

OPINION 6
THE AFGHAN STORY
KEEPS ALL OCCUPIED

WORLD 8
TALIBAN: WOMEN CAN STUDY IN
GENDER-SEGREGATED VARSITIES

SPORTS 12
RADUCANU WINS
US OPEN TITLE

NEW DELHI, MONDAY SEPTEMBER 13, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



AKSHAY KUMAR
ADMITS HE IS
NOT FEARLESS
10 VIVACITY

Gujarat gets low-profile CM

BJP brass chose lightweight Patidar Bhupendra Patel for top job

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP's central leadership on Sunday "hand-picked" a lightweight Patidar and first-time MLA Bhupendra Patel — known to be a *protégé* of former Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben Patel — as the new Chief Minister of Gujarat in place of Vijay Rupani who resigned a day earlier, after holding the post of the State's Chief Minister for close to four years. The choice of Patel surprised many State leaders and the front runners for the top post, including Nitin Patel, the Deputy Chief Minister, again lost the race.

A builder by profession, Bhupendra Patel staked his claim to the Chief Minister's Office on Sunday in front of State Governor Acharya Devvrat and will be sworn in on Monday.

According to sources, Patel's familiarity with the Gujarat business fraternity, a core voter base of the BJP, may also work in his favour.

While Patel was elected the leader of the Legislature Party after a meeting at Gandhinagar, it is well-known in the State BJP's political circles that his appointment was finalised beforehand by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister Amit Shah. In choosing a first-time MLA and



Newly-appointed Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel at the BJP headquarters in Gandhinagar on Sunday

PTI

a low-profile face as the Chief Minister, Modi has made it clear that the elections in his home State will again be contested in his name and that the vote for the BJP would be a vote for Prime Minister Modi and for the Union Government.

In 2016, he was in the reck-

oning for the Chief Minister's post with the backing of the outgoing Chief Minister Anandiben Patel but Shah is understood to have favoured Rupani at that time.

Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar made the announcement after Patel's

name was approved at the BJP Legislature Party meeting.

Tomar and Union Minister Pralhad Joshi were the central observers at the party meeting and outgoing Chief Minister Rupani proposed Patel's name, Tomar said.

"Bhupendra Patel is capa-

ble. We believe the BJP will win the forthcoming elections in the State under his leadership," Rupani said after the announcement.

Amit Shah congratulated the new Chief Minister to be saying the BJP will win the Assembly elections under his leadership in December 2022.

Patel won from the Ghatlodiya constituency in 2017 Gujarat Legislative Assembly elections, defeating Shashikant Patel of the Congress by a record margin of 1,17,000 votes, the largest for any constituency in Gujarat for the BJP in that election.

He is the former Chairman of the Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority and has also been Chairman of the AMC Standing Committee.

In the 2017 Assembly elections, the BJP was down by 16 seats, winning only 99 seats in the 182-member House. The Congress fought tenaciously collecting 77 seats in what many saw as a close contest, with the latter increasing its vote share in the State.

The 2022 Assembly polls may be more challenging for the BJP which has to face a 27-year anti-incumbency and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) a new entrant in the fray. The AAP had won 27 seats in the Surat Municipal Corporation.

Continued on Page 2

‘Skip Covid jab, increase death risk by 10 times’

CDC cites three studies on role shots play in saving lives

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

People who are not vaccinated against the Novel Coronavirus disease are ten times more likely to die from the infection, compared to those who have taken the shots, the US' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said citing three new studies that emphasised the importance of Covid shots in preventing death rates.

The studies appeared in the agency's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

The findings showed that the currently available Covid-19 jabs provide strong protection for most people against hospitalisation and death, even during the Delta surge. However, higher hospitalisation and death rates are observed in older age groups, regardless of vaccination status.

For the study, the CDC analysed data on more than 6,00,000 Covid-19 cases, hospitalisations and deaths among people 18 years of age and older, by vaccination status, reported from April 4 to July 17 in 13 States and cities.



Vaccine effectiveness against the infection dropped from 90 per cent, when Delta had not yet gained significant traction, to less than 80 per cent from mid-June to mid-July, when Delta began out-competing all other variants of the virus.

Effectiveness against hospitalisation and death showed barely any decline during the entire period, *The Washington Post* reported. "Still achieving 80 per cent is a very good number. These vaccines still hold up against a highly transmissible

variant," Mehul Suthar, a virologist at Emory University, was quoted as saying.

A second study showed that Moderna's vaccine for Covid-19 is significantly more effective against the Delta variant of the SARS-CoV2 virus as compared to Pfizer or Johnson & Johnson. It suggested that Moderna was 95 per cent effective at preventing hospitalisation among adults, while Pfizer was 80 per cent effective and Johnson & Johnson 60 per cent effective.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

POST-MORTEM REPORT SAYS WAZIR WAS SHOT

New Delhi: The post-mortem report of National Conference leader Trilochan Singh Wazir stated that he was shot dead, police said on Saturday. Multiple teams of Delhi Police's Crime Branch with technical assistance from the Special Cell are conducting raids in neighbouring States to nab the two prime suspects — Harpreet Singh and Harmeet Singh — against whom a look out circular has been issued. **P3**

SHIV SENA WILL CONTEST UP, GOA ELECTIONS: RAUT

Mumbai: Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday said his party will contest the Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh and Goa due early next year. **P5**

KEJRIWAL RE-ELECTED AS AAP CONVENOR

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was re-elected as the national convenor of the AAP at the national executive meeting of the party on Sunday, according to sources. **P3**

GOVT APPOINTS 31 MEMBERS AT NCLT, ITAT

New Delhi: The Government has appointed 31 people as judicial, technical and accountant members at the NCLT and the ITAT, amid the Supreme Court flagging concerns about vacancies at various tribunals. **P2**

India to get 3rd set of Swiss bank a/c details, info on properties

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/BERNE

India will get this month the third set of Swiss bank account details of its nationals under an automatic exchange of information pact with Switzerland and this will include for the first time the data about real estate properties owned by Indians there, officials said on Sunday.

Marking a key milestone in the Indian Government's fight against black money allegedly stashed abroad, India will get this month the complete information on flats, apartments and condominiums owned by Indians in Switzerland as also on earnings made from such properties to help it look into tax liabilities associated with those assets.

The move assumes significance on the part of Switzerland as well as the European Alpine nation is trying hard to reposition itself as a key global financial centre while warding off the long-persisting perception about the Swiss banking system being an alleged safe haven for black money.

Continued on Page 2

Nitish skips but JD(U) to attend Opp rally KC Tyagi to represent party in Sept 25 show at Jind

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

While Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has expressed his inability to attend the much-hyped Jind rally called by INLD stalwart Om Prakash Chautala for non-BJP and non-Congress parties, Nitish's party JD(U) will be represented by senior leader and former Rajya Sabha member KC Tyagi.

JD(U) president Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lallan said the Chief Minister was busy so he would not be able to visit Jind on September 25, though the JD(U) would be sending national general secretary KC Tyagi as its representative.

The response comes days after INLD leader Abhay Chautala announced that Nitish, along with top Opposition leaders, would attend the mega rally in Haryana to commemorate the birth anniversary of former Deputy Prime Minister Chaudhary Devi Lal.

JD(U) said the Bihar Chief Minister has the deepest personal regard for Devi Lal and he was willing to attend, but the



State is facing several challenges on the ground like Covid, floods and local politics.

Lallan said under the prevailing circumstances, Nitish could ill-afford to go out of the State. He might, at most, make short trips to the national Capital if the situation warants.

Abhay Chautala, along with his father and former Haryana Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala, is organising the Kisan Panchayat where leaders like Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh

Yadav, former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda and Siromani Akali Dal leader Parkash Singh Badal are expected to be present.

Chautala had initially claimed that Nitish had confirmed his presence for the meeting, which had led to a political storm in Bihar since the JD(U) is the biggest constituent of the NDA after the BJP. It is being speculated that the JD(U) strongman, whose party had been given short shrift by the BJP in the recent Union Cabinet expansion,

might have decided to attend the Jind programme to express his disquiet.

The rally was being viewed as a precursor to the formation of a non-BJP, non-Congress Third Front. NCP leader Sharad Pawar, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and NC leader Farooq Abdullah have also been invited to the rally.

Confirmation about the participation of all invitees is yet to come as all the announcements so far have been made by the INLD.

Zawahiri surfaces in 9/11 20th anniversary video

AP ■ BEIRUT



signed in February 2020.

Al-Zawahiri made no mention of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan and the capital Kabul last month, SITE added. But he did mention a January 1, attack that targeted Russian troops on the edge of the northern Syrian city of Raqqa.

Rumours have spread since

late 2020 that al-Zawahiri had died from illness. Since then, no video or proof of life surfaced, until Saturday.

"He could still be dead, though if so, it would have been at some point in or after January 2021," tweeted Rita Katz, SITE's director.

Al-Zawahiri's speech was recorded in a 61-minute, 37-second video produced by the group's as-Sahab Media Foundation.

In recent years, al-Qaida has faced competition in jihadist circles from its rival, the Islamic State (IS) group. IS rose to prominence by seizing large swaths of Iraq and Syria in 2014, declaring a "caliphate" and extending affiliates to multiple countries across the region.

Continued on Page 2

Kozhikode crash: A sad tale of pilot in a hurry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The probe report of the Kozhikode plane crash has revealed that the pilot was in a hurry to return to Kozhikode as he had to operate a flight to Doha the next morning.

"There was only one Captain against 26 First Officers on the posted strength at Kozhikode. The pilot was on standby duty the next day but due to the non-availability of Captains at Kozhikode, he was assigned the Doha flight for August 8", the probe report said. According to the report, the events of AXB 1344 crash replicated the Mangalore crash of 2010. "Ten years later, on 7 August, 2020, it was once again a similar tabletop aerodrome, the same airline, the same type of aircraft that landed off an 'un-stabilised approach' and touched down past half the runway and resulted in another major disaster".

The report said that the pilot's actions and decisions were "steered by a misplaced motivation" to land back in Kozhikode to operate a flight to Doha the next morning. The unavailability of a sufficient number of Captains at Kozhikode was the result of Air India Express Limited's (AIXL) faulty human resource policy which does not take into account

operational requirements while assigning a permanent base to its Captains", the report said.

These are among the findings of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) report that delved into the accident on August 7 last year when the Boeing 737-800 aircraft overshot the table top runway and fell to a depth of about 110 feet below the runway elevation and broke into three pieces. Two



pilots and 19 passengers, including three infants, lost their lives as the plane coming from Dubai with a total of 190 people on board crashed.

"This last-minute assignment of eighth morning flight to Doha put additional pressure on the pilot in command (PIC) to land back at Kozhikode in time on seventh evening," the report added. Had the flight been diverted, the pilot would have exceeded his Flight Duty Time Limitation and would not have been available for the morning flight.

The probe report also pointed out that due to low visibility and "suboptimal performance" of windshield wiper in the rain, the pilot probably experienced visual illusions causing errors in distance and depth perception.

Noting that in the last ten years, AIXL had two major accidents and a number of non-fatal accident/serious incidents,

the AAIB said most of them were a result of continuation of unstabilised approach and total disregard to the repeated calls from the First Officer to "Go Around", both being serious breach of Standard Operating Procedures.

Among other aspects, the probe report has flagged that AIXL did not have provision for child/infant restraint system and they rely solely on lap-held infants without any supplemental restraint. Out of the ten infants on board, three sustained fatal injuries, three had serious injuries and four escaped unhurt. The cockpit voice recorder recording revealed that the pilot carried out an unusually detailed briefing of an experienced flight officer regarding windshield wipers. The transcript points out that the pilot was perhaps apprehensive about the reliability of the windshield wiper, the report said.

Centre appoints 31 members at NCLT, ITAT

New Delhi: The Government has appointed 31 people as judicial, technical and accountant members at the NCLT and the ITAT, amid the Supreme Court flagging concerns about vacancies at various tribunals.

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) deals with matters mainly related to companies law and insolvency law while Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) deals with income tax matters.

The appointments also come at a time when the Supreme Court has flagged concerns, saying the Centre was "emasculating" tribunals by not appointing officials to the quasi-judicial bodies that are facing staff crunch.

There are around 250 posts lying vacant at various key tribunals and appellate tribunals such as NCLT, DRT, TDSAT and SAT.

As many as 8 judicial and 10 technical members have

been appointed to the NCLT while 13 judicial and 7 accountant members have been appointed to the ITAT, according to separate communications issued by the Department of Personnel and Training on September 11 based on decisions taken by the Appointments Committee of Cabinet.

Andhra High Court Judge Justice Telaprolu Rajani, Bombay High Court Retired (Rtd) Judge Justice Pradeep Narhari Deshmukh, Madras High Court Retd Judge Justice S Ramathilagam and District Court Judge Deep Chandra Joshi are among those appointed as the judicial members to the NCLT.

Others are DRT-3, Delhi, Presiding Officer Dharminder Singh, Punjab and Haryana High Court Retd Registrar General Harnam Singh Thakur,

Principal District Court,

Salem (Tamil Nadu) Retd District Court Judge P Mohan Raj and Advocate Rohit Kapoor.

The newly-appointed technical members include Principal Commissioner of Income Tax Ajai Das Mehrotra, Retd NHPC CMD Balraj Joshi, Retd Ministry of Panchayati Raj Secretary Rahul Prasad Bhatnagar, Retd Principal Director General of Income Tax Subrata Kumar Dash, Retd

Department of Consumer Affairs Secretary Avinash K Srivastava and Retd SBI Chief General Manager Shree Prakash Singh.

Other technical members are Chartered Accountant Sameer Kakar, Retd Director General of Income Tax Manoj Kumar Dubey, Chief Commissioner of Income Tax Kaushalendra Kumar Singh and Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax Anuradha Sanjay Bhatia. **PTI**

Over 2,400 dengue cases in MP so far this year: Health official

PTI ■ BHOPAL

More than 2,400 people were infected by dengue in Madhya Pradesh so far this year and out of them, 95 were currently undergoing treatment in various hospitals of the state, an official said on Sunday.

The admission rate of dengue patients in hospitals was around 20 per cent, MP programme officer (for control of vector-borne diseases) Dr Himanshu Jayswar told **PTI**.

"More than 2,400 people have been infected by dengue in MP so far since January 1 this year," he said.

He said the highest number of 800 people were infected by the mosquito-borne disease in Mandsaur district this year and out of them, 150 were admitted to hospitals.

The admission rate of dengue patients in Mandsaur hospitals was 20 per cent, he said.

Jabalpur reported the second highest 325 dengue cases since

January 1, the official said, adding that the remaining cases were reported from the state capital Bhopal, industrial hub Indore, Agar Malwa, Ratlam districts and other places.

On deaths caused by dengue, he said four co-morbid patients have so far died due to the mosquito-borne viral infection.

Any person suffering from fever, bodyache, rashes, joint pain or retro-orbital pain (behind the eye) should consult a doctor within 24 hours, he added.

The Jabalpur Municipal Corporation, one of the oldest civic bodies of MP, was imposing a fine of Rs 200 on the owners of houses where the larvae of mosquitoes causing dengue were found, another official said.

As per reports from different parts of MP, medical teams and squads of civic bodies were visiting dengue-prone areas across the state and taking steps to destroy the larvae of such mosquitoes.

Maha logs 3,623 new cases, 46 Covid deaths

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a clear indication of a flattening Covid-19 curve in Maharashtra, the daily Covid-19 deaths dropped below the 50 mark for the third consecutive day on Sunday, while the infections remained well below 5,000 for more than 10 consecutive days.

After it recorded 44 and 35 deaths on Friday and Saturday respectively, Maharashtra logged 46 deaths on Sunday.

Similarly after recording 4,174, 4,219, 4,154 and 3,075 on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday respectively, the State registered 3,623 new cases on Sunday.

There has been a near consistent drop in the number of daily deaths during the past nine days. After the daily deaths dropped to 52 on August 30 (Monday), the daily fatalities remained below 100 mark for five more days during the last eight days—55 deaths on September 2, 92 deaths on September 3, 64 deaths on September 4, 67 deaths on September 5, 37 deaths on September 6, 86 deaths on September 7, 65 deaths on September 8, 55 deaths on September 9, 44 deaths on September 10, 35 deaths on September 11

and 46 deaths on September 12.

With 46 fresh deaths reported on Sunday, the total number of deaths in the state increased from 1,38,096 to 1,38,142, while the total infections -- with 3,623 new cases -- went up from 64,94,254 to 6,49,78,77.

As 2,972 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year increased from 63,02,816 to 63,05,788. The recovery rate in the State dropped from 97.05 per cent to 97.04 per cent.

The total "active cases" in the State rose from 49,796 to 50,400. The fatality rate in the State stood static at 2.12 per cent.

Pune with 13,018 active cases emerged as the first in the state in terms of maximum number of "active cases" in the state, while Thane with 7,979 cases stood second in the state, followed by Satara (5,637) Ahmednagar (6027) and Mumbai (5,244).

Of the 5,59,79,898 samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 64,97,877 have tested positive (11.61 per cent) for Covid-19 until Sunday.

MP tribal assault-death: Govt to take care of son, says CM Chouhan

PTI ■ BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh Government will take care of the education and upbringing expenses of the son of a 40-year-old tribal man from Neemuch who died after being thrashed by a group of people and dragged behind a vehicle some days ago, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Sunday.

He also said his Government would construct houses for two brothers of the deceased and also provide them assistance of ₹2 lakh each.

"In an unfortunate inci-

dent, a man identified as Kanhaiyalal Bheel had died in Neemuch district. We have decided that the State Government will take complete care for the upbringing and education of his son Durgashankar, who is currently in Rajasthan with his mother," Chouhan said in a statement.

Bheel (40) was thrashed and dragged after being tied to the rear part of a vehicle in Neemuch district on August 26 following a minor road accident with a milkman riding a motorcycle on Neemuch-Singoli road.



A cloudy day at the Taj Mahal in Agra on Sunday

PTI

Captain pays tribute to soldiers of historic Saragarhi battle

Ferozepur: Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Sunday paid tributes to the soldiers of the historic Saragarhi battle on its 124th anniversary.

The Chief Minister digitally paid obeisance in Gurdwara Saragarhi during the state-level martyrdom day function.

In his address, he also recalled the valour of the 22 soldiers of the 36th Sikh stationed near Samana ridge (now in Pakistan), who laid down their lives after a fierce battle following an attack by nearly 10,000 Afghans on September 12, 1897.

Giving the background, the Chief Minister said in order to quell the disturbances

in the Pathan areas, four columns of the then British Indian Army were sent by General Lockhart.

Of these, 36th Sikh comprising 21 Sikh soldiers and a cook, was assigned the task of defending Saragarhi an observation post to ensure that the communication between Fort Lockhart and Fort Gulistan is not disrupted.

"On September 12, 1897 morning, Pathans of Afridi and Orakzai tribes in huge numbers attacked the Saragarhi post. The Pathans demands for surrender were rebuffed strongly by Havaldar Ishar Singh. 'Soon the attack ensued, prompting Ishar Singh to send a signal to his superior Colonel

Houghton who asked them to hold positions," said Singh, adding the battle continued till mid-afternoon and every Sikh soldier fired 400-500 rounds of ammunition.

The Chief Minister further said all the efforts to send help to the besieged soldiers were unsuccessful owing to a large number of tribal Pathans.

At last, Sepoy Gurmukh Singh sent the last signal to Colonel Houghton and picked up the gun to fight. None of the soldiers surrendered and all were martyred. The CM further said it is also a matter of pride that the statue of Havaldar Ishar Singh is being unveiled today in Wolverhampton in the United Kingdom. **PTI**

6 temples of different deities in Ram temple's final blueprint

Ayodhya (UP): Six temples of different deities will be constructed on the Ram Janmabhoomi temple complex, according to the final blueprint prepared by the Ram temple construction committee.

The construction of the foundation of the Ram temple is in full swing and is expected to be completed by October-end or first week of November, Ram Mandir Trust member Dr Anil Mishra said.

According to the final blueprint, six temples of different deities will be constructed in the Ram Janmabhoomi premises.

The deities include Lord Surya, Lord Ganesha, Lord Shiva,

Lord Durga, Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma.

"These six temples of deities will be build along the outer periphery of the Ram temple but within the premises. Along with worshipping Lord Rama, worshipping these deities is also very important in Hindu dharma," Mishra told **PTI**.

The construction of the base (plinth) of the super structure of the Ram temple will start from the end of October or from the first week of November after the completion of the filling of foundation, he said.

For in-situ setting of stones in the structure of the grand temple,



four tower cranes will be installed at four different locations, Mishra added.

The filling of the excavated foundation area of 1,20,000 square feet and 50 feet deep was expected to be completed by the end of October. Now, the temple Trust has decided to construct four additional layers on the founda-

tion area to bring the foundation to 107 meters above the sea level, he said. Earlier, in the foundation where 44 layers of engineered fill material was to be used, has now been increased to 48 layers, the Ram Mandir Trust member said. According to sources, after the completion of the foundation filling, the casting of the seven-foot raft will be done again. This casting will be done from concrete in which cement will also be used. So far, cement was not being used in engineered field material, but stone dust and fly ash was being used.

According to Ram Janmabhoomi Trust General

Secretary Champat Rai, cement absorbs more heat, which will increase the heat in the atmosphere. To avoid this, minimum use of cement is being done.

The plinth of the super structure of the Ram temple is to be constructed with the 3.5 lakh cubic feet stones from Uttar Pradesh's Mirzapur, contract for the cutting and setting of the stones has been given to two Mirzapur-based private firms, he said.

The sources said that due to only 10 to 12 hours of electricity supply in Mirzapur, cutting and setting of stones has slowed down. **PTI**

Displaced Brus from Mizoram find new permanent homes in Tripura

Agartala: Laksiti Reang, a 40 year old Bru woman, who fled from her house in Mizoram's Mamit district 24 year ago following ethnic conflicts and took shelter at Naisinghpura relief camp in Tripura's North Tripura district has finally got a permanent home at Haduklaj, a tribal hamlet in Tripura's Dhalai district.

She along with her four member family now live at her own house with all amenities built out of money from a relief package sanctioned by the union government.

Over 400 Bru people left a relief camp in the third week of April last to set up houses on land provided by the

government as a measure to permanently solve the refugee status of the community.

Thousands of the Bru tribal people have been living in relief camps in Tripura since 1997. They had fled their ancestral homeland in Mizoram to reach the neighbouring State, victims of ethnic clashes. By now, the number of the internally displaced people has risen to over 37,136. Altogether 426 people belonging to 92 families living in Naisinghpura camp in Kanchanpur subdivision of North Tripura district were brought to Haduklaj in Dhalai district, an official said. **PTI**

Despite Covid, malnutrition down by over 40% among kids in Naxal-hit Kondagaon in C'garh

Raipur: Kondagaon, a small tribal-dominated and Naxal-affected district in Chhattisgarh's Bastar division, has recorded more than 40 per cent decline in the number of malnourished children in the last two years even as it is also tackling the Covid-19 pandemic since last year, an official claimed on Sunday.

Besides, a project, titled 'Nangat Pila', (term coined in local 'Halbi' dialect which means a healthy

child), launched last year has not only helped in curbing malnutrition, but also provided a new source of livelihood to women and their self-help groups (SHGs) in the district. Located over 200 km from the state capital Raipur, Kondagaon, which has often been in news due to Naxal violence, is now showing how a systematic approach can help in fighting malnutrition along with creating avenues of livelihood. **PTI**

Security forces to have training module on Taliban

New Delhi: Border forces and armed police units deployed in the counter-terrorism grid have been directed by the central security establishment to prepare and administer a new training module on the Taliban and its modus operandi to the troops in view of the "emerging" scenario following the Islamic militia taking over Afghanistan.

Stating that the fall of Kabul to the Taliban last month may have a "serious bearing" on the security situation in India, the ground forces and their

intelligence setup have been asked to update both their strategy, tactics and combat syllabus on the new 'geo-political situation in central and south Asia and its grave security implication on India's borders and the hinterland."

The directive issued by the security establishment a few days back also envisages a scenario where infiltration from across the border from Pakistan on India's west and illegal entry of terrorist operatives from open fronts in the east may increase including that by

foreign terrorist fighters.

Officials in the central security forces and intelligence wings acknowledged the new developments that have taken place in the neighbourhood after the Taliban swiftly took over almost all provinces of Afghanistan last month following the US military retreating from their 20-year war in that country launched after the 9/11 terror attacks in 2001 in their country.

A senior officer told **PTI** that the existing training module of border guarding forces

like the BSF and SSB, state police units and those involved in counter-terrorist duties like the CRPF and Jammu and Kashmir Police have an existing title "changing dynamics of border management".

"This included information on the Taliban as well but it was not updated. That is being added through open-source authentic information and others available in a classified manner to us and the focus is the developments of the last twenty years that took place in the aftermath of the

9/11 attacks," the officer said. A full-fledged training, intelligence and combat module on Taliban, its leadership and their modus operandi is being prepared apart from specific case studies that have taken place in that country and the region, he said.

The directives have been forwarded to the central and state police forces which have multiple levels of training centres and academies to train their personnel and officers during induction and while in service. "It is very important

for the last man standing at the border, a checkpoint or under a police jurisdiction to know about the Taliban's history and linked activities and strategies.

"Senior and top commanders of the security forces may know most of the things about Afghanistan and Taliban situation but they draw their operational strength from the troops or the constable standing on the ground. They need to be informed well," another senior officer working in the training management division of a paramilitary force said. **PTI**

Zawahiri surfaces in 9/11 anniv...

From Page 1

IS's physical "caliphate" was crushed in Iraq and Syria, though its militants are still active and carrying out attacks. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the shadowy leader of IS was killed by US special forces in a raid in northwestern Syria in October 2019.

Al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian, became leader of al-Qaida following the 2011 killing of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan by US Navy SEALs.

India to get 3rd set of Swiss bank a/c details, info on...

From Page 1

While it would be the third time that India will get details about bank accounts and other financial assets held by Indians in Switzerland, it will be the first time that the information being shared with India would include information about the real estate assets. While the Swiss Government has agreed to share details of real estate assets, the information about contributions to non-profit organisations and other such foundations, as also details on investments in digital currencies still remain out of bounds from the automatic exchange of information framework, officials said.

‘Skip Covid jab, increase death risk by ...

From Page 1

"These real-world data show that vaccines remain highly effective at reducing Covid-19 related hospitalisation and emergency department visits, even in the presence of the new Covid-19 variant," said researcher Shaun Grannis from Indiana University in the US, as per the news report.

For the study, the team analysed more than 32,000 medical encounters from nine States during June, July, and August this year, when the Delta variant became the predominant strain.

The third study which looked at the effectiveness of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna found that the mRNA vaccines were 87 per cent effective in preventing hospitalisations and remained highly effective even during Delta's predominance. Vaccine effectiveness in preventing Covid-related hospitalisation dropped to 80 per cent among adults aged above 65 years compared with 95 per cent among those aged between 18 and 64 years.

Indians with low antibody...

From Page 1

"Based on the outcome of the clinical trial, the ICMR may approve the booster dose. The trial is on whether the booster dose will be Covaxin for people vaccinated with Covishield and vice-versa or Sputnik V for people vaccinated with either Covaxin or Covishield. The study is expected to be over in a week," he stated.

Dr Rahul Bhargava, Head of Hematology Department, Fortis Gurugram who has been vocal about the booster dose said that those who have issues in developing antibodies need to be protected from the virus which is taking shape now and then. They should be given an additional booster dose, he added.

Gujarat gets ...

From Page 1

Ahead of Sunday's Legislative Party meeting, the names of two Union Ministers from Gujarat — Mansukh Mandavia and Parshottam Rupala — the controversial Lakshadweep administrator Praful Khoda Patel, and State Agriculture Minister RC Faldu were doing the rounds as the potential candidates for the top job.

Rupani, a Jain, stepped down on Saturday — 15 months ahead of the State elections — in a surprise move amid reports that his handling of the second wave of Covid and his lack of "coordination with State leaders and the bureaucracy" had come in way of his spearheading the party in the 2022 high-stake Assembly polls.

Kejriwal re-elected AAP convenor for 3rd time

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was re-elected as the national convenor of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for the third time at the national executive meeting of the party held on Sunday. Party's senior leader Pankaj Gupta was named the national secretary and ND Gupta was named the national treasurer, the AAP said in a statement. The office bearers were unanimously elected for tenure of five years. Upon the proposal of Kejriwal's name as the convenor, the executive unanimously agreed and stated that he is the guiding light of the party since day one. "Kejriwal stood for the party and its ide-

ology even in the most unprecedented times and it would be the wisest decision to elect him for the third time consecutively," the statement said. The meeting reinforced their belief in the fact that he is the most popular leader of the party, considering that he has won the public's mandate thrice as the Chief Minister of Delhi. The national executive also strongly supported the election of Pankaj Gupta and ND Gupta for the posts of the national secretary and national treasurer, respectively; stating that their work and experience makes them the best candidates for the posts. The national council of the AAP met and elected the new national executive on

Saturday. The meeting was presided over by national convenor Arvind Kejriwal. In the meeting, 34 new national executive members were elected. The executive members include senior AAP leaders Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Satyendar Jain, Imran Hussain, Rajendra Pal Gautam, Raghav Chadha, Atishi, Rakhi Birla among others. The first meeting of the newly elected national executive was held today through video conferencing. The order of business of the next national executive meeting shall be discussions and deliberations upon the upcoming state assembly elections and current political scenario of the country.

CM inaugurates redeveloped Chandni Chowk

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday inaugurated the redevelopment and beautified areas of Chandni Chowk market which went through several delays owing to Covid -19 pandemic. The project was to be inaugurated on April 17 this year but cancelled due to the second wave of the virus. Kejriwal said that broken roads, traffic jams, hanging electric wires used to punctuate Chandni Chowk; at the same time, now people from all over Delhi are coming to see how beautiful Chandni Chowk has become. He said that there are many more plans to develop this entire stretch as a tourist destination and street food will be allowed in this redeveloped area till 12 AM, so that visitors can enjoy. "In the entire world, when



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal during the inauguration of redeveloped Chandni Chowk market in New Delhi on Sunday

someone speaks of Delhi, they remember Chandni Chowk for sure. Chandni Chowk's image some time before was of broken roads, traffic jams, electric wires hanging all around. Overall, Chandni Chowk had a very dirty image. In the last

3 years, Delhi Government has carried out the redevelopment and beautification project in Chandni Chowk," the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor said. Under this project, the 1.4 km stretch from Red Fort

to Fatehpuri Mosque has been beautified, the traffic problem has been resolved, CCTVs have been installed, all the hanging electrical wires are underground now and Chandni Chowk has become one of the most beautiful and important tourist spots of Delhi. "We have more plans to develop Chandni Chowk as a tourist spot. In the coming times, these plans will be finalised and we'll keep implementing them. This beautification project has been a great success, and I congratulate the people of Delhi for witnessing this development," the CM added. Urban Development Minister Satyendar Jain said, "All the major problems of the area, like roads and overhanging wires, have been dealt with. We will further facelift the entire area and give it a splendid look. We will soon operate

electrical vehicles that match with the look of the area for the convenience of the people." Taking it to micro blogging site, Jain tweeted, "Chandni Chowk has been redeveloped under the guidance of Chief Minister Shri Arvind Kejriwal. Today, the main road of Chandni Chowk is one of the most beautiful places in Delhi. This redevelopment work is a glimpse of how the Delhi government will make entire Delhi the most beautiful city in the world." The proposal for redevelopment of Chandni Chowk was approved on August 27 2018. The transfer of facilities under this project was completed in December 2018. Work on the main project started in March 2019 by the Public Works Department. The Chandni Chowk corridor was notified in June 2021.

IIMC Prof selected as IAMCR faculty ambassador

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Professor (Dr) Surbhi Dahiya, Course Director, Department of English Journalism, Indian institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) has been selected as the new International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) faculty ambassador for three years. As an Ambassador, she will organise various events with university departments; local and regional media, communication research bodies and think tanks and NGOs involved in media advocacy and research and encourage Indian scholars to have visibility in international conferences. Dr Dahiya was conferred the Women Economic Forum (WEF) award 2019 for "Iconic Woman" as an Exceptional Leaders of Excellence. She won the national award by Public Relation Society of India (PRSI) for Contribution to Mass Communication Education in India and the Lifestyle Journalistic TLJ Jury Awards" for Excellence in the field of Journalism Education in 2019.

2 Tihar jail inmates injured after clash, case registered

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Two Delhi's Tihar jail inmates sustained stab injuries following a fight on Saturday evening. Police said that an attempt to murder case has been registered and further investigation is going on. According to Tihar jail officials, on Saturday evening, two to three inmates had a fight and injured each other with sharp edge objects. "The incident took place inside jail number 3 of Tihar. Nobody was serious. Two of them were sent to hospital from where they returned to the jail after treatment," said the prison officials. "Information was received from Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Hospital on Saturday around 10 PM that an undertrial prisoner Sumit Dutt, who was lodged in ward number 2 of central jail 3, has been admitted in the hospital," said a senior police official. "Police team reached the hospital. The injured stated that he was assaulted with sharp weapons in jail by his fellow inmates Kalu and Bilautu in the evening," said the police official.

NC leader's death: Autopsy report says he was shot; hunt on for 2 prime suspects

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The post-mortem report of National Conference leader Trilochan Singh Wazir stated that he was shot dead, police said on Saturday. Multiple teams of Delhi Police's Crime Branch with technical assistance from the Special Cell are conducting raids in neighbouring states to nab the two prime suspects — Harpreet Singh and Harmmeet Singh — against whom a look out circular has been issued, they said. Wazir (67), also former Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Council member, was found dead in a flat in West Delhi's Moti Nagar Thursday morning. "We have substantial leads in the case and our teams are working on them. In a complaint received from the

deceased's brother, four people have been named, but as of now, we are focusing on the two prime suspects. However, we are looking into all the allegations raised by the family and investigating the case from all angles," a senior police officer said. The post-mortem of the NC leader was conducted at a government hospital here on Friday for which a board of doctors was constituted. According to police, the autopsy report has revealed that the victim suffered gunshot injury in the temple area of head. Police said Wazir had visited Delhi even in August, but if the suspects had any plans to target him then or not will be ascertained only after the two absconders are nabbed. "We are in touch with our counterparts in the neigh-

bouring states too. Our teams were also sent to Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab in connection with the probe," a senior police officer had said. During the investigation, Harpreet's female friend, who lived in the same flat, told police that she was not aware about the body probably because the air condition was on throughout and she did not get any foul smell. Wazir's body was found to be in a highly decomposed state with his head wrapped in a plastic bag at the flat which was taken on rent by his acquaintance Harpreet, a native of Amritsar, police had said. A case of murder was registered in the matter and the investigation was transferred to Delhi Police's Crime Branch with the force's Special Cell to assist them, officials had said.

22 Covid-19 cases reported in Capital; zero fatalities

NEW DELHI: The national Capital has reported 22 new cases and zero fatalities due to Covid-19 on Sunday while the positivity stands at 0.04 per cent, according to the health bulletin issued by the Delhi Government. According to the health bulletin, 61,968 tests were conducted a day ago to detect COVID-19. It included 47,028 were RTPCR, CBNAAT and TrueNat tests while 14,940 were rapid-antigen tests. 44 patients were discharged in a day. The overall infection tally in the city has climbed to 1,43,233 of which over 14.12 lakh patients have recovered. "The number of containment zones declined to 94 on Sunday while the death toll was 25,083. The case fatality rate stood at 1.74 per cent. While, on the vaccination front, 1,06,16,609 beneficiaries in Delhi have received at least one dose," it said. SR

Inter-State drug syndicate busted, 3 held, heroin worth ₹2 cr seized

NEW DELHI: With the arrest of three men, the Crime Branch of Delhi Police has busted an inter-State syndicate of drugs involved in supplying heroin in the national Capital. Police said that a total of 1.1 kilogram of fine quality heroin worth over ₹ 2 crore in international market has been recovered from the possession of the accused. The accused have been identified as Hukam Chand (45) and Rohit (32), both residents of Sultanpuri and Shahid Khan (58), a resident of Bareilly district in Uttar Pradesh (UP). "During interrogation, Chand disclosed that he procured the heroin from Rohit. Later, on August 18, Rohit was apprehended from Sultanpuri area. His car was seized and 100 grams of heroin was also recovered from it," said the DCP. SR

Just a call away



HARYANA
EMERGENCY HELPLINE
112

We're always ready



*Police services across Haryana
*Ambulance and fire brigade services initially in Faridabad and Gurugram



Govt. of Haryana



75
Azadi Ka
Amrit Mahotsav

“Our aim is to make the citizen services easily accessible to everyone in an efficient manner. A convenient and fast emergency service has been started for the residents of Haryana two months ago with extremely good results.”

- Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana



Sixty Days of Service

Total Calls
7,47,163

Recorded Events
1,03,264

Total Vehicles Dispatched
88,140

Satisfied Callers
86%

ERV Average Time
14:09 Minutes

5352 Trained Personnel

601 ERV Vehicles

24x7 in Public Service

Saved 28 Lives

15 Missing Persons Reunited

Prevention of 25 Crimes

Prevention of 5 Robberies



Information, Public Relations and Languages Department, Haryana



www.prharyana.gov.in



@DiprHaryana

Threat to India from Af-Pak terror groups real, imminent

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The threat to India from the terror groups from Afghanistan-Pakistan region like the Haqqani Network and Islamic State Khorasan Province is real and imminent. The Haqqani Network, a project of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), has ostensibly made inroads into the Islamic seminaries in the country in an apparent bid to attract gullible youth to join its fold for taking forward Islamist agenda in the subcontinent.

According to a video recording of the seminar, Hamid-ul Haque Haqqani, a radical scholar and Vice Chancellor of Darul Uloom Haqqania, Akora Khattak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan addressed an online conference at Darul Uloom Deoband, Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh on December 7 last year as part of a three-day conclave that began on December 6, 2020, the anniversary of the demolition of the erstwhile Ramjannbhoomi-Babri Masjid complex.

Hamid-ul Haque Haqqani is also the Chairman of the Difa-e-Pakistan Council of which Lashkar-e-Tayabba chief Hafiz Sayeed is a founder chairman. Haqqani is the son of Sami-ul Haq who is considered the Father of Taliban. After his father's assassination, Haqqani also became chairman of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Pakistan.

The clamour for supporting the Taliban regime from a cross-section of individuals of a particular community and Muslim clerics giving call to segregate education for girls and boys in line with the Taliban exhortations could be an outcome of the outreach by the Haqqani Network.

Darul Uloom Haqqania is the alma mater of top global terrorists of the world. The Darul Uloom Haqqania, also referred to as Haqqania University, has the notorious distinction of producing several global terrorists like the founder of Taliban, Mullah Omar, Lashkar-e-Tayabba chief Hafiz Sayeed and Jaish-e-Mohammad boss Masood Azhar among others. Mullah



Omar's son Mullah Mohammad Yakoub is the Defence Minister of Afghanistan under the current Taliban regime in Kabul.

The main campus radicalizes an estimated 4,000 students every year. The seminary has 10 campuses in the Af-Pak region.

The online address by Haqqani was facilitated by the

vice chancellor of Darul Uloom Deoband, Saharanpur, Arshad Madani. Madani is also the President of the Arshad faction of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, an outfit of Muslim clerics, since the split of the parent organization in 2008.

Post-takeover of Afghanistan by Taliban last month, Madani gave a call for segregating education for girls

and boys including by non-Muslims in order to propagate the Taliban ideology. Following his call and Taliban's ascent in Kabul last month, a number of leaders from several States exhorted recognition of the Taliban regime. Their direct or indirect linkages to the Haqqani Network could not be ruled out.

The Haqqania seminary's

outreach is part of terror group Al Qaeda's project Barre Sagheer (subcontinent) movement for radicalisation of the countries in the region like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India for further expansion of Islam in these countries and push radicalisation. The movement was aimed at identifying seminaries and winning over clerics, especially in India who could exhort the Centre to recognize the Taliban regime following withdrawal of the US forces.

Counter-Terrorism Expert Dr Rituraj Mate said, "The Haqqani Network being a designated terror group by both the UN and the US has no business to engage its terror seminary with any Indian educational institutions, including the Darul Uloom Deoband."

The Haqqani Network has been seeking to get Indian Muslim clerics on board for its Barre Sagheer project for over nine months. In January this year, ADG (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar had denied Haqqani's activities in the State. The Barre Sagheer move-

ment was launched in 2008-09 by Al Qaeda in collusion with the ISI in anticipation of the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan sooner or later. The movement's objective was to identify like minded outfits of clerics and bring them under one umbrella to ramp up radicalization and subsequently create Taliban-like movements in the South Asian region, initially through overground sympathisers. The other objective was to elicit a united voice of these outfits of clerics to express solidarity with Taliban in getting international recognition after the exit of the US and allied forces from Afghanistan.

The agenda of achieving the objectives of the Barre Sagheer movement was tasked by the Al Qaeda to Haqqani Network and Taliban was committed to facilitate such like minded outfits.

While Hamid ul Haque Haqqani addressed the students of Darool Uloom Deoband, the authorities in the State and the Centre could not take cognizance of the nefari-

ous interaction between the Deoband seminary and the jihadi Haqqania University of Pakistan as an enquiry into the linkages was never initiated. Inadvertently, a section of the media also played into the hands of the Haqqani conspiracy by hyping up the propagation of the hardline Islamist world view of separate education for boys and girls through the exhortations by clerics like Madani on certain television news channels following the Taliban onslaught in Kabul.

Germany-based counter-terrorism expert of Afghan origin Ajmal Sohail said, "The Haqqani Network had influenced the educational institutions in Afghanistan in a similar manner by radicalizing the students in large numbers before the swift takeover of Kabul by Taliban on August 15 amid the US troops' withdrawal that was ongoing then."

Response from Director General of Police Uttar Pradesh, Mukul Goel and ADG (Law and Order), Prashant Kumar could not be elicited despite messages.

Air courier service for ferrying paramilitary personnel resumes

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has resumed the air courier service for ferrying the paramilitary personnel proceeding on leave or joining duties in Jammu and Kashmir as also the Northeast.

The services were discontinued from September 1 following non-receipt of approval from the Union Home Ministry. The air courier service was initiated after the Pulwama terror attack.

The Ministry accorded approval for seven months from September 1 till March 31 next year.

"It is requested to resume air courier service on all approved routes of NE (Northeast) and J&K Sectors w.e.f. from 16th Sept 2021 as per scheduled days and time. A confirmation may please be communicated to this HQr," reads a communication titled "Resuming of Air Courier Service for CAPFs personnel" issued on Friday by the BSF to Senior Manager (Commercial), Marketing planning of Air India here.

On February 21, 2019, the Ministry had allowed extension of air travel in respect of non-entitled personnel of CAPFs, AR (Assam Rifles) and NSG deployed in the Kashmir Valley



to travel by air. The order allowed the facility of air travel to the jawans and other rank officers who were otherwise not entitled to travel by air.

The order came following a deadly terror attack on a CRPF convoy on February 14, 2019 in Pulwama which took a toll of 40 paramilitary lives. The terror attack by Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) had led the Indian Air Force to carry out an aerial raid at Balakot's jehad factory of the banned terrorist group.

The CAPFs include Assam Rifles, Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo-Tibetan Border

Police (ITBP), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and National Security Guards (NSG).

Apart from being safe, the air courier service for the jawans and other non-gazetted officers of the paramilitary forces significantly cuts down on the travel time on both the routes from Jammu to Srinagar and back and from Jammu to Delhi and back.

The air courier facility is available from Jammu to Srinagar and back on official duty/transfer/tour and leave (on termination/commencement at base point at Jammu). The service is also available from Delhi to Srinagar and back on official duty /transfer/tour.

CBI arrests 7 more for Bengal post-poll violence

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Sunday arrested seven more people in connection with the post-poll violence related cases in West Bengal, taking the number of those arrested in these cases to 11. "The CBI has arrested 11 accused (seven on 12.09.2021 and four on 11.09.2021) in ongoing investigation of two separate cases related to violence and other offences in West Bengal," the CBI said in a statement on Sunday.

The CBI had registered these cases following express orders of Calcutta High Court and took over the investigation of the cases earlier registered by the State Police.

The CBI has so far regis-

tered 31 cases related to the post-poll violence in West Bengal after the Assembly election results were declared on

May 2. The cases relate to offences like murder, rape and grievous injuries to Opposition sympathisers and workers.



MLA from Purola (Uttarakhand), Rajkumar joins the BJP in the presence of Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, in New Delhi on Sunday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer Photo

SC to hear pleas seeking independent probe into Pegasus row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a batch of pleas seeking an independent probe into the alleged snooping on certain people in India involving Israeli spyware Pegasus.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana had on September 7 had granted more time to the Centre to decide on filing a further response on the petitions after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said that due to some difficulties he could not meet the officials concerned to take a decision on the filing of the second

affidavit.

The Centre had earlier filed a limited affidavit in the apex court saying the pleas seeking an independent probe into the Pegasus snooping allegations are based on "conjectures and surmises or on other unsubstantiated media reports or incomplete or uncorroborated material".

On August 17, the top court had issued notice to the Centre on the pleas, making it clear that it did not want the Government to disclose anything which compromises national security.

In its short affidavit filed in the court earlier, the Centre had

On August 17, the top court had issued notice to the Centre on the pleas, making it clear that it did not want the Government to disclose anything which compromises national security

said the position on the issue has already been clarified in Parliament by Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnav.

With a view of dispelling any wrong narrative spread by certain vested interests and examining the issues raised, the

government will constitute a committee of experts, it had said. The top court, while issuing notice on the pleas, had said that it did not want the government to disclose anything related to the national security and had asked the Centre what is the "problem" if the competent authority files an affidavit before it on the issue.

"Our considered response is what we have respectfully stated in our last affidavit. Kindly examine the issue from our point of view as our affidavit is sufficient," the law officer had told the bench, adding, "The Government of India is before the highest

court of the country."

The law officer had said if the government of any country divulges information about which software is used and which is not used, then those involved in terrorist activities may take preemptive measures.

The pleas are related to reports of alleged snooping by government agencies on eminent citizens, politicians and scribes by using Israeli firm NSO's spyware Pegasus.

An international media consortium has reported that over 300 verified Indian mobile phone numbers were on the list of potential targets for surveillance using Pegasus spyware.

Covid jabs can reduce anxiety too

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There's yet another reason to take the Covid-19 shots. If the Covid pandemic has affected mental health, researchers have indicated that the vaccines meant to kill the infection can also bring down anxiety and boost mental health. In other words, reducing risk of death and hospitalisation from infectious disease is not the only benefit of vaccination.

A team of researchers at the University of Southern California has found evidence suggesting that people who were vaccinated against Covid-19 experienced less stress afterward and saw resulting improvement in their mental health.

They found that people



experienced a 15 per cent decrease in the likelihood of feeling very depressed after being vaccinated and a 4 per cent reduction in the likelihood of feeling just mildly depressed.

The team estimates that based on their data, it is likely that one million people have felt reductions in mental distress after being vaccinated. The findings are published in

the open-access site PLOS ONE.

The researchers further suggest that their data indicates that getting vaccinated against Covid-19 does more than just protect people from infection — it also greatly reduces the fear and anxiety people feel about their likelihood of being infected.

For the study, the team sent

out more than 8,000 surveys to people across the country with questions geared toward gauging how the pandemic was impacting the mental health of people in general and impacts on their mental health after receiving a Covid-19 vaccination. Data from the surveys showed that the majority of people queried have been experiencing some degree of anxiety and depression as a result of the pandemic.

In yet another study that appeared in Psychiatry Research Trusted Source last October, a team of researchers outlined the characteristics of Covid-19 anxiety syndrome, naming avoidance, compulsive symptom-checking, worrying, and threat monitoring (combined).

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the administration of 72,86,883 vaccine doses in the last 24 hours, the country's Covid-19 vaccination coverage surpassed the cumulative figure of 73.82 crore as per provisional reports till 7 am on Sunday.

In the meantime, the country on Sunday reported a gradual decline in daily Covid-19 cases with 28,591 infections recorded in the past 24 hours, which pushed the nationwide tally to 33,236,921, while the death toll climbed to 442,655 with 338 fresh fatalities.

According to the Union Health Ministry, active cases are at 6,595 to stand at 384,921 during the same period. Active cases constitute 1.18% of total



cases while the national Covid-19 recovery rate stands 97.6%, the Ministry said. Kerala accounted for the highest count, followed by Maharashtra. Currently, Kerala

has a total of 2,38,201 active cases while Maharashtra has 49,796. Other states, such as Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan have also seen improvement in

their daily Covid case count for the past month.

As many as 15,30,125 Covid-19 tests were conducted on Saturday, taking the total number of samples tested so far to 54,18,05,829. The daily positivity rate was recorded at 2.1%, even as it has remained below 3 per cent for the past 12 days. The weekly positivity rate, which has been less than 3 per cent for the past 78 days, was recorded at 2.26% on Sunday morning, according to the health ministry.

Meanwhile, the Centre has urged people not to be complacent and follow Covid-19 protocols as the festive season has kicked off in the country.

As per the Ministry, "more than 57 lakh doses (57,56,240) are in the pipeline."

ASSEMBLY POLLS 2022

‘Sena will contest in UP, Goa’

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI;

In its intent to take on its erstwhile saffron alliance partner and current bitter rival BJP electorally, the Shiv Sena on Sunday announced that it would contest “80 to 90” seats in Uttar Pradesh and 20 seats in Goa in the 2022 State Assembly elections in the two states.

After Shiv Sena’s Uttar Pradesh unit president Thakur Anil Singh went to town saying that his party would contest 403 seats in the northern state to “teach a lesson” to the BJP, Sena’s chief spokesperson and MP Sanjay Raut made a formal announcement that his party would put up candidates in “80 to 90” constituencies in the UP Assembly elections to be held in early 2022.

“We are in talks with several organisations and parties to cobble electoral alliances. Some farmers organizations in Uttar Pradesh have told us that if the Sena contests the polls, they would support us. Even some small parties have offered to support... We intend to contest anywhere from 80 to 90 seats in Uttar Pradesh,” Raut said.

Alluding to the Sena’s plans in Goa, Raut said: “Like in Maharashtra, we are planning to experiment the Maha Vikas Aghadi (an alliance comprising Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress) in the forthcoming Assembly elections in Goa. As of now, I cannot talk much



about it. Talks are on among the MVA constituents. You will get to know more about it in the coming days. As Shiv Sena, we intend to contest 20 seats in this state.”

Earlier, in a statement issued after the meeting party’s office bearers, UP Shiv Sena Secretary Vishwajeet Singh said that the Sena – in its effort to “teach a lesson” to BJP -- would contest “almost all the seats” in Uttar Pradesh in the forthcoming Assembly elections.

“Jungle Raj has prevailed under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the past four-and-half years. Law and order has broken down in the state. Sisters and daughters are not safe in the state.

“The Yogi Government is indulging in harassment against the Brahmin

community,” UP Sena chief Anil Sinha said. “There is no medical infrastructure in the state to fight Covid-19. New vocation in the state is to burn the bodies of the people who die of Covid-19. Even after the Supreme Court verdict, the Yogi government has not announced 15 fees cut in schools. Fee is being collected from students even in schools which are closed due to Covid-19,” Sinha said.

“The people are suffering because of rampant unemployment and price rise. The Yogi government is meting out a step-motherly treatment to farmers and Youngsters,” Sinha added.

This is not for the first time that the Shiv Sena, a regional party that came into existence way back in 1966, is contesting the State Assembly polls outside Maharashtra. In the past, the Sena had contested the State Assembly polls in states like Goa, Karnataka, Delhi, Gujarat,

Bihar, West Bengal and Jammu & Kashmir. However, its electoral performance in all these states was pathetic.

Given that the Congress’ General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi has gone on record saying that it was open to having electoral tie-ups with like-minded parties in Uttar Pradesh, there is strong possibility that the Sonia Gandhi-led party and the Sena will have a seat-sharing arrangement for the Assembly polls in the northern State.

TMC criticises UP Govt for using pic of Kolkata flyover in its advertisement

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Uttar Pradesh Government’s advertisement carrying a purported image of a Kolkata flyover to drive home its development initiatives has created major controversy with the Trinamool Congress on Sunday lashing out at the Yogi Adityanath Government for “acting like a *Thagi* (trickster) and not like a “yogi” (saint) by hoodwinking the people of that State with false publicity in order to win elections.

Reacting to the incident TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee --- who is currently facing the Enforcement Directorate heat in a money-laundering case --- promptly wrote “Transforming UP for ... Yogi Adityanath means stealing images from infrastructure seen in Bengal under Mamata (Banerjee’s) leadership and using them as his own! Looks like the ‘DOUBLE ENGINE MODEL’ has MISERABLY FAILED in BJP’s strongest state and now stands EXPOSED for all!”

Senior Trinamool MP Derek O Brien congratulated the UP Chief Minister for “finally acknowledging the good works being carried out by our Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.”

Heaping more sarcasm he said “Yogi ji can take more of such advertisements from Bengal” adding “while Mamata Banerjee has constructed 5,100 km or rural roads as compared to UP’s 1680 km.” He further listed the alleged low corruption data of Bengal saying “while Bengal registers only 0.2 percent of the corruption all over India Yogi ji’s UP accounts for 3.2 percent of the national average.”

Similarly while Bengal had created 97,000 work days for the members of Scheduled Caste the figure for UP is 67,000 work days he said adding “while UP has 57,000 hospital beds, Bengal has 86,000,” and calling upon the UP Chief Minister “to take away all these advertisements of Bengal to hoodwink the people of his State.”

TMC national vice president Mukul Roy who left the BJP to return to his old party after the State elections wrote “Mr Narendra Modi is so helpless to save his party that other than changing CMs, he has also had to resort to using pictures of growth & infrastructure seen under Mamata Banerjee’s leadership, as his own.” Curiously the CPI(M) leadership promptly jumped in to clarify that the advertisements shown “neither belongs to the so-

called development projects of Yogi or Mamata Banerjee ... one RTI and government records will show that these projects belong to the Left era ... Mamata Banerjee only named them.”

The national newspaper which carried the advertisement however issued an immediate corrigendum regretting the inadvertently included cover collage of the advertorial. “A wrong image was inadvertently included in the cover collage of the advertorial on Uttar Pradesh produced by the marketing department of the newspaper,” it wrote.

When reminded of the corrigendum being issued by the said newspaper senior TMC leader Arup Chakrabarty alleged “the newspaper must have been coerced by the BJP to accept the said mistake ... otherwise it would have to face the same fate of Dainik Bhaskar.”

He said apart from non-performance the BJP had been coercing the entire media of the country into silence. “Unprecedented and undeclared media censorship is going on in Bengal ... look at how the newspapers in Tripura are being shut down just because they are highlighting the attacks on the TMC and Abhishek Banerjee in that State.”

Priyanka Gandhi begins two-day Rae Bareilly tour



Rae Bareilly (UP): Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra began her two-day tour of Rae Bareilly, her mother’s parliamentary constituency, on Sunday and offered prayers at the Hanuman temple in Churruva on the Lucknow-Rae Bareilly border.

Her visit to Rae Bareilly comes ahead of the crucial Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, which will be held early next year.

UP Congress media panelist Priyanka Gupta said the party general secretary will be holding organisational meetings throughout the day and the meetings will continue till late night.

She may also meet people from different sections of the society, Gupta said. Gandhi visited Bachhrawan, Harchandpur, Jagdishpur village and Civil Lines area of the city, where she was welcomed by party leaders and workers. Then her cavalcade proceeded towards the Bhuyemau guest house, a party leader said. **PTI**

Bengal Speaker Biman issues summons to ED, CBI officials

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee issuing summons to ED and CBI officials for filing charge sheets against the Members of the State Assembly without taking him into confidence is seen as a “counter offensive” strategy on the part of the Trinamool Congress in the wake of Enforcement Directorate issuing fresh summons to TMC national general secretary and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee’s nephew Abhishek Banerjee in the multi-crore coal scam and related money laundering case.

The two central agencies were likely to get the letters of summons by Monday, Speaker’s office said adding the officials concerned have been asked to explain their conduct and appear before him by the third week of September.

Though the purported context of the Speaker’s letter could be the charge sheets against the TMC leaders and Ministers Firhad Hakim, Subroto Mukherjee and others in the Narada chit fund case the immediate trigger for the Speaker’s action could be the summons issued to Abhishek



Banerjee who was already grilled for 9 hours at the ED office in Delhi last week.

A second summons for appearance was however skipped by the TMC MP. Consequently he has

been issued fresh summons by the Agency asking him to appear before its officials in Delhi by September 21, TMC sources said adding “it is a clear case of political vendetta.” Chief Minister herself said that “the BJP is taking revenge on our men including my family members after failing to defeat me politically in the Assembly elections.”

ED officials earlier said that the TMC MP had circumvented many questions and had failed to explain the sources of a few crore of rupees that had accumulated in two companies owned by the Banerjees.

While there was no reports on whether the junior Banerjee would appear before ED on the stipulated date sources said he could ask for some more time like his wife Rujira who had also been summoned by the Agencies and failed to appear before it.

‘Love, narcotics Jihad to destroy Hindus, Christians’

KOCHI: The statement by Mar Joseph Kallarangatt, the Bishop of Palai, warning the laity, especially the Christian youth, against Love Jihad and Narcotics Jihad has embarrassed the ruling CPI(M) and the Opposition Congress alike in Kerala.

The Bishop, while addressing a religious congregation at the famous Marth Mariam Archdeacon Pilgrim Church at Kuravilangadu in Kottayam district on Wednesday came down heavily on Love Jihad and Narcotics Jihad which he described as the new modus operandi employed by a section of the Islamic community in the State to destroy the Hindu and Christian religions and families. He said Lok Nath Behra, the then Chief of Kerala Police, had warned the authorities how Kerala was being used by terrorists to recruit jihadi fighters for the establishment of an Islamic republic.

Though the Bishop spoke at length about Love Jihad and Narcotics Jihad in his address, even Deepika, the mouthpiece of the Catholic Church had ignored the report. It was Janmabhumi, the organ of the BJP which highlighted the speech which has led to a furor

over the State.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, in his televised press meet, lambasted the Bishop and feigned ignorance about the term Narcotics Jihad. “I am hearing it for the first time. Perhaps, the Bishop may be asked to explain what he meant by it,” Vijayan had said.

V D Satheesan, leader of the Opposition, criticized the Bishop for making irresponsible allegations. Many Islamist organisations went to the extend of demanding the arrest of the Bishop for his attempts to create rift between the minority communities. While leaders of the CPI(M) and the Congress were vying with one another to placate the Islamic community, Mar Pauly Kannookadan, the Bishop of Iringalakkuda Diocese, issued a stern warning to the youth to be vigilant against Love Jihad and Narcotics Jihad in the backdrop of hundreds of girls from the Christian community falling victims to the evil designs of zealots and ending up as slaves in terrorist camps in West Asia. Bishop Kannookadan too was addressing a religious congregation while offering Holy Mass at the Diocese headquarters.

J&K police officer martyred in Srinagar

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A young police officer, currently serving as Sub-Inspector (on Probation) was ‘mercilessly’ shot dead by an ‘unidentified’ terrorist in Khanyar area of Srinagar on Sunday.

This is the third incident of targeted killing involving policemen in Srinagar this year.

The police officer has been identified as Arshid Ashraf Meer, hailing from North Kashmir district of Kupwara.

Shortly after the police officer was targeted a CCTV footage of the attack surfaced which clearly revealed an ‘unidentified’ terrorist pumped bullets from behind using a pistol while the young officer stepped out of a building in the area.

Apparently, the police officer was being tracked by the terrorist. After hitting the cop the terrorist was seen running away in an opposite direction without facing any resistance.

The mortal remains of the police officer were later handed over to the family after a



brief wreath laying ceremony.

Large number of relatives and close family friends assembled at their residence in Handwara to offer their condolences to the bereaved family members of the police officer.

In February 2021, two policemen were shot dead from a close range by a terrorist in Barzulla area of Srinagar while they were waiting for their tea cups.

Then in the month of June, Inspector Parvaiz Ahmad Dar, working with the criminal investigation department (CID) wing was shot near his house in Nowgam when he was returning home after offering evening prayers.

Meanwhile, in Jammu region a terrorist was killed by a joint team of security forces in Thanamandi area of Rajouri. According to ADGP (Jammu range) Mukesh Singh one terrorist has been neutralised in the ongoing operations in the thickly forested area of Thanamandi in Rajouri. Till the time of filing the report the operation was still going on in the area.

BJP sold everything that the Cong built in 70 years: Rahul

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday attacked the BJP-led Centre, saying they “sold” everything in seven years that the Congress-led Governments set up in 70 years.

Addressing the national executive of the Congress-affiliated National Students’ Union of India (NSUI), he said Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was dubbed a weak PM at the time of the Mumbai terror attacks but the media did not question Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the time of Pulwama attacks.

“The Congress has always been a building block for the country and all our hard work of 70 years has been sold by the BJP in mere seven years. When the



Mumbai attacks had happened, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was called a weak PM by the media. The media did not raise questions at the time of Pulwama attacks,” he said.

He also praised NSUI members for working hard during the coronavirus period.

Congress general secretary and Rajya Sabha MP K C

Venugopal also praised the NSUI members for their hard work.

“I myself have been a part of the NSUI family and used to sit at the same place where the members are today. We can change the Government for good,” he added. **PTI**

Cabinet may take up amendments to PFRDA Act soon

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet is likely to consider amendments to Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Act, 2013 soon and a Bill in this respect may be introduced in the upcoming session of Parliament, sources said.

The amendment Bill may contain provisions on separation of NPS Trust from PFRDA, hike in foreign direct investment (FDI) limit for the pension sector to 74 per cent from the existing 49 per cent, among others, sources said.

In March, Parliament approved a Bill to increase FDI limit in the insurance sector from 49 per cent to 74 per cent. The Insurance Act, 1938 was last amended in 2015 which raised FDI limit to 49 per cent, resulting in foreign capital inflow of

₹26,000 crore in the last 5 years.

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

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

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced to separate NPS Trust from PFRDA with appropriate organisational structure, keeping in view the wider interest of the subscribers and to

maintain arm’s length relationship of NPS Trust with the regulator.

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

PFRDA was established for promoting and ensuring the orderly growth of the pension sector with sufficient powers over pension funds, the central record keeping agency and other intermediaries. It also safeguards the interest of members.

The National Pension System (NPS) was introduced by the government to replace the defined benefit pension system. NPS was made mandatory for all new recruits to the central government service from January 1, 2004, (except the armed

forces in the first stage) and has also been rolled out for all citizens with effect from May 1, 2009, on voluntary basis.

The Government had made a conscious move to shift from the defined benefit, pay-as-you-go pension scheme to defined contribution pension scheme, NPS, due to rising and unsustainable pension bill.

The transition is aimed at freeing the limited resources of the government for more productive and socio-economic sectoral development.

PFRDA, which runs two flagship schemes NPS and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) under its fold, is targeting to reach an AUM (asset under management) of ₹7.5 lakh crore by the end of the current fiscal year. **PTI**

7L Maha farmers inform insurance firms about crop damages

Mumbai: More than seven lakh farmers in Maharashtra have called up insurance companies during the current monsoon season to inform about crop damage due to excessive rainfall, officials said.

Representatives of crop insurance companies need to personally visit the farms and assess the damages, and based on their report, the farmers will get the insurance amount, they said.

“A total of 2,56,985 were received till August 1 from farmers across Maharashtra intimating about extremely heavy rains that led to damage of crops. The number of such calls increased to 4,15,747 by September 1 and reached 5,53,491 on September 9. In last two days, the number of such calls reached over seven lakh,” state agricultural commissioner’s chief statistical officer Vinaykumar Awate told PTI.

The figures could increase further as the data of calls made during the weekend will be updated in the system on Monday, the official said.

Besides crop damage, the farmers also informed about washing away of their farm sheds and other issues, he said.

The number of such calls from farmers jumped drastically after heavy rains lashed the state’s Marathwada region last week, he said. To a query, the official said, “We held a meeting with officials of the Union Government last week and discussed the issue. The central government has increased its technical support to help us accept more number of such calls in the wake of the excessive downpour in the Marathwada region and north Maharashtra.”

He said earlier, there were glitches in the system as the

rise in the number of such calls from farmers would clog the phone lines or servers would be down. “But, with the help of the Union Government, we have managed to address these issues. Apart from phone calls, other options are also available which farmers can use to register their names with the insurance companies for damage survey,” he added.

Since the introduction of the crop insurance scheme for farmers, it is necessary for the insurers to record every such call from cultivators.

Farmers can call up a number given by the insurance company, send an e-mail or call up the local revenue officer to inform about the crop damage. They can also inform their local bank branch, which further updates about their intimation call on the common portal to the state agriculture department. **PTI**

IIFT moves up one place to 25th in NIRF ranking

New Delhi: The commerce Ministry’s Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) has moved up one place to 25th rank under management category, in NIRF ranking 2021.

The ranking under National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) was released by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan recently.

In the last year’s ranking, IIFT had climbed five places to 26th spot from 31st in 2019. It was at 23rd rank in 2018, 30th in 2017 and 81st in 2016.

NIRF was launched in 2015 to rank higher educational institutions in the country based on objective criteria to promote competitive excellence in such institutions.

Commenting on the development, IIFT Director Manoj Pant said the institute has taken

several measures to improve the ranking and that would help in further improving the position next year.

“I believe that the 25th ranking does not do justice to us...We are now moving from the course and making money to focus more on research and publications. I do believe that next year you will see our ranking go up to maybe 16th or 17th because the publication part will show up in the 2020-21 data,” Pant told PTI.

IIFT Dean Rakesh Mohan Joshi said steps taken by the institute to improve the ranking include increased focus on marketing and social media promotion; planning the admission process well in advance; actively participating in international accreditations; and vibrant international collaborations. **PTI**

NCW team meets Mumbai rape victim’s kin, visits crime spot

Mumbai: A team of the National Commission for Women (NCW) on Sunday met the family members of a woman who died after being brutally raped, and also visited the crime spot as well as the hospital where she was treated, an police official said.

The 34-year-old woman was raped and brutalised with a rod by a man inside a stationary tempo in suburban Sakinaka in the wee hours of Friday. She died at a hospital during treatment in the early hours of Saturday, police earlier said.

The crime bore similarity to the 2012 ‘Nirbhaya’ gang-rape case of Delhi.

The 45-year-old suspect, arrested within a few hours of the incident, was later charged with murder. According to a police official, four-five members of the women’s commission first went to the victim’s house in Sakinaka area and met her family members on Sunday. The team later went to the spot where the crime took place inside the tempo. The panel members later also went to the Sakinaka police station to seek details of the case.

The team also went to the city-based Rajawadi Hospital where the woman died after a nearly 36-hour battle for life, and collected details pertaining to the case, the official said.

The commission’s members are also likely to visit the office of the state Director General of Police (DGP) here in connection with the

case, official said.

Besides being raped, the victim was assaulted with an iron rod in her private parts and lost a lot of blood, a police official earlier said, adding that she was also stabbed with a knife.

The accused, Mohan Chouhan (45), hailing from Jaunpur in Uttar Pradesh, worked as a driver and lived on the pavement in the same area. He was identified with the help of CCTV footage of the area and traced within a few hours of the incident. Mumbai Police Commissioner Hemant Nagrale earlier told reporters that the crime came to light when the watchman of a company located on Khairani Road in Sakinaka called the police control room and said a man was seen thrashing a woman.

Police reached the spot within 10 minutes and found the victim inside a parked tempo. As her condition was serious, they decided to take her to hospital in the same vehicle so as to save time. They got the key of the tempo from the watchman and drove her to Rajawadi hospital in suburban Ghatkopar, the official had said.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had termed the incident as a “blot on humanity”, and ordered that a charge sheet in the case must be filed within a month. He had also directed that measures should be taken to make the city safer for women. **PTI**



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

‘No’ means ‘no’

Another shame, as ‘Mumbai’s Nirbhaya’ case, is showing our society the filthy mirror

Social progress in any society can be measured by how many men stop when a woman says no. Doing the measuring in India is problematic. It is a sickening Sunday, the newspapers full of news of rape. A man in his 30s allegedly raped a mentally challenged girl in Maharashtra’s Palghar. A 45-year-old was sentenced to life imprisonment for raping a seven-year-old in Hamirpur in Uttar Pradesh. The body of a young national level kho-kho player was found dumped in Bijnor, also in UP, her face bruised, clothes pulled down. Her family claims that she was raped. And in India’s financial capital of Mumbai, a ‘Nirbhaya’ was enacted by a depraved man. He allegedly raped a mother of two and brutalised her with a rod afterward. She died, unable to even give a dying statement. Since the infamous ‘Nirbhaya’ rape case in Delhi of 2012, the police and political machinery are quick to initiate action for fear of people’s anger. It is a different matter that for every rape case in which arrests are made, there could be several that would have been ignored or sought to be hushed up. The issue at hand is not about the filing of FIRs, arrest of the accused and taking the case to trial. It is about the mindset. Minal Arora’s lawyer Deepak Sehgal tells the court in the film, *Pink*: “The single word, no, is a complete sentence in itself.” What nobody seems to explain is why it is so difficult to understand that sentence then.



The rapists of ‘Nirbhaya’ were hanged to death. The fear of capital punishment does not seem to have acted as a deterrent. Instances of rape have not reduced since ‘Nirbhaya’. A high degree of perversion leaves its signature in most sexual assault cases. Cases of post-rape violence on the victim are becoming common. Rape, these days, inevitably leads to murder. It is not just about the rapist killing the victim because he wants to remain unidentified. There is an element of depravity that is being exhibited more and more, with the victims’ private parts horribly attacked after the initial violation. That indicates the work of a deranged man who seeks more than sexual gratification in a woman. Society and the constitutional bodies need to wake up. Probes, committees and candlelight vigils are not going to work. We, as a people, have to debate our growing insensitivity to how women are treated. Even the judiciary is not exempt from this affliction. The order of the Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court is still fresh in everybody’s mind, that a man groping the breast of a child does not prove his sexual intent unless there is a “skin-to-skin contact”. Such orders disillusion victims who know that they can be denied justice if they fail to meet bizarre conditions. Our society will progress the day a man can tell a woman he will stop if she says no.

PICTALK



Dancers celebrate the National Day of the Morenada dance in La Paz, Bolivia

PTI

New leader

Months ahead of the Gujarat polls, the BJP has chosen to rope in a new Chief Minister

In a surprise move, Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani has resigned, saying that his resignation is in line with the BJP’s policy of giving equal opportunity to all workers. The installation of Bhupendra Patel as the new CM unfolds a new chapter in the politics of Gujarat, which is to go to polls in about 15 months. The resignation, though unexpected, was perhaps on the cards as rumours of Rupani’s impending resignation were floating even in June when Hardik Patel had hinted that the CM may be shown the door. That time, however, the rumours proved to be just that and there was no change of guard in the State. However, three months on, the party has replaced Rupani with Patel as the new Chief Minister ahead of the Assembly elections. There is substance to Hardik’s jab that if the party was happy with Rupani’s work, why did it feel the need to replace him? He further alleged that the BJP does not have faith in its Chief Ministers. Now, that is largely true if we look at the pan-India picture. Rupani is the fourth BJP Chief Minister to step down in recent months. BS Yediyurappa resigned as the Karnataka CM in July and, in Uttarakhand, Tirath Singh Rawat quit four months after replacing Trivendra Rawat.



Rupani had succeeded Anandiben Patel on August 7, 2016, when she was asked to step down. He continued as the Chief Minister after the BJP’s win in the 2017 State elections. Though he has categorically denied that he had any differences with State BJP president CR Paatil, there is bound to be some reason behind the resignation. His performance as the Chief Minister was not topnotch while handling the COVID crisis. Rupani comes from the Jain community, which is insignificant from an election perspective. Moreover, people’s unease over the COVID mismanagement, industrial slowdown leading to unemployment and price rise, and the Opposition parties getting space could also be reasons for the soft-spoken Rupani’s departure, who was often dominated by the bureaucracy. Speculation was rife that his successor would be a Patidar, which has rung true. Besides, Patel — a first-time MLA from Ghatlodiya who holds a diploma in civil engineering — is considered close to Anandiben. All eyes would now be on the new Chief Minister, who would be the BJP’s face and steer the party in the elections.

The Afghan story keeps all occupied

Global powers are reacting to the crisis in Afghanistan in different ways, though Pakistan, China and Turkey are going in a different direction



PRAFULL GORADIA

It is extraordinary that the security and intelligence representatives of the US, Russia and Great Britain had to arrive in New Delhi simultaneously last week and possibly had joint meetings. The gentlemen concerned are CIA chief William Burns, Nikolai Patrushev of the KGB and Richard Moore of Britain’s M16. India’s National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval was the host.

Such a meeting was unprecedented and indicates how seriously these powers have reacted to the Afghan crisis. To add to it all, China has announced an aid package of \$31 million to the new regime in Kabul, thus declaring whose side it is on, whether terrorists or otherwise.

One wonders how an associate of terrorist States and a member of the United Nations and, that too, a permanent member of its Security Council is being allowed to get away with such behaviour. On the one hand, the US and the UK publicly condemn terrorism and, on the other, sit with China on the same Security Council. By doing so, are they not legitimising terrorism? Was the recent Delhi mega meet arranged in order to persuade India on any reasonable terms to join the coalition to keep the Chinese out of Afghanistan? If at all New Delhi happens to be thinking along these lines, it must recall that Britain failed three times in the 19th century to defeat Afghanistan. Russia, then the Soviet Union, fought for nine years to dominate Afghanistan through proxies backed by its own soldiers. Russia’s Afghan adventure was an undiluted failure.

Thereafter, the US took its turn, not once but twice. Both times, it has had to retreat with its tail between its legs. A few American GIs are still in the Afghan theatre. Incidentally, going further back into history, Mughal Emperors Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb had bitter experiences in Afghanistan. Prior to them, Akbar the Great did manage to subdue Afghanistan. The moral of this history is to think, think and think before committing Indian soldiers on the same soil. It is true that Afghanistan owes a great deal to India; the debt began with Mahmud of Ghazni, Shahbuddin Ghorri and subsequently Ahmed Shah Abdali. In fact, to say something unusual, the era of the use of foot soldiers to conquer territory is over. The infantry is needed to hold territory after it is captured. This is the era of aircraft, missiles and drones.



If people desire to flee Afghanistan, Pakistan would be the first country they would turn to. The next would perhaps be India, either through the Kashmir Valley or the deserts of Rajasthan through the Jaisalmer area; it still remains unfenced. The trust of this submission is that New Delhi must make sure that Pakistan does not become the Bangladesh of yesterday, teeming with infiltrators.

America’s latest concern would be Afghanistan’s enormous mineral wealth, which still lies untapped. Washington would hate to see it simply fall into the lap of China. For its part, Russia too would not like China to grow more dominant. Any Chinese ascendancy in Afghanistan would mean a bigger shadow of the dragon in Central Asia, whose borders touch Russia’s

“
AMERICA’S LATEST CONCERN WOULD BE AFGHANISTAN’S ENORMOUS MINERAL WEALTH, WHICH STILL LIES UNTAPPED. WASHINGTON WOULD HATE TO SEE IT SIMPLY FALL INTO THE LAP OF CHINA. FOR ITS PART, RUSSIA TOO WOULD NOT LIKE CHINA TO GROW MORE DOMINANT

Siberia, a vast territory China is eyeing.

The elephant in the room is Recep Erdogan’s Turkey, which has spontaneously got interested in Afghanistan. Erdogan has no money to spend, but makes up for it by the enormity of his ambition. The seat of the Caliph of Islam has been considered vacant since Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the Ataturk, abolished the Caliphate in 1924, and exiled its last incumbent. Occupying this seat would make Erdogan the leader of all Sunni Muslims in the world, spiritual as well as temporal. He has not hesitated to jostle with the King of Saudi Arabia to demonstrate that he is more Islamic than the Arabs.

Another reason for Erdogan to get involved in Afghanistan and to flirt with Pakistan is to possibly obtain a few of the latter’s nuclear weapons so that, if the need arises, he could blackmail either Russia or Europe, or both. Erdogan has been harbouring Ottomanesque ambitions for long. Under him, Turkey has all but abandoned its quest to become a European country. Quite to the contrary, its long-practised secularism now seems in danger of being washed away in the rising tide of neo-Islamism. Such a neo-

Ottomanesque Turkey acquiring nuclear weapons will undoubtedly be a nightmare for Europe and the whole world. The silent equations being pursued with Delhi could be a pointer.

Hitherto, there was no great relationship between Turkey and Afghanistan. Erdogan and his predecessors had maintained Turkey in such a manner that it was part of Europe. In fact, Kemal Ataturk had consistently felt that the future of Turkey lay in Europe. He asked his people to dress up like Europeans and follow the European way of life. He converted the alphabet of the Turkish language from the Arabic script to Roman in three months, also having the *Quran* written in Turkish. Ataturk was undoubtedly a visionary.

This visionary plan has been disturbed due to the outbreak of the ‘Fourth World War’ between Islamic jihad and five continents. In other words, Islamic terrorism has made Turkey unwelcome in Europe and, hence, its new endeavour is to spread tentacles in Central and South Asia.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

‘RAPE’ EVEN WITHIN MARRIAGE

Sir — The High Courts of Kerala, Maharashtra and Gujarat have pronounced conflicting rulings on marital rape. Some basic premises should hold. Women are individuals in their own right, with their own rights. Marriage does not render them their spouses’ chattel. Marital rape is rape within marriage and it cannot be excused in view of the sanctity traditionally attached to the institution of marriage. An act of sex has to be consensual even within marriage. Just because a woman happens to be a man’s wife, her body cannot be used for sexual gratification without her consent or against her will. The wrongness of coercing wives into sex cannot be overstated.

The view that wives should routinely service the physical needs of their husbands stems from the notion of women’s subservience to men. It is true that sex is an intrinsic part of marital life and contributes to marital bliss. At the same time, it cannot be forced on a wife as a male privilege. Once legally pronounced man and wife, a married couple has conjugal rights. But the right to have sex with a spouse cannot be stretched to validate violation of a woman’s body and dignity.

G David Milton | Maruthancode

THE MANY FACETS OF HINDI

Sir — In his address while inaugurating the Moturi Satyanarayana Centre for Advanced Study at Chennai a few days ago, Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu emphasised the need and importance of learning Hindi apart from one’s mother tongue. Unfortunately, South Indians at large fail to realise that learning as a second language comes with several added benefits. In fact, when you are studying a second language, it actually improves your command of your mother tongue. Trying to learn a language yet unknown to you is like opening a treasure chest. Once you unlock it, many priceless things come pouring out. Marvelling over a completely new

Stepping down for the party



Vijay Rupani, the Chief Minister of Gujarat, tendered his resignation “to further develop Gujarat with new energy and power”. Rupani is the third Chief Minister to step down from the post in the BJP-ruled States in recent months. BS Yediyurappa resigned as the Chief Minister of Karnataka in July and the double whammy in Uttarakhand, where Tirath Singh Rawat quit barely four months after replacing Trivendra Singh Rawat.

The change of guard is a natural phenomenon in the BJP. The former Chief

Minister stated that “the BJP, as a party, keeps changing as per requirements. It is a speciality of the party that every worker delivers to the fullest, and I too will continue to work for the party with the same energy”.

Reacting to the development, Congress leader Gaurav Pandhi credited his party’s efforts behind Rupani’s resignation claiming that the grand old party’s campaign against Gujarat CM forced him to resign from the post. But it is just another image correction gimmick by the BJP just a year ahead of the Gujarat Assembly polls. A few names were speculated to succeed Rupani and, after the BJP Legislative Party meeting in Gandhinagar, senior BJP leader Bhupendra Patel was appointed to replace Vijay Rupani as the Chief Minister of Gujarat, with a little over a year to go for elections in the State. Vijay Rupani has congratulated Bhupendra Patel on his appointment.

MR Jayanthi | Mumbai

language is a creative way to experience the vivid richness of this world and the course of human evolution. And learning Hindi opens the door to better understanding the Indian culture and tradition. The Hindi language has a direct line of evolution to Sanskrit. As such, it is part of one of the oldest religious and literary traditions in the world. Therefore, learning Hindi is very important as it penetrates the old and new social values of the Indian society.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

THE YOUNGEST TO SLAM THE US OPEN

Sir — This is just ridiculous for tennis lovers! An 18-year-old Briton, Emma Raducanu, defeated Canadian Leylah Annie Fernandez in the US Open Women’s and became the youngest grand slam champion since Maria Sharapova in 2004.

What was more remarkable was that Raducanu’s march to the title required 10 matches, including three wins in qualifying, and she did it with-

out dropping a single set along the way. Interestingly, Raducanu has never been a direct entrant to a grand slam main draw, she is yet to play a four-level three-set match and she has not even won a match at a WTA tour event.

Besides, Raducanu is the first British woman to win a grand slam title since Virginia Wade’s Wimbledon victory in 1977. She is the first qualifier, man or woman, to win a grand slam title. I doubt we’ll ever see that again in the near future. Emma Raducanu is a supernova. She has been outstanding and deserves all the praise that she will get. But one hopes that Raducanu has a good head on her shoulders and would continue to perform magnificently. Kudos to Raducanu and Fernandez; between them, one can’t think of a more spectacular sporting moment in living memory of the US Open women’s final.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

To fulfil the dream of making India resurgent, we should instil the ideals of Swami Vivekanand in today’s youth.

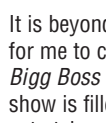


Chief Justice of India —NV Ramana



A malign force seems at work in our common life that turns every disagreement into an argument, and every argument into a clash of cultures.

Former US President —George W Bush



It is beyond exciting for me to come on Bigg Boss OTT. The show is filled with entertainment, especially the ‘Sunday ka Vaar’.



Singer —Neha Kakkar



India’s best combination includes R Ashwin. So, India need to find a way to fit him into the playing XI.

Former Australia captain —Ian Chappell

The posting of RN Ravi as the new Governor of Tamil Nadu is suspicious. The Government seems to have some agenda in his posting.




TNCC president —KS Alagiri

FIRST COLUMN


SCOLIOSIS: A LOUSY PANDEMIC FALLOUT

Prolonged sitting during lockdown is likely to cause musculoskeletal changes in the body



PARIDHI OJHA

Back pain is a well-known source of discomfort in adults, but it is also being diagnosed more frequently in children and adolescents. Most parents donot expect otherwise healthy children to complain of back pain-a problem generally associated with middle age or later. However, studies have found back pain occurs in between 14 per cent and 24 per cent of children and adolescents. Prolonged sitting in front of computers due to pandemic-forced online learning is likely to further stress and cause musculoskeletal changes in the body. Some reasons why back pain may be common in kids include higher average body weight, obesity, intensebut infrequent sporting activities, and crucially, increased screen time. Determining the severity of back problems remains a challenge, especially whether a pain requires medical attention or is just a simple strain, and knowing when expensive specialised imaging tests might be helpful. There are warning signs to look out for, to aid in understanding whether a back pain problem in an adolescent may be more serious. While poor posture or muscle strains can lead to prolonged pain, at the simplest level, if any pain lasts for more than a few days or gets progressively worse, then it is imperative to seek medical counsel. Scoliosis is a deformity of the backbone (spine). Scoliosis refers to a condition where the spine has a side-to-side curve, and the curve of the spine measures 10 degrees or more. A normal spine appears straight when looked at from behind. But a child with scoliosis has a spine with an S or C shape. The child may thus look like he or she is leaning to one side. The curve can happen on the right or left side of the spine. Or it can happen on both sides in different sections. Both the middle (thoracic) and lower (lumbar) spine may be affected. Scoliosis usually causes no pain, so symptoms can often go unnoticed. Parents or caregivers should watch for the following signs in their child: uneven shoulders, constant leaning to one side, uneven leg length, prominent shoulder blade(s), an uneven waist, or elevated hips. A majority of children with back pain have symptoms that result from muscle or ligament injury, without any structural abnormality. Some of the back pain warning signs to look out for more serious problems include:night pain (especially pain that awakens your child from sleep), symptoms of generalized illness (fever, chills, malaise, weight loss), symptoms persisting beyond several weeks, symptoms in very young children, leg pain, numbness, or weakness. These warning signs donot necessarily denote a serious problem, however, they are a good screening test to determine if more evaluation should be pursued. For example, muscular back pain can persist for months. Back pain in children and adolescents is not unusual and is becoming more common over time. Part of this is due to changes in the activities of children, and part is due to changes in the conditioning of children. If your child is experiencing back pain, especially if it is associated with the warning signs mentioned, it is worthwhile to have him or her be seen by a physical therapist. Initiating proper treatment, and ensuring the symptom improvement, can help to ensure problems donot become chronic. The good news, for kids and parents alike, is that the vast majority of children with complaints of back pain find relief that tends to be lasting. While back pain can interfere with sports and day-to-day activities, with appropriate treatment, these children almost always return to full mobility and cessation of discomfort. (The writer is a Delhi-based sports physiotherapist. The views expressed are personal.)



The disappearing wetlands of India

These water bodies are falling prey to real estate mafia on the one hand and becoming dumping ground for waste on the other

The presence of wetlands in urban India is almost taken for granted. These stagnating marshes and bogs are instinctively seen as dumping grounds for construction and other waste material. Almost every city and town in India probably has that wetland which is suffocating under eutrophication thanks to proliferating water hyacinth and algae. As the water body and the life forms in it fight a losing battle, the final nail in the coffin is served by the real estate mafia who nibble away slowly but steadily at the wetland till enough land is cleared up to be encroached. Thus, in this manner another wetland in India would have died a silent death. India has 7,57,060 wet-



KOTA SRIRAJ

lands that are ostensibly protected by the Wetland (Conservation & Management Rules) 2017 but unfortunately the enthusiasm of the rules doesnot extend beyond the paper as illegal acts continue to wreak havoc on wetland across India. The size matters too, the smaller the wetlands the lesser their chance of survival. In fact, 5,55,557 wetlands out of the 7,57,060 are smaller sized wetlands and hence at a greater risk of disappearing swiftly. But smaller wetlands are by no means environmentally irrelevant as they support almost the same scale of aquatic life and rich biodiversity as the big wetlands. Historically, India was a water surplus nation due to the widespread availability of wet-



lands, but these water bodies were eventually sidelined in favour of piped water supply so as to gain control over an important natural resource such as water. Though this act of colonizing water resources provided power and cash to humanity, but it sealed the fate of wetlands forever and resulted in the beginning of water scarcities. It is critical for India to understand the role played by wetlands to enhance water resources availability and rejuvenate these water bodies so that water scarcity is replaced with water security. Apart from being a valuable water resource, wetlands play an essential role in conserving environment and keeping climate change in check. These underestimated water bodies can absorb carbon, replenish groundwater and prevent floods. They also play a vital role in attracting a variety of wildlife including migratory birds due to which the region around the wetland develops a very healthy balance of human existence and flora and fauna. The wetlands provide good moisture content in the air which in turn plays a critical role in reining in air pollution. Let alone metropolises, the wetlands in smaller cities in India are facing woeful times. Uttarakhand in northern India is an apt example where over 70 per cent of the 994 documented wetlands are facing extinction due to delayed conservation. The 2.62-hectare Niranjanpur wetland in Dehradun lying in a coveted real estate location is fast falling prey to builder mafia on one hand and becoming dumping ground for domestic and construction waste on the other. As the construction waste and rubble gradually reach the wetland floor, the process of the water body drying up begins. This is accelerated by the lack of rains and ever-increasing eutrophication levels. All these factors eventually pave the way for real estate builders to approach the dried-up wetland area and usurp the prime property. These conditions are fast becoming normal for most of the wetlands in India and unless remedial measures are undertaken on priority basis, the nation will lose some of the best and oldest natural water bodies. In order to make an immediate difference, the government must commission a satellite-assisted remote sensing-based wetland census project to authentically draw up a data of current number of wetlands across India. The last such wetland census exercise was done in 2013 and the data is too old considering the pace of climate change and anthropogenic activities which have changed the ground situation very much since then. In addition to this, all the available data concerned with wetlands must be digitally inventoried. This will help ear-mark wetlands and their buffer zones on public domains and, therefore, assist planners and the public to steer clear of the same when undertaking developmental activities. This in turn will stop encroachment in the name of development. The government must also undertake immediate measures to cut off the nutrient-rich domestic waste seeping into wetlands as it assists in the growth of algae and water hyacinth. Finally, a nationwide wetland de-siltation project will aid in restoring the lost glory of the wetlands and halt their disappearance.

Perils surrounding ‘gunpoint diplomacy’

A ‘peace deal’ with an organisation still on the UN’s terror list is a precedent of grave concern that opens up a Pandora’s box for the world community



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI

The international community has witnessed a paradigm shift in global security and geopolitics during the last three weeks. With the deal between the US and the Taliban and the subsequent capture of Kabultoincreasing convergences between some states and the Taliban, international politics will never be the same again. There would be profound changes in the manner in which diplomacy and inter-state relations would henceforth be conducted. The most immediate question is whether state representatives can sign peace agreements and deals with terrorist organizations knowing their intentions to seize territories through violence and terror mechanisms? Primarily, we have heard of an “understanding” between different players, but a "peace deal" with an organization still on the UN's terror list is a precedent of grave concern that opens up Pandora's box for the world community. Today, through various sources such as Qatar and Pakistan, the Taliban is sending messages that negotiations and engagements mustbegin if the world does not want Afghanistan to be the terror hub. Such statements certainly are not in the form of requests and amount to tactical blackmail to seek recognition and financial aid with the ulterior motive of infiltrating various international and regional organizations. The example of Pakistan has proven that financial flows do not sway away the actors (both state and non-state), facilitating their sinister agendas such as Jihad. In proverb terms, the wolf feels the need to wear the sheep's clothes. The dilemma that the world faces currently is that the Taliban has taken control over the territory unlawfully and forcibly, and to function as a “legitimate” heir, it has to present itself to the world as a de jure entity. China, Pakistan, Russia, Iran and others have been sent an invite to the “government formation” process in which atleast half of the “ministers” are designated terrorists pushing forward the agenda of radical Islam and Jihad. The pressures on the international community, especially the donor countries like India and Japan, to initiate diplomacy, aid and trade with the Taliban and assess them on their ‘acts’ will only bolster the tactics of “run with the hare and hunt with the hounds”. The countries must come out of the paradoxicalmentality of financing and aiding the failed states like Pakistan and Violent Non-State Actors (VNSA) like the Taliban in Afghanistan in expectation ofstability in the region. While the US concludes that force is not the predominant factor in deciding the future course of actions, the same power of force would be encouraged if such VNSA is either “engaged” or “aided”. Acceptance of the blackmail, as in this case, is not a



long-term solution to the pol-yarchic tendencies that have gained prominence. It will only encourage the behaviour of probably what can be called “gunpoint diplomacy” akin to the Chinese tactics of “gunboat diplomacy”,wherein blackmailing is used for tactical and strategic manoeuvrability. Likewise, the talks with the Taliban, even by other countries, create new precedents in the domain of international law, the consequences of which the world may have to face for the rest of this century. The issue of “recognition” or “cooperation” to the Taliban Afghan in return for their display of actions in “compliance with the international norms” is thus tricky. There is a difference between what India expects and what the other powers expect from the Taliban. We are primarily left to fend for ourselves. Even the slightest show of “normalcy” or “diplomacy” will affect India. What will happen a year or two from now is in the realm of the unknown. Even on some conditions, an “engagement” with the Taliban will be taken as a diplomatic recognition to it, having domestic consequences and create wrong precedents. Suppose India opts for talks with the Taliban, a few months down the line, we might see the Taliban representing Afghanistan sitting across the Table in UNGA or other regional organization-scommenting upon our internal matters.Would not India be then tricked by China and Pakistan in the same way as the US was downplayed? Sometimes, not making a decision is much more desirable than taking decisions prompt-

ly under coercion, aslater times can seldom reverse them. Second, the feeling of being left out on the part of US allies will affect future alliances. In the current problem, India's immediate interests weresidelinedwhen the US left Afghanistan, leaving behind a cache of arms thatmay have already been transported to Pakistan only to be used against Indian interests in areas bordering Pakistan. As the vested interests of China and Pakistan “blossom” with the support of Iran and Russia, a pertinent question is how India would deal with the issue. Some backdoor communications channels (not diplomacy) have to be maintained at a fundamental level until the last Indian citizen exits Afghanistan. We must learn to differentiate between negotiations for evacuations and recognizing a form of “government”. Third, as the US introspects its policies, there are chances that it might adopt an approach of ‘democratic realism’that Charles Krauthammer suggested in 2004 that commits its “blood and treasure” only at places of “strategic necessity”. In such a case, what strategic and tactical commitments do the US have towards India needs to be demonstrated? If India is considered an ally, the onus of proving itself a credible partner lies on the US. The same standards are applicable for Russia too. Further, diplomatic engagements now seem to be turning towards a new kind of power relations devoid of any long-term commitments. In trends like this, countries do not hesitate to extend their outreach through VNSA.

Further, adverse powers also team up for short-term or long-term gain, and, in the process, either sideline or resolve their existing issues. When China and Pakistan have shed their cloak of pretence, and the US is not going ahead with its previous “policing role” for advocating democracy, New Delhi should adopt an Indocentric approach as a solution to this new great game. From India's perspective, we should question whether Afghanistan becomes a terror hub of different factions of proxy organisations or will it serve as an exclusive ISI extension working solely against India? Owing to the geopolitics, the Haqqanis have been included in the so-called “government”. There is no doubt that the Indian interests would be affected. Taliban's “spokesperson” Suhail Shaheen has already stated that Kashmir is next. The Taliban stated that it would not “interfere” between Pakistan and India a few days later. The two statements released within a week have no credibility. Which statement can India trust? Moreover, why should India trust the Taliban if Pakistan's active role is already evidenced? The consequences of the churning of the Afghan problem will probably start appearing when it becomes the new epicentre for emerging rivalries and partnerships. The world might witness more chaos and terror, but not for long as resistance will come up against such tendencies. They might be in the form of alliances, partnerships, or at the international forum, but certainly, “gunpoint diplomacy” would not continue for long.

AS THE VESTED INTERESTS OF CHINA AND PAKISTAN ‘BLOSSOM’ WITH THE SUPPORT OF IRAN AND RUSSIA, A PERTINENT QUESTION IS HOW INDIA WOULD DEAL WITH THE ISSUE. SOME BACK CHANNELS HAVE TO BE MAINTAINED AT A FUNDAMENTAL LEVEL UNTIL THE LAST INDIAN CITIZEN EXITS AFGHANISTAN

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

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

IT WAS A FIVE-YEAR JOURNEY OF DEVELOPMENT. NOW, TO FURTHER DEVELOP GUJARAT WITH NEW ENERGY, I HAVE DECIDED TO RESIGN AS CHIEF MINISTER. —FORMER GUJARAT CHIEF MINISTER VIJAY RUPANI



THE BJP'S FAILURE WILL NOT REMAIN HIDDEN BY CHANGING THE CM, VIJAY BHAI HAS BEEN MADE A SCAPEGOAT TO HIDE THE BJP'S FAILURE. —GPCC PRESIDENT AMIT CHAVDA

Iran to allow new memory cards in UN's nuclear site cameras

AP ■ TEHRAN

Iran agreed Sunday to allow international inspectors to install new memory cards into surveillance cameras at its sensitive nuclear sites and to continue filming there, averting a diplomatic showdown this week.

The announcement by Mohammad Eslami of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran after a meeting he held with the director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Grossi, in Tehran still leaves the watchdog in the same position it has faced since February, however.

Tehran holds all recordings at its sites as negotiations over the US and Iran returning to the 2015 nuclear deal remain stalled in Vienna. Meanwhile, Iran is now enriching small amounts of uranium to its closest-ever levels to weapons-grade purity as its stockpile continues to grow.

"I am glad to say that today were able to have a very constructive result, which has to do with the continuity of the operation of the agency's equipment here," Grossi said.

It "is indispensable for us to provide the necessary guarantee and information to the IAEA and to the world that everything is in order."

Eslami described the negotiations between Iran and the



Head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, Mohammad Eslami, center, speaks during a joint Press briefing with Director General of International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, Rafael Mariano Grossi, second right, in Tehran, Iran on Sunday

Vienna-based IAEA as "sheer-ly technical" without any room for politics. He said Grossi would return to Iran soon to talk with officials, without elaborating. Also left unsaid was whether Iran would hand over copies of the older recordings, which Tehran had threatened previously to destroy.

"The memory cards are sealed and kept in Iran according to the routine," Eslami said. "New memory cards will be installed in cameras. That is a routine and natural trend in the agency's monitoring system."

A joint statement released by the IAEA and Iran confirmed the understanding, saying only that "the way and the timing are agreed by the two sides."

The announcement could buy time for Iran ahead of an IAEA board meeting this week in which Western powers had been arguing for Tehran to be censured over its lack of cooperation with international inspectors.

Eslami said Iran would take part in that meeting and its negotiations with the IAEA would continue there.

The IAEA told member states in its confidential quarterly report last week that its verification and monitoring activities have been "seriously undermined" since February by Iran's refusal to let inspectors access their monitoring equipment.

The IAEA said certain monitoring and surveillance equipment cannot be left for more than three months without being serviced.

It was provided with access this month to four surveillance cameras installed at one site, but one of the cameras had been destroyed and a second had been severely damaged, the agency said.

Iran and world powers agreed in 2015 to the nuclear deal, which saw Tehran drastically limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

In 2018, then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the accord, raising tensions across the wider Middle East and sparking a series of attacks and incidents.

President Joe Biden has said he's willing to re-enter the accord, but so far, indirect talks have yet to see success. In the meantime, Iran elected Ebrahim Raisi, a hard-line protégé of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as president.

Mujahid says he lived in Kabul right under nose of his adversaries

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Taliban's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, who appeared before the media for the first time in a decade at a Press conference after the insurgent group seized Kabul last month, said that he lived in the Afghan capital right under the nose of his adversaries who considered him a 'ghost-like' figure during the war.

Mujahid, who operated in the shadows for years, also admitted that he studied at the Haqqania seminary in Nowshera in northwest Pakistan, which has also been dubbed the Taliban University or the 'University of Jihad' internationally.

"They (US and Afghan National Forces) used to think I did not exist," Mujahid told The Express Tribune newspaper in an interview.

"I escaped so many times from their raids and attempts to capture me that they seriously considered that 'Zabihullah' was a made up figure, not a real man who exists," the 43-year-old spokesman said.

"And yet, I managed to move about Afghanistan freely. I think this perception helped with that," he explained. "I lived in Kabul for a long time, right under everyone's noses. I



roamed the width and breadth of the country. I also managed to have first-hand access to the frontlines, where the Taliban carried out their actions, and up to date information. It was quite puzzling for our adversaries."

Due to his shadowy appearance for years, there was speculation as to whether the faceless spokesman might actually be more than one person.

"The US forces would often pay off locals to obtain some information about my whereabouts. Using that information, like I said, they must have launched dozens of intelligence-based operations hoping to find some trace of me," he said. "But I never left or tried to – even think about try to leave Afghanistan."

Mujahid, who was born in the Gardez district of Paktia province sometime in 1978,

said that he specialised in Islamic jurisprudence from the Haqqania seminary in north-west Pakistan.

The Taliban government's acting interior minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, Water and Energy Minister Mullah Abdul Latif Mansoor and Telecommunication minister Najibullah Haqqani – all on the UN blacklist – and Education Minister Maulana Abdul Baqi Haqqani studied at the Haqqania seminary, which has regularly received grants from successive governments in Pakistan.

Mujahid said he became the spokesman of the Taliban following the arrest of his predecessor. He also said that he had never seen the Taliban founder Mullah Umar. "But I have worked with Sheikh Mullah Mansoor, and Sheikh Hebatullah," he said, referring to Mullah Omar's successors.

Kabul flag shop merchandise documents Af's history

AP ■ KABUL

A small flag shop, tucked away in the courtyard of a Kabul market, has documented Afghanistan's turbulent history over the decades with its ever-changing merchandise.

Now the shop is filled with white Taliban flags, emblazoned with the Quran's Muslim statement of faith, in black Arabic lettering.

On Sunday, four teen-age boys leaned over white fabric draped on a table illuminated by fluorescent lights and filled the template for the Quranic verse with black ink. Finished flags were hung over a balcony railing to dry.

The owner, Wahidullah Honarwer, 58, said that before President Ashraf Ghani fled the country on Aug. 15, as the Taliban were poised to take the capital of Kabul, he produced flags from all nations that had diplomatic relations with Afghanistan. Honarwer still has those flags in stock.

"The Taliban came over and saw all those flags and said nothing to us," he said, sitting behind a computer in his shop. He said the Taliban told him to hang on to those flags until the situation stabilises.

GLOBE TROTTER

POPE HEADS TO URBAN'S HUNGARY

Budapest: Pope Francis arrived in Hungary early on Sunday at the start of his first big international outing since undergoing intestinal surgery in July. He will celebrate a Mass and meet with Prime Minister Viktor Orban, whose right-wing, anti-immigrant policies clash with Francis' call for countries to welcome refugees.

SCHOOL BELLS RING IN B'DESH AFTER 543 DAYS

Dhaka: School bells rang after a hiatus of 543 days in Bangladesh on Sunday, as tens of thousands of students returned to classes, amid an ease in the coronavirus situation in the country and the vaccination programme picking up pace.

LIGHTNING KILLS 14 IN NORTHWEST PAKISTAN

Peshawar: At least 14 people, including women and children, were killed as lightning struck three homes in a remote village of northwest Pakistan on Sunday.

TYPHOON POURS 5 INCHES OF RAIN ON TAIWAN

Taipei: Typhoon Chanthu drenched Taiwan with heavy rain Sunday as the storm's center passed the island's east coast heading for Shanghai. On the Chinese mainland, the Government issued a typhoon warning for Shanghai and warned of possible torrential rains.

Pakistan releases dossier on Kashmir

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Sunday unveiled a dossier, claiming that it contained details of the alleged human rights violations committed by the Indian authorities in Kashmir.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi along with National Security Adviser Moeed Yousaf and Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari launched the 131-page document at a Press conference in Islamabad.

5 in Italy slashed with knife; suspect arrested

AP ■ ROME

Italian police on Sunday were investigating a Somali asylum-seeker for attempted murder after he allegedly slashed two ticket controllers aboard a bus in the beach resort town of Rimini, then wounded three other people, including a boy, as he fled.

Investigators are ruling out terrorism as a motive and hypothesize that the 26-year-old man was under the influence of drugs during the knife attack Saturday night, according to reports on Italy's state broadcaster RAI.

Interior Minister Luciana Lamorgese said she would meet with local security officials on Monday in Rimini to review

"the very grave episode."

Lamorgese has been under attack by right-wing leader Matteo Salvini, who heads the anti-migrant League party. Salvini has been demanding that Lamorgese crack down more heavily on illegal migration.

The man, who apparently didn't have a bus ticket, slashed the controllers who had asked to see his ticket, leaving the two women wounded, news reports said. When the bus driver opened the door, the attacker fled. As police gave chase, the man allegedly slashed three more persons along his path. They included a six-year-old boy who was sitting with his mother in a local outdoor market.

HOTEL AND RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN INDIA

Regd. Office: 40073-78, Manisha Building, Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019
Tel: 011-26468103, 26433599, Fax: 011-26226291
Website: www.hranl.net.in, E-mail: hranl.1950@gmail.com

NOTICE OF 70th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, REMOTE E-VOTING INFORMATION
The 70th Annual General Meeting of "Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India" will be held through Video Conference (VC) on ZOOM platform on **Tuesday, September 28, 2021 at 1230 hrs** in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 read with MCA General Circular No. 14/2020 and 17/2020, 20/2020 and 02/2021 dated 8th April, 2020, 13th April, 2020, 5th May, 2020 and January 13, 2021 respectively and all other relevant circulars issued by Ministry of Corporate Affairs from time to time (collectively referred to as "MCA Circulars"). The deemed venue for the AGM would be the registered office of the Association.

The notice of the Annual General Meeting has been served to all Members of HRANI on September 13, 2021 through electronic mode. Following businesses will be transacted at the Annual General Meeting:

- Adoption of Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st March, 2021
- Appointment of Auditors
- Election of Members of Managing Committee of HRANI, which was due to be conducted at the 70th Annual General Meeting of HRANI be and is hereby deferred for the next year and the existing members be allowed to continue to be the members of the Managing Committee of HRANI until the elections are conducted next year at the 71st Annual General Meeting of HRANI.

Members may cast their votes electronically on the business as set forth in the Notice of the AGM through electronic voting system of "KFin Technologies Private Limited ('KFin') from a place other than venue of the AGM ('Remote e-voting'). All the members are informed that:

- i. The business as set forth in the Notice of the AGM may be transacted through remote e-voting and linking at the AGM. The Link to attend the AGM is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84599548636> and the link for voting through electronic mode is <https://voting.kfintech.com>
- ii. The cut-off date for the purpose of completing all formalities for renewal of membership and thereby being eligible for remote e-voting and voting at the Annual General Meeting is **20th September 2021**.
- iii. The remote e-voting shall commence on **September 24, 2021 (9:30 am IST)** and shall end on **September 27, 2021 (5:00 pm IST)**.

iv. Members may note that: a) the remote e-voting module shall be disabled by KFin Technologies Private Limited ("KFin") beyond **5:00 p.m. IST on September 27, 2021** and once the vote on a resolution is casted by the member, the member shall not be allowed to change it subsequently; b) the members who have cast their vote by remote e-voting prior to the AGM may also attend the AGM but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again.

v. In case of queries in regard to electronic voting, members may contact Mr. S.V. Raju, Deputy General Manager, Corporate Registry, KFin Technologies Private Limited ("KFin"), Selenium Tower B, Plot 31-32, Gachibowli, Financial District, Nanakramguda, Hyderabad - 500032, Ph: 040-67161582, M: 9849574684, Email: raju.sv@kfintech.com

For Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India
Sd/-
New Delhi, India
September 13, 2021
Renu Thapliyal, Secretary General

Afghan musicians flee Kabul, fearing for their lives and dire future of art

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

As the Taliban tighten its grip on power in Afghanistan, patrons of the popular Afghan music in Pakistan are shutting their offices with artistes in Kabul being forced to flee into hiding, resulting in cancellation of music programmes and huge losses for the industry.

The Taliban swept across the country last month, seizing control of almost all key towns and cities in the backdrop of withdrawal of the US forces that began on May 1. On August 15, the capital city of Kabul fled to the insurgents.

The Taliban claimed victory over opposition forces in the last holdout province of Panjshir on September 6, completing their takeover of Afghanistan three weeks after capturing Kabul. Since then, music artistes have taken their instruments home, or crammed them into store rooms, waiting to see if the group will again ban music as they did 20 years ago.

Drones target northern Iraqi airport after 2 month lull

AP ■ BAGHDAD

Explosives-laden drones targeted Irbil international airport in northern Iraq late Saturday where US-led coalition troops are stationed with no reports of casualties, according to security forces and officials in Kurdish-run region.

Kurdistan's Counter-Terrorism Service said at least two drones carrying explosives targeted the airport. It said the attack did not kill any casualties. Lawk Ghafari, spokesman for the semi-autonomous northern region, said the explosives struck outside of the airport and dismissed reports the attack had impacted flights. He said the airport remained open and an investigation was ongoing by Kurdish authorities.

The attack is the first following a two month lull in drone and rocket attacks to target the US presence in Baghdad and military bases across Iraq. On July 8, rockets landed in and around the heavily fortified Green Zone in the Iraqi capital Baghdad, which houses the US Embassy. It caused material damage but no casualties.

Until recently the attacks were a frequent occurrence. The US has blamed Iran-backed militias for attacks. More recently, the attacks have become more sophisticated, with militants using drones instead of Katyusha rockets.

US forces will end their combat mission in Iraq by the end of this year, but will continue to train and advise the Iraqi military.

Japan, Vietnam sign defence transfer deal amid China worries

Tokyo: Japan can now give defense equipment and technology to Vietnam under an agreement signed on Saturday, as the two countries step up their military cooperation amid worries about China's growing military influence.

Japan's Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi said the deal elevates their defense partnership "to a new level" and that Japan and Vietnam plan to deepen defense ties through multinational joint exercises and other means.

Details about the transfer of specific equipment, including naval vessels, will be worked out in subsequent talks, the ministry

said. Kishi's meeting with his Vietnamese counterpart, Phan Van Giang, in Hanoi coincided with a two-day visit to the Vietnamese capital by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

He wrapped up his visit by saying China plans to donate 3 million doses of its coronavirus vaccine to Vietnam.

The agreement comes two weeks after the US Vice President Kamala Harris travelled to Vietnam to strengthen ties with the Southeast Asian nation.

During the tour, Harris urged countries to stand up against "bullying" by China in the South China Sea.

In Somalia, a rare woman President candidate

AP

2 women campaign to become France's 1st female President

AP ■ PARIS

Two French politicians kicked off their presidential campaigns on Sunday, seeking to become France's first female leader in next year's spring election.

The far-right National Rally party's Marine Le Pen and Paris' Socialist mayor, Anne Hidalgo, both launched their presidential platforms in widely expected moves.

They join a burgeoning list of challengers to centrist President Emmanuel Macron. This includes battles among

multiple potential candidates on the right – including another female politician Valerie Pécresse – and among the Greens.

Hidalgo, 62, mayor of the French capital since 2014, is the favorite to win the Socialist Party nomination. She launched her candidacy in the northwestern city of Rouen.

"I want all children in France to have the same opportunities I had," she said, invoking her roots. Hidalgo is the daughter of Spanish immigrants who fled their country in search of freedom amid

dictator Francisco Franco's rule.

Le Pen, the 53-year-old leader of France's far-right party, started her campaign in the southern city of Frejus with a pledge to defend French "liberty." In keeping with a hard-right message that critics say has vilified Muslim communities, Le Pen promised to be tough on "parts of France that have been Talibanized." Although she launched her candidacy earlier this year, on Sunday she made 26-year-old Jordan Bardella the acting head of the party as her campaign goes into full gear.

India expected to grow 10% during current fiscal

Says NCAER Director General Poonam Gupta

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian economy is expected to grow around 10 per cent during the current financial year on the likelihood of fewer Covid-19-linked supply disruptions and buoyancy in the global economy, said Poonam Gupta, director general of economic think-tank NCAER.

The real challenge, however, would be to sustain a growth rate of 7-8 per cent in years to come, she said.

"We could see annual growth in the ballpark range of about 10 per cent. The reasons for this perceived optimism are: fewer supply disruptions; increased pent-up demand in the traditional and contact-intensive services; and a buoyant global economy.

"Even so, if two pandemic years are taken together, there would be a very small net growth. In other words, the economy at the end of 2021-22 would be only slightly larger than at the end of 2019-20," Gupta said.

Gupta is the first woman director general of NCAER. Before joining the think-tank, she was the lead economist at



the World Bank. She was also the Reserve Bank of India Chair Professor at NIPFP, and a Professor of Macroeconomics at ICRIER.

On the challenges being faced by the Indian economy, she said the first one is to recover from the impact of COVID-19 and the second is to sustain post-COVID-19 growth rates of at least 7-8 per cent.

India has done rather well during the COVID-19 pandemic, primarily because of the rapid pace of vaccination, Gupta said, adding, "Currently, ensuring rapid and widespread vaccination is the best pro-growth policy that any country can implement."

India's economic growth surged to 20.1 per cent in the April-June quarter of this fiscal, helped by a low base in the year-ago period, amid a devastating second wave of the COVID-19.

The gross domestic product (GDP) had contracted by 24.4 per cent in the corresponding April-June quarter of 2020-21.

The RBI expects the GDP growth at 9.5 per cent in 2021-22 consisting of 21.4 per cent in the first quarter; 7.3 per cent in Q2; 6.3 per cent in Q3; and 6.1 per cent in Q4 of 2021-22.

On a question related to private investment picking up in India, Gupta said that one of the biggest economic challenges that India has faced in the past decade has been an anaemic private investment.

The data, she said, show that the rate of investment declined from a peak of 36 per cent of GDP in 2007 to 27 per cent in 2020. A large part of this decline is on account of the slowdown in private investment.

She noted that the Economic Survey 2017-18 had shown that the investment cycles often tend to be long-drawn. Notwithstanding even this cross-country experience, India's downturn in the realm of private investment has been longer drawn than anticipated, as it has now stretched into a second decade.

5 of top-10 valued firms add ₹ 62,508 cr to market valuation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Five of the 10 most valued firms added ₹ 62,508.32 crore to their total market valuation last week, with Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest gainer.

Hindustan Unilever Limited, HDFC, State Bank of India and Bharti Airtel were the other gainers while Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, Infosys, ICICI Bank and Bajaj Finance took a hit in their market valuation.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Reliance Industries jumped ₹23,582.73 crore to reach ₹15,37,600.23 crore at close on Thursday, becoming the biggest gainer among the top-10 firms.

Bharti Airtel's valuation zoomed ₹15,377.67 crore to ₹3,76,917.83 crore and that of HDFC by ₹12,836.43 crore to ₹5,11,126.48 crore.

The valuation of Hindustan Unilever rose by ₹9,997.52 crore to ₹6,59,941.45 crore and that of State Bank of India by ₹713.97 crore to ₹3,85,721.71 crore.

In contrast, the valuation of Tata Consultancy Services tumbled ₹18,347.3 crore to ₹14,02,587.80 crore.



The market capitalisation of Bajaj Finance dropped ₹5,824.68 crore to ₹4,48,383.08 crore. HDFC Bank's valuation eroded by ₹4,429.22 crore to ₹8,67,933.20 crore and that of Infosys dipped ₹3,605.59 crore to ₹7,17,639.19 crore.

The valuation of ICICI Bank declined ₹3,013.49 crore to ₹4,99,218.97 crore.

In the ranking of top-10 firms, Reliance Industries Limited was leading the chart followed by Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever Limited, HDFC, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finance, State Bank of India and Bharti Airtel.

During the last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark rose 175.12 points or 0.30 per cent.

Outlook for manufacturing in Q2 improves significantly; cost of doing biz rises: FICCI survey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The outlook for increased manufacturing activities in the second quarter of this fiscal has been significantly improved, though the cost of doing business and production is rising, according to a survey by industry chamber FICCI.

As per FICCI's latest quarterly survey (Q2) on manufacturing, industry respondents have attributed the hike in production costs primarily to high fixed costs, higher overhead costs for ensuring safety protocols, and a drastic reduction in volumes due to lockdown.

The hike was also attributed to lower capacity utilisation, high freight charges and other logistic costs, increased cost of raw materials, power cost, and high-interest rates.

It said that after experiencing subdued Q1 (April-June 2021-22), the outlook seems to have improved significantly in the second quarter (July-September), it said.

"However, the survey noticed a high percentage of respondents experiencing the rising cost of doing business and production," it said.

On exports, it said the outlook seems improving as around 58 per cent of the participants are expecting a rise in their output shipments during the second quarter.

"Hiring outlook for the sector remains subdued as 68 per cent mentioned that they are not likely to hire additional workforce in the next three months," the survey added.

Responses have been drawn from over 300 manufacturing units from both large and SME segments with a combined annual turnover of over 2.7 lakh crore.

FPIs continue to invest in Indian markets; pump in ₹7,605 cr till Sep 9

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Continuing the buying in Indian markets, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pumped in a net sum of ₹ 7,605 crore in September so far.

According to data from depositories, overseas investors invested ₹4,385 crore into equities and ₹3,220 crore in the debt segment during September 1-9.

During this period, the total net investment stood at ₹7,605 crore.

FPI funding in September comes after buying to the tune of ₹16,459 crore in August,

with a record ₹14,376.2 crore investment in the bonds market.

For the continuing gush of foreign money in the debt segment, Himanshu Srivastava, associate director (research) of Morningstar India, said, "The stability in Indian currency and increasing bond spreads between the US and India made Indian debt better placed on the risk-reward basis, which would have caught investor fancy resulting in rather sudden and high inflows."

However, he added that how investment in Indian equities has been volatile in recent times.

Last week, US Fed Chair Jerome Powell's address at the 'Jackson-Hole' event where he adopted a wait-and-watch approach and highlighted that the central bank is not in a hurry to hike rates, garnered positive reaction from investors and increased their appetite for riskier assets, Srivastava noted.

"FPIs would have chosen to be part of the ongoing rally in the Indian equity markets rather than missing out on it. However, the scenario was slightly different this week. "The uncertainty around the timeline to taper QE (quantitative easing) would have restrained them from going overboard or bring in substantial investments in Indian equities," he added.

In times to come, Shrikant Chouhan, executive vice-president (equity technical research) at Kotak Securities, said FPI flows are expected to remain volatile during September-December 2021, as global investment continues to remain challenging. Investors are focusing on the sustenance of growth in developed economies. As a result, they are expected to focus on emerging markets for diversification and India cannot be ignored by global investors given the growth opportunities, he further said.

Pensioners' body seeks PM's intervention in release of DA, DR arrears

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Pensioners Manch (BMS) has sought intervention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the release of dearness allowance (DA) and dearness relief (DR) arrears for Central Government employees and pensioners at the earliest.

In April last year, the Ministry of Finance had put on hold an increment in dearness allowance (DA) till June 30, 2021, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In July this year, the Government hiked DA and DR to 28 per cent from July 1, 2021, which benefited more than 48 lakh Central Government employees, and 65 lakh pensioners.

The rate of DA from January 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021, was 17 per cent. Thus no DA and DR arrears were released for Central Government employees and pensioners respectively.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, the BMS stated, "It is urged upon you to kindly intervene into the matter and direct the Ministry of Finance for early release of the freeze DA/DR with effect from January 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. An early and immediate action with a line of reply to this organization will be highly appreciated."

The BPM opined that during this period (DA/DR freeze) the retail inflation had shot up and the price of auto fuel, edible oil and several pulses had soared to record level.

The very basis of payment of DA/DR is to compensate employees and pensioners for increase in the cost of living. After the cost of living has gone up, it is unfair to deny the compensation to employees and pensioners, it submitted.

"The most of the pensioners being in their old age are required medical assistance and now the rate of every commodity has risen many-folds due to the crisis of COVID-19. Most of the pensioners are in hand to mouth financial condition, it mentioned.

Sebi notifies certification requirements for distributors, staff of portfolio mgmt services

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi has put in place certification requirements for associated persons engaged by portfolio managers as distributors or employees having decision-making authority related to fund management.

These persons need to obtain certification from the National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM), the regulator said in two separate notifications dated September 7.

The associated persons, engaged by a portfolio manager as a distributor of the PMS, and associated persons functioning as principal officers of a portfolio manager or an employee having decision-making authority related to fund management, will have to obtain certification from the NISM by passing the certification examination.

The portfolio managers will have to ensure that all associated persons who are distributors of the portfolio management services (PMS) and who are principal officers having decision-making authority related to fund management, as of September 7,

2021, obtain the certification within two years, Sebi said.

It further said a portfolio manager, who engage or employ such associated person after September 7, 2021, will have to ensure that such person obtains certification within one year from the date of their employment.

However, an associated person, who being a distributor of the PMS has obtained a valid AMFI Registration Number (ARN) or NISM certification, will be exempted from the requirement of obtaining such certification. Earlier in March, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) notified new regulations for portfolio managers about their qualifications.

The move was expected to help recognise "the postgraduate programme in the securities market of not less than one year offered by NISM" as an eligible qualification for portfolio managers. With regard to qualification for the portfolio manager, Sebi had said a portfolio manager needs to have a professional qualification in finance, law, accountancy or business management from a university.

Packaging education to play key role in promotion of various products: Patel

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Packaging is a unique field and it should be promoted, as the sector will play a vital role in promoting various products of every industry, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel has said.

The Minister visited the Indian Institute of Packaging, under the ministry, on Saturday. "She emphasised that the packaging is a unique and good field and should be promoted. Packaging education will play a vital role in promoting various products of each and every industry," the institute said in a statement.

IIP-Ahmedabad has showcased the minister prototypes developed for packaging.

The Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP) is a national apex body that was set up in 1966 by the packaging and allied industries and the Ministry of Commerce, with the specific objective of improving the packaging standards in the country.

The institute is an autonomous body working under the administrative control of the ministry.

Banks should embrace digitisation to ensure Govt schemes reach needy: FM

PTI ■ TUTICORIN (TN)

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said banks, including private sector banks, should embrace digitisation towards ensuring that Government schemes reach the poor and downtrodden, besides adopting financial inclusion for a wider reach.

Delivering her address at the centenary celebrations of the city-based Tamilnad Mercantile Bank here, Sitharaman said even during Covid-19 pandemic with the use of digitisation through banking correspondents, the government's financial disbursements were distributed to the needy after verifying their details.

"Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) was clearly aware that banking is important and did not hesitate that there can be accounts with zero balance, if they were opened under the Jandhan Yojana scheme (launched in 2014). But he ensured that every one must hold a bank account and be able to transact through a RuPay card," she said.

Stating that the government distributed Rs 1,500 in

three installments to the needy through their bank accounts during the Covid-19 outbreak, she said there are lot of changes happening in the banking sector at a "fast pace" through digitisation.

"There is no necessity to open a branch in a place which does not have a bank. Today, to reach a bank account of the people who live there, all kinds of technologies are available...Even sitting from Tuticorin one can serve the banking requirements of people living in small villages through technology", she said.

"The way forward for any bank, particularly for a bank like Tamilnad Mercantile Bank, to be more efficient, is to adopt complete technology related solutions", she said.

"Today financial technology is the biggest area and using that we can able to populate data into forms. It may be Income Tax or GST related. Auto-populating data (of a consumer) has been very useful (today)," she said.

Auto-populating data can be done only through 'digitisation' and the management of TMB should think of greater use of digitisation, she said.

| <div><div><div><div><div></div><div>DHFL</div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div></</div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div></div> | | |
|--|--|--|
|--|--|--|



Bollywood
‘Some films never get made but the stories live on forever.’
—Randeep Hooda

AN UNTOLD PERSPECTIVE

Actor **SHREYA DHANWANTHARY** tells **KHUSHBU KIRTI** and **CHRISTY VARGHESE** that *Mumbai Diaries 26/11* covers a different angle of the fateful night

When we think of the date November 26, 2008, it takes little time for our mind to conjure the horrific imagery of what transpired during the 26/11 attacks, as the incident has come to be known among the masses, when 10 members of Lashkar-e-Taiba wreaked havoc in Mumbai.

While numerous renditions, in cinema and literature, have emerged of what happened that night, no one really gave much thought to what healthcare workers were dealing with in the aftermath of the 26/11 attacks. Working on the aforementioned premise, *Mumbai Diaries 26/11* shares the perspective of the doctors who had to treat both the victims and the terrorists.

Shreya Dhanwanthary, who essays the role of a field reporter, Mansi Hirani, in the series, expresses that while she has played a journalist in the past, with her portrayal of Padmashri-winning financial journalist Sucheta Dalal in *Scam 1992*, this felt a new experience altogether.

Read on for excerpts of the interview:

Tell us a little about what's in store for viewers that sets the series apart from other representations of what took place on November 26, 2008, like Ram Gopal Varma's *The Attacks of 26/11*?

There have been many angles that covered this particular event that just about every Indian is familiar with, but I don't think there has been anything around the viewpoint of the doctors, people who were working at hospitals that night.

Mumbai Diaries 26/11 is all about different forces that collided at this particular hospital, during those attacks. We are trying to give a different perspective to what happened, which might be new, yet harrowing at the same time.



The frontline workers, their life is what is being shown here?

Yes, exactly. Most of us were not even familiar with that term before the pandemic reached India. On a regular day itself the hospital goes through a lot of horror but be it a private or a government hospital. But this is set in the backdrop of 26/11 so the horror is manifold.

So, the series highlights how doctors had to go beyond the call of duty on that fateful night?

I think they do that every day, every night, regardless of whether there is something to uphold in the background or not. In every sense of the word, members of the healthcare sector are genuine lifesavers.

And in the series, we have tried to reflect how they are carrying on with their job, irrespective of what's happening around them. That is a testament of their grit and what they can do.

What can the audience expect from your role and what, according to you, is the



USP of the show?

I hope that once they watch *Mumbai Diaries 26/11*, they would be able to agree that this is nothing like *Sucheta*, at all. Because that is the question that I have been getting from most people.

My character is that of a field reporter, which is something altogether different from the financial mindset the Padmashri-winning journalist, Sucheta had.

What is the one thing this project taught you?

The one thing this project taught me is something we briefly spoke about earlier; that there is always another perspective that we tend to overlook. I think we all are bound to think along the lines of, 'oh, I have seen a rendition of 26/11 oh so many times'. However, this show is covering a different angle, through a different lens.

I believe this is a message we should carry for life. There is more than one side to every story. After the show, that one thought has been ingrained on my mind. I personally think it is nice to know that there are more perspectives, apart from what we think we know, to any particular matter.

Since it is based on events that took place almost 13 years ago, we have to ask whether you felt like you were reliving the night?

It's something that is still

like a fresh wound in the minds of a lot many fellow citizens of our country. I have to remind you that *Scam 1992*, was even further back in the past. Reliving the past is a part of the experience of being in such productions.

After a role in *The Family Man*, then *Scam 1992* and now *Mumbai Diaries 26/11*, you've come a long way. To what do you attribute your career-graph which is now pointing upwards?

Yes, I have come a long way, but I have a longer way to go, yet.

While people would think that hard work paves the path to success, I disagree. Hard work cannot beat working smartly. I have to be honest and admit that at times I ask my parents, 'why couldn't you have done a film when you were younger, it would have made matters easy for me'.

I think talent pays a bigger role in this industry than hard work, because that probably is the difference between smart work and hard work.

Hard work isn't always equivalent to good work. You can really work hard all your life for something, and still not be good at it. Hard work cannot signify how good you are at something, it just simply stands for how hard you worked, unfortunately.

Now that I have said this, you might think it is all about applying yourself, but no. There are so many different factors at play. You need to be passionate about what you are doing. There are so many people who literally work hard every day. Visit any construction site, labourers are engaging in back-breaking hardwork. Make no mistake, they do it because that is the way society is built. They don't have access to the opportunities that we do, hence they continue toiling, day in and day out, without having anything to show for it.

It is very easy to say that hardwork se *kisi ko mauka mil jaata hai*. In India it is pretty easy to see what hard work gets you, and what other opportunities can do for you...

How do you try to stay relevant to the modern audience with the characters you choose?

(laughs heartily, before responding) I don't think I have properly arrived in the industry, it is too early for me too think about my relevance in the industry.

I haven't really given much thought to how relevant or irrelevant is a character before accepting that role. Ever since I could read, I've been reading books. Stories have always been my truest, closest and constant friends. When I get my hands on a script I read it like a story, bearing in mind the thought whether I feel like flipping the page, whether I am hungry to know what comes next. If I genuinely like a script, I read it again.

This time, from the perspective of my character, tracing all the nuances. Again, you can't really control how the story may pan out. When its written to when it is released, if it does release, they are multiple filters, that a script may go through, right from the creation of the script to editing of the script, to improvisations and additions that may happen during production, and then some more editing in post-production. And these are things which I cannot control, the only bits that I have some influence over is my performance of the character, provided I like it. That is my only concern, at this point in my life.

Relevance or relevance of my character, is hopefully something I would have to worry about later on in my career.

I trust you will come back to me then, so that I can cry about it. (chuckles)

WEBBED



PAVITRA RISHTA... IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

Unlike other romantic dramas, *Pavitra Rishta... It's Never Too Late* will see the beginning of a love story which is forced to end as Manav and Archana are conned into the sacred union of marriage by their families. This series releases on September 15 on ZEE5.



NAKAAB

The life of a small-time cop — Aditi Amre — changes completely when she is involved in a high-profile death case. As the cop digs deeper, multiple masks come off revealing multiple suspects. This whodunit releases on September 15 on MX Player.



THE HARPER HOUSE

An overconfident female head-of-household struggles to regain a higher status for herself, and for her family of oddballs, after losing her job and moving from the rich side to the poor side of a small Arkansas town. It releases on September 16 on Voot Select.

'Don't commit to stereotypes'

Actor **AYUSHMANN KHURRANA** talks about breaking free from norms on the second anniversary of *Dream Girl*. By **TEAM VIVA**

Ayushmann Khurrana reveals that his aim as an artiste is to constantly tell people to not stereotype themselves or others. He does this through the cinema that he chooses to be a part of and he intends to constantly hand pick such content-driven films that stand out and spread a positive message to the society.

Referring to *Dream Girl*, which released exactly two years ago, Khurrana shares that that was the thought process behind the film. He shares, "Consciously or unconsciously we are constantly conditioned to stereotype everything around us.

Sometimes, we aren't even aware that we are either getting stereotyped or stereotyping others or ourselves."

Khurrana credits the film's director, Raja Shaandilyaa, and producer, Ekta Kapoor, for trying to convey this important message through the film. "I loved the script of *Dream Girl* because it told us to not stereotype ourselves because that

would limit us from realising our potential and make a difference. It told us that when we break this cycle, we can action positive change in society," expresses Khurrana.

He further adds, "My character, Karamveer, broke away from stereotyping himself when he decided to become Pooja. To me, that was a fresh and disruptive thought and it hit home for me because I'm constantly looking out for such subjects that stand out and have a message to give to the audience."

Khurrana also lets in on his belief that he will be satiated as an actor if he continues to be on this mission to shatter stereotypes. He says, "If you look at the films that I have done like *Bala*, *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhaan*, you will see that I'm trying to tell people to not stereotype themselves. I hope that I can get some really good scripts to help underline this message. That would make me really happy as an artiste."



In accordance with the 'new normal', gone are elaborate house parties where you could be the host and still not know some of the people in your house. Hosting small gatherings at home is the new way to spend quality time with friends and family and the secret to having a great house party is to create a comfortable space for your guests where they can feel at home. It is important to adorn your house with the right furniture elements to create a warm and inviting atmosphere. For instance, it might be wise to stay away from bulky and rigid pieces of furniture to create a party-friendly space. Having multipurpose and modular furniture instead will make it easier for you to rearrange your house whenever you have guests over, irrespective of whether it is for an intimate family dinner-party or a birthday celebration with friends.

Here are some versatile pieces of furniture that blend in effortlessly with your home decor, making your house the ideal choice for a memorable party.

A COMFY LOUNGE



Managing floor space is perhaps one of the most important aspects while hosting a party. To make the most of your space, you should choose furniture that is multi-functional and versatile in nature. Sofa sets that can be

Mixing it up

KEYUR ZAVERI suggests some mindful furniture for your home to be prepared for a party at short notice

rearranged to fit the vibe of the party are must-haves. Compact floor seating solutions are perfect for accommodating multiple guests in a limited space, allowing them to arrange the seating as per their convenience. Multipurpose sofa-cum-beds present another interesting seating option for a party with close friends who may want to stay over. Dandy Low Seaters also complement your decor beautifully and provide additional seating space.

SWING IN STYLE

Bring back the magical charm of a wooden swing that's not only a treat to the eyes but also a comfortable seating option. Wooden swings enhance the aesthetics of any space and also serve as a tradition-



al element in a modern living space. Add colourful cushions and bolsters to the swing to give it an accentuated look. A Hammock chair is another wonderful piece of furniture that can be used to achieve the same effect in smaller settings.

ERGONOMIC CENTRE TABLES



Centre tables add a lot of value to any house party. For a large group of people, it is important to create enough surface space for people to

place plates, beverages, or any other items that they're holding. For a quirky and fresh approach, set aside your traditional centre table and opt for mobile height-adjustable tables that can be easily moved around and used by either seated and standing guests, as required. These contemporary designs add



simply adding a multifunctional bar unit to your living room or dining area. You can complement the setup with a set of stools and foldable tables, which are ideal for an outdoor party.

BALCONY DECOR

Get creative with your balcony and decorate the space with outdoor furniture to make the most of it. You can go for a contemporary look with simple, sleek wooden furniture that is ideal for an outdoor setting. Alternatively, a petit sofa cum bed with cushions can add a retro feel to your balcony, which can be further accentuated with the right lighting. Make sure to decorate your balcony with some potted plants or hanging planters in colourful pots to give it a fresh and inviting vibe. With a little bit of effort, you can create the perfect outdoor paradise for your guests.

Revamping your home to make it party-friendly isn't as difficult as it may seem. By making a few fundamentally correct decor choices and mindfully choosing your furniture, you can become the ultimate host of any social gathering.

(The author is the senior director of design at Furlenco, an Indian online furniture rental platform that was established in 2012.)

TRENDBLAZER



AKSHAY KUMAR ON 'GOOD FEARS'

Three weeks after *Bell Bottom* became the first major Hindi film to be released in theatres, actor **AKSHAY KUMAR** made a startling revelation.

He may be an ace action hero, but Kumar is not free from what he calls 'good fears'.

"I fear everything and these are called 'good fears'. I fear even jumping from a stool because I want to take care of myself and make sure I don't hit my leg or hurt my knee," he revealed with a grin.

fairtalk

RICHA CHADHA



'Social media campaigns are a great way to reach many people at one go and through *The KINDry*, my ultimate purpose is to educate people on Covid appropriate behavior and encourage them to get vaccinated at the earliest. The threat of the third wave of infections still persists and it is very important for people to maintain social distancing and stay at home.'

dailytalk

KANGANA RANAUT



'Speaking about politics, I strongly believe that without working on the ground level, one cannot win even a panchayat election. People can see through ingenuity. To enter politics, one needs to make genuine investments in people. One can see this in how people love J Jayalalithaa long after her demise because she tried to help them.'

KRISTEN STEWART ON PLAYING DIANA

The Hollywood actor, **KRISTEN STEWART** will play the character of Princess Diana in the forthcoming movie *Spencer*.

"Even when she looked her most beautiful self, I think she was comfortable enough to kick her shoes off and walk outside with you, ask how you are, and you would feel that honesty from her," Stewart said.

She added that she had to learn to curtsying while shooting the movie.



When the lockdown was imposed in March last year, an SOS message was sounded out by a girl who had been sent back from school to her home in the red-light area. Her mother, who had transitioned to daily-wage work, lost all her income and the family was unable to buy food. There were similar messages of hunger from other victims of sex trafficking and their children. The anti-sex trafficking NGO, Apne Aap, launched the #1MillionMeals drive as a rapid response. Its efforts were meant to be a stop-gap till the government set up systems in place for vulnerable women and children. However, it had to continue the food drive indefinitely as there is still no system in place.

Apne Aap has distributed more than 12 million meals among half a million vulnerable women and girls in eight states of India between March 2020 and June 2021. Its intended goal was a million meals for 10,000 victims of sex trafficking and their children in 100 days. It has exceeded its initial target 12 times over and is continuing even after 500 days.

The beneficiaries include people who experience marginalisation on account of their caste, gender, occupation and geographical location. Many of them also face intersecting discrimination. Many of these individuals depended on precarious occupations besides victims of sex trafficking and included agricultural labourers, sharecroppers, fishermen, vegetable sellers, basket-makers, cotton carders, street performers, snake-charmers, cattle herders, coal-miners, plough-cultivators, tea garden labourers and construction site labourers. Some excerpts from an interview:

◆What was the initial idea behind the foundation?

To end sex trafficking by creating choices for girls at risk in marginalised communities. We focussed on ending inter-generational prostitution among identified criminal tribes by educating their children and helping their prostituted mothers exit brothels by getting government IDs and accessing government welfare like food, housing and health care.

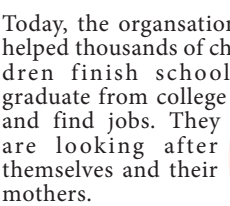
Initially, the founding 22 prostituted women had four dreams: a) school for their children b) a job with dignity c) a room of their own d) old-age pensions.

Apne Aap rented a room in a Municipal School in a red light area and hired a teacher. Slowly, when the children were ready for school, we formed an Apne Aap mothers circle and together talked and begged the local principal to admit the children.



THE LAST GIRL

An SOS call at the start of lockdown spurred Apne Aap International to reach out to marginalised communities at the bottom of the pyramid. RUCHIRA GUPTA, founder, tells SAIMI SATTAR that the #1MillionMeals continues to reach out to people



◆How has it transformed?

With time we named our approach the '10 Asset Approach'. An Apne Aap woman or child became independent as they gained 10 assets over a period of one or two years. The assets were a 1) a safe space like access to a community centre 2) education 3) self-confidence through storytelling, dance, kung fu karate 4) political knowledge and ability to talk to authorities 5) government IDs like BPL cards and caste certificates 6) government welfare like ration card, Indira Awas Yojana 7) bank accounts and loans 8) IGP and small business training 9) legal knowledge and support like testifying in court, filing police complaint 10) friendship circles of Apne Aap self-action groups of at least 10 members and the larger network.

This made the women and children stand on their feet and learn how to negotiate without putting them into a home or institution. It changed the place where they lived. This was a slow process but longer-lasting and transformative too. There are red light areas which have become non-red light areas in Bihar due to this effort. The traffickers are in jail, children in school and college and mothers have taken over the houses, turned them into homes and are daily wage earners running small businesses and accessing government welfare.

◆What has been the reach of the programme? In numbers and area.

We've worked in Bihar, Delhi, Maharashtra and West Bengal. We've helped more than 20,000 women and children exit prostitution systems since we began work in 2002. We've reached the most vulnerable communities who were labelled as criminal tribes under British and were so marginalised that prostitution became

their only livelihood.

Recently, when Covid hit in 2020, we found that many of the women had lost all income from daily wage work, their children were sent back from school to the red light area and they slowly began to starve.

We launched a #1MillionMeals food drive. In the last 18 months, we have served more than half a million women and children from red-light areas, refugee camps and migrant camps more than 12 million meals.

◆Who are the volunteers who have come forward to take on the task?

The maximum volunteers have come forward from the student community. I've had a constant stream of volunteers from Ahmedabad University, Jadavpur University, Delhi University in India and Oxford University in the UK. From the US, volunteers from NYU, Hunter, Stanford, Yale, Harvard and University of Washington. The ones who provided on-the-ground support have been retired business owners mostly older women who are helping with our income-generation training like supervising sewing circles.

◆How is it put into operation?

Our approach for #1MillionMeals is through something called The Human Chain which was created through WhatsApp group starting from factory owners to the girls in the red-light areas, with merchants, transporters, celebrity amplifiers, warehouse owners, NGO leaders, student volunteers, our team of Apne Aap managers and community mobilisers and finally the beneficiaries whom I call 'The Last Girl'. For me, she is the 13-year-old in a brothel.

◆What have been the obstacles in implementing the programme, if any?

Logistical issues caused by the lockdowns, like no transportation, shortage of food, a health risk for our workers and constant need for money or food donation. We also faced some corruption and discrimination along the way.

◆Women cannot be considered a monolith. The problems, I am sure, would have changed depending on the area, age and more. How do you find a customised solution?

The victims of sex trafficking in Kolkata needed food in the form of dry ration most, whereas migrant women needed cooked meals as they were walking along the highway from Delhi. In some cases women needed cash, and in others, they needed to rent a room. In the Sundarbans, they wanted material to rebuild their homes after a bad storm. At other times we had to provide oxygen concentrators.

◆What does the post-pandemic world mean for women in the workforce?

It's going to be a tough world if we don't create special economic stimulus packages for the most marginalised women and girls. Send them cheques so that they can make their own decisions on how to restart their lives or manage the crisis they are in. Our government can certainly afford it. Otherwise, the economy will suffer.

If the bottom third suffers, we will all suffer. Covid has taught us that we are interconnected. No lockdown or wall or police control could stop the virus from travelling from one country to another, rich to poor areas, man to woman, adult to children, black to white or upper caste to poor caste. So if someone continues to live in a dirty area with no sewage, remember that the mosquito that breeds there will bite us all. We are linked not ranked.



Change 'I', not 'them'

RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI claims that self-transformation is the only way to overcome the hollow value-system

Across the globe, almost every leader, today, articulates the need to base the educational system, politics, trade and commerce and all other professions on moral and human values. But when these leaders are themselves faced with real life situations, they discover that there are dissensions galore, even among the elite, about the right type of values and also about who should observe which value. For example, heads of many countries, which are members of the UN or its Security Council, stress upon withdrawal of one powerful country's troops from a less powerful country, for it is an act of forcible occupation of the territory of another member country and is against the accepted morals or principles of international amity, cooperation, co-existence and non-covetousness, et al. They, therefore, call on the powerful nations to observe moral norms and maintain status quo ante.

But those nations argue vehemently that the UN Security Council, and its member nations, do not themselves put into practice the values of being just and fair in their treatment of all nations because, if they did, they should have earlier declared military blockade of, and economic sanctions against, many such powerful nations who have time and again illegally occupied territory of another member country. Likewise, in India those who are opposing the reservations in many sectors like education, sports, and so on, say that merit should be given the highest value, and selections and promotions should be based on merits, for neglect of merit means putting premium on mediocrity and turning back the wheels of progress at a time when other nations are advancing rapidly. Denying chance to those who deserve it because of merit, they say, is doing injustice to those who work hard to achieve excellence or higher quality. On the other hand, we find that those who, in favour of reservations have been proposed, avow that denying better opportunities to the backward classes and castes is a worse form of injustice. Whereas, others acclaim that promoting the employment prospects of the backward people on the basis of castes is a negative and indirect way of promoting casteism and of converting the present meritorious sections of society into backward classes of tomorrow.

In a similar way, those



who are fired with the zeal of building a place of worship at a disputed site say that the minority should respect the feelings of the majority and show regard for a great historical figure of this country and should co-operate to undo a wrong done by the cruel invaders, who, out of religious fanaticism, demolished a place of worship to hurt sentiments of a particular religion. Others who are against this say that the majority community should be more liberal and magnanimous and should not dig out the buried carcasses to stir the religious emotions of the minority community and thus lead to hatred, fear and instability. In short, there is dispute as to who is not observing which value and yet everyone is trying to emphasise that grave moral degeneration has taken place. Each one is raising his or her accusing finger at the other without realising that the rest of the fingers are pointing at him or her and that the real remedy for transforming the society and basing it on cherished values is to work for self-transformation and to fulfill the onus of observing values in one's own life first.

Transformation, as we all know and have experienced it ourselves, is in fact a natural process of life wherein there are tons of ups and downs. It's a journey of self-discovery where there are moments on mountain tops and moments in deep valleys of despair. One single seed, when sown into the ground and watered and nurtured, grows into a tree, every branch of which gives so many fruits year after year. Imagine, if one transformed seed could fulfill the hopes and aspiration of so many fruit lovers, what would be our world like, if each and every person starts transforming positively from within? Indeed, it would be a much better place to live for sure. So, never think that if x, y or z will change only then will I change, because if I change, others around me will definitely change. So, the whole process is of changing 'I' and not 'them'.

Madam aap ise samjhaye na, sasural wapis chale jaye, thoda adjust karle" (Madam, please make her understand that she should go back to her in-laws and adjust a little), a famous psychiatrist, Dr Binda Singh, from Bihar, was once told by her patient's family. The patient was a survivor of domestic violence.

As per Dr Singh, families place a high value on marriages and consider them as one of the most important social events. Girls, from a very young age, are 'trained and prepared' for this event by their families. Instead of receiving education, girls are forced to spend time learning how to cook and take care of the house. And when the marriages fail, parents choose to suppress or ignore the plight of their own daughters. "Not being self-sufficient leads to women accepting domestic violence, making them unable to make the right decision at the time," Dr Singh added.

The patriarchal society encourages coercive control over women, which frequently leads to violence against them. To be controlled by male members before getting married and by her husband and in-laws after the marriage has always limited women's ability to exercise their fundamental rights. To make matters worse, societal shame, taboos and prejudices make it worse for women to

BATTLING WITH PATRIARCHY

ARCHANA KISHORE and SAUMYA JYOTSNA throw light on the plight of women forced to 'adjust' with domestic violence



take a stand even today.

Sushma (name changed) from Muzaffarpur district while reflecting on her painful experience shared, "It started with a demand for dowry. Once it was fulfilled, my husband demanded a bike. All these years of marriage, I was physically and mentally tortured. I could not take it anymore and returned to my mother's house."

Although Sushma's parents initially asked her to go back and try to 'adjust' with the situation, she did not let this pressure influence her decision and refused to return to her husband. Currently, Sushma is preparing for competitive examinations.

As per the statistics, there are around five crore women



victims of domestic violence in our country, but only 0.1 per cent of them file a complaint. An incident of domestic violence is reported every five minutes. According to a report by the United Nations Population Fund, two-thirds of

married women in India are victims of some type of domestic violence. 70 per cent of women in the age bracket of 15 to 49 are victims of thrashing, rape and sexual abuse.

While sharing thoughts on the current statistics, Dr

Kalpna Chawla, who works at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences in Patna, said that the majority of women do not speak the truth or raise their voices about domestic violence. "They hide the marks of assault or lie about getting wounded by tripping over. However, we do not force them to speak the truth and treat them accordingly," shared Dr Chawla.

"At times, the reality surfaces after a series of conversations with the survivor or if their relatives tell the truth. Several medical cases arise due to sexual abuse although women and their families do not prefer to report it. To correctly estimate the actual count of such cases can be taxing," she added.

Covid-19 has worsened the situation as the cases of domestic violence against women are undeniably on the rise. Due to restricted movement, women are trapped in their houses with their abusers. With no resources at their disposal, victims of domestic violence are facing the worst time of their lives. In Bihar, according to the State Women Commission figures, altogether 1,384 cases of domestic violence have been reported during the first lockdown.

Domestic violence pushes women into a vicious cycle of pain and depression. Several women suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

(PTSD). Domestic violence affects not only a woman's physical and mental health, but also of her children. Counseling the survivor of domestic violence and her in-laws, according to Dr Singh, can be a productive way to bring things under control. Behavioral and cognitive therapy are useful in these treatments.

Rural women lack access to such platforms — grievance redressal mechanisms and counselling services. In many cases, they would consider it acceptable to be hit by their partners and continue to pretend to be a 'good wife'.

For the most part, patriarchal tradition and culture are to be blamed. Patriarchy has been in place for thousands of years, laying the groundwork for men's entitlement to power over women. The impact has been such that over years, women have become the perpetrators of patriarchy.

While some women attempt to fight against what they have endured, lack of support from family or administration can lead to a never-ending cycle of suffering. The need of the hour is to educate women about their legal rights and make legal services accessible to women so that they can put a strong fight against the perpetrators of domestic violence.

—Charukha Features

If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal, not to people or things.
—Albert Einstein

REGULAR EXERCISE TO LOWER ANXIETY

Those who engage in regular exercise may lower their risk of developing anxiety by almost 60 per cent, finds a new study.

The study, published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, indicated that a group with a more physically active lifestyle had an almost 60 per cent lower risk of developing anxiety disorders over a follow-up period of up to 21 years.

Anxiety disorders, which typically develop early in a person's life, are estimated to affect approximately 10 per cent of the world's population and has been found to be twice as common in women compared to men.

The study is based on data from almost 400,000 people in one of the largest ever population-wide epidemiology studies across both sexes.

The authors found a noticeable difference in exercise performance level and the risk of developing anxiety between male and female skiers.



CHEWING-GUM MAY RELIEVE GUT PROBLEMS

Chewing gum after heart surgery may kickstart the digestive tract, helping patients feel better and potentially be discharged sooner than those who don't use this generally safe and simple intervention, finds a new study.

According to the researchers, postoperative gum chewing is an effective and inexpensive intervention that helps improve how patients feel after surgery.

For the study, presented at the 18th Annual Perioperative, the team involved one group comprising 341 patients who underwent surgery between 2017-2020 and took part in the sugarless chewing gum protocol after their operations.

A second group, which included 496 patients, received similar heart surgeries between 2013-2016, but did not chew gum after their procedures.

It was found that only 0.59 per cent of the gum-chewing patients had confirmed postoperative ileus, while 3.43 per cent in the non-gum chewing group developed postoperative ileus.



MODERNA'S VACCINE IS MOST EFFECTIVE

Moderna's vaccine for Covid-19 is significantly more effective against the Delta variant of the SARS-CoV2 virus than Pfizer or Johnson & Johnson, suggests a new study.

The study, published in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, suggests that Moderna was 95 per cent effective at preventing hospitalisation among adults ages 18 and older.

For the study, the team analysed more than 32,000 medical encounters from nine states during June, July and August 2021, when the Delta variant became the predominant strain.

They found that Pfizer was 80 per cent effective at preventing hospitalisation among adults ages 18 and older. While Johnson & Johnson was 60 per cent effective.

The results showed that unvaccinated individuals with Covid-19 are 5-7 times more likely to need emergency department care or hospitalisation. It was also found that vaccine effectiveness is lower for people 75 years and older, which has not been shown in previous research.



WORLD LEADERS TO SHIFT TO CLEAN ENERGY

The UN is bringing together heads of state and government as well as leaders from business, foundations and other organisations on September 24 to mobilise commitments and actions.

The recent IPCC report showed that urgent action is needed to keep the 1.5° C goal in reach, in order to limit the impacts of climate change.

At the same time, this goal will not be reached unless all people have access to clean, affordable and reliable energy, as agreed to by all countries as part of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals — Goal 7.

Globally, there are 759 million people without access to electricity. A further 800 million people have unreliable or intermittent access to the essential electricity that is needed at home, work, school, health facilities and community services for people to live healthy lives.



HAS THE PANDEMIC IMPACTED SUICIDE RATES?

Covid-induced lockdown has been lifted from most regions and various other measures have been eased. But, the very thought that Covid-19 pandemic is still on continues to affect mental health.

The uncertain nature of the pandemic, the chaos associated with the same continues to add to mental stress, which manifests as rising cases of depression, anxiety, insomnia, behavioural changes, health anxiety, nightmares, grief, among others, all that can contribute to suicidal thoughts and behaviour, said mental health experts.

On World Suicide Prevention Day, observed on September 10, WHO claimed one of every 100 deaths is due to suicide. There were online news media reports of 369 cases of suicides and attempted suicides during Covid lockdown vs 220 reports in 2019, revealed the study by the Indian Law Society, Pune.



EMMAZING

18-year-old qualifier Raducanu wins her maiden Grand Slam title after beating Fernandez in US Open final

AFP ■ NEW YORK

Britain's 18-year-old Emma Raducanu became the first qualifier to capture a Grand Slam title by defeating Canada's 19-year-old Leylah Fernandez on Saturday in the US Open women's final.

Raducanu, ranked 150th, was the first British woman in 44 years to win a Slam crown after beating 73rd-ranked left-hander Fernandez 6-4, 6-3 to take the \$2.5 million top prize.

"I knew I would have to dig deep," Raducanu said. "It was an incredibly difficult match but I thought the level was really high. I had to play some of my best tennis."

Not since Virginia Wade in 1977 at Wimbledon had a British woman taken a Slam singles title, with Raducanu the first Briton to claim the US Open crown since Wade in 1968.

Queen Elizabeth II was among the first to pay tribute to Raducanu's remarkable win.

"It is a remarkable achievement at such a young age, and is testament to your hard work and dedication," the British monarch said in a statement.

Wade and British men's tennis legend Tim Henman were among a sellout crowd of 23,700 that created an electric atmosphere at Arthur Ashe Stadium in the first-ever women's Slam final between unseeded players.

"It means so much



"It's an absolute dream. You just have visions of yourself going up to the box, hugging everyone, celebrating. For that moment to actually happen, I'm just so grateful."
—Emma Raducanu

to have Virginia here and also Tim and to have such British legends and icons, to follow in their footsteps and it gave me the belief I could actually do it."

Fernandez, who turned 19 on Monday, had ousted defending champion Naomi Osaka, second-ranked Aryna Sabalenka, fifth seed Elina Svitolina and three-time Slam winner Angelique Kerber in her epic run to the final.

"I'm very proud of myself the way I played the last two weeks," Fernandez said.

"I hope to be back here in the finals and having the right trophy."

While she was in tears after the defeat, Fernandez said on the 20th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that she wants to show the same resilience as New York.

"I know it's especially hard on this day for New York," she said. "I just want to say I hope I can be as strong and resilient as New York has been the past 20 years."

Raducanu is the youngest US Open champion since Williams in 1999 and the first US Open women's champion not to drop a set since Williams in 2014.

The showdown of prodigy talents was the first all-teen Slam final since 17-year-old Serena beat 18-year-old Martina Hingis for the 1999 US Open crown.

"I send my congratulations to you on your success. It is a remarkable achievement at such a young age, and is testament to your hard work and dedication."
—QUEEN ELIZABETH II

"What a sensational match! Huge congratulations to Emma Raducanu. You showed extraordinary skill, poise and guts and we are all hugely proud of you."
—BORIS JOHNSON

"Look at that bounce back @EmmaRaducanu US Open champion, amazing. Congratulations,"
—MARCUS RASHFORD

"She will win more of these, she is that good. This is not some flash in the pan or fairytale. She is playing top-five tennis."
—TIM HENMAN

"A star is born — Emma Raducanu makes history... and she is just getting started. And will never have to qualify again!"
—MARTINA NAVRATILOVA

Salisbury gets doubles double



AFP ■ NEW YORK

Britain's Joe Salisbury completed a US Open doubles double on Saturday, partnering with American Desirae Krawczyk to win the US Open mixed doubles final.

Salisbury and Krawczyk defeated Mexico's Giuliana Olmos and El Salvador's Marcelo Arevalo 7-5, 6-2 to capture the crown in Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Salisbury, who paired with American Rajeev Ram to win the men's doubles crown on Friday, became the first man to capture

both doubles crowns on the New York hardcourts since American Bob Bryan in 2010.

"It has been such an incredible couple of weeks," Salisbury said. "It has been so much fun. To come away with two titles, I couldn't have even dreamt that. To win the title with Des is amazing."

It's the third straight Slam mixed doubles title for Krawczyk, who paired with Salisbury to capture the French Open trophy and joined Britain's Neal Skupski to beat Salisbury and Britain's Harriet Dart in the Wimbledon mixed doubles final.

'Indian selectors must prioritise fitting in Ashwin by tweaking middle order'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The legendary Ian Chappell feels the Indian selectors must prioritise finding a way to "tweak" the team's middle order to accommodate the proven R Ashwin in the playing XI.

The former Australian captain's contention is that the veteran off-spinner all-rounder has proved himself as a "fine bowler in all conditions" and deserves a place in the team.

"India's best combination includes R Ashwin. He is a fine bowler under all conditions, as he proved in Australia, so India need to find a way to fit him into the XI," Chappell wrote in his column for ESPNcricinfo.

"Tweaking the Indian middle order to accommodate the skills of Ashwin should be a priority for the selectors," he added.

Chappell said the Indian team has got "substantial depth", something that makes them the formidable outfit that they are at the moment, adding that the thought that they can still improve is scary.

"There's no doubt that India are a very good all-round team. They have conclusively proved it by winning consecutive series in Australia and now having had success in England, albeit Covid-affected, while they are virtually unbeatable at home."
"It's a scary

ECB has written to ICC on outcome of cancelled 5th Test: spokesperson

London: The England and Wales Cricket Board has officially written to the ICC to decide the fate of the cancelled fifth Test against India at Old Trafford, indicating that the two boards are far from reaching a settlement. "Yes we have written to the ICC," an ECB spokesperson said when asked if they want the global body to decide on the fifth Test.

The ECB wants the ICC's Dispute Resolution Committee to address the issue and expect that a forfeiture would be granted so that they can claim insurance as they are going to lose 40 million pound if the match is declared abandoned due to Covid.

Covid is an acceptable non compliance and the Indian

camp has stated that it was unable to field a team for the match. However, the ECB's contention could be that the Indian players returned two negative RT-PCR results and were still reluctant to play.

If the ICC rules the Test as abandoned, then India will win the series 2-1 but if England get a forfeiture as per the DRC ruling, it will be a 2-2 verdict and the host nation can also claim insurance.

The ECB going to the ICC proves that there hasn't been an amicable settlement yet on the issue as the host board stares at losses. If it is ruled in favour of India, ECB stands to incur huge losses as most of the 40 million pound is not covered under Covid insurance. PTI

thought for the other Test sides that Virat Kohli's highly

successful team can be improved."

Iyer's return will strengthen DC: Dhawan

PTI ■ DUBAI

Delhi Capitals' senior batsman Shikhar Dhawan on Sunday said the return of regular skipper Shreyas Iyer will strengthen the team further as it looks to resume its IPL campaign on a high note.

The 2021 IPL was suspended in May due to multiple Covid cases inside its bio-bubble and the second leg of the lucrative tournament will begin on September 19 in the UAE. "We were in a certain flow in the first half of the season and then that flow was broken once the tournament was suspended," Dhawan said in a release.

"So we have to rebuild our energy and get back on the flow we were in. The good thing is that our team is well balanced and Shreyas Iyer is back in the side as well, so our team is even stronger now."

Iyer had missed the first leg of the IPL after suffering a shoulder injury during the first ODI between India and England in March.

The 35-year-old Dhawan, who is currently the highest run-getter in the IPL 2021 sea-



son with 380 runs in eight matches, said the team is focussed on its first match against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

"It's great to be back. There's a great environment within the team. All the boys are working very hard and I am looking forward to the IPL season. I am very excited to play the upcoming matches," said the opener,

who has scored 3 fifties in the season so far.

"It's very important to start on a high note. We need to do well from the first match itself and therefore we are working very hard for our first match against Sunrisers Hyderabad. We have to bring our hard work into effect during matches and produce great results."

SL announce T20 WC squad

AP ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka has named a Squad made up of a combination of youth and experience for the T20 World Cup to be played next month.

The squad features 15 players and an additional four reserves as injury replacements and includes former captain Dinesh Chandimal, current captain Dasun Shanaka and opening batsman Kusal Perera.

In all, six batsmen, five all-rounders and four bowlers were included.

Squad: Dasun Shanaka (c), Dhananjaya De Silva, Kusal Perera, Dinesh Chandimal, Avishka Fernando, Bhanuka Rajapaksa, Charith Asalanka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Kamindu Mendis, Chamika Karunaratne, Nuwan Pradeep, Dushmantha Chameera, Praveen Jayawickrema, Lahiru Madushanka, Maheesh Theekshana. **Reserves:** Lahiru Kumara, Binura Fernando, Akila Dananjaya, Pulina Tharanga.

Zlatan returns with goal

AFP ■ MILAN

AC Milan made it three wins from three to begin the Serie A season as they ran out comfortable 2-0 winners over Lazio at San Siro on Sunday.

Both teams went into the game having won two from two but it was perhaps the away side who arrived having impressed more, as they racked up nine goals scored in their first pair of outings.

However, they were to have no such luck in Lombardy as Milan disposed of them with a very confident performance. The first goal came from Rafael Leao in the first half as the winger settled himself well before firing home.

As the game was entering a decisive phase it was Zlatan Ibrahimovic who got the second goal to take the sting out of the game as the 39-year-old came off the bench to score within minutes after excellent work from Ante Rebic down the left.



AC Milan's Zlatan Ibrahimovic celebrates after scoring his side's second goal during Serie A match against Lazio at the San Siro stadium in Milan. AP

The win puts Milan top of the league albeit temporarily until Roma play, as one of only two teams (so far) to have won all of their league games this season.

There were four changes made to the starting XI from Stefano Pioli, with Alessio Romagnoli slotting into the back four allowing Simon Kjaer to rest, Franck Kessie coming back into the midfield, Alessandro Florenzi on the right wing and Ante Rebic up front.

100% START OVER

In the other game played in Genoa, Inter Milan's perfect start to the defence of their Serie A title ended when they were held to a 1-1 draw at Sampdoria.

Federico Dimarco and Lautaro Martinez twice put Simone Inzaghi's side ahead at the Stadio Luigi Ferraris but strikes from Maya Yoshida and Tommaso Augello earned a draw for Roberto D'Aversa's Sampdoria, who sit 15th with two points.



Liverpool win at Leeds

AFP ■ LEEDS

Liverpool moved alongside Chelsea and Manchester United at the top of the Premier League table with a 3-0 win at Leeds overshadowed by serious injury suffered by teenage star Harvey Elliott.

The hosts' midfielder Pascal Struijk was sent-off for a challenge that appeared to break the 18-year-old's left leg midway through the second-half.

By that point Liverpool were already comfortably ahead thanks to Mohamed Salah's 100th Premier League goal and

Fabinho's 50th minute strike. Sadio Mane rounded off the scoring in stoppage time.

However, the loss of Elliott cast a dark cloud over a positive performance for Jurgen Klopp.

Elliott, who made his Premier League debut as a 16-year-old for Fulham, had broken into the Reds side with impressive early season displays against Burnley and Chelsea.

Liverpool's title defence was blown off course last season by a series of long-term injuries to key players such as Virgil van Dijk, Joel Matip, Joe Gomez and Jordan Henderson.

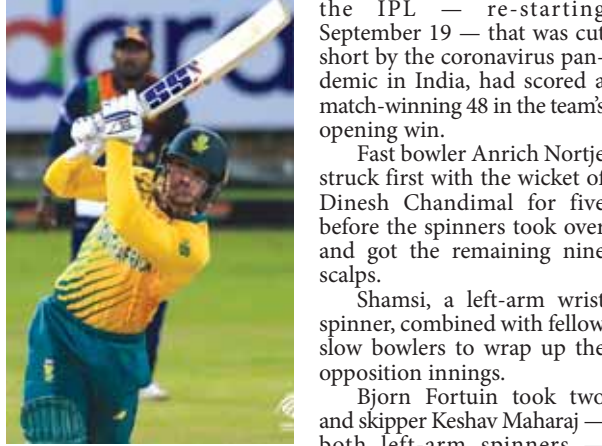
Shamsi, Markram help Proteas seal T20I series with big win

AFP ■ COLOMBO

Spinners Tabraiz Shamsi and Aiden Markram set up a crushing nine-wicket win for South Africa in the second T20 International against Sri Lanka to clinch the series on Sunday. Shamsi and Markram took three wickets each to help bowl out Sri Lanka for 103, a total the tourists chased down in 14.1 overs to take an unbeatable 2-0 lead in the three-match series in Colombo.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Quinton de Kock hit an unbeaten 58 and put on 62 runs with opening partner Reeza Hendricks, who made 18. The left-handed De Kock struck his 10th T20 half-century and first against Sri Lanka to see the team home with Markram for company on 21 after Hendricks' departure.

But it was the spinners who set up victory with world number one T20I bowler Shamsi, a left-arm wrist spinner, return-



ing impressive figures of 3-20.

Markram, a top-order batsman who has been named the replacement for England's Dawid Malan in the Indian Premier League side Punjab Kings, returned career-best 3-21 with his off-spin bowling.

Markram, who will join Punjab in the United Arab Emirates for the remainder of

the IPL — re-starting September 19 — that was cut short by the coronavirus pandemic in India, had scored a match-winning 48 in the team's opening win.

Fast bowler Anrich Nortje struck first with the wicket of Dinesh Chandimal for five before the spinners took over and got the remaining nine scalps.

Shamsi, a left-arm wrist spinner, combined with fellow slow bowlers to wrap up the opposition innings. Bjorn Fortuin took two and skipper Keshav Maharaj — both left-arm spinners — claimed the final wicket.

South Africa made short work of their modest chase with De Kock leading the charge to reach his fifty off 42 balls as he hit seven fours.

Leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga took the only wicket of Hendricks.

The third T20 is on Tuesday at the same venue.