals of SL4 class and SH6 class respectively. Tarun Dhillon too stayed in



Shuttler Pramod Bhagat wins Gold medal in the men's singles SL3 at Tokyo 2020 Paralympics in Tokyo



Manish Narwal poses for photographs during the presentation ceremony of P4-Mixed 50m Pistol Shooting event in Tokyo on Saturday

PTI

contention for a Bronze after losing his semifinals while the duo of Bhagat and Palak Kohli will also feature in the third-

place play-off in the mixed SL3-SL5 class.

Narwal smashed the Paralympic record to clinch

India's third Gold of the current edition of the Games while compatriot Singhraj Adana bagged the Silver to make it a sensational one-two finish for the country.

Narwal, who holds the world record in the category, claimed the yellow metal in P4 Mixed 50m Pistol SH1 event in his debut Games.

"I'm very happy," said Narwal who hails from Ballabgarh in Haryana.

## Lack of global standards barrier to Covid passport

### UK researchers say countries must ensure data protection

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amidst the controversy over issuing of Covid-19 vaccine passports, a report has warned that lack of global standards for coronavirus certificate is a key barrier to their successful implementation around the world.

The UK's University of Exeter research in its report has asked policymakers to ensure coronavirus health status certificate providers to abide by basic data protection principles, including lawfulness, fairness and transparency, purpose limitation, data minimisation, accuracy, storage limitation, integrity and confidentiality, and accountability.

It has identified three key barriers to implementation — lack of trust, lack of global standards, and lack of a holistic approach.

The report recommends



that the certificates should be only used during the pandemic and their use is discontinued once the WHO declares that Covid-19 is no longer a public health emergency of international concern.

It also says policymakers should ensure that Covid-19 health status certificate providers build data protection into the design of these certificates by default, and that the confidentiality and security of the information collected and processed are maintained. Providers of these certificates should prevent any unauthorised access, accidental loss, damage, or destruction of the data.

The report presents independent research funded by the

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as part of UK Research & Innovation (UKRI)'s rapid response to Covid-19.

The research was led by Dr Ana Beduschi, who carried out literature reviews and evaluations of primary and secondary sources of law. The research was also informed by twenty semi-structured interviews with technologists and experts in digital identity and certification conducted between December 2020 and March 2021.

Dr Beduschi said, "Focusing only on the technological solutions for Covid-19 health status certificates is not sufficient."

*Continued on Page 4*

# To Didi's delight, Bhabanipur bypoll on September 30

## Mamata needs to win to remain CM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Saturday announced the bypoll in Bhabanipur Assembly constituency in West Bengal — the seat Mamata Banerjee must win to remain Chief Minister. The poll would be held on September 30 at the request of the State Government.

However, the EC has kept pending bypolls to three Lok Sabha and 31 other Assembly

seats. The EC also announced polls in Samserganj, Jangipur constituencies in West Bengal and Pipli in Odisha where polls were earlier deferred.

As per the EC notification, the Bhabanipur Assembly constituency by-election will be held on September 30 and votes will be counted on October 3. Nominations will be filed from September 6 till September 13 while scrutiny of papers will take place on September 14. September 16 is the last date to withdraw from the electoral battle.

*Continued on Page 4*

# Now, set off for Ramayana Yatra from Nov 7

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To promote religious tourism in the country, the Indian Railways on Saturday announced to start the run of "Shri Ramayana Yatra" by Deluxe AC Tourists train after the celebrations of Diwali in November this year.

The Indian Railway's catering and tourism arm shared the details, including fare structure and announced to launch the special tourist train to promote the Government of India initiative "Dekho Apna Desh".

The tour will start from Delhi Safdarjung Railway Station on November 7 and it will cover the visit of all prominent places linked with the life of Lord Shri Ram, said Ministry of Railways statement.

The whole journey of "Shri



Ramayana Yatra" will cost ₹82,950 per person. It will cover train journey in AC classes, accommodation in AC hotels, all meals, all transfer and sight-seeing in AC vehicles, travel insurance and services of IRTC Tour Managers.

"Previously, the train was operated with sleeper class, but this time, the tour will be operated in Deluxe AC tourist train equipped with modern facilities," said a rail official.

As per IRTC, the train journey will be complete in 17



days, and Ayodhya will be the first stop. The tourists will visit Shri Ram Janmbhumi temple, Hanuman temple, and Bharat Mandir at Nandigram. The next destination will be

Sitamarhi, the birthplace of Sita in Bihar and Ram-Janki temple in Janakpur. Nepal will be covered by road. From there, the train will move to Varanasi where tourists will visit temples

at Varanasi, Prayag, Shringverpur and Chitrakoot by road. Night stay will be assigned at Varanasi, Prayag and Chitrakoot.

*Continued on Page 4*



**HOME THEATRE**

# Made with good intentions



**HELMET Zee5**  
**\*ing: Aparshakti Khurana, Pranutan Bahl, Abhishek Banerjee and Ashish Verma**  
**Rated: 5/10**

It is no wonder that most of the people in our country live in a fantasy world. Look at the Bollywood films that are churned out on a yearly basis. They are enough to turn a person's head – usually in the wrong direction.

The latest movie to hit the OTT (ZEE5) directed by Satramm Ramani is a case in point. A young man, singing in a marriage band is in love with a girl – okay, so she is a flower decorator – but is from a rich family – falls in love! Look at how

incredulous that sounds! Where in India does a rich girl even look at the bandwallahs? Let alone fall in love with them?

But the good part is that it is not so much about our here played by Aparshakti Khurana being in a band but more about him wanting to start his band. But money is needed. So, he steals stuff from a truck thinking that he has hit the jackpot. Well, he did but of a different kind. Condoms worth many thousands. This is when all the trouble or should one say some fun comes into play.

We all know that to just use the word condom is looked at with horror let alone a film on it. Ramani's intentions are in the right place – if only we use this

more often our population would not be touching 1.37 billion and soon to overtake China's at 1.40 billion.

Sadly, that's all there is to this movie. Good intentions. The dialogues by Rohan Shankar are nothing to rave about. The almost lackluster manner in which they are delivered don't even bring a smile. Saanand Verma, who plays Saxena in Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain!, has nothing much to do here; he plays a pharmacist here with precisely four minutes of screen time.

Still, the makers should be lauded for their efforts to at least make a film on a subject that is so hush-hush. We just hope that next time, there is not so much drama.

Shalini Saksena



# Not a patch on the original

**CINDERELLA Amazon Prime**  
**\*ing: Pierce Brosnan, Camila Cabello, Idina Menzel, Minnie Driver, Nicholas Galitzine, Billy Porter**  
**Rated: 4.5/10**

The latest *Cinderella* movie to get dropped on Amazon Prime written and directed by Kay Cannon is not the first time that this fairy-tale is being told. This fairy tale has been retold at least 10 times in the past. And each one has had its pluses.

Unfortunately, this one is the most disappointing. There are a few points that make this a movie that has no soul or the much needed fairy-tale element to it that one would

associate with the original movie. The whole reason why one loved this story was because – brace for it – the wicked stepsisters and the stepmother. Well, the sisters are not so wicked though they are mean. At least the stepmother is somewhat true to the original story.

Then there is the Prince himself. He wants to be a prince but doesn't. He is more like a boy-man. The King, played by Pierce Brosnan, who did so many Bond movies, does his bit but falls short of being a good father until the movie reaches the climax.

Then there is Cinderella herself. Singer Camila Cabello who plays the part here, is unable to create the much-needed magic. While the

message of woman empowerment is clear and strong, the *Moulin Rouge* vibe thrown in for good measure, it doesn't do anything to uplift this.

Given that the story is set in the 18-19th Century, is it not odd for the makers to make Cinderella wear an above the knee dress? Given that she dreams to be a seamstress instead of a princess, it is still strange for only her to be wearing it while the rest of the town folk are wearing what people wore back then.

Still, it is a fairy-tale and all is well that ends well. However, one would have preferred if it would have been as close to the original as possible.

— Shalini Saksena

## Plan Your Sunday

### SCHOOL OF SHUFFLE

School Of Shuffle is a series of workshops where you get exclusive access to learn from hip-hop's biggest names! Hone your skills in various hip-hop art forms such as music, dance and art right here with BREEZER Vivid Shuffle.

Mekhhola Bose is a trained dancer and choreographer, best known for her waacking. She is also a part of the Crafts of Kammoionn crew ( C.K.N). from Kolkata. Bose comes with a diploma in Contemporary Arts, and is also a musician, fashion model and performer. Having competed on the TV show dance plus 3 with the House of Suraj team led by Kumari Suraj, you can count on her to bring in the big power-packed moves. You can also catch her waacking on Yeh Ballet, the film on Netflix. And her last waacking championship win was at Waackfest Mumbai! She is also the co-creator of jams like Don't Panic at The Disco, Retro Rally India, Crafts of Passion Jam and more!

In this masterclass, you will learn the core essentials of waacking and more.

**What:** Art Workshop

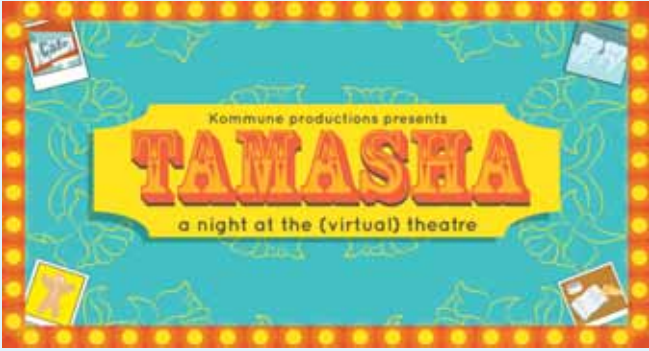
**Where:** Online

**When:** September 17, 2021

**Time:** 7 pm to 8:30 pm



### TAMASHA - A DRAMATIC READINGS EVENT



Life amazes us everyday, so do people! Four strangers in a cab, what do they talk about? Same as four captives in a confined cell? And what about a husband and a wife fighting over tooth pain or a few friends fighting illness of another friend? Endless possibilities.

And there are multiple ways to explore these, but the easiest one is drama! Kommune presents 'Tamasha', an online dramatic readings show with a group of talented actors, performing live readings on some really interesting topics and with all the feels!

In a month-long process, performers were selected and trained by the likes of Sheena Khalid and Roshan Abbas.

So grab your cup of chai or coffee and join us on Sunday, 5th September at 7 PM for an entertaining, soulful evening.

**What:** Theatre and Arts

**Where:** Online

**When:** September 05, 2021

**Time:** 7 pm to 9 pm

## TELLY TALE

### 'HOSTING A CRIME SHOW WAS LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE'

The Q, India's Hindi general entertainment channel launches its first original crime fiction show 'Jurm Ka Chehra' for television. The show will air every Saturday and Sunday at 9PM exclusively on The Q. Hosted by actor Kinshuk Vaidya, the show is based on modern age crime stories plaguing our society. Crime has increased and changed its face with the changing times. It's not just murders and robbery that can scare the daylight out of people but also other unethical and rampant crimes like cybercrimes, online frauds amongst others. With an aim to create awareness, the show will bring to its viewers 'Naye Zamane Ki Nayi Crime



Stories,' inspired by modern crimes. Actor Kinshuk Vaidya who rose to fame with his massive popularity as a child actor in the early 2000's on being the host of the show shared, "I have grown up watching crime thrillers and investigative shows. So, hosting one was like a dream come true and

quite exhilarating. However, with changing times, the nature and face of crime and criminals has changed and hence what sets this show apart is that it will give the viewers insight into the modern age crimes. Honestly, shooting for it has also made me more aware as a person and also as a consumer of

various products, services and technologies. I really hope the audiences watch our show and benefit from it as well". Speaking on the launch of its first crime thriller, Krishna Menon, Chief Operating Officer, The Q added "With Jurm Ka Chehra we foray into the crime genre. The cast of the show has been chosen from virtual auditions and we have handpicked talented social media creators to feature as actors in it. This is our attempt of not just using the content of creators for our audience but also offering specially curated content with the creators for our audiences. Thus, truly living up to our brand philosophy of exploring, Zara Hatke initiatives."

### KARAN SUCHAK TO PLAY A LEAD

COLORS' recently launched a show, *Thoda Sa Baadal, Thoda Sa Paani*, which highlights the journey of a strong, independent woman through the protagonist Kajol (played by Ishita Dutta). While there has been much excitement about her character, the show will now introduce the lead character named, Anurag Basu. Anurag will be played by heartthrob Karan Suchak, who shows strong potential in bringing the character to life. Anurag by profession is a cardiologist, but when it comes to matters of his heart, his relationship with his mother has strained his outlook towards women. While the character is yet to be unveiled on the show, Karan is quite confident that Anurag Basu will be loved by everyone.

While the character is yet to be unveiled on the show, Karan is quite confident that Anurag Basu will be enjoyed by everyone. He mentions, "It feels great to be on the sets, it's been more than 500 days since I've



work, and what could be better than working with a leading TV channel Colors on their new show. I'm excited to portray Anurag Basu's character in *Thoda Sa Baadal Thoda Sa Paani*. Looking forward to giving my 100% and am thrilled to reconnect with the audience."

### MIKA SINGH FOR FARAH KHAN

Even as the pandemic continues to cast its shadow of stress, Zee TV is attempting to lighten up the country's collective mood by offering its viewers an escape from all the stress via the route of rib-tickling comedy through its reality show, Zee Comedy Show. The show has been successful in helping every Indian family unwind on their couch with some of India's top comedians making them LOL their stress away. The acts put up by all the comedians coupled with the witty reactions of our laughing buddha Farah Khan continue to leave everyone in splits. However, in an unfortunate turn of events, even after being double vaccinated and taking absolute precautions, Khan has tested positive for COVID-19. While the filmmaker is self-isolating and recuperating at home, Mika Singh has stepped in for Khan on Zee Comedy Show. He will be seen stepping in for her for two weeks starting from next weekend, which is the 11th of September. The singer shot for two episodes with Raveena Tandon and Mallika Sherawat as well this week, but he was missing Khan beside him during the shoot. As Singh revealed, "It is unfortunate that Farah tested positive despite being double vaccinated and it



clearly proves that you cannot predict anything in the current scenario. I have spoken to her, and it is great to know that she is doing fine, and I really hope she gets well soon. Last time around, I shot for Zee Comedy Show as a special guest, and I really had a gala time with Farah, so I do miss her beside me. But as you know, the show must go on and with an aim to spread cheer and joy amongst the audience in this gloomy time, we have shot for two episodes of Zee Comedy Show with Raveena Tandon and Mallika. I hope everyone enjoys my presence on the show for two weeks."

# 'It's exciting to play Ram'

NAKUUL MEHTA who plays Ram in SET's *Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2* talks to SUNDAY PIONEER about his experience of being a part of the show and working with Disha Parmar, among other things

■ **The announcement date of *Bade Achhe Lagte Hain* is out and viewers can't keep calm. How excited are you?** I'm delighted to be back on Television and headlining a show which has been so loved and revered by so many including myself. Also, very excited to collaborate with Ekta Kapoor. It has been long pending and it finally gives me a chance to get a peek into her creative genius and hopefully learn along the way.

■ **What is new in store for Ram and Priya? How will this season be different from the previous season?**

I feel it's a different era now. We are doing this a decade after the first season came out. A lot has changed in terms of the world we live in and how relationships are made or lost in this digital era however a lot remains the same, which is human longing for love and companionship. I also feel with new actors, you will see a new flavour and at its core it will remain the same story but a lot of it will be served differently.

■ **Ram Kapoor and Sakshi Tanwar had successfully struck a chord with the audience, how challenging will it be to step into their shoes?**

In my eyes, both of them are absolute rockstars of Indian TV. Whilst it may seem daunting at the outside, personally for me it's a new character which I get to colour with my brush.

■ **You've worked with Disha Parmar before, how has your bonding with her evolved over the years?**

I feel having known her over nearly a decade now, there is an unsaid comfort, friendship and mutual respect. Whilst it has been nearly eight years since I last worked with her, our first day of shoot seemed so organic like we picked up from where we left. Now, both of us have of course grown personally and professionally in our lives yet it feels just like the old times. Super pleased to share this equation with her.

■ **How has been your experience shooting for the show so far?**

To be honest, it's been brilliant and anxious at the same time. Brilliant because I'm very excited about playing this new character and see how it comes



**It's sheer luck and faith of my producers in my potential that I got this show. I hope I am able to do justice to the same**

to life and anxious because I understand the expectations the audience have from us and I hope I am able to do justice to the same. Needless to say, being a part of this show is a big responsibility to shoulder on.

■ **Any message for your fans and viewers?**

Just huge gratitude for all the love they have shared with me over the years and that they continue to share, I am who I am because of their love, admiration and support. Here's hoping that I can make another memorable show for them and make all my supporters proud. Hoping for the best!



# Kejriwal Govt to honour 122 teachers on today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

On the occasion of Teachers' Day, Delhi Government will honour teachers of Delhi Government schools with State Teacher Awards to recognise their invaluable contribution during Covid-19 crisis.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, said it is because of our teachers our education is being recognised globally. Teachers' Day on Sunday will be celebrated as Abhar Diwas and city Government will award 122 teachers who discharged their duties diligently during the Covid -19 pandemic, deputy CM Sisodia said. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government will facilitate teachers who played an important role in the Covid -19 pandemic times.

Sisodia said the teachers played a big role during the corona. Teachers did important work in distribution, vaccination, and enforcement from



duty at the Quarantine Centre to distributing rations in schools.

He further said that teachers performed duty during the epidemic, as well as conducted online classes amid challenges. The children's mobile recharge was done by paying for online classes themselves.

Sisodia said, "During the migration of people, the teachers took responsibility and accommodated the children in Delhi."

# Mindfulness helping students to overcome stress: Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia Saturday said mindfulness has become a turning point in the lives of students studying in Delhi Schools as it is helping children overcome stress and increase their focus in studies.

Sisodia who also holds portfolio of education minister in AAP government said happiness curriculum is a massive success in Delhi and every day, 16 lakh children in Delhi Schools start their day with mindfulness.

"Our school children will play the role of mindfulness ambassadors and messengers in making mindfulness a mass movement," Sisodia said.

While Delhi government's Happiness Curriculum has turned out to be a huge success, the AAP leader said, "Mindfulness is a gift given by India to the world in the field of Emotional Science. India has given its thousands of years old



tradition of meditation to the world, but with time it has forgotten its value. The actual goal of mindfulness is to focus on your life but mindfulness now has become limited to just 15 minutes of meditation. People have learned to meditate very well but have not learned how to focus on their life. If we practise mindfulness by understanding its true meaning and start paying attention in our life too, then we can never do anything wrong."

"We need to make mindfulness a mass movement. Every Indian needs to live life with mindfulness. In order to

practise mindfulness in children from a young age, Delhi Government has started the Happiness Curriculum from the very beginning of the school, so that children start their day with 5-10 minutes of mindfulness daily and make mindfulness an integral part of their life," he added.

The 'Mindful Education Awards 2021' is an initiative by Mind On to recognise, support and honour the efforts of schools and school leaders in creating a mentally and physically healthy environment for the growth and development of children.

# Reopening schools despite warning of 3rd Covid wave premature idea: Anil Kumar

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar said that the Aam Aadmi Party Government's decision to re-open schools seems to be a premature move with experts has warned of the third wave on October and many States where schools reopened the cases of covid-19 among children have gone up. Kumar said that with the festival season about to set in and people expected to crowd markets and shopping centres, the Kejriwal Government should show a more pro-active attitude in the strict implementation of the Covid guidelines.

He said that Delhiites would not be able to bear with another lockdown as the past lockdowns have virtually wrecked the economy of the national Capital and therefore, prevention is better than cure. He recalled that in November-December last year, Delhi wit-

nessed a sharp spike in Corona cases.

Kumar said that Delhi cannot afford to face such a grim scenario yet again, as people are still to recover from the deadly blows inflicted by the last two waves of the Covid pandemic.

Meanwhile, a meeting of prominent leaders of the Dalit community was organized by Delhi Congress vice-president and former MLA Jaikishan. The leaders expressed its anguish at Kejriwal Government "apathy" in raising voice against atrocities reported against Dalit girls.

The Congress Delhi unit vice-chairman said that after independence the Congress initiated many schemes and projects for the protection and uplift of Dalits and other backward castes, including reservation in education and jobs but the present government in Delhi and Centre have done nothing to address the issues being faced by the community.

# Man stabbed to death for asking not to make noise

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 26-year-old man was stabbed to death allegedly by two persons after he asked them to not make loud noises while they were in an e-rickshaw at Delhi's Mohan Garden area. Police said that they have arrested the duo accused.

The accused have been identified as Lav Kumar (21), a resident of Mohan Garden, Sainik Enclave, and Deepak (23), a resident of Faridkot in Punjab.

According to Parvinder Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Outer district, on Friday, a police control room

(PCR) call was received at Ranholi police station around 11:30 PM regarding murder at main Gandhi chowk, Mohan Garden.

"Thereafter, police reached the spot and found a man was lying on the ground in a pool of blood.

The injured was immediately shifted to the DDU hospital where he was declared dead," said the DCP.

The Deceased was identified as Dalip, a resident of Roorkee in Uttarakhand. He was residing at Tilak enclave part-1, Mohan Garden, Uttam Nagar with his maternal aunt and worked as salesmen in a mall in Dwarka, police said.

# Asthana takes salute at the 'Passing out Parade'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Commissioner, Rakesh Asthana took the salute at the 'Passing out Parade' of newly inducted Constables held at Police Training College (PTC) in Delhi's Jharoda Kalan.

A total of 312 recruit Constables of the 116th batch completed their training and will now be joining various districts and units of Delhi Police.

"Among them, 171 candidates have been appointed on Compassionate Grounds in the place of their blood relations, who lost their lives while discharging duty. There are 11 Post Graduates, 116 Graduates,



three B. Techs and one BBA & BCA each among these recruits, who also come from different regions of India," said Anil Mittal, the Additional Public Relation Officer (APRO)

The CP congratulated all the fresh recruits and lauded the drill instructors and PTC

staff for imparting excellent training to the newly inducted Constables. Welcoming them in the force, CP, Delhi exhorted them to remain updated as per latest crime trends and make optimal use of technology in conducting investigation, gathering evidence and for prosecution procedures.

# Police didn't conduct proper investigation into Delhi riots: Atishi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has accused the Delhi Police of not conducting proper investigations in the Delhi riots cases.

Senior AAP leader and MLA Atishi said on Saturday that in charge sheet, only 35 out of over 700 cases have been filed even after a long span of 1.5 years into the investigation. "The Delhi police has no intention of catching the real culprits. All we want to understand is why the Delhi Police are not carrying out a proper investi-

gation. Is the Delhi police protecting someone in the investigation," she asked?

Quoting various judicial opinions, Atishi said "In February 2020, Justice Murlidhar of the Delhi High Court asked the Delhi Police why they had not taken any action on the videos that contained inflammatory speeches of politicians.

The Delhi police replied that they did not see those videos.

Then the court pulled up the police and showed them the videos in the court itself."

# Delhi reports 55 Covid cases

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital reported as many as 55 new cases of Covid-19 with a positivity rate of 0.08 per cent while no death was recorded for the fourth consecutive day, according to a health bulletin issued by the health department of the Delhi Government.

A total of 70303 tests, including 48510 RT-PCR tests and 21793 rapid-antigen tests, were conducted a day before, as per the bulletin.

The number of cumulative cases stood at 1437874 on Saturday and over 14.12 lakh patients in Delhi recovered from the virus till the date, the bulletin stated.



Govt. of Haryana









**Greetings on the occasion of Teachers' Day September 5, 2021**

**Nation remembers the great educationist, statesman and former President Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan on the occasion of his Birth Anniversary**

**“The implementation of 'New Education Policy' will pave the path to a better education system in the State. We will implement the New Education Policy in State on priority for providing quality education and to ensure that Haryana gets special recognition in the field of education.”**

**- Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana**

**“Today, we are celebrating 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' aiming to sketch a brighter future of our Nation, which depends on the education that we impart to our youth today. Our teachers have a significant role at every stage from the formulation to implementation of National Education Policy (NEP).”**

**- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister**

**गुरु ब्रह्मा गुरु विष्णु: गुरु देवो महेश्वरः। गुरु साक्षात् परब्रह्म: तस्मै श्री गुरुवे नमः॥**

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana

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# Centre signs peace pact in Karbi Anglong region



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday signed a tripartite agreement with five insurgent groups of Assam and the Assam Government to end years of violence in the Karbi Anglong region.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who was present on the occasion, said the accord will bring lasting peace and all round development in Karbi Anglong. Modi Government is committed to resolving the decades-old crisis, ensuring the territorial integrity of Assam,” Home Minister Amit Shah tweeted and posted a video of the meeting.

The insurgent groups which signed the peace accord are: People’s Democratic Council of Karbi Longri (PDCK), Karbi Longri NC Hills Liberation Front (KLNLF), Karbi People’s Liberation Tiger (KPLT), Kuki Liberation Front (KLF) and

United Peoples Liberation Army (UPLA).

About 1,000 militants belonging to these groups have surrendered along with their arms and have joined the mainstream.

Shah said the signing of the Karbi-Anglong Agreement is another milestone in Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of ‘insurgency-free prosperous Northeast’.

“Over 1,000 armed cadres have abjured violence and joined the mainstream of society, which reflects their trust in Modi ji’s leadership,” he said.

Shah said that a ₹1,000 crore development package will be given to Karbi Anglong.

“I want to assure everyone that we will implement this accord in a time-bound manner,” he said.

The Home Minister said the Central and State Governments are committed to

all round development of Karbi Anglong and there will be peace in the region.

“We not only sign peace accords but implement them within our time too,” he said, citing the example of similar peace pacts earlier signed with other insurgent groups of the Northeast — the NDFB, NLFT and Bru groups.

Shah said ever since the Modi Government came to power, its focus in the Northeast is not only to ensure peace but also overall development.

“We have ensured that there is all round peace, no violence, no blast, no firing in the Northeast,” he said.

The accord is significant as Karbi Anglong, which is the territory of ethnic Karbi tribals, has seen years of violence, killings and abduction in the rebels’ fight for a separate homeland.

Union Minister and former Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, who was present on the occasion, appreciated the efforts of the Prime Minister and the Home Minister in bringing peace in Assam and the Northeast.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said it was a historic day as the militants of these five insurgent groups will now join mainstream and work for the development of Karbi Anglong.

# Jan Aashirwad Yatras highly successful: Nadda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Describing the ‘Jan Aashirwad Yatras’ by the newly appointed 39 Union Ministers in the Narendra Modi Government across several States as ‘highly successful’, BJP President J P Nadda on Saturday claimed that the ‘massive response’ from the people has made the Opposition ‘nervous’ and hence, it has sought to put hurdles in the ‘Yatras’.

The ‘Jan Aashirwad Yatras’, which began on the Independence Day and lasted till August 28, 2021, covered more than 24,000 kms in 14 days in which over 5,000 programmes were organised, said Nadda.

“All these programmes were highly successful which also ensured enthusiastic participation of people from all walks of life. Entire credit of the success of the ‘Jan Ashirwad Yatra’ goes to the people of India”, he said.

These ‘Yatras’ were undertaken under the instructions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi after he in his first expansion of union cabinet in last two years inducted 39 new ministers in July 6, dropping many heavyweights including Ravishankar Prasad and Prakash Javadekar.

“The people of India across the states have heartily welcomed the new Ministers and lauded the Bharatiya Janata Party government led by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi for doing the all-round development and progress of India, said BJP President in a statement.

He said since 2014, Prime Minister has “worked tirelessly and with full dedication and devotion” to serve the people of the country and to ensure welfare and wellbeing of every sections of our society.

He claimed that in the past 7 years “all the calamities and problems have been converted into opportunities by the Narendra Modi government. Be it the Covid-19 management, the execution of the world’s largest and fastest Covid vaccination programme, evacuation of Indians stuck in any part of the world or the preservation and conservation of the great culture and traditions of our great country.”

Nadda said ‘Jan Aashirwad Yatras’ across the country has left the “Opposition parties disturbed and nervous and they unsuccessfully tried to disturb and create hindrances in our Yatra and programmes.”

“All plays and disturbances have failed to shake the strong support and trust that the people have showered on the Narendra Modi Government.

# Cong seeks SC-monitored probe into manipulation of JEE (Mains)



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday demanded a Supreme Court-monitored probe into the alleged manipulation of JEE Mains examination after the CBI arrested seven persons in this connection.

The party also demanded answers from the Government, saying the Education Ministry and the National Testing Agency (NTA) are responsible for conducting examinations in a transparent manner and why they are not held accountable.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said that as a nation it’s responsibility of all including the Government owe the candidates or aspirants a fair exam. “JEE (Main) Exam has been breached. Students

appearing for such competitive exams prepare very hard, battling difficulties of various kinds. We, as a nation, owe them a fair exam,” Rahul tweeted alleging the Modi government is now best providing cover-ups.

The party’s students’ wing, NSUI, also announced protests across the country on Monday on the issue.

Addressing a joint press conference, Congress spokesperson Gourav Vallabh, Delhi Congress leader Alka Lamba and NSUI national president Neeraj Kundan asked how can students be assured that such frauds have not happened in other exams conducted by the NTA.

If one of the most prestigious entrance examinations of

the country (JEE) is not spared by these frauds, then what is the quality of future professionals generated, they asked.

“We demand an inquiry into the entire fraud under the supervision of a sitting Supreme Court judge as this is an issue related to the future of our country,” Vallabh said at AICC Press conference.

“Is it not the responsibility that the government should ensure that every student out of 22 lakh applicants who appeared for JEE Main exams 2021 to get a fair chance as their future is at stake,” he said.

Citing the chronology of paper leaks, he mentioned Vyapam, SSC-2017, CBSE Class X and XII-2018, entrance exams in Haryana, JEE main 2020 and the latest case.

# 40K plus daily Covid cases alarm Govt



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The daily Covid-19 case count has remained above 40,000 for the past few days as on Saturday update till 8 am, taking India’s total tally of infections to touch to 3,29,45,907, while active cases registered an increase for the fourth consecutive day, prompting the Union Health Ministry to hold a meeting with North East and Hill States and UTs asking them to quickly saturate the first dose coverage among the 18+ population category in the region.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan chaired the high-level review meeting with representatives from Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand.

At the outset, the Health Secretary underlined that they must also focus on the 60+ age group. He pointed out that the coverage of both the doses in this category is unsatisfactory in Assam, Manipur, Arunachal

Pradesh, Nagaland and Meghalaya. The vulnerability of this age group to Covid-19 makes this exercise of prime importance, he said.

The attention of the States was brought to the fact that the administration of the first dose has progressively outpaced the administration of second dose. It was suggested that States earmark doses, earmark days and target the completion of the exercise for these beneficiaries.

States/UTs were also advised to closely monitor the stock from State Vaccine Stores to Cold Chain Point, check rational distribution and restrict vaccine wastage to below 2%, update data on eVIN (electronic vaccine intelligence network) on a daily basis, check supply of other denomination syringes as per availability for Covid vaccination.

While 42,618 people tested positive for coronavirus, the death toll climbed to 4,40,225 with 330 fresh fatalities, according to the data updated at 8 am on Saturday.

The daily positivity rate was recorded 2.50 per cent and

# Indians flying to Turkey need to carry negative Covid-19 report

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

From Saturday, people travelling from India to Turkey will be required to submit a negative Covid-19 report from the RT-PCR test done not more than 72 hours before arrival. Those who have been inoculated by a World Health Organization (WHO)-approved vaccine will be exempt from the 14-day quarantine rule upon arrival in Turkey.

In addition to WHO-approved vaccines, the vaccines approved by the Turkish Government are Pfizer Biotech, Sputnik V and Sinovac. A traveller must have taken the second dose (if Johnson & Johnson one dose is sufficient) at least 14 days prior to the date of travel.

This means those who have been inoculated with Covishield vaccine can travel to Turkey. Those who got Covaxin dose will have to wait as it is not approved for emergency use by the WHO so far.

“Effective from Saturday, passengers travelling from



India to Turkey or those who have been in India within the 14 days will need to undergo a negative report from a RT-PCR test taken within 72 hours before arrival. Passengers who certify that they have had at least two doses (single dose for Johnson & Johnson) of the vaccines approved for emergency use by the World Health Organisation (WHO) or Turkey provided that at least 14 days have passed since the last dose will be exempted from mandatory quarantine,” Turkey Embassy in New Delhi said in an updated travelling rule on Saturday.

August 7, 2020, 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, two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23.

Non-vaccinated travellers are required to undergo mandatory quarantine for 10 days in a hotel or a location mentioned in the declaration. Passengers who cannot provide the above mentioned certificate will be quarantined in their residence or the address they will declare, the Embassy said.

# BSF arrests Bangladeshi police inspector roaming inside border

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Border Security Force (BSF) has apprehended a Bangladeshi Inspector of Dhaka Metropolitan Police while he was moving suspiciously inside the Indian territory in the general area of Changrabandha in Coochbehar district of West Bengal.

Later, he was identified as Md Seikh Sohel Rana, 46, of Gimadanga, Gopalganj district (Bangladesh). Four debit cards, USD 20, Euro 15, two high end mobile phones with Bangladeshi SIM and few medicines were recovered from his possession. He has been handed over to the local police for further action.

During the preliminary questioning, he revealed that he started his journey from Dhaka by bus on September 2



and reached Patgram in Lalmonirhat district and he crossed over the Indo-Bangladesh border the next day at about 12. 30 PM with the help of one Bangladeshi tout namely Babu of Patgram (Bangladesh) by paying him Taka 10,000. He was arrested on September 3.

Rana joined Dhaka Metropolitan Police as a Sub-Inspector in 2003. He was

placed under suspension along with 21 other police personnel from 2003-2008 and his suspension was revoked in 2008.

Rana also revealed that his destination was Kathmandu, Nepal. The apprehended Bangladeshi Police Inspector along with seized items has been handed over to Police Station Mekhliganj for further legal action, it added.

# In a first, Indian Army engages in training with paramilitary forces

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ MEERUT

In a departure from the past, the Indian Army is engaged in training with the paramilitary forces. A batch of Indian Army is currently receiving training in “public order and crowd management” at the Rapid Action Force Academy for Public Order (RAFO) before moving on for the United Nations assignments.

The Army and the paramilitary don’t mix their trainings.

RAFO is the first and only of its kind training institute in the field of riot control, crowd management and public order management in the country and there is a pact with 138 countries for exchange training programs.

Ever since its inception, the RAFO, which is a unit of the elite RAF, has been imparting training to States and UT police force including Delhi Police and other paramilitary forces, but never had Army personnel within its campus for training except for a brief program in 2019.

Beginning last week, a batch of Indian Army has been getting lessons on public order by the highly trained and qualified instructors of RAFO drawn from CRPF and RAF. The unit is to be deputed at Sudan as part of the UN peace keeping mission.

“The academy is being developed as the center of excellence to enhance the capability of the different Police force personnel in Public Order management and also for training, Research and Development on the concept,”



A mock scene created for the trainees at RAFO campus

Pioneer photo

said DIG RAFO Akhilesh Kumar Singh.

Police personnel from across the world which includes Central armed police forces of India, police force of various states in India including Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, are being trained at the academy in various subjects, with focus on public order.

“Since inception, the RAF Academy has trained 14318 men in uniform on various subjects which include crowd management, media management, human rights, legal aspects concerning police personnel in India,” said Akhilesh, who is also the recipient of President of India Medal for Distinguished Services in 2018.

The faculty at RAFO is highly experienced personnel of RAF/CRPF and have been pooled in with varied educational backgrounds to match the requirements of RAFO to optimise competency as well as international standards.

Myanmar police was the first foreign police batch to be trained in the RAF Academy in



RAFO instructor imparting training to army personnel

Pioneer photo

December 2019 followed by Zimbabwe police in March, 2020.

The academy also conducts pre induction training for MFPU and FPPU personnel for various UN missions abroad.

“Maintaining the highest traditions of CRPE, three courses are presently running at this institute,” said Akhilesh. Spread across 25 acres, the RAFO was inaugurated by former Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde in November 2013.

The Academy received formal approval by the MHA on November, 2019 with a sanctioned strength of 201 personnel with an officer of the rank of DIG as the head of the institution.

# SKM to hold today mega mahapanchayat in UP to mobilise farmers against Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Assembly polls next year, the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) protesting against the three farm laws, has organised a mega mahapanchayat on Sunday in Uttar Pradesh’s Muzaffarnagar, known as the Jat belt to mobilise farmers against the Modi Government.

According to farmer leaders, discussions will be held on issues concerning farmers, including the contentious three laws passed by the Centre last year but the main focus will be to mobilise farmers especially Jat community against Yogi and Modi Governments anti farmers policies.

In a statement, the SKM said that they will launch Mission Uttar Pradesh - Uttarakhand, for spreading the farmers’ movement all over these states against the anti-farmer BJP, for repeal of three

**The farmers’ leader said that the Mahapanchayat will make the Yogi-Modi Governments realize the power of the farmers, farm labourers, and supporters of the farm movement**

anti-farmer laws, withdrawal of Electricity Amendment Bill 2020, and to fulfill the demand for legal guarantee of purchase at MSP at one and a half times the comprehensive cost for all agricultural products.

The farmers’ leader said that the Mahapanchayat will make the Yogi-Modi Governments realize the power of the farmers, farm labourers, and supporters of the farm movement.

# Excessive use of digital devices by children worries V-P Naidu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Excessive usage of digital devices by children during the ongoing pandemic causing vision problems has drawn the attention of Vice President Venkaiah Naidu who has called upon the government, parents and teachers to urgently address the issue.

At the Silver Jubilee celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama after inaugurating a new block of Sri Sharadadevi Eye Hospital and Research Centre at Pavagada, he noted many children use devices around the clock for both school and play. This, combined with delayed vision screenings during the pandemic, has created a heap of issues for children’s eyesight.

“We all are living in a digital age with tons of information available online. While technology is phenomenally benefiting people across the globe, however, like everything else it comes with its own set of advantages and disadvantages. When it comes to children a lot has

changed for them, now everything they need is just one click away, be it books, games, activities, or connecting with friends,” he said.

During the ongoing pandemic, these digital devices are helping students to continue with their education without any interruption. The flip side is that gadget addiction among children is on the rise and is an issue which needs to be addressed by parents and teachers.

Also, due to the increasing screen time, problems like eye strain, dry eyes and irritation are believed to be increasing among children. Therefore, while using technology, it should also be ensured that it does not give rise to health issues or those of excessive dependence. Hence, we need to regulate our usage of digital devices and be particularly mindful of this fact in the case of children, the Vice President further said.

Drawing attention to the major health challenge of corneal blindness, Naidu quoted

ed the National Blindness survey (2015-19) and said that in India, approximately 68 lakh people suffer from corneal blindness in at least one eye and of these around 10 lakh people are blind in both their eyes.

“The National Blindness and Visual Impairment Survey 2019 reported that corneal blindness was the leading cause of blindness among patients aged less than 50 years in India, accounting for 37.5% of the cases and was the second leading cause of blindness among patients above the age of 50 years,” he added.

He urged the Government and private sector to build disabled-friendly infrastructure as it would benefit people with disabilities in a big way. He said that every public building and utility must be equipped with facilities for differently abled persons. “There are guidelines already in place for disabled friendly infrastructure therefore all the local bodies and state governments must enforce them,” he added.



# Centre misusing ED to harass opponents: Pawar

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday charged that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) was never misused in the past as much as it was being done now by the Narendra Modi Government to target its political opponents not just in Maharashtra but the entire country.

Talking to media persons in Pune, Pawar said: "The ED has been misused as it is being done now by the BJP-led NDA Government to bring its political opponents to their knees. This is not happening in just Maharashtra but is happening in the states like Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and various southern states".

Pawar was responding to



questions relating to the investigations launched by the ED against Maharashtra's former Home Minister Anil Deshmukh, former Minister and NCP leader Eknath Khadse, Shiv Sena leaders Pratap Sarnaik and Anil Parab. Pawar's comment came a day after the ED filed a charge-sheet against Khadse, his wife Mandakini and son-in-law Girish Chaudhary in the

alleged money laundering in the much-discussed Pune land deal.

It may be recalled that Chaudary was arrested by the ED for offences allegedly committed by him under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

This is for the first time that the Pawar has slammed the Centre for "misusing" the CBI and ED to harass its political opponents.

Defending his party leader and former State Home Minister Anil Deshmukh, Pawar had said in the past: "he raids are aimed at harassing Deshmukh. This is a new political pattern adopted by the Centre. The agencies will get nothing. We are not at all worried by this kind of investigation".

## PDP chief attacks Centre, says basic human rights of dead or alive suspended in J&K

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Saturday said the Centre's claim that people of Jammu & Kashmir now enjoy equal rights is a "barefaced lie" and the ease with which it imposes a "complete siege" in the valley every time it anticipates a reaction is distressing and deeply insensitive.

Her remarks come after authorities snapped mobile telephone services, except on BSNL's postpaid, and internet services, except on BSNL's Broadband and Fiber, on Wednesday night immediately after the death of headline separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani.

"GOI's dubious claims that people of J&K now enjoy equal rights is a barefaced lie as

truth is that even their basic human rights dead or alive are suspended with pervasive impunity (sic)," Mehbooba said on Twitter.

The former Chief Minister of the erstwhile state said the ease with which the Government of India imposes a "complete siege", including communications blackout, in Kashmir every time it anticipates a reaction from people is distressing and deeply insensitive.

"Their misadventure of creating fear and suppression to eliminate a sentiment is counter productive since feelings and emotions don't dissipate or vanish into thin air.

These feelings of betrayal, subjugation and anger are absorbed and passed on from one generation to the next," she tweeted.



Teachers play a game during the Teachers' celebration, in a school, Patiala on Saturday

PTI

## Kerala logs 29,682 new cases, 142 more die

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

There has been no let up in Kerala's face off with Covid-19 for the sixth day in succession. A release issued by Veena George, Health Minister said that out of the 1.69 lakh samples tested on Saturday, 29,682 were diagnosed with Covid-19.

The Test Positivity Rate too remained high at 17.54 per cent. The last 24 hours saw 142 patients succumbing to the pandemic and the death toll till sate reached 21,422.

The State also saw 132 health workers getting infected with the pandemic while the number of patients undergoing treatment across the State crossed 2.5 lakh.

Thrissur (3,474) topped the list of districts with high number of Covid-patients as on Saturday. Ernakulam (3,456), Malappuram (3166) and Kozhikode (2,950) were

the other districts with high number of patients.

Students of Calicut University are a worried lot as their semester examinations begin on September 9. "Thrissur, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Palakkadu, the districts coming under Calicut University's jurisdiction have an unusual number of Covid-19 patients. Though 150 LLB students in Government Law College are appearing for the semester examination, we are in the dark about how the examination would be held during this pandemic," said Vijaya Kumar, a first year LLB student in the college. He said commuting to Thrissur or staying in hotels or lodges during this pandemic are filled with risk.

At the time of going to Press, the students were seriously considering approaching the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor to postpone the examinations at least by a month.

## State Govt has still not considered reopening classes 1-5: K'taka CM

**Bengaluru:** Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Saturday said the Government has still not considered reopening schools for classes 1 to 5, and guidelines will be issued once again to restrict organising large-scale events and rallies, in view of violation of Covid-19 protocols.

"No, we have not considered it yet. We will see how things will function with class 6,7 and 8, and based on that we will take further decisions," Bommai told reporters in response to a question on reopening school for classes 1-5.

The government has already allowed reopening of schools for students from class 9 to 12 since August 23, and class 6,7 and 8 will reopen from September 6.

To a question about large-scale events, rallies linked to political parties taking place despite restrictions, Bommai said, "we are taking all these things seriously, as few such events have taken place, we will once again announce guidelines for such events." Several incidents of events or meetings by political parties, including by the ruling BJP which organised "Jan Ashirwad Yatras" across the state, has witnessed a large-scale gathering of people, in violation of Covid-19 protocols, and they have come under intense criticism. **PTI**

## AP sees 16 Covid deaths in a day

**Amaravati:** Andhra Pradesh reported 1,502 fresh Covid-19 cases, 1,525 recoveries and 16 deaths in the 24 hours ending 9 AM on Saturday. The State's Covid-19 chart showed a total of 20,19,702 positives, 19,90,916 recoveries and 13,903 deaths so far. A health department bulletin said the number of active cases stood at 14,883.

SPS Nellore district reported the highest with 260 fresh cases, Chittoor 208, East Godavari 191, Prakasam 152, West Godavari 146, Guntur 143, Krishna 129 and Kadapa 113 in 24 hours.

The remaining five districts added less than 70 new cases each. Chittoor reported four fresh fatalities, Krishna and West Godavari three each, East Godavari and Guntur two each, Kurnool and Prakasam one each in a day. **PTI**

## Tiruppur garment units seek Centre's aid to tide over crisis

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ THIRUPPUR

Knitwear units of Tiruppur, struggling because of a host of issues like Covid-19, non-availability of containers and ships to export the finished products and the economic slowdown have approached the Union Government with a request to hasten up the reimbursement of the Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (ROSCTL) which would help them sail through the present crisis.

"The ROSCTL is popularly known as embedded taxes like cess on power, tariff on petro products and tax on transport which are offered back to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in the form of scrips. We are free to

sell it in market or pawn it as surety in banks and mobilize some funds for meeting our urgent financial commitments," said S Sakthivel, executive secretary, Tiruppur Exporters Association, the umbrella organisation representing all knitwear units in Tiruppur. Raja M Shanmugham, president, TEA, said that the knitwear exports sector in Thirupur, comprising 95 per cent of the units in MSME category has been impacted by the second wave of Covid-19 and was struggling to meet their statutory financial commitments in every month.

"The total readymade garment (woven and knitwear) exports from India between January 1, 2021 and 31st August 2021 was ₹75,250 crore and the ROSCTL pending

claim to the garment sector was ₹3,750 crore. The Tiruppur units have to get ₹850 crore out of this amount," said Sghanmugham.

The TEA president disclosed that he has written to M Ajit Kumar, chairman, Central Board of Indirect taxes and Customs seeking help to the TEA units to tide over the difficulties being experienced by the knitwear garment exporting units in the challenging global business environment.

Though faced by the a series of challenges, the TEA is working overtime to emerge as the fashion capital of India in manufacturing casual wears of global standards and had launched a massive skill development programme in association with union textile ministry.

## Mayawati questions findings of pre-poll survey by pvt channel

**Lucknow:** Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati has questioned the findings of a pre-poll survey by a private TV channel, saying the survey was "sponsored, misleading, mischievous and lacks credibility".

She said even as the popularity of the Bharatiya Janata party had nosedived due to massive dislocation in economy due to pandemic, the survey had predicted over 40 per cent vote for the BJP in the 2022 UP assembly elections.

"The survey lacks credibility. In 2007 UP assembly elections, despite the wave in favour of the Bahujan Samaj Party, the pre poll surveys had predicted that BSP will emerge as the single largest party. The poll results proved them wrong and the Bahujan Samaj party got a clear majority," Mayawati said in a statement here on Saturday. **PNS**

Mayawati said the BSP cadre was trained and ready to deal with conspiracies and people would not be misled by a sponsored campaign by the media.

She said the sole purpose of the survey appeared to be to project the BJP as the strongest contender to win the 2022 assembly election. She said the BSP accepted the challenge and after the survey the BSP cadre was working for the assembly election with more devotion and determination.

"I trust my cadre and as the election draws close, such misleading campaigns and conspiracies will only grow loud and shrill. There is nothing new as this kind of malicious campaign is always launched by the media to break the morale of the BSP ahead of the elections," Mayawati said. **PNS**

## 17-yr-old girl held captive, raped by 3

**Mahoba (UP):** A 17-year-old girl was allegedly gangraped by three men who kept her locked in a room for a day, police here said on Saturday.

The teen, who works in a private company, was sexually assaulted on Thursday and made her escape on Friday while she was being taken to another place, police said. Efforts are on to nab the accused who fled the area.

On Thursday, she was taken by a man, an employee at a nearby dak bungalow, to a room in a deserted area where she was raped by him and two of his friends, Station House Officer at Mahoba's Kotwali police station Balam Singh said.

The girl also alleged that they made a video of her, he said. The men locked her inside after raping her and went out, he said. **PTI**

## Maha records 4,130 new cases

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The daily Covid-19 deaths dropped below three digits for the fourth day in a week in Maharashtra on Saturday, as the fatalities went down to 64 in the State.

On a day when the daily infections dipped to 4,130 as against 4,313 cases recorded on Friday, the daily deaths dropped from 92 on Friday to 64 on Saturday.

The somewhat consistent drop in the number of daily deaths during the current week has come as a relief to the health authorities.

After the daily deaths dropped to 52 on August 30 (Monday), the daily fatalities remained below 100 mark for three more days during the week -55 deaths on September 2, 92 deaths on September 3 and 64 deaths on September 4.

However, in between on August 31 and September 1, there were 104 and 183 deaths respectively in the state.

With 64 fresh deaths reported on Monday, the total number of deaths in the state increased from 1,37,643 to 1,37,707, while the total infections -- with 4,130 new cases -- went up from 64,77,987 to 64,82,117.

As 2,506 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from



Candidates undergo thermal screening before appearing in Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) exams, in Karad, Maharashtra on Saturday

PTI

the hospitals since the second week of March last year increased from 62,86,345 to 62,88,851. The recovery rate in the state dropped from 97.04 per cent to 97.02 per cent.

The total "active cases" in the state increased from 50,466 to 52,025. The fatality rate in the State stood static at 2.12 per cent.

Pune with 15469 active cases emerged as the first in the state in terms of maximum number of "active cases" in the State, while

Thane with 7,171 cases stood second in the state, followed by Satara (6,175), Ahmednagar (5,051), Mumbai (4031), Sangli (3,537) and Solapur (2,689).

Of the 5,46,60,825 samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 64,82,117 have tested positive (11.86 per cent) for Covid-19 until Saturday.

Currently, 3,02,196 people are in home quarantine while 2,013 people are in institutional quarantine.

## Punjab: Kapurthala's Rail Coach Factory engineer held for taking bribe

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Saturday arrested a Principal Chief Engineer of Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala for demanding and accepting a bribe of ₹1 lakh from the complainant.

A case was earlier registered by the CBI against Principal Chief Engineer, Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala, Suresh Chand Meena on a complaint.

"It was alleged that the complainant (a contractor who undertakes works related to civil and horticulture of Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala) met the Principal Chief Engineer, RCF, Kapurthala in connection with tender/payment related work in his office. During the said meeting, the accused allegedly demanded bribe at the rate of 1 % of gross payments received by the complainant's firm in lieu of completed tender work and also for further continuation of contract work," the CBI said in a statement.

The CBI laid a trap in Kapurthala and caught the accused red handed while demanding and accepting the bribe of ₹1 lakh.

Searches were conducted at the office and residential premises of the accused at Kapurthala and Jaipur which led to recovery of incriminating documents, it said.

The arrested accused was produced in the Court of Special Judge, CBI cases, Mohali (Punjab) and was remanded to 14 days judicial custody.

## UP floods: Adityanath says State Govt stands with all citizens

**Siddharthanagar (UP):** (PTI) With parts of Uttar Pradesh grappling with floods, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said the life of every citizen is very valuable and his Government stands with all people of the State.

Addressing a gathering at Shahpur Mandi Parishad in Domariyaganj tehsil here, the CM said the flood-affected people are being provided with ration.

He also asked officials to prepare a list of farmers whose crops were destroyed due to the deluge so that they can be provided financial assistance.

Adityanath had said on Friday that a total of 15 districts in the State have been affected by the deluge -- the third witnessed by the state this year. He had also conducted an aerial survey of the flood-hit areas in Gonda, Bahraich and Balrampur districts.

The CM said on Saturday that for the past two weeks, owing to heavy rains in Nepal, the water levels in rivers Rapti and Burhi Rapti have increased, leading to the flooding of near-



by areas. Every effort is being made to provide help to the people of Domariyaganj and Naugarh tehsil.

"The life of every citizen is very valuable and the government stands with all citizens. The flood-affected people are being given 10 kg rice, 2 kg pulses, salt, wheat flour, spices, edible oil and other necessary things. The provision of fodder has also been made for animals," Adityanath said.

He said the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and other forces have been deployed for carrying out relief and rescue operations. Instructions have been given

that people should be provided nutritious food.

Adityanath directed officials to prepare a list of farmers whose crops were destroyed due to the floods and provide them financial assistance.

He said people whose houses were damaged in the floods would be provided new ones under the Mukhyamantri Awas Yojana.

"The flood-affected families are being provided ration and oral rehydration solutions (ORS) as they are vulnerable to ailments such as dehydration and diarrhoea due to flooding. Dry ration is being given and meals are being provided through community kitchens," he said. Snake venom antidote and anti-rabies vaccines are being supplied to the flooded areas, he also said.

The Chief Minister cautioned the people against spread of vector-borne and water-borne diseases once flood water recedes and appealed to them to join the State Government's special sanitation drive from September 5 to 12. **PTI**

Chipi Airport to put coastal Konkan on national air-map on Oct 7

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Come October 7, new Chipi Airport in Sindhudurg district of coastal Konkan region will go on the country's air-map. Chipi airport will be the 14th airport in Maharashtra.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will formally throw open the Chipi airport for air traffic on Tuesday. Initially, intra-state flights will be operated from this airport. Later on, the Chipi airport will offer inter-state connectivity to Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and a couple of other states.

After meeting the chief minister, Shiv Sena MP Vinayak Raut made a formal announcement about the inauguration of Chipi Airport on social media.

Constructed at a cost of Rs 520 crore under Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Transfer (DBFOT) model, the Chipi Airport -- first-ever airport constructed in the coastal



Konkan region --will initially offer flights to Mumbai, Pune, Nashik and Nagpur.

Incidentally, Sindhudurg where Chipi airport is located is the home district of BJP leader and current Union Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

More than two years ago, the then Chief Minister Devendra and the former Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu had inaugurated the new terminal building and other facilities at the Greenfield

Airport as flights under the UDAN scheme were expected to be launched from there. However, the launch of air traffic from the Chipi Airport was delayed afterwards.

The airport has a runway of 2500 metre length and 45 metre width, which can be extended by another 1,000 metres. The airport airport can handle up to 400 passengers or two flights per hour with an estimated annual capacity over a million passengers.

The airport can handle aircraft like A-320 and B-737 which would give a huge fillip to tourism in Konkan, known for its long and picturesque coastline, dazzling beaches, big and small rivers, creeks, abundant greenery and natural beauty, ancient temples, sea and land forts, a rich cultural heritage, unique lifestyle and major historical landmarks.

Developed by the IRB Sindhudurg Airport Pvt Ltd., a SPV, the Maharashtra

Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) is the nodal agency that facilitated and supervised the entire project.

The Chipi Airport is expected to create more job opportunities and give a boost to the regional economy, considering that the Maharashtra Government has announced plans to develop the coastal Konkan as a major tourist and business-cum-leisure travel hub.





# Taliban postpone Af Govt formation

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

The Taliban have postponed the formation of a new Government in Afghanistan for next week, their spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said on Saturday, as the insurgent group struggles to give shape to a broad-based and inclusive administration acceptable to the international community.

The insurgent group was expected to announce on Saturday the formation of the new Government in Kabul, likely to be led by the outfit's co-founder Mulla Abdul Ghani Baradar. This is the second that the Taliban have delayed the formation of the new government in Kabul since they seized Kabul on August 15.

"The announcement about the new Government and Cabinet members will now be made next week," Mujahid said without giving further details.

Khalil Haqqani, a member of a committee constituted by the Taliban to negotiate talks with different groups over the formation of the government, said the Taliban's bid to form a broad-based government in Kabul acceptable to the world, in fact, is causing the delay.

"The Taliban can form a government of their own but they are now focussing to have an administration in which all parties, groups and sections of the society have proper representation," he said, acknowledging that "the Taliban alone



will not be acceptable to the world."

Former Afghan premier and head of Jamiat e Islami Afghanistan Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and brother of former Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, who have announced their support to the Taliban, will be given representation in the Taliban government, he said.

The Taliban are also in the process of negotiating with other stakeholders to seek their support for their government, he added.

Earlier, sources said that Baradar, the Chairman of the Taliban's Political Office in Doha, Qatar, is likely to be the head of the Taliban government in Kabul.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Friday said that America and the international community expect the Taliban in Afghanistan to form an inclusive government with representations from different communities and fulfil its commitments like countering terrorism, respecting the rights of women and minorities and

not engaging in reprisal.

"As we've said and as countries around the world have said, there is an expectation that any government that emerges now will have some real inclusivity, and that it will have non-Talibs in it who are representative of different communities and different interests in Afghanistan," Blinken told reporters ahead of his important visit to Doha where the political office of the Taliban is based.

"The expectation is to see inclusivity in government, but ultimately the expectation is to see a government that makes good on commitments that the Taliban have made, particularly in freedom of travel, not allowing Afghanistan to be used as a launching ground for terrorism directed at the US or any of the allies and partners, upholding the basic rights of the Afghan people, including women and minorities, and not engaging in reprisals," Blinken said.

UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, who was in Pakistan on Friday, said the

Taliban had made a series of undertakings, "some of them are positive at the level of words" but there was a need to test whether they translated into deeds.

In New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said India's immediate focus in Afghanistan was to ensure that Afghan soil is not used for terrorist activities against it and it was still "very early days" to talk about any possible recognition of the Taliban.

Earlier this week, the envoy to Qatar Deepak Mittal held talks with a senior Taliban leader in Doha.

"We used the opportunity to convey our concerns whether it is in getting people out (from Afghanistan) or on the issue of terrorism. We received a positive response," Bagchi said.

Responding to a question about the recent meeting that India's Ambassador in Qatar had with a senior Taliban leader in Doha, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla, who was in Washington on Friday, said: "In our statement, we have said that we have told them that we want them to be cognizant of the fact that there should be no terrorism that emanates from their territory against us, or other countries; that we want them to be mindful of the status of women, minorities and so on so forth.

## Afghan woman activist thrashed by Taliban during Kabul protest: Report

**Kabul:** A woman activist who participated in a protest in Kabul seeking political rights under Taliban rule was seen in a video with a head injury, blood streaming down her face.

Activist Nargis Saddat alleged that she was beaten by the Taliban during a protest on Saturday led by women's rights activists. Tolo News reported that the Taliban prevented the marchers from continuing towards the presidential palace and lobbed tear gas on them. Women activists and the protesters said they wanted to protest in front of the gate of the Presidential Palace (ARG), but members of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan did not allow them to, reported The Khaama Press News Agency.

According to video clips shared on social media by journalists and other people, the Taliban used tear gas to disperse the all-women protest after they failed to do so after gunshots. As per the eyewitnesses, the Taliban opened gunshots to disperse the women and asked the journalists to leave the scene, reported The Khaama Press News Agency. Saturday's protest was the fourth all-women protest held in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover. Earlier protests were held in western Herat province and in the Afghan capital respectively. **ANI**



## UN chief to hold meeting on Af funding

**United Nations:** The United Nations chief will convene a ministerial meeting in Geneva on September 13 to seek a swift scale-up in funding to address the growing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, where nearly half the country's 38 million people need assistance.

U.N. Spokesman Stephane Dujarric made the announcement Friday and said Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will also appeal "for full and unimpeded humanitarian access to make sure Afghans continue to get the essential services they need."

Dujarric said the U.N. Appeal for USD1.3 billion for 2021 to help more than 18 million people is just 40per cent funded, leaving a USD766 million deficit.

"Afghanistan faces a looming humanitarian catastrophe," the U.N. Spokesman said.

"One in three Afghans do not know where their next meal will come from. Nearly half of all children under the age of 5 are predicted to be acutely malnourished in the next 12 months."

Earlier Friday, Dujarric said the secretary-general is "very grateful for the generosity" of Denmark, Kazakhstan, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Poland, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and the United States for making available facilities and transport for the temporary relocation of U.N. Staff in Afghanistan. **AP**

## US building small cities at bases for Afghan evacuees

**Washington:** US military bases housing Afghanistan evacuees are building their own city-type leadership organisations to deal with sanitation, food and other challenges as the numbers of Afghans coming into the U.S. grows.

Air Force General Glen VanHerck, who heads U.S. Northern Command, said there were more than 25,000 Afghan evacuees being housed at the eight bases as of Friday.

He acknowledged there have been problems as the bases grapple with language, cultural and other issues. He told Pentagon reporters that he's "building eight small cities, we're going to have challenges."

He said the bases have designated a military officer as a "mayor" to be in charge of a couple dorms or housing units and an Afghan counterpart who can communicate about any ongoing issues.

He said Northern Command has asked the Defense Department for additional linguists who are fluent and can speak with the Afghans.

The U.S. Military will eventually be able to house as many as 50,000 Afghanistan evacuees at the eight bases around the country and won't likely need to tap additional facilities, said VanHerck, who is also the head of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD).

Afghans at the bases are divided, with single males and single females in separate housing, and families walled off in their own sections where possible to provide privacy. So far, he said, there have been few problems with evacuees testing positive for COVID-19, and he has heard of no serious security problems.

A defense official said the number of Afghans at each of the eight bases will fluctuate over time, but as of Friday the approximate totals were: Fort McCoy, Wisc., 8,800; Fort Bliss, Texas, 6,200; Fort Lee, Va., 1,700; Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., 3,700; Holloman Air Force Base, N.M., 650; Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., 800; Fort Pickett, Va., 3,650 and Camp Atterbury, Ind., 65. **AP**

## US presses Pak to fight terror groups as Af crisis spirals: Leaked diplomatic documents

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

The Biden administration is quietly pressing Pakistan to cooperate on combating dreaded terrorist groups such as the ISIS-K and Al Qaeda following the Taliban takeover of

Afghanistan, according to a set of leaked documents and diplomatic cables to a prominent US media outlet.

The Dawn newspaper on Saturday carried a report quoting a news report published on Friday by the Politico on a slew

of diplomatic messages exchanged between Washington and Islamabad recently after the Taliban insurgents seized power in neighbouring Afghanistan.

The messages show that "the Biden administration is quietly pressing Pakistan to cooperate on fighting terrorist groups such as ISIS-Khorasan and Al Qaeda in the wake of the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan," the Politico, which obtained the sensitive but unclassified cables and other written materials, reported.

## Over 24 hours in Kabul, brutality, trauma, moments of grace

AP ■ KABUL

Bone-tired like everyone else in Kabul, Taliban fighters spent the last moments of the 20-year Afghanistan war watching the night skies for the flares that would signal the United States was gone. From afar, US generals watched video screens with the same anticipation.

Relief washed over the war's winners and the losers when the final US plane took off.

For those in between and left behind — possibly a major

ity of the allied Afghans who sought US clearance to escape — fear spread about what comes next, given the Taliban's history of ruthlessness and repression of women. And for thousands of US officials and volunteers working around the world to place Afghan refugees, there is still no rest.

As witnessed by The Associated Press in Kabul and as told by people The AP interviewed from all sides, the war ended with episodes of brutality, enduring trauma, a massive if fraught humanitarian effort and moments of grace.

Enemies for two decades were thrust into a bizarre collaboration, joined in a common goal — the Taliban and the United States were united in wanting the United States out. They wanted, too, to avoid another deadly terrorist attack. Both sides had a stake in making the last 24 hours work.

In that stretch, the Americans worried that extremists would take aim at the hulking, helicopter-swallowing transport planes as they lifted off with the last US troops and officials. Instead, in the green tint of night-vision goggles, the Americans looked down to goodbye waves from Taliban fighters on the tarmac.

The Taliban had worried that the Americans would rig the airport with mines. Instead the Americans left them with two useful fire trucks and functional front-end loaders along with a bleak panorama of self-

sabotaged US military machinery.

After several sleepless nights from the unrelenting thunder of US evacuation flights overhead, Hemad Sherzad joined his fellow Taliban fighters in celebration from his post at the airport.

"We cried for almost an hour out of happiness," Sherzad told The AP. "We yelled a lot — even our throat was in pain." In the Pentagon operations centre just outside Washington at the same time, you could hear a pin drop as the last C-17 took off. You could also hear sighs of relief from the top military officials in the room, even through COVID masks. President Joe Biden, determined to end the war and facing widespread criticism for his handling of the withdrawal, got the word from his national security adviser during a meeting with aides.

"I refused to send another generation of America's sons and daughters to fight a war that should have ended long ago," he said.

Gen Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was among those watching at the Pentagon. "All of us are conflicted with feelings of pain and anger, sorrow and sadness," he said later, "combined with pride and resilience."

It was a harrowing 24 hours, capped Monday by the final C-17 takeoff at 11:59 pm in Kabul.

## Afghan evacuation raises concerns about child trafficking

**Washington:**U.S. Officials are looking into reports that in the frantic evacuation of desperate Afghans from Kabul, older men were admitted together with young girls they claimed as "brides" or otherwise sexually abused.

U.S. Officials at intake centers in the United Arab Emirates and in Wisconsin have identified numerous incidents in which Afghan girls have been presented to authorities as the "wives" of much older men. While child marriage is not uncommon in Afghanistan, the U.S. has strict policies against human trafficking that include prosecutions for offenders and sanctions for countries that don't crack down on it.

One internal document seen by The Associated Press says the State Department has sought "urgent guidance" from other agencies after purported child brides were brought to Fort McCoy in Wisconsin. Another document, described to the AP by officials familiar with it, says Afghan girls at a transit site in Abu Dhabi have alleged they have been raped by older men they were forced to marry in order to escape Afghanistan.

The State Department had no immediate comment on the documents or the veracity of the details in them. Officials

say that they take all such allegations seriously but that many of them are anecdotal and difficult to prove, particularly amid the crush of Afghan evacuees at multiple locations in the Middle East, Europe and the United States.

An Aug. 27 situation report sent to all U.S. Embassies and consulates abroad as well as military command centers in Florida points to potential issues involving young girls and older men, some of whom claim to have more than one wife at Fort McCoy, a sprawling 60,000-acre (243-square-kilometer) Army base in Wisconsin. Relevant portions of the document, titled "Afghanistan Task Force SitRep No. 63," were obtained by the AP.

"Intake staff at Fort McCoy reported multiple cases of minor females who presented as married" to adult Afghan men, as well as polygamous families," the document says. "Department of State has requested urgent guidance."

There was no immediate indication from the military or from the departments of homeland security and health and human services, which run the facility, that such guidance had been received. **AP**

Public at large is hereby informed that my clients, **Sh. Ashok Kumar Arora**, **S/o. Sh. Chaman Lal** and his wife **Smt. Sunita Arora** both **R/o 288-289, 1st Floor, Pocket IV, Sec-22, Rohini, Delhi-86** have severed their relations with their son **Sh. Kunal Arora** and his wife namely **Smt. Kulvinder Kaur** since both are out of their control and my clients have debarred both of them from all their movable and immovable properties, any person dealing with any of them in future shall be doing so, at his own risk and consequences and my clients will not be responsible for their iota of act in any manner what-so-ever.

**Pardeep Saini (Advocate):** **Seat No-34, Hall No-2, Lawyer's Chamber Block, Dwarka Court Delhi-75**


### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I **NIRJA MUNSHI W/LATE RAVINDER MUNSHI**, residing at **H.No.118, NEAR HOLY CHILD PUBLIC SCHOOL, SECTOR- 29, FARIDABAD, HARYANA - 121008** declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as **RAJI MUNSHI** in my husband's J&K Migration Identity (Card Reg N.-8049). The actual name of mine is **NIRJA MUNSHI**, which may be amended accordingly.

### EASTERN RAILWAY

Open Tender No. 23-SDSTE-ASN-2021-22 dated 02.09.2021. Open e-tender is invited by Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom, Engineer, Eastern Railway, Asansol for the following works: **Name of Work/Location:** Asansol Division - Replacement of DSLAM at UDL. **Tender Value :** ₹ 14,40,190. **Date & Time of Closing of the tender :** 30.09.2021 at 13.00 hrs. **Website Particulars :** <http://www.irops.gov.in/> Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. The tender/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate & must be registered on IREPS portal. Only registered tender/bidders can participate in e-Tendering. **ASN-69/2021-22**

Tender Notice is also available at websites : [www.e.indianrailways.gov.in/](http://www.e.indianrailways.gov.in/) [www.irops.gov.in/](http://www.irops.gov.in/)

**RATHI BARS LIMITED**  
CIN: L74899DL1993PLC054781  
Registered Office : A-24/7, Mohan Co-Operative Industrial Estate, Mathura Road, New Delhi-110044  
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**NOTICE OF THE 28TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, E-VOTING INFORMATION AND BOOK CLOSURE**  
NOTICE is hereby given that the Twenty Eighth Annual General Meeting of the Company will be held on Wednesday, the 29th September, 2021 at 04.30 P.M. through virtual mode to transact the business as set out in the notice of the AGM.  
The Notice of the 28th AGM and Annual Report for the financial year 2020-21 has been sent to all the members electronically to the email addresses registered with the Company's Depository Participants and physical copies have not been sent due to Covid19 in compliance with statutory law. The dispatch of Notice and the Annual Report to all the Members has been completed on 06th September, 2021.  
A copy of the Notice and Annual Report is available on the Company's website i.e. [www.rathisteels.com](http://www.rathisteels.com) and can be downloaded from there. Members may also request for a copy by writing to the Company Secretary at [rathibars@hotmail.com](mailto:rathibars@hotmail.com) or at the registered office address of the Company.  
The Company is pleased to provide its Members, facility of remote e-voting, through electronic voting services provided by National Securities Depository Limited ("NSDL"). Members holding shares either in physical form or dematerialized form as on the cut-off date shall be entitled to remote e-voting. Voting through ballot paper shall also be made available at the AGM Venue and Members attending the AGM who have not cast their vote through remote e-voting shall be able to vote at AGM. Members who have cast their vote through remote e-voting prior to the AGM can attend the AGM but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again.  
The cut-off date for determining the eligibility of Members for voting through remote e-voting and voting at the AGM is Wednesday, 22nd September, 2021.  
Members holding shares as on cut-off date of September 22, 2021 (9:00 A.M. IST) may cast their vote electronically (e-voting) on all the businesses to be transacted at the 28th AGM through e-voting facility on the platform of National Securities Depository Limited ("NSDL") at [www.evoting.nsdl.com](http://www.evoting.nsdl.com). The e-voting period begins at 9:00 A.M., Sunday, September 26, 2021, and ends on Tuesday, September 28, 2021 at 5:00 P.M. The e-voting module shall be disabled by NSDL for voting thereafter. Once the vote is cast by the Member on a resolution, Member shall not be allowed to change the same simultaneously. Any person who acquires shares of the Company and becomes a Member of the Company after the dispatch of the AGM Notice and holding shares as on cut-off date, i.e. September 22nd, 2021 may obtain the User ID and Password by sending request to [evoting@nsdl.co.in](mailto:evoting@nsdl.co.in).  
In case of queries, members may refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Members and e-voting user manual for members at the Downloads Section of [www.evoting.nsdl.com](http://www.evoting.nsdl.com) or call on toll free number 1800222990.  
It is further notified that pursuant to Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 and Regulation 42 of the SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015, the Register of Members and Share Transfer Register of the Company shall remain closed from Thursday, 23rd September, 2021 to Wednesday 29th September, 2021 (both days inclusive) for the purpose of Annual General Meeting of the Company.

**By order of the Board For RATHI BARS LIMITED**  
**Sd/-,**  
**(Anurag Rathi)**  
**Managing Director**

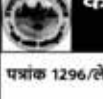
**Place : New Delhi**  
**Date : 06.09.2021**

**SUPRA INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES LTD.**  
Registered Office: 1212, Hemkunt Chambers, 89 Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019  
E-mail: [supra1985@gmail.com](mailto:supra1985@gmail.com) Website: [www.supraindustrialresources.in](http://www.supraindustrialresources.in)  
CIN-L65999DL1985PLC019987, Phone: 011- 26444556

**NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given that the 36th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the shareholders of the Company shall be held at the Registered Office of the company at 1212, Hemkunt Chambers, 89 Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019 on Thursday, 30th September 2021 at 04.30 P.M. to transact the business mentioned in the Notice convening the said AGM which has been sent by e-mail and courier on 04.09.2021 all the shareholders of the Company / depositories.  
Notice is further given pursuant to Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 10 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 and Regulation 42 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations 2015 that the Register of Members and Share Transfer Books of the Company shall remain closed from 24st September, 2021 till 30th September, 2021 (Both days inclusive) for the purpose of Annual General Meeting.  
In terms, Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 and Regulation 44 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations 2015, the Company is providing facility to its shareholders to enable them to cast their votes through electronic means on the items mentioned in the Notice. In connection with the E-voting at the AGM, we wish to notify the shareholders as under:-  
(1) The shareholders, holding shares as on 23.09.2021, being the cut-off date, may participate in the E-voting.  
(2) A person whose name is recorded in the register of members or in the register of beneficial owners maintained by the depositories as on the cut-off dated i.e. 23.09.2021 shall only be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting as well as voting in the Annual general Meeting by ballot papers.  
(3) Details of the manner of casting votes is mentioned in the leaflet annexed to the Notice of AGM, as sent to the Shareholders, which is also displayed on the website of the Company at [www.supraindustrialresources.in](http://www.supraindustrialresources.in) and shall be displayed on the website of the E-voting agency, M/s. Central Depository Services (India) Limited at <https://www.evotingindia.com>.  
(4) E-voting shall commence at 9.00 A.M. on 26.09.2021 & shall be available till 5.00 P.M. on 29.09.2021 and shall not be available thereafter.  
(5) Any person who becomes member of the Company after dispatch of the Notice of the Meeting and holding shares as of the cut off date i.e. 23.09.2021 may obtain the User ID and password under alias by sending a request at [evoting@cdslindia.com](mailto:evoting@cdslindia.com).  
The detailed procedure for obtaining User ID and password is also provided in the Notice of the meeting which is available on Company's website and CDSDL website. If the member is already registered with CDSDL for e-voting, he can use his existing User ID and password for casting the vote through remote e-voting.  
(6) Kindly note that once you cast your vote through E-voting, you cannot modify your vote or vote on poll at the AGM. However, you may attend the AGM and participate in the discussions.  
(7) The facility for voting through ballot papers shall be made available at the Annual General Meeting and the members attending the Annual General Meeting who have not casted their votes by remote e-voting shall be able to vote at the Annual General Meeting through Ballot Papers.  
(8) In case of any query pertaining to E-voting, please visit Help & FAQ's section available at CDSDL website [www.evotingindia.com](http://www.evotingindia.com)  
(9) The members are requested to note the following contact details for addressing e-voting queries / grievances:  
All grievances connected with the facility for voting by electronic means may be addressed to Mr. Rakesh Dalvi, Sr. Manager, (CDSL) Central Depository Services (India) Limited, A Wing, 25th Mill Compounds, N.M. Joshi Marg, Lower Parel (East), Mumbai-400013 or send an email to [helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com](mailto:helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com) or call

**By Order of the Board Sd/-**  
**Rajat Agarwal**  
**Director**

**Place: New Delhi**  
**Date: 04.09.2021**

**कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता (दक्षिण) उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान**  
32-राजपुर रोड, देहरादून। फोन 0135-2742028 ईमेल :- [eesouth-ujss-uk@nic.in](mailto:eesouth-ujss-uk@nic.in)

**पत्रांक 1296/लेखा/ई-निविदा/2021-22 ई-निविदा सूचना दिनांक : 04 सितम्बर 2021**

**मुख्य महाप्रबन्धक, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान की ओर से निम्न कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा, टू-बिड सिस्टम (तकनीकी बिड एवं वित्तीय बिड) के आधार पर निम्नानुसार आमंत्रित की जाती है :-**

S. No.	Name of Work	Cost of Tender	Time & Date for Downloading the Bid	Last Date for Online Submission of Bid	Earnest Money	Bid Opening Date
1	देहरादून शहर के सहारनपुर चौक से लाल पुल तक पाईप लाईन का कार्य	Rs. 4000.00 +G.S.T. @18%	06-09-2021 from 11.00 A.M.	20-09-2021 upto 5.00 P.M.	Rs. 90000.00	21-09-2021 at 3.00 P.M.
2	डोमालबाबा जून के अन्तर्गत इन्दिरा कॉलोनी क्षेत्र में पाईप लाईन का कार्य	Rs. 5000.00 +G.S.T. @18%	06-09-2021 from 11.00 A.M.	20-09-2021 upto 5.00 P.M.	Rs. 140000.00	21-09-2021 at 3.00 P.M.

**शर्त :-**  
1. निविदा प्रपत्र की उपलब्धता तथा ई-टेंडरिंग की प्रक्रिया की समस्त जानकारी वेबसाइट [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in) पर देखी जा सकती है।  
2. निविदा प्रपत्र दिनांक 06.09.2021 को प्रातः 11.00 बजे से दिनांक 20.09.2021 को सायं: 05.00 बजे तक डाउनलोड / अपलोड किया जा सकता है।  
3. तकनीकी बिड खोले जाने की तिथि 21.09.2021 को सायं 03.00 बजे निर्धारित है।  
4. Only Registered contractors/Firms of Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan registered in minimum "C-Class" for above work (Pipeline Work) category will be allowed to take part in the tender. Tenderer must have adequate experience of work of similar nature, in a Govt. Department or Govt. Organization/Undertaking.  
5. ई-निविदा हेतु प्रिबिड मीटिंग हेतु तिथि 10.09.2021 को अधिशासी अभियन्ता (दक्षिण) कार्यालय, 32-राजपुर रोड, देहरादून में प्रातः 11.30 बजे निर्धारित है।  
6. निविदा प्रपत्र हेतु निविदादाता को डिजिटल हस्ताक्षर प्रमाणपत्र (डीनएससीए) किसी प्रमाणित / प्राधिकृत संस्था द्वारा निर्गत किया होना आवश्यक है।  
7. उपरोक्त निविदा सूचना में यदि कोई संशोधन किया जाता है तो संशोधित निविदा सूचना सीधे वेबसाइट [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in) पर ही अपलोड की जायेगी। संशोधित निविदा सूचना का प्रकाशन समाचार पत्र में नहीं किया जायेगा।  
8. किसी भी निविदा अथवा समस्त निविदाओं को बिना कारण बताये निरस्त करने का अधिकार विभाग में निहित है।  
9. शेष विस्तृत समस्त नियम एवं शर्त निविदा प्रपत्र में देखी जा सकती है।

**जल संवय-जीवन संवय****अधिशासी अभियन्ता (दक्षिण)**



# Equities likely to rise further but valuations cast a concern

■ MUMBAI

Persistent foreign capital inflows on the back of buoyant global cues as well as domestic macros are expected to further accelerate the rise of India's key stock indices in the upcoming week.

Accordingly, FPIs expect an accelerated economic recovery in India based on healthy macro numbers and monsoon rains.

They now await July industrial production figures slated to be released next Friday.

However, market observers cited high valuations along with chances of profit bookings as key factors that can cap gains and flare up volatility.

Last week, India's benchmark indices registered strong gains aided by positive global cues, encouraging macro data and FPI inflows.

Consequently, both the NSE Nifty50 and S&P BSE Sensex closed the week at record high levels.The Sensex rose 3.6 per cent and the Nifty gained 3.7 per cent over last week, its second consecutive weekly gain and the largest in seven months.

"US payrolls data has come in much below expectations, fuelling anticipations that the

US Fed will keep providing enough stimulus to revive the US economy," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

"This could support FPI inflows into the emerging markets, including India. Nifty could take support from 17,153 while 17,480 could act as a resistance in the near term," he added.

Lately, strong liquidity has boosted the domestic market with FPIs pumping in ₹6,800 crore in the last few sessions.

"Going ahead, the market is likely to continue with its positive momentum as economic recovery and vaccination continue their northward journey. However, valuations are also moving beyond the comfort zones and hence could lead to bouts of profit-booking and increase in volatility," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head, Retail Research, Broking and Distribution, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

"Large caps offer better margin of safety in the current environment and could continue to remain in focus in the near term as well," he added.

Recent data points such as GDP, PMI and GST collections have indicated a healthy economic recovery.

# India for early outcome of TRIPS waiver for Covid vax, diagnostics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has pitched for an early Outcome of the TRIPS waiver proposal for Covid-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), an official release said on Saturday.

Addressing a meeting, which was attended by trade and economic ministers of BRICS countries on Friday, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal also stressed on finding a permanent, adequate and equitable solution to the Public Stock Holding programmes for food security purposes; early outcome of the

TRIPS Waiver proposal for vaccines," the release said. In October 2020, India and South Africa had submitted the first proposal, suggesting a waiver for all WTO

asked for adoption of emerging new technologies in a swiftly changing world while finding solutions to the challenges of data protection and cyber security; and ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns. The Minister "emphasised, amongst other things, on the need for a permanent, adequate and equitable solution to the Public Stock Holding programmes for food security purposes; early outcome of the

(World Trade Organisation) members on the implementation of certain provisions of the TRIPs Agreement in relation to the prevention, containment or treatment of Covid-19.In May this year, a revised proposal was submitted by 62 co-sponsors, including India, South Africa, and Indonesia.

The agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights or TRIPs came into effect in January 1995. It is a multilateral agreement on intellectual property (IP) rights such as copyright, industrial designs, patents and protection of undisclosed information or trade secrets.

# Dr Reddy's inks pact with Citius Pharma to sell all rights to anti-cancer agent E7777

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Dr Reddy's Laboratories on Saturday said it has inked a pact with US-based Citius Pharmaceuticals to sell its rights to an anti-cancer agent.

The drug firm said it has entered into a definitive agreement with Citius to sell all of its rights to E7777 (an engineered IL-2-diphtheria toxin fusion protein) and certain related assets.

Under the terms of agreement, Dr Reddy's will receive USD 40 million upfront upon the closing of the transaction, followed by approval milestone payment of up to USD 40 million related to the CTCL (cutaneous T-cell lymphoma) indication approval and up to USD 70 million for additional indication approvals, the

# Supertech to file review petition against SC order; twin towers built as per law: Chairman RK Arora

New Delhi:Realty firm Supertech Ltd on Saturday said it will file a review petition against the Supreme Court order to demolish the company's twin 40-storey towers in Noida while asserting that the buildings were constructed as per the bye-laws with approval of the competent authority.

Last week, the apex court had ordered to demolish the twin 40-storey towers, which are part of the Supertech's Emerald Court project in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. "While we respect the Hon'ble Supreme Court order, we have decided to re-present the mat-

ter before the Hon'ble Supreme Court in a review application as the towers were constructed as per the approval of the competent authority conforming to the Building bye-laws," Supertech Chairman R K Arora said.

He said in a statement that the Apex and Ceyane towers are not linked to or part of any ongoing project of the company.Supertech group is developing 10 crore sq ft across its projects, while Apex and Ceyane towers only constitute a mere 6 lakh sq.ft which is 0.6 per cent of the total portfolio, he added. **PTI**

# CIL launches software for better assessment of coal resources

New Delhi:State-owned CIL on Saturday said it has launched a software which will help in identifying thin coal seams under the earth crust and improve assessment of resources of fossil fuel using seismic survey during exploration process. The launch of software assumes significance as the present seismic survey techniques for coal resource exploration have their limitations in identifying the thin coal seams under the earth, which will now be possible as this new software helps in enhancing resolution of seismic signals. **PTI**

# Infosys Foundation inaugurates Silver Jubilee Block at Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Infosys Foundation on Saturday announced the inauguration of the Silver Jubilee Block at Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Pavagada, in Karnataka.

The philanthropic arm of Infosys provided a grant of Rs 5.5 crore towards the construction and development of this block, which will aim to provide ophthalmology and ENT services, among other healthcare facilities, to patients, according to a statement.

The block was inaugurated virtually by Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu.The grant from Infosys Foundation was utilised to construct this block, which will accommodate special units for eye care, two operating theatres for surgical procedures, a high-tech diagnostic centre, an ENT centre and a cancer clinic, the statement said.

In addition, part of the grant was also used to procure

necessary medical equipment, furniture, computers, and air conditioners required for operation theatres, it added.

This Silver Jubilee Block will aim to facilitate almost 4,000 surgeries and benefit a minimum of 30,000 outpatients every year.

"Infosys Foundation always tries to do its best towards those who are in need. This hospital and its services will aim to help thousands of underprivileged patients in the country," Infosys Foundation Chairperson Sudha Murty said.

Swami Jagananda, president of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama added that providing proper treatment to help underprivileged patients receive quality healthcare, will play a big role towards the development of healthcare services in the country. The initiative adds to Infosys Foundation's efforts to expand hospital and quarantine facilities and ensure proper medical treatment for the public.



**SIMBHAOLI SUGARS LIMITED**  
**(CIN: L15122UP2011PLC044210)**  
**Registered Office:** Simbhaoli - 245 207, District Hapur, Uttar Pradesh)  
**Phone:** 0120-4806666, **Fax:** 0120-2427166  
**Email:** kamal@simbhaolisugars.com; **Website:** www.simbhaolisugars.com;

**NOTICE**

**NOTICE OF THE 10th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, E-VOTING AND BOOK CLOSURE**

**Annual General Meeting:**

NOTICE is hereby given that the Tenth (10th) Annual General Meeting ("AGM" or "Meeting") of the Members of Simbhaoli Sugars Limited (the "Company") will be held on Monday, September 27, 2021 at 12:30 p.m. (IST) through Video Conference ("VC") / Other Audio Visual Means ("OAVM"), to transact the business as set out in the Notice of the AGM. In accordance with the General Circulars issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs dated April 8, 2020, April 13, 2020, May 5, 2020 and January 13, 2021 (collectively referred to as "MCA Circulars") and the Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI") Circulars dated May 12, 2020 and January 15, 2021, the Company has sent the Notice of the 10th AGM along with the Annual Report 2020-21, through electronic mode only, to those Members whose e-mail addresses are registered with the Company or Registrar & Transfer Agent ("Registrar") and Depositories. The requirement of sending physical copies of the Notice of the AGM has been dispensed with vide MCA Circulars and the SEBI Circulars.

The e-copy of the Notice of the AGM along with the Annual Report for the FY 2020-21 of the Company will be available on the website of the Company at <https://www.simbhaolisugars.com>, on the website of the BSE Limited at <https://www.bseindia.com> and the National Stock Exchange of India Limited at <https://www.nseindia.com>.

**Remote e-Voting:**

In compliance with Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 ("the Act") read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended from time to time, the Secretarial Standard on General Meetings (SS-2) issued by the Institute of Company Secretaries of India and Regulation 44 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations 2015, the Company is providing e-voting facility to its members holding shares as on Monday, September 20, 2021 being cut off date, to exercise their vote at the ensuing AGM. The Members may cast their vote by using an electronic voting system from a place other than that of the venue of AGM (e-voting). The Company has engaged NSDL to provide remote e-voting facility. The details pursuant to the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 and rules thereof are as under:

1. The remote e-Voting facility will be available during the following period:

Commencement of remote e-Voting	Thursday, September 23, 2021 (9:00 a.m. IST)
Conclusion of remote e-Voting	Sunday, September 26, 2021 (5:00 p.m. IST)

The voting through electronic means shall not be allowed beyond 05:00 p.m. on September 26, 2021. The businesses set out in the Notice of AGM, may be transacted through e-voting or e-voting facility at the AGM.

2. The voting rights of Members shall be in proportion to their shares of the paid up equity share capital of the Company as on the cut-off date i.e. 20th September, 2021. The facility of remote e-Voting system shall also be made available during the Meeting and the Members attending the Meeting, who have not already cast their vote by remote e-Voting shall be able to exercise their right during the Meeting. A person whose name is recorded in the Register of Members / Register of Beneficial Owners as on the cut-off date only shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-Voting before / during the AGM. Members who have cast their vote by remote e-Voting prior to the Meeting may also attend the Meeting electronically, but shall not be entitled to vote again.

3. A Non-individual shareholder or shareholder holding securities in physical mode, who acquires shares of the Company and becomes a Member of the Company after the despatch of the Notice and holds shares as on the cut-off date, may obtain the User ID and Password for e-Voting by sending a request at [evoting@nsdl.co.in](mailto:evoting@nsdl.co.in). However, if the Member is already registered with NSDL for remote e-Voting then he/she can use his/her existing User ID and password for casting the vote.

4. Individual shareholders holding securities in electronic mode and who acquires shares of the Company and becomes a Member of the Company after despatch of the Notice and holds shares as of the cut-off date may follow the login process mentioned in the Notice of the AGM.

Members can also login by using the existing login credentials of the demat account held through Depository Participant registered with National Securities Depository Limited ("NSDL") or Central Depository Services Limited ("CDSL") for e-voting facility.

5. A person who is not a Member as on the cut-off date should treat the Notice of the AGM for information purposes only.

6. Mr. Sandeep Joshi, (Practicing Company Secretary/COP No. 20884), has been appointed as the Scrutinizer to scrutinize the voting and remote e-voting process in a fair and transparent manner.

7. In case of any queries/grievances pertaining to remote e-Voting (before / during the AGM), you may refer to the Frequently Asked Questions for shareholders and e-Voting user manual for shareholders available in the "Downloads" section of [www.evoting.nsdl.com](http://www.evoting.nsdl.com) or call NSDL on the toll-free number: 1800 1020 990/1800 224 430 or send a request at [evoting@nsdl.co.in](mailto:evoting@nsdl.co.in) or contact Mr. Amit Vishal or Ms. Pallavi Whatre from NSDL at the designated e-mail IDs: [evoting@nsdl.co.in](mailto:evoting@nsdl.co.in) or [amitv@nsdl.co.in](mailto:amitv@nsdl.co.in) or [pallavi@nsdl.co.in](mailto:pallavi@nsdl.co.in).

Helpdesk for Individual Shareholders holding securities in electronic mode for any technical issues related to login through Depository i.e. NSDL and CDSL:

Login Type	Helpdesk details
Securities with NSDL	Members facing any technical issue in login can contact NSDL helpdesk by sending a request at <a href="mailto:evoting@nsdl.co.in">evoting@nsdl.co.in</a> or call at toll free no.: 1800 1020 990 or 1800 224 430
Securities with CDSL	Members facing any technical issue in login can contact CDSL helpdesk by sending a request at <a href="mailto:helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com">helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com</a> or contact at 022-23058738 or 022-23058542 / 43

**Book Closure**

The Register of Members and the Share Transfer Books of the Company will remain closed from Tuesday, September 21, 2021 to Monday, September 27, 2021 (both days inclusive) for the purpose of 10th AGM.

**For Simbhaoli Sugars Limited**

**Sd/-**  
**Kamal Samtani**  
**Company Secretary**  
**Membership No. FCS-5140**

**Place: Noida**  
**Date: September 04, 2021**

**CROSS COUNTRY HOTELS LIMITED**

Regd. Off.: Cross Country Heritage Hotel, Mukand Garh Fort, Mukundgarh, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan India-333 705 CIN: L55101RJ1990PLC013744 Email Id: [sales@crosscountry.co.in](mailto:sales@crosscountry.co.in) Website: [www.crosscountry.co.in](http://www.crosscountry.co.in) Tel No. 011-65801008

**NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that 31<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting ("AGM") for the year ended, 31.03.2021 of Members of the company will be held on Thursday, the 30<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2021 at 11.00 A.M. at Shri Ashvinayak Dham, Dunlond road Railway Station Mukandgarh Dist. Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan to transact the business as set forth in the Notice of the Meeting. Pursuant to Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 and rules made there under and Clause 16 of the Listing Agreement with Stock Exchange, Notice is also given that the Register of Members and Share Transfer Register shall remain closed from Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2021 to Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 (both days inclusive) for the purpose of the Annual General Meeting.

<b>Place: New Delhi</b> <b>Date: 04.09.2021</b>	<b>By the order of the Board</b> For Cross Country Hotels Limited	<b>(Ishan Rai Juneja)</b> <b>(Director)</b> <b>DIN: 06410313</b>
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**CROSS COUNTRY HOTELS LIMITED**

Regd. Off.: Cross Country Heritage Hotel, Mukand Garh Fort, Mukundgarh, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, India-333 705 CIN: L55101RJ1990PLC013744 Email Id: [sales@crosscountry.co.in](mailto:sales@crosscountry.co.in) Website: [www.crosscountry.co.in](http://www.crosscountry.co.in) Tel No. 011-65801008

**NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that 30<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting ("AGM") for the year ended, 31.03.2020 of Members of the company (which had been convened on Monday, the 30<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2021 at 11.00 A.M. and was adjourned due to lack of presentation of quorum within half an hour from the appointed time for holding AGM) will hold on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 at 11.00 A.M. at Shri Ashvinayak Dham, Dunlond road Railway Station Mukandgarh Dist. Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan to transact the business as set forth in the Notice of the Meeting.

<b>Place: New Delhi</b> <b>Date: 04.09.2021</b>	<b>By the order of the Board</b> For Cross Country Hotels Limited	<b>(Ishan Rai Juneja)</b> <b>(Director)</b> <b>DIN: 06410313</b>
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**BARAK VALLEY CEMENTS LIMITED**

CIN: L01403AS1999PLC005741

**Regd. Office:** Debendra Nagar, Jhoombasti, P.O. Badarpurghat, Badarpurghat, Distt. Karimganj, Assam-788803

**E-mail:** [cs@barakcement.com](mailto:cs@barakcement.com), [www.barakcement.com](mailto:www.barakcement.com)

Phone: 03843-269258/881, Fax: 91-3843-269965

**NOTICE OF 22<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, E-VOTING INFORMATION AND BOOK CLOSURE**

NOTICE is hereby given that the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the members of Barak Valley Cements Limited will be held on **Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 at 02:00 P.M.** at the registered office of the Company situated at Debendra Nagar, Jhoombasti, P.O. Badarpurghat, Badarpurghat, Distt. Karimganj, Assam-788803 to transact the businesses as set forth in the notice of AGM.

The Annual Report of the Company for the Financial Year 2020-21 along with the Notice of the AGM has been sent to the members at their registered address by courier and electronically to those members who have registered their e-mail address with the Company.

In compliance with Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management & Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended and Regulation 44 of the SEBI (Listing Obligation & Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the Company is pleased to provide the e-voting facility to all its members enabling them to cast their vote electronically for all the resolutions as set out in the AGM Notice through the e-voting services provided by National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL). Thus, all the members holding shares either in physical or dematerialized form as on the cut-off date i.e. **Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2021** may cast their vote electronically.

**All the members are hereby informed that:-**

a) The e-voting period commences on **Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 (9:00 A.M. IST)** and ends on **Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 (5:00 P.M. IST)** for all the shareholders whether holding shares in physical form or in demat form. The E-voting module shall be disabled by NSDL for voting thereafter and the e-voting shall not be allowed beyond the said time and date;

b) Members may note that:-

- The facility for voting through ballot paper shall be made available at the AGM.
- A person whose name is recorded in the Register of Members/ Beneficial Owners, as on the cut-off date i.e. **22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2021**, shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting as well as voting in the Annual General Meeting.
- The members who have casted their vote by remote e-voting prior to the meeting may also attend the meeting but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again.

c) Investors, who became members of the Company subsequent to the dispatch of the Notice/E-mail and hold the shares as on the cut-off date, are requested to send written / e-mail communication to the Company's RTA [admin@mcregistrars.com](mailto:admin@mcregistrars.com) by mentioning their Folio No./DPID/Client ID to obtain Login-id & Password for e-voting.

d) The Members may view the notice of the aforesaid meeting at the Company's website [www.barakcement.com](http://www.barakcement.com).

Notice is further given that pursuant to the provisions of Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 10 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 and Regulation 42 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirement) Regulations, 2015 the Register of Members and Share Transfer Books of the Company will remain closed from **Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2021 to Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2021** (both days inclusive) for the purpose of conducting the 22nd Annual General Meeting of the Company.

In case of any queries / grievances regarding e-voting, members may contact **Ms. Soni Singh (Assistant Manager), NSDL Trade World, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, A Wing, Kamala Mills Compound, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel (W), Mumbai- 400013 at the designated e-mail ID: [evoting@nsdl.co.in](mailto:evoting@nsdl.co.in) or at telephone no. 022-24994545 or toll free no. 1800-1020-990 and 1800-22-44-30.**

**For BARAK VALLEY CEMENTS LIMITED**

**Sd/-**  
**(Kamakhya Chamarlia)**  
**Vice Chairman and Managing Director**

**Place : New Delhi**  
**Date : 04.09.2021**

**SIDH AUTOMOBILES LIMITED**

R-13, S/F GREATER KAILASH-I, NEW DELHI -110048 CIN: L34102DL1985PLC020156

**Email:** [sidhindia1985@gmail.com](mailto:sidhindia1985@gmail.com); **Website:** [www.sidhgroup.in](http://www.sidhgroup.in) **Tel No.:** 011-41053325

**NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, E-VOTING AND BOOK CLOSURE**

Notice is hereby given that the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of the Members of SIDH AUTOMOBILES LIMITED ("the Company") is scheduled to be held on Thursday, September 30, 2021 at 1.00 P.M at R-13, S/F Greater Kailash-I, New Delhi -110048 to transact the businesses as set out in Notice convening the AGM of the Company.

The dispatch of the notice of AGM, inter alia indicating the process and manner of remote e-voting, along with attendance slip and proxy form, has been completed on September 4, 2021, to the Members whose names appear in the Register of Members/List of beneficiaries received from the depositories in the following manner:

- Through email to the Members who have registered their email ID; and
- Through post to other Members who have not registered their email ID.

In terms of Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 (the "Act") read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended, and Regulation 44 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 (the "Listing Regulations") and Secretarial Standard on General Meetings (SS2) issued by the Institute of Company Secretaries of India, the Company is providing the facility to its Members to exercise their right to vote by electronic means on any or all of the businesses specified in the Notice convening the AGM of the Company (remote e-voting), through e-voting services of Central Depository Services (India) Limited ("CDSL"). The details pursuant to the Act and Rules made thereunder are as under:

- Members holding shares either in physical form or in dematerialized form and whose name is recorded in the register of members or in the register of beneficial owners maintained by the depositories, as on the cut-off date, i.e. September 23, 2021 ("eligible Members"), shall be entitled to exercise their right to vote by remote e-voting as well as voting to be held at AGM on any or all of the businesses specified in the Notice convening the AGM of the Company;
- the remote e-voting will commence on Monday, September 27, 2021 at 09:00 a.m.;
- the remote e-voting will end on Wednesday, September 29, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.;
- the remote e-voting module shall be disabled for voting thereafter and voting through electronic means shall not be allowed thereafter. Once the vote on a resolution is cast by a Member, the Member shall not be allowed to change it subsequently;
- Members may note that:
  - the facility for voting through ballot paper shall be made available at the AGM and the members attending the meeting who have not casted their vote by remote e-voting shall be able to exercise their rights at the meeting through ballot paper;
  - A member may participate in the AGM even after exercising his right to vote through remote e-voting but shall not be allowed to vote at the AGM.
- In case a person has become a Member of the Company after the dispatch of the AGM Notice but on or before the cut-off date-i.e. September 23, 2021, may obtain the login ID and password by sending request at [helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com](mailto:helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com)
- A person, whose name is recorded in the register of Members or in the register of Beneficial owners maintained by the depositories as on cut-off date only shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting as well as voting at the AGM through ballot paper.
- In case of any queries, you may refer to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for members and e-voting user manual for members available at the Download sections of <http://www.evoting.com> or contact Mr. Mehbob Lakhani, Assistant Manager at [helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com](mailto:helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com) or call at 1800-200-5533/+91-22-23058543 at CDSL, Marathon Futurex, A-Wing, 25th floor, NM Joshi Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai 400013.
- The Board of Directors has appointed Ms. Teena Rani, Practicing Company Secretary appointed as Scrutinizer to scrutinize the voting through Remote e-voting and Insta Poll process in a fair and transparent manner.
- The Register of members and Share Transfer Books of the Company will remain closed from Friday, September 24, 2021 to Monday, September 30, 2021 (both days inclusive) for the purpose of AGM.

Members may go through the Notice for the AGM for detailed process and manner on remote e-voting. Any grievances or queries of the Members of the Company, connected with the electronic voting, can be addressed as per the details provided above or may write to the Company Secretary at the Registered Office of the Company.

The Notice convening the AGM and other relevant documents will be available on the website of the Company at [www.sidhgroup.in](http://www.sidhgroup.in) and the website of CDSL at [evoting@cdslindia.com](http://evoting@cdslindia.com).

**By the order of the Board**

**For SIDH AUTOMOBILES LIMITED**

**Sd/-**  
**ANIL SHARMA**  
**Director**  
**DIN: 02928210**

**Date : 04.09.2021**  
**Place : New Delhi**

**UJVN Limited**

H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006

Telephones: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2763508

CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: [www.ujvn.com](http://www.ujvn.com)

**RO No. 640 TENDER NOTICE Dated : 04.09.2021**

Office of Executive Engineer (Maint.), Khodri Power Station, Dakpathar (Dehradun), invites tenders for following supply & work :  
Tender No.05/EE(Maint.)/Khodri 2021-22-- Supply & Installation of various sizes Gate Valve, of Unit No. 3 and 4 of Khodri power station.  
Estimated Cost: Rs. 10,46,800/-  
Date of availability of bid documents : 04.09.2021(18:00 Hrs)  
Last date for submission of Tender : 27.09.2021 (upto 16:00 Hrs.).  
For further details and downloading of the tender documents kindly visit our Nigam's website "www.ujvn.com"

**Executive Engineer(Maintenance)**

**"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"**

**MY MONEY SECURITIES LIMITED**

REGD. OFF : 10-A, UNDERHILL LANE, CIVIL LINES DELHI-110054

CIN : L67120DL1992PLC047890; Website: [www.mymoneyviews.com](http://www.mymoneyviews.com);  
E-mail id : [mymoneyviews@outlook.com](mailto:mymoneyviews@outlook.com), Tel No. : 011-23937870; Fax No. : 011-23924241

**Information regarding 30<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting and Record Date**

Notice is hereby given that he 30<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of the company will be held through Video Conferencing ("VC") / Other Audio Visual means ("OAVM") on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 at 12.30 P.M to transact the business set out in the notice convening the said AGM.

In view of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic and considering the social distancing norms, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs ("MCA") has vide General Circular No. 02/2021 dated 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2021 read with General Circular No. 14/2020 dated 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2020, General Circular No. 17/2020 dated 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 and General Circular No. 20/2020 dated 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2020 (collectively referred to as "MCA Circulars") permitted holding of AGM through VC/OAVM. In compliance with applicable provisions of Companies Act, 2013 ("Act") and Rules framed thereunder and the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, as amended ("SEBI Listing Regulations") and MCA Circulars, the AGM of the Company is being held through VC/OAVM. In accordance with the provisions of the MCA Circulars and Circular no.SEBI/HO/CFO/MD2/CIR/P/2021/11 dated 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2021 read with Circular No. SEBI/HO/CFO/MD1/CIR/P/2020/79 dated 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2020 issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India, the Notice of 30<sup>th</sup> AGM and Annual Report for the financial year 2020- 21 is being sent only by electronic mode to those Members whose email addresses are registered with the Company (Depository Participant(s)). The Notice of AGM and Annual Report for financial year 2020-21 will be available on the website of the Company at [www.mymoneyviews.com](http://www.mymoneyviews.com), website of stock exchange BSE Limited ([www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com)) and the website of National Securities Depository Limited ("NSDL") (agency for providing the Remote e-Voting facility)-[www.evoting.nsdl.com](http://www.evoting.nsdl.com). In compliance with the provisions of Section 108 of the Act and Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended and Regulation 44 of the SEBI Listing Regulations, the Company is pleased to provide the Members, facility to cast their votes electronically through Remote E-Voting and E-voting during the AGM in respect of all the businesses to be transacted at the AGM. The Company has engaged services of NSDL for providing E-voting platform. The detailed procedure to cast vote using e-voting system of NSDL has been described in the Notice of AGM.

All the Members are informed that;

- the business set out in the Notice calling the AGM may be transacted through voting by electronic means only;
- Register of members & Share Transfer Books of the company will remain closed from Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 to Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 (both days inclusive) for the purpose of taking record of the shareholders at the Annual General Meeting;
- Remote E-voting facility shall commence from Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. and will end at the meeting, 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. Remote E-voting will not be allowed beyond the aforesaid date and time and the Remote E-voting module shall be disabled by NSDL upon expiry of aforesaid period;
- Voting rights shall be reckoned on the paid-up value of shares registered in the name of the Member/ beneficial owner as on the cut-off date i.e. 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2021;
- Any person who becomes a Member of the Company after dispatch of this Notice and holding shares as on the cut-off date i.e.19<sup>th</sup> September, 2021, may obtain the User ID and password for Remote E-voting by sending a request at [evoting@nsdl.co.in](mailto:evoting@nsdl.co.in) or [info@masserv.com](mailto:info@masserv.com);
- Members who have cast their vote by remote E-voting may participate in AGM but shall not be entitled to cast vote again through E-voting during the AGM. Members participating in AGM and had not cast their vote through Remote E-Voting can cast/their vote through E-voting during the AGM;
- The Members whose names appear in the Register of Members' list of beneficial owners maintained by the depositories as on the cut-off date i.e. 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2021, only shall be entitled to avail the facility of Remote E-voting as well as E-voting during AGM.

Since the AGM is being held through VC/OAVM, physical attendance of Members has been dispensed with and accordingly, the facility for appointment of proxies by the Shareholders is not available for the Meeting. However, Corporate Shareholders can authorize representative(s) to attend the Meeting and are requested to send a certified copy of the Board Resolution authorizing their representative or the authority letter or power of attorney of the board of directors or other governing body of the body corporate authorizing their representative to attend and vote on their behalf at the meeting, through email at [mymoneyviews@outlook.com](mailto:mymoneyviews@outlook.com). In case you have not registered your email ID with the Company Depository, please follow below instructions to register your email ID for obtaining annual report for FY 2020-2021 and login details for e-voting :

<b>Physical Holding</b>	Send a request to Registrar and Transfer Agents of the Company, MAS Services Limited at <a href="mailto:info@masserv.com">info@masserv.com</a> providing Folio number, Name of the shareholder, scanned copy of the share certificate (Front and Back), PAN. (Self attested scanned copy of PAN Card), AADHAR. (Self attested scanned copy of Aadhar Card) for registering email address.
<b>Demat Holding</b>	Please send your bank detail with original cancelled cheque to our RTA (i.e. MAS Services Limited, T-34 2nd floor, Okhla industrial area Phase-II, New Delhi 110020 alongwith letter mentioning folio no. if not registered already.) <b>PLEASE UPDATE THE SAME ON OR BEFORE 19/09/2021</b>
	<p><b>For and on behalf of the Board</b></p> <p><b></b></p>



# YEAR-22, COVID-22

The world has yet to recover from the new variants of Delta, which is keeping the Governments and citizens across the globe on their toes and looking for ways to avoid the next wave. And now, there is talk of COVID-22. The new strain might be a combination of the variants Delta, Beta and Gamma. SUPRIYA RAMESH speaks with experts to bring you a report on this strain and how lethal it is going to be



New Year, new SARS CoV-2 variant. The 2022 year may come up with a super variant — COVID-22. This, experts say, could be even deadlier than the existing one. We need to gear up the vaccination game as unvaccinated people could be the potential super spreaders.

The term ‘COVID-22’ flared on Twitter after a Swedish immunologist mentioned it in an interview with a German newspaper, Blick last week. It is being said that the new strain would make up for a deadlier combination of Delta, Beta and Gamma variants and it is highly impossible to escape the new strain.

Dr Sandeep Nayar, Senior Director and HOD, Centre for Chest and Respiratory Disease, BLK Max Super Speciality Hospital, quoting the interview says, “COVID is such a notorious virus, by the time we come to know about one variant, another variant starts playing with us. Now we have got a highly infectious and scarier variant that is COVID-22. The virus is not going to stop mutating and there’s also a report which says it has got combined features of all three variants -- delta, beta and gamma and it is going to be highly infectious.”

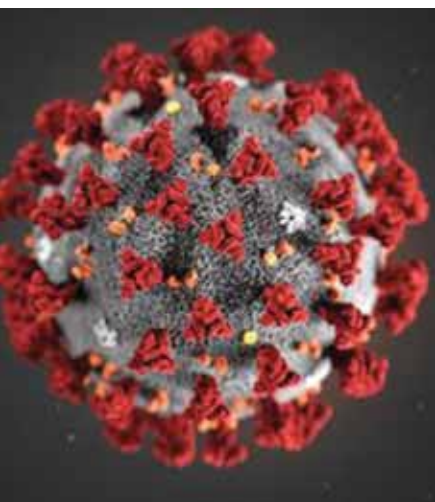
At the moment, most of the COVID patients in the world are affected by the delta variant and it is obvious that this strain will mutate very soon but there are chances it might not become severe. Emphasising that mutation is not always bad, it can be for good as well, Dr Arunesh Kumar, Chief of Pulmonology, Paras Hospitals, Gurugram says, “These viruses are going to mutate. There are a lot of variants that come under the category of variants of interest. There are variants of concern -- Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Delta -- which we are already dealing with. The variants of interest are something we are still researching upon but aren’t sure if they are variants of concern and if they will cause harm.”

★**VACCINATION**

Vaccination and booster shots might become a need for the rest of our lives and relying on one vaccination would not suffice in the future as we only march into a deadlier variant. Early identification of the emerging variant is necessary and vaccine manufacturers would have to fasten the process of adapting vaccines as the COVID-22 variant could be a big risk.

“To protect ourselves from the emerging viruses, we have to update our vaccines also. We don’t know when it might hit us but we have to gauge its severity. The vaccines might not be effective against it,” says Nayar.

COVID-22 strain is a part of viruses that we would meet. Vaccines may not work and we have to consider this strain as harmful but we should also not get too paranoid. “As the time comes, as the viruses mutate, our vaccines will also have some observation in between,” says Kumar, adding that after we have covered both the doses, we will be making booster doses for sure.



“AS THE TIME COMES AND THE VIRUSES MUTATE, OUR VACCINES WILL ALSO HAVE TO BE UPDATED. AFTER WE HAVE COVERED BOTH THE DOSES, WE WILL NEED BOOSTER SHOTS FOR SURE. VACCINE’S EFFECTIVENESS GOES DOWN VERY QUICKLY AS YOU GO FORWARD. IN TWO TO THREE MONTHS, IT GOES DOWN BY 30 PER CENT. IT IS IMMINENT THAT THE THIRD WAVE WILL COME BUT IT WON’T BE AS BAD AS THE SECOND. SINCE OUR VACCINATION COVERAGE HAS GONE UP FROM WHAT IT USED TO BE TWO OR THREE MONTHS BACK

— DR ARUNESH KUMAR, CHIEF OF PULMONOLOGY, PARAS HOSPITALS, GURUGRAM



**To protect ourselves from the emerging viruses, we have to update our vaccines also. We don’t know when it might hit us but we have to gauge its severity. The vaccines might not be effective against it**

— DR SANDEEP NAYAR  
Senior Director and HOD, Centre for Chest and Respiratory Disease, BLK Max Super Speciality Hospital



He states a fact that currently, Pfizer is the most effective vaccine, which gives you around 92 per cent protection against delta if you are fully vaccinated. Vaccine’s effectiveness goes down very quickly as you go forward. In two to three months time it goes down by 30 per cent. As we are seeing a new variant that keeps coming, very soon everybody will need booster doses.

Talking about the third wave and its severity Kumar says, “Even if the third wave comes, it won’t be as severe as the second wave and I am sure about it as our vaccination coverage has gone up from what it used to be two or

**VARIANT C.1.2**

The first case of the new variant called C.1.2 was detected in South Africa and is found in at least six countries now. There is not much known about the C.1.2 variant currently. However, the technical head of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr Maria Van Kerkhove, took to Twitter to give more insights on what the WHO knows about the new variant.

“The WHO has regularly been discussing with South African researchers their work on sequencing throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We are grateful for researchers in South Africa who first presented their findings on variant C.1.2 to the WHO Virus Evolution Working Group in July ‘21,” Kerkhove tweeted.

According to WHO, 100 sequences of C.1.2 have been reported worldwide. The first case was detected in South Africa in May this year. Currently, Delta appears dominant from available sequences.

“Monitoring & assessment of variants is ongoing & critically important to understand the evolution of this virus, in fighting COVID-19 & adapting strategies as needed,” she added.

three months back. There is a sizable population that has been vaccinated as well and as people are getting more aware after seeing the worse. People, hospitals and the Government have been working on it. But it is imminent that it will come but it won’t be as bad as the second wave.”

★**INFECTION RATE**

Delta is currently the most transmissible Coronavirus strain and is called COVID-21 as it is emerging earlier this year. It is still lin-

gering in many parts of the world. Viruses tend to develop into various variants with time and the major drawback would be when in the next phase of this pandemic, Beta or Gamma variant would become more contagious.

“Once the strain is anywhere in the world it spreads quite fast as we have seen with delta and delta plus, alpha strain, British strain, South African strain and Brazilian strain. They do not take much time to spread. We haven’t yet started international flights but we are also not totally locked down and separated and people are sticking to short-time travel,” Nayar tells you.

“Virus is not always mutating to cause more harm but it is mutating to protect itself. So, sometimes it becomes less harmful and sometimes more. For example, if we have some medication, the virus will have some mutation so that it has to protect itself from that particular medication. This is happening with all influenza viruses. What we have seen in the past is alpha was worse than the normal COVID, South Africa strain was even worse and now Delta,” he adds.

★**TREATMENT**

As of now, the treatment is, giving supportive care till our own immunity kills the virus. “I wish there was a treatment for COVID but even one and a half years down the line, the treatment of covid is with supportive care, we have been treating the symptoms of the patient.

If a patient has low oxygen, we need oxygen. There are some antivirals available but the concern is they cannot be used for every patient. So, the treatment would more or less remain the same that is giving symptomatic care,” Kumar says.

★**SYMPTOMS**

Nayar says that we can’t predict what the symptoms of the new variant would be as the first virus had symptoms like loss of taste, loss of smell and as it started mutating and delta, delta plus virus came, they have different symptoms like heart problems, muscle pain and extrapulmonary symptoms.

On the contrary, Kumar tells you that signs and symptoms would be more or less the same. He suggests that we keep checking our oxygen levels, monitor our fever, keep ourselves hydrated and seek early help if one thinks he is becoming breathless.

★**PRECAUTIONS**

Precautions would be more or less the same. “Regardless of the mutation of the virus, all the SARS CoV-2 Virus spread through the air so, if we use the covid appropriate behaviour, if we wear masks, maintain social distance we are safe. Although, it will be different only in terms of its wavelength, severity rate,” Kumar tells you.

“And as far as these new variants are concerned, it is too early to be scared about it. We just need to be careful and abide by the existing safety measures,” he adds.



Pramod Bhagat  
wins historic  
badminton Gold  
in Paralympics,  
Manoj Sarkar  
claims Bronze

# INDIA'S SEASON OF FIRSTS

PTI ■ TOKYO

Reigning world champion Pramod Bhagat claimed a historic Gold medal in the men's singles SL3 class while Manoj Sarkar bagged a Bronze as Indian badminton players dished out an impressive performance to continue country's medal rush at the Tokyo Paralympics, here on Saturday.

World number one Bhagat, who is also an Asian champion, humbled Great Britain's Daniel Bethell in the summit clash while Sarkar defeated Japan's Daisuke Fujihara in the third place play-off.

In SL3 classification, athletes with lower limb impairment compete.

With badminton making its debut at the Paralympics this year, Bhagat, became the first Indian to win a Gold medal in the sport.

The top seed showed great mental fortitude as he prevailed 21-14, 21-17 over second seeded Bethell in a thrilling final that lasted 45 minutes at the Yoyogi National Stadium.

"This is very special to me, it's my dream come true. Bethell really pushed me but I



Pramod Bhagat in action during his final match in the Tokyo Paralympics on Saturday

@Tokyo2020hi

just kept my calm and played to my strengths," said Bhagat after winning India's fourth Gold medal in the ongoing Tokyo Games.

"I would like to dedicate this to my parents and to everyone who has supported me throughout. I'm glad I could make India proud."

Bhagat said he had a strategy in place for his rival.

"I played the same opponent in Japan two years ago and I lost. That was a learning opportunity for me. Today it was the same stadium and the same environment, and I devised a strategy to win. I was very determined."

The 33-year-old from Bhubaneswar also remains in contention for a Bronze medal in mixed doubles SL3-SU5 class.

Bhagat and his partner Palak Kohli will meet Japanese pair of Daisuke Fujihara and Akiko Sugino in the Bronze medal play off on Sunday.

They had lost the semifinals 3-21, 15-21 to Indonesian

"This is a very proud moment for me. I'm representing the Indian badminton community and India as a whole. This is the first time that para badminton is appearing in the Paralympics and winning the first Gold medal for India is a moment to cherish for me."

—PRAMOD BHAGAT

combination of Hary Susanto and Leani Ratri Oktila.

Bhagat, who had contracted polio when he was four years old, picked up the sports after watching his neighbours play. Initially, he competed against able-bodied players before getting into competitive para badminton in 2006.

He eventually emerged as one of the best para shuttlers in

the country with 45 international medals under his belt, including four world championship Gold medals and a Gold and a Bronze in 2018 Asian Para Games.

The 31-year-old Sarkar, whose right leg was affected after he contracted polio at age one, displayed great resilience during his 22-20, 21-13 win over Fujihara.

Sarkar had lost his semifinals against second seeded Bethell, going down 8-21, 10-21 in SL3 class. But he recovered quickly from the defeat to produce a superb show to claim the Bronze.

Sarkar had taken up badminton at age five but it was the passion to win against his elder brother's which led him to play the sport seriously. He played inter-school competition against able-bodied players till the 11th grade before starting to compete in para badminton in 2011.

He won a Gold medal in the SL3 singles at the 2016 Asian Championships in

Beijing.

More medals are in store for India as Suhas Yathiraj and Krishna Nagar also sailed into the men's singles finals of SL4 class and SH6 class respectively.

Tarun Dhillon too stayed in contention for a Bronze after losing his semifinals earlier in the day.

In SL4 class, Suhas outwitted Indonesia's Fredy Setiawan 21-9, 21-15 in the first semifinal.

The 38-year-old, who has an impairment in one of his ankles, will face top seed Lucas Mazur of France in the final on Sunday.

Krishna, seeded second, outplayed Great Britain's Krysten Coombs 21-10, 21-11 in the SH6 class semifinals. He will cross swords with Hong Kong's Chu Man Kai in the final on Sunday.

In SL4 class semifinal, Tarun went down narrowly 16-21, 21-16, 18-21 to Mazur. He will face Setiawan in the Bronze medal play off.

# 1-2 finish in shooting

Manish Narwal smashes Paralympic record to win Gold, Adana takes Silver

PTI ■ TOKYO

Shooter Manish Narwal smashed the Paralympic record to clinch India's third Gold in the ongoing Tokyo Games, while compatriot Singhraj Adana bagged the Silver to make it a sensational one-two finish for the country here on Saturday.

The Gold and Silver from the Faridabad duo took India's medal tally to 17 — 4 Gold, 7 Silver and 6 Bronze.

The 19-year-old Narwal, who holds the world record in the category, shot a total of 218.2, a Paralympic record, to claim the yellow metal in P4 Mixed 50m Pistol SH1 event in his debut Games.

"I'm very happy," said Narwal who hails from Ballabhgarh in Haryana.

Narwal had a keen interest in sports from childhood and grew up wanting to become a football player. Unfortunately, he could not fulfil his footballing dreams due to a congenital ailment in his right hand.

His wrestler father Dilbagh tried doing anything to make sure that his son's deformity did not hold him back.

In 2016, on the suggestion of a family friend, Dilbagh took Narwal to a nearby shooting range at Ballabhgarh run by coach Rakesh Thakur. That changed Narwal's life and he instantly developed a keen interest in the sport and started doing practice regularly.

But at that time he did not know about Paralympic Games and he was practising and competing with other athletes for fun.

His talent was spotted by coach Jai Prakash Nautiyal and Narwal won an individual Gold in P1 Air Pistol SH1 event in the 2017 Bangkok World Cup. Before that, he won Gold medal in P1 and Silver in P4 in 2018 Asian Para Games in Jakarta.

The 39-year-old Adana,



who had won the Bronze in the P1 men's 10m air pistol SH1 event on Tuesday, added a Silver to his kitty with an effort of 216.7 as India continued its medal rush in the sport.

With his feat, Adana, who competes with polio-impaired lower limbs, joins the elite list of Indians who have won multiple medals in the same edition of the Games.

"Every shot is very difficult. One shot is very important, so my coach every time says 'Singhraj, Manish, only one shot, one shot fired'," Adana said of the final shoot-off between he and Narwal.

"The final was very difficult. I decided (when I was) in third position, Singhraj, good, please, stop, breathe, stop, OK. And one shot, only one shot, please. No other thought, my mind is slow. And go again."

On the tribly hat he wore during the final, Adana said, "My hat is a gift from my wife, so my very lucky hat."

Adana belongs to a humble family at Faridabad. His grandfather took part in the country's freedom movement and served in the British Indian Army during the second world war. Adana's father Prem Singh is a farmer and social worker.

Dream to see Indian flag flying high fulfilled: Singhraj

Tokyo: Shooter Singhraj Adana, who wrapped up his debut Paralympics campaign with two medals, on Saturday said his dream of seeing the Indian flag flying the highest in his event has been fulfilled.

The 39-year-old Adana, who had won a Bronze in the men's 10m air pistol SH1, added a mixed 50m pistol SH1 Silver to his haul, making him only the second athlete in the ongoing Paralympics who has won two medals, Avani Lekhara being the other.

"I was delighted when I saw our flag being raised with the national anthem. I will always remember the Tokyo Paralympics with my Bronze and Silver," Adana said after his Silver-winning performance.

"I always dreamt about seeing the Indian flag flying the highest, that dream has been fulfilled today. I will also remember also everyone's blessings and love. A huge thanks to my coaches and staff," added Adana. PTI

# History beckons IAS officer Suhas

PTI ■ NOIDA

History beckons Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer Suhas Lalinakere Yathiraj when he steps into the court for the badminton finals at the Paralympics in Tokyo on Sunday with a shot at the Gold medal.

Even if he loses and wins a Silver, the 38-year-old district magistrate of Gautam Buddh Nagar (Noida) will have scripted history as the first-ever IAS officer to win a medal at the Paralympics.

Suhas, currently world No 3 in SL4 category, has played three matches, including the semifinals on Saturday, in the ongoing Games. He has been at his dominating best against his rivals.

While it took him less than 20 minutes to sail through the first two matches, Suhas outwitted

Indonesia's Fredy Setiawan 21-9, 21-15 in 31 minutes in the first semifinal.

The 2007-batch IAS officer, with a leg impairment, will face top seed Lucas Mazur of France in the final on Sunday.

"History under making! Suhas L. Y. IAS, DM GB Nagar (Noida), UP, India in Men's singles para-badminton SL4 finals. He beats Indonesia's S Freddy 2-0 in semifinals. Now will be playing for Gold on September 5," the IAS Association, a group of serving and retired administrative officers, tweeted.

With the Karnataka-born engineer graduate making it to the final at the showpiece, internet users have been rallying support for him by trending the hashtag #Cheer4Suhas on social media platforms.

# Sports Minister felicitates Mariyappan



New Delhi: Sports Minister Anurag Thakur on Saturday felicitated Tokyo Paralympics Silver medallist high jumper Mariyappan Thangavelu, who was disappointed at not winning a Gold.

Mariyappan, who won a Gold in 2016 Rio Paralympics, bagged a Silver this time around in T42 category with

a best jump of 1.86m.

"Mariyappan has made the country proud with his performance in Rio and now in Tokyo. I congratulate him and take this occasion to congratulate all our para athletes for their fantastic performance," Thakur said in a statement.

Mariyappan, on his part,

Avani to be India's flag-bearer at closing ceremony

Tokyo: Shooter Avani Lekhara will be the flag bearer of country's contingent during the closing ceremony of the Tokyo Paralympics on Sunday.

The 19-year-old trail-blazer Lekhara had won a Gold in R-2 women's 10m Air Rifle Standing SH1 event on Monday before claiming the 50m Rifle 3 Position SH1 Bronze on Friday.

"Avani will be the flag bearer and there will be 11 participants from the Indian contingent during the closing ceremony," an official of the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) said. PTI

said: "I had expected to win a Gold for India but due to the weather conditions on the day of the event, I could not fulfil that dream. I am confident that in Paris I will win a gold for the country again."



Amit Shah felicitates Mirabai Chanu on Saturday

@AmitShah

# Don't be content with Silver medal, aim for Gold next time: Shah to Mirabai

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday felicitated Olympic medallist Mirabai Chanu for bringing laurels to the country in weightlifting and exhorted her not to be content with the Silver medal and to aim for Gold next time.

The 27-year-old sportsperson, appointed as an additional superintendent of police in her home state Manipur after the recent win at the summer games, was honoured during the 51st Raising Day celebrations of the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), a central Government think tank.

Shah presented the athlete with a shawl and memento.

He said Chanu brought honour for the country by winning a medal at the Tokyo Olympic games and is now a proud member of the police force.

"I thank her for her hard-work and dedication," the home minister added.

"When I met her on the stage to honour her, I wished her success. Everyone, from the Prime Minister of the country to the common man, has applauded her and rejoiced in her victory."

"I want to tell her that she

should not be content with a Silver medal but should now aim for a Gold. The entire country is waiting for it," Shah said.

He acknowledged the "struggles" undertaken by Chanu mentioning that she used to take "lift" in trucks to reach the place where she trained.

Shah said much more needed to be done for athletes in terms of providing them facilities.

The BPR&D had earlier said that this honour for the Olympic winner was "a small gesture to welcome her to the fraternity on behalf of the Indian police."

Chanu had clinched a silver medal in the 49kg category weightlifting that opened India's account at the recently-concluded Tokyo Olympics. India won a total of seven medals at these games.

The home minister also gave away trophies and medals for excellence in training to winner states/union territories and central police organisations and forces, and seven authors who wrote on policing subjects in Hindi.

The BPR&D, an organisation under the Ministry of Home Affairs, was founded in August 1970.

# Teens shock Osaka, Tsitsipas at US Open

AFP ■ NEW YORK

Defending champion Naomi Osaka and Greek third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas were both ousted from the US Open by 18-year-olds in epic stunners on Friday at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Four-time Grand Slam champion Osaka was shocked by Canadian left-hander Leylah Fernandez 5-7, 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 after Spain's Carlos Alcaraz upset French Open runner-up Tsitsipas 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (7/2), 0-6, 7-6 (7/5).

"Honestly the Alcaraz match gave me motivation and gave me the energy to do the same," Fernandez said. "I saw his match and I saw the way he won and I'm like 'I'm going to do that next now'."

Shock followed shock as defending champion Osaka, in a tearful news conference after the loss, announced she was taking a break from playing tennis.

"I honestly don't know when I'm going to play my next tennis match," Osaka said, wiping away tears. "I think I'm going to take a break from playing for a while."



Osaka, who had won her prior 16 Grand Slam matches, was fouled in a bid for her third US Open crown in four years and the first back-to-back titles since Serena Williams in 2014.

Alcaraz is the youngest man in the US Open fourth round since 17-year-old American Michael Chang in 1989 and at any Slam since Ukraine's Andrei Medvedev in the 1992 French

Open.

"Incredible. Incredible feeling for me," Alcaraz said. "This victory means a lot to me. It's the best match of my career, the best win."

"To beat Stefanos Tsitsipas is a dream come true and to win here is even more special for me."

Osaka had a major meltdown on court during the final moments of the



second set after she was unable to hold serve for the victory.

"From the very beginning, right before the match, I knew I was able to win," Fernandez said. "Thanks to New York fans. They helped me get the win."

Osaka, who hadn't played since Monday thanks to a second-round walkover, took the first set in 37 minutes on her sixth ace.

But Osaka was broken in the 12th game of the second set, an errant forehand sending her to a tie-breaker.

That began a sequence of repeated racquet smashing by Osaka as she was humbled in the tie-break to force a third set.

Fernandez, who turns 19 on Monday, hit a forehand winner to

break Osaka to start the third set.

Osaka saved two break points to hold in the third game and from there both held to the finish, which came after two hours and four minutes, sending Fernandez against German 16th seed Angelique Kerber in her first Grand Slam fourth round appearance.

Fernandez, who won her first WTA title in March at Monterrey, had never beaten so high-ranked a rival as third-rated Osaka and the same was true for Alcaraz when he sent home the men's world number three.

SANIA EXITS

The Indo-American pair of Sania Mirza and Rajeev Ram made a first round exit from the US Open mixed doubles event after losing to Dayana Yastremska from Ukraine and Australia's Max Purcell, here.

The unseeded Mirza and Ram lost 3-6, 6-3, 7-10 to their opponents in just 61 minutes on Friday night.

With this defeat, Mirza's campaign folded at the last Grand Slam of the season as she had already crashed out of the women's doubles event after losing the first round with American partner Coco Vandeweghe.



# INDIA'S DAY OF BATTING DOMINANCE

## Rohit scores first overseas ton to set up an engrossing fourth day

PTI ■ LONDON

A determined Rohit Sharma showed exceptionally steely temperament to score the eighth and most significant century of his Test career that propelled India to a fighting position with an overall lead of 171 runs after third day's play in the fourth Test against England here at the Oval on Saturday.

Having displayed incredibly gorgeous defensive technique throughout the series with unflinching determination, the innings of 127 (256 balls) in India's day-end score of 270 for 3 was the culmination of all the hardwork put in over the past two years.

The 153-run second wicket stand with a confident Cheteshwar Pujara (61 off 127 balls) had put India in a position of command at 236 for 1 before Ollie Robinson (21-4-67-2) got quick breakthroughs with the second new ball saw to sent packing two set batsmen.

While Rohit misjudged a slower delivery as he couldn't keep his pull shot down, Robinson bowled an in-cutter that took the inside edge off Pujara's bat into the pads and flew towards slip for an easy catch.

At stumps, Indian captain Virat Kohli (22 batting) looked in good nick in the company of Ravindra Jadeja (9 batting), who was once again promoted ahead of Ajinkya Rahane.

The Test may not go the distance but what one can surely guarantee is an engrossing fourth day, thanks to Rohit's superlative knock. Any target in excess of 225 and closer to 250 will be challenging on this track and especially with a batting line-up where Joe Root is the only consistent performer.

One of the more elegant among modern day batsmen, Rohit during the series curbed all his ego to present a solid defence but brought his 'Hit-



BEST OPENING PARTNERS IN ENG SINCE 1999						
Partners	Year	I	Runs	AVG	HS	Balls
Herschelle Gibbs/Graeme Smith (S.A)	2003	9	677	75.22	338	1013
Lokesh Rahu/Rohit Sharma (India)	2021	8	421	52.62	126	985
Neil McKenzie/Graeme Smith (S.A)	2008	8	415	59.28	204	894
Andrew Strauss/M Trescothick (Eng) v Aus	2005	10	538	53.80	112	824
Matthew Hayden/Justin Langer (Aus)	2005	10	442	49.11	185	783
Faisel Features						

4th Test. Day 4  
Live from 3:30pm IST  
SONY SIX NETWORK

Man instincts to the fore with a straight six off Moeen Ali that hit the second tier of the Oval stands en route his hundred.

An ecstatic captain Virat Kohli punching his fists and serene smile that refused to leave head coach Ravi Shastri's lips said it all.

He is one of the most loved men in that Indian dressing room and this hundred which belonged more to the team than Rohit himself will remain a popular milestone in terms of importance quotient.

It took eight years and 43 Test matches to get an overseas hundred and that too in England in tough conditions, and there won't be any second guess about where this knock of Rohit will rank among his eight tons.

There was a lot of restraint at the start when KL Rahul (46) was attacking the bowlers but in between a straight drive at the onset and the first cover drive was brought out of the closet only at the end of second hour when James Anderson (23-8-49-1) over-pitched one.

Rohit did offer a couple of streaky chances that Rory Burns at slip failed to capitalise or that upshl on-drive that caught Chris Woakes stationed at mid-on went on the wrong foot.

However, Pujara should not be denied his share of credit as his counter-attacking batting did help Rohit to play his shots.

The square cut that had gone extinct from his game of late was back on the day as he looked the vintage Pujara, who would rock back and play those regal shots including a late cut and a ramp shot which brought thunderous applause from the majority of spectators.

In all, he hit nine fours and the pull-shot off Moeen Ali that got India the lead was a statement for one and all.

Rohit also played some cracking sweep shots after getting into his 80's after leaving the balls admirably during that first session and defending dourly with the bat kept close to his body.

Earlier, Rahul, for good measure, cover drove Robinson for a boundary and then hooked him for a six. But there was some anxious moments as Robinson got one to angle in and the on-field umpire ruled him leg before only to be successfully reviewed by the batsman.

Once Rahul was out, Anderson provided Rohit with an over-pitched delivery that was dispatched through the cover region and also pulled Craig Overton for another four.

On either side of that boundary, Pujara hit an off-drive and square cut off Robinson and Overton respectively. In the second session which went wicket-less for England, Rohit and Pujara added insult to the injury with their critically acclaimed performances.

## 'When I was asked to open in 2019, I knew it was my last opportunity in Tests'

PTI ■ LONDON

Rohit Sharma on Saturday admitted that deciding to open in Test matches back in 2019 was one of his biggest decisions he took as a cricketer because he knew that it was going to be his "last chance" in red ball cricket.

Rohit on Saturday scored a near chanceless 127, his first overseas hundred that put India in a good position against England in the fourth Test.

Asked if giving the green light to the team management about batting at the top of the order was the biggest risk that he took, the elegant Mumbaier nodded in approval.

"You could say so in the hindsight," Rohit said at the end of the third day's play.

"In the back of my mind, I knew this was my last chance as well trying another position in the batting order," he said after scoring his eighth Test hundred and fifth as an opener.

"When the offer came to me, I was very much aware of it as there were talks within the management about opening the innings at some stage. Mentally, I was ready to take up the challenge and see how I can do well up the order," he said.

He was aware that there won't be too many chances as his stint as a middle-order batter didn't go exactly well.

"I know I batted in middle order and things didn't go as per the way I wanted it to and I knew this was my last opportunity to try out and you know management is thinking whatever I want to try," he stated.

However sport is about taking chances that comes one's way.

"When you are playing the sport, you always have to take those chances and you always have to take those risks and so you could say I was ready for it and didn't come to me as a surprise. You can say it would have been my last opportunity if I

wouldn't have succeeded. Anything could have happened," said Rohit, who was very straight forward in his admission.

He did say that the team management had told him that he will get a long rope.

"That (about it being his last opportunity) was my feeling. I don't know about others because the team management told me that I will have a long run. But I wanted to think in a way that this is it. I have to make good use of the opportunity and for that I have to do whatever it takes," he said.

For Rohit, it is all about ticking the small boxes in pursuit of the bigger picture.

"I don't mind looking ugly at times as long as I can get the job done for the team. That is very crucial."

### LACK OF SWING

"Lack of swing from the duke ball surprised us," said England assistant coach Paul Collingwood as India put themselves in the driver's seat after day three of the fourth and penultimate Test here on Saturday.

The match saw 13 wickets falling on day one with India getting all out for 191, but the conditions seemed to have improved for batting thereafter as England bowlers capped a frustrating day, managing just three wickets on Saturday.

"I thought we were very disciplined and stuck to task all day. But one thing that surprised us was the lack of swing from the duke ball," the former England captain told reporters in a virtual interaction after the day's proceedings.

"We all know once there's some movement in the air, and the wicket with some carry it would trouble the Indian batsmen. So we were pretty surprised and could not get the swing. We tried everything with it, changing the shining side but could not get movement," he rued.

## Max takes pole for Netherlands GP

AP ■ ZANDVOORT

Dutch driver Max Verstappen sent his Orange Army of fans into raptures after taking a brilliant pole position for the Netherlands Grand Prix on Sunday.

The Red Bull driver's final lap was just good enough to beat Mercedes star Lewis Hamilton by .04 seconds and his teammate Valtteri Bottas by .034.

Verstappen's orange-clad fans stood and roared on Saturday when he went past the main grandstand area and sealed his season-leading seventh pole of the season — four more than F1 record holder Hamilton.

"Unbelievable, we were just flying today," Verstappen said. "It's an amazing feeling to get pole position here. The crowd is incredible."

Verstappen led Bottas by .3 seconds and Hamilton

by .35 after their first runs. They all improved on their second stints and Verstappen did enough for his 10th career pole.

"Pole position, home Grand Prix," Red Bull team principal Christian Horner said after Verstappen's sixth pole in the past seven races.



## Covid +ve Raikkonen out

Zandvoort: Finnish driver Kimi Raikkonen has tested positive for Covid-19 and will miss this weekend's Dutch Grand Prix, his Alfa Romeo team and the race organisers announced on Saturday.

The 2007 world champion, 41, who is retiring from Formula One at the end of the

season, will be replaced in Zandvoort by Alfa Romeo's reserve driver Robert Kubica.

Polish driver Kubica, 36, won the Canadian Grand Prix in 2008 but his career was severely hampered following a crash during the Andorra Rally in 2011 in which his right forearm was partially severed.

high-banking corners.

Having jeered Hamilton at the previous three races after he sent Verstappen crashing out of the British GP with a risky overtaking move, the Dutch fans seemed to finally have gotten over it and clapped him after he spoke.

The race returned to the Netherlands for the first time since 1985, when Zandvoort last hosted the race.

About 65,000 fans packed into stands that were at 67% capacity because of coronavirus restrictions. All had to show a corona pass to get in.

## Puducherry ropes in Tait as bowling coach

PTI ■ PUDUCHERRY

Former Australia pacer Shaun Tait has been roped in as the bowling coach of the Puducherry cricket team, sources in the Cricket Association of Pondicherry (CAP) said on Saturday.

Tait joins a coaching team that includes head coach Dishant Yagnik and manager and strength and conditioning coach Kalpendra Jha, the sources said.

The former Australia player had recently been appointed bowling coach of the Afghanistan team for a period of five months.

However, the uncertainty in Afghanistan following the takeover of the country by Taliban has raised doubts over his stint there.

CAP sources said Tait could join the Puducherry team later this month.

Tait is also expected to mentor the pace bowlers at the CAP academy in Puducherry, the sources added.

## Southgate hails 'mature' Eng duo over racism reaction

AFP ■ LONDON

Gareth Southgate has saluted England duo Raheem Sterling and Jude Bellingham for the "incredibly mature" way they handled racist abuse from Hungary fans.

Sterling and Bellingham were subjected to vile monkey chants during England's 4-0 victory in a World Cup qualifier in Budapest on Thursday.

England players were also pelted with cups thrown from the hostile Puskas Arena crowd, with many Hungary fans also booing Southgate's team when they took the knee before kick-off to show support for equality. Southgate was impressed with the cool response from Sterling, who scored England's opening goal against the Hungarians, and midfielder Bellingham.

"Unfortunately, I don't know how many camps in the last four years but I seem to have been talking about this subject almost



every time we have been together," Southgate told reporters on Saturday.

"I can only reiterate that our players are incredibly mature in the way they deal with it. I think they feel supported by their team-mates, which is very important to them."

"I think their team-mates recognise how challenging it must be for our black players and how disappointing it is in the modern world that we con-

tinue to have to answer these questions because of the incidents that happen.

"But we can only keep taking the stance that we have done and hope that we continue to send the right messages, not only to people in football but across society, and that everybody keeps progressing."

"We know it's going to take time and we know that feels very slow for everybody, but we have to keep fighting that battle."

## India look to raise level vs Nepal



PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Held by a lowly Nepal in their last match, the Indian men's football team would settle for nothing less than a victory in the second international friendly against the Himalayan nation here on Sunday.

Worse, Indian football team is not at all happy with the training facilities provided by the host country.

At 105, India are ranked much above the 171st placed Nepal in the FIFA rankings, but still then the Sunil Chhetri-led side produced a below-par show in the first match to be held to a 1-1 draw on Thursday.

In the last match, substitute Anirudh Thapa came in as saviour for the visitors as found the equaliser in the 60th minute after Nepal grabbed the lead through Anjan Bista in the 36th minute.

But come Sunday, India will have to raise their game by leaps and bounds to outwit a determined Nepal, who will brimming with confidence following the last match result.

The friendlies are being organised as part of preparations for next month's SAFF Championships in Maldives.

The five-team SAFF Championships will be held from October 3 to October 13 at the National Stadium in Male. India head coach Igor Stimac was not happy with the performance but hoped for a better show from his wards on Sunday.

"The mood is positive and our boys are aware that they can do much better. Of course, we are still short with the energy level because we are just at the end of the second week of preparation, and the legs are still heavy. But, they are looking forward to put in a better performance," he said.

"We are going to change a few things, and see if that can help us in terms of passing with more confidence, and getting forward easier."

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Two-time Olympic champion Sifan Hassan ran the fifth-fastest women's mile ever, clocking 4 minutes, 14.74 seconds at the Memorial Van Damme meeting.

Hassan set off on pace to beat her own world record but could not maintain it at the end of a grueling season where she took Gold in Tokyo over 5,000 and 10,000 meters and Bronze in the 1,500.

"It is a beautiful time," the Dutch track star said.

"After Tokyo I was so tired so I just wanted to run the short distance."

Hassan now has three of the five fastest mile times in history, including the 4:12.33 world record she set two years ago in Monaco.

In yet another tilt at his own pole vault world record, Olympic champion Armand Duplantis came up just short in three attempts to clear 6.19 meters.

Duplantis was still in action fully 30 minutes after the rest of the track and field program had finished in the next-to-last Diamond League meeting in Europe.

The 21-year-old United States-born Swede took the win in a meet



record of 6.05, three centimeters higher than his winning clearance in Tokyo.

Fred Kerley, the Olympic Silver medalist in the men's 100, led an American 1-2-3 to win in 9.94 seconds, ahead of Trayvon Bromell and Michael Norman.

Olympic Silver medallist Christine Mboma won the women's 200 in 21.84 seconds, just 0.03 outside the world junior record the 18-

year-old from Namibia set in the final in Tokyo.

With Hassan skipping the 5,000, victory went to Francine Niyonsaba in a personal best time of 14:25.34 that was also a Burundi national record.

The three-way rivalry in women's high jump saw Olympic Bronze medallist Yaroslava Mahuchikh win this time at 2.02 meters.

## Mandzukic retires from football

AFP ■ ZAGREB

Iconic Croatian striker Mario Mandzukic, who scored the winning goal against England in the semi-finals of the World Cup in 2018, has retired from the game, three years after playing his last international.

The 35-year-old announced his decision in a post on Instagram, which included a photo of a pair of boots, on Friday night.

"While you put on these boots for the first time, you can't even imagine what you will get to experience in football," he wrote in a message in English addressed to his young self, "Dear little Mario", and signed "Your big Mario".

"You'll recognize the moment to retire, to put these boots in a cabinet and you'll have no regrets."

Mandzukic appeared 89 times for Croatia scoring 33 goals, he also played Bayern Munich, Atletico Madrid and Juventus and appeared 11 times this year for AC Milan. Plagued by injury he was used mostly as a substitute and did not score a goal.

He won the Croatian league three times with Dinamo Zagreb, the Bundesliga, twice, and the Champions League at Bayern, and Serie A four times at Juventus.





KUSHAL SRIVASTAVA

*Air Force officer-turned-bollywood filmmaker, KUSHAL SRIVASTAVA best known for his debut directorial film Vodka Diaries talks to Shalini Saxena about his directorial short film Speed Dial and upcoming feature film Golden Arrows, a biopic on Wing Commander Birender Singh Dhanoa*

**'NOTHING IS  
DIFFICULT IF  
YOU ARE  
PREPARED'**



One thing I learnt from the Indian Air Force is that nothing is difficult if you are well prepared. I have learnt the craft of filmmaking from Jyoti Prakash Dutta, he is my guru. He is considered as a master of war films in India. So, I have done my homework and am well prepared for it.

I WANT TO TELL THE AUDIENCE THAT NOTHING IS UNACHIEVABLE. ONE OF MY DIALOGUES IN THE FILM IS 'THERE IS NOTHING YOU CANNOT DO IN LIFE.' SO, I THINK THIS FILM WILL MOTIVATE THEM AND WILL GIVE THEM GOOSEBUMPS WHEN THEY SEE THOSE MACHINES ON THE BIG SCREEN

I will just say that be honest to your job. Follow your instinct and don't listen to anyone, don't get influenced by others. Write stories about what you want to say and whatever appeals to you. Be genuine and honest to your craft and you will excel one day for sure.

## Shehnaaz Gill breaks down

One of the lasting images of the last rites of Sidharth Shukla at the Oshiwara crematorium here on Friday was the late TV star's 'special friend' Shehnaz Gill breaking down inconsolably as she arrived with her brother Shehzad to pay her last respects to the man with whom she shared incredible chemistry. Famous among their fans as 'SidNaaz' (the hashtag had been trending much before the actor's untimely death), the two visibly shared a cordial bond, and when she was on 'Big Boss 13', Shehnaz would off and on verbalise her feelings for Sidharth.

## Madhab dons producer's hat

Producer-director Nila Madhab Panda, who is a multiple National Award winner and a Padma Shri awardee, is now donning the producer's hat for his next venture *Bishwa*, with his long-time associate and debutant director Anuj Tyagi.

The film features Vinay Pathak, Yagya Bhasin, Sharib Hashmi, and National Award-winning actress Usha Jadhav in pivotal roles.

Nila started his celluloid journey with the acclaimed *I Am Kalam* that won him 34 international awards and a national award.

His subsequent work focused equally on environmental as well as children's issues. He is excited to steer another project that has a child as a central character.

*Bishwa* is based on the life of a blind boy and how he emerges as a hero in a village near the mesmerising Chilika lake. It was shot entirely in Odisha, right before the lockdown started. Nila, who is born and brought up in Odisha has always shown his love for Odisha through his films.

*IAN/S*



# Masterstroke

Preparing your skin well before a party will make your skin look healthier regardless. One can start with exfoliation and then using a few ice cubes on the face which helps in tightening the pores. Using a toner is a must after this step followed by a face oil/cream and a lip balm.

Always remember — less is more!

Avoid layering your face with heavy concealers and foundations. Go for sheer coverage which will brighten your face, and let your natural skin texture show.

It's possible to pull off a strong eye and lip at the same time, but to keep the look balanced and easy to carry.

Fake a glow by applying a powder highlighter..

Use waterproof makeup.

Use a long-lasting lipcolour.

Ensure to set your makeup with a setting spray.

— Courtesy Damini Chaturvedi, make-up artist




# NatureTalk

English Ivy looks pretty with its triangular leaves and if they are variegated its even prettier. The first part about this plant is that it is easy to take care of it. It does require to be fertilised every month in spring, summer and fall. If you have the variegated variety low sunlight will reduce the variegation.

Most cultivars of ivy grow best in bright light, but not direct sun. They tolerate low to medium light.

The plant needs somewhat dry soil so check before you water. But in Indian climate it may need more watering three-four days instead of six-seven. Ensure that the pot is well-drained.

A photograph of a potted plant with variegated English Ivy leaves. The leaves are primarily green with prominent yellow and white variegation. The plant is growing in a dark-colored pot, which is placed on a reddish-brown saucer. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

With restrictions easing and films now releasing in theatres, the newly revamped PVR Priya in its new avatar — first P[XL] format, the state-of-the-art premium giant-screen format, — is all set to wow movie buffs, says SUPRIYA RAMESH

## The transformation of Vasant

**TIME FOR XL VIEWING**



“When people go out, they want to spend some time discussing the movie or getting into the mood of the movie. Keeping that in mind, there are lounges



The giant screen alone does not make up for a great movie, it is the great content and technology that boosts the viewer's experience. By redefining Priya, New Delhi has got its first P[XL] format and India's first state-of-the-art premium giant-screen format.

“Did you know why cinema halls are always put on the higher floor in a mall, he asks? “Cinemas are the foot-fall drivers, not only do people come but while they are moving up, they shop. They are called anchor tenants and we are the anchor tenant for Basant Lok community centre. In one show, we can get as many as 300 people and every time 300 people come, they will buy something, they will eat something,” Dutta says.

To ensure consumer's safety, PVR Priya has gone beyond the Government-laid COVID protocols. By blocking every alternate seat with a not-to-be-occupied tape, they have also put in a negative ion technology that purifies the air. Making sure that people consume the right and fresh food, it will be sterilised before it is given to the consumer. "These are not protocols laid down by the Government but we've done it because we want consumers to be safe. Our staff is all 100 per cent vaccinated," Dutta says.

**RAVI DUBEY**, who has completed 16 years in the industry, speaks with **SHALINI SAKSENA** about how and why he turned a producer among other things

These are some dignitaries and luminaries from the facets of our country. You can very well imagine the responsibility on their shoulders and the experiences that they may have got out of them. I will cherish that morning forever.

❖ What made you become a producer?

I had one desire, to  
be in front of camera'



❖ **Is the transition tough — from an actor to a producer?** What is not tough in that sense? Everything has its challenges but those challenges, they only give you a fantastic

era.

❖ What are your upcoming projects?

There are many as producers and as an actor, but unfortunately, I'm not at liberty to talk about it at present. By next fortnight we will be talking about one of the projects.

# Sound of . music



*Music is the best medicine.  
Here are the top 10 songs of the  
week that will lift up your  
weekend mood*

## BOLLYWOOD VIBES

Har Funn Maula (Vishal Dadlani, Zara Khan)  
Barood Wargi (Simran Kaur Dhadli)  
Tera Suit (Tony Kakkar)  
Saiyan Ji (Honey Singh)  
Is Qadar (Tulsi Kumar, Darshan Raval)

## ENGLISH VINGLISH

I Don't (Johnny Orlando, DVBSB)  
How I Came (Li 9)  
Closer (The Keymakers)  
Bikes (Josefine)  
Sacrifice (Bebe Rexha)





I think that an actor is more likely to be forgiven in the public's eye than an actress  
— Mila Kunis



# THE AMERICAN EXIT FROM AFGHANISTAN & THE INDIAN CONUNDRUM

While bilateral exigencies demand diplomatic attention, it is essential for India to support Afghanistan as its strategic & developmental partner, writes CHAYANIKA SAXENA

“Afghanistan finds itself at the cross-roads once again”.

In the last twenty years that the US has waged its war on terror in Afghanistan, this statement was written at least a hundred times over. However, the sheer frequency of its utterance did not necessarily signal that swift changes were occurring on the Afghan landscape. Contrarily, it demonstrated how little things had changed on the ground, so much so that this rhetoric became a stubborn editorial refrain. Today, the situation in Afghanistan reminds us more of the same. In fact, with the complete takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban, life has come a full circle for millions of Afghans.

On the 15th of August 2021, as India marked its 75th Independence Day, a quiet Sunday became extraordinarily eventful courtesy of Kabul's easy and swift capitulation to the Taliban. Sitting in New Delhi, it was both shocking and tragic for me to witness the “imminent and inevitable” takeover of Afghanistan become a reality for this nebulous nation-state, expelling lakhs of people into spontaneous camps scattered across Kabul. But for all the safety they thought they might find in the national capital, it soon disappeared without a trace. The dissolution of defence and the infamous flight of Afghanistan's political class, allegedly with a chopper full of cash, allowed the Taliban to walk into Kabul without firing a shot.

In what has been described as a “bloodless” takeover, the supposed victory of the Taliban revealed just about how shambolic the Afghan institutions were. Having spent trillions of dollars in trying to build a nation out of Afghanistan, most of the international stakeholders, including the United States, picked up their bags and left as if they had never marched into this country in the first place. While some departed onboard chinooks, others negotiated to stay back only to force Afghanistan into another chaos that resembles its unenviable past.

## THE AMERICAN MISADVENTURE IN AFGHANISTAN

In a misplaced, misdirected war that lasted twenty years, the American invasion of Afghanistan did little to create robust institutions that could have sustained the momentum of nation and state-building in this war-torn country. Instead, the once-blue-eyed boy of the West, and the (co) author of what could have been a prophetic book called *Fixing Failed States*, Ashraf Ghani, left behind a legacy of debilitation, destruction and depletion of morale that would affect generations of Afghans to come. In a cruel twist of fate, much of which was manufactured by Western nonchalance, the situation in Afghanistan is back to square one. Or, perhaps even worse. The gun-toting members of the Taliban are roaming the streets of major Afghan cities, breaking into jails and even go-karting while 98 nations, including many Western countries, negotiate with them to allow their citizens and “Afghans with authorised travel documents” a safe exit out of Afghanistan. But where it is one thing to negotiate for a harmless exit, it is another to reconcile with an emergent reality in which the Taliban will get to call the shots.

The so-called military victory of the Taliban was metamorphosed into a political victory for it owing to the tone-deafness of the international stakeholders who just wanted out of an imbroglio they birthed. Right from the



time of the so-called Afghan Jihad against the USSR in the 1980s to the present-day situation in which the writ of the Taliban runs large, the international powers have been complicit in manufacturing the ‘mess’ we are witnessing in Afghanistan. The bloody mess outside of the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul where as many as 170 Afghans and 13 American soldiers were killed in a suicide attack executed by the Islamic State of Khorasan (IS-K). The mess of deprivation and humiliation we see spilling out in the streets of Afghanistan in the shape of famished human bodies of more than 3.5 million internally displaced Afghans.

But while the world exits from Afghanistan, Afghanistan has not exited the world. On the world's political map, it continues to be there as a South Asian country, even though it might be in the wrong hands. Moreover, its location on the periphery of a region of which India is a part makes it even more critical for New Delhi to assess, analyse and act on the evolving Afghan situation to prevent further implosion. It is not only crucial for India to do so from the perspective of its massive investments in Afghanistan's or the country's strategic relevance to India's extra-regional aspirations. It is equally a humanitarian cause for New Delhi to extend a helping hand to a nation of people it has often described as its ‘friend’. Yet, the room and time for manoeuvre available to India are only shrinking as another day goes by in sheer uncertainty that seems to have become the by-name of our “contiguous” neighbour. So then, the objective for us must be to evolve and articulate our position on Afghanistan as swiftly and decisively as possible lest we miss the bus again.

## THE INDIAN CONUNDRUM

My intention is not to suggest that we show haste in deciding on our stance on Afghanistan. We cannot pull an America on this war-torn nation, especially in the South Asian neighbourhood where each country is tied to the other at the hip for good and bad reasons. Instead, given the irresponsi-

“THE RECENT SPATE OF EVENTS, WHICH AMONGST OTHER THINGS, HAS WITNESSED AN OPENNESS ON INDIA'S PART TO TALK TO THE TALIBAN, HAS DEMONSTRATED NEW DELHI'S KEENNESS ON ADAPTING ITS AFGHAN-CENTRIC POLICIES IN VIEW OF THE EVOLVING SITUATION. HOWEVER, INSTEAD OF BEING (MIS)READ AS A DIPLOMATIC VOLTE-FACE, INDIA'S OUTREACH TO THE TALIBAN IS, IN FACT, AN EXTENSION OF ITS LARGER BILATERAL TEMPLATE IN WHICH INDIA HAS REPEATEDLY MAINTAINED THAT IT SHALL SUPPORT ANY PEACE PROCESS THAT IS “OWNED, CONTROLLED, CONTROLLED AND LED” BY THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN



ble and reckless exit of the US, it has become essential for India to weigh its bilateral and regional concerns vis-a-vis Afghanistan on their merit instead of simply aligning itself with the ‘democratic bloc’ as some might have suggested. After all, if geography is destiny, we must learn to play by its rules instead of picking up on cues decided elsewhere.

Thus, while it is true that New Delhi has a tricky balancing act ahead of it, particularly as it seeks to establish an equilibrium between its regional aspirations, its responsibilities as a rising power and the geopolitical calculus in the Indo-Pacific, India needs to think and (re)act on Afghanistan in a manner that is not entirely beholden to an extraneous discourse. Instead, its policies and actions must chart an indigenous course, mindful of India's unique spatial, strategic and security concerns vis-a-vis Afghanistan.

As the largest South Asian donor to Afghanistan, India has invested USD 3 billion in developmental projects, ranging from infrastructural offerings (e.g. Salma Dam in Herat province) to human capacity building. Focusing on assisting Afghanistan to transition into a robust nation-state, the Indian investments were primarily concerned with aspects like the rule of law and strengthening of democracy. In fact, as the world's largest democracy, it was only apparent for India to lead by example and offer instructive lessons on democratic governance, federalism, and the like. However, unlike its democratic compatriots in the Western world, India did not export or impose its model of democracy on Afghanistan. It comes as no surprise then that India, according to one Gallup poll conducted in Afghanistan, was described as a country that played the “most positive role” in the rehabilitation of this nebulous nation-state.

However, today, the political landscape of Afghanistan stands in stark contrast to the one that Afghans, and Indians, had once imagined it to be. Despite its apparent pitfalls, the semblance of democracy, republicanism and other ideal political traits have been consigned to the dustbin of histo-

ry. Literally speaking, the Afghanistan of 2021 finds itself in the same position in which it was ‘found’ in 2001 — under the *de-facto* rule of the Taliban.

While much has been written about the (unfounded) claims of change in the Taliban's outlook vis-a-vis women's rights, inclusive government and so on, it is not hard to see that the so-called Taliban 2.0 and the Taliban of the 1990s are not two different species. It has just become better at image management and PR blitz. That said, it is also unfortunately true that the Taliban is currently *the* political reality of Afghanistan, which would not disappear even if the world chooses to shut its eyes close to it once again. *Prima facie*, regional powers such as China and Russia appear to have reconciled to the new political arrangement in Afghanistan, wherein dealing with the Taliban is no longer just a strategic necessity but a diplomatic *fait accompli*. India, too is alive to this possibility.

## WAYS FORWARD

The recent spate of events, which amongst other things, has witnessed an openness on India's part to talk to the Taliban, has demonstrated New Delhi's keenness on adapting its Afghan-centric policies in view of the evolving situation. However, instead of being (mis)read as a diplomatic volte-face, India's outreach to the Taliban is, in fact, an extension of its larger bilateral template in which India has repeatedly maintained that it shall support any peace process that is “owned, controlled, controlled and led” by the people of Afghanistan. As such, it is critical not to read a riot act against India's attempt to talk to the Taliban for two reasons. One, engagement in and of itself does not amount to recognising the Taliban. Two, this engagement might throw more weight behind the different non-Taliban Afghan constituencies as they deal with this militant organisation. Thus, while it is wise for India not to reveal all its cards yet, it is equally crucial for India to not entirely dismiss the possibility of establishing a direct line of communication with the Taliban for its own sake and

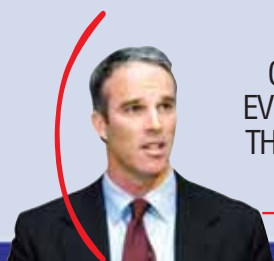
that of Afghans.

The so-called military victory and political takeover of Afghanistan by an insurgent Islamist group are enough to send India's security concerns into a tizzy. The end of the longest and most expensive American expedition in the dead of night, after all, only reinforces the epithet attached to Afghanistan as the ‘graveyard of empires’. Moreover, it would not be too misplaced to believe that extremist and insurgent groups worldwide, particularly in South Asia, are celebrating what they believe is a strategic win against an imperial superpower. The Taliban's return to Kabul will likely provide ideological fodder to other radical outfits, including transnational terrorist entities like the Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). For that matter, AQIS has since renewed its agenda to debilitate India, demonstrating the same through a conscious renaming of its online mouthpiece to *Nawai Ghazwa-e-Hind* or the new holy war against India.

As things stand today, the immutable presence of the Taliban in Afghanistan is bound to deflect the course of India's policies and actions vis-a-vis this war-torn nation. While these bilateral exigencies demand diplomatic attention, it is equally essential for India to support Afghanistan as its strategic and developmental partner. Its foremost priority must be to ensure the safety and well-being of Afghans who are currently staring at an uncertain future. Moreover, a new generation of Afghans born during the American stint has witnessed freedom, mobility, and a semblance of security to which India had also contributed. As such, it is only incumbent upon us to use a collective moral preference for democracy and development to create a conducive environment in Afghanistan that can anchor the Taliban down to political civility while giving Afghans a reason to repose their faith in us once again.

The writer is a President Graduate Fellow and Final Year PhD Candidate at the Department of Geography, National University of Singapore. Her doctoral research is on Afghan refugees and migrants in New Delhi and Kolkata





CLIMATE CHANGE IS THE  
EVEREST OF ALL PROBLEMS,  
THE THORNIEST CHALLENGE  
FACING HUMANKIND  
— LEWIS GORDON PUGH

## SHELTER SOLUTIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION MIGRANT LABOUR

Regressive policies and an over-inflated real estate market have made residential rentals an unviable proposition for businesses in India, write DHAVAL MONANI & PRASANNA SRIRAMAN, as they discuss the challenges in the affordable rental housing complex scheme in the first of four part series

# SHELTER FOR ALL?

Rental housing is an integral part of a robust housing market. Making rental housing accessible and affordable can facilitate migration-led development and movement of talent across the rural-urban spectrum. Europe sees a healthy inter-country and cross border migration with some of the largest percentages of rental housing with Switzerland leading the way at about 59%.

India has always struggled with providing rental housing solutions to low-income families. Regressive policies and an over-inflated real estate market have made residential rentals an unviable proposition for businesses. A high risk-free rate and high real estate prices reduce the net yield on residential rental to as low as 2-3% across the country as brought out in the Knight Frank-Khaitan & CO report circa 2019. The market relies largely on capital appreciation for returns. The problem is further magnified for the low-income segment as the capital appreciation of such assets is much lower. This leads to higher rental costs making it unaffordable for the urban poor, especially migrants, to find decent homes. As a result, informal settlements and overcrowded accommodation proliferate in cities across the country with millions living in inadequate dwellings.

While the situation has long been dire, the Covid-19 crisis brought these housing inadequacies into focus, with decent shelter coming to the fore in both public health and families' livelihoods. When lockdowns upended the informal economy, workers' need for stable housing, along with job and income loss contributed to the largest reverse migration in decades. Cognisant of the unfolding humanitarian crisis, the Government of India put forward the Affordable Rental Housing Complex (ARHC) scheme.

The scheme aims to increase the supply of affordable rental accommodation in urban and peri-urban areas. It intends to achieve this by focusing on Public-Private-Partnership models, thereby minimising the impact on government finances.

There are two models under the scheme. In the first model, the Urban Local Body provides existing government owned vacant houses to private entities through a concession agreement for 25 years. The



concessionaire is to upgrade, operate and maintain the building during the period while collecting rent.

In the second model, the concessionaire is given incentives to construct and operate ARHCs on its own vacant land as greenfield developments. Greenfield ARHCs are incentivised through 50% higher Floor Space Index and financed at lower interest rates through priority sector lending. Additionally, the concessionaire is allowed to commercially rent a certain portion of the complex to cross-subsidise development.

The scheme marks an important shift in the governments housing policy to rental housing models. However, the adequacy of incentives proposed in the scheme is yet unproven to make ARHCs attractive to investors, developers and businesses.

Let us consider the cost per unit for both models. We consider 150 sq. ft of built-up area per person including common areas, and assume ₹500 per sq. ft as the cost for refurbishment. In the first model, the total cost per person is ₹75,000.

IN ITS CURRENT  
FORM, THE ARHC  
SCHEME FAILS TO  
ACCOUNT FOR THE  
COST OF  
IMPLEMENTATION  
AND IMPLICATIONS  
ON REQUISITE  
RETURNS FOR  
PRIVATE ENTITIES

Assuming ₹60,000 as debt at 10% for a tenure of 10 years, the cost would be ₹1,000 per person per month. We estimate monthly housekeeping at a minimum of ₹1,000 per person. Considering varied occupancy levels and access issues, a private entity would most likely set rental prices at ₹2,500 to ₹3,000 per person. With most migrant workers earning an average monthly income ranging from ₹7,000 to ₹9,000, the expected rent structure would be unaffordable.

In the greenfield model, the concessionaire contributes land in addition to undertaking construction and management of the property. Assuming an FSI cost of ₹500 per sq. ft and construction cost of ₹1,500 per sq. ft - 150 sq. ft of built-up area per person would cost ₹3,00,000. Assuming 80% debt at 10% and 20% equity at 20%, the cost per person would be ₹3,000 per month. Adding maintenance costs of ₹1,000 and a 20% margin, the rental per person works out to ₹5,000 per month. Here we consider 100% occupancy.

If the ULB were to stipulate a rent of ₹1,500 per month and we consider ₹500

per month as a cross-subsidy from the commercial portion, the concessionaire will still incur a loss of ₹3,000 per month or ₹36,000 per person annually. To bridge this gap, a Viability Gap Funding ₹36,000/per year would be needed. This will amount to a VGF funding of ₹36,000 crore annually if the scheme aims to reach 1 crore target beneficiaries. These are important challenges in ARHC as the operator faces poor financial returns and the government faces an enormous subsidy requirement.

In conclusion, the ARHC scheme is an important milestone in India's housing policy that acknowledges the significance of increasing the availability of affordable rental housing for the urban poor and migrants. However, in its current form, it fails to account for the cost of implementation and implications on requisite returns for private entities. The scheme is pragmatic in mandating the local governments to provide the necessary infrastructure, and putting existing property resources — housing stock and land — to greater use, but in allowing local bodies to decide the

rental rates, the scheme falls short of being a more market-based intervention. It also falls short of recognising and fully accounting for the high cost of business in the real estate development sector, variable occupancy levels, location constraints and low cost-to-benefit returns for private entities in an already low rental yield market. When millions of urban poor and migrant labour rely on rental property to fulfil their housing needs, albeit, with fewer choices, it is critical to continue developing comprehensive and effective measures ensuring that they have a decent place to live. The government's increased commitment to supporting and strengthening the housing sector brings significant promise, and we urge the reconsideration of the financial model behind the ARHC scheme to address viability concerns and to achieve intended outcomes.

Monani is Director of Affordable Housing at Anant National University and Sriraman is a Senior Specialist — Market Systems at the Habitat for Humanity's Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter

# Update policies to build infrastructure

Climate resilient development requires climate considerations to be mainstreamed into planning. Strategies must be integrated into building bye-laws & national construction codes to ensure large scale adoption, writes RUCHIE KOTHARI

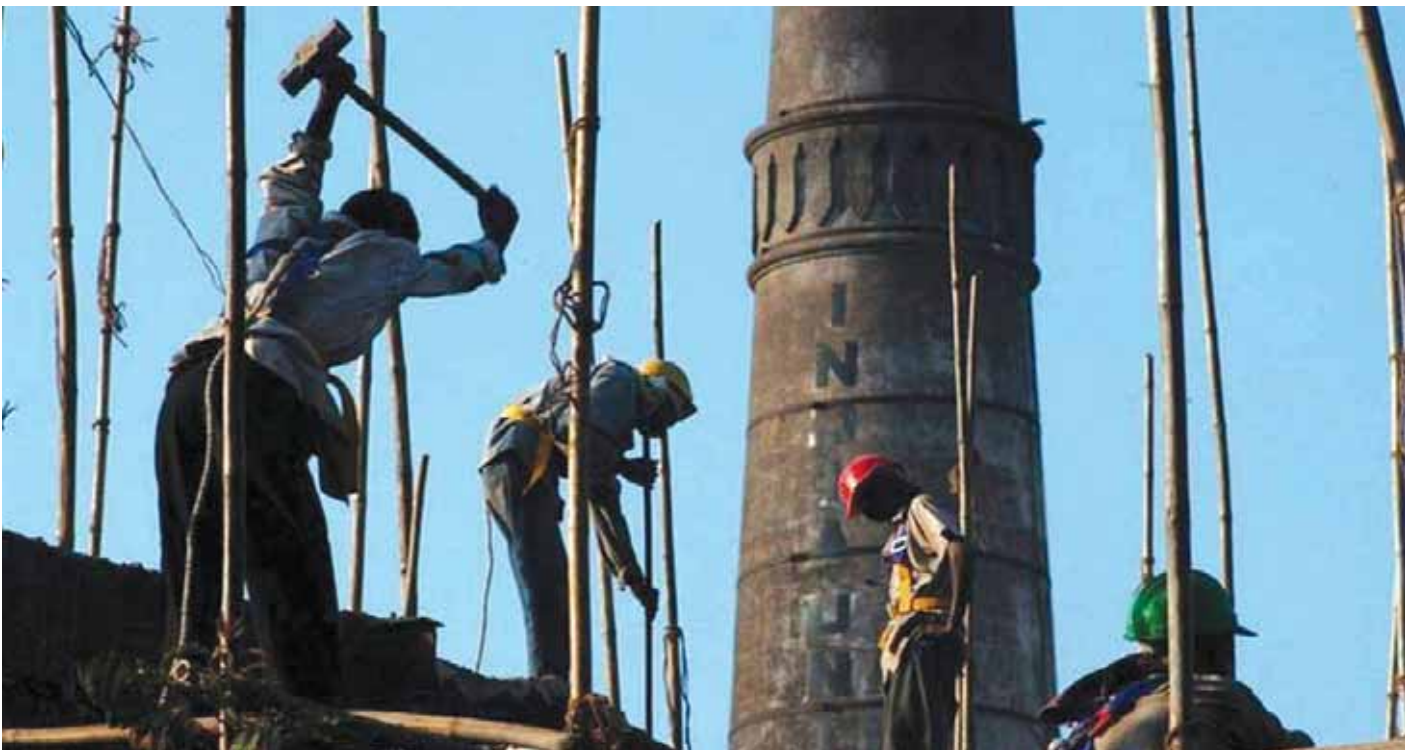
The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate (IPCC) recently released the first part of its sixth assessment report, Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. The IPCC report warns that the global average air temperature may rise by more than 1.5C over pre-industrial levels within the next 20 years. The IPCC report also predicts that India will see a rise in extreme weather events such as floods, cyclones and heatwaves over the years.

Each extreme weather event heavily impacts the infrastructure (public and private) of the country creating stresses for developers and owners alike. Natural disasters cause a loss of 2% of GDP every year in India. An increasing number of extreme events over the last decade has resulted in improvements in disaster response and recovery systems within the country. However, it is equally important to take steps to minimise the effects of disasters before the event occurs. This will reduce our vulnerability to the impact of disasters on property, livelihoods and lives. Introducing climate resilience plans at a local, state and central level is one way of doing this.

Climate resilience is the ability to prepare for, recover from, and adapt to the impacts of climate change events. Climate resilience actions integrate mitigation, disaster risk reduction and management along with climate change adaptation approaches.

Majority of the efforts to address climate change through green buildings is focused on reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Measures to reduce GHG emissions associated with energy, transportation, water, waste and construction materials are incorporated in green building rating systems as well as national building codes. These mitigation measures need to be supported with sufficient adaptation measures to ensure that all new construction is resilient to future extreme weather events.

Within the construction industry, designing for resilience will mean that citizens are safer, business operations remain uninterrupted, workplace productivity is maintained, and supply chains are protected. Several frameworks have been established to help practitioners design and build climate resilient infrastructure and buildings. Frameworks such as Envision Sustainable Infrastructure Rating System, the RELi Rating System, Strategies for Multifamily Building Resilience — Enterprise Green Communities etc provide strategies for short-term hazard preparedness, monitoring and maintenance, community engagement, mitigation and long-term adaptability. Similar to green building rating systems, these frameworks include strategies addressing transportation, energy, water, waste, food production, health and diversity. Building rating systems and frameworks have proven to be an



effective way of making a market shift in the way buildings are designed, constructed, operated and maintained. They can be easily adopted by different stakeholders globally and provide policy makers with a collection of actions that can be integrated into building byelaws.

The impacts of climate change must be addressed at a hyper local

level through appropriate actions. For example, Enhancing Resilience in Boston, is a guide to help commercial buildings in Boston adapt to climate risks related to extreme floods. The guide provides 32 strategies to address vulnerabilities unique to Boston including actions to protect against and reduce damage from floods — an extreme weather event that Boston is vul-

nerable to. Similar guides have been prepared for different cities globally based on risk assessment studies.

In India, the 100 Resilient Cities (100R) initiative supported four cities — Surat, Chennai, Pune and Jaipur — to develop a resilience strategy to help the cities survive, adapt and grow irrespective of the stresses they experience.

Different city level interventions in areas such as institutional development, land use planning, drainage and flood management, emergency response systems, ecosystem strengthening, citizens awareness building and disease surveillance have been initiated that demonstrate practical ways to build resilience of systems, sectors and communities to the effects of cli-

mate change. While vulnerability profiles were prepared for 20 cities across India, it is necessary to prepare similar resiliency plans for all cities across India to help reduce India's vulnerability to climate change events.

Climate resilient development requires climate considerations to be mainstreamed into development planning. Climate resilient strategies must be integrated into building bye-laws and national construction codes to ensure large scale adoption. As India is still building a lot of its basic infrastructure, we have the opportunity to make the infrastructure climate resilient from the out-set.

Interventions in early design and construction phases will reduce additional costs and help us avoid expensive retrofitting later. It will also be necessary to include strategies to re-design and reconstruct existing infrastructure in climate resilience plans to reduce damages in vulnerable regions.

These rating systems, policies and development plans will help provide the necessary know-how to building resilient cities, and need to be supported with appropriate institutional mechanisms. This includes necessary capacity building and training, improving engagement and coordination between all stakeholders, market mobilisation and providing financial support to build climate-proof infrastructure and buildings.

The writer is Anant Fellow for Climate Action



# We don't stifle original ideas: Dr Mitra

September 2, 2021, gave me an awful shock that will linger forever. After finishing the editions last night, I had woken up around 9.30 am only to get a vague SMS "My deepest condolences" from an old journalist friend. I thought I would call up the person to know who he was taking about during my morning walk for which I was getting ready. Suddenly the phone rang. It was our photographer, Ranjan Dimri, who asked me, "When are you reaching the cremation ground?" I was speechless when I enquired who he was speaking about.

A distressing scene conjured up in my mind. My 17-year-long association with my editor, Dr Chandan Mitra, would end so suddenly seemed a nightmare. It was too early for him to leave us forever at just 66. But then death is the only eternal truth. I rushed to the cremation ground to have the last glimpse of the great editor who groomed me. He was the only reason I didn't accept a job offer from a top national daily on the last day of joining, about a decade back. September 2 was filled with vivid memories that kept hugging me all the day.

Would an editor-owner of a media organisation ever allow a subordinate journalist to even think of taking a stand (wittingly or unwittingly) contrary to his/her and place it on the record on the same space? It is next to impossible for two basic reasons: First, it is an utter disrespect to the editor and the editorial position to go off at a tangent, and second, it is fraught with the danger of losing your job. However, it was very much possible under the editorship of Dr Mitra, an editor par excellence.

I vividly remember the day he called me to his chamber to discuss/explain why I had written the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi was a national shame on the opinion page. "Didn't you read *The Pioneer*? Don't you know the editorial position? I myself have written that the CWG is a 'national pride'," he enquired in his calm but deep baritone voice, accentuating the phrase "national pride", with his eyes penetrating mine for the answer.

I was only six years into journalism then and was replete with lofty idealism of journalism. "Sir, organising a global sporting event is indeed a pride for any country. But I think the huge public money splurged on organising the Commonwealth Games is not worth its salt for a poor country like India. I have tried to substantiate my opinion with the National Sample Survey data. But I am sorry if I have offended you. I wrote it in the anticipation that *The Pioneer* under your leadership respects all shades of opinion," I explained with tinge of fear of repercussions.

He flashed me a disarming smile. "Yes, we do respect all shades of opinion. But you are an in-house journalist and your article appeared within a couple of days of my writing. But it was a well researched piece."

I was startled. I didn't know whether to take it as a compliment or a warning. But he hastily added, "Keep on writing good stuff. We don't stifle original ideas. You have freedom to write in the paper if you have compelling reasons to put your point across logically."

It was his fearlessness and magnanimity which gave a rare opportunity to the journalists in *The Pioneer* to nail their colours to the mast.

During the animated news meetings, he ensured that every willing member got the floor to express their opinions no matter how much those were at odds with his political-social associations and ideologies. Though he respected cogent arguments, he would hit the roof at imputations which were completely off base. Despite his personal political prejudice or constraints, as an editor he did not dictate terms when it came to selection of copies or treatment of them. He would go with the majority opinion in



the news meeting and it did earn him immense respect.

Therefore, the evening news meeting has been the liveliest event in our life in *The Pioneer*. Besides the selection of copies and planning for the future, this was our public sphere where a variety of topics were on the table, ranging from literature, music, cinema to personal life stories. That he loved music, books, and good food and wine were reflected in his usual non-news subjects of discussion. In our many leisure talks, he always enriched my knowledge about the deeds and (mostly unwitting) misdeeds of many famous individuals some of whom were his friends or close acquaintances. But those stories were never for public consumption.

As for stories, my generation had grown up reading about his expertise in his craft. He was a well-bred and highly learned editor with command of language and expertise in story telling. When he launched Pioneer Hindi editions, we witnessed his command of Hindi language was equally excellent.

While he embodied the most ideal possibility of journalism, he kept his ear to the ground and his projections were based on primary sources which proved prophetic. At the same time, he was an intrepid fighter who took on the powerful people, seen in *The Pioneer* coverage of the 2G scam.

He would always look for exclusive in-house stories and would desire that each desk pitches their stories during the evening news meetings. He would not go for what was running on TV or news websites. What tormented him the most was being forced to pick lead copies from websites or agencies.

It seemed he had symbiotic relationship with *The Pioneer*. And his official chamber was his best retreat. Despite his hectic schedule, some due to his political affairs, he never ignored the journalist in him. Even during his heyday as a Member of Parliament for 12 years, his heart lay in journalism. He would always find out time to attend *The Pioneer* office, especially for the news meeting. Also he would never miss to have a look at page one headlines that I used to send him, earlier via SMS, then email and in later years via

WhatsApp. During my early years as News Editor, I would call him even after 11.30pm if I wanted his approval to include a piece of breaking news on page one. Next day, he would invariably tell me that it was not necessary to wake him up for his approval (just to keep my morale high), but I always knew he wanted at least to be kept posted about any change on page one.

Although he would say that he trusted my abilities and judgment, he would still like to know page one headlines unless he had to turn in early for some reasons. During those days, then he would ask me to tell him tentative headlines much before the copies were filed and would sometimes suggest what he wanted the headlines to convey.

However, in the last five-six years, he had left it to my judgment to make any change on page one, making me account-

able for the error of judgment as well.

On several occasions, when I would alert him that the suggested headline does not match with the copy, he would lose his cool questioning the writer's judgment and would ask me to add those things in the copy to substantiate the headline.

No matter whether he was outstation within India or abroad, he would call me up to keep abreast of what copies have been selected for page one and what headlines I have drafted.

My close day-to-day interactions with Dr Mitra began in 2011 when I started attending news meetings. In December 2012, when he offered me the post of News Editor, stressing on the fact that I would be the youngest to hold the position, he was a little surprised when I asked him to offer me the rank of Associate Editor to

head the news desk, besides ensuring no interference from any other department. He teased me, "I understand, an Associate Editor rank will help you easily fly to the greener pasture."

However, he gave a patient audience when I explained to him how my demand for an Associate Editor rank would assign the required dignity to the chair of News Editor, steering the massive news desk: Delhi and six outstation editions. He took no time to approve both the requests, but quipped, "Only your work gives you dignity."

His ability to assess the strength of his staff was unparalleled. While he gave full freedom to the department heads to run their show as they deem fit, he did not compromise on the quality of their work reflected in the newspaper. At the same time, he spared no efforts to retain talents.

At one point of time, when I explored non-monetary ways to recognise accomplished staffers on the desk and also to infuse more energy in my team by way of giving them freedom to work lesser hours but with more responsibilities, besides two offs a week to retain the talents, he readily accepted the first one with the only condition that their productivity will not suffer at any cost. I think he gave due consideration for two offs a week for all the editorial staff, but it could not ensue into implementation probably because of financial constraints as it would have meant hiring more manpower.

However, he was adept in utilising the existing human resource and respected good exclusive reports. In January 2019, when Sheila Dikshit returned to active politics in Delhi after her gubernatorial stint, it was common understanding that the AAP and the

Congress will stitch pre-poll ties to take on the likely Modi wave in the 2019 Delhi Assembly elections. The then Congress chief had vehemently favoured an alliance with the AAP and it had stoked speculation about the AAP-Congress pre-poll tie-up. But I had information to the contrary from a close confidant of Sheila Dikshit. I hurriedly managed an exclusive interview with Sheila Dikshit and got confirmation about her firm stand against any tie-up with the AAP even if that meant the Congress won no seats. When I sent my copy to the editor for a look, he readily commissioned it as the page one anchor.

Later, on several occasions during the news meeting, he would cite the interview piece to reiterate that speculation must be confirmed or scotched from the horses' mouth. Our day-to-day interactions were badly affected during the Covid-19 pandemic, which has been devastating in our social and professional life. The physical meetings became infrequent. But he kept on attending office despite not keeping a robust health.

Of late, he felt bad for not being able to write regularly because of his ill health. However, when President Pranab Mukherjee breathed his last on August 31, 2020, I rang him up during the edition time in the evening to request to pen an obituary. Dr Mitra was superb in writing obituaries and his craft was greatly supported by his memory like an elephant. As he was not keeping well enough to devote time to write, he asked me to keep a stopgap arrangement in case he was unable to finish his writing well before the edition time. Although it alarmed me a little, I prodded him to give it a try. And he did produce an excellent obituary in an hour before our early editions. Later on, he thanked me for "forcing" (read, requesting) him to write.

Today, I feel fortunate, I could extract a brilliant piece from my editor that proved to be his last writing in *The Pioneer*.

(The writer is an Associate Editor & News Editor, *The Pioneer*)

**During the animated news meetings, he ensured that every willing member got the floor to express their opinions no matter how much those were at odds with his political-social associations and ideologies. Though he respected cogent arguments, he would hit the roof at imputations which were completely off base**



SWARN KUMAR ANAND





