

OPINION 6
WHEN ARTISTS TURNED
INTO COMMUNISTS**WORLD 8**
CHINA ASKS US, WORLD
TO STEP-UP AID TO AF**MONEY 9**
GOVT TO CHECK LAND RECORDS
BEFORE PADDY PROCUREMENT

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 14, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



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SC reserves order on Pegasus snooping

Court gives Govt
2-3 more days as
it refuses to file
detailed affidavit
over security issue

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



After the Centre's refusal to field a detailed affidavit in the Pegasus snooping scandal, the Supreme Court on Monday said it will pass an interim order in the matter soon.

Chief Justice NV Ramana told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that the interim order will come in two-three days and the Centre can re-think on filing a detailed affidavit before that time.

"We are reserving order. We will pass some interim order. It will take two-three days. If you have some re-thinking on this, you can mention the matter before us," the bench, also comprising justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli, told Mehta.

"You (Solicitor General) have repeatedly been saying that the Government does not want to file an affidavit. We also do not want any security issues

to be put before us. You say that a committee will be formed and the report will be submitted... We have to look into the whole issue and pass an interim order," the bench said, adding, "Mr Mehta, you have been beating around the bush and that is not the question here".

The petitions before the courts are related to reports of an alleged snooping by the Government agencies on eminent citizens, politicians and journalists by using Israeli firm NSO's spyware Pegasus. On the last date of hearing, the SC suggested that the Government might consider filing an affidavit on the limited question if the phones of such persons were "tapped".

During the hearing, Mehta told the bench that the Government has "nothing to hide" and that is why the Centre has on its own said that



it will constitute a committee of domain experts who will look into these allegations. Mehta told the bench that report of the committee of domain experts will be made available to the apex court.

The Solicitor General said the issue whether a particular software is used or not by the Government cannot be a subject matter of public discourse as it has its "own pitfalls" and it would be better if the target groups, like terror outfits, does

not know what is being used to combat their activities.

"The insistence that it must come in public domain, please appreciate the harm it may cause. Suppose, I say this particular software I am not using, it would alert all potential targets. It can be terror groups, it can be any other groups. If I say yes, I am using it, there would be different consequences," he said.

"Your lordships are aware that every technology has its own counter technology to protect the system from being examined by the security agencies. Therefore, the only distinction is instead of the petitioners insisting that everything must come in public domain by way of an affidavit, I am saying let the experts go into it and place it before your lordships," Mehta told the bench.

Continued on Page 2

I'm alive: Baradar audio quashes death rumours

Speculation was
rife that Afghan
Deputy PM died
in a shootout

AFP ■ KABUL

The Taliban co-founder and now Deputy Prime Minister of Afghanistan released an audio statement on Monday saying he was alive and well after news of his supposed demise went viral on social media.

Abdul Ghani Baradar, who was last week named as a number two to Mullah Mohammed Hassan Akhund, blamed "fake propaganda" for the death rumours in an audio message posted by the Taliban.

Taliban spokesperson from Qatar office Suhail Shaheen tweeted: "Mullah Bradar Akhund, Deputy PM, Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, in a voice message rejected all those claims that he was injured or killed in a clash. He said it is a lie and totally baseless."

Social media has been in a frenzy over the speculation — particularly in India, where rumours swirled that he had been mortally wounded in a shootout between rival Taliban factions at the presidential palace.

"There had been news in



the media about my death," Baradar said in the clip.

"Over the past few nights I have been away on trips. Wherever I am at the moment, we are all fine, all my brothers and friends.

"Media always publish fake propaganda. Therefore, reject bravely all those lies, and 100 per cent confirm to you there is no issue and we have no problem."

It was not possible to authenticate the message, but it was posted on official Taliban sites — including that of the spokesman of the political office of the new Government.

The Taliban's supreme leader, Hibatullah Akhundzada, was also

rumoured to have died for several years before the group's spokesman said he was "present in Kandahar" two weeks after they took power.

Chatter in Pakistan and Afghanistan had suggested he had contracted Covid or been killed in a bombing.

Afghanistan news outlets such as TOLO News also tweeted about the audio clip, saying: "Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, deputy Prime Minister of the Taliban Govt, in an audio message confirmed he was alive and said he was not injured. The message, tweeted by Taliban spox Mohammad Naeem, follows reports that Baradar was injured or killed in clashes among the Taliban."

CAPSULE

DRONES FOR DELIVERY OF VAX: ICMR GETS NOD

New Delhi: The Civil Aviation Ministry said on Monday that it had granted conditional permission to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to use drones in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Manipur and Nagaland to deliver vaccines beyond the visual line of sight. The ICMR has been permitted to use drones up to a height of 3,000 metre to deliver vaccines. **P4**

VVIP CHOPPERS DEAL ACCUSED HELD BY ED

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Rajiv Saxena, who is also an accused in the ₹3,600-crore VVIP choppers deal case, over money-laundering linked to an alleged bank fraud, officials said Monday. They said Saxena will be produced before a court here to seek his custody. Saxena, an alleged middleman in the choppers deals case, was based in Dubai and was deported by India from the UAE on January 31, 2019 and arrested by the agency in the case. **P4**

GET GREEN CARD IN US BY PAYING SUPPLEMENTAL FEE

Washington: Millions of people stuck for years in the Green Card backlog in the US, including a sizable number of Indians, can hope for a lawful permanent residency in America by paying a supplemental fee if a new House Bill is passed into law. The move, if included in the reconciliation package and passed into law, is expected to help thousands of Indian IT professionals who are currently stuck in an agonising Green Card backlog. **P8**

TN opts out of NEET for medical admission

House adopts
Bill as student's
suicide echoes
in Assembly

PTI ■ CHENNAI



he was to take and the incident echoed in the House, with the main Opposition AIADMK targeting the Government.

Chief Minister MK Stalin introduced the Bill and all parties, including the main Opposition AIADMK and its ally PMK, besides others like Congress, supported it and it was passed by a voice vote.

It seeks to provide for admission to UG courses in medicine, dentistry, Indian medicine and homeopathy on the basis of marks obtained in the qualifying examination, (Class XII).

The Opposition BJP staged a walkout, protesting against the Government move.

Continued on Page 2



Union Home Minister Amit Shah congratulates new Chief Minister of Gujarat Bhupendra Patel during a swearing-in ceremony at Raj Bhavan in Gandhinagar on Monday

PTI

WHO nod for Covaxin this week; 74 cr shots given

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In what could be the good news for those who have taken Covaxin shot, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is likely to give nod to India-made Covid-19 vaccine in this week, according to sources. In yet another good news, cumulative jabs administered in the country crossed 74 crore on Sunday.

The Union Health Ministry said all adult people in Sikkim, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, Ladakh and Lakshadweep have received at least one dose of Covid vaccine.

Over 52 lakh vaccine doses were administered on Sunday, according to data from the COVIN portal.

"Congratulations to these States and Union Territories for



administering the first Covid-19 vaccine dose to 100 per cent of the adult population. Special appreciation for the health workers in these regions for their diligence and commitment, the office of Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya tweeted.

Along with the tweet, the

office of the Union Health Minister also put up a chart which stated that Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (6.26 lakh doses), Goa (11.83 lakh doses), Himachal Pradesh (55.74 lakh doses), Ladakh (1.97 lakh doses), Lakshadweep (53,499 doses), and Sikkim (5.10 lakh doses) are the States and UTs with 100 per cent eligible population vaccinated with the first dose of the vaccine.

Regarding the proposed approval to the indigenous vaccine Covaxin which is manufactured by Hyderabad-based manufacturer Bharat Biotech, sources said that an emergency approval from the WHO will allow Bharat Biotech to export Covaxin and also ease international travel of people who have received this vaccine.

Continued on Page 2

Cong leader Fernandes passes away

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

Veteran Congress leader Oscar Fernandes (80), a former Union Minister and Rajya Sabha member, died at a private hospital in Mangaluru in Karnataka on Monday. Fernandes was hospitalised in July after he suffered a head injury due to a fall while practising yoga at his home. He had also undergone a surgery to remove a clot in his brain.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish at the death of Fernandes. "Saddened by the demise of Rajya Sabha MP Oscar Fernandes Ji. In this sad hour, my thoughts and prayers are with his family and well-wishers. May his soul rest in peace."

Congress president Sonia Gandhi, former party chief Rahul Gandhi, senior party leaders too condoled the demise of Fernandes and all remembered him as a guide and mentor. Rahul and Priyanka described Fernandes' death as a "personal loss".

Akhilesh, Shivpal may bury hatchet to take on BJP might in 2022

VIRENDRA NATH BHATT ■ LUCKNOW

After five years of split in 2017, Chacha Shivpal Yadav and Bhatija Akhilesh Yadav are expected to bury the hatchet and join hands to take on the BJP in 2022 UP Assembly polls. The patch up is likely to be announced on the birthday of Samajwadi Party (SP) patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav in November. After several failed attempts, Mulayam has brokered the deal and likely to succeed.

Political observers have been battling for this alliance if the mighty BJP were to be given any competition in the upcoming polls. On January 15, 2017, then Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh wrested control of the SP from his father Mulayam and uncle Shivpal, putting an end to a four-month family feud which



came to the fore in October 2016.

This happened day after Mulayam was forced to revoke Akhilesh's expulsion, along with that of Akhilesh supporter Ram Gopal Yadav. SP members gathered in thousands in Lucknow's Janeshwar Mishra Park for an emergency national executive meeting.

Ram Gopal had called the meeting to counter what he called unprecedented, unconstitutional actions by Mulayam where Akhilesh was expelled from the party.

Continued on Page 2

Curbs on Markaz Nizamuddin: Govt defends it, cites diplomatic ties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday cited diplomatic relations and "trans-border" implications for the continuation of restrictions at Nizamuddin Markaz.

A ban on public entry was imposed in the adjoining masque following uproar over gathering of Tablighi Jamaat members at the Markaz and a huge number of them testing positive for Covid-19 more than a year ago.

"Since about 1,300 foreigners were found to be residing on the said premises and cases against them have cross-border implications and involves nation's diplomatic relationship with other countries, it is necessary and incumbent on the part of the respondent to preserve the said premises for the purpose of Section 310 of CrPC," the Ministry of Home Affairs said.

The MoH was responding to a petition filed by Delhi Waqf Board for easing of restrictions at the Markaz.

2 die in house cave-in



Two teenagers were killed after a four-storey building collapsed in North Delhi's Sabzi Mandi area on Monday, officials said. It is suspected that three to four more people are trapped under the debris, a senior police officer said

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Pusa bio-decomposer very effective: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre's WAPCOS reported that 90 per cent of farmers stated that stubble decomposes in 15-20 days after spraying of bio-decomposer, claimed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Monday and urged the Central Government to ask neighbouring States to distribute it for free among farmers. He added that the agency found the Pusa bio-decomposer, a microbial solution for stubble management, highly effective.

Kejriwal will soon meet Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav and will urge him to ask the States to stop stubble burning using bio-decomposers.

While stubble burning in Delhi's neighbouring States in October is a major factor behind high level of air pollution according to SAFAR and other agencies, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government approached the Chief Ministers of Punjab and Haryana.

Kejriwal said there is no point blaming and penalising farmers when the State



Governments have done nothing to curb the stubble burning.

Citing Water and Power Consultancy Services (WAPCOS) report, Kejriwal said 90 per cent farmers say stubble decomposes in 15-20 days after spraying of bio-decomposer. "Fields are now ploughed once or twice instead of 6-7 times, the amount of organic carbon increased by 42 per cent, nitrogen in the soil increased by 24 per cent, bacteria content 7 times, the sprouting of wheat increased by 17-20 per cent and the yields increased by 8 per cent," he said while briefing the media online.

2 tribal communities in J&K given rights after 14 years’ gap

PNS ■ JAMMU

In a historic step that has the potential to transform the lives of members of the deprived Tribal Communities in the UT of J&K, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha Monday handed over individual and community rights certificates to the beneficiaries of Gujjar-Bakerwal, Gaddi-Sippi communities under the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor termed it as a historic day for J&K and said that it was after a wait of more than 14 years, due rights have been conferred upon the Tribal community by implementing the Forest Rights Act of 2006, keeping in mind the basic spirit of social equality and harmony as guided by the Constitution of our country and the Parliament.

The Lt Governor said that under the guidance of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the J&K administration has been vigorously pursuing the ideals of establishing an equitable and just social order and has been working sincerely to empower the Tribal community, which remained neglected and discriminated against for decades together.

“Empowering the tribal

community through the Forest Rights Act means giving them back the rights for a better life while fulfilling the primary needs of water, food, home, and livelihood. It will certainly change the condition of their lives. They will become self-reliant with access to resources for their development”, he added.

Besides implementing the constitutional rights of the tribal community, we are also working to connect J&K’s tribal population and their new generation with the mainstream of development, added the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor lauded the role of the Department of Forests and Tribal Affairs for reaching out to the stakeholders in order to ensure the seamless transfer of rights to all the genuine beneficiaries.

“I want to assure that the UT administration is continuously working at different levels to protect the interests of Tribal people, including their land; full attention will be given to the maintenance of forests”, he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, termed the occasion as historic and called upon the members of the tribal communities to discharge their responsibilities to protect the forests.

K’TAKA ASSEMBLY SESSION Cong leaders ride bullock carts to protest rising prices

FIANS ■ ARRAYBENGALURU

The Monsoon Session got off to a stormy start in Karnataka on Monday with the opposition Congress leaders arriving on bullock carts to the Vidhana Soudha to highlight the issue of rising prices. Former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa attended the session, but sat in the last row.

Opposition leader Siddaramaiah and Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee President D.K. Shivakumar reached the Vidhana Soudha on bullock carts with their supporters to register their protest against the rising prices of fuel and daily commodities.

Traffic was thrown out of gear as hundreds of supporters and many legislators took part in the bullock cart procession.

“The BJP government is indulging in pickpocketing the common man. This is a pick-pocket government. We can’t sit quiet. We will invent new ways of protests until the prices of essential commodities are brought down,” Shivakumar said.

“No government in history has allowed inflation like the ruling BJP. The fuel rate here is

higher than Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan. India has become the nation levying maximum tax on fuel. Former Prime Minister Late Atal Bihari Vajpayee had equated the price hike to ‘criminal loot’. The ruling BJP is indulging in this,” he charged.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai reacted to the bullock cart protest by saying: “Let the Congress leaders come to the session and I am ready to give a befitting answer to their questions. Why didn’t they protest during the UPA government’s tenure, even then there was inflation,” he asked.

Prior to attending the session, Basavaraj Bommai met his predecessor Yediyurappa in the lounge and sought his blessings. All the Ministers, who were accompanying Bommai, touched Yediyurappa’s feet.

Yediyurappa attended the session and sat in the last row. He was quiet all through. Later, while talking to the media, he vowed that he will ensure that Siddaramaiah sits in the opposition in the upcoming elections. “His win in Badami constituency last time was accidental,” he said.

Sisodia, Sanjay Singh turn Ram bhakts in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Amid the “temple run” of the political leaders in Uttar Pradesh where Assembly elections are due in 2022, Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi, Manish Sisodia, along with Rajya Sabha member and UP incharge of Aam Aadmi Party, Sanjay Singh, and party’s State president worshiped Rama Lalla in Ayodhya on Monday.

Sisodia is scheduled to attend the party’s “Tiranga Yatra” in Ayodhya on Tuesday. The Delhi deputy Chief Minister’s visit to the temple town raised the political temperature to a new high in Uttar Pradesh on Monday.

Sisodia and Sanjay Singh recited Hanuman Chalisa in Hanuman Garhi. Both AAP leaders then went to Rasik Peeth, Janki Ghat and Bada Sthan where they took the blessings of seers.

Speaking on this occasion, Sisodia said Ram raj was the biggest inspiration for the world for the well-being of public and transparent governance.

Sisodia said he prayed to Lord Ram to put AAP in power in UP so that the state’s people had a good governance like one in Delhi under the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal.

Earlier, on his visit to the Ram Lalla temple, Sisodia said Lord Ram established such a standard of governance in Ayodhya that even today Ram raj was a source of inspiration for all governments. He said AAP had succeeded in setting a new definition of politics by opting for honesty and development and all this was possible by blessing of Lord Ram and the seers of Ayodhya.

“The Tiranga Yatra will prove its mettle in UP and by the blessings of Lord Sri Ram, AAP will come up with a new definition of nationalism,” he said.

Sisodia was welcomed by the AAP leaders and he first reached Hanuman Garhi where he along with Sanjay Singh recited Hanuman Chalisa and later took blessings from Mahant Shri Prem Das and later left to offer prayers at the Ram Lalla temple. The AAP leaders also took part in a bhandara and took prasad there.

Maharashtra: Total Covid-19 infections cross 65L mark

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

The total number of Covid-19 positive patients crossed a milestone of 65 lakh in Maharashtra on Monday, while the total number of pandemic deaths touched 1,38,169 in the State.

On a day when 2,740 more people tested positive for the Covid-19, the total infections -- with 2,740 new cases -- went up from 6,49,78,77 to 65,00,617.

With 27 fresh deaths reported on Monday, the total number of deaths in the state increased from 1,38,142 to 1,38,169.

The daily pandemic fatalities remained below the 50 mark for the fourth consecutive day. After it logged 44, 35 deaths and 46 deaths on Friday, Saturday and Sunday respectively, Maharashtra recorded 27 deaths on Monday.

Similarly after recording 4,174, 4,219, 4,154, 3,075 and 2,740 infections on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday respectively, the state logged 2,740 new cases on Monday.

There has been a near consistent drop in the number of daily deaths during the past 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, 46 deaths on September 12 and 27 deaths on September 13.

As many as 3,233 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 63,05,788 to 63,09,021. The recovery rate in the state stood static at 97.05 per cent.

22 Assam groups to protest against NHPC project from Sept 20

FIANS ■ GUWAHATI

More than 22 organisations in Assam have threatened to launch a joint movement against the mega 2,000 MW capacity hydropower project being set up by the state-owned National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) along the Arunachal Pradesh-Assam border from September 20.

Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP) leader, Palash Changmai on Monday said more than 22 organisations have decided to launch a series of protests, including blockade of the project site, against the NHPC.

The AJYCP, an anti-Bharatiya Janata Party organisation, on Saturday organised a public meeting where various experts, including geologists and hydrologists, had highlighted a threat to downstream areas of the Subansiri river. The AJYCP leader said work on the project was resumed without consulting 965 villages across four districts in the downstream of the hydroelectric project.

These districts in eastern Assam adjoining Arunachal Pradesh include Biswanath, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur and Majuli. The 22 organisations, which are opposing the mega power plant, include the influential All Assam Students’ Union and All Assam Adivasi Students’ Association whose leaders had attended the Saturday meeting.

Maha zila parishad, panchayat samiti by-polls on Oct 5

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The by-elections to the 85 election blocks in five Zilla Parishads and 144 voting blocks in 33 Panchayat Samitis in Maharashtra -- which had earlier been stayed in view of the continued second wave of Covid-19 and apprehending the possible third wave of the pandemic -- will now be held on October 5 2021.

According to the fresh schedule announced by the State Election Commission (SEC), the nominations for the by-polls will be between September 15 and 20, while the papers will be scrutinised on September 21. The deadline for withdrawal of nomination is

September 29.

While the polling for the by-polls will be held on October 5, the votes will be counted the following day.

It may be recalled that on July 9, the SEC had stayed the by-elections to the vacant posts in five Zilla Parishads and 33 Panchayat Samitis scheduled for July 19, 2021.

The stay on the ZP and Panchayat by-polls had followed a Supreme Court directive. It may be recalled that on July 6, the apex court had asked the SEC, Maharashtra, to decide on whether to hold or postpone the by-elections to the vacant positions of five ZP and 33 panchayat samitis after considering the Disaster Management Authority

notifications and whether the prevalent pandemic conditions are “conducive”.

On its part, the SEC had told the Supreme Court that if the situation on the ground is conducive for conducting by-elections in the concerned constituency and there was no prohibitory order or lockdown order operating in those areas, it could proceed with the election program while ensuring that the standard operating procedures and that it would follow the Covid-19 protocols as notified by the competent authorities, in its letter and spirit”.

The SC directed SEC to proceed in the matter in accordance with law and report compliance within two months.

In March this year, the apex court had read down a provision of the Maharashtra ZP and Panchayat Samitis Act of 1961 to mean that reservation in favour of OBCs in the concerned local bodies can be notified to the extent that it does not exceed aggregate 50 per cent of the total seats reserved in favour of SCs/STs/OBCs taken together. The SC had also quashed a few notifications issued in 2018 and 2020 by the SEC.

On March 5, the SEC had declared by-elections to the six ZPs and 27 Panchayat Samitis were more than the 50 per cent reserved, held those seats vacated, and separately announced an election scheduled for such vacated seats.

Clear sky makes Kanchenjunga mountain visible from Siliguri



PTI ■ SILIGURI (WB)

The snow-capped Kanchenjunga could be seen from the plains of Siliguri on Monday to the delight of locals and tourists.

Clear skies helped people see Kanchenjunga, India’s highest mountain, from Siliguri, Jalpaiguri and other

parts of north Bengal.

Lakhs of tourists visit the Darjeeling hills and Sikkim every year for a glimpse of the mighty Kanchenjunga, often referred to as ‘Sleeping Buddha’ because of its formation.

Kanchenjunga, having an elevation of 28,169 ft, is the third highest mountain in the world, lying between India and Nepal.

Leaders should observe courtesy, SP’s reaction to Yogi’s ‘abbajaan’ remark

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party, in a guarded reaction to the “abbajaan” comment of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said the political leaders should observe courtesy.

“Yogi Adityanath is no small person, he is a senior leader and chief minister of Uttar Pradesh and the people never like such kind of political discourse from the chief minister. Parliamentary and civilised language must be used in political discourse,” said Samajwadi Party spokesman Rajendra Chaudhary.

He said, “The Samajwadi Party no longer takes such jibe by the chief minister seriously as Yogi Adityanath has made such a comment for the second time about our party chief, Akhilesh Yadav.”

The SP leader claimed that the BJP knows that it has lost the support and confidence of the common man and

the chief minister out of frustration is speaking in intemperate language. He said the electorate of the state would give a befitting reply to such utterances in 2022 UP assembly elections.

Slamming the previous state governments for what he said was their “casteist and dynastic mentality” and “politics of appeasement”, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday had said that before 2017, those saying ‘abbajaan’ used to “digest” ration meant for poor but now everyone was benefitting equally from development under his administration.

Yogi said, “Today you are getting ration. Were you getting this ration before 2017? Because back then, those saying ‘abbajaan’ used to digest the ration. Back then, the ration meant for Kushinagar used to reach Nepal and Bangladesh. Today, if someone tries to swallow the ration of the poor, he will end up in jail. We are working with this commitment.”

Maya slams Govt over flood relief

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati said that the lives of lakhs of families had been rendered miserable due to the ravaging floods in eastern Uttar Pradesh. She alleged that help from the Bharatiya Janata Party government in the state so far had been confined to just papers.

In a tweet posted in Hindi on Monday, Mayawati said, “Due to floods

in Uttar Pradesh, especially in Purvanchal region, again this year, the lives of lakhs of families have become miserable after widespread devastation and destruction. The expected government help is only on paper. The government should immediately ensure adequate relief to the affected people. I also urge party workers not to leave the flood-affected people behind and help them in whatever way they can.”

SC reserves... TN opts out...

From page 1

The apex court told Mehta that it had already made clear that it did not want the Government to disclose anything which compromises national security. On September 7, the apex court had granted more time to the Centre to decide on filing a further response on the petitions after Mehta had 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 top 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”. In its limited affidavit filed in the court, the Centre had said the position on the issue has already been clarified in Parliament by Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. With a view to 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 to the Centre on the pleas on August 17, 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.” Mehta 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.

Akhilesh, Shivpal may bury hatchet...

From page 1

At the height of the political drama Mulayam called a meeting of the party’s Parliamentary board at his residence around the same time. But no person of consequence turned up at the Mulayam meeting.

The bitter dispute in the first family of the SP resulted in March 2017 UP Assembly polls poor performance where the tally of the party was reduced to 48 MLAs. Shivpal, on September 2018, announced to float new political party Pragatishheel Samajwadi Party after falling out with Akhilesh. Shivpal had complained that during the tenure of Akhlesh as Chief Minister he felt neglected in the SP, which was founded by his elder brother Mulayam. Meanwhile, Akhilesh kept ruling out any alliance with his uncle all these years. The duo did not come together even for Lok Sabha elections in 2019.

Earlier this year hinting at a possible electoral tie-up with his estranged uncle’s Pragatishheel Samajwadi Party for the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, Akhilesh said Shivpal will be given a Cabinet berth if his party forms the Government in the State. However, he made it clear that the SP will not enter into any electoral alliance with the Mayawati-led Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP).

To a question whether the SP will form an electoral alliance with his uncle Shivpal’s party, he said, “We will adjust that party. Jaswantnagar is his (Shivpal) seat and the SP will not field from this seat. Shivpal was elected from the Jaswantnagar Assembly constituency in the 2017 State elections.

From page 1

Earlier, as soon as the House convened, Leader of the Opposition K Palaniswami referred to the suicide of 19-year-old Dhanush in his native Salem district on Sunday and targeted the government on the matter.

He said though the DMK had promised ‘cancelling’ NEET, it was not done and several students had not prepared well. Some of his remarks were expunged by Speaker M Appavu.

Palaniswami sought a job for a person from the deceased’s family, besides cash assistance.

The Opposition party MLAs, who came to the House wearing black badges, staged a walkout, led by Palaniswami.

On Sunday, hours before he was to appear for NEET for a third time, Dhanush, belonging to a village near Salem, died by suicide, fearing the outcome of the test he was to take. The incident triggered a blame game, with the AIADMK holding the DMK regime responsible for the death and the state government targeting the Centre.

Stalin, in his reply, said NEET was conducted for the first time in Tamil Nadu when Palaniswami was the Chief Minister and was not held even when the late J Jayalalithaa was the CM.

Recalling the death by suicides of students, including S Anita, in recent years, he said all these happened when Palaniswami was the CM.

The student, Dhanush, who took the extreme step, could not clear the exam twice when the AIADMK was in power. Stalin also targeted the AIADMK over rejection of Bills enacted during its regime in 2017 to get the state exempted from the ambit of NEET and also for “hiding” it from the House.

Stalin introduced the Bill and appealed to all to support it for social justice, indicating that this initiative would be different from what was done during the AIADMK regime.

When the Bill was taken up for consideration hours later, Palaniswami recalled the efforts taken by the AIADMK government to exempt Tamil Nadu from the ambit of NEET, including adoption of two Bills in 2017.

Later, he said the AIADMK Government provided 7.5 per cent internal reservation to government school students in admission to medical courses who cleared NEET.

On Stalin saying that the current effort was different

from what was done during the AIADMK regime, the leader of the opposition said the only difference was a reference to the recommendations of a high-level panel, led by Justice A K Rajan.

Palaniswami also pointed to the Central enactments and a judgment of the Supreme Court on this subject and considering such aspects, asked whether the state Bill could prevail. Eventually, he said the AIADMK however supported the Bill.

The CM welcomed the support of the main Opposition party to his government’s move on NEET and recalled that in the past, when the DMK was in the opposition, it supported the then AIADMK Government on the issue of jallikattu, the bull-taming sport.

When BJP’s Nainar Nagendran insisted that NEET had its benefits and said that the pass percentage, vis-a-vis the test from TN, was on the rise, he saw intervention from Ministers.

When Nagendran said NEET was like only an exam like the IAS and TN Public Service Commission, Finance Minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan said such exams had other features as well, including interviews and this comparison was not correct.

The BJP MLA should also specify if he was making a reference from any reports and avoid generalisation when he spoke on pass percentage in subjects like anatomy and biochemistry (after NEET’s introduction), the Minister said. Stalin said aspects like pass percentage were not important. So far 15 aspirants have died by suicide and keeping such factors in mind, the Bill has been moved. “Our goal is that their sacrifices should not go waste,” he said.

Opposing the Bill, Nagendran led his party’s walk-out, protesting against the bill.

Later, the TN Admission to Undergraduate Medical Degree Courses Bill, 2021, was declared adopted by Speaker Appavu.

The Bill, referring to recommendations of a high-level committee, said the government has decided to enact a law to dispense with the requirement of NEET for admission to UG Medical courses.

Providing for admission to such courses on the basis of marks obtained in Class 12 and through “Normalisation methods”, the statement of objects and reasons said this is to ensure “social justice, uphold equality and equal opportunity.”

INSTALLATION OF ROOFTOP RAINWATER HARVESTING SYSTEMS Govt to give ₹50k aid, 10% off on water bills

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

To encourage residents to install rooftop rainwater harvesting systems, the Delhi Government will provide financial assistance of ₹50,000 and a rebate of ten per cent on water bills.

Delhi Water Minister and Chairman of the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), Satyendar Jain, convened a meeting with officials and took stock of the progress of the work of installation of Rooftop Rainwater Harvesting Systems.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government has also extended the last date for the compulsory implementation of the rooftop Rainwater Harvesting (RWH) system until December 31, 2021.

Interestingly, in order to increase the groundwater levels, the Delhi Government has followed the INLINE-RWH, popularly known as the Dungarpur model.

This model is also known as the INLINE Rainwater Harvesting (RWH) system. This model is cost effective and is being implemented in the tribal-dominated Dungarpur district of Rajasthan.

Jain said, "This model uses innovative techniques and is centred on routing the rainwater directly to a borewell, instead of a regular rainwater-harvesting pit."

In this system, the rainwater gets filtered within the pipe, removing any need for an additional filter system and harvesting pit. The INLINE-RWH comprises a pipe filter installed horizontally in the rainwater pipe. This pipe is then connected to non-functional and defunct borewells. The filter media has the INLINE-RWH has a Geotextile membrane as a cover, at the mouth of the rainwater pipe. This is followed by wire mesh at the entry point of the different media. This includes coarse sand, gravel/stone aggregate, gravel/stone aggregate. The total length of the filter media is around 90 cm. Another advantage of this model is that it is much cheaper than the conventional ones. "The reason for this system to be cost-effective is that it does

■ For plots sized between 100 sq m and 199.99 sq m, financial assistance of 50% of the total cost of the RWH structure or ₹10,000 whichever is lesser.

■ For plots sized between 200 sq m and 299.99 sq m, financial assistance of 50% of the total cost of the RWH structure or Rs. 20,000 whichever is lesser.

■ For plots sized between 300 sq m and 399.99 sq m, financial assistance of 50% of the total cost of the RWH structure or ₹30,000 whichever is lesser.

■ For plots sized between 400 sq m and 499.99 sq m, financial assistance of 50% of the total cost of the RWH structure or ₹40,000 whichever is lesser.

■ For plots sized from 500 sq m and above, financial assistance of 50% of the total cost of the RWH structure or ₹50,000 whichever is lesser.

■ To avail of these benefits, people must have an adequacy certificate for the RWH system.

nected to non-functional and defunct borewells. The filter media has the INLINE-RWH has a Geotextile membrane as a cover, at the mouth of the rainwater pipe. This is followed by wire mesh at the entry point of the different media. This includes coarse sand, gravel/stone aggregate, gravel/stone aggregate. The total length of the filter media is around 90 cm. Another advantage of this model is that it is much cheaper than the conventional ones. "The reason for this system to be cost-effective is that it does



not require a heavy installation set-up. While conventional RWH system set-up requires Rs. 75,000 to Rs. 1 Lakh, the INLINE-RWH system can be set up at a cost as little as Rs. 16,000."

The Delhi Government has also relaxed the compliance norms wherein people can get adequacy certificates for installing the RWH system from architects registered with the Council of Architecture instead of the DJB only the guidelines issued by the DJB have to be followed.

ED notice to leader under PMLA; AAP cries foul



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Monday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of targeting its leaders, saying that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has sent a notice to its national secretary Pankaj Gupta under a fabricated case under the 'Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002' (PMLA).

"In Delhi, they tried to defeat us with the Income Tax Department, the CBI, the Delhi Police - but we won 62 seats. As we grow in Punjab, Goa, Uttarakhand, Gujarat, we get an ED notice! The people of India want honest politics. These tactics of the BJP will never succeed, they will make us stronger," Kejriwal said in a tweet.

Addressing the media, AAP's national spokesperson Raghav Chadha said that in the ED has asked Gupta to appear before the agency on September 22 at 11.30 AM at its office.

"In an unending quest to persecute the AAP, the Modi Government's favourite agency the Enforcement Directorate has been pressed into service

and has dispatched a love letter (notice) to the AAP. They (ED) have sent a notice to party's national secretary under some section of Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002," Chadha said.

The AAP leader further alleged that a witch-hunt against AAP by the Centre is going on. He said that during Anna Movement in 2012, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) sent a notice under the FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 2010) to check accounts.

When asked about the case in which Gupta has been served a notice, Chadha said that he had no idea but added "it must be some fabricated case". The Rajinder Nagar MLA alleged that the BJP was rattled by the growth of the party's national convener Arvind Kejriwal and the rising graph of the party.

"When you (BJP) can't electorally assassinate us you try to character assassinate us. As soon as opinion polls show that Kejriwal is getting popularity, agencies like ED are pressed into service to seek political revenge and character assassinate AAP," Chadha alleged.

51 dengue cases in city this week

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With 51 cases of dengue reported in the last week, the number of people infected with the vector borne disease has reached 353 cases on Monday.

According to a report released by municipal Corporations on Monday, 121 cases of malaria and 40 cases of chikungunya have also been reported till September 11 this year.

The number of dengue cases for January 1-September 11 period is also the highest this year since 2019 when the count had stood at 171 in that same duration.

Seventy-two cases were recorded in the month of August, which is about 45 per cent of the total reported cases, according to the report.

Thirty-four cases have been recorded in the first 11 days of September. Dengue mosquito larvae breed in clear, standing water, while those of malaria thrive even in dirty water. Cases of vector-borne

diseases are usually reported between July and November, but the period may stretch till mid-December.

According to a civic report issued by the municipal corporations last week, 124 cases of dengue were recorded till September 4 this year.

At least 158 cases have been reported this year till September 11. No cases were recorded in January, two in February, five in March, 10 in April, 12 in May, seven in June and 16 in July.

In the previous years, the cases in the same period were -- 1,158 in 2016, 1,177 in 2017, 243 in 2018), 171 in 2019 and 131 in 2020.

However, no deaths have been reported due to dengue in the city till now. Malaria, dengue and chikungunya are accompanied with high fever and therefore, doctors feel that people might suspect that they have contracted COVID-19.

Civic bodies in Delhi have intensified their measures to prevent the outbreak of vector-borne diseases.



Two killed in building collapse; more feared trapped



Locals look on as rescue operation is underway after a building collapsed in the Sabzi Mandi area in New Delhi on Monday
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer Photo

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a tragic incident, two children, both brothers aged seven and 12, died after a four storey building collapsed in North Delhi's Sabzi Mandi area on Monday. Police said that the boys were passing by when the incident occurred and they got trapped under the debris. The officials said that a 72-year-old man, who was also trapped under the debris, was rescued and rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment. It is suspected that three to four more people are trapped under the debris and rescue operation is going on.

The ground floor of the building is believed to be 75-years-old and it was being used for commercial purposes while the rest of the building was used for residential purposes. Locals said that construction work was also going on the ground floor of the building. A car parked nearby was severely damaged as the debris from the building fell on it.

The incident comes days after record heavy rains pounded Delhi, throwing life out of gear. Following the incident, the locals also gathered at the spot to help with rescue operations, but were later removed from the area by the police.

According to a senior police official, the two children, who were trapped under the rubble were also rescued and sent to hospital but succumbed to their injuries.

"Both of them are brothers and were declared brought dead by the doctors at the hospital. An elderly man identified as Ramji Das was also rescued from the debris and he sustained head injury," said the

senior police official.

"The children were passing by the road with their mother when the building collapsed and the two brothers got trapped under the debris. A case will be registered in the matter and legal action will be taken accordingly," he said.

"The Delhi Fire Service (DFS) received a call about the incident at 11.50 AM following which five fire tenders and rescue teams were rushed to the spot. Later two more fire tenders were dispatched for the spot," said Atul Garg, the director of DFS.

Teams of North Municipal Corporation Delhi (NMC), NDRF among others were at the spot and were participating in the rescue operation.

"On the ground floor of the building, there was a sweet shop whereas the upper floors were reportedly residential in



nature. As per the local inquiry, the upper floors of the building were vacant and no construction activity was going-on. Further, no complaint regarding any unauthorised construction in the said building was received from any source in the Building Department, Civil Lines," said an official of the NMC.

"An inquiry has been ordered by the Commissioner, NMC in this unfortunate incident to be conducted by the Building Department (HQs) and directed for submission of

report within seven days. Further, necessary action against delinquent officials, if any, will be taken after receipt of the report," he said.

After the incident, the Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said he is closely monitoring the situation.

"The incident of building collapse in Sabzi Mandi area is very sad. The administration is engaged in relief and rescue work. Through the district administration, I am monitoring the situation," he tweeted in Hindi.

Pollution, weather info now on GMDA's 'My Gurugram' app

Gurugram: Gurugram residents will soon be able to get the latest information about pollution, weather and parking lot directly on the 'My Gurugram' app developed by the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA).

The development authority has linked the websites of the Meteorological Department (IMD) and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) with this app.

Apart from this, with this app, the residents will also get parking lots available in the city. GMDA officials said that for this, information has been sought from the concerned authority about their parking places located in different areas. Along with this, the survey of parking places is also being done by the authority itself.

After this, information about those parking places will also be made available on the app through geo-mapping. Through which the residents of the city will be able to see where the parking spot is near them and how many vehicles are there and how many vehicles are already parked, all this information will soon be available on GMDA's app.

Meanwhile, the residents can also get information regarding the management of solid waste in the district.

The development authority has linked the websites of the Meteorological Department and the Central Pollution Control Board with this app

The 'My Gurugram' app was launched by GMDA on 10 August. According to officials, about ten thousand people have downloaded this app so far.

GMDA officials said people also avail facilities of online payments of water and electricity bills, property tax. Apart from this, information related to the city's historical places, administration, including CCTV cameras, water flow meters, street lights installed in the city can also be obtained on this app. Also, e-challans of vehicles can be viewed on this app and their payment can also be done. "Weather and pollution levels can also be accessed on the My Gurugram app. For this, the app has been linked to the website of IMD and CPCB. Soon the information about parking lots will also be made available to the people on this app," PK Aggarwal, Adviser, Smart City Division, GMDA, said.

Delhi Govt to take strict measures to prevent foetus sex determination: Jain



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Monday said that the Delhi Government is taking strict measures to prevent misuse of techniques to determine sex of an unborn child and stop female foeticide.

Jain made the remarks during a meeting of the Delhi Supervisory Board on the Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act. The Health Minister also said that more awareness will be spread on this issue. Sex determination and female foeticide are crimes under the laws of the country.

"Chaired the Delhi Supervisory Board meeting of Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act. Delhi Govt is taking strict measures to prevent misuse of sex determination techniques & female foeticide. Active measures will be taken to aware society about its effects," Jain tweeted.

Delhi reports 17 new Covid-19 cases, zero deaths; positivity 0.04%

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi reported 17 new Covid-19 cases and zero death on Monday, while the positivity rate stood at 0.04 per cent. According to data shared by the health department, 40,399 tests were conducted a day ago to detect Covid-19. It included 30,266 where RTPCR, CBNAAT and TrueNat tests while 10, 133 were rapid-anti-gen tests.

"The number of containment zones declined to 92 on Monday while the death toll was 25,083. The case fatality rate stood at 1.74 per cent. While, on the vaccination front, 10621955 beneficiaries in Delhi have received at least one

dose since the inoculation exercise started on January 16, according to Government data," it said.

The Capital has recorded only one fatality due to the infection in September so far.

With the new cases, the overall infection tally in the city climbed to 14,38,250. Of this, over 14.12 lakh patients have recovered from the infection. The death toll stands at 25,083, according to the bulletin.

In order to deal with 'possible' third wave of Covid infections, the Delhi Government has been ramping up health infrastructure to prevent a repeat of the crisis witnessed during the peak of the second wave.

Delhi Police stops suicide attempt, prevents man from jumping off flyover

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police saved life of a 42-year-old man who was trying to commit suicide by jumping off the Andrews Ganj flyover in the national Capital. The man, hails from Almora in Uttarakhand and he is a food delivery executive, who has been living in Delhi for around four years.

According to Atul Kumar Thakur, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South district, the man came to the flyover to attempt suicide after consuming alcohol with a friend on Sunday evening.

"Around 6 PM, when Kotla

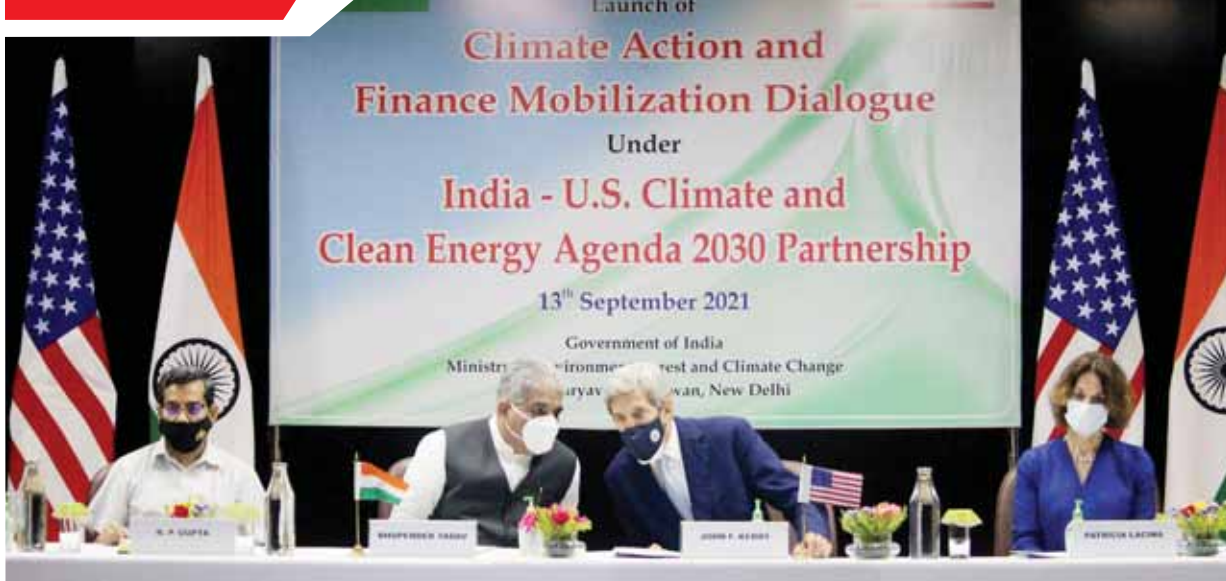
Mubarak Pur Station House Officer (SHO) Vinay Kumar Tyagi was patrolling the area, he received information that a man was trying to jump from the Andrews Ganj flyover.

"He immediately alerted the local staff, motorcycle patrolling team as well as the PCR staff," said the DCP.

"When SHO Tyagi reached the spot with his team, they spotted a man who was trying to jump from the Andrews Ganj flyover.

The man was standing near the flyover iron railing and was loudly saying that he is "disappointed with his life" and "wanted to die," said the DCP.

PICTALK



US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry, during the launch of Climate Action; Finance Mobilisation Dialogue (CAFMD) under India-US Climate & Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership, at Paryavaran Bhawan in New Delhi on Monday
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer Photo

VACCINE DELIVERY BY DRONES

ICMR, IIT-B allowed use to reach rough terrains

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Civil Aviation on Monday granted conditional exemption of usage of drones from the existing rules for ICMR to allow it to experiment delivery of Covid-19 vaccines in inaccessible and rough terrains of regions of Andaman and Nicobar, Mizoram and Nagaland. The system is already in use in Telangana on a trial basis in areas that are inaccessible.

Similarly, the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT-B) has received drone use permission for research, development and testing of drones in its own premises.

According to a statement from the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), allowed conditional exemption from Drone Rules, 2021 granting the two premier institutes in the country to use the ultra manned vehicles .

“The permission has been

♦ The Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT-B) has received drone use permission for research, development and testing of drones in its own premises.

♦ According to a statement from the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), allowed conditional



exemption from Drone Rules, 2021 granting the two premier institutes in the country to use the ultra manned vehicles

granted to ICMR for conducting experimental Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) vaccine delivery in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Manipur, and Nagaland upto a height of 3000 meters using drones.

“This exemption shall be subject to the terms and conditions of the said airspace clearance and shall be valid for a period of one year from the date of approval of the said airspace clearance or until further orders, whichever is earlier,” said the statement.

On September 11, Union Minister for Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia had

launched the 'Medicines from the Sky' project in Telangana's Vikrabad, under which vaccines and other essential products will be transported to remote areas using drones.

During the trial flight, vaccines were delivered in 9 minutes, Balfour Manuel, the managing director of Bluedart, had said.

The project, which seeks to deliver medicines, vaccination, and units of blood to remote, rural areas by means of drones, is a collaboration of the Telangana government, World Economic Forum, HealthNet Global and NITI Aayog.

AgustaWestland accused Rajiv Saxena arrested in money laundering case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Rajiv Saxena in a money-laundering case linked to an alleged bank fraud. Saxena is also an accused in the Rs 3,600-crore VVIP choppers deal case.

The agency will produce him before a competent court to seek his custody, officials said. Saxena, an alleged middleman in the AgustaWestland VVIP choppers deals case, was based in Dubai and was deported to India from the UAE on January 31, 2019. Following his deportation, the agency arrested him in a chopper deal case.

The helicopter deal was subsequently scrapped by the Centre in 2014 after allegations of payment of kickbacks surfaced.

"Saxena is a hawala operator who runs accommodation entry business in Dubai



through numerous companies, known as Matrix group companies, and has laundered proceeds of crime in the cases of AgustaWestland chopper scam (linked to purchase of VVIP choppers by India) and Moser Baer bank fraud case," the ED had earlier said.

"Saxena created structures for laundering proceeds of crime generated by accused of both cases either for the kickbacks in AgustaWestland case or defrauding banks by misutilising the loans given to Moser Baer India Ltd and its subsidiaries," the ED had alleged, adding his role was under investigation in a number of other cases.

Farmers' land records check before paddy procurement is interest of kisan: Secretary

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a first, the Centre has decided to cross check land records before the procurement of paddy from next month in a bid to ensure the MSP reaches farmers and not traders. The main objective behind this mechanism is that the government procures the crop from genuine farmers and not from traders.

According to the Secretary, "Most states including Punjab are in complete readiness." Many states like Uttar Pradesh and Odisha had already integrated their land records, while some states had not done and they are doing this year, he added.

The Centre procured 3,449 lakh tonne of paddy at a MSP value of Rs 6,02,156 crore between 2016-17 and 2020-21, while 1,627 lakh tonne of wheat at MSP value of Rs 2,85,071 crore in the same period. This is much higher than 2,495 lakh tonne of paddy at a MSP value of Rs 2,88,871 crore between 2009-10 and 2013-14, while 1,395 lakh tonne of wheat at MSP value of Rs 1,68,223 crore in the same period.

Jet Airways likely to begin domestic ops from first quarter of '22

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Grounded for over two years, Jet Airways is expected to resume domestic operations in the first quarter of 2022.

The airline plans to restart operations with a flight from New Delhi to Mumbai. The airline also would now be headquartered in Delhi instead of Mumbai.

After the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) cleared Jalan Kalrock consortium's plan to revive Jet Airways, the airline is working closely with authorities and airport coordinators to finalise

slot allocations among other things.

Jet Airways had ceased operations in April 2019 and has become the first Indian carrier to be revived under the bankruptcy laws. In its new avatar, Jet will be based in Delhi NCR and not Mumbai like Jet Airways 1.0.

In a statement, Murari Lal Jalan, Lead Member of the Jalan Kalrock Consortium and the proposed non-executive chairman of the airline, said, "Jet Airways 2.0 aims at restarting domestic operations by Q1-2022, and short haul international operations by Q3/Q4 2022."

"Our plan is to have 50-plus aircraft in three years and 100 plus planes in five years, which also fits perfectly well with the short-term and long-term business plan of the Consortium," he noted.

"The aircraft are being selected based on competitive long term leasing solutions. It is the first time in the history of aviation that an airline grounded for more than two years is being revived and we are looking forward to being a part of this historic journey," Jalan said.

The Consortium's statement read that the revival plan for Jet Airways is being imple-



mented as approved by NCLT and all the creditors will be settled according to the plan in the coming months.

The process of reviving the grounded carrier is on track with the existing Air Operator Certificate (AOC) already under process for revalidation, it mentioned.

"It is the first time in the history of aviation that an airline grounded for more than 2 years is being revived and we are looking forward to being a part of this historic journey. The brand Jet Airways has a huge loyalty-base and we are confident that with industry stalwarts like Capt Gaur, we will be able to capitalize and create new benchmarks," he said.

The revival plan for Jet Airways is being implemented as approved by NCLT and all the creditors will be settled as per the plan in the coming months, the consortium said in a statement.

Foodgrain output likely to touch record 150 mn tonnes this year

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's foodgrain production is likely to touch a new record of over 150 million tonnes in the Kharif season of the 2021-22 crop year (July-June) due to good rains.

The Agriculture Ministry is expecting foodgrain production to be more than 150 million tonnes in the Kharif sea-

son this year, higher than 149.56 million tonnes achieved in the same season of the 2020-21 crop year. "We have received good rains so far this year. Total Kharif foodgrain production was 149.56 million tonnes last year as per the fourth estimate. As there is likely to be an increase in area under pulses and paddy, foodgrain production will definitely be much higher than last year's Kharif season," Agriculture Secretary Sanjay Agarwal said on Monday.

Sowing of Kharif (summer) crops like paddy, which begins with the onset of the Southwest monsoon from June, will get over by the end of this month. Harvesting in most of the parts will commence from October.

The first estimate of the country's overall foodgrain production for this Kharif season will be released around September 15, he said. Agarwal said Kharif foodgrain production has been pegged higher despite area sown to summer crops so far remaining lower by 10 lakh hectares compared to the year-ago period, as the ministry is expecting the gap in the coverage to get reduced by the end of September.

Total area sown to Kharif crops reached 1,096.70 lakh hectares till September 10 this year as against 1,106.57 lakh hectares in the year-ago period, he said. The secretary said there has been a slight increase in the coverage of paddy and pulses, while a major drop in area under crops such as coarse cereals, cotton and groundnut. "However, the gap in coverage is getting reduced as sowing in some parts will get over by the



end of this month. Looking at the current situation, we are definitely expecting better production this time," he asserted.

Agarwal also said that the states have been asked to take necessary steps for procurement of Kharif crops as in some states the arrival of crops has begun. For instance in Karnataka, arrival of pulses crop has begun and permission to the state government has been given for procurement of about 40,000 tonne, he said.

The Secretary also mentioned that he will hold a meeting with Punjab and Haryana in preparation for addressing the stubble burning issue. "Funds of around Rs 491 crore have been released to three states of Punjab Haryana and Uttar Pradesh ahead of harvesting of Kharif crops for tackling the stubble burning issue," he said.

The stubble burning in northern India has long been a major cause of air pollution even as the central government has spent Rs 2,245.17 crore to address this issue in the last four years. Agarwal said the states have also been asked to allow gram sabhas to open custom hiring centres so that small farmers can have access to machines and equipment used in the management of crop residue.

‘Convalescent plasma does not reduce risk of death in Covid+ve’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Convalescent plasma does not reduce the risk of intubation or death in Covid-19 patients, according to a study which found that people receiving the therapy experienced more serious adverse events than those getting standard care.

Intubation is a procedure where a tube is inserted into the windpipe to make it easier to breathe.

The research, published in the journal Nature Medicine, also found that the antibody profile in the blood of people who have had the virus is extremely variable and this may modify the response to the treatment. Convalescent plasma therapy uses blood from people who have recovered from an illness to help others recover.

India had dropped convalescent plasma therapy (CPT) from its national clinical management protocol for Covid-19 in May itself.

The Canadian researchers also found that patients receiving convalescent plasma experienced significantly more serious adverse events than those receiving standard care.

The majority of those events were an increased need for oxygen and worsening respiratory failure, they said. However, the rate of fatal incidents was not significantly different from the control group of patients who did not receive the blood.

The clinical trial, called CONCOR-1, included 940 patients at 72 hospitals in



Canada, the US, and Brazil.

The trial found that convalescent plasma had highly variable donor antibody content due to the highly variable immune response to the virus.

Different antibody profiles in the convalescent plasma were observed to significantly impact whether or not patients experienced intubation or death.

Unfavourable antibody profiles, meaning low antibody titres, non-functional antibodies or both, were associated with a higher risk of intubation or death.

"These findings may explain the apparent conflicting results between randomised trials showing no benefit, and observational studies showing better outcomes with higher titre products relative to low titre products," said study co-principal investigator Jeannie Callum, an associate scientist at the Sunnybrook Research Institute in Canada.

"It appears that it may not be that high-titre convalescent plasma is helpful, but rather that low-titre convalescent plasma is harmful," Callum said.

The researchers noted that the harm may come from the transfusion of convalescent plasma containing poorly functioning antibodies.



Union Railways Miinister Ashwini Vaishnaw arrives at Katra railway station aboard a train from Delhi, in Jammu, Monday PTI

Cong slams Centre's proposed disinvestment in CONCOR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday raised objections over the proposed disinvestment in the Container Corporation of India Ltd (CONCOR), a railway PSU and Navratna company.

Congress spokesperson Prof Gaurav Vallabh alleged a scam and questioned the disinvestment in a zero-debt, profit-making PSU after the Centre gave its nod to sell 30.8 percent out of its 54.8 per cent holding in CONCOR and management control to strategic buyers.

The Congress also questioned how the government can hand over railway land acquired from farmers of our country at a concessional rate or free of cost to a private party for commercial use in a "back-door arrangement". Vallabh

emphasised that the land should be returned to the farmers if the Railways have no use for it.

"It is of more significance when Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ), says 'Acquiring CONCOR will be a breeze' and 'It can easily acquire strategic target CONCOR.' The same group already has ports and airports; if CONCOR and its dry ports also go to them, they will have a monopoly over the export-import of the entire country. What ensures us to believe that they will not exploit this monopoly for commercial gains?" Prof Gaurav Vallabh said while addressing AICC Press conference.

Vallabh said that from its humble beginnings, CONCOR is now an undisputed market

leader having the largest network of 60 Inland Container Depots (ICD), of which 24 are situated on the railway land. Railway Board policy dated March 19, 2020, notified a Land Licensing Fees (LLF) regime for industrial use of its land and extended the same to CONCOR. The LLF being charged by the transporter now is six per cent of land value in the first year of license; the rate will increase at a rate of seven per cent annually to factor in inflation.

"Modi government is considering a change in the lease rate to two per cent-three per cent from the current level of six per cent. This policy may extend the land lease period from 5 years to 35 years or more. In other words, the government is considering the



proposal to lease Railway land for 35 years by receiving an upfront 99 per cent of lease rentals," he alleged.

For this, CONCOR will require about Rs 3,500 crore debts after utilizing Rs 2,500 crore of cash reserves, the Congress leader added. Following the long-term lease, CONCOR will not be paying any land licensing fees (LLF) to the Railways.

"Is the proposal to reduce

LLF an indirect way to hand over developed government land to private parties for the long term," Prof Vallabh demanded from the Centre.

He further pointed out that to pay 99 per cent upfront lease, CONCOR has to raise debts of Rs 3500 crore and these debts will directly hurt the valuation. "Is the entire transaction is planned to reduce the valuation of CONCOR?" he questioned.

India–Africa defence talk to be held alongside DefExpo

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the objective of further strengthening defence and strategic ties, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will host his counterparts from African nations in the next India– Africa Defence Dialogue on the sidelines of the DefExpo to be held at Gandhinagar, Gujarat in March next year.

The broad theme of this India Africa Defence Dialogue will be 'India – Africa: Adopting Strategy for Synergizing and Strengthening Defence and Security Cooperation,' defence ministry officials said here on Monday.

India and Africa share a close and historical relationship. The foundation of India–Africa defence relations are based on the two guiding principles namely 'SAGAR', Security and Growth for All in the

Region' and 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', The World is One Family.

The first-ever India Africa Defence Ministers Conclave (IADMC) was held in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh in conjunction with DefExpo in February last year co-organised by the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of External Affairs.

This was the first in the series of Pan Africa events at the Ministerial level in the run-up to India Africa Forum Summit IV. A Joint Declaration, 'Lucknow Declaration' was adopted after conclusion of IADMC 2020 as an outcome document of the Conclave.

In furtherance of the declaration and in consultation with stakeholders, India proposes to institutionalise the India Africa Defence Dialogue during successive DefExpos to be held once every two years.



Institutionalisation of the India Africa Defence Dialogue will help building on the existing partnerships between African countries and India and to explore new areas of convergence for mutual engagements including areas like capacity building, training, cyber security, maritime security and counter terrorism.

It was also decided that Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses(IDSA) shall be the knowledge partner of India Africa Defence Dialogue and will assist in providing necessary support for enhanced defence cooperation between India and Africa.

BJP, INLD leaders, industrialist from Haryana join Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Haryana-based industrialist Ashok Goel Mangaliwala, BJP leader Pawan Beniwal and INLD leader Kanwarjit Singh on Monday joined the Congress in the presence of AICC State in-charge Vivek Bansal and PCC chief Kumari Selja.Bansal claimed that the winds are blowing in favour of the Congress and against the BJP in Haryana and hoped those who have joined will contribute in strengthening the party further. Selja said these leaders have quit the saffron party and come into the Congress fold due to the BJP's 'anti-people policies'.

"There are leaders who understand that the Congress is the only

viable option to the BJP which has proved to be a failure in all spheres of governance in Haryana," she said. She alleged that the BJP has become a "paper leak government" as many examination papers were leaked in the state. Welcoming Goel, Beniwal and Singh in the Congress, Selja said the BJP, both at the Centre and Haryana, is "anti-farmer and anti-labourer", and the Congress will work unitedly to oust this regime. She also hoped the joiners will work effectively with Congress workers to strengthen the party.

The joining of these leaders is also a clear reflection of which way the wind is blowing -- in favour of the Congress.Goel said he was attracted by the policies of the Congress for upliftment of common

people. He said it was like a homecoming for him as his grandfather, Jugal Kishore Goyal, was the first Rajya Sabha member from Haryana, and had worked closely with Jawaharlal Nehru.Vivek Bansal said due to heavy rains in Haryana, several crops have suffered damage, and demanded adequate compensation for the farmers.

He also deplored the language used by the Karnal SDM while ordering the lathi-charge on farmers protesting the three agri laws. Beniwal was BJP's candidate fom Ellanabad constituency in the last assembly polls after he contested unsuccessfully against INLD's Abhay Chautala. Kanwarjit Singh is the son of former Congress MP Tara Singh.

BHAWANIPORE BY-ELECTION

BJP, CPM candidates file nomination against Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The BJP and the CPI(M) on Monday fielded Priyanka Tibrewal and Srijib Das respectively from the high-profile Bhawanipore Assembly constituency against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. While the Chief Minister is a qualified lawyer the two contestants fielded by the BJP and the Left are legal practioners too making the Bhawanipore by-elections an all-advocates affair so to say.

While Das is a complete green-horn in terms of contesting elections, Tibrewal a vocal BJP leader and a Calcutta High Court lawyer unsuccessfully fought the April-May Assembly polls losing to TMC leader and minister Javed Khan from the Entally constituency in central Kolkata.

When reminded of the towering personality she is contesting against Tibrewal said “there is nothing called a superstar in the field of elections because the voters of a democratically conscious constituency like Bhawanipore always weigh up the issues more than anything else.”

The BJP candidate who was earlier referred to as a “Bacchha” (a kid) by Banerjee’s election-manager Firhad Hakim also said that “some

people look like Bacchha but have explosive qualities ... let the time come and the Mr Hakim will understand whether I am a bacchha or a veteran”

The BJP would give the Chief Minister a taste of Nandigram --- where Banerjee was defeated by her onetime protégé-turned-BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari by 1,900 votes --- Tibrewal said. “Here the people of Bhawanipore has got a chance to give the Chief Minister a taste of Nandigram ... I think they will not miss out on that opportunity.”

State BJP president Dilip Ghosh on the other hand said that “the BJP has come to fight the elections with high spirits as we are the principal opposition party in Bengal ... we will go all out to win the elections about which we are pretty confident... the TMC should remember that no one becomes a star overnight ... even Mamata Banerjee was a newcomer when she created history by defeating in her first election a political heavy-weight like Somnath Chatterjee in 1984.”

Apparently the BJP’s confidence stems from the sizeable population of non-Bengali people residing in the area. Bhawanipore has a whopping 42 percent population of

Hindi-speaking voters including Gujaratis, Marwaris, Punjabis and those from Bihar and UP.

“If the Left manages to retain its own support base of about 15-20 percent then the BJP has a fairly good chance,” said a State party leader.

The Left Front candidate who has been working silently --- away from political lime-light --- said that “the main issue in Bengal is inflation, rising price of oil, gas and lack of jobs for which the people have to go to outside states ... they have seen the 10-year rule of Mamata Banerjee and 7-year rule of Modi in the Centre ... now they may start think differently ... we are taking our plans and programmes without much political fanfare to them and they are quietly listening to us ... we are expecting to put up a good show.”

The Congress which was likely to contest the elections with the backing of the Left however chose to withdraw following a decision taken by its national leadership. On whether the Congress “betrayal” would hurt its alliance with the Left CPI(M) Rajya Sabha member Bikash Bhattacharya said “such small deviations here and there do not affect broader alliances.”

First-time MLA Bhupendra Patel sworn-in as the 17th CM of Gujarat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leaving Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel 'unhappy', first-time MLA Bhupendra Patel was on Monday sworn-in as the 17th Chief Minister of Gujarat by Governor Acharya Devvrat in place of Vijay Rupani, who resigned a year ahead of next Assembly elections in the State.

The 59-year-old Bhupendra Rajnikant Patel, the first Ahmedabadi Chief Minister of Gujarat, is also a first-time MLA, first-time Minister and first 'Kadva Patel' to take the CM's chair seat.

He will announce his Cabinet after two-day, sources said.

This is the fourth change of Chief Minister in the BJP-ruled States after shifting of B S Yediyurappa (Karnataka) and Tirath Singh Rawat- and Trivendra Singh Rawat (Uttarakhand).

The hand-picking by Prime Minister Narendra Modi of a lightweight 'Patidar' for the top post has made Deputy-Chief Minister Nitin Patel, a many-time hot contender for the top post "unhappy" and disgruntled.

The new Chief Minister met Nitin Patel, also a 'patidar' leader, to soothe his ruffled feathers.

Patel was sworn-in in the presence of union Home



Minister Amit Shah.

Modi congratulated Patel saying, "I have known him for years and have seen his exemplary work, be it in the BJP Organisation or in civic administration and community service. He will certainly enrich Gujarat's growth trajectory."

Madhya Pradesh and Goa Chief Ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Pramod Sawant were on stage for the oath-taking ceremony of Patel.

Nitin Patel did not try to hide his hurt feelings for being sidelined as a CM candidate and said while addressing a gathering in his home turf Mehsana on Sunday, that he had seen many ups and downs, and asserted that nobody can "throw him out" as he lives in people's heart.

The outgoing CM Rupani, however, kept his own counsel and dismissed opposition barb

on the Modi-government for removing him.

"I do not care what the opposition has to say....this sort of a smooth transition of power is possible only within the BJP...I will continue to work for the party," said Former Gujarat CM.

On his part Modi said that former Rupani worked tirelessly for all sections of the society.

"During his five years as CM, Vijay Rupani ji has undertaken many people-friendly measures. He worked tirelessly for all sections of society. I am certain he will continue to contribute to public service in the times to come," said Prime Minister.

Rupani who comes from a numerically smaller community of Jains, was said to have been found short of expectations while handling the Covid19 pandemic in the state.

CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

8-year-old girl raped by relative; 2 sisters gangraped in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An eight-year-old girl was raped in Basti district while in Etawah two sisters returning from a Mahila police station were abducted by three men and gang-raped during the last 24 hours.

In Basti, a 16-year-old boy and also a distant relative forced himself on the minor girl while her family members were not at home in a village in Dhubulia police station area on Sunday evening.

When the family members returned home shortly after, the victim narrated her ordeal after which her father called up the local police station. A police team immediately rushed to the location and admitted the girl to a clinic for treatment where her condition was stated to be stable.

A case was registered under Section 376 of IPC and provisions of POCSO Act and a hunt was underway for the juvenile accused.

In Etawah, a young woman accompanied by her sister visited the Mahila police station to lodge a complaint against her husband on Sunday evening. While they were returning to their native village at Saifai, a stranger



offered them lift. On the way he stopped at a hotel and called one of his aides. Later one of them forced the sisters to drink alcohol and later took the intoxicated sisters to a shop and gang-raped them after downing the shutters. The sisters were also brutally beaten up by the accused so that they did not complain about the crime to the police.

The accused abandoned the sisters in the shop and were trying to flee when a police patrol asked them to stop. As they started fleeing, the police team chased and nabbed them.

The police said that while the arrests were made, they heard wails from a nearby shop that was half-closed. The police team entered the shop only to find the injured and scantily clad victims weeping. On learning about their ordeal, the victims were rushed to Etawah district hospital for medical examination. The victims later lodged an FIR in this connection at Saifai police station.

PM to lay foundation stone of Mahendra Pratap State University in Aligarh today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh State University and also inspect exhibition models of Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor and Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh State University in Aligarh on Tuesday.

The Prime Minister's visit is being viewed as yet another move by the Bharatiya Janata Party to placate the Jat community of western UP which has been seething over the three new farm laws, no hike in cane price and high input costs of farming.

The ruling party is looking to send a message to the Jats that none of the previous regimes bestowed any honour on the 'most powerful Jat king in the way he deserved.

While campaigning for by-elections for assembly seats Tundla in Firozabad and Iglas in neighbouring Hathras in 2019, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had announced the setting up of a State university after Raja Mahendra Pratap, who once donated land to Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). The Chief Minister had then said that even though the Jat king donated land for the AMU, his name

was never engraved on its walls and hence, the BJP Government would set up a university to honour the Raja, who was a great freedom fighter, educationist and social reformer. The university will be set up in an area of over 92 acres in Lodha village and Musepur Kareem Jarouli village of Aligarh's Kol thesil and once operational, it will provide affiliation to 395 colleges of Aligarh division.

Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh's great grandson Charat Pratap Singh, who had earlier sent a legal notice to the AMU over lease expiration of the land donated by the Hathras royal, expressed satisfaction at the move.

“We are happy with the government decision. I would say 'der aaye durust aaye' better late than never). The family is very happy and we welcome the decision. This is a historical step. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has played an important role in setting up this new university. I personally congratulated him after this decision. He recognised the contribution of Raja Mahendra Pratap in the field of education. Some people are relating this decision with politics but we are not relating it with Jat politics,” he said.

BJP worker put Jinnah’s photo in public toilet

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

Before the arrival of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Aligarh, a ruckus has been created in the name of Jinnah's portrait in Aligarh Muslim University. A Bharatiya Janata Party worker put the picture of the founder of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah in a public toilet. However, it was removed after being informed. BJP said action will be taken against the miscreants.

On Monday, in a viral video, a BJP worker, identified as Shivang Tiwari, is seen putting Jinnah's poster in the toilet and trampling it with his feet. Tiwari is the media in-charge of BJP Vishnupuri mandal. Shivang Tiwari has demanded that the picture of Jinnah in the union hall of AMU should be removed. A few days before this, he along with his colleagues had also sent a letter written in blood to PM Modi demanding the removal of Jinnah's portrait from the Union Hall of AMU.

Tiwari put many posters of Jinnah in the toilet of Gandhi Park Bus Stand and

made photos and videos viral on the internet media. Shivang says that this is the place for the poster of the person who broke the country. We will continue protesting till the picture is removed.

BJYM District President Mukesh Lodhi said that BJP is a disciplined party, there are many ways to protest, it should not have been done like this. BJP Metropolitan President Dr. Vivek Saraswat said that he does not know Shivang Tiwari. The executive committee of the Mandal is big, so such a name has never surfaced.

In the past, the matter has also heated up several times regarding Jinnah's picture in the Union Hall of AMU. BJP MP Satish Gautam had written a letter to the management to remove the picture from the hall, which was opposed by the students. Even after this many times BJP workers have raised the matter to remove the picture.

But the picture is still in the union hall. Under the pressure of the students, the management could not remove it.

Nitish-Chirag feud continues on Ram Vilas' death anniversary

IANS ■ PATNA

On the first death anniversary of Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) founder and former Union Minister Ram Vilas Paswan, his son and LJP chief Chirag Paswan tried to iron out differences by inviting leaders from all parties in Patna, except Chief Minister Nitish Kumar who skipped the programme.

Leaders from various parties gathered on this occasion except Nitish Kumar or any top Janata Dal (United) leader who chose to skip this event. This has fuelled speculation about the JD(U) leaders maintaining a distance from Chirag Paswan.

It is speculated that Nitish Kumar wants to maintain a distance from LJP's Chirag Paswan under any circumstances. The big question is whether relations can turn so sour in the course of political enmity that old relations are sidelined.

Chirag's uncle and Union Minister Pashupati Paras of LJP (Paras) faction attended this programme and paid tributes to his brother Ram Vilas Paswan. He said that even if he had not been invited, he would still have come.

Though Nitish Kumar paid tributes to Ram Vilas Paswan, he did not attend the event hosted by Chirag Paswan.

Political experts are view-



ing this feud from different viewpoints. Political critic Ajay Kumar says, "Even if Nitish Kumar had attended this programme, he would not have suffered any political loss but instead he would have benefited. This is the beginning of a wrong tradition in politics."

Manoj Chaurasia, who knows the politics of Bihar from close quarters, says, "Nitish Kumar's absence from this event gives a clear indication that he is not interested in mending ties between the JD(U) and the LJP but wants to further maintain a distance from LJP."

He said the JD(U) became the third largest party in the 2020 Bihar Assembly elections. JD(U) leaders hold the LJP responsible for their party's poor performance so Nitish Kumar does not seem to be in any mood to forgive LJP leader Chirag Paswan.

Oscar Fernandes: A leader who had no enemies in political world

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

Veteran Congress leader Oscar Fernandes, who passed away on Monday, was one of those personalities who had virtually no enemy in the cut-throat world of politics both within and outside the Congress.

He was hospitalised a couple of months ago after suffering a fall at his house while doing his regular exercise and had to be operated upon.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish over the death of the veteran Congress leader saying: "Saddened by the death of Rajya Sabha MP Shri Oscar Fernandes ji. In this sad hour, my thoughts and prayers are with his family and well wishers. May his soul rest in peace."

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh too condoled the death of his former cabinet colleague and remembered him as a pleasant personality and people's man and one of the tallest leaders of the Congress.

Describing him as 'Ajaathashatru' (a person who has no enemy), former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda said, "Let almighty bestow peace on his soul." While Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai hailed the service of Oscar Fernandes to the state and nation, former CM H D Kumaraswamy said Oscar Fernandes looked up to the Congress as a mother figure and loved all.



"It is a personal loss for me. He was a guide and mentor to many of us in the Congress party. He will be missed and fondly remembered for his contributions," Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said in a tweet.

The Chief Ministers of Congress ruled States as well CMs of other parties also condoled the death of Congress leader.

Fernandes was a sitting member of the Rajya Sabha from Karnataka. He had been a five-time Lok Sabha MP and a four-time Rajya Sabha member. He had entered politics as a member of the Udupi Municipal Council and was elected to Lok Sabha for the first time in 1980.

Fernandes became the parliamentary secretary to the prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in December 1984 and then the AICC general secretary in 1985. Thereafter, he went on to assume several key positions in the party and Government.

Only time will tell which party has lost existence in UP, Priyanka tells BJP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, on Monday, took on the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, saying that only time would tell which party --Congress or BJP-- had lost existence in the country's politically most crucial State- Uttar Pradesh.

Priyanka Vadra, who is touring her mother Sonia Gandhi's Prliamentary constituency Rae Bareilly and the lost bastion of Amethi, was responding to UP Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya's claim that the State had got rid of Congress.

A day earlier, on Sunday, she had taken a jibe at a Government advertisement claiming that fake development had been highlighted by the BJP in the name of 'Transforming UP'.

"We fulfilled what we promised to the public," Priyanka Vadra asserted while saying that the people would reply to the BJP for cheating them with false promises of 'achhey din' and for even depriving the public of two meals by snatching their jobs or through unemployment besides a steep hike in prices of all essential commodities, including petroleum products, edible oils and other edible items.

Meanwhile, Congress Pradesh Election Committee (PEC) chairman

Salman Khurshid reiterated a well-known fact that Congress would contest the 2022 UP polls under the leadership of Priyanka Vadra.

Making it clear that Congress would not stitch an alliance with any party and would go it alone in the UP polls, Khurshid said that his party had not yet decided on its chief ministerial candidate but it would field candidates on all 403 assembly constituencies in UP.

Khurshid, who was in Agra to take people's feedback for the party manifesto, stressed that the manifesto would include voices of the common people by visiting assembly constituencies to get a sense of the problems being faced by the locals.

"This will make people happy and they can say that this manifesto is their own," the Congress leader said.

"We have visited other districts such as Ayodhya, Jhansi, Gorakhpur, and others and on Sunday in Agra, we interacted with the natives of Tora village. People complained about several issues such as pension for widows and old people," Khurshid said.

Meanwhile, Priyanka Vadra on Monday, left for Delhi after wrapping up her five-day tour of the state during which she exhorted party workers to work round-the-clock for the 2022 UP assembly polls.

Rlys Min lays foundation for enhanced infra at Katra station

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Minister of Railways, Ashwini Vaishnaw, on Monday visited SMVD Katra and laid the foundation stone for enhanced infrastructure and passenger amenities at the Sri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra station. He reviewed the ongoing work on the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla-Rail-Link Project (USBRL).

Vaishnaw boarded the Vande Bharat Express train from SMVD Katra for Jammu. He interacted with the passengers while on the train. Sh. Ashutosh Gangal, General Manager Northern Railway, Chief Administrative Officer, USBRL Project, Sh. S.K. Jha, Divisional Railway Manager, Firozpur, Dr. Seema Sharma and other officials of Northern Railway and USBRL were present on the occasion.

The Minister was briefed about the progress of work of the USBRL project which is to link Jammu to Srinagar by the USBRL Engineers. The project which is to Link Jammu to Srinagar Valley through an all-weather rail line is being built at a cost of ₹ 27,949 crore.

Farmers in western TN agitated over shifting of organic farming centre

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ COIMBATORE

Resentment is brewing up Among thousands of organic and natural farmers spread across the districts of Coimbatore, the Nilgiris, Tirupur, Erode and Dindigul following the announcement by the DMK Government that the headquarters of Tamil Nadu Organic Certification Department at Coimbatore would soon be shifted to Chennai.

The TNOCD was launched with the objective of ensuring sustainable productivity without the use of artificial external inputs such as agro chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides, said G K Nagaraj, president of the Agricultural Wing of Tamil Nadu BJP, who is a lead farmer in the region. He said the decision to shift the head quarters comes at a time when the entire Kongu region consisting of the seven districts were on the verge of switching over to organic and natural farming.

“The farming community in this region would be put to difficulties once the State

administration shifts the TNOCD to Chennai where there is no kind of natural farming. All of us may have to commute to Chennai to meet our needs for natural farming at this critical juncture,” said Nagaraj who along with hundreds of farmers handed over a representation to the District Collector pleading with the government not to go ahead with the shifting.

“This is yet another proof of the indifference of the Tamil Nadu Government towards the problems faced by people in the western region. More than 30 per cent of the tax revenue of Tamil Nadu is generated from this region and we need a fair deal from the Government in Chennai,” Vanathi Srinivasan, who represents Coimbatore South in Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly. Srinivasan who is also the national president of the BJP's women's wing said that instead of shifting the TNOCD from Coimbatore, the Government should have modernised the centre by incorporating the new technologies that would benefit natural and organic farming.

FIRST COLUMN

TOO BIG TO BE EQUAL?



GWYNNE DYER

Never mind the destruction of the relatively free society of Hong Kong (no emergency airlift like Kabul, but the number of people fleeing Hong Kong may ultimately be larger). Never mind the persecution of the Uyghurs, or the Orwellian surveillance society that the Communist Party is building, or the tens of millions who died in wars, famines and 'cultural revolutions' to bring equality to China. The Party's fundamental failure is to create a society, after seventy years of absolute power, that is about as unequal as that of the United States. Per capita incomes are still much lower in China than in the US. But since then, the gulf between the rich and the rest has inexorably widened until it now approaches the American standard. If you take the incomes of the top 20 per cent of the US population and compare them with those of the lowest 20 per cent of American earners, the wealthiest fifth earns 9.4 times more than the poorest fifth. In China, the top fifth earn 10.2 times as much as the bottom fifth. Drill down and compare



the incomes of the top 10 per cent with those of the bottom 10 per cent, the wealthiest tenth of Chinese people get 21.5 times more money than the poorest tenth. In the United States it's 18.5 times more. Americans are used to these disparities, and can console themselves with the myth of 'equal opportunity'. Chinese people are new to this situation, and the official ideology still says that people should be equal. That's the goal that supposedly justifies the perpetual dictatorship of the Party. So, the grotesque inequality is embarrassing for the Party, and potentially quite dangerous. Back in the days when the Chinese economy was growing at 8-10 per cent a year it could be ignored but the fast-growth era is over. Sooner or later the losers in the race will realise that they have lost permanently. Last May, Premier Li Keqiang revealed that 600 million Chinese citizens earn \$5 a day or less.

This is not a good look in a country that has more billionaires (1,058) than the United States, and the Party leadership is not stupid. Something must be done. That's why President Xi Jinping is talking up a new policy of 'common prosperity'. while also imposing stricter censorship and other social controls. The idea is to head off trouble by evening out the grossest inequalities and teaching the highest-flying billionaires a little humility: don't stall the economy, but spread the wealth around a little. The Party knew this day would come when it first abandoned Communist ideals forty years ago in order to escape from three decades of no growth. "Let some people get rich first," said Deng Xiaoping, and took the capitalist road. Rich capitalist democracies like France, Germany, Canada, and Japan manage to have income gaps between the rich and the rest only about half as big as the US and China. But the very biggest developed countries, China and the US, seem unable to manage it. Maybe it's just a question of size. Income disparities in the United States have been widening for forty-five years now, with grave social consequences, but being democratic doesn't enable the US to deal with it any better. Instead, American police have been turned into a militarised force that essentially manages the social results of the inequality by force. In 1970, there were 200,000 people in US prisons; now, there are 2.3 million. More than a quarter of adult Americans have a criminal record. What are the odds that the ageing autocrats who rule China will do any better?

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

Shun duopoly in telecom industry



UTTAM GUPTA

The real problems are the policies and regulatory environment that have favoured one player even while targeting others

Telecom operators including Airtel, Vodafone Idea or Vi and Reliance Jio have submitted a charter of demands to the Centre.

They primarily relate to licence fees: reducing the license fee from three per cent of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) to one per cent, USOF (Universal Service Obligation Fund) contribution from five per cent of AGR to one per cent, spectrum usage charge (SUC) from 3-6 per cent (depending on when the operator acquired spectrum in respective bands) to a uniform three per cent for all operators.

A demand is also to extend the tenure of leased spectrum to operators from 20 years to 40 years. They want a 7-10-year moratorium on payments (in addition to two years already given). They demand reducing interest rate on all outstanding deferred payment liabilities (for acquiring spectrum) and outstanding AGR dues from 9-10 per cent to four per cent or less, only telecom revenue be considered for levying license fee and SUC, early completion of the TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) consultation paper on 'floor price for tariffs and waiver of financial and performance bank guarantees (BGs).

Reportedly, the Government has agreed to reduce SUC by per cent 'prospectively', allow additional moratorium of two years for payments, consider telecom revenue only for AGR calculation 'prospectively' and reducing BG on AGR dues and deferred spectrum payments (DSP). Additionally, it has kept an option open for "converting a portion of Vi dues to equity after four years".

The above relaxations will ease cash flow of the operators, though there is scope as well as strong justification for doing more particularly with regard to levies. Under the current environment wherein, the operators are buying spectrum - unlike in the past when it came bundled with the license - there is no logic in collecting license fee and SUC also. There is also no valid case for continuing with USOF levy (meant to fund building rural infrastructure) all the more when there is un-used money in the Fund.

Even so, a drastic reduction in the levies will not help in extricating a major operator from the financial disaster it is currently facing. The real culprits are the policies and regulatory environment that have favored one player even while targeting others.

On the policy front, even as other operators paid gargantuan sums for obtaining license and spectrum, RJio got these at a throwaway price. It acquired an internet service provider (ISP) license from an unknown entity, Infotel Broadband Services Pvt Ltd (IBSPL) in 2010, and got with it pan-India broadband wireless spectrum (BWA) by paying ₹12,837 crore. In 2013, this was converted into a unified license (UL) to provide voice services also by paying an addition-



THE GLOBAL EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT IN MARKETS WITH FEWER OPERATORS, TARIFFS TEND TO BE HIGH. UNDER A DUOPOLY, THE RISK OF A STEEP INCREASE WILL REMAIN. THE WAY FORWARD IS TO GIVE A SPECIAL PACKAGE TO VI, SAY, BY CONVERTING A PORTION OF ITS DUES INTO EQUITY BUT THIS SHOULD BE DONE 'NOW' INSTEAD OF WAITING FOR FOUR YEARS

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



al fee of a mere ₹1,658 crore - a price that telcos paid in 2001.

On the regulatory front too, TRAI went out of its way to favor RJio. In September 2016, in a bizarre move rarely seen before, RJio entered the market with 'free' and 'unlimited' voice calls and low-cost data - a case of 'predatory' pricing. The incumbent operators were forced to reduce tariff drastically to match RJio. Post-revision, the tariff in India at less than \$1 per GB was a fraction of what customers in other countries pay (\$30 in Japan, \$18 Korea, \$15 the UK and 10 in USA).

In February 2018, TRAI amended the Telecom Tariff Order (TTO) to define a firm to be predator, if in a relevant market (circle) it offers services at less than its average variable cost (AVC) and controls 30 per cent market share or above. During 2017-18, even as all firms were selling below AVC, incumbent operators had a market share above 30 per cent whereas, RJio had a share of under 30 per cent. In the eyes of the regulator, the former were predators even as the latter was not.

The amended order being 'one-sided' and 'discriminatory', was set aside by the Telecom Disputes Settlement Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT). But, by the time TDSAT gave its verdict (December 13, 2018), the damage was already done.

As a result, incumbent operators, who were making profits prior to RJio's entry, started incur-

ring losses. Several operators downed shutters while others were bought over. Today, there are only three private operators - Vi, Airtel besides RJio - down from over a dozen prior to 2016. The hike in tariff - by all three operators in December 2019 - by up to 50 per cent may have given some breathing space but, at under \$2 per GB, the rate continues to be woefully low.

The other major factor that pushed Vi to the brink (besides Airtel) was the October 2019 order of the Supreme Court requiring them to pay "unpaid" dues towards license fee and SUC. The "unpaid" dues resulted from a stance taken by DoT (upheld by the SC) that for determining these levies, apart from telecom services revenue, AGR should also include revenue from non-telecom services viz. rent, profit on sale of fixed assets, dividend, interest etc.

The demand pertained to a period of over a decade being the 'difference between the levies amount calculated by using both telecom and non-telecom revenue and actual payments made by operators (based on telecom revenue only)'. Together with interest on differential amount, plus penalty and interest on penalty, this works out to ₹58,000 crore for Vi (₹36,000 crore for Airtel).

This has seriously undermined the finances of Vi and Airtel even as the impact on RJio was negligible at ₹13 crore. While, Airtel has somehow managed to come out of

the morass (helped to some extent by December 2019 tariff hike), Vi continues to be in doldrums due to the sheer magnitude of AGR and DSP liabilities totaling ₹160,000 crore. The concessions granted by the Government do little to address the huge handicap faced by Vi.

Left to fend for itself, the company will go into liquidation leaving only two operators which does not augur well for a population of 1.35 billion. The global experience shows that in markets with fewer operators, tariffs tend to be high. Under a duopoly, the risk of a steep increase will remain. The way forward is to give a special package to Vi say by converting a portion of its dues into equity but this should be done 'now' instead of waiting for four years (as proposed by DoT).

Given its huge customer base of around 255 million, massive network and quality of assets, potential for growth in telecom services, the Union Government should go for majority ownership and control over Vi in lieu of its dues from the latter. However, this should be treated as one-off event; for efficient and profitable running, the firm must be ring-fenced from the bureaucracy.

Meanwhile, the Government should nudge TRAI to finalize its recommendations on 'floor price' for tariffs promptly and take steps to strictly enforce it. It should make sure that in the name of fostering competition, there is no repeat of blood bath.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

BEFORE 2017, ONLY THOSE WHO USED TO SAY 'ABBA-JAAN' WERE DIGESTING THE RATION.
— UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER
YOGI ADITYANATH



HERE IS A CHIEF MINISTER SEEKING RE-ELECTION CLAIMING THAT MUSLIMS ATE UP ALL THE RATIONS MEANT FOR HINDUS.
— FORMER J&K CHIEF MINISTER
OMAR ABDULLAH


Trans-Asian rail connectivity: South Asian perspective

The new corridor could provide transport connections to ensure the development of landlocked countries such as Afghanistan, Bhutan and Nepal

To develop connectivity and boost commercial activity, ITI-DKD-Y (Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad-Delhi-Kolkata-Dhaka-Yangon) route has been long proposed as the major rail freight transport corridor. It has great potential and can have a positive impact on the economy of the sub-region and of the countries involved.

The proposed ITI-DKD-Y corridor will be part of the Southern Corridor of the Trans Asia route (TAR), which is the least integrated, but crosses the most populous sub-regions in the world with a maximum potential of consolidating Asia's industrial activity.

The new corridor could provide transport connections to ensure the accessibil-



PRADYOT KUMAR CHATTERJEE

(The writer is a retired Indian Railways professional and consultant. The views expressed are personal.)

ity and development of landlocked countries such as Afghanistan, Bhutan and Nepal becoming an artery for intra-regional trade.

Currently, the Turkey-Iran part of the corridor is operational. For the ITI train to get on tracks, the weaker part of the equation - Pakistan -- has to upgrade its infrastructure in Baluchistan province. Here lies a catch as it is linked to the Belt Road initiative (BRI) of China which is trying to set up access to Gwadar port through Pakistan railways. Opening of the ITI route depends on internal dynamics and relations between Baluchistan and the Pakistan Government. With the US exit from Afghanistan, the scenario is further changed in the region.

Indian Railways has pri-



oritised the railway corridor that connects Istanbul to Dhaka (Bangladesh) through Delhi and Kolkata.

India's emphasis is on regional connectivity projects with Nepal-Bangladesh-Bhutan. Connectivity with Nepal will be boosted with the completion of Jogbani (IR)-Biratnagar (Nepal) line of which 5.4 km is in India and 13.3 km is Nepal and Jaynagar (IR)-Bijalpur (Nepal)

of which around 3 km is in India and around 17 km in Nepal besides the Raxual-Birganj link. These networks will boost trade within SAARC countries and will be cost effective. These will also be subroutes to TAR.

India has also an ambitious project to connect all state capitals of eastern states with the IR network. Such links are expected to be completed in another year or two. One of these -- Imphal in Manipur -- is on the TAR.

The India- Myanmar rail connectivity is planned through Jiribam-Imphal in Manipur. The missing link between the two countries is the Jiribam-Moreh (India)-Tamu-Kaley (Kalemyo-Myanmar) section, and this alignment is part of the south-

ern corridor of the Trans-Asian Railway (TAR) network. The link between Jiribam and Imphal (110 km) is under construction by Indian Railways over inhospitable terrain. There is no sanction plan for construction of a rail link to Moreh from Imphal and is not likely to happen in the near future.

The other route to Myanmar is through Bangladesh Railway network. Chittagong-Dohazari-Gundum (Cox bazaar route) and further on to Maynmar. This needs Chittagong-Cox Bazar rail network to be completed and corresponding link to Yangon on Myanmar side also implemented. The gaps in both sides are too long to be bridged soon.

Bangladesh Railways has

several projects to improve rail connectivity internally which will in the long run be part of TAR. The rail-cum-road bridge over the Padma river being built at Mawa-Bhanga will be part of the rail route between Dhaka-Jessore and through Jessore to Kolkata. This link has the potential to cut down actual running time by two hours between Kolkata and Dhaka. If customs and immigration time is fine-tuned, one can reach Dhaka in 7-8 hours and Agartala in 12 hours or so from Kolkata. Presently these journeys take 12 hrs and 40-odd hours, respectively from Kolkata. This route is expected to be completed in 2024.

The Dhaka-Comilla chord rail route planned by BR will provide an even shortened

route between Bangladesh and Tripura, Mizoram and Manipur. The port towns of Chittagong, Magla and Payara in Bangladesh and the India-Nepal-Bhutan corridor will be easily linked, boosting trade in land-locked countries of SAARC.

For the ambitious ITI-DKD-Y route to be fully operational, infrastructural inputs in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Myanmar are very important. This will be achieved with good relationships between neighbouring countries. Much will depend on the security scenario and socio-political situation of the countries involved. Political stability in the countries of the region and government patronage to rail projects are important for such routes to be fully operational.

China asks US, world to step-up aid to Afghanistan

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Monday asked the US and the international community to take “active actions” to help ease the economic crisis in Afghanistan by providing aid to the war-torn country even as it called on the Taliban to stay true to its commitment not to allow terrorist groups to operate from the Afghan soil.

“The Afghan Taliban should stay true to its commitment and earnestly make a clean break with all terrorist forces and take effective measures to crack down on them to avoid the spillover effects,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing on Monday.

“Terrorism remains a common threat for the international community. China stands ready to work with other countries to deepen counter-terrorism cooperation to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a hotbed and safe haven for terrorism and jointly safeguard the regional peace and stability,” he said.

Asked for his reaction to the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres appeal for aid to Afghanistan to prevent economic meltdown of the country, which would be a “gift for terrorists,” Zhao said China has committed to provide 200 million Yuan (about \$31 million) aid comprising food, winter clothing and medicines to the war-torn country.

He said the international community should provide humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. On September 8, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi had announced at a conference on Afghanistan’s neighbours organised by Pakistan that China would provide \$31 million aid to the war-ravaged country.

“When security conditions are ripe China will help Afghanistan to build projects and support the country’s peace, reconstruction and development to the best of its ability,” Zhao said.

“This shows China’s friendly policy towards Afghanistan is for the entire Afghan people. It also embodies the Chinese



Children pose for a photo as they play in a camp for internally displaced people in Kabul, Afghanistan on Monday

culture of mutual assistance especially in trying moments,” he said.

“Currently, Afghanistan faces grave humanitarian liveli-

hood and pandemic challenges. The international community should offer economic, livelihood and humanitarian assistance to help the people to tide

over difficult times,” he said.

Blaming the US for the current crisis in Afghanistan, Zhao said Washington should provide humanitarian aid to

Afghanistan. “I want to stress that as the culprit of the Afghan issue the US must earnestly fulfil its commitments to the country and assume due responsibility and obligation on the basis of respecting the country’s sovereignty and independence,” he said.

“The US should take active actions to help it to ease economic difficulties instead of shifting the blame and shirking its responsibility,” he said.

Asked for his reaction to Taliban’s decision to cancel the inauguration of its interim government and Russia’s decision not to attend it, he said “whether the Afghan side is going to hold the inauguration ceremony for the interim Government in its internal affair and whether other countries plan to attend the ceremony is up to their independent decision. China respects both”.

Reports from Kabul said last week the Taliban has invited China, Pakistan, Russia, Turkey, Iran and Qatar to attend the new Government formation ceremony in Afghanistan.

UN seeks \$606m for Afghanistan after Taliban takeover

Geneva: The United Nations is hosting a high-level donors conference on Monday to drum up emergency funds for Afghanistan after last month’s Taliban takeover of the country that stunned the world.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was leading the world body’s call for more than \$600 million for the rest of this year in a “flash appeal” for Afghans after their country’s government was toppled by the Taliban and US and NATO forces exited the 20-year war in a chaotic departure.

There are concerns that instability and upended humanitarian efforts, compounded by an ongoing drought, could further endanger lives and plunge

Afghanistan toward famine.

The conference will put to the test some Western governments and other big traditional UN donors who want to help everyday Afghans without handing a public relations victory or cash to the Taliban, who ousted the internationally backed government in a lightning sweep.

The UN says “recent developments” have increased the vulnerability of Afghans who have already been facing decades of deprivation and violence. A severe drought is jeopardizing the upcoming harvest, and hunger has been rising. The UN’s World Food Program is to be a major beneficiary of any funds collected during Monday’s conference. **AP**

First foreign commercial flight after Taliban takeover lands in Kabul

AFP ■ KABUL

An international commercial flight left Kabul on Monday, the first since the Taliban retook power last month, offering some hope to Afghans still desperate to leave the country.

The Afghan capital’s airport was left trashed after US-led forces finished a chaotic evacuation of more than 1,20,000 people, and the Taliban have since scrambled to get it operational with technical assistance from Qatar and other nations.



On Monday morning, a Pakistan International Airlines jet touched down in Kabul, before making a return flight to Islamabad. Around 70 people were on the flight to the Pakistani capital, mostly Afghans who were relatives of staffers with international organisations such as the World Bank, according to airport ground staff.

“I am being evacuated. My final destination is Tajikistan,” said a 35-year-old World Bank evacuee, who did not want to give her name.

“I will come back here only if the situation allows women to work and move freely.”

A 22-year-old university student said he was taking a one-month trip to Pakistan.

“It’s like a vacation. I am sad and happy. Sad about the country, but happy to leave for some time,” he said.

The resumption of commercial flights will be a key test

for the hardline Islamist group, who have repeatedly promised to allow Afghans with the right documents to leave the country freely.

As passengers prepared to board, airport staff went about their duties, although working under the new regime is marred by fear and confusion for women.

“I don’t know if we will be killed or not for working here,” one of two women handling the security scanning machine told **AFP**.

‘Great moment’

Many NATO nations admitted that they had run out of time to evacuate thousands of at-risk Afghans before the withdrawal deadline — agreed between the United States and the Taliban.

A PIA spokesman said at the weekend that the airline was keen to resume regular commercial services, but it was too soon to say how frequently flights between the two cap-

UN official slams Taliban over reprisal killings

AP ■ GENEVA

The UN human rights chief says her office has received credible allegations of reprisal killings by the Taliban of former Afghan security forces, as well as instances in which officials in the previous Government and their relatives were arbitrarily detained and later turned up dead.

Michelle Bachelet, speaking on Monday to the Human Rights Council, warned of a “new and perilous phase” for Afghanistan as she criticised

the Taliban for a disconnect between their words and actions.

She cited “multiple” allegations of Taliban house-to-house searches looking for officials from the previous government and “people who cooperated with US security forces and companies”.

Such searches took place in at least a half-dozen cities, Bachelet said. UN staffers have also reported increasing attacks and threats, she added, without providing specifics.

Blinken readies for contentious Afghan hearings in Congress

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Secretary of State Antony Blinken is preparing to face tough congressional questioning this week over the Biden administration’s handling of the military withdrawal from Afghanistan.

In separate House and Senate hearings, lawmakers are expected to grill Blinken on the Biden administration’s response to the rapid collapse of the Afghan government and more specifically on the State Department’s response

to what many claim was a predictable result in the final days of the American military presence there.

Blinken, who had publicly predicted in June that a complete Taliban takeover would not happen “from a Friday to a Monday,” will appear before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Monday and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Tuesday. He’s likely to get assailed for that prediction, which turned out to have been wrong.

The State Department has

come under heavy criticism from both Republicans and Democrats for not doing enough and not acting quickly enough to get American citizens, legal residents and at-risk Afghans out of the country after the Taliban took control of Kabul on Aug. 15.

Republicans, in particular, have been demanding answers as to why American citizens were left behind in the chaotic days and weeks before the military completed its withdrawal on Aug. 30.

Israel hits Hamas targets as Gaza militants fire rockets

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli aircraft struck a series of targets in the Gaza Strip early Monday while Palestinian militants launched rockets into Israel in the third consecutive night of fighting between the sides.

The violence took place shortly before Israel’s prime minister, Naftali Bennett, was heading to Egypt for a visit expected to focus on Egyptian efforts to broker a long-term truce between Israel and Gaza’s Hamas rulers in the wake of an 11-day war last May.

Those efforts appear to have come to a standstill in recent weeks. Tensions have further risen after last week’s escape from an Israeli prison by six Palestinian inmates.

The Israeli military reported three separate rocket launches late Sunday and early Monday, saying at least two of them were intercepted by its rocket defenses. It said it attacked a number of Hamas targets in retaliation. There were no reports of casualties on either side.

In other violence, the Israeli army said an assailant attempted to stab a soldier at a busy intersection in the occupied West Bank. It said that soldiers shot the attacker, who was taken to a hospital. No further details were immediately available.

In downtown Jerusalem, meanwhile, police said a 17-year-old Palestinian boy stabbed and wounded two people near the city’s central bus

station.

Jerusalem police chief Doron Turjeman said the assailant was shot by an officer. The boy suffered a serious gunshot wound to the chest.

Last week’s prison break appears to have heightened tensions across the region, with Palestinians staging a number of protests in solidarity with the men. In Palestinian society, nearly every family has seen a member imprisoned by Israel, and the thousands of prisoners held by Israel are widely seen as heroes paying a price for the national cause.

Over the weekend, Israel caught four of the six Palestinian inmates, who tunneled out of a maximum security prison on Sept. 6. Palestinian militants reacted to

the arrests with rocket fire. Israel’s search for the last two prisoners is continuing.

The Egyptian-mediated efforts to deliver a long-term truce have struggled with the sides unable to agree on a system to renew Qatari payments to needy Gaza families. Israel has demanded guarantees that Hamas does not divert the money for military use.

Gaza is an impoverished territory whose population is overwhelmingly comprised of families who fled or were forced from properties in what is now Israel during the war surrounding Israel’s establishment in 1948.

Hamas is pushing for Israel to end a crippling blockade that has devastated Gaza’s economy, while Israel is demanding that

Hamas free two captive Israeli civilians and return the remains of two dead Israeli soldiers.

Hamas has controlled Gaza since ousting the forces of the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority in 2007, a year after the Islamic militant group won Palestinian parliamentary elections.

Since then, Israel and Hamas have fought four wars and numerous smaller rounds of fighting.

On Sunday, Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid on Sunday called for a new approach to end the cycle of fighting with Hamas, describing a plan of international investment in Gaza’s infrastructure in exchange for pressure on Hamas to halt its military buildup and preserve calm.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL
HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR
Telefax :- 0194-2496089, Email Id:- xenmhchdk@yahoo.in

Gist of e-tender
NIT No: MHCHD/TS /2021-22/126/e-tendering Dated:-11.09.2021
For and on behalf of the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir state, e-tenders, valid for 180 days, are invited from the Registered , reputed & experienced firms as detailed in the NIT for below mentioned works:
Name of Work:- SITC of VRV/VRF based HVAC Facility System at SDH, Tral
Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs):- 18.00
Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees) :- 1000
Time of completion (in months) :- 1 Month
Technical Sanction No : 82 of 09/21
AA accorded vide:- 82 DDCP of 2021 Dt:10.07.2021
Position of Funds : Available
1. Downloading of Bids:- The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from the departmental website **www.jktenders.gov.in** from **11.09.2021 (18.00 hrs)** and can be downloaded from **11.09.2021 (18.00 hrs)**.
2. Uploading: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from **12.09.2021 (10.00 hrs) to 20.09.2021 (15:00hrs)** in two (02) covers.
3. Opening of Bids:- The bids received upto due date and time shall be opened on **21.09.2021 (14.00 hrs)** or any date convenient to the **department in the office of Executive Engineer, Srinagar.**
Sd/- Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar
No. DIPK-8455/21 Dated:- 13.09.2021

Nepal issues alert against possible spread of Nipah virus from India

Kathmandu: Nepal Government on Monday sounded an alert against the possible spread of Nipah virus, found in neighbouring India.

Early this month, a 12-year-old boy in Kerala succumbed to the infection, the first such incident three years after it wreaked havoc in parts of Kozhikode and Malappuram districts of the state.

Nepal’s Ministry of Health and Population has urged the general public to remain alert to the possible risk of Nipah Virus (NIV) infection after its outbreak was reported in India.

Health Ministry spokesperson Dr Krishna Prasad Poudel said in a press statement on Monday that the risk of the virus outbreak and spread in Nepal could not be ruled out as Nepal and India share open borders.

“The infection of the deadly NIV, which is transmitted to humans from animals and then human-to human, causing a serious illness, has now been detected in the Kerala State of India.”

Though the virus has so far been not detected in the country, the risk remains large, pointed out Poudel adding the fruit bat is the natural host of the virus and it is transmitted to pigs, cattle and then to humans. **PTI**

New Bill can help Indians, get Green Card in US by paying supplemental fee

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Millions of people stuck for years in the employment-based Green Card backlog in the US, including a sizable number of Indians, can hope for a lawful permanent residency in America by paying a supplemental fee if a new House Bill is passed into law.

The move, if included in the reconciliation package and passed into law, is expected to help thousands of Indian IT professionals who are currently stuck in an agonising Green Card backlog.

A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently in the US.

According to the committee print released by the US House of Representatives Judiciary Committee, which has jurisdiction over immigration, an employment-based immigrant applicant with a “priority date that is more than 2 years before” can adjust to permanent residence without numerical limits by paying a “supplemental fee of \$5,000.”

The fee is \$50,000 for the EB-5 category (immigrant investors). The provisions expire in 2031, the Forbes

magazine reported.

For a family-based immigrant who is sponsored by a US citizen and with a “priority date that is more than 2 years before”, the fee for getting a Green Card would be \$2,500.

The supplement fee would be \$1,500 if an applicant’s priority date is not within two years but they are required to be present in the country, according to the committee print. This fee would be in addition to any administrative processing fee paid by the applicant.

However, the bill does not contain permanent structural changes to the legal immigration system, including eliminating country caps for green cards or increasing the annual quotas of H-1B visas.

Before becoming law, the provisions would have to pass the Judiciary Committee, the House of Representatives and the Senate and be signed by the president, the report said.

According to a report in **CBSNews**, if successful, the legalisation plan would allow undocumented immigrants who came to the US as children, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) beneficiaries, farmworkers and other pandemic-era essential workers to apply for permanent US residency, or green cards.

Xi praises PLA’s model border battalion in Tibet

PTI ■ BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping has praised a border-guard battalion in Tibet, which shares boundary with the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, saying its troops have done a “great job” in the past five years, official media here reported.

Xi visited Nyingchi, the Tibetan border town close to Arunachal Pradesh in July, becoming the first Chinese President to visit the remote border areas in Tibet.

“President Xi writes back to a plateau-stationed border-guard model battalion, saying they have done a great job in the past five years and encouraging them to make new contributions to the Party and the people,” the state-run *Global Times* reported on Monday.

The model battalion is under the Xizang (Chinese name for Tibet) Military Command of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), it said.

Xi commended the battalion members for their remarkable efforts in guarding China’s border region, noting that they have dedicated their youth to securing the country’s territorial integrity and have accomplished their missions well, state-run *Xinhua* news agency reported. Border troops are on the frontline of strengthening China’s national defence and shoulder massive responsibilities, said Xi in the letter.

He called on them to continue to strengthen their sense of responsibility, carry forward fine traditions, and enhance their combat readiness in order to perform their duties well.

The battalion is stationed in a region with an average altitude of over 4,800 meters. The lowest temperature in the region reaches minus 40 degrees Celsius, and strong wind blows for over 200 days a year, the *Xinhua* report said.

In 2016, Xi bestowed special honours on a PLA military battalion posted in Tibet for its “outstanding performance in safeguarding borders”.

Xi, who heads the Central Military Commission (CMC) - the overall command authority of the PLA, signed orders to give honorary titles for the battalion in 2016.

“Troop 77656 is now titled as a ‘model plateau battalion’ for its outstanding performance in safeguarding borders, ensuring stability and helping disaster relief,” the state-run *Xinhua* news agency had said in a report in August 2016.

The model plateau battalion is reportedly one of the six battalions functioning under the Tibet Military Area Command.

China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of South Tibet, which is firmly rejected by India. The India-China border dispute covers the 3,488-km Line of Actual Control (LAC).

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	UHBVN	BANKING OF POWER DURING NOV 2021 TO SEPT 2022 WHEREIN HPCC SHALL SUPPLY 500 MW RTC POWER DURING THE PERIOD 01.11.2021 TO 31.03.2022. THE RETURN PERIOD SHALL BE 16.06.2022 TO 30.09.2022.	15.09.2021 27.09.2021	Rs. 30000/- per MW per month of quantum offered	uhbvno.org.in, etenders.hry.nic.in	9357886789 cehppcc@uhbvno.org.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in

RO NO. 4691

Govt to check land records before paddy procurement

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a first, the Centre has decided to cross check land records before the procurement of paddy from next month in a bid to ensure the MSP reaches farmers and not traders, Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said on Monday.

Most procuring States, barring Assam and Uttarakhand as well as Jammu and Kashmir, are ready and have also integrated digital land records with the Centre's nodal procurement agency Food Corporation of India (FCI) for this purpose, he told reporters.

Asserting that this new mechanism is in the interest of farmers, Pandey said the crop

cultivated by farmers whether in their own land or in rented land will be procured by the Government.

"It is not necessary for farmers to own the land or not. If farmers have cultivated any land, that will be procured," he said.

The whole idea is to cross check how much crop has been cultivated in what area and accordingly procure it, he said, adding this is where digital land records integrated centrally with FCI will help during the procurement process.

The main objective behind this mechanism is that the government procures the crop from genuine farmers and not from traders.

According to the Secretary,

"most states including Punjab are in complete readiness."

Every state wants farmers to benefit from the procurement process and not the traders. This mechanism will ensure the minimum support price (MSP) reaches farmers and not traders, he said.

Many states like Uttar Pradesh and Odisha had already integrated their land records, while some states had not done and they are doing this year, he added.

Agriculture Secretary Sanjay Agarwal, who was also present in the media briefing, said the Government's intention is to ensure actual farmers get the benefit of MSP procurement, which the government has increased substantially in the last five years.

Retail inflation eases to 5.3% in August as food prices soften

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Subdued prices of food items like vegetables pulled down retail inflation for the third month in a row to 5.3 per cent in August, within the RBI's comfort zone.

While the Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based retail inflation declined to 5.3 per cent in August from 6.69 per cent in the same month a year ago, food inflation dipped at a much faster pace to 3.11 per cent from 9.05 per cent in August 2020.

The food inflation was also lower than 3.96 per cent in preceding month of July.

Retail inflation, which rose sharply to 6.3 per cent in May from 4.23 per cent in April, has been on a downward trajectory since then.

It was 6.26 per cent in June and 5.59 per cent in July this year.

The Reserve Bank, which mainly takes into account retail

inflation to decide the monetary policy every two months, has been tasked by the government to keep it at 4 per cent, with a tolerance band of 2 per cent on either side.

As per the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on Monday, inflation in 'vegetables' and 'cereals and products' contracted by 11.68 per cent and 1.42 per cent, respectively.

However, the rate of price rise was 33 per cent in the 'oils and fats' segment in August 2021 over the year-ago month.

In order to control rising edible oil prices during the festival season, the government recently slashed the base custom duties on palm, soyabean and sunflower oils. The move, industry said, could bring down retail prices by ₹ 4-5 per litre.

'Fuel and light' continued to be pocket heavy for consumers with an inflation print of 12.95 per cent last month.

Jet Airways to start domestic ops from Q1CY22

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Jet Airways is all set to resume domestic operations from Q1 of 2022, said Jalan Kalrock Consortium, the successful resolution applicant of the airline.

Accordingly, the existing Air Operator Certificate (AOC) is under process for revalidation. In a statement, the consortium on Monday said it is working with relevant authorities and airport coordinators on slot allocation, required airport infrastructure, and night parking."Jet Airways 2.0 aims at restarting domestic operations by Q1-2022, and short haul international operations by Q3 or Q4 2022," said Murari Lal Jalan, Lead Member of the Jalan Kalrock Consortium and the proposed Non-Executive Chairman of Jet Airways."Our plan is to have 50 plus aircraft in 3 years and 100 plus in 5 years which also fits perfectly well with the short-term and long-term business plan of the consortium. The aircraft are being selected based on competitive long term leasing solutions."

India Inc sees 219 deals in August worth \$ 8.4 bn: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Deal activity witnessed a handsome growth in August at USD 8.4 billion, on the back of a healthy jump both in volumes and sizes, a report said on Monday.

There were 219 deals during the month, which was the highest since 2005, and double that of the year-ago August 2020 period when the country was coming out of a national lockdown, consultancy firm Grant Thornton Bharat said.

However, when compared with the preceding month of July, the transaction activity shows mixed results.

Deals were up 21 per cent by volume, but lower by 36 per cent in values on the back of a six-times drop in merger and

acquisition (M&A) activity, the report said.

A bulk of the deals in August came from private equity and venture capital funds, who invested USD 7.6 billion across 182 deals driven mainly by high value investments in Indian companies and unicorns, supported by confidence in recovery, lucrative opportunities in the start-up space and promising entrepreneurial talent, it said.

"As improvement in industrial indicators and external demand unfold, we hope economic activities would normalise in the coming months driven by pent-up demand, ongoing vaccination drive, support from policy mix and a resurgence in global growth," its partner Shanthi Vijetha said.

August saw total M&A transaction value at USD 867 million across 37 deals, as opposed to August 2020 that witnessed 30 transactions with values aggregating to USD 908 million, it said, pointing that unicorns such as Byju's, Unacademy and Dream Sports sealed some of them.

The star sector of the month continued to be tech, followed by education, pharmaceutical and energy sectors. The bulk of the deals were in IT solutions, data analytics, cleantech, pharmaceuticals, e-commerce, consumer retail, digital healthcare, fin-tech and ed-tech companies, whose products and services have seen strong demand during the pandemic, it said.

Spike in overdues impacts NBFC performance in Q1 FY2022

IANs ■ MUMBAI

After witnessing an uptick in AQ3 FY2021 and Q4 FY2021, disbursements for non-banks declined again in Q1 FY2022, as expected, and was down by about 55% on a sequential Q-o-Q basis.

According to analysis by ICRA while disbursements revived quite sharply in July 2021 on the back of the pent-up demand, sustainability of the same would depend on the broader macro-economic indicators.

Given this subdued disbursements and portfolio run-down in the absence of any moratorium like in Q1 FY2021.

The asset under management (AUM) for NBFC-segment shrunk in Q1 FY2022, while the HFC AUM remained flat.

KYC frauds: RBI cautions public not to share account details, passwords with unidentified agencies

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Monday cautioned people against frauds in the name of KYC updation and advised them not to share key information like account details or passwords with unidentified persons or agencies.

In a release, the RBI said it has been receiving complaints/reports about customers falling prey to frauds being perpetrated in the name of KYC updation.

"The usual modus operandi in such cases include receipt of unsolicited communication, such as, calls, SMSs, emails, etc., by customer urging him/her to share certain personal details, account / login details/ card information, PIN, OTP, etc. Or install some unauthorised/unverified application for KYC updation using a link provided in the communication," it said.

Such communications are

also reported to carry threats of account freeze, block or closure.

Once the customer shares information over call/message/unauthorised application, fraudsters get access to his/her account, the central bank noted.

"Members of public are hereby cautioned not to share account login details, personal information, copies of KYC documents, card information, PIN, password, OTP, etc. With unidentified persons or agencies," RBI said.

Also, such details should not be shared through unverified or unauthorised websites or applications. In case they receive any such requests, customers should get in touch with their bank.

The RBI further said that while the Regulated Entities (REs) are required to undertake periodic updation of KYC, this process has been simplified to a large extent.

DELHI TOURISM & TPT. DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD. 18-A, DDA SCO COMPLEX, DEFENCE COLONY, NEW DELHI-110024

Recruitment Notice
Applications are invited from the eligible officers on deputation basis from the eligible officers of Central/ State Government/ Autonomous bodies for the following posts:
Chief Manager (Level-10), Manager & Manager (Finance) (Level-11)
Dy. Manager (Level-10), Assistant Manager (Level-7)
Details of eligibility criteria, number of vacancies can be seen on DTTCDC's website www.delhitourism.gov.in
Complete application shall reach DTTCDC by 22.10.2021.

General Manager
Sd/-
VEENA VERMA
Deputy Manager (Personnal)
Delhi Tourism & Tpt. Dev.Corpn Ltd.
(A Govt. Undertaking)

DIP/Shabdarth/0301/21-22

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform you all that on 18th July 2021, Party has expelled the primary membership of Shri Shahnawaz Chowdhary, Shri Rahul Parcha, Shri Anupam Sharma, Shri Sunil Kumar Baliyan, Shri Krishnendu Chatterjee, Shri Harpreet Singh Saini and Shri Rajeev Singh Kushwaha. Now Akhil Bhartiya Parivar Party is not responsible for any act done in future by the above said persons on behalf of Akhil Bhartiya Parivar Party in and/or under party name and banner.

WESTERN RAILWAY
Various Sections in Chhotaudepur-Dhar Section on Vadodara Division
Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer (Construction), Western Railway, Vadodara invites E-tender as per details given below : **Tender Notice No. & Date** : TR-C-3-2021-22, dated : 09.09.2021. **Work & Location** : Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 25 KV AC OHE of Chhotaudepur-Dhar Section on Vadodara Division of Western Railway (Phase-I, RKM 72). **Approx. Cost of work:** ₹ 17,01,66,120/- **EMD** : Nil. **Date of Uploading of Tender** : 09.09.2021. **Date & Time of Submission** : 06.10.2021 up to 15.00 hrs. **Date & Time of Opening** : 06.10.2021 at 15.30 hrs. please visit our website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> to download the tender document, corrigendum and further details. 0410

Dr. Virender Bhati
National Organizer
Akhil Bhartiya Parivar Party
Regd. Office: A-37, Pocket-11, G/F, Jasola,
Janta Flat, New Delhi-110025, # 93290118260

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National Yuva Cooperative Society Ltd
Regd Office : 209, 2nd Floor , A2/B, Vardhman Janak Market
Janakpuri, New Delhi – 110058, Phone: 011-25331063
E-mail: regdoffice.nycslimited@gmail.com, Website: www.nycsindia.com

NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that **20th Annual Representative General Body Meeting (RGB) of National Yuva Cooperative Society Ltd. will be held on 30th September 2021 at 3:00pm** at National Cooperative Union of India, 3August Kranti Marg, New Delhi–110016. **All the Members of the RGB and Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies,** are requested to participate in the meeting. Detailed Agenda of the meeting can be viewed in the website: www.nycsindia.com
Date : 14th September 2021 **Dr. Umesh Londhe**
Place: New Delhi **Chief Executive Officer (Hon.) NYCS Ltd.**

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, WATER RESOURCES DIVISION I BARAN
क्रमांक / EEW/R/ DIV. 1st/Baran/NI/T/2021-22/1459 **Date 08-9-2021**
E-NIT No.-07/2021-22
Bids for (1) Renovation & Development of Area Near Ganesh ji Talab Bhatwara Tehsil Mangrol Dist. Baran, Part (A) Building, Horticulture & Protection work (Rs. 294.98 lac) & (2) Renovation & Development of Area Near Ganesh ji Talab Bhatwara Tehsil Mangrol Dist. Baran, Part (B) Boundary wall & Road Development Work (Rs. 292.45 Lac) (3) वाहनचलई, बमूलिया गावली, दुमारी, जीकरीया से अन्ना की राक बमोरी खाकी नाले का पत्राईकरण का कार्य (294.08Lac) are invited from interested bidders (registered in appropriate class) from 10.09.2021 (9:30 AM) to 03.10.2021 till 18:00 Hr. Others particulars, terms & conditions may be seen on the procurement portal eproc.rajashtan.gov.in, spp.rajashtan.nic.in, dipronline.rajashtan.gov.in and www.water.rajashtan.gov.in.
Sd/-
(Satyendra Pareek)
Executive Engineer,
Water Resources Division I Baran

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)

S.N.	N.I.T.No.	128-W/269/O.E.T.-21-22-NRCH-05
1	Name of work with its location	Annual Zone work of Central Hospital for the period ending on 30.06.2022 in the section of SSE/WN/RCH under ADEN/RCH. Definition Of Similar Work : - - Any Civil work other than track work.
2	Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 7999974.99
3	Completion period of work	12 Months
4	Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender	Upto 15.00 hrs on 08.10.2021 Opening of tender at 15.00 hrs. On 08.10.2021
5	Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in

128-W/269/O.E.T.-21-22-NRCH-05 Dated : 13.09.2021 2047/2021

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male **Age:** Approx 53 years, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Height:** 5'7", **Built:** Thin, **Face:** Oval, **Hair & Beared:** White & Grey, was wearing White Shirt and Sky Blue Pant, was found in unconscious condition on 09.09.2021 at Footpath along the wall of Panchkuian Road Metro Rail, in front of Gate No. 6 LHMC Hospital, New Delhi. He was brought to LHMC Hospital, where doctor declared him brought dead vide MLC No. 1804/21. In this regard a **DD No. 55A, Dated 09.09.2021, has been registered at P.S. Mandir Marg, New Delhi.** His dead body has been preserved in Lady Harding Hospital, New Delhi mortuary for 72 Hours. Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

SHO
P.S. Mandir Marg, New Delhi
Ph.: 011-23364100, 23366730

DP/328/NDD/2021

SEARCH FOR MISSING BOY

General public is here by informed that one boy **Namely:** Sonu, **S/o** Shri Chandi Ram, **R/o** H. No. 10333, Library Road, Azad Market, Delhi. **Age:** 13-14 years (as in 2015), **Height:** 5'1", **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Round, **Built:** Strong, **Wearing:** Checked Light Yellow Shirt, Black Pant and Black Slippers in feet has been missing/kidnapped since 07.12.2015 in the area of PS. Bara Hindu Rao, Delhi.

In this regard a FIR No. 199/2015, U/s 363 dated 11.12.2015 has been registered at P.S. Bara Hindu Rao, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this boy but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this boy kindly inform to the following.

SHO
P.S. Bara Hindu Rao, Delhi
Ph. 011-23528060, 8750870125
DP/1488/N/2021

E-Mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
Fax: 011-24368639 **Ph. 011-24368638, 24368641**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005


The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Sanjay Kapoor, Airvoice Aviation Pvt Ltd, Anamika Kapoor, Sanjay Kapoor, B-241 Sector-26, Uttar Pradesh, A/c:- LBDEL00002448345	House No-s 569, Front Portion 3rd Floor, Greater Kailash Part II, Delhi	08/07/2021 Rs. 2,88,748/-	31/01/2021
2.	Chandra Mohan Negi, Sunita Negi, C/o Op Sharma F-2/1 Gali No-1, F Block liird Futta Road Molar Band Extn Badapur New Delhi, A/c No:-LBDEL00003193345	Flat No.1702, 17th Floor, K2 Tower, Eco Village-1, Plot No.08, Sector-1, Gautam Budh Nagar, Greater Noida Uttar Pradesh	28/06/2021, Rs. 13,90,679/-	09/01/2021
3.	Anil Sharma, Ruchika Sharma, C 88 Ganesh Nagar, Tilak Nagar, Delhi, Delhi, A/c:-LBDEL00003837285	H No C-88, (old No 58) Block - 4 Upper Ground Floor Ganesh Nagar Tilak Nagar Delhi 110058	25/06/2021, Rs. 6,84,973.4/-	31/01/2021
4.	Ashok Kumar Pandey, Shivi Agarwal, Falt-14059 Tower-04, Block A GH-7 Near Abes Engg College, Uttar Pradesh Near Abes Engg, College, A/c No:-LBGUR00002438999	Flat No 1003, Floor 10, Tower T2, Sec-88 Rps Auria, Faridabad, Haryana	13/07/2021 Rs. 71,98,264/-	31/01/2021
5.	Rajmee Baruah Sudarshan, Sudarshan Ramakrishna Chettur, Bg- 1- 133 SFS Flats, Paschim Vihar, S o West New Delhi, A/c No:-LBGUR00004375337	Flat No 303, 3rd Floor, Tower West End-6, Vatika-Turning Point, Sector 88-B, Gurgaon Haryana	28/06/2021 Rs. 2,36,386/-	06/03/2021
6.	Mandeep Singh Nain, Poonam Singh Nain, Flat No C1/601 Plot No GH-01, Sec-16B Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, A/c No:-LBGUR00004738858	Flat No-1801 18th Floor, Tower - H, Future Estate, Sector-1 Greater Noida, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	13/07/2021 Rs. 48,33,044/-	31/01/2021
7.	Rajeev Gautam, Parmila Devi, House No-1, Sagar Enclave Part-3, Surat Nagar Ph-1, Haryana, A/c No:-LBGUR00004976779	Flat No-5701, The Park Block-d, In Riff, The Park, Sector-54 Village Shahpur, Bhiwadi, Rajasthan	13/07/2021 Rs. 30,29,841.74/-	31/01/2021
8.	Brijmohan Singh Rana, Suman Rana, Yashpal Singh Rana, House No N82 1st Floor, Mayfield Garden, Haryana, A/c No:-LBGUR00005144081	Flat No E- 13/2, 13th Floor Pilot Court, Group Housing Scheme, Indian Airlinsociety Esal Tower MG Road , Sec 28 Plot No N-82 1st Floor Mayfield Garden Sec 50, Gurgaon, Haryana	13/07/2021 Rs. 2,69,86,613/-	31/01/2021
9.	Vijay Kumar, Ashwani Kumar, C-43, Surya Ngr, Ghaziabad, A/c:-LBNOD00001027565	Flat No-G-2, Ground Floor, Plot No-43, Block-C, Tha, Surya Nagar Sector 7, Ghaziabad 201010	25/06/2021, Rs. 8,95,278.56/-	31/01/2021
10.	Vijay Kumar, Ashwani Kumar, C-43, Surya Ngr, Ghaziabad, A/c:-LBNOD00001066768	Flat No-G-2, Ground Floor, Plot No-43, Block-C, Tha, Surya Nagar Sector 7, Ghaziabad 201010	25/06/2021, Rs. 2,47,864.05/-	31/01/2021
11.	Pankaj Kumar, Ranjana Kumari, A 3/ 406, 9, I P Extension, atparganj, Ekta Garden Near Mother Dasi, New Delhi, A/c No:-LBNOD00001828164	Flat No.837/GC-05, 8th Floor, Tower- E, GC-05/05th Avenue, Plot No. GH-01, Sector-4, Greater Delhi Delhi, A/c No:-LBNOD00001828164	28/06/2021, Rs. 11,36,976.9/-	04/01/2021
12.	Sandeep Sethia, Romi Navin Jain, D-26 South Extn-2, Delhi, A/c No:-LBNOD00001900526	Flat No-KRH0181404, Wish Town, Krescent Homes Jaypee Greens, Sector -129, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	13/07/2021 Rs.3836174/-	31/01/2021
13.	Sandeep Sethia, Romi Navin Jain, D-26 South Extn-2, Delhi, A/c No:-LBNOD00001900774	Flat No-KRH0181401, Wishtown, Krescent HomesJaypee Greens, Sector -129 Noida, Uttar Pradesh	13/07/2021 Rs. 38,43,425/-	31/01/2021
14.	Ajay Srivastava, Shobha Srivastava, K-96 Sector-12, Noida G.B. Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, A/c No:-LBNOD00001925644	Flat No-1603, 15th Floor, Tower-129, Lotus Zingplot No-GH-01/A Sector-168, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	13/07/2021 Rs. 35,75,810/-	31/01/2021
15.	Rinky Rani, Vijay Kumar Gupta, Lxentech, E-71-72, Lower Ground Floor, Amar Colony, Lajpat Nagar-4, A/c No:-LBNOD00001957500	Flat No-KRH0020004, Krescent Homes Jaypee Greens Noida, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	13/07/2021 Rs. 67,94,356.6/-	12/01/2021
16.	Madan Mohan Sharma, Sekha Sharma, Top In Town Caterers, Sector No 22 Village Chaura, Near Esi, New Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, A/c No:-LBNOD00001975058	Flat No 1103, 11 Th Floor, Tower 11, Unitech Habitat Plot No-9 Sector PI II, Greater Nodia, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	13/07/2021 Rs. 45,41,786/-	31/01/2021
17.	Aman Vaid, Shanel Vaid, 12 E Fruit Garden Nh-5, Nit, Haryana, A/c No:-LBNOD00001984439	Flat No 3004 30th Floor, Tower Gdi 07 Sector 133, Garden Isles Jaypee Greens, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	13/07/2021 Rs. 46,58,833.96/-	31/01/2021
18.	Jagjeet Singh Luthra, Rishu Luthra, Kuldeep Kaur, F-22, Sector-39, G B Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, A/c No:-LBNOD00002027761	Flat No-KRH0012004, Krescent Homes Jaypee Greens Noida, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	13/07/2021 Rs. 62,82,090/-	31/01/2021
19.	Saurabh Gupta, 0, Avانش Kumar Dixit, House No-251 Ground Floor, Shakti Khand-4 Indrapuram Nr Mandir, Uttar Pradesh, A/c No:-LBNOD00002137034	FLAT NO-1804 18th Floor, Tower-F Pan Oasis, Plot No Gh-02, Sector-70 Noida, Uttar Pradesh	13/07/2021 Rs. 69,96,258/-	31/01/2021
20.	Ashutosh Palwal, 0, C- 3/168 Sec -31, Uttar Pradesh, A/c No:-LBNOD00002138178	Flat No-1502, 14th Floor, Tower-t, Prateek Wisteria Plot No-GH-01, Sector-77, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	13/07/2021 Rs. 35,95,954/-	31/01/2021
21.	Intown Realtors Pvt Ltd, Krishan Kumar Setia, Sapna Setia, Intown Realtors Pvt Ltd, A-14 1st Floor Sector-57, A/c No:-LBNOD00002201318	Flat No C2-1802 17th Floor Tower C-2, Victory-ace Pocket -2, Plot No Gh 02 Sector 143, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	13/07/2021 Rs. 48,64,676/-	31/01/2021
22.	Nitin Midha, Deepika Khurana, G1, Ground Floor, Po No-18 Gali No-17 Hindon Vihar, Sector-49, Uttar Pradesh, A/c No:-LBNOD00002214748	Prop 1-Flat No-D-133 & Prop 2- D-134 13th Floor Tower-d, Lumbini Terrace Homes Village Babupur Sector-109, Gurgaon, Haryana	13/07/2021 Rs. 2,03,97,205/-	31/01/2021
23.	Sanjay Agarwal, H C Agrawal & Associates, Renu Agarwal, H C Agrawal And Associates, B 3/17 Basement, Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi, A/c No:-LBNOD00002286281	Flat No 2803 28th Floor, Tower-O, CB04 Jaypee Greens Orchards Sector-128, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	13/07/2021 Rs. 87,06,410/-	31/01/2021
24.	Anshuman Chandra, Surabhi Thapa, Rohit Gupta, A 55 Block A , South Extension Part II, Delhi, A/c No:-LBNOD00002386314	Flat No 1602, 16th Floor, Tower G3, The Grand Sector-92, Gurgaon, Haryana	13/07/2021 Rs. 73,95,361/-	31/01/2021
25.	Amit Katyal, Renu Katyal, 404 Godrej Woodshan Estate Ebonj Wings Abe Liary Road, Dhebbal Banglore, Karnataka, A/c No:-LBNOD00002396861	Bungalows No-g Ground Floor Tower-VS-09, Rise Sky Bungalows Gh-02 Sec-41, Faridabad, Haryana	13/07/2021 Rs.1,97,46, 637.99/-	30/09/2020
26.	Gaurav Arora, Sweety Arora, Puneet Arora, WZ-102 Block-WZRamgarh Colony Basai Darapur Delhi, Delhidelhi, A/c No:-LBNOD00003053237	Flat No C-1504, Hawelia Valenova Park, Plot No.CP-GH-05A, Sector Techzone IV, Greater Noida Uttar Pradesh	28/06/2021, Rs. 21,37,257/-	31/12/2020
27.	Ajay Verma, Vishal Verma, A- 75, I St Floor, Preet Vihar, Delhi, A/c No:-LBDEL00001932418	Flat No-102, Tower-KRH07, Krm070102, Krescent Homes, Jay		

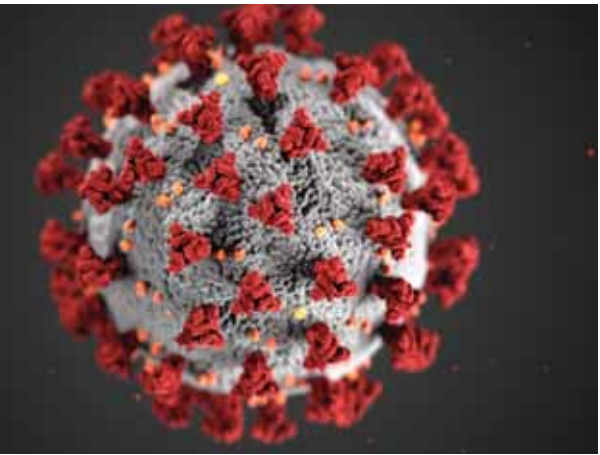
DOCYARD

DR VIDYA JHA

Associate Professor & Consultant (In-Charge), Cytogenetics lab, Assistant Medical Administrator
AMRITA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, KOCHI



Be better protected against COVID-19



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines endemic as the constant presence and/or usual prevalence of a disease or infectious agent in a population within a geographic area. This observed baseline or the endemic level of the disease is not necessarily the desired level, which may in fact be zero. The disease may continue to occur at this level indefinitely, in case of lack of any intervention and assuming that the disease level is not high enough to exhaust the entire pool of susceptible persons. Therefore, this baseline level is often regarded as the expected level of the disease in the population.

Because of the difference in timing of achieving herd immunity in various populations and nations and the uncertainty in duration of protection from COVID-19 vaccines, it is likely that some measures such as booster vaccines might be required indefinitely. SARS-CoV-2 will continue to exist. Even when a country reaches herd immunity, ongoing surveillance, booster vaccines, and potentially other measures may be required. As of now, Delta variant has effectively shifted the overall herd immunity out of reach in most countries at least in the short term.

India would like to reach endemicity. But it remains as an at risk country for significant waves of the disease. The overall immunity is low because large part of the Indian population is not yet fully vaccinated

So far, India has not been able to achieve herd immunity and a more realistic epidemiological endpoint appears to be when COVID-19 can be managed as an endemic disease. However, the biggest overall challenge is the emergence of a significant new variant that is more transmissible, more likely to cause hospitalisations and deaths, and or more capable of infecting vaccinated people. The existing vaccines have not been able to prevent infection from the Delta variant. Also, serial blood tests suggest that immunity may wane relatively fast.

This has prompted some developed countries to start offering booster doses to high-risk populations or planning for their rollout.

Therefore, many countries including India would like to reach a stage of endemic COVID-19. But India remains as an at risk country for significant waves of the disease. The overall immunity is low, owing to the fact that large part of the Indian population is not yet fully vaccinated. The possible time frame for India to manage COVID-19 as an endemic disease is also less clear. There has to be a shift in focus of public-health efforts from managing COVID-19 case counts to managing severe diseases and deaths when the Delta driven wave of cases decline.

The challenges in reaching endemicity as the endpoint continue to be the emergence of new variants that evade vaccine-mediated immunity. They frequently cause severe disease in the vaccinated persons and are highly transmissible, waning of natural and vaccine-mediated immunity over time, rolling out vaccine booster doses quickly enough to maintain immunity and defining an acceptable burden of disease (for example, setting different targets for disease burden in vaccinated and unvaccinated populations). The biggest task will be determining what burden of disease is low enough to warrant lifting of public-health restrictions.

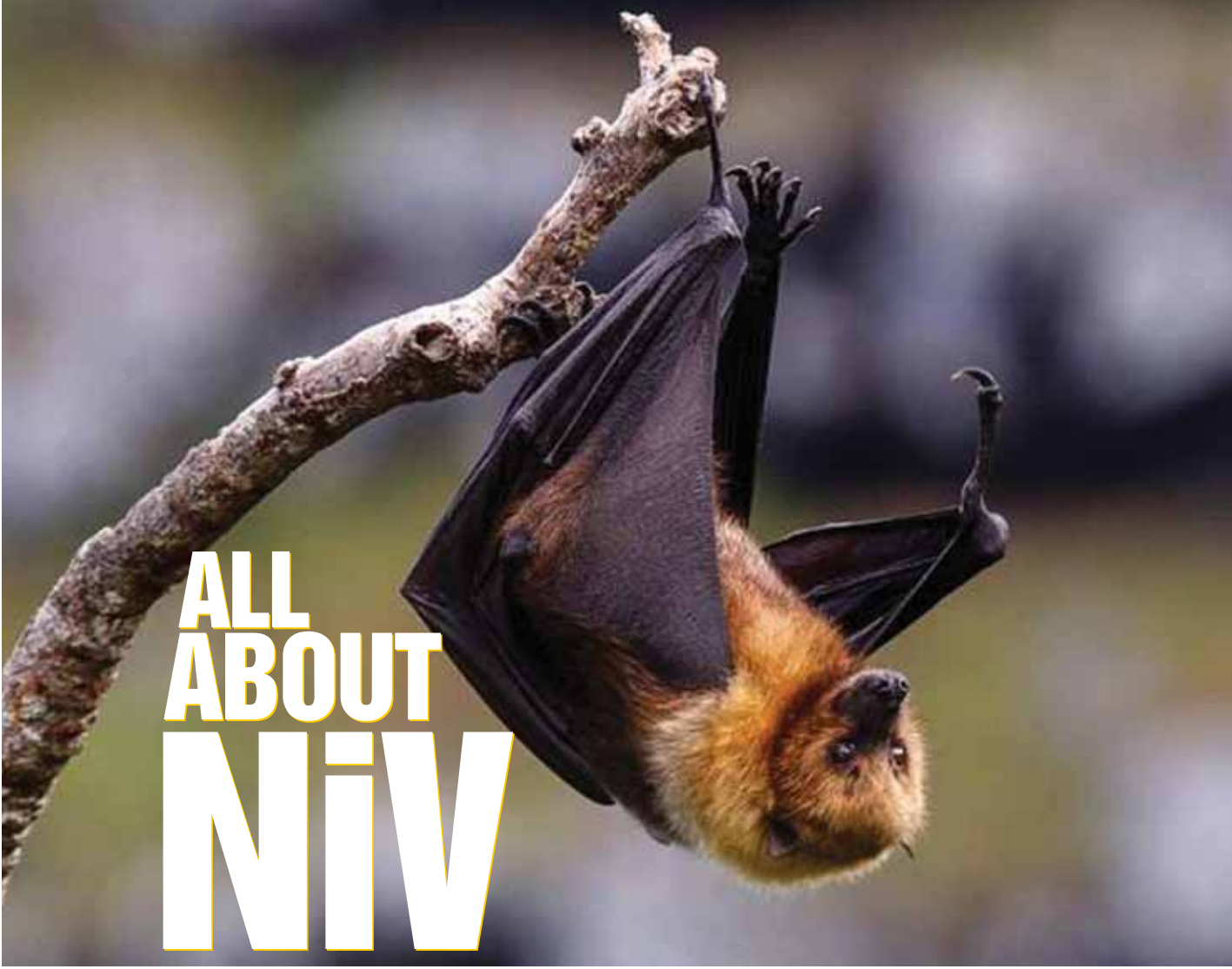
However, with time, against all odds, we will be better protected against hospitalisation and mortality due to COVID-19 owing to more vaccination coverage, natural immunity from prior infection, booster doses, full approval of vaccines in India and authorisation of vaccines for children.

SUMMERCOOLER

MUSKMELON SEEDS: We usually throw away seeds encased in fruits. A lot of fruits' seeds can be consumed in different ways in our food and one such fruit with seeds that has countless health benefits is melon.

It is a great hydrator for your body and skin and keeps the heat at bay. Carrying a good amount of fibres, it is also rich in magnesium, vitamin A and phosphorus that helps fastening the process of losing weight. Maintaining good gut health is equally important and these seeds help clean your gut and also act like a dewormer. Screen fatigue during these trying times can be of great

concern and we all should take proper care of our eyes. Lutein and zeaxanthin are two carotenoids present in seeds, which works wonders for your eyesight. Melon seeds after being taken out from the fruit and dried in sunshine for a few days can be eaten as snack or used as a garnishing element in sweet dishes.



The Nipah virus is again taking rounds after a death of a 12-year-old boy was reported in Kerala's Kozhikode district. How worried should we be? SUPRIYA RAMESH talks to experts to know more about the virus

Nipah virus (NiV) was first recognised in 1999 during an outbreak among pig farmers in Malaysia. In India, its first outbreak was reported in Kozhikode, a district of Kerala, which has spread via Bangladesh. While the first case of NiV was reported three years back, recent news is suggestive of its third outbreak since then.

NiV infection is a zoonotic illness that is transmitted to people from animals and the primary source of the NiV are bats. It can also be transmitted to humans either through contaminated food or can be directly contagious. "While it was also noted that the virus had a tendency to severely affect pigs, consumption of virus infected pork is another attributable factor," Dr Ashutosh Shukla, Senior Director - Internal Medicine & Medical Advisor says.

Even though it is a known disease, the reappearance of the virus is a matter of concern and thus all possible preventive measures need to be taken before it engulfs the planet just like the COVID pandemic. "In severe infections, a person may die on the spot, but other symptoms may include acute respiratory illness, vomiting, headache and neck stiffness, and the complications increase when the virus starts affecting the brain and the nervous system, leading to swelling in the brain and eventually death," says Shukla.

According to the World Health

Organisation (WHO), Nipah virus infection in humans causes a range of clinical presentations, from asymptomatic infection (subclinical) to acute respiratory infection and fatal encephalitis.

NiV is primarily diagnosed through Polymerase Chain reaction (PCR) as done in cases of dengue or other viral ailments. Early detection and monitoring is the key to prevent complications. Currently, there are no licensed treatments available for NiV infection and it is limited to supportive care, including rest, hydration, and treatment of symptoms as they occur.

WHO reported that initial signs and symptoms of Nipah virus infection are nonspecific, and the diagnosis is often not suspected at the time of presentation. This can hinder accurate diagnosis and creates challenges in outbreak detection, effective and timely infection control measures, and outbreak response activities. In addition, the quality, quantity, type, timing of clinical sample collection and the time needed to transfer samples to the laboratory can affect the accuracy of laboratory results.

The case fatality rate is estimated at 40% to 75%. This rate can vary by outbreak depending on local capabilities for epidemiological surveillance and clinical management. "Usually the infection of Nipah virus occurs through the contaminated bodily fluids. In that case, the infectivity rate is not very high but if it is not maintained in the local

THE ILLNESS INITIALLY PRESENTS AS 3-14 DAYS OF FEVER AND HEADACHE, AND OFTEN INCLUDES SIGNS OF RESPIRATORY ILLNESS, SUCH AS COUGH, SORE THROAT, AND DIFFICULTY IN BREATHING

spread, it might be of great concern," says Dr Ankita Baidhya, Consultant, Infectious Diseases.

The symptoms include high fever, vomiting, headache and neck stiffness and the complications increase when the virus starts affecting the brain and the nervous system. Infection can cause mild to severe disease including swelling of the brain leading to death. Symptoms typically appear in 4-14 days following exposure to the virus. "The illness initially presents as 3-14 days of fever and headache, and often includes signs of respiratory illness, such as cough, sore throat, and difficulty in breathing. A phase of brain swelling may follow, where symptoms can include drowsiness, disorientation, and mental confusion, which can rapidly progress to coma within 24-48 hours," Shukla tells you.

Like in any other disease, early detection and monitoring is a must. And even though communication of the virus through humans is less common, it is more important to follow precautionary steps to prevent it from spreading. If you are living somewhere a lot of bats are found, you should be extra careful. In Kerala, where a lot of bad population is there, people should be careful if any bat in the vicinity is found dead. "If people are reporting fever and headache and some sort of brain infection symptoms like forgetfulness, immediate testing should be done," Baidhya says.

CANNED OXYGEN TO THE RESCUE



Keeping a portable bottled Oxygen at home can be as important as a band-aid in the first aid kit.

ALANKAR SAXENA tells you how they can also be very helpful in our day-to-day life situations

That first-aid kit lying in your bathroom vanity, how often is it being used beyond the thermometer, antiseptic liquid/creams, OTC medicines and band aids? For a majority of households and even workplaces, first-aid kits comprise these few things with the sole purpose of using them to treat injuries and ailments and reduce their severity and chances of infection. However, to be precise, first aid is basically the immediate care given to a sick or injured person while waiting for medical care. So, why no immediate action is being taken for life-threatening emergencies that are accompanied by low tissue oxygen?

The most significant aspect of a first aid practice is 'Preservation of life', which is possible if there is a consistent circulation of air in the body, without any blocked airways. Blocked airways can lead to brain damage occurring in a matter of just a few minutes. Dangerous isn't it? Of late, India has been in the news for its severely polluted cities. In fact, as per the 'World Air Quality Report, 2020' prepared by Swiss organisation, IQAir, 22 of the world's 30 most polluted cities are in India, with Delhi being ranked as the most polluted capital city globally. While numerous policies and alternate ways of transport and living are being introduced to curb pollution. But there's still an urgent need for people to take serious precautions on a household level.

A polluted environment is a red flag for any city as it can impact its weather. It clearly indicates that the oxygen in that air is not fit for breathing and can substantially disturb your well-being. Simply recall the horrors of waking up to a thick layer of smog covering the sky, travelling in the same atmosphere for work or running errands and even letting the children and the elderly citizens breathe that air. No sooner, breathing issues are bound to attack almost every member of a family. In such scenarios, a first aid kit equipped with portable bottled oxygen can be a saviour for every household. During an emergency, while waiting for medical assistance, a puff from the portable bottled oxygen can help in maintaining the oxygen outputs to the body and organs. Considering the absence of pure oxygen is becoming a new normal in our daily lives, the old adage of "Prevention is better than cure" makes complete sense. Thus, keeping a portable bottled Oxygen at home can also be very helpful in our day-to-day life situations like shortness of breath, post-sickness recovery, recovery after any physically exhaustive activity like gymming, running etc. Not just that, portable bottled oxygen is also a very commonly used performance enhancer that professional athletes use during games. The World Health Organization (WHO) has already recommended oxygen therapy for adults with compromised breathing. The recommendation has acquired greater significance amid the pandemic with the COVID 19 virus causing life-threatening breathlessness in some cases due to depleting levels of oxygen in the blood flow.

The writer is Co-Founder and CEO, UCS Wellness Pvt Ltd

DadiKaKehna

There are a lot of reasons why people lose their hair, it could be hormonal or it could be due to illness. ROSHANI DEVI shares home remedies that can help prevent the hairloss



Here is your solution to falling hair. Licorice is a herb that not only prevents your hair from damaging but also helps reduce hair loss. It can be used in a form of moisturiser by applying on the scalp to soothe and get rid of dry flakes. Natural licorice can be mixed with henna, which would help you get a silky texture after rinsing. With this, it will moisturise your hair just as it strengthens and repairs. Licorice with essential oils and hair clay also makes for some great masks for hair.

Ground some licorice root with a quarter tea-

spoon saffron to one cup milk to make a fine paste. Applying the paste twice a week and leaving it overnight on your scalp and hair length can help reduce hair fall.



Licorice root works to lessen a dry, scabbed or itchy scalp. But most importantly, licorice root gives way for your scalp to breathe and make your weak hair follicles strong, which is mostly the cause of hair loss in the first place. For enjoying instant results, applying weekly or consuming orally in the form of would tea.

'Strengthen healthcare'

Taking lessons from the ongoing pandemic and emphasising a once-in-a-century opportunity, countries of WHO South-East Asia Region adopted a Ministerial Declaration resolving to strengthen health system resilience to ensure health security, and achieve universal health coverage and Sustainable Development Goals for health.

"Strong health systems that are primary health care-oriented, and which leave no one behind, create populations that are healthier, more productive and financially secure. Resilient health systems are the bedrock of emergency preparedness and response, and ensure that when acute events occur, essential health services can be maintained," Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia, at a ministerial round table during the ongoing Seventy-Fourth Regional Committee meeting, said.

Through the Declaration adopted at the ministerial round table, Member countries committed to provide political leadership and accountability to

advance health security and progress towards universal health coverage and the health-related SDGs.

The Member countries resolved to reorient health systems towards comprehensive primary health care through increased public investments, as the foundation for strengthening both public health emergency capabilities and achievement of universal health coverage.

"The pandemic has highlighted the urgency and importance of investment in human resource for health, especially at the primary health care level, and the need for adequate supply of affordable, effective, quality and safe medical products to ensure an effective response to public health emergencies and to build resilient health systems," the Regional Director said.

To roll-out effective response for at-risk and affected communities, Member countries agreed to ensure integration of public health emergency and disaster risk management strategies, as well as strengthening surveillance and preparedness capacity at the primary health care level.

Member countries additionally resolved to accelerate integration of noncommunicable diseases including mental health, and other programmes, at the primary health care level, as well as establishing national quality standards for primary health care services and ensuring access to quality health services during the pandemic and recovery phase.

The Member countries further agreed to appropriately leverage the potential of traditional systems of medicine, while optimising innovations in digital health technologies.

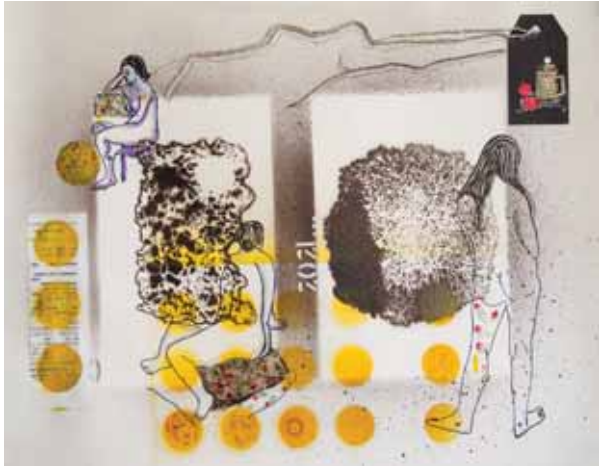
"Together we are stronger. Together we can build back better essential health services, for a fairer, healthier and more health-secure future for all, leaving no one behind," Khetrapal said.

INBRIEF

Check your mental health

Psymate has been conceptualized with the idea of offering evidence-based Psychiatry and Psychology services for mental health disorders with a personalised and integrative treatment approach. With the fundamental vision of offering patient centred comprehensive mental health care through state-of-the-art treatment protocols backed up by latest research and knowledge, the first Psymate Clinic was started at Noida.

In explaining this further Dr. Samant Darshi said, "It has always troubled me that individuals experiencing mental health concerns do not have a place that is essentially a one stop solution. This issue is further heightened by paucity of adequately trained mental health professionals and a lack of integrative approach to mental health care. Dearth of centers that provide holistic care makes it difficult for the patients to access all the services under the same roof. Some places limit themselves and provide only psychopharmacological treatments, some restrict their treatment purview to neuromodulation and the others only provide psychological interventions often overlooking important biological contributors."



Understanding femininity

Renowned artist SANTOSH JAIN talks about exploring womanhood artistically in a conversation with TANMAYA DAS

The concept of ‘womankind’ has evolved over-time. While generations across the world have defined feminine attributes sensitively, several women have shattered the glass ceiling to reconstruct the idea of feminism. Santosh Jain, who began her career in 1971 as a young printmaker, strongly showcases the beauty of women through her art. Baring her heart during a telephonic conversation, she shares that she has observed how the vulnerability of women has remained unchanged over the years.

Her signature artistic style in the section of the digital landscape, the *Solitude series* talks about how women as a group suffer through loneliness. Her digital painting on archival paper, titled *Malgudi days* talks about the unconditional love for family. A family develops a sense of security, love, and bond amongst one another. Acrylic on canvas, being titled as *Dream Come True* expresses a close bond that pets and children share with one another.

“There are numerous positive

and negative aspects of womanhood. For a mother or a wife, it is delightful. Womanhood is beautiful, but if she is a silent sufferer then it is an absolute nightmare,” she said. However, she adds, “Today, women are educated, as they have put their foot down for their rights. However, I strongly feel that the underlined story has remained unchanged, or maybe I am wrong.”

Distressed over the suffering of women, she feels empathetic over the pitiful circumstances that women are facing. “In the smallest village of Punjab or some other remote sections, I always see women suffering. I got sympathy and empathy with women; they are bread-winners, homemakers, who are suffering silently” she expressed.

Considering her work as the second language she shares her stories and her innermost thoughts. Looking back, she says, “I was a carefree self, least bothered by what is happening behind my back. I used to enjoy every small moment.” On being asked about

what has changed, she realises, “Today, I am a mother and I over-think everything, and maybe I am a storyteller in my painting. I have started assuming a lot of less relevant things.”

Her artworks are recognised extensively in prestigious artist associations — Group 8, Shilpi Chakra, Lalit Kala Akademi, Bombay Art Society, and All India Fine Arts & Crafts Society. Her family has always encouraged her to pursue her passion for the arts. Referring to her three beautiful daughters, she happily expresses, “My children are lovely. They know how I have brought them up, they feel it but they don’t say it, but they try their best to help me out with my passion. They say that now it is my moment, I should feel free and do my artwork the way I want. They are always standing behind me, all three daughters, including my sons-in-law.” Her creative ideas pop up out of nowhere. “Sometimes, maybe at 2 am, I get an idea and start working on it. Even if, I leave watercolors, or a painting; I get up, and look at it in

the morning”, she says thoughtfully.

Reflecting on how life has changed over the years, she chuckles after a long silence and talks about being slightly judgmental. She says, “There are some positive and negative changes in my life. Like I told you, when I was young, I was carefree and least bothered about *kisne kya kaha, kyu kaha, and kaise kaha* (who said what, why, and how someone can say like that). Now it hurts me if someone says, maybe I have reached a stage where I have decided that I am not going to get affected by anyone. But I am not going to harm anyone intentionally. That’s the motto of my life.”

Her love for photography never faded out. During her lockdown phase, she was engrossed in watercoloring but currently, she is engrossed in her digital artworks. To young artists, she advised all to have patience. She says, “We used to have a lot of patience and we would look up to our teachers. Today, I see that students start drawing in the first week, but

instead of finishing their artworks, they seek something new. The young generation has little patience in the fast-moving world. I feel that the base needs to be stronger, if you want to become an artist. If you have a goal, keep looking at the goal and hit the bull’s eye.”

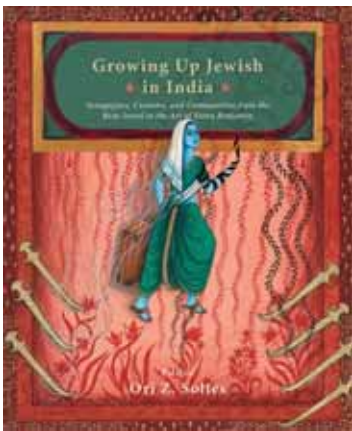
After studying arts for five years at Delhi College of Arts, she went to Amsterdam for two years. She expresses, “I went for a scholarship to Holland for two years. Life went on, even though, I got a job, but my family was my priority. Later on, I went for art education, I went to the college of arts as a visiting lecturer and then I got a job in DPS Vasant Kunj. Then, I started loving art education like anything.”

She conducted solo exhibitions in Paris and Amsterdam. Additionally, she exhibited her artworks in several group shows in New York, Australia, the UK, and India. The Cultural Department of Netherlands recognised her as an exceptional artist before she returned to India.

Home away from home

Growing Up Jewish In India juxtaposes the resilience of jews in India with the the help of artworks by the Indian-Jewish artist, SIONA BENJAMIN, says ORI Z SOLTES

Growing Up Jewish In India — Synagogues, Customs, And Communities From The Bene Israel To The Art Of Siona Benjamin is a double delectation. Put together by Ori Z Soltes, professor of Art History, Theology, Philosophy and Political History at Georgetown University, it’s an inspiring chronicle of the resilience of the Jewish community in India over the centuries and a tribute to the artwork of Siona Benjamin, who grew up in Mumbai’s Bene Israel community and whose extensive portfolio reflects her background of being born Jewish in a country that is predominantly Hindu and Muslim but also gives ample space to other religions to flourish.



“The book came about because of a desire to produce a more substantial work on the art of Siona Benjamin than I (or anyone else, for that matter) had written up to this point, because I have long admired her work and the multi-faceted ways in which it presents not only as beautiful, but offers a social agenda directed to improving the world. The book grew, however, to encompass the larger matter of the diverse Jewish community within a very diverse India, and the fact that such diversity placed it in a position to be welcoming to the Jewish communities who arrived on Indian shores at various times from various places,” shared Soltes in an interview.

“The book begins with a broad discussion of the arrival of Jews into South and East Asia, followed by a slightly narrower discussion about the religious history of India and within that of the Jews immigrating to India, followed by three essays that focus on the three major Indian Jewish communities, before arriving at a memoir by Siona and an analysis of her work. She was the inspiration and remains a central part of the overall volume,” he added.

The book is the outcome of intense research, of ‘many, many hours reading everything’ that Soltes could find about the Bene Israel, supplemented by questions to friends from that community.

“This book includes years of interest, study, and teaching and lecturing about India, about aspects of Jewish history, religion and culture, and about Jewish art and architecture and of course, writing and lecturing specifically about Siona’s work. This includes many years of studying and also teaching Sanskrit and Vedic (texts), providing me with more of a linguistic basis for my understanding than could be achieved simply in translation,” Soltes explained.

Benjamin’s work, he said, makes use of the visual heritage of India — Hindu elements, such as the imagery of Krishna as well as of Siva Nataraja; Moghul stylistic elements — and elements imported by the Moghuls from the Persian miniature tradition.

All this is combined together with elements that resonate from the Byzantine Christian tradition (such as her sometimes lavish use of gold leaf); and symbols, like the seven-branched candelabrum, that derive from the Jewish visual tradition — as well as concepts like ‘*Tikkun olam*’ (Hebrew for ‘repairing the world’).

“As such, her art reflects the reality of her life: growing up in Mumbai surrounded by Hindu and Muslim friends, going to Zoroastrian and Catholic schools and then weaving those visual and conceptual influences, together with elements of Bollywood and Amar Chitra Katha comic book imagery with pop art and other aspects of the American art scene with which she became intimate over the following three decades,” Soltes elaborated.

What was it like growing up Jewish in India?

“The Shabbat lights that my mother and father lit every Friday evening, the *shema* prayers that they taught me to recite, the need I felt to call my mother up and tell her

anything and everything in my life and the consolation I felt after telling her, is irreplaceable and will always stay with me. Her strong sense of belief in her Jewish values taught me that it was not necessary to be strictly observant in all ways but to just carry the essence of who I was always with me,” Benjamin writes in her 38-page memoir in the book.

“In my work and life I find it important to stress not just the uniqueness of my culture but to try and cultivate the specifics of my culture, and to try to connect with a diverse universe of people. My transcultural Jewish upbringing taught me to use these specifics, but also to universalise, so anyone and everyone can hopefully identify with my work. This is what I would transmit to my own daughter; it is the gift I got growing up Jewish in India,” she adds.

To what does Soltes ascribe the resilience of the Jewish community in India?

The resilience of the community is, I think, a function of two features in particular. One is that, as a global community, Jews have needed to learn how to be resilient over many centuries of more than frequent intolerance and sometimes very active persecution. In this respect the Indian Jewish community is similar to many other Jewish communities.

“However, the second element is India itself that, in its strong tendency to be open to varied perspectives on both humanity and divinity, due to its own religious and cultural traditions, afforded to its Jewish communities the opportunity to flourish. The only time Jews experienced anti-Semitism was in the brief period in Goa — when the Portuguese were in charge. Being a tiny minority, even within an accepting majority culture, Jews experienced challenges with respect to defining their identity, which pushed them to flourish in India,” Soltes explained.

He also noted that Indian Jews, most of whom currently live in Israel, “see themselves as having two complementary religious and cultural identities — India as their mother and Israel as their father”.

“With that in mind, members of that population maintain consistent contact with India and its now even smaller Jewish population. I don’t see any reason why that would change in the near future: the roadmap of the varied Jewish community is likely to continue along a landscape of maintaining a presence in India, even if that presence is accompanied, paradoxically, by their living for the most part elsewhere,” Soltes maintained.

Thus, in combining discussions of the Indian Jewish communities with Benjamin’s own story and an analysis of her artistic output — and in introducing these narratives within the larger story of Jews across eastern Asia — the book offers a unique verbal and visual portrait of a significant slice of Indian and Jewish culture and tradition. It would be of interest to Jews and non-Jews, Indian and non-Indian alike, as well as to history enthusiasts and the general reader interested in art and culture.

—IANS

At Triveni Kala Sangam in Delhi, one gallery that is a must see is Art Pilgrim which is nestled down the corridor next to the cafe. Gita Singh, its director, is a well known collector with a deep interest in the masters as well as emerging talent, and often curates historical exhibitions.

The opening of the physical space after the pandemic brings Art Pilgrim’s show *Bloom Time* with a suite of splendid works that celebrate the flowering of life and its many facets in myriad ways.

Just as you step down into the gallery on the left is a magnificent B Prabha. This 1989 oil on canvas is a unique composition of Prabha’s trademark fisher-folk — always graceful and simply clad in white with an odhini standing against a

Bloom Time at Art Pilgrim

UMA NAIR highlights some of the pieces on display during the the ongoing group exhibition at Triveni Kala Sangam

field of blooming flowers. Rare, perhaps, in the study she offers, this masterpiece is an inspiration for all of us because it speaks in equivocal ways about life and its many predicaments.

Down the wall, as it continues, is a heady meditative mooring of the brilliant Shobha Broota. This oil and acrylic on canvas (2015), is a savouring of contemplation; it is a distinct entity of the moment of rapture of the suffusion of particles of energy that form a bloom of the moment of meditation which is at once



soft and tranquil and one that seeps into your senses. This work reaffirms the



truth that abstraction is a journey that travels inward into the realms of the conscious state of being. Shobha also brings home the words of Wassily Kandinsky when he said, “Repetition is a potent means of heightening

the inner vibration and is, at the same time, a source of elementary rhythm which, in turn, is a means to the attainment of elementary harmony in every form of art.”

Jayashree Chakravarty’s *Sun Rays* (2017), a rare oil on canvas is a study in evocative elegance and the magnitude of nature and the sojourn of full bloom in the living spirit of the tree. At once, a signature of being autobiographical and dream-like , here is an exercise in transition and transformation of the personal

experience into mystical truth. Her imagery, because of her fluid and transparent images, reflects the unity of man and nature. The detailing in her work is an array of arresting elements that spell infinity of earth’s bounty.

In that same vein is a sienna toned landscape by Shabir Husain Santosh which captures the tonal tenors of a sunset. Modernist in its mappings, it creates an evanescent tone of fervour and flavour. The show has something for everyone including a magnificent set of tree paintings which must be written about at a later date.

(Bloom Time, the group exhibition at Art Pilgrim Gallery, can be viewed till September 27, 2021.)

Musical turnings

MEERA’s creativity flowered during the pandemic, says RAJBIR

Lane Music festival, Calcutta, and at marquee locations like the Shanukhananda hall, the National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA) in Mumbai, and the Repertory in Moscow. Her performances have been appreciated by the connoisseurs and the gurus alike.

However, the pandemic and its resulting constraints has sparked a new flowering of creativity in her. She comes from a musical family where both her parents were accomplished singers. Her mother, Girija, had been trained by the maestro of the Banaras *gharana*, Pandit Omkarnath Thakur. Her father, Sureshwar’s effortless and authen-

tic renditions of K L Saigal’s soulful melodies made him the star of many and evening. During the lockdown, deprived of avenues of creative expression, Meera combined her natural love for singing, imbibed from childhood, with her training in the sitar to come up with 40 compositions that bring to life India’s rich tradition of folk music, classically based Hindi film songs, and the *Sufiyana kalam*. While initially she presented purely instrumental interpretations, she soon moved to renditions that combine singing and sitar. In these compositions, Meera sings the main melody of the song, and then presents a creative interpretation on the sitar improvising in the manner of a Jazz musician.

Her compositions are unique because they combine the spontaneity of one steeped in a love for popular music with the deep training of a classical musician of 40 years



standing that allows breathtaking improvisation almost without end. This series could mark a new beginning not just for Meera but also for the performance repertoire of sitar players which hitherto has been limited to instrumental presentation alone, with a few notable exceptions like Ustad Vilayat Khan. Meera described the last two years as the consummation of her career as a musician, as a time of synthesis of musical influences spanning a lifetime, and a time where she broke free of her training to emerge as a spontaneous creative artist.

The pandemic has shown that creativity knows no bounds, and that artists can flower in the most trying of conditions. Meera is an exemplar of the entire generation of artists who have had to learn to shine despite all odds. A link to her compositions can be found on her website :

<https://www.meeraprasad.com/>

WHAT’S HAPPENING THIS WEEK

Pristine, an online exhibition of photographs by Navin Sakhuja, ophthalmologist opened on September 6. First published in the IIC Quarterly, Autumn 2017 issue, the photographs engage with the power and beauty of nature. Dr Sakhuja in his art practice has been fascinated by, and is drawn to, the unknown, the unexplored, and the untouched, pristine and desolate parts of the planet. The photographs on view cover three different visits to the Arctic Circle, Iceland (2010); Antelope Canyon, Arizona USA (2010); and the Great Namib Desert, Namibia (2015).

When: Till September 19.
Where: icdelhi.in

Pandit Chatur Lal Memorial Society is coming up with the Mumbai Chapter of the Smritiyan concert series named **Khamma Ghani**, a conversation of traditions. ‘Khamma Ghani’, a Rajasthani phrase meaning pass on the good wishes, will witness an exciting line-up of prominent artists like renowned Kathak dancer Kumar Sharma from Jaipur Gharana, tabla maestro Pranshu Chatur Lal, who will be seen with his enchanting percussion ensemble, supremely talented Rajasthani folk artists Sawai Khan, and Manganiar Dholak player Latif Khan who will be accompanied by Sarangi artist Mudassar Khan, award-winning vocalist Jai Dadhich, and the young keyboard artiste, Shivam Sharma.

When: September 18
Where: The live event will be aired at 7 pm on the organisation’s official social media accounts.



A group exhibition featuring eminent contemporary artists from Bengal and showcasing the cultural richness of the region, **The Joy Of Bengal**, is presented by Art Magnum, Debovasha Art Gallery and 108 Projects. Bengal has been the epicentre of arts in India since the germination of the Bengal School in the early 20th century. Its relevance as the cultural capital of India has increased manifold considering the challenges posed by both the domestic scenario as well as the international situation.

Artists participating in the exhibition are Jogen Chowdhury, Somanth Hore, Reba Hore, Chandana Hore, Ganesh Haloi, Lalu Prasad Shaw, Sanjay Bhattacharya, Rabin Mandal, Sunil Das, Krishnendu Chakki, Sanat Kar, Shuvaprasanna Bhattacharya, Shampa Sircar Das, Sanjay Das, Krishnendu Porel, Suhas Roy, Arup Das, Alay Ghoshal, Niren Sen Gupta, Atin Basak, Ramananda Bandyopadhyay, Shekhar Roy and Haren Das.

When: Till September 20
Where: Triveni Kala Sangam



Mai Ghat (2019), a Marathi film directed by Ananth Narayan Mahadevan, portrays the true story of a mother’s protracted 13 year fight for justice for her son who was tortured to death in custody, resulting in a historic death sentence for the guilty policemen

The film was a recipient of the Silver Peacock for Best Actor-Female at the International Film Festival of India (2019); and Best Cinematography Award at the Indian Film Festival of Cincinnati (2020).

When: 6:30 pm, September 16
Where: C D Deshmukh Auditorium, IIC



Want rescheduled Test to be fifth of series: Ganguly

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The proposed “standalone” Test between India and England should be treated as the series-deciding fifth match that was cancelled last week owing to a COVID-19 outbreak in the Indian camp, BCCI President Sourav Ganguly told PTI on Monday and ruled out the possibility of it being treated as a one-off game.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has written to the ICC seeking a Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) verdict on the fate of the cancelled match that was to be played at Old Trafford, Manchester. The ICC is yet to comment on the matter.

“We want the series to be completed as this will be our first series win (in England) since 2007,” Ganguly told PTI in an exclusive interview.

“The BCCI maintains that Test cricket is the ultimate format and we won’t compromise it for anything,” he made it clear.

India were leading 2-1 when the match was called off last week after the visiting players refused to step on to the field following positive COVID-19 cases among its support staff, including head coach Ravi Shastri.

A forfeiture will allow the ECB to get insurance reimbursement of 40 million pounds that, it claims, would help offset its losses because of the cancellation.

Asked if BCCI has offered to play two extra T20 Internationals when the team tours in July next



year for a white-ball series in lieu of the Test, Ganguly said: “We are ready to play extra ODI and T20s and that’s not an issue.

“Just that the Test match that will be played later will be the fifth match of the series.”

If the ICC deems that the match was abandoned due to COVID-19, then India will officially win the series 2-1 as such a can-

cellation is considered an “acceptable non-compliance” under the World Test Championship rules.

“There is precedence of series being cancelled because of COVID-19 in the past 18 months. The BCCI cancelled its home series against South Africa last year which cost us around 40 to 50 million pounds,” the former captain said.

He also hoped that in near future there will be concrete “medical advice” on offer that will allow series to go on even with COVID cases within the team.

“Because we understand how detrimental it is to the game in terms of spectators and viewers’ interest (TV and OTT) especially when the series has been of such high quality. Test cricket is BCCI’s

foremost priority,” he stated.

Ganguly said that the BCCI is “disappointed” that the match was called off but it could not have pushed the worried players beyond a point.

“We are extremely disappointed that this series had to be called off. The only reason is COVID-19 outbreak and players’ safety. We could only push them to a point.

“But the pandemic is so severe that one can only go that much distance,” he explained.

Asked if the option of fielding a fresh team by resting some of the senior players, who were not comfortable, was considered, Ganguly answered in the negative.

“No that wasn’t an option. If you see the Yogesh Parmar (the junior physio who tested positive just before the match) was a close contact of every player,” Ganguly said.

“So obviously that was a cause of worry. It was something nobody had any control on and they (the players) had families travelling with them,” he added, justifying the anxiety in the camp.

ECB CEO Tom Harrison had also said that every effort was made to comfort the travelling players but the “perception of what might happen” made them fearful of playing.

Asked if he would try and sort it “amicably” with Harrison and ECB head Ian Whatmore during his personal visit to London on September 23, Ganguly said: “Even the Test match was called off amicably. I am going there and let’s see, we will figure out something.

Sad we ended up in IPL early: Kohli

PTI ■ DUBAI

India captain Virat Kohli said it is unfortunate to “end up here early” for the IPL after a COVID-19 outbreak led to the cancellation of the fifth Test against England and hoped for a “secure” bio-bubble in the league to tackle the “uncertain” times.

Kohli, who will again lead Royal Challengers Bangalore in the tournament, along with other Indian players refused to take the field in the fifth Test against England at Old Trafford, after junior physio Yogesh Parmar became the fourth close-

contact support staff to test positive for COVID-19.

“Unfortunately that we had to end up here early, but with COVID in place, things are very uncertain,” Kohli told the RCB’s digital media platform.

“Anything can happen at any time. Hopefully, we’re able to maintain a good, strong, and secure environment, and have a quality IPL.

“It’s going to be an exciting phase and a

very important one for us at RCB and then for the Indian team at the T20 World Cup,” the Indian captain said.

The IPL begins on Sunday and RCB will play their first match on Monday.

The RCB will have some exciting new additions to their squad including leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga and Singapore batter Tim David. The skipper is looking forward to meet the new recruits.

“I’ve been in touch with everyone. We’ve had discussions over the last month or so, a little longer than that with the replacements, who’s coming and who’s not. Eventually, we ended up replacing our key players with some top-quality cricketers,” the RCB skipper said.

He believes that replacement players will fit into the system perfectly. “Our key players will be missed, and they are a part of the family, but the people coming in as well have great skill sets, especially for these conditions. “So, I’m very excited to see them, with the whole group at practice and certainly very excited to resume a very good season that started last time around,” he said.



Online Chess Olympiad: India edges out Ukraine in tie-break to reach semi-final

PTI ■ CHENNAI

India held off a fighting Ukraine via the tie-breaker to enter the semi-finals of the FIDE Online Chess Olympiad on Monday with B Adhiban, D Harika and Nihal Sarin playing key roles.

The blitz tie-break saw India outclass its opponent 5-1 thanks to wins for Adhiban, Harika, Sarin and R Vaishali storm into the last four.

India’s top woman player Koneru Humpy drew her game against Iulija Osmak while Vidit Gujrathi, playing on top board instead of the rested former world champion Viswanathan Anand, shared honours with veteran Vasily Ivanchuk.

In the blitz tie-break, Adhiban broke the resistance of Kirill Shevchenko in 36 moves in a Larsen Indian variation game. The Ukraine player had in the two regular games held his own, drawing against P Harikrishna and beating Vidit Gujrathi.

Ukraine bounced back after losing the first round 2-4 by trouncing India 3.5-2.5 in the

second to force the blitz tie-breaks.

In the second round, R Praggnanandhaa, playing in place of Nihal Sarin, posted the first win for India, beating Platon Galperin with white pieces. The young GM underlined his superiority, securing victory in just 20 moves in a Sicilian variation game.

Harika extended India’s lead by getting the better of Natalia Zhukova in 32 moves with white pieces. She had in the first game of the quarterfinal beaten her opponent.

While Anand drew a second straight game against long-time rival Ivanchuk, Vidit Gujrathi who came in for P Harikrishna lost to Kirill Shevchenko.

However, the defeat of Humpy at the hands of IM Iulija Osmak in a marathon 114-move game secured a win for Ukraine.

In the first set of matches, Anand and Ivanchuk played out a draw while Harikrishna, Humpy and Vaishali also shared honours with their respective opponents.

Medvedev ends Djokovic’s bid for year Slam at US Open

AP ■ NEW YORK

A game from the end of his bid for what would have been the first calendar-year Grand Slam in men’s tennis since 1969, Novak Djokovic covered his face with a towel, hiding his tears during a changeover.

For 27 Grand Slam matches in 2021, on hard courts, clay courts and grass, Djokovic could not be deterred, could not be beaten. Needing one more victory, in the US Open final on Sunday against Daniil Medvedev, to complete a season sweep of major titles and to claim the record 21st of his career, Djokovic could not come through.

Outplayed by someone using a similar style to his own, Djokovic came up just short of those two historic milestones, losing 6-4 6-4 6-4 to first-time major champion Medvedev at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

What was in Djokovic’s thoughts as he sat there on the sideline, knowing full well that his quest was moments from its conclusion?

“Relief. I was glad it was over, because the buildup for this tournament, and everything that mentally, emotionally, I had to deal with throughout the tournament in the last couple of weeks, was just a lot. It was