

## OPINION 8

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LUCKNOW, MONDAY SEPTEMBER 20, 2021; PAGES 14 ₹3



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## BJP will cross 350 seats: Yogi

### UP has seen complete transformation under BJP rule, asserts CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Asserting that his government reinforced rule of law in the state, provided good governance and delivered in a transparent manner, a buoyant Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the Bharatiya Janata Party would return to power with over 350 assembly seats in the 2022 Assembly elections.

"We delivered on all promises we made before coming to power in 2017, catering to all sections, including youth, women, farmers and the poor without any discrimination on caste or religion basis," the chief minister claimed while addressing a function on completion of four-and-a-half years of his government on Sunday.

He said every individual of the state was happy as his government evolved a transparent development model, based on which the party was confident of returning to power with more than 350 seats.

Launching a broadside against the opposition for unleashing a misinformation campaign, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath minced no words while stating that "we had inherited a state which was mired in corruption in recruitment process, where appeasement of certain sections was the mainstay of governance and the poor and deprived sec-



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

PTI

tion was denied benefits of the welfare schemes."

He added, "It was an onerous task for his government to change the perception about Uttar Pradesh in the country which we managed to do with precision as the state was considered as an obstacle in the overall progress of the country."

Thanking Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the government at the Centre for continuous support and guidance for four-and-a-half years, the chief minister said that it was a matter of pride for all that Uttar Pradesh had now emerged as the leader on many counts, so much so that the state of Uttar Pradesh secured the top position in the country in implementation of 44 gov-

ernment schemes.

The chief minister, while listing the achievements of his government, was livid how the state was earlier consigned to communalism and appeasement which prevented the most eligible lot of society from getting benefits of the welfare schemes. "The habitual criminals and mafia were directly under government patronage during the previous regime and the period between 2012 and 2017 witnessed riots every three-four days," he pointed out and added, "My government may well boast of having not a single riot during the last four-and-a-half years, the criminals were shown their place and the property of mafia, acquired through unscrupulous manner,

worth over Rs 1,800 crore was either seized or demolished."

He said that during previous governments, there used to be a scramble among ruling party leaders for making their own houses but his government delivered for the people and provided as many as 42 lakh houses for the poor under PM Awas Yojana.

Yogi Adityanath said that there was a time when the investors were wary of coming and investing in Uttar Pradesh. "My government held the first-ever Investors' Summit in 2018 which assured the state investments of over Rs 3 lakh crore which was quite an achievement considering the fact that the state affairs were in a shambles till 2017.

He said the state of Uttar Pradesh which used to be the sixth largest economy of the country was now at number two. Similarly, he said, Uttar Pradesh which languished at 14th position in Ease of Doing Business in 2016 took a quantum jump to reach second position which led to repositioning of investors' confidence in the state.

"With a conducive environment created by the government in terms of controlled law and order, transparent processes and prompt decision-making, it came as no surprise that even companies from China relocated their businesses in Uttar Pradesh," Yogi added.

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## Cong plays Dalit card in Punjab

### Names Channi as CM to secure Sikh, Dalit votes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi congratulated Channi after he was picked as the next Punjab Chief Minister, and said the party must continue to fulfil the promises made to the people of the State. Rahul said "history had been created by the party after choosing a Dalit face" to head the Congress Government in Punjab. The entire Congress leadership including party chief Sonia Gandhi, Rahul and his sister Priyanka Gandhi besides seniors like Harish Rawat, Adhir Ranjan



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

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Chaudhary, Pawan Bansal, Ajay Maken and Randeep Surjewala, were involved in setting the Punjab unit in order. Channi, 58, a three-time MLA from Rupnagar's Chamkaur Sahib will be sworn in as Punjab's first Dalit Chief Minister on Monday. His elevation is significant given the fact that Dalits form around 31 per cent of Punjab's population. The Dalit population is in the

same range in neighbouring States of UP and Uttarakhand.

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

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

Continued on Page 6

## CAPSULE

### 'BJP RAKING UP OUTSIDER CARD WITH EYE ON POLLS'

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

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

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

### TRAILBLAZING TOURIST TRIP TO ORBIT ENDS

**Cape Canaveral:** Four space tourists safely ended their trailblazing trip to orbit on Saturday with a splashdown in the Atlantic off the Florida coast. Their SpaceX capsule parachuted into the ocean just before sunset, not far from where their chartered flight began three days earlier. The all-amateur crew was the first to circle the world without a professional astronaut.

### IN 2020, 1.20L DIED DUE TO NEGLIGENCE: NCRB

**New Delhi:** India recorded 1.20 lakh cases of "deaths due to negligence relating to road accidents" in 2020 — 328 people losing their lives every day on an average — despite Covid-19 lockdowns, according to Government data. As many as 3.92 lakh lives have been lost in three years in deaths due to negligence related to road accidents, the National Crime Records Bureau revealed in its annual 'Crime India' report for 2020.

### 9 OF FAMILY KILLED IN AUTO-SUV COLLISION

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

## Aao hamare desh, India to tell tourists

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

The officials said free visa to the tourists will be issued till March 31, 2022 or the issuance of five lakh visa, whichever is earlier. The total financial implication for this would be ₹100 crore. "The free visa move is

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

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

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



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

File photo

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

The Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday urged his Saudi Arabian counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud to resume direct flights between India and Saudi Arabia, which remains suspended owing to pandemic. UAE has relaxed norms for travellers from India. As per Government data, foreign tourist arrivals during the period January — April, 2021 were 376083 as compared to 23,57,877 in January - April 2020

registering a negative growth of — 84.0 per cent.

The percentage share of Foreign Tourist Arrivals in India during April 2021 among the top 15 source countries was highest from the USA (26.85 per cent), followed by Bangladesh (15.65 per cent), Afghanistan (6.92 per cent), UK (5.87 per cent), Nepal (4.59 per cent), Canada (4.27 per cent), Iraq (2.99 per cent), Portugal (2.40 per cent), Germany (1.42 per cent), Russian Fed (1.41 per cent) Maldives (1.39 per cent), France (1.33 per cent), Sudan (1.21 per cent), Korea (Rep.) (1.18 per cent), and Australia (1.02 per cent).

### ₹9K cr heroin from Af seized at port in Guj

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In one of the biggest drug hauls in the country, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has reportedly seized two shipping containers with heroin worth an estimated ₹9,000 crore from Mundra Port in Gujarat's Kutch district.

The contraband originated from Afghanistan and the cargo was camouflaged between bags of talcum powder in the two containers that landed at Mundra Port in Gujarat on Tuesday.

The containers were imported from Afghanistan to Mundra Port allegedly by Vijaywada-based Ashi Trading Firm.

Sources said the Indian firm had reportedly declared the consignment as "talcum powder". The exporting firm has been identified as Hassan Hussain Ltd., based in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Continued on Page 6

## Hurt by events of last 5 mths: Capt tells Sonia

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

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

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

"Notwithstanding my personal anguish, I hope this will not cause any damage to the hard-earned peace and development in the State, and that the efforts I have been focusing



during the last few years, would continue unabated, ensuring justice to one and all," Amarinder wrote, indicating his apprehensions of instability in Punjab as a result of the political developments in the State unit of the Congress.

Amarinder also expressed his personal satisfaction at having done his best for the

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## Jaishankar, Saudi Foreign Min discuss ties, developments in Afghanistan

### Saud to meet Modi today in first visit since virus outbreak

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

PTI

Arabia to India since the outbreak of the pandemic.

Given the strong ties between the two countries, the two Foreign Ministers, meanwhile, also explored ways to further expand bilateral ties in areas of Defence and security, trade, investment and energy. Incidentally, Army chief General MM Naravane became the first Indian Army head ever

to visit Saudi Arabia last year, thereby signifying the growing relations between the nations.

On the talks between Jaishankar and Al Saud, sources said the former called for further relaxing restrictions on travel from India to the Gulf nation while appreciating the country for the support provided to the Indian

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## Afghan boys stand up for girls' right to study

### Won't attend classes till schools for girls reopen

AGENCIES ■ KABUL

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

This startling development comes at a time when women employees in the



Kabul city Government have been told to stay home, with work only allowed for those who cannot be replaced by men. This announcement detailing the latest restrictions on women by the new Taliban rulers, was made by the interim Mayor of Afghanistan's capital on Sunday.

While most of the boys went to school, some boys

stayed home to express solidarity with the girls and said that they wouldn't show up until the schools for girls were opened. "Women make up half of society ... I won't show up at school until the girls' school opens," Rohullah, an 18-year-old student in class 12, reportedly told the *Wall Street Journal*.

The Taliban Ministry of

Education had on Friday ordered the reopening of secondary school for boys while the reopening of girls' schools was still a mystery. "All male teachers and students should attend an educational institution," said a statement released late on Friday. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told the local Bakhtar News Agency on Saturday that an arrangement was underway to reopen girls' secondary school, but he did not give a date.

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

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# Yogi cites prevalence of rule of law as one of his biggest achievements

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday described restoration of law and order as one of the biggest achievements of his government. Speaking on the occasion of completion of four-and-a-half years of his government at a ceremony held at Lok Bhawan, Yogi Adityanath said that if investors were ready to invest in UP today, women felt safer and the benefits of the government schemes reached the poor and the needy, it was because of the prevalence of rule of law in the state, which had been missing from the state for past several years.

"Not a single riot has taken place in the last four-and-a-half years of our government, which had become a routine affair occurring every three-four days between 2012 and 2017," he remarked.

Taking a dig at previous governments, Yogi pointed out that while his government had handed over 42 lakh houses to the poor in the last four-and-a-half years under the PM Awas Yojana, the previous governments were busy demolishing government buildings and building their own luxury houses. "There was a competition among leaders to build their own luxury houses," he quipped. "Transfer and posting of officers had become an industry during the previous governments to make money.

## ‘Before 2017, farmers were forced to commit suicide’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday attacked the previous governments, claiming that the farmers of Uttar Pradesh were forced to commit suicide before 2017 but his government took up their cause in an earnest way to change their fortune.

The period between 2007 and 2017 witnessed several sugar mills being either closed or sold at throwaway prices, making the lives of cane farmers miserable, he said.

"There were even hunger deaths in December 2016 and January 2017, before we came to power," the chief minister said. "The previous governments did the work of ruining the condition of farmers where they were forced to commit suicide. Our government revived all the shut sugar mills and even set up new ones. With this, our government



also ensured timely payment to the sugarcane farmers," Yogi Adityanath said while marking four-and-a-half years of his government at Lok Bhawan here on Sunday.

Uttar Pradesh government has cleared over 84.29 per cent dues of sugarcane farmers of the state, making it the highest and fastest payment in a season in the past 50 years.

The sugar mills have procured 1,028 lakh tons of sugarcane worth Rs 33,025 crore of which dues of Rs 27,837.52 crore have been cleared, he pointed out.

The Yogi government has transformed the sugarcane sector in Uttar Pradesh with its commitment to pay every penny of the sugarcane farmers. Over 45.22 lakh sugarcane

farmers in Uttar Pradesh have been paid a record cane price payment of more than Rs 1,42,889 crore between 2017 and 2021 which indicates the pro-farmer stance of the government.

"In the previous governments, the sugarcane price of Rs 95,000 crore was paid, whereas from 2017 till now Rs 1.43 lakh crore has been paid. Between 2007 and 2017 all the sugar mills were either sold at throwaway prices or were shut down," the chief minister said.

It is noteworthy that during Mayawati's tenure from 2007 to 2012, 30 lakh cane farmers were paid Rs 52,131 crore and during the Akhilesh regime from 2012-2017, a payment of Rs 95,215 crore was made to 33 lakh farmers. The payment made by the BJP-led UP government is twice the amount that was made by the former Bahujan Samaj Party government and 1.5 times more than the Samajwadi Party

government.

Highlighting the procurement made by the government during the previous Kharif and Rabi marketing seasons, the chief minister said, "During 2016-17, only 6 lakh metric tons of paddy was procured through middlemen, and not directly from the farmers. The farmers did not get the benefit of the minimum support price (MSP). Even during the COVID-19 period, more than 66 lakh metric tons of paddy were purchased from the farmers at MSP by the BJP government."

"As far as the procurement of wheat is concerned, our government purchased more than 56 lakh metric tons of wheat. In the previous government, it did not even reach 6 lakh metric tons. The purchase was done through middlemen, but we procured it directly from the farmers and the payment was made through DBT," he added.

large number of criminals and gangsters and have confiscated their property worth over Rs 1,800 crore. We are demolishing their illegal properties," he said.

Yogi added that domestic and foreign industrialists, who were scared of investing in UP due to lawlessness and bureaucratic red tape during the previous governments, were now willing to invest in the state due to restoration of rule of law as well as policy reforms that had made UP number two in Ease of Doing Business in the country. "Industrialists are investing over Rs 3 lakh crore in the state in different fields," he pointed out.

The chief minister said that the MSMEs, which had been lying defunct in the state for past several years, were currently exporting goods worth Rs 1,21,000 crore and UP was well on the way to become an export hub of the country.

Furthermore, according to him, 1.38 crore poor people have got free power connection while 2.61 crore toilets have been built in the state in the last four-and-a-half years. Apart from this, six crore people are benefiting from the Ayushman Bharat scheme. In terms of infrastructure also, Uttar Pradesh has been making rapid progress with 341-kilometre-long Purvanchal Expressway having already been constructed and 594 kilometres of land acquired for Ganga Expressway

which will connect the eastern and western UP.

Besides, the state currently boasts of five international airports and eight domestic airports while work is underway on 10 airports, the chief minister pointed out.

In the field of education, seven new universities are being built, including Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical University and the Police and Forensic Institute in Lucknow under the new education policy.

Yogi said that his government was also committed to the uplift of farmers in the state and had taken several initiatives in this regard.

He said that his government had purchased a record 66 lakh metric tons of food grain from farmers and made a record payment to sugarcane farmers.

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# SP firming up its base among Muslims

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections less than six months away, the Samajwadi Party, besides scouting for the new allies, is also firming up its social base particularly among the Muslims.

Entry of the rabble-rouser Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi in UP electoral politics has added to the challenges before the SP.

The SP has inducted prominent Muslim leaders from the Bahujan Samaj Party and Congress over the past few months to strengthen its Muslim leadership. Even as its veteran leader and Rampur MP, Mohammad Azam Khan remains inactive as he is in jail for the past 19 months; Owaisi's entry into the fray has raised fresh challenges for the SP.

Among the tall Muslim leaders who joined the SP in recent months include former Congress leader Salim Iqbal Sherwani, a five-time MP from Budau and friend of late Rajiv Gandhi. Sherwani, 68, had joined the SP in the wake of the Babri Masjid demolition, but returned to the Congress in 2009 when the SP chose Dharmendra Yadav, a nephew of Mulayam Singh Yadav, over him for a party ticket. Sherwani is already being made to share the stage with party Chief Akhilesh Yadav in many important programmes held by the SP, including the Kisan Mahapanchayat that was held in Aligarh, to send a strong message to the Muslim community.

More recently, the SP has welcomed Sibgatullah Ansari, the eldest of the Ansari brothers and a former BSP MLA from Mohammadabad in Ghazipur district, and his son into the party. The Ansaris, who also include BSP MP Afzal Ansari as well as (now ex-BSP MLA) Mukhtar Ansari, wield considerable clout among Muslims in the east UP districts.

Other Muslim leaders with strong influence in their respective districts who joined the SP include former BSP MP from Sitapur Kaiser Jahan, who had joined the Congress ahead of the 2019 general elections, as well as four-time MLA from Shahabad in Hardoi, Babu Khan, and ex-BSP MP from Shahabad in Hardoi, Daud Ahmed.

SP sources said while not everyone who had come into the party would get a ticket and this

## ‘Six months left for this rhetorical, arrogant govt’

**Lucknow (PNS):** With the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh completing four-and-a-half years on Sunday, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav targeted the Bharatiya Janata Party government on social media. "Six months are left for this rhetorical and arrogant government," Yadav said in a tweet on Sunday.

"Fifty-four have passed, six months left of this arrogant government of atrocities, unemployment, inflation, hatred and stagnation of business, allurements, and the rhetoric of the government," he said.

Akhilesh further wrote, "I don't want such a government, whose truth is: Thug ka Saath, Thug ka Vikas, Thug ka Vishwas, Thug ka Prayas."

In another tweet Akhilesh said, "The way farmers and rural people are troubled by the problem of stray animals, it seems that the next election of UP is the problem of self-proclaimed 'Damdar' vs 'Dumdar'."

The SP chief said the BJP would be wiped out in 2022 UP assembly elections. He reiterated that the Yogi Adityanath was claiming credit for the development works done during the previous Samajwadi Party government. He said the foundation stone of the Kanpur Metro rail project was laid during his government but obstacles were raised and his government was unable to complete the project. He said the Purvanchal Expressway was also the brainchild of the previous Samajwadi Party and the Yogi government was claiming credit for this project.

had also not been a prerequisite for their entry, the exodus from the BSP and Congress highlighted the erosion of minority leadership in those parties. "There is a mela at the party headquarters these days with scores of people wanting to join and this is a strong sign that the party is coming to power," said SP spokesperson IP Singh. "While many Muslim leaders have joined and are working for the party including Salim Sherwani and even Abu Azmi, there is no replacement for Azam Khan," he said.

## CITYBRIEFS

### ORATION

Cosmetic dental surgeon Dr Sandesh Mayekar delivered a keynote lecture on success mantra to clinicians, academicians and budding dentists at an oration function organised by Sardar Patel Post-Graduate Institute of Dental and Medical Science in remembrance of founder-chairman Dr OP Chaudhary and to celebrate silver jubilee of its inception. Over 200 dentists attended the oration. Dr Mayekar shared his experiences in his 30 years of dental practice. Dr Sabhyasachi Saha was the chief guest of the valedictory session.

### AWARDED

Six meritorious students of City Montessori School, Kanpur Road Campus, were awarded a cash prize of Rs 5,000 each by the school management for bringing fame to the city at the international level with their outstanding performance in the International Benchmark Test (IBT). These students achieved first rank globally by virtue of figuring in the 100th percentile in various subjects in IBT, organised by the



Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Suman Kumar secured 100% marks in Science & English while Siddhanta Shukla,

Rishan Haldar and Arush Ajeet Pratap in Science. Aditya Verma and Anveshika Shukla secured 100% marks in Mathematics.

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

## Yogi's report card another bundle of lies: Opposition

Opposition parties, including Congress, Bahujan Samaj Party and others, attacked the Yogi Adityanath government, alleging that only poverty, unemployment and inflation had soared in the four-and-a-half-year rule of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Uttar Pradesh.

"The report card released by the government highlighting its achievements is full of lies, the opposition parties charged on Sunday.

Reacting to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's remarks on Sunday that Uttar Pradesh remained riot-free while the governance saw a total changeover from the past in providing benefits of welfare schemes directly to the deserving, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra alleged that the government had "failed" on several counts such as giving jobs to people, dues to farmers and in reining in price rise.

The Congress general secretary said the Uttar Pradesh government should have answered people's questions on its four-and-a-half years in power, but it was continuing to peddle "lies, lies and more lies".

In a tweet in Hindi, Priyanka Gandhi said, "On giving jobs to lakhs and filling up vacant posts, in giving dues on sugarcane, wheat, paddy, potato to the farmers, in reducing electricity prices, in reining in price rise, the UP government has failed."

In another tweet, she alleged, "What did the BJP government make Uttar Pradesh, number 1 in malnutrition, number 1 in crimes against



women, number 1 in kidnappings, number 1 in murder cases, number 1 in atrocities against Dalits."

The Congress leader has been criticising the performance of the Yogi Adityanath government on various fronts and said last week that people were going to change the government and the chief minister in the upcoming assembly polls.

BSP chief Mayawati said, "The advertisement of transformation of four-and-half years is all gas and far from reality...there has been an increase in poverty, unemployment, and inflation, and the bad condition of the public is known to everyone."

Attacking the BJP government, Rashtriya Kisan Manch president Shekhar Dixit said, "Four years ago, a promise was made that the sugarcane price will be paid to the farmers in 14 days. But this was conveniently forgotten, and to date, no statement from the government came on this. Corruption is rampant at the wheat and paddy purchase centres in the state."

He added that the suicide by farmers was continuing. "This government has only taken forward the policies of the previous government. However, you should be con-

gratulated for the ongoing construction of the Ram temple (in Ayodhya). But, please do not open the box of lies about development and transformation," Dixit said.

Meanwhile, Rajya Sabha member and Aam Aadmi Party's UP incharge Sanjay Singh criticised the Yogi Adityanath government, saying the chief minister's claim of development was a farce.

"UP has slipped into the abyss of backwardness during the four-and-a-half years of the Yogi rule," he said, addressing a press conference in Lucknow.

Singh was reacting to the Yogi government's claim on its achievements on completion of four-and-a-half years of its rule. "Yogi's claim on development is a bundle of lies and its data book is in fact a book of jokes," he commented.

The AAP leader said UP was at the 20th position in education and 5th in health services. He alleged that children were being served salt and roti in the name of a midday meal. He said there was a scam in purchase of oximetres and ventilators during the COVID-19 times and bodies of those dying of the disease were seen floating in rivers.

He also said that the state government could give only 1.37 lakh jobs against the BJP's poll promise of providing employment to four lakh youths, and that too on the instruction of the Supreme Court. Singh also contested the state government's claim on crime against women and communal riots. "In 2016, 5,808 communal riots took place, in 2017 the figure was 8,018, in 2018 it was 8,990 and in 2019 it was 8,908.

### HEALTH CAMP

A health camp was organised for 68 students at Habibullah Hall of Lucknow University on Sunday. It was the first activity of the newly established Institute of Advanced Molecular Genetics and Infectious Diseases, ONGC Centre, at the University of Lucknow. The team of Molecular and Human Genetics Lab, including Atar Singh Kushwah, Saurav Kumar, Ashwin Shukla and Shivam along with hostel inmates, completed a series of anthropometric and biochemical tests. The health reports will be provided to all students. Similar camps will be held in all boys' hostels of the university.

### ANNOUNCED

DSP Investment Managers has announced a unique Old Fund Offering (OFO) of the DSP Flexi Cap Fund, which highlights flexi cap funds ability and flexibility to allocate across market capitalisations, its strong investment framework and the fund manager's conviction in investing a substantial part of their own money in the fund.



# Govt issues guidelines for peaceful, safe celebrations

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

To ensure peaceful and safe festivals in coming Shardiya Navratri, Vijayadashami and Chehallum, the state government on Sunday issued guidelines for maintaining the Covid protocol along with law and order. According to the instructions given by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in the COVID-19 meeting review held here on Sunday, guidelines have been issued to maintain law and order and communal harmony in view of Shardiya Navratri, Vijayadashami, Dussehra and Chehallum this year.

On the occasion of Navratri Durga puja and Vijayadashami/Dussehra festival and Ramlila staging and

Chehallum, instructions have been given to ensure strict compliance with the instructions given by the government for the prevention of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the instructions issued by Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Kumar Awasthi, it has been said that while granting permission for establishing Durga Puja pandal and Ramlila manch, care should be taken that normal traffic is not affected. The idols should be installed in the traditional but empty space, their size should be kept as small as possible and there should not be more people than the capacity of the ground. As much as possible small vehicles should be used for the immersion of idols and only a minimum

number of people should be involved in the idol immersion programme. At the time of idol immersion etc, there should not be more than the prescribed limit and the rules of physical distance and wearing of masks must be followed. It should be ensured that no gathering of people exceeds the capacity at any religious place.

It has been said in the instructions that it should be ensured that the traffic is never obstructed and the suspicious vehicles should be checked by putting up barriers and police check posts and the rules of the Motor Vehicles Act should be strictly followed.

Along with this, special attention has also been given to public facilities like electricity, drinking water and cleanliness.

The officers of the district and police administration have been directed to ensure that social and communal harmony is maintained on this occasion and security arrangements are ensured in such a way that no law and order problem arises. Mobile patrolling is to be done in sensitive areas and other places also.

Necessary instructions have been issued by the government to maintain law and order and communal harmony even on the occasion of Chehallum and to reduce the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. The district administration has also been asked to grant permission with the condition that the Covid protocol is strictly followed.

## Mutilated body of man found on rly tracks

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

Mutilated body of a 40-year-old man was recovered from railway tracks in Banthra on Sunday morning. Police said the man was hit by a train while crossing the tracks around 2:40 am on Sunday. The police were informed about a staff member of Harauni railway station. The deceased was identified as Nanhke of Godwa village in Banthra by his brother Rajesh. The railway track is located in Bhatgaon village, which is 2 kms away from the Nanhke's house.

Meanwhile, the body of an elderly woman missing for the last two days was recovered from a water body in PGI police station area on Sunday. Police said that the woman was mentally unstable and that the body bore no injury marks.

The deceased was identified as Brijrani of Pathakpuram in the area. Her son Ashok said Brijrani left the house for an evening walk on September 17 but did not come back. He said his mother was under treatment for her mental illness.

### FIRE

A massive fire broke out in a factory manufacturing plastic items on Raitha road in Madaion police station area on Sunday morning. Twelve fire tenders were pressed into service to contain the fire which was doused after three hours. As per reports, the factory owned by Sunil Bansal of Aliganj is located in Kamlabad Badahuli village. Items like chairs, tables and other plastic items are manufactured in the factory. Around 7 am, smoke started emanating from the godown. He raised an alarm and later called the police and firefighters.

# 226 turtles rescued in Hyd airlifted to Lko



**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

As many as 266 rescued Indian tent turtles (Pangshura tentoria circumdata) and Indian roofed turtles (Pangshura tecta) were airlifted from Hyderabad (Telangana) to Lucknow by Uttar Pradesh Forest Department and Turtle Survival Alliance on Sunday. Chief Wildlife Warden PK Sharma said that in early August, these turtles had been confiscated and two offenders were detained in Hyderabad. They confessed to have poached these turtles from the Gomti river near Lucknow.

"The turtles were temporarily housed in Nehru Zoological Park (Hyderabad) for safe custody until legal proceedings were in place. Under the technical inputs of TSA, we contacted the

Telangana Forest department to hand over the turtles to the us so that they can be rehabilitated in the wild without any delay and maximum survival can be achieved. We immediately instructed CCF Avadh RK Singh and DFO, Avadh, Ravi Kumar Singh to expedite the necessary paperwork between both the states," he said.

He said that TSA coordinated with Wildlife Conservation Society-India Eastern Ghat team head Imran and former TSA intern Sujith to help in rapid health check-ups, standard packaging and translocation of turtles through Air India.

Air India has been TSA's partner for translocating endangered wildlife for over seven years. It rose to the occasion again and extended all the assistance as well as easy access for en-route health monitoring

of the turtles.

After a journey of eight hours, the turtles were received by Sub-Divisional Officer Alok Pandey in Lucknow and biologist of TSA Arunima Singh.

DFO Ravi Singh said these turtles will be health assessed and quarantined for 29 days at the TSA Laboratory for Aquatic Biology at Kukrail Gharial Centre before their rehabilitation in mid-October.

Director of TSA Shailendra Singh said these species of turtles are poached to cater to the demand of illegal pet trade as they look pretty and make suitable candidates to be kept in aquariums.

"Both the species are sympatric and found in the Gomti river and associated wetland. One prefers flowing water while the other stagnant pools near and within the river," she said.

# Edu institutions in UP to have Aarogya vaticas

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

All educational institutions in Uttar Pradesh will now have an Aarogya Vatika to make students aware of the importance of medicinal plants. "Every household in our country has been using plants with medicinal properties for centuries. Some even worship them. However, these age-old customs and usage of these plants have been forgotten by many," said Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma here on Saturday.

He added, "After COVID-19 pandemic, people have understood the importance of

medicinal plants again and have started using them in their daily life. Our aim is to make the students understand this too and for this we have taken the Aarogya Vatika initiative in every school."

Aarogya Vatika is a special health corner where herbs and plants with high medicinal value and the ones that are immunity boosters will be planted in various city parks in different areas to make citizens aware of their health benefits available in our surroundings.

RA Ram, scientist at the Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture (CISH), Lucknow, said that the

public could grow plants at home in kitchen gardens and terrace gardens and waste could be converted into compost. A scientist at the Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP), Rajesh Verma, said the people who were suffering from fever should consume 'Kalmegh' (green chiretta).

Similarly, those who are suffering from ulcer or sciatica can use Sarpagandha (Indian snakeroot), which can be easily planted and grown at home. Consuming the plants with medicinal properties also benefits in controlling diabetes and obesity, he added.

## Longevity has led to more injuries in senior citizens

**SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW**

Longevity has led to more injuries in senior citizens because of the falling tendency due to poor psychomotor coordination, organising secretary of a conference on shoulder problems, Dr Ashish Kumar from KGMU, said on Sunday.

The message that they wanted to send across was that incidents would happen and injuries would be caused, but one should always consult the doctor as several injuries could become untreatable.

The symposium was organised online by Lucknow Orthopaedic Society and the departments of Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine (KMGU) on Sunday. The co-convenor

was Prof Uttam Garg.

Dr Ashish Kumar said the aim of the conference was to educate the doctors about the ailments and other injuries of shoulder joint. He said the main cases coming before the doctors include shoulder blade dislocations (common in sports injuries), shoulder dislocation in day-to-day activity, arthritis of the shoulder where one has to go for shoulder replacement, and then there are tumours.

Talking about senior citizens, Dr Kumar said the injuries which they sustain are difficult to manage but still manageable with minimally invasive or reverse shoulder arthroplasty.

"Among the various ways by which these shoulder problems can be managed in senior

citizens include interlocking plates which are helpful and have revolutionised the old osteoporotic fracture management. These are different types of plates with screws that make a single unit which holds the fracture. This is about a decade old and is developing newer and newer designs by the day," he pointed out

He said that the second thing worth mentioning is the reverse shoulder arthroplasty in which they put the cup where there is a head and put the head where there is a cup, which reverses the shoulder that is an advantage to the muscles around the shoulder and leads to the regaining of movement in old people. He said it can also be used for rotator cuff tear not amenable to union of bones.

The senior doctor said that in the lifestyle changes with increased pace of life, injuries which are simple in the beginning become severe; the fractures are not simple fractures but 4-5 part fractures.

"Besides, lifestyle has led to more osteoporosis in bones because of the food we are taking and the lack of exercise apart from working on computers while sitting on the sofa, which is a major problem. So when you have an injury, it involves multiple factors of bones," he said.

Dr Kumar said that online work had stopped all physical activities and while the day-to-day activities were physical activities earlier, now one needs to go to the gym for physical exercises.

"One needs to have prop-

er training in the gym so that there is no injury and but if some injury occurs, one should contact the doctor immediately. We have been getting cases from gyms too because many times you begin the exercise without doing the warm-up and sometimes people over exceed their capacity. Dislocations, sprains such as muscle sprains, ligament sprains are quite common injuries," he pointed out.

More than 150 orthopaedic surgeons from all over India participated in the symposium.

Vice-president of Indian Orthopaedic Association Dr Atul Srivastava from Agra was the guest of honor. President of UPOA and many eminent doctors like Dr Rajeev Raman from Kolkata were the participants.

## Stay connected to traditional roots of heritage: Dy CM

**Lucknow (PNS):** Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma urged people of the state not to forget the traditional roots of heritage and culture and also encouraged them to plant maximum medicinal plants in and around their localities for cleaner and greener surroundings. The deputy CM was speaking at the Uttar Pradesh Chapter of PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry awareness campaign highlighting the salient features of Aarogya Vatika.

The interactive campaign was aimed at focusing on the role of medicinal plants in boosting the immunity and reducing air pollution in the environment. It was also aimed at shedding light on other medical health, beauty and wellness benefits of having these plants in the surroundings, especially during this pandemic when strong immunity is the key for human beings.

Sharma spoke on the significance of nature in ancient times when greenery was all around and plantation of medicinal plants was a convention. He said people were stronger from within then and more resistant towards diseases even in their old ages as opposed to the current fragile immunity found in masses, even in the

younger generation.

"In the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, we are going away from mother nature, underscoring the benefits of nature, including stress relief, improved short-term memory, increased mental energy, less inflammation, better vision, improved concentration, creativity, and improved mental health. The old family values and Indian culture are also connected or associated with nature as for ancient families, the great greener and cleaner outdoors were the natural healthy playground that contributed to a child's positive development," he said.

He added that saving the earth and its environment has become highly important as it provides all food and water for sustainability, and the only way to honour the mother earth is by raising awareness about the benefits of plantation.

Sharma, along with others, also planted medicinal saplings in the lawn of PHD House, Gontinagar.

Senior advisor, UP State Chapter, Mukesh Bahadur Singh said that trees not only promote health and social well-being by removing air pollution but also aids in reducing stress, encouraging physical activity, and promoting social ties and community.

## SGPGI faculty forum against increase in retirement age

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

Faculty Forum of SGPGIMS secretary Dr Sandeep Sahu said they strongly disagree with the decision to increase the retirement age of faculty members. The UP government has recently decided to raise the retirement age of the faculty members of medical institutions and medical colleges to 70 years.

Dr Sahu said they will have an urgent general body meeting to decide the course of action. "This decision does not benefit patient care as elder doctors are not capable of the desired level of patient care because of vari-

ous physical and mental issues related to ageing. They are not having new energy and modern vision to improve the institute and hospital quality and services," he said. He pointed out that new methods of teaching and training for improving teaching courses are lacking in older faculty with increasing age.

"Old faculty's increasing age will debar new faculty from acquiring administrative skills and the second line will never be prepared to take care of hospitals. New faculty members' posts will not be created and new students will not get a chance for faculty jobs. Besides, nowhere in the rest of the states has this been

practically implemented. Overall, increasing the retirement age of faculty only leaves old hands and brains who are not medically and physically fit to take care of patients, teaching and research work effectively. We strongly condemn this decision of the government," he added.

Dr Sahu said the government, in the larger interest of public and young doctors' future and career, should not increase the retirement age and also implement rotational headship of each department so that all faculty members should get administrative experience," he said.



Mayor Sanyukta Bhatia during an inspection at Paltan Chhavni in Aliganj (Sector-A) following complaints by locals regarding unhygienic conditions and non-collection of garbage

# Teen shoots at father on being scolded for studies

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

A teenager shot at his father who scolded him for not being serious about studies.

Police tried to water down the incident and came up with conflicting statements. While the local police mentioned no details about the injuries, ADCP (East) Qasim Abdi, in an e-byte, said the victim suffered injuries in the shoulder. However, locals said the victim suffered thigh injuries.

The victim was identified as Akhilesh Yadav aka Tinku of Matiyari in Chinhat while his son as Aman Yadav (19), who

is a student of class XI. Akhilesh was admitted to a hospital while the police started further investigation.

As per reports, Akhilesh saw Aman sitting in the shop of a scrap dealer, Qadir, while returning home after a morning walk on Sunday. Aman was chatting with his friends at the shop. Akhilesh gave Aman a piece of his mind for not being serious about studies. Akhilesh asked Aman to go home and study. Back home, Aman picked up the double-barrel gun of his father and opened fire before fleeing the scene. Akhilesh was rushed to RML hospital where

he is under treatment. It surfaced that Akhilesh would often scold Aman who was careless towards studies and the father-son duo used to have heated arguments on the issue.

Akhilesh told the police that he asked Aman why he was sitting at the shop in the and not studying in the morning. The police registered a case of attempt to murder against Aman. ADCP (East) Qasim Abdi said Akhilesh was referred to the KGMU Trauma Centre. "He suffered no injuries in any vital organ and is out of danger," he said. The police launched a manhunt for Aman.

# Two groups clash over possession of land

**Lucknow (PNS):** Two groups clashed over possession of a plot in a prominent location in Chinhat on Sunday morning. Both the groups were said to have been at loggerheads over the issue for a long time. A man suffered injuries in the clash as he was attacked with some heavy object. Police personnel were deployed in the area to avert fresh clashes.

A cross-FIR for rioting and on other counts was reg-

istered in this connection. The injured was identified as Hemant Kushwaha of Gahmar Kunj. As per reports, Hemant was getting the boundary wall of a plot repaired when his opponent Krishna Kumar Singh of Indiranagar, along with his son and aides, reached the scene by an SUV.

It was alleged that Singh and his son opened fire on Hemant but the bullet missed the target. He then attacked

Hemant with the butt of the pistol. On being informed by locals, a team of police reached the scene and both the parties were taken to the police station. Singh said Hemant sustained injuries as he banged his head against the boundary wall in a bid to flee the scene in a hurry. Singh further alleged that he had lodged a complaint against Hemant four days back but the police sat on the case and did nothing.



# Govt ready to meet oxygen crisis in case of third wave: Tandon

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

UP Urban Development Minister Ashutosh Tandon on Sunday said that the state government is ready to meet the crisis of oxygen in case the third wave of COVID-19 pandemic knocks the door in the state because as many as 392 oxygen plants have been made functionally.

Talking to the news persons at Circuit House, here Tandon claimed that keeping the challenges faced during the second wave of the pandemic in mind, the state government gave its nod to set up 555 oxygen plants in the state and of them, as many as 392 oxygen plants have been made functionally.

There is availability of 1.80 lakh CovCOVID-19 beds in the state and more than 6500 PICU and NICU beds are available, he informed adding, the post-covid care centre and board have also been set up.

The government has so far



UP Minister Ashutosh Tandon addressing a press conference in Varanasi on Sunday.

Pioneer

made payment of more than ₹ 1.43 lakh crore to sugarcane farmers while the government purchased 435 lakh metric tonne food grain and made payment of ₹ 79,000 crore, he informed adding, the farmers were paid ₹2,613 crore as compensation under PM Fasal Bima Yojana while the payment of ₹4.72 crore was made to farmers for crop loan.

The government seized the properties of more than 1866 crores which were earned by mafias illegally he

claimed and added, 150 criminals were gunned down in police encounters besides arresting 11,864 rewarded criminals. The state government gave government jobs to 4.5 lakh youths and made appointments of 3.5 lakh youths on contractual basis, he informed, adding that the jobs were given to about 2 crore youths by distributing loans of ₹ 2,16,000 crore to 82 lakh MSME units. In addition, the government also gave 25 lakh jobs to youths under

One District One Product scheme, he informed further.

The government constructed 341 km long Purvanchal Expressway and the construction of 297 km long Bundelkhand Expressway is on progress while the land-acquisition work for the 594 km long Ganga Expressway has been completed, he informed adding, the construction work of 91 km long Gorakhpur link expressway is in progress. The government has given its nod to Balia link expressway, he informed further.

The UP is the first state in the country which has been declared ODF free with constructing 2.61 crore toilets which benefitted 10 crore peoples, he informed adding, the district headquarters are getting 24 hour electricity. The state government developed 10 smart cities and seven more districts are also to be developed as smart city, he informed further.

# BJP govt has created atmosphere of security, trust in UP: Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Jal Shakti Minister Mahendra Singh presented an account of the works of the state government on Sunday. In a press conference held at Circuit House, he said now the public can see a changing and growing Uttar Pradesh where an atmosphere of security and trust has been created.

“Earlier, there was jungle raj in Uttar Pradesh. As many as 4.50 lakh people have been given jobs in the last 4.5 years and on the basis of merit. Earlier it was through recommendation or money power. The state government has also tightened the noose around the mafia. Action has been taken against 45 land mafia in Prayagraj while 58 illegal constructions were demolished. Electricity has reached even in the remotest of villages,” he said.

The minister said that the cottage industry in villages has also grown in the last 4.5 years. “When AIIMS was formed under the BJP government, a system of PHC was



Jal Shakti Minister Mahendra Singh addressing a press conference in Circuit house in Prayagraj.

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also made. Every village was connected to a road along the expressway. Electricity is available for 14 hours in villages. There is also awareness among women. Clean water is being supplied to every household. The state has also progressed in the field of tourism. The state government has checked

crime and there is no talk of cast, crime and corruption anymore,” he said.

Singh said that the previous SP government encouraged extortion and mafia but the BJP government has put an end to such things. “An atmosphere of security has been created in the state which

has led to increased investment. Before 2017, people were migrating from the state but it is not the case now. Uttar Pradesh has secured first position in 40 schemes. The state is identified with Deepotsav in Ayodhya and Kumbh,” he added.

# We are trying to avoid split in Congress: Khurshid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Former External Affairs Minister and senior Congress leader Salman Khurshid, while reacting on the resignation of Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Captain Amarinder Singh, said that we were making effort to avoid any split amongst ourselves. ‘Man can try but everything is not in hand. Somewhere, differences emerge. We pray that we can resolve the minor differences between each other,’ he said while addressing a press conference here on Sunday. During his stay, he also held talks to senior local leaders on the issues of party’s manifesto.

When asked about the allegations of Union Minister Smriti Irani that no development work was done in Amethi even after the Gandhi family’s rule for five decades, Khurshid



Ex-Union Minister Salman Khurshid holding a meeting of Congress workers in Varanasi on Sunday.

Pioneer

said that these people had earlier complained that all the work was being done in only in Amethi. ‘This is dual politics,’ he said, asking Smriti Irani to discharge her responsibility in Amethi as an MP. Reacting over the charges of the Akali

Dal calling Congress a sinking ship, Khurshid said that everyone knew what was the condition of Akali Dal today, we would not say anything on it. When asked about the resignation of former MLA Laliteshpati Tripathi, the

Congress leader said that Laliteshpati had not left the party but he had only resigned from his post. ‘The party leadership is in talks with him and everyone is in touch with him,’ he said. Khurshid also expressed his concern over the city which is a parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said, ‘Banaras remains a city of problems.

The youth here have problems with employment while the weavers with electricity’. However, he was confident about solving all the local problems by the Congress. According to him, the biggest task here is to make Ganga Maa pollution-free, which has not happened so far. ‘Our goal is that we should go to the public to know their problems in view to prepare our manifesto,’ he said.

# Projects worth ₹20.71 cr inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya gave a gift of Rs 20.71 crore to Prayagraj. He inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of these projects at Shringverpur. He said that the common man would get many facilities with the launch of these projects.

The Engineering Training Institute of the Public Works Department will be set up with a hostel at Shringverpur Dham. The work on 17 projects, including a four-lane bridge and Ram Van Gaman Marg on Ganga, will start soon. A 51-feet statue of Lord Ram and Kevat hugging each other will also be installed.

Maurya said in Shringverpur Dham that development work is being done by rising above caste and discrimination with the slogan



Di CM Keshav Prasad Maurya being honoured by party workers at Shringverpur.

‘Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas’ under BJP rule. Efforts are also being made to make water paths from Sangam to Shringverpur Dham, he added.

Former regional MLA Vikramajit Maurya demanded that Shringverpur Dham be made a tehsil and the name of Phaphamau Legislative Assembly be changed to

Shringverpur Dham. He said there is a meeting in Delhi on September 20 for a four-lane bridge at Shringverpur Dham along the Ram Vanagaman Marg going from Ayodhya to Chitrakoot. After that its construction will start. He said that in the last four-and-a-half years, new parameters of multifaceted, all-round, village-oriented and balanced development have been set in the state. The Public Works Department has also done excellent and remarkable work, he added.

Phulpur MP Kesari Devi Patel, District Panchayat president Dr VK Singh, National Ramayana Mela general secretary Umesh Chandra Dwivedi, former MLA Guru Prasad Maurya, former MLA Prabha Shankar Pandey, block pramukh husband Kundan Yadav, Alok Pandey etc were present on the occasion.

# Smriti praises Modi, Yogi for development

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Union Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani, while addressing the people in the Prabudh Sammelan (Intellectuals’ Meet) at Saroja Palace (Ramkatora) here on Saturday evening, said that for the last 7-8 years, remarkable development is going on under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. ‘It is not only a development but a journey to make the impossible possible,’ she said.

‘Only one family ruled in Amethi for five decades but it did not serve the people,’ she said, highlighting the poor condition of her parliamentary constituency during the

Congress regime. Referring to the development story of Modi-Yogi era, she said that during the coronavirus pandemic when it was seen that it was not possible to provide proper treatment and vaccination to the huge population of 135 crore in the country, the determined leadership of the PM has made this impossible looked task a possible one.

‘Earlier people used to talk about being Vishwa Guru but the previous governments did not worry for the respect of the poor but the PM, worrying about the honour of the poor, gave toilets to 20 crore people, pure drinking water to 8.12 crore and directly transferred

money to the accounts of 2.20 crore farmers under the Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme,’ she said, adding that corruption was curbed in the country in the form of Digital India as the nation saved ₹ 2 lakh crore by curbing eight crore fake beneficiaries through DBT.

UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Tourism, Culture, Religious Affairs and Protocol Dr Neelkanth Tiwari in whose assembly constituency (City South) the conference was being held, welcomed the guests. Highlighting the importance of the constituency, he said ‘Baba Vishwanath resides in this assembly constituency. The birthplace of Bharatendu

Harishchandra, the founder of modern Hindi language, is also in this assembly constituency. It is also the main centre of Banarasi saree.’ He also highlighted the development work being done in the recent time in this constituency, saying ‘Kashi has become the hub of the medical field. When people walk on the Ring Road, they feel like a country in Europe.

The roads have become selfie points. Kashi Vishwanath Dham is developing in a grand and divine form.’ State BJP co-incharge Sunil Ojha, city president Vidyasagar Rai and many others were also present. The conference was conducted by Alok Srivastava.

# PSC chief inspects Banaras station

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chairman of Passenger Service Committee (PSC) Ramesh Chandra Ratna, along with committee members, conducted a thorough inspection of the advanced facilities available for the passengers at Banaras station of Varanasi Division (North Eastern Railway) here on Sunday. He first inspected the wide circulating area of the station, fountain and park and saw the progress made in ongoing cleanliness fortnight on the Indian Railways. He also planted a sapling. Ratna expressed happiness to see the cleanliness of the station premises and displayed diesel loco of the meter gauge as a heritage there.

During the inspection, he also visited grand Banaras station building, high level platforms, general passenger hall, all categories of passenger waiting halls, VIP lounges, ramps, toilets, water booths, ticket counters, inquiry centre, food and catering stalls, reservation centre, automatic stairs, lifts, foot over bridges etc and direct-



PSC chief RC Ratna inspecting Banaras railway station in Varanasi on Sunday.

ed the stall vendors to display the correct rate list, correct weight, correct expiry dates and GSTIN number outside their stalls. At waiting room, he asked the passengers about the facilities available at the station. Many passengers described the facilities at Banaras station like the same available at the airports.

Later, the PSC chief

reached the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) office, Lahartara and discussed the DRM Ramashray Pandey and other officers about ongoing development works on various railway sections of the Varanasi division. Ratna said that the PSC is an important part of the Railways, which monitors the services provided to the general railway passengers and it is

the responsibility of the committee to provide basic services to the railway passengers. He said that the Indian Railways saved lakhs of people by playing the role of life-line of India during COVID-19. ‘The Railways has done a commendable job of controlling the effect of Corona in the lockdown by providing food to the poor, movement of Shramik Special trains to take the workers to their homes, transporting logistics/medicines and essential materials to the needy people,’ he added.

The members of the committee Surendra Bhagat, Yatindra Singh, Prakash Pal and Ram Kishan apart from Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Infra) Gyanesh Tripathi, ADRM (Operations) SPS Yadav, SDCM Sanjeev Sharma, SDE (Coordination) Rakesh Ranjan, DME (ENHM) Dushyant Singh, Assistant Signal and Telecom Engineer Bhupendra, member of Zonal Railway Users Consultative Committee Sachin Mishra and many others were also present.

# No connection of poultry farm owner with terrorism found

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

A man who was detained for alleged links with Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, was released on Saturday night after thorough interrogation by the investigating agencies. He was identified as Shahrukh. Explosives, including IED, were allegedly recovered from his poultry farm in the trans-Yamuna area of Dandi. There is a difference of opinion whether Shahrukh surrendered before the police or was nabbed, but the ATS and the local police interrogated him for about 24 hours, and he was ultimately found to be innocent.

During interrogation, Shahrukh admitted that he was close to Zeeshan, who was having links with the terrorist groups. However, he said they

were just friends and he did not know about the ulterior motive of Zeeshan, who reportedly placed a box filled with explosives in Shahrukh’s poultry farm. The ATS and the police grilled Shahrukh for hours together and ultimately released him in late night hours on finding no clue about his involvement in terrorism.

It may be mentioned here that the ATS had raided different places in the state, including Prayagraj, and arrested a good number of Pakistan-trained terrorists having connection with different madrasas. Zeeshan had been arrested from a poultry farm in Dandi with explosives and IED. The owner of the poultry farm is Shahrukh of Kareli area, so he was also on the ATS radar. The police claimed to have nabbed him from his res-

idence on Saturday morning for investigation. The family members of Shahrukh are of the view that when Shahrukh came to know about the incident and was told that the police had launched a manhunt for him, he reached the police station and surrendered to prove his innocence.

**91,822 JABS ADMINISTERED IN PRAYAGRAJ:** The Sangam city has set a record for the highest vaccination in a single day as 91,822 jabs were administered to people of all age groups on Sunday. The vaccination campaign was held at 343 sites and Sangam city recorded the highest turnout of recipients across the state. Prayagraj was followed by Lucknow (86,135), Sitapur (80,042), and Aligarh (77,085) in terms of doses administered. As many as

80,144 people were administered the first dose while 11,678 were given the second dose. A total of 23,34,242 people of all age groups have been vaccinated so far, including 18,57,410 with the first dose and 4,76,832 with both doses. The Health department claimed to have given jabs to over 50 per cent of the eligible beneficiaries in the district so far even as it has set a target of administering 46.10 lakh jabs in the district. District Immunisation officer and ACMO Dr Teerath Lal told newsmen that the department aimed to cover the maximum number of people in a single day mega campaign and was successful in its endeavour. The department had set a target of 1.24 lakh jabs on Friday on the occasion of the 71st birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



# Yogi govt has fulfilled all promises: Pachauri

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Former minister and Member of Parliament Satyadev Pachauri, while addressing press persons at the Circuit House here on Sunday, said the objective of the meet was to highlight the massive development works carried out by the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh during its four-and-half-year rule.

He said the UP government had fulfilled all the promises made in the Lok Kalyan Sankalp Patra and was committed to fulfilling all the pre-poll promises of the Bharatiya Janata Party. He said the performance of the Yogi government had broken all the records of the past government and proved that it was a pro-farmer government.

Pachauri said the UP government had waived loans of the farmers of the state, waiving Rs 36,000 crore in one budget. He said this pro-farmer move benefited over 86 lakh farmers which had not been ever done in any part of the country. He said the UP government also deposited Rs 89,000 crore directly in the bank accounts of over 435 lakh farmers. He said this initiative was only taken by the Yogi government and this move suc-



MP Satya Dev Pachauri addressing the presspersons at Circuit House on Sunday.

Pioneer

cessfully eliminated the "touts" and said today over 2.53 crore farmers had been provided farm inputs like seeds, fertilisers, irrigation, and other needs and this was done only by the BJP government. He said if one viewed the past this had never been done in the history of the state ever.

He said the pro-farmers policies adopted and introduced by the Yogi government had led to farmers' income

shooting up high. He said apart from all this, the UP government also introduced the crop insurance scheme as farming in India was very uncertain due to the vagaries of weather conditions and this move benefited the farmers immensely.

He said another major demand of the traders and farmers was that the mandi fee, which was earlier 2 per cent, was too high and thus the BJP government reduced it to 1 per

cent.

He said in addition to this the UP government had set up 220 new mandis and modernised over 27 mandis. He said the BJP government had also introduced 291 e-mandis which were of immense help to the farmers and their incomes had increased.

All BJP leaders along with Mayor Pramila Pandey were present in the crowded press conference at Circuit House.

# 60 registries executed in KDA camp

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

As many as 60 registries (Agreement to Lease) of flats under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) were executed in the first camp organised by the Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) on Sunday. These flats were constructed and available in Ram Ganga Enclave Housing Scheme.

Vice Chairman Arvind Singh inaugurated the camp by handing over the Agreement to Lease along with the sweets to allottees. Speaking on the occasion, he said, 'As Vice Chairman of KDA, it is my responsibility to make efforts for the empowerment of the lowest category people of the society along with all-round development of the Kanpur City. In this context, KDA has executed registry of flats to allottees of PMAY(U) at the first in the state. KDA would continue to serve the interests of weaker section of the society in future also'. He said such types of camps for registry of houses/flats and other relevant issues would continue to be organised by KDA from time



KDA Vice Chairman Arvind Singh handing over Agreement to Lease and sweets to a woman allottee on Sunday.

Pioneer.

to time for their quick disposal.

Lauding the efforts of KDA Vice Chairman, allottee Amit Kumar Tripathi said he did not face any problem in quick registry of his flat. Another allottee Ramesh Vishwakarma said with the conduct of such camps, he was able to get the registry of his

flat without running here and there. He was thankful to KDA for quick disposal of his work.

Rani said all the procedural formalities were completed smoothly in the camp. She wholeheartedly expressed her gratitude to the KDA Vice Chairman and all the officers and employees of Bulk Sale

Department

It may be recalled that under the Ram Ganga Enclave Housing Scheme, as many as 576 flats had been allotted. Allottees who had deposited the entire money under this head, KDA has executed registry (Agreement to Lease) in their favour at the camp on Sunday.

# Jaipuria Group of Schools, STTAR launch health education curriculum

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Seth Anandram Jaipuria Group of Schools, in collaboration with Saamarthya Teachers Training Academy of Research (STTAR), Ghaziabad, virtually launched its health education curriculum for schools. The curriculum is a comprehensive programme that aims at inculcating and nurturing health consciousness in students from grade I to grade XII.

Launching the curriculum, CBSE Secretary Anurag Tripathi, said, "To bring out this health curriculum for the students, teachers and parents is a very thoughtful initiative in this pandemic times. The aim of the National Education Policy 2020 is to create good human beings. This can be achieved by changing the paradigm of classroom pedagogy to introduce new components for the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual development and health of students. He said the health education curriculum touched all the aspects of a child's development and now the focus was to ensure the curriculum was implemented in schools across India and reached lakhs of students and teachers.

The launch of the health education curriculum was graced by the presence of guest of honour Dr Muffazal Lakdawala, a noted bariatric



Shishir Jaipuria, Chairman of Seth Anandram Jaipuria Group of Educational Institutions addressing the webinar.

Pioneer

surgeon and founder of Digestive Health Institute.

Speaking about the importance of creating and promoting health awareness, he said health was the mental and social well-being of an individual. He said the right time to introduce health education curriculum was now and the right place to introduce it was in schools and this move was in the right direction.

Special guest, Dr Dilip Thakore, founder editor of Education World, touched upon the issue of lack of enough funding for health and education and complimented the idea of introducing the health education curriculum in schools. He said this curriculum fulfilled a very important lacuna in the education system and added

that without health one could not have satisfactory education and they were two sides of the same coin.

Harish Sanduja, director (schools) of Seth Anandram Jaipuria Group of Educational Institutions, addressed the session and this was followed by a moving invocation of Goddess Saraswati by the students of the school.

Shishir Jaipuria, chairman of Seth Anandram Jaipuria Group of Educational Institutions, laid out the vision behind the creation and launch of the health education curriculum. He said the health curriculum was a unique initiative of the group to create a healthy society and the need to start teaching schoolchildren various aspects of health, hygiene, fitness, nutrition, exercise, disease control, sub-

## 15 cattle mowed down by rail engine

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

As many as 15 cattle were mowed down by a speeding electric engine on Kanpur-Jhansi railway track near Bahabalpur village under Gajner police station of Kanpur Dehat late Saturday night.

According to reports, farmers often leave their cattle for grazing near the railway track. Around 10 pm on Saturday, some stray cattle were grazing on the railway track when an electric engine arrived. On seeing the cattle on the track, the engine pilot blew the horn and the cattle started running here and there. Some of them ran on the track ahead and were mowed down by the engine one-by-one. The engine driver applied the brakes and informed the officials of the nearby Lalpur railway station about the incident. A railway team reached the spot and examined the engine. After removing the remains of the cattle from the track they allowed the engine to proceed for its destination. On Sunday morning, the villagers were stunned to see the mass killing of cattle. They said such an incident took place there for the first time. Lalpur Station Master Shivpal said there was no damage to the engine. The Kanpur-Jhansi Intercity was, however, delayed by a few minutes, he added. It may be recalled that the Kanpur-Jhansi and Delhi-Howrah railway tracks pass through the Kanpur Dehat area. Due to this, incidents of cattle being hit by trains are often reported there. A few days ago, after a bull was hit by the speeding Mahabodhi Express train at Jhinjhak, the overhead equipment line was damaged, disrupting the movement of railway traffic up to Delhi. Earlier, a cattle was hit by the Vande Bharat train.

## Vaccination camp at Journalists' Club

KANPUR (PNS): Under the aegis of Kanpur Journalists' Club, a vaccination camp was organised at the Hindi Patrakar Bhawan in Ashok Nagar on Saturday. It was inaugurated by Uttar Pradesh Punjabi Academy Vice Chairman Gurvinder Singh Chhabra alias Vicky Chhabra who holds the rank of a state minister. Speaking on the occasion, Chhabra stressed on combating coronavirus at all costs. Senior journalists including Vivek Khare, club president Om Babu Mishra and general secretary Abhay Tripathi were present. Joint secretary Alok Agarwal conducted the proceedings. They called upon the fraternity to get vaccinated along with their family members to defeat the coronavirus and follow the Covid appropriate behaviour like using masks and maintaining social distance. Eminent journalists Suresh Awasthi, Om Chauhan, Neeraj Tewari, Vicky Raghuvanshi, Shailendra Mishra and Dilip Anshwani were also present.

## Online test soon for driving licence

KANPUR (PNS): For the first time in Uttar Pradesh, driving lessons will be imparted online via videos in Kanpur soon. Prior to issuing a permanent driving licence, this online training will be provided to all those who have applied for a driving licence. As per reports, informative videos related to driving will be sent via WhatsApp on the registered mobile phone numbers of the applicants. This facility is expected to be rolled out by the end of this month. After progressing with the learning licence, passing the test is mandatory for all to get a permanent driving licence. Now, lectures on techniques of driving and tutorials on traffic rules and regulations will also be forwarded to the learners. As per Divisional Transport Officer Rajesh Singh, lessons on automatic testing driving track will be imparted to the test takers through videos, thereby preparing the trainees before they take the test. He said 52-55 per cent of people failed while driving on the tracks, laid according to the international standards. He said the lack of authentic information about driving on these particular tracks was a major reason for this failure

# Trains to be cancelled, diverted

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Under the patch doubling work of Aunrihar-Dobhi section of Varanasi division of North Eastern Railway (NER) for pre-non-interlocking and non-interlocking works at Aunrihar and Dobhi stations the cancellation of trains, their diversion, control, short termination/short origination and rescheduling will be done as follows, CPRO PK Singh said.

**CANCELLATION:** The run of 05133/05134 Aunrihar-Jaunpur-Aunrihar unreserved special train from September 22 to October 3 will remain cancelled. The run of 05143/05144 Aunrihar-Jaunpur-Aunrihar unreserved special train will remain cancelled from September 22 to October 3. The run of 05135/05136 Chhapra-Aunrihar-Chhapra unreserved special train will remain cancelled from September 27 to October 3. The run of 05136 Aunrihar-Chhapra unreserved special train will remain cancelled on September 26. The run of 05153 Siwan-Gorakhpur unreserved special train will be cancelled from September 27 to October 2. The run of 05145/05146 Chhapra-Siwan-Chhapra unreserved special train will remain cancelled on September 27. The run of 05145 Chhapra-Siwan unreserved special train will be cancelled on September 28. The run of 05145/05146 Chhapra-Siwan-Chhapra unreserved special train will remain cancelled from September 29 to October 3. The run of 05147/05148 Bhatni-Varanasi City-Bhatni unreserved special train will remain cancelled from September 30 to October 4. The run of 05169/05170 Ballia-Varanasi City-Ballia unreserved special train will remain cancelled from September 30 to October 5. The run of 05170 Varanasi City-Ballia unreserved special train will remain cancelled on October 6. The run of 05169 Ballia-Varanasi City unreserved special train will remain cancelled on October 7. The run of 05111/05112 Chhapra-Varanasi City-Chhapra Intercity Special Express on will remain cancelled October 3.

**DIVERSION:** The 09066 Chhapra-Surat Special Express departing from Chhapra on September 22 and 29 will be diverted via Aunrihar-Varanasi-Prayagraj Chheoki route. The 04055 Ballia-Anand Vihar Terminus Special Express departing from Ballia on September 23 and 30 will be run via the diverted route i.e. Aunrihar-Varanasi-Janghai-Prayagraj. The 02233 Ghazipur City-Anand Vihar Terminus Special Express departing from Ghazipur City on September, 28 will be run via diverted route i.e. Aunrihar-Varanasi City-Janghai. The 05231 Barauni-Gondia Special Express departing Barauni on September 28 and October 2 will be run via the diverted route i.e. Aunrihar-Varanasi City-Varanasi. The 05139 Mau-Anand Vihar Terminus Special Express departing from Mau on September 24, 28 and October 1 will be run via the diverted route i.e. Aunrihar-

Varanasi City-Varanasi-Sultanpur. The 09042 Ghazipur City-Bandra Terminus Special Express departing from Ghazipur City on September 28, will be run via the diverted route i.e. Aunrihar-Varanasi City-Varanasi-Jaunpur. Meanwhile the 05160 Durg-Chhapra special train departing from Durg on October 2 will be run by being controlled by 90 minutes. The 02219 Ghazipur City-Anand Vihar Terminus special train departing from Ghazipur City on October 3 will be run by being controlled by 30 minutes.

**SHORT TERMINATION/ SHORT ORIGINATION:** The 05008 Lucknow Jn-Varanasi City special train departing from Lucknow Jn on October 2 will be short terminated at Mau and will remain cancelled between Mau and Varanasi City. The 05007 Varanasi City-Lucknow Jn special train departing from Varanasi City on October 3 will be run from Mau. It will remain cancelled between Varanasi City and Mau. The 05138 Prayagraj Rambag-Mau unreserved special train departing from Prayagraj Rambag from September 30 to October 4 will short terminate at Banaras. It train will remain cancelled between Banaras and Mau. The 05137 Mau-Prayagraj Rambagh unreserved special train departing from Mau from September 30 to October 4 will be run from Banaras. It will remain cancelled between Mau and Banaras.

**RE-SCHEDULED:** The 08202 Nautanwa-Durg special train departing from Nautanwa on October 3 will be run from Nautanwa by being rescheduled by 60 minutes.

### KISAN RAIL PARCEL SPL TO RUN FOR 5 TRIPS

For the convenience of farmers the railway administration will from Farrukhabad of NER to Jorhat Town of North East Frontier Railway (NER) run Kisan Rail parcel special train for five five trips with general second class rake, CPRO PK Singh said. The 00596 Farrukhabad – Jorhat Town Kisan Rail parcel special train will on September 20, 30 and October 10, 20 and 30 leave Farrukhabad at 18.00 hrs, from Kanpur Central at 21.10 hrs, from Aishbagh at 23.15 hrs, the second day from Gonda at 01.20 hrs, from Gorakhpur at 04.25 hrs, from Chhapra at 07.55 hrs, from Barauni at 11.55 hrs, from Katihar at 15.00 hrs, from New Jalpaiguri at 19.10 hrs, from Changsari at 04.30 hrs and reach Jorhat Town at 12.30 hrs. In the return journey 00597 Jorhat Town – Farrukhabad Kisan Rail parcel special train will leave on September 23, October 3, 13 and 23 and November 2 leave Jorhat Town at 04.00 hrs, Changsari at 12.30 hrs, New Jalpaiguri at 21.40 hrs, the second day from Katihar at 02.00 hrs, from Barauni at 05.10 hrs, from Chhapra at 09.30 hrs, from Gorakhpur at 13.10 hrs, from Gonda at 16.15 hrs, from Aishbagh at 18.30 hrs, Kanpur Central at 21.50 hrs and will reach Farrukhabad at 00.30 hrs. A total of 22 coaches, including 20 of general second class and two of SLR will attached in the train.

# Seven applications disposed of

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

District Magistrate Praveen Kumar Laxkar directed the officials concerned to dispose of the applications received on Sampoorana Samadhan Diwas timely and on the basis of merit at Lalganj tehsil on Saturday. He made it clear that the officials concerned will be punished if any complaint came again after disposal of the application. Out of 138 applications, seven



were disposed of on the spot while for the rest the officials concerned were directed to do the needful on merit basis. The maximum applications were related with possession, ration card, irrigation, consolidation, land dispute, measurement of land etc. The DM and SP Ajai Kumar Singh directed the teams to go to the spot and decide the matters without any discrimination. A group of people from Layan village complained about a ration shop for which SDM was directed to look into the matter and take action after inquiry. The DM directed all officials concerned to dispose of matters related to IGRS on priority and monitor them on a daily basis through the portal. He made it clear that follow up of each matter was necessary and in

# Clean Train Day observed

PNS ■ VARANASI

Along with the entire Indian Railways, special cleanliness drive is being run in Varanasi Division from September 16 to October 2. In this sequence, under this fortnight Saturday was observed as Clean Train Day in the division in which on board inspection of trains was done by the nominated officers. Besides by running a massive campaign cleanliness was done in the trains. Awareness was created for maintaining cleanliness inside the trains Public Relations Officer Ashok Kumar said. Efforts were made by nominated officials of the division to make trains clean by running an extensive cleanliness drive in mail express trains passing through terminating and originating stations — Banaras, Prayagraj Rambag, Azamgarh, Bhatni, Ghazipur City, Mau, Chhapra Kacheri, Siwan, Thawe, Indara, Kaptanganj, and Varanasi City. During this period special attention was paid to the condition of cleaning in trains, availability of cleaning equipment, number of sanitation workers, arrangement for garbage disposal, availability of dustbins, cleaning of trains in washing line, cleanliness in toilets of trains and of washbasins, pest control in air-conditioned coaches and level of facilities available to the passengers during the journey in the trains. In this context, a feedback was also taken from the pas-



sengers and prompt action was also taken. An appeal was made to the passengers that during the journey by always remaining aware about cleanliness in stations and trains they should make other passengers also aware about it. A feedback was also taken from the passengers in the perspective of maintaining cleanliness at the stations and they were made aware of the damage caused by spreading squalor in the stations and trains during the journey. During this campaign awareness about cleanliness is being spread in the station premises through posters, banners, street plays etc.

**INSPECTION:** The Passenger Service Committee (PSC) on Saturday conducted a thorough inspection of the amenities available for the passengers and passenger facilities development works at Varanasi City station of Varanasi division. It's chairman reached the station along with members Surendra Bhagat, Yatindra Singh and Ram Kishan. On the occasion ADRM (Infra) Gyanesh Tripathi, SDCM Sanjeev Sharma, Senior Divisional Engineer (Coordination) Rakesh Ranjan, Additional Chief Medical Superintendent Dr SK Barnwal, Divisional Mechanical Engineer (ENHM) Dushyant Singh, Assistant Divisional Security Commissioner MK Gautam, Assistant Signal & Telecom Engineer Bhupendra, member of Zonal Railway Users Consultative Committee Sachin Mishra and senior observers were present.



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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

In 2020 alone, there were

41,196 cases of "hit and run" while there were 47,504 such cases in 2019 and 47,028 in 2018, the report showed.

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

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

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

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

There were 51 cases of

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

their armoury for "neutralising any low-flying UAV".

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

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

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

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

# ‘Instal statue of Ezhuthachan, father of modern Malayalam, in his native village’

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

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

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

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

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

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

# BSY cautions party workers against taking Opposition lightly

**Davangere (K'taka):** Former Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Sunday cautioned his party colleagues against taking the Opposition lightly in the upcoming elections. "I have a suggestion to all of you. None of you should take the opposition lightly. They have their own calculation and strengths," Yediyurappa said at the BJP Core Committee meeting here. The Lingayat strongman claimed that a few Congress leaders are in touch with some BJP leaders. "You need to tread with confidence without giving chance to such incidents (defection). We have to make a sincere effort for the BJP to come back to power with 140 seats in the next Assembly elections," Yediyurappa, who stepped down as the Chief Minister on July 26, said here. He said the party can be strengthened by inducting into the BJP leaders from SC/ST and OBC communities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI

# YSRCP registers landslide win in Parishad polls

SNV SUDHIR ■ VIJAYAWADA

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

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

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

of the 641 ZPTCs were also bagged by YSRCP.

The resounding victory in the Parishad polls could not have come at any other time for the YSRCP cadre and leaders as they have been facing flak from the opposition TDP and also a section of media over financial crisis being faced by the state and the alleged mishandling of the situation by the Jagan government. The win is sweeter to YSRCP as Jaganmohan Reddy didn't campaign for any of these polls, didn't conduct a press conference, didn't release any video message seeking votes as he was confident that performance fetched votes, as it did.

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

However on paper and for

the record TDP announced it had boycotted the parishad polls

a week before the polls were to be held on April 8.

# YSRCP decimates TDP in home turf Kuppam

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

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

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

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

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

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

## FROM PAGE 1

# CONG PLAYS DALIT CARD IN PUNJAB

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

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

News of Channi's appointment came just a few hours after sources said another outgoing Minister - Sukhjinder Randhawa - would be named to the top post. Randhawa's name met with some doubts and the Congress high command - keen to ensure the new Chief Minister has maximum support - switched tack.

"I am happy with the high command's decision. I want to thank all MLAs who supported me. Channi is my brother," Randhawa said after Channi was announced as the Chief Minister.

The early day meeting of the legislature party was postponed after Rajya Sabha MP Ambika Soni - believed to be the party's first choice for the Chief Minister's post - declined the offer. Soni said "no" at a late-night meeting with Rahul. She stressed on the "ramifications" of a non-Sikh Chief Minister, particularly with an election due.

Amarinder had announced that he would oppose it tooth and nail if the party named Sidhu as the Chief Minister. He was the first to convey his best wishes to his successor.

"My best wishes to Charanjit Singh Channi. I hope he's able to keep the border State of Punjab safe and protect our people from the growing security threat from across the border," Singh said in the message.

# HURT BY EVENTS OF LAST 5 MTHS: CAPT TELLS SONIA

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

Amarinder said that he had worked

wholeheartedly for the welfare of the people of Punjab. He claimed that he established the rule of law, and ensured transparent governance, but maintained ethical conduct even in management of political affairs, "winning eight out of 13 seats in the Parliament Elections in 2019 and the PRI and ULB Elections decisively."

Referring to the numerous challenges faced by him over the last four-and-half years in fulfilling the promises made by the Punjab Congress in the Punjab Elections 2017, he pointed out that these notwithstanding, of the total promises made, his Government had fulfilled 89.2 per cent, while work was in progress on the remaining commitments.

On the issue of sacrilege cases and subsequent police action of 2015, Amarinder said that despite legal hurdles and the refusal of the CBI to return the cases, which were transferred to them by the SAD-BJP Government, his Government had succeeded in filing 10 challans, while 24 people had been charge-sheeted, 15 police personnel suspended, and ten civilians arrested. "The criminal proceedings in these cases are currently underway and I am sure that in due course justice will be done," he said.

Regarding controversial Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) that were signed by the previous Government for the purchase of expensive power to ensure affordable supply to the people of the State, Amarinder said that his Government had invested ₹3,709 crore in electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure from 2017-21 and released about ₹11,000 crore per annum to the benefit of 22 lakh SC/BC consumers, and 14 lakh farmers.

Talking about the farmers, whom he described as the backbone of Punjab's economy, he wrote that in line with its commitment to provide debt relief and repeal statutory provisions of attaching their properties, his Government had given debt relief of Rs 4,624 crore to 5.64 lakh farmers and Rs 526 crore to 2.68 lakh farm workers.

"In addition, we have repealed Section 67-A of the Punjab State Cooperative Societies Act, 1961, and also amended the Civil Procedure Code, disallowing attachment of agricultural land up to 2.5 acres," he added.

Referring to his personal promise to the people of Punjab to break the back of drug peddlers and smugglers in the State, he said that he had done so relentlessly by establishing a Special Task Force (STF) in this regard. Pointing to his Government's three-pronged strategy titled EDP — Enforcement, De-addiction and Prevention, he said as a result, 62,744 people had been arrested, 202 OoAT clinics

established, 6,28,083 Drug Abuse Prevention Officers (DAPOs) registered and 9,51,202 Buddy Groups formed.

Underlining his Government's commitment to the development and welfare of the poor and those belonging to SC and BC, he pointed out that debt relief of Rs 50,000 each has been given to 10,151 SC beneficiaries and 4,702 BC beneficiaries. "We had also decided to enact a special legislation to earmark dedicated funds for development and welfare of SC population in our State," he noted, adding that 200 units of electricity were being given free of cost to all families belonging to SCs, BCs and BPL with a total coverage of about 22 lakh beneficiaries and an annual subsidy of about ₹2,000 crore.

# JAISHANKAR, SAUDI FOREIGN MIN DISCUSS TIES, DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

community during the pandemic.

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

"The two Ministers reviewed the implementation of the 'Strategic Partnership Council Agreement' signed between the two sides during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Saudi Arabia in October 2019," the MEA said.

The two sides also discussed bilateral cooperation in multilateral forums such as the United Nations, G-20 and Gulf Cooperation Council.

"The External Affairs Minister congratulated Saudi Arabia on its successful presidency of G-20 last year despite the Covid-19 pandemic," the MEA said.

The visit by the Saudi Foreign Minister came at a time India has been engaged with all leading powers on the developments in Afghanistan.

Being a major regional player, Saudi Arabia's position on the developments in Kabul assumes significance as several countries in the Gulf region, including Qatar and Iran, were playing a role in the Afghan peace process before the Taliban's capture of power.

not "inclusive".

He made the remarks during a virtual address at a meeting on Afghanistan of the heads of state of the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation.

# BJP WILL CROSS 350 SEATS: YOGI

"We have reached the position where the exports are at Rs 1.61 lakh crore making Uttar Pradesh as the export hub while the MSME sector, which was lying in the dumps during the previous regime, has become growth engine of the economy and with the flagship One District One Product (ODOP) scheme, promoting the traditional crafts and craftsmen has been a grand success," the chief minister said.

The chief minister said that the Covid management of his government proved to be a torchbearer for many states with health infrastructure having been created during the most trying times. "Earlier in the previous governments, the relief in disaster situations could not reach the needy for months but my government changed the system to a great deal and provided instant relief to the people in crisis," he said.

Yogi said that the hallmark of his government was the underlying mantra of transparency in governance and ensuring benefits of the welfare schemes to all without discrimination. "Only because of this, the government has been enjoying overwhelming support of the masses which would be the sole criterion of satisfaction for all of us," he said.

Taking a jibe at the opposition again, the chief minister said, "They used to mock us on Ayodhya Ram temple construction date. Now they are silent as the construction of the grand temple at Ayodhya has taken off." He added, "The Deepotsav at Ayodhya, Dev Deepawali at Kashi and Rangostav at Barsana, Mathura have become the symbol of our ancient culture and faith."

# ₹9K CR HEROIN FROM AF SEIZED AT PORT IN GUJ

The valuation of the seized contraband has been arrived at by the DRI and customs that were undertaking the checks of the suspicious consignment.

The drug haul was made from two containers that landed at Mundra Port on Tuesday. These containers were carrying heroin in 38 bags.

The DRI officials engaged in the checks segregated the talcum powder

bags from those containing heroin after a preliminary inquiry revealed the presence of a narcotic substance in the two shipping containers.

The Afghan origin consignment was loaded at Bandar Abbas in Iran, the sources said.

The case is being handled by the Gandhidham unit of DRI which is the nearest railway network link to the Mundra Port.

The purity of the seized narcotics could not be ascertained immediately.

Following the seizures, intelligence agencies have now swung into action and are tracking the kingpin of this drug trafficking racket to unravel the entire syndicate.

The agencies maintained studied silence on the seizures.

Kandahar has been a stronghold of the Taliban and a major hub of the poppy cultivation and export of banned drugs globally. Afghanistan has the dubious distinction of supplying the highest quality of narcotics globally.

Following the takeover of Kabul on August 15, Taliban has been revitalising the drugs syndicate in collusion with the Al Qaeda and Pakistan Army-ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) combine to stave off the funds crunch that country is facing amid pending recognition of the governance structure there.

# AFGHAN BOYS STAND UP FOR GIRLS' RIGHT TO STUDY

in Afghanistan remains questionable.

The decision to prevent most female city workers from returning to their jobs is another sign that the Taliban, who overran Kabul last month, are enforcing their harsh interpretation of Islam despite initial promises by some that they would be tolerant and inclusive.

In their previous rule in the 1990s, the Taliban had barred girls and women from schools, jobs and public life. In recent days, the new Taliban government issued several decrees rolling back the rights of girls and women. It told female middle and high school students that they could not return to school for the time being, while boys in those grades resumed studies this weekend.

Female university students were informed that studies would take place in gender-segregated settings from now on, and that they must abide by a strict Islamic dress code. Under the US-backed Government deposed by the Taliban, university studies had been co-ed, for the most part.

# Indian industry to produce 2 more entire rockets: DoS

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

NSIL (NewSpace India Limited) has received three bids -- HAL-L&T, BEL-Adani-BEML, and BHEL, in response to the request for proposal (RFP) floated by it for end-to-end production of PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle). "We are now going through the techno-commercial evaluation (in respect of the three bids)", NSIL Chairman and Managing Director, Radhakrishnan D, told PTI here. He said the process will be completed within the next two months with one of the bidders bagging the contract. The selected bidder will be responsible for realisation of five numbers of PSLV. Immediately after selection of the bidder to produce the entire PSLV, NSIL will release Expression of Interest (EOI) for end-to-end production of another operational rocket -- GSLV-Mk III (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle) -- in a similar fashion, Radhakrishnan said.

"I am targeting before the end of this year (to release EOI for GSLV-Mk III)", he said.

NSIL also has plans to realise SSLV (Small Satellite Launch Vehicle), being developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) with the first development flight expected by this year-end, through Indian industry partners. "We are waiting for the first mission (of SSLV) to happen successfully", Radhakrishnan said. "This (SSLV) will be an ideal candidate for industry production".

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

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



# India becoming destination for healthy food items

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

The minister was participating a session on "Working

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

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

Govt promoting biofortified varieties to address malnutrition

farmers.

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

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

# BJP questions choice of Channi as Punjab CM

Recalls 'MeToo' charges against him

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

PTI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I will never allow that

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

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

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

# Ration card-related assistance now available at common services centres

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



ability of ration and register their grievance, it said.

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

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

ration cards and help them get access to the public distribution system and various government schemes for free ration."

Moreover, the online services of CSC will also be made available at fair price shops that include PM welfare schemes, G2C services, education and skilling courses, financial services, health care and utility bill payments services. For this, CSC will undertake training and capacity building of fair price shop dealers on providing these services, Tyagi added.

# India logs 30,773 new Covid cases, 309 fatalities



PTI ■ JAIPUR

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

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

The death toll has further climbed to 4,448,38 with 309 daily fatalities, while active caseload declines to 3.32 lakh

Meanwhile, 38,945 more people were discharged in the last 24 hours, taking the total

recoveries in the country to 32,671,167.

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

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

A total of 80,33,75,147 vaccine doses have been administered so far, said the Union health ministry in an official statement released on Saturday.

It further stated that out of these 80 crore, the last 10 crore Covid-19 vaccine doses were

administered in just 11 days.

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

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

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

# Rajasthan CM's OSD resigns after tweet sparks row

PTI ■ JAIPUR

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

# Deferments by courts causing unnecessary burden on us: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

The names were cleared



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

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

Besides, the marathon col-

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

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

# Govt to launch telemedicine project at AIIMS, Raipur



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

fisheries cooperatives in the Northern State.

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

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

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

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

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



## Uncertainty

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

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



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

### PICTALK



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

AP

## Jumping ship

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

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



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

# Building defence of peace in mind

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



JS RAJPUT

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### COLD SHOULDER TO AN ALLY

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

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

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

### LURES WORTH FALLING FOR?

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

## Rift within consumes the Captain



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

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

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

G David Milton | Maruthancode

Indian team win most of the home series. And, his overseas performance improved a lot in recent years. He remains unperturbed during tight situations and played his role as a cool coach.

Watching Shastri grow from a lanky left-arm spinner into an allrounder who opened the innings for India in Tests and then crowned as Champion of Champions was a stunning transformation. Ravi Shastri is surely one of the most successful cricketer-cum-coaches who set higher standards for himself and players around him. During Shastri’s tenure, India also recorded T20 series wins in South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and England. In his last assignment in England, his book launch at the time of pandemic and some of his partial acts like dropping Ashwin hastened his exit after a successful stint as a coach.

MR Jayanthi | Mumbai

THE SHASTRI SAGA COMES TO AN END

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

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

## SOUND BITE

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

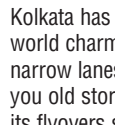


Rajasthan Chief Minister —Ashok Gehlot



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

Pakistan Prime Minister —Imran Khan



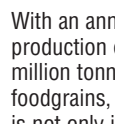
Kolkata has an old-world charm...its narrow lanes tell you old stories, and its flyovers show how modern the city is.

Actor —Yami Gautam



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

Former West Indies captain —Darren Sammy



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

Union Agriculture Minister —Narendra Singh Tomar



FIRST COLUMN

CONSUMERS EASY PREY TO FOOT THE BILL

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



AMIYA KUMAR SAHU

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# ‘Cabbage tactic’ to seize waters

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



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



hinting towards its future expansionism.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

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



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

# Why do we need nurses with disabilities?

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

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



SATENDRA SINGH

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

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

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



College, causing her to lose an academic year. Thankfully, the Supreme Court and the Goa High Court have already granted MBBS admission to girls with an amputated arm in Gujarat and Goa, respectively.

The INC does not need to repeat NMC's embarrassing gaffes. The INC's new curriculum mentions the keyword “dignity” six times, whereas NMC's patented competency-based Medical Education Curriculum does not. In the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# ‘Delhi-Mumbai E-way to fetch ₹1,500 cr per month’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Gadkari, who just completed a whirlwind tour to assess the progress of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway that will pass through four states apart from the national capital, said the national highways infrastructure is a world-class success story.

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



Nitin Gadkari

he told PTI in an interview. The Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is likely to be completed by March 2023 and is being built as part of the first phase of the ‘Bharatmala Pariyojana’.

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

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

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

“NHAI was not in a debt trap, and it will never be in debt trap in future. It is a gold mine, and is on strong footing... In the next five years, NHAI’s toll income will rise to Rs 1.40 lakh crore per year from current toll income of Rs 40,000 crore,” Gadkari noted.

In March, the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture had expressed its displeasure over a whopping Rs 97,115 crore-debt servicing liability on NHAI.

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

The Union Cabinet recently approved a blockbuster relief package for the stressed telecom sector that includes a four-year break for companies from paying statutory dues, permission to share scarce airwaves, change in the definition of revenue on which levies are paid and 100 per cent foreign investment through the automatic route.

The measures, aimed at providing relief to companies such as Vodafone Idea Ltd (VIL) that have to pay thousands of crores in unprovisioned past statutory dues, also include the scrapping of Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC) for airwaves

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Labour codes unlikely to be implemented this fiscal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

The four codes have been passed by Parliament. But for implementation of these codes, rules under these must be notified by central as well as state governments for enforcing those in respective jurisdictions.

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

Once the wages code comes into force, there will be significant changes in the way basic pay and provident fund of employees are calculated. The labour ministry had envisaged implementing the four codes on industrial

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Vi (Vodafone Idea) has been allocated high-frequency bands like 26 gigahertz (Ghz) by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), along with the traditional 3.5 GHz spectrum band, for 5G network trials.

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

“In this trial, Vi has achieved a peak speed in excess of 3.7 Gbps with very low latency on the mmWave (millimetre wave) spectrum band,” Vi said in the statement.

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, State Bank of India and Bharti Airtel were the winners.

The valuation of Bharti Airtel jumped Rs 22,984.14 crore to reach Rs 3,99,901.97 crore.

State Bank of India added Rs 19,500.28 crore taking its market capitalisation (m-cap) to Rs 4,05,221.99 crore. The valuation of Tata Consultancy Services climbed Rs 14,315.33 crore to Rs 14,16,903.13 crore and that of HDFC Bank jumped Rs 8,664.66 crore to Rs 8,76,597.86 crore.

In contrast, the market valuation of Reliance Industries tumbled Rs 22,219.75 crore to Rs 15,15,380.48 crore.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

“We have suggested rationalisation of the tax on these footwears,” he said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Countries which share land borders with India are China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and Afghanistan. As per that decision, FDI proposals from these countries need government approval for investments in India in any sector.

The major sectors under which these FDI proposals mainly came included manufacturing of heavy machinery, automobile, auto components; computer software and hardware; trading, ecommerce, and manufacturing of light engineering and electrical, the official said.

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

“This week is going to be critical for the Indian market after a recent outperformance because there is some weakness in global markets where the outcome of FOMC’s meeting, which is scheduled for September 21-22, will be a critical factor.

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

## What makes ETFs an ideal choice for investors?

When it comes to investing, your returns are as good as the portfolio you construct and to get the portfolio right you have to get the asset class – equity, debt, and commodity – allocation aligned with your objectives. For this, you need to spend sufficient time to identify and analyse each asset class and then determine the level of allocation. One the target asset allocation is decided; you then need to identify the investments within each. There are several macro and micro factors that affect the market sentiments, leading to sharp variation in performance. And staying up to date on all these factors, consistently, is not easy.

In such cases, a passive investment instrument like the Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) can be an ideal solution. Simply put, an ETF is a pooled investment fund that tracks and replicates an index – which can invest in different asset classes such as equity, debt and gold. Typically, any ETF takes the entire list of securities in the index, which may include stocks, bonds, commodities, and currencies, and develops a basket of them in the same proportion as the index. Each basket has its own ticker. You can purchase a share of that basket, just as you would buy a company’s stock. More importantly, ETF shares can be bought and sold anytime during market hours. Hence its price fluctuates depending on the net asset value of the underlying basket of securities that it represents.

This is the key differentiation that ETFs offer. It gives you the diversification benefits of mutual funds while replicating the simplicity with which equities can be exchanged. If you are looking for a long-term buying and holding strategy, then ETF would be an option worth considering. Given the convenience, diversification and cost-effectiveness that ETFs offer, this category has started seeing increasing interest from both new-age as well as experienced investors.

Here’s are six aspects that make ETFs an important addition to your portfolio:

**Easy Diversification:** Using ETFs, you can get exposure to multiple asset classes, like equities, bonds and gold. Each asset class behaves differently and has little to no co-relation in its performance. This helps you tide over volatility in a single asset class and protects returns.

**Wider Spread:** In an ETF, any investment you make is distributed among a wide set of securities that are a part of the underlying index. For example, if you invest Rs 500 in an ETF, your money will get distributed within all stocks comprised in the index. This is advantageous compared to equities, wherein you need to buy a whole share of a single company.

**Provide Liquidity:** ETFs trade daily on the exchange and do not have a lock-in period. This provides you with the benefit of liquidity, which means you can exit your investments easily whenever the need arises.

**Cost-Effective:** ETFs have lower management fees since they are not actively managed funds.

**Trading Flexibility:** Another advantage of ETFs is that they provide trading flexibility. In other words, daily trading, as well as intraday trading, is possible with these funds during market hours. This provides you an opportunity to better utilize trading opportunities that arise in the course of the day.

**Greater Transparency:** ETFs replicate the benchmark index, and the constituents are transparently available to you at all times. Also the passive approach helps your investment provide returns that are in tandem with the benchmark index’s returns.

To sum up, the multi-pronged benefits offered by an ETF – ranging from liquidity and flexibility to diversification and transparency – make it a valuable addition to your portfolio. Based on your financial goals and investment needs, you can choose to allocate a portion of your portfolio to an ETF.

— Ashwin Patni  
Head, Products & Alternatives, Axis AMC



# France knew of our sub concerns: Morrison

AP ■ CANBERRA

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

France accused Australia of concealing its intentions to back out of the 90 billion Australian dollar (USD 66 billion) contract for French majority state-owned Naval Group to build 12 conventional diesel-electric submarines.

President Joe Biden revealed last week a new alliance including Australia and Britain that would deliver an Australian fleet of at least eight nuclear-powered submarines.

Morrison blamed the switch on a deteriorating strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific. He has not specifically referred to China’s massive military buildup, which has gained pace in recent years.

“The capability that the Attack class submarines were going to provide was not what Australia needed to protect our sovereign interests,”



Morrison said.

“They would have had every reason to know that we have deep and grave concerns that the capability being delivered by the Attack class submarine was not going to meet our strategic interests and we have made very clear that we would be making a decision based on our strategic national interest,” he added, referring to the French government.

France responded to the contract cancellation, which Morrison has said will cost his government at least USD 1.7 billion, by recalling its ambassadors from Australia and the United States.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian on Saturday denounced what he called the

“duplicité, disdain and lies” surrounding the sudden end of the contract and said France was now questioning the strength of the alliance.

China has denounced the sharing of such US and British nuclear technology as irresponsible. France won the contract in 2016 over offers from Germany and Japan. The Shortfin Barracuda was to be a nuclear submarine design adapted to be powered by diesel on the surface and battery underwater.

Japan was particularly disappointed because then-Prime Minister Tony Abbott had promised the close defense ally the contract before he was deposed by his own party in 2015.

# ‘Explosion targeted Taliban, 2nd in as many days’

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

The Taliban and IS extremists are enemies, and fought each other even before the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan last month.

Witnesses say Sunday’s blast targeted a vehicle of the border police, which is now run by the Taliban. Initial reports said five people were killed, including two civilians, among them a child. The Taliban were not immediately available for comment about possible casualties among their ranks.

Female employees in the Kabul city government have been told to stay home, with work only allowed for those who cannot be replaced by men, the interim mayor of Afghanistan’s capital said Sunday, detailing the latest restrictions on women by the new Taliban rulers.

The decision to prevent most female city workers from returning to their jobs is another sign that the Taliban, who overran Kabul last month, are enforcing their harsh interpretation of Islam despite initial promises by some that they would be tolerant and inclusive.



In their previous rule in the 1990s, the Taliban had barred girls and women from schools, jobs and public life.

In recent days, the new Taliban government issued several decrees rolling back the rights of girls and women. It told female middle- and high school students that they could not return to school for the time being, while boys in those grades resumed studies this weekend.

Female university students were informed that studies would take place in gender-segregated settings from now on, and that they must abide by a strict Islamic dress code. Under the U.S.-backed government deposed by the Taliban, university studies had been co-ed, for the most part.

# Trailblazing tourist trip to orbit ends with splashdown

AP ■ CAPE CANAVERAL

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

Their SpaceX capsule parachuted into the ocean just before sunset, not far from where their chartered flight began three days earlier.

The all-amateur crew was the first to circle the world without a professional astronaut.

The billionaire who paid undisclosed millions for the trip and his three guests wanted to show that ordinary people could blast into orbit by themselves, and SpaceX founder Elon Musk took them on as the company’s first rocket-riding tourists.

“Your mission has shown the world that space is for all of us,” SpaceX Mission Control radioed.

“It was a heck of a ride for us ... Just getting started,” replied trip sponsor Jared Isaacman, referring to the growing number of private flights on the horizon.

SpaceX’s fully automated Dragon capsule reached an unusually high altitude of 363 miles (585 kilometers) after

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

The four streaked back through the atmosphere early Saturday evening.

The first space travellers to end their flight in the Atlantic since Apollo 9 in 1969, SpaceX’s two previous crew splashdowns — carrying astronauts for NASA — were in the Gulf of Mexico.

Within a few minutes, a pair of SpaceX boats pulled up alongside the bobbing capsule. When the hatch was opened on the recovery ship, health care worker Hayley Arceneaux was the first one out, flashing a big smile and thumbs up.

All appeared well and happy.

Their families were waiting near the scene of Wednesday night’s launch from NASA’s Kennedy Space Center.

This time, NASA was little more than an encouraging bystander, its only tie being the Kennedy launch pad once used for the Apollo moonshots and shuttle crews, but now leased by SpaceX.

# Israeli Army arrests last 2 of 6 Palestinian prison escapees

AP ■ JERUSALEM

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

The two were captured during an Israeli army raid in their hometown of Jenin in the occupied West Bank, closing an intense, embarrassing pursuit that exposed security flaws after the six tunneled out of their cell on September 6.

Palestinian media reported that clashes erupted in Jenin when Israeli troops entered the city, but a spokesperson for Israeli police said the two escapees, Munadil Nafayat and Iham Kamamji, were arrested without resistance from a house where they had taken refuge and were taken for questioning. Fouad Kamamji, Iham’s

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

Five of the prisoners are from the Islamic Jihad militant group, with four of them serving life sentences, and the sixth is a member of the secular Fatah group of President Mahmoud Abbas.

For the Palestinians, the prisoners who dug the tunnel for months and escaped were “heroes”.

For Israel, they were “terrorists” who took part or planned attacks that targeted the Israeli military and civilians.



# Haitians on Texas border unfazed by US plans to expel them

AP ■ DEL RIO

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

Scores of people waded back and forth across the Rio Grande on Saturday afternoon, re-entering Mexico to purchase water, food and diapers in Ciudad Acuña before returning to the Texas encampment under and near a bridge in the border city of Del Rio.

Junior Jean, a 32-year-old man from Haiti, watched as people cautiously carried cases of water or bags of food through the knee-high river water. Jean said he lived on the streets in Chile the past four years, resigned to searching for food in garbage cans.

“We are all looking for a better life,” he said.

Biden Administration Plans Mass Deportation Of Haitian Migrants In Del Rio, Texas

NATIONAL Biden Administration Plans Mass Deportation Of Haitian Migrants In Del Rio, Texas

The Department of Homeland Security said Saturday that it moved about 2,000 of the migrants from the camp to other locations Friday for processing and possible



removal from the U.S. Its statement also said it would have 400 agents and officers in the area by Monday morning and would send more if necessary.

The announcement marked a swift response to the sudden arrival of Haitians in Del Rio, a Texas city of about 35,000 people roughly 145 miles (230 kilometers) west of San Antonio. It sits on a relatively remote stretch of border that lacks capacity to hold and process such large numbers of people.

A U.S. official told The Associated Press on Friday that the U.S. would likely fly the migrants out of the country on five to eight flights a day, starting Sunday, while another official expected no more than two a day and said everyone would be tested for COVID-19. The first official said operational capacity and Haiti’s willingness to accept flights would determine how many flights there would be. Both officials were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on

the condition of anonymity.

Told of the U.S. plans Saturday, several migrants said they still intended to remain in the encampment and seek asylum. Some spoke of the most recent devastating earthquake in Haiti and the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, saying they were afraid to return to a country that seems more unstable than when they left.

“In Haiti, there is no security,” said Fabricio Jean, a 38-year-old Haitian who arrived with his wife and two daughters. “The country is in a political crisis.”

Haitians have been migrating to the U.S. in large numbers from South America for several years, many having left their Caribbean nation after a devastating 2010 earthquake. After jobs dried up from the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, many made the dangerous trek by foot, bus and car to the U.S. border, including through the infamous Darien Gap, a Panamanian jungle.

# Climate change focus of PM Boris at UNGA, says UK

PTI ■ LONDON

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

More than 100 Heads of State and Government as well as Foreign Ministers and diplomats will participate in-person in the annual General Debate, beginning September 21 through September 27.

Prime Minister Johnson, who will also visit the White House for the first time since Joe Biden became the US President, will be joining

Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the UNGA meeting among the world leaders scheduled to attend the meeting in person.

The visit is seen as an important precursor to the

26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) UN climate summit, to be hosted by the UK in Glasgow in November.

“World leaders have a small window of time left to deliver on their climate commitments ahead of COP26,” Johnson said ahead of the UNGA.

“My message to those I meet this week will be clear: future generations will judge us based on what we achieve in the coming months. We need to continue to make a case for a sustainable recovery from coronavirus rooted in green growth.”

“And we have a responsibility to ensure the benefits of that growth extend to all, no matter where they are born,” he said.

According to the UK media reports, Johnson intends to push for an action on coal, climate, cars and trees in particular.



# Vladimir Putin’s party set to retain parliamentary majority after polls

AFP ■ MOSCOW

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

The vote comes in the wake of an unprecedented crackdown on the opposition this year, with Russian authorities jailing Putin’s best-known domestic foe Alexei Navalny and banning his organisations as “extremist”.

In the lead-up to this weekend’s vote, all of his top allies were arrested or had fled the country, with anyone associated with his groups kept from running in the parliamentary and local polls scheduled to close at 8:00 pm Sunday across 11 time zones.

“These essentially aren’t elections. People in effect have no choice,” 43-year-old businessman Vladimir Zakharov told AFP in Russia’s second city Saint Petersburg.

The elections were also marred by claims of censorship



and rampant ballot stuffing.

As voting kicked off Friday, Apple and Google caused an uproar among Russia’s opposition after they removed Navalny’s “Smart Voting” app, which showed supporters which candidate they should back to unseat Kremlin-aligned politicians.

Sources familiar with Google and Apple’s decision told AFP the move was taken under pressure from Russian authorities, including threats to arrest the tech giants’ local staff. By late Friday, the popular Telegram messenger had

also removed Navalny’s “Smart Voting” bot, and by Sunday Google Docs and YouTube videos containing the lists of the recommended candidates had also been blocked.

Navalny’s team, which promptly made new Google Docs and YouTube videos with the lists, said that Google had complied with demands made by Russia’s media regulator Roskomnadzor.

In a final pitch to voters from behind bars on Sunday, Navalny wrote on Instagram: “Today is a day when your voice truly matters.”

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

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

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

The white flags of the Afghan Taliban were spotted on the rooftop of the Jamia Hafsa, a women’s madrasa in the capital, on Saturday, Dawn newspaper reported.

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

Officers of the capital administration said Aziz openly threatened the police, who arrived at the seminary to remove the flags, with dire consequences by using the name of the Afghan Taliban.

Some people affiliated with the seminary, including Aziz, also displayed weapons.

The seminary students and teachers also challenged the police and taunted them with remarks, sparking tension in the area. “Area cleared, flags removed, case registered,” the deputy commissioner Islamabad wrote on his Twitter handle. This was the third time since August 21 the Afghan Taliban flags were hoisted on the seminary. Earlier, at least five white flags were found installed on the rooftop of the seminary. Hoisting of any flag is not a crime, as no law addresses the issue or under which legal action can be taken, the officers said, adding that the cleric took advantage of the legal lacuna.

# Policeman escorting polio workers killed in Pakistan

AP ■ PESHAWAR

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

The constable was killed by the gunmen riding a motorcycle while he was joining the polio workers in the tribal district of Dhal Behzadi of Kohat district, about 75 kilometres south of provincial capital Peshawar.

Members of the vaccination party are said to be safe. No group has yet taken responsibility for the attack.

Police teams rushed to the area and started a cordon and search operation for the attackers.

Chief Minister Mehmud Khan condemned the attack and vowed to nab the perpetrators. Such acts of cowardice cannot deter our resolve to wipe out this crippling disease, he said.

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

AFP ■ PARIGI

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

The military earlier said the militants killed late Saturday were Ali Kalora, leader of the East Indonesia Mujahideen network that has claimed several killings of police officers and minority Christians, and another suspected extremist, Jaka Ramadan, also known as Ikrima.

The two men were fatally shot by a joint team of military and police officers in Central Sulawesi province’s mountainous Parigi Moutong district. It borders Poso district, considered an extremist hotbed in the province.

Several pictures obtained by The Associated Press from authorities showed an M16 rifle and backpacks laid near their bloodied bodies. The Central Sulawesi Police Chief Rudy Sufahriadi told a news conference on Sunday that security forces also seized two ready-to-use bombs from their backpacks, which also contained food and camping tools.

He said the bodies of Kalora and his follower have been evacuated to a police hospital in Palu, the provincial capital, after the rugged terrain and darkness hampered earlier evacuation efforts from the scene of the shootout in the forested village of Astina.

“We urged the other four wanted terrorists to immediately surrender and dare to take responsibility for their actions before the law,” said Sufahriadi, referring to remaining members of the East Indonesia Mujahideen who are still at large in the jungle on Sulawesi island.





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

—Shilpa Shetty

# ON BOTH SIDES OF THE LINE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

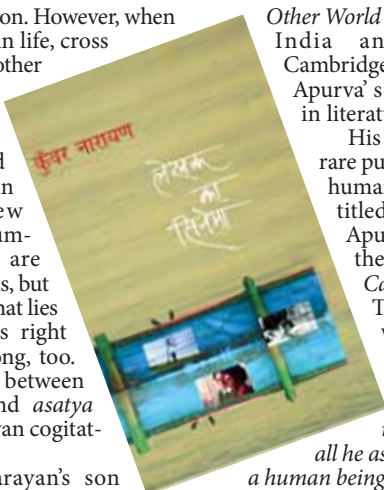
His poem *Rekha Ke Dono Or* (English: *On Both Sides Of The Line*) is a highly complex poem, with metaphorical geometrical and mathematical references that one is surrounded by. In a manner, it becomes philosophical poem, too. '*Ek bindu se dusre tak, ek seedhi rekha me agar ve daudta chala jata toh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

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

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

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

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



## WEBBED



### BIRDS OF PARADISE

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

## 40 is the new 20

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

—IANS

A recent survey conducted by iSchoolConnect revealed that 42 per cent of undergrads and 49 per cent of graduates considered the 'chance' to pursue a career in the US a key factor while choosing universities. However, not all students are aware of the process they need to follow for securing a successful future in the US, or any other country abroad.

Securing admission at a university abroad is only the first step in ensuring that your life's work is valued and accredited. It is getting a visa — be it a student visa, an exchange visa, or a work visa — that's tricky. The application process for these visas isn't straightforward and requires students to be aware of the finer details. Additionally, there's immense competition amongst aspirants looking to secure a work visa.

While profile building is something students can work upon themselves, the information needed to apply for these visas can be easily found if they refer to the right sources.

### Why do I need a work permit?

A work permit, also known as a work visa, is a document authorised by the government of the country a student wishes to work in. Unlike the student visa, which lets students pursue education at a recognised institution, the work visa allows them to stay back and work in the country for a set number of years, given that they satisfy certain predetermined conditions — like having a job offer, being promised a salary above a certain amount, and so on.

### How to get a work permit after graduating from a university abroad?

These predetermined conditions, along with the period for which students are allowed to work, vary from one country to another. And so does the application process.

However, any student with a general idea of when and how to apply for a work visa will find it easy to navigate through the process —

### ◆Check if you need a work visa at all.

The relations of any country with another vary vastly, which affects the rules and regulations revolving around getting to work in the country. For example, if a student plans to work in Germany and is from the EEA/EU, US, Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, or the Republic of Korea, she/he can work in Germany without a visa and will only

## A smooth switch

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



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



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

### ◆Find out which work visa to apply for.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### ◆Collect all the required documents.

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

### ◆Pay and submit your application.

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

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

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

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

## TRENDBLAZER



### IT'S HIGH TIME WE OPEN UP: JANHVI

Youth icon and actor **JANHVI KAPOOR** expressed, "It is high time that we speak openly and freely about feminine hygiene care, and I think that's the first step in making sanitary pads more easily accessible to a larger number of women in our country."

Janhvi, who is face of the brand Patee Sanitary Pads, concluded, "Accessibility to sanitary pads is extremely important to a woman's physical and mental health. Periods are natural and healthy and I strongly advocate the need to encourage educational conversation around it."



### fairtalk

VARUN SOOD

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



### dailytalk

RENUKA SHAHANE

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

### ENRIQUE RELEASES ALBUM AFTER 7 YEARS

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

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







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

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

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

## WRECKING LIVES

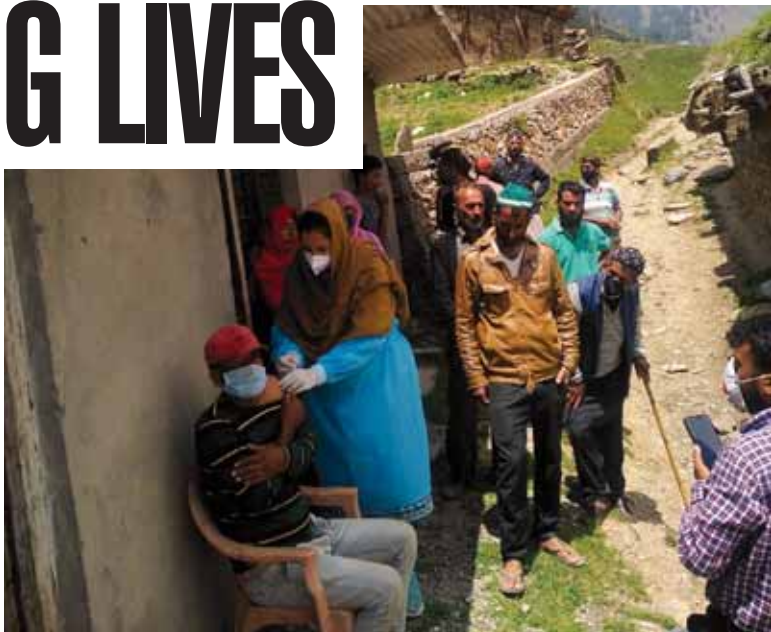
SHAZIYA CHOWDHARY shares how Covid-19 is affecting the nomadic tribes residing in the remote regions of Jammu and Kashmir

increased in the last 19 months due to the pandemic.

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

### Dwindling livelihood

As these nomadic tribes largely



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

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

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

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

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

### Challenges in establishing vaccine centres

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

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

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

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

—Charkha Features



## Education: A tool for social change

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

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

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

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



“How can I say no?”  
“What if they feel bad?”  
“I cannot say no to my boss...”  
“My children need me.”  
“I have done it for my spouse for so long; now it feels like a habit.”  
While you are stuck with your commitments or someone else’s additional work that you took on unwittingly, do these excuses cross your mind?

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

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

### Why do we say ‘yes’?

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

## Breaking free from the loop

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



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

### How it becomes a harmful pattern

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

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

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

### Repercussions

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



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

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

### How to say ‘no’ assertively

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Saying ‘no’ more often means saying yes to more self-care, better health and your overall well being. (The author is an ontological coach and author.)

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

### BACK TO SCHOOL — GOOD FOR HEALTH

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

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

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

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



### GREEN TEA AND COCOA TO TACKLE SARCOPENIA

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

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

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



### INDIA PLANS TO ELIMINATE COAL

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

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

The report says Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan are showing leadership in cancelling projects and making political statements that they will no longer pursue new coal power. While, India has not engaged in discussion on moving away from coal for multiple reasons, progress is being made at the sub-national level, with several states considering pivoting away from new coal.



### INTERVENTIONS FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

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

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

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



### MICROPLASTICS FOUND IN SAL RIVER

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

The study states that MPs found in water, sediment and biota from the Sal estuary are dominated by fibres (55.3 per cent, 76.6 per cent and 72.9 per cent, respectively), followed by fragments, films and other plastics. The prominent ubiquity of fibres in all three matrices suggests a variety of sources of MPs, including domestic sewage, effluents from industries and laundry.

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





# Ruturaj, bowlers shine as Chennai pip Mumbai

PTI ■ DUBAI

The gifted Ruturaj Gaikwad laid the foundation with an unbeaten 58-ball 88 before Dwayne Bravo led an excellent bowling display to power Chennai Super Kings to a crushing 20-run win over Mumbai Indians in the IPL here on Sunday.

Gaikwad batted through the innings to lift Chennai Super Kings from a precarious 7/3 to 156 for six as the IPL-14 resumed in the UAE after the first phase in India was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic in May.

The late spark was provided by Bravo (23 off 8 balls) as CSK recovered from a disastrous start to put up a fighting total.

Chasing 157 on a pitch where the ball often stopped on the batsmen, MI too were off to a poor start as they slipped to 37 for three in the sixth over at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

Both Quinton de Kock (17) and debutant Annolpreet Singh (16) got out after getting starts, the bowler being pacer Deepak Chahar on both occasions.

Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan too made their way back to the dugout in quick succession to leave MI in a spot of bother at 58 for four in the 10th over.

Saurabh Tiwary (50 not out) and stand-in skipper Kieron Pollard tried to forge a partnership before Josh Hazlewood had the big-hitting all-rounder from Trinidad trapped in front of the wicket. CSK brightened their



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

BCCI

prospects further when Krunal Pandya was run out by the Dwayne Bravo-MS Dhoni combination.

Tiwary and Adam Milne tried but could not succeed, with the latter getting out to the experienced Bravo in the second ball of the 20th over.

Bravo picked up 3/25 while Chahar had 2/19 as MI ended at 136 for eight.

Earlier, the 24-year-old Gaikwad added 81 runs for the fifth wicket with Ravindra Jadeja (26) to steady the ship after they lost skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni in the sixth over with the score reading 24 for 4.

Gaikwad smashed nine

fours and three sixes, while Bravo hit three maximums as CSK scored 112 runs in the back 10.

CSK lost four wickets in the power play, including the wickets of skipper Dhoni and the team's seasoned run-getter Suresh Raina, as three top-order batsmen failed to open their account.

The start was inauspicious for CSK as Trent Boult dismissed Faf du Plessis in the fifth ball of the very first over when the New Zealand pace spearhead had the veteran South African caught by the backward point fielder Adam Milne, who was standing very fine, after the batsman had

shaped himself up to play the cut shot.

One for one became two for two in the next over as Milne got Moeen Ali who slapped a slightly short ball straight to Saurabh Tiwary at cover.

What didn't help Moeen was that the ball seemed to stop as the England all-rounder went for his shot.

More trouble was in store for CSK as the three-time winners lost the big wicket of Raina in the third over when the experienced left-handed batsman, who has helped the team win so many matches in the past, got out to an irresponsible shot when he miscued one while trying to attack the Kiwi seamer.

Meanwhile, Ambati Rayudu retired hurt after taking a blow on his body to make matter worse for the Super Kings. If that was not enough, holders Mumbai Indians piled more misery on CSK by sending the veteran Dhoni back to the hut for a poor score.

The World Cup-winning Indian captain timed his shot well but, to his shock, Boult completed a well-judged catch at deep square leg, capping a forgettable powerplay for the unit from Chennai.

After that, Gaikwad and Jadeja put together invaluable runs by mixing caution with aggression to give their team a total to defend against a side that is missing two of their big players in regular skipper Rohit Sharma and all-rounder Hardik Pandya, whose seam-up bowling was missed when the Chennai duo was rebuilding their innings.

# Struggling KKR look to script turnaround against RCB

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

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

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

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

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

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

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

Even though KKR leads in head-to-head record against RCB, winning 18 and losing 13 out of 28 fixtures played between the two sides, the 38-run defeat against Kohli's team in the first half of the event in Chennai would be fresh on their players' minds. KKR's two wins earlier this year came against two under-performing sides — Punjab Kings, who are placed just a rung above them, and bottom-placed Sunrisers Hyderabad.

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

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

While Gill scored just 132 runs, Rana managed 201 runs in the first seven games for KKR in this year's IPL, which was post-

## Kohli to quit RCB captaincy

PTI ■ DUBAI

Virat Kohli will step down as captain of his IPL team Royal Challengers Bangalore at the end of the ongoing season, the Indian batting maestro announced on Sunday, two days after deciding to quit national T20 captaincy following next month's World Cup.

The 32-year-old will quit the India T20 captaincy to manage the immense workload that he has been enduring as an all-format skipper and his decision to leave the leadership role in franchise cricket is part of those efforts.

"This will be my last IPL as captain of RCB. I'll continue to be an RCB player till I play my last IPL game. I thank all the RCB fans for believing in me and supporting me," Kohli said in a video statement issued by RCB. "I have spoken to the squad. It was something that was on my mind as I recently announced stepping down as T20 captain to manage my workload which has been immense.

"I want to be clear about how I want to move forward. I have made it clear to the management that I can't think of being in any other team apart from RCB," he

added.

Kohli was inducted in the RCB squad in 2008, when the league came into existence, and started leading the side in 2013. He has not managed to win the IPL title even once but was never removed from captaincy due to his immense brand value.

"It is just a little halt, not the end of the journey. The journey will continue," he asserted. One of the most decorated players of the franchise, the star batsman will continue to be a part of the RCB squad. Kohli has been enduring a tough phase in which he has gone without a Test century in two years and perhaps the decision will help focus on the longest format of the game. He has managed 563 runs at 26.80 in 12 Tests during this period.

"It has been a great and an inspiring journey, captaining a talented bunch of players in the RCB squad.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank the RCB management, coaches, support staff, players, and the entire RCB family, who have been instrumental in the growth of the franchise over the years. "It wasn't an easy decision but one that has been well thought of and in the best interest of this wonderful franchise."

poned in April following multiple COVID-19 cases inside the bio-bubble in India.

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

Dinesh Karthik, Andre Russell, Rahul Tripathy and Shakib Al Hasan too need to come good for KKR if the team harbours any hopes of making it to the play-offs.

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

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

With Glenn Maxwell (223 runs from 7 games) and AB de Villiers (207 runs from

7) leading the run scorers chart till now for the team, RCB's batting unit looks ominous.

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

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

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

## Gill and Rana are quality players: David Hussey

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the second phase of the IPL 2021, Kolkata Knight Riders' mentor David Hussey believes openers Shubman Gill and Nitish Rana will "shock the world" with their batting in UAE.

KKR did not have a successful opening leg of IPL 2021 and the reason was the failure of their opening pair.

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

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



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

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

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

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

IANIS ■ DUBAI

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

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



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

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

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

## India win silver in Asian U18 Girls' Rugby Sevens Championship

IANIS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

## Atletico Madrid held by Athletic Club Bilbao in La Liga

IANIS ■ MADRID

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

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



just Oblak to beat.

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

## Pakistan will overcome crisis: PCB chairman after NZ tour pullout

IANIS ■ LAHORE

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

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

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

the tour given the advice he was receiving.

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

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

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

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

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

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



and ODI Cricket."

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

tremendous job," Lara said during a video interaction with cricket.com on Saturday.

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

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

## Indian paddlers shine in ITTF Kazakhstan Open

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Kazakh pair of Alan Kurmangaliyev and Kirill Gerassimenko.

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

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

## McClenaghan to Hafeez: Don't blame players for cancellation

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

New Zealand players shouldn't be blamed for the cancellation of the tour of Pakistan as they were just following the advice of their government, said Kiwi pacer Mitchell McClenaghan.

The 35-year-old pacer was reacting to a sarcastic tweet by batsman Mohammed Hafeez on Saturday on eve of the departure of the New Zealand team from Pakistan.

"Come now bro. This has a bad taste to it... Don't blame the players or the organisation... blame our government. They have only acted on the advice they have received. I'm absolutely certain these young men -- all wanting to prove themselves wanted to play. They had no choice," McClenaghan wrote on his twitter handle.

On Saturday, Hafeez had taken a dig at New Zealand Cricket (NZC) for calling off their tour of Pakistan citing security threats.

"Thanks to the security of Pakistan forces to make arrangements to @BLACKCAPS to reach at airport Safe & Sound. Wonder same route & same security but no threat today???", Hafeez had tweeted.

New Zealand had arrived in Pakistan on September 11 for a white-ball series after 18 years and were scheduled to play three ODIs and five T20 Internationals.