SATURDAY, AUGUST 21, 2021



GTA chief Anit Thapa to form new party in Darjeeling hills



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page 15

**NEARBY** 

'Centre rejects panel on oxygen-scarcity deaths'

Deputy CM Manish Sisodia on Friday said the Centre has yet again rejected the high-level committee of medical experts set up by the Delhi government to probe the oxygen-scarcity deaths in the national capital during the second wave of COVID-19.

**CITY** ▶ PAGE 3

### Cong. forms panel for coordination in Punjab

Punjab CM Amarinder Singh and his detractor Navjot Singh Sidhu on Friday agreed to set up a 10-member 'Strategic Policy Group' to expedite implementation of the various government programmes in the State.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 8



# Oppn. leaders call for unity to take on BJP

Statement from 19 parties calls for protests next month

SANDEEP PHUKAN NEW DELHI

Top Opposition leaders came together on a virtual platform on Friday to give a call for unity and working together for the "ultimate goal" of defeating the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, and providing a government that believes in the values of the freedom movement and the principles enshrined in the Constitution.

The leaders of 19 parties, who participated in the meet, issued a joint statement calling upon "the people of India to rise to the occasion to defend our secular, democratic Republican order" and announced joint protests between September 20 and 30.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi, who convened the meeting, said the Opposition parties simply had "no alternative to working cohesively together" and needed to rise above "compulsions in the interest of the nation".

### Mamata's call

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee suggested the formation of a core committee to focus on key issues that affect the people, and said parties not aligned to the Congress should also be invited as "every Opposition



The ultimate goal is the 2024 Lok Sabha election ... We all have our compulsions, but clearly, a time has come when the interests of our nation demand that we rise above them

Those who believe in secularism; those who like to work together for saving the democratic principles and ethos of our country must come together

The new India is a Modi project which is based on destruction of the Constitution. It is a battle for which the time has come to firmly decide where vou stand SITARAM YECHURY

party should be brought into the fight against the BJP".

SHARAD PAWAR

NCP president

Addressing a key point that often stalls Opposition unity, Ms. Banerjee said parties should "forget who is the leader as the people of India will lead" the fight against the BJP. Maharashtra Minister Uddhav Thackeray endorsed Ms. Baneriee's views and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin raised the issue of the Centre "undermining" federalism.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi suggested that the Opposition parties offer an alternative vision to counter the vision offered by the BIP-RSS.

Taking to Twitter, NCP leader Sharad Pawar said, "Those who believe in democracy and secularism; those who like to work together for saving the democratic principles and ethos of our country must come together."

In a show of Opposition strength, 19 parties, including the Congress, were part of the meeting. However, the Samajwadi Party dropped out at the last minute, with party chief Akhilesh Yadav informing that he was in "an interior part" of Uttar Pradesh and could not join.

**CONTINUED ON ▶** PAGE 8

# Reign of terror is never permanent: PM

### 'Somnath temple the best example and an assurance'

MAHESH LANGA AHMEDABAD

At a time when the world is anxiously concerned about the Taliban's seizure of power in Afghanistan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on the occasion of launching new projects at the historic Somnath temple on Friday, reminded the world that the reign of terror is always temporary and cannot be per-

manent. The Prime Minister, in a subtle message, said "des-



Stories in stone: The Somnath Exhibition Centre that was inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi on Thursday. • ANI

tructive and terror forces" may become dominant temporarily but were not permanent, citing the example of Somnath temple, which was

razed and plundered several times in the past and resurrected every time with grea-

"Forces that strive for des-

truction and those who follow the ideology of creating empires out of terrorism can dominate for some time, but their existence is never permanent as they cannot suppress humanity forever," he stated. The Somnath temple was the best example and also an assurance to the world. The world is apprehensive of such ideologies, he noted.

"This temple was destroyed, its statues were broken but it was resurrected again as many times as it was razed because terrorism cannot suppress faith," he observed.

**CONTINUED ON ▶** PAGE 8

### Zycov-D, first vaccine for those above 12, gets nod

Largest trial shows 66% efficacy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Drug Controller General has granted emergency approval to the Zy-

cov-D, a COVID-19 vaccine developed by the Ahmedabadbased Zydus Cadilla group, on Friday, making it the first vaccine in India that

can be administered to adults as well as those 12 and above. It is also the only DNA-

based vaccine in the world

and can be administered

without a needle, purport-

edly minimising chances of reactions Interim results from

phase-III clinical trials in July, in over 28,000 volunteers, showed a primary efficacy of 66.6% for symptomatic RT-PCR positive cases. "This has been the largest vaccine trial so far in India for CO-

VID-19," the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) said in a statement on Friday.

**CONTINUED ON ▶** PAGE 8 J&J SEEKS NOD FOR TRIAL ON **ADOLESCENTS** ▶ PAGE 10

### Delta variant driving infections in India: report

'Vaccination reduces severe disease'

JACOB KOSHY

The Delta variant remains most responsible for the continuing spread of infections in India, ac-

cording to a weekly update from the India Sars Cov2 Genome Consortium (INSACOG), a repository of labs tasked with monitoring the

coronavirus variants. According to an August 16 report by the consortium, of the 49,867 coronavirus sam-

ples analysed for their ge-

two-thirds - 30,230 - were among the internationally classified variants of concern or variants of interest (VoC/VoI). Of these, nearly 20,000 were the Delta

variant (AY.2) and about 5,000 its associated lineages (AY.1 and AY.3). "The Delta variant is

the major VoC in India at this time. Vaccination continues to be very effective in reducing severe disease and death," said an accompanying note.

netic composition, about **CONTINUED ON ▶** PAGE 8





Toothache: Pain caused due to gingivitis and bleeding gums. \*\*As per Clinical Trial No. DRF/AY/5004/CT-2 carried out by Dabur India Limited



# Light rain peppers city, mercury dips

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Several parts of the city received light rain on Friday, bringing relief from the heat. The India Meteorological Department said there is a revival of the monsoon, which was on "break" in August after bringing record rainfall to the Capital in July.

The weather station at Safdarjung, which is the official weather station of the Capital, recorded 11 mm of rainfall on Friday.

Palam and Lodhi Road stations recorded 6.4 mm and 13.4 mm of rainfall, respectively. Jafarpur, Narela, Pusa and Najafgar stations recorded no rain.

The maximum temperature settled at 32.8 degrees Celsius, one degree below normal. The minimum settled at 27.3 degree Celsius, one degree above normal.

Generally cloudy sky with moderate rain/thundershowers is forecast for Saturday. Maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to settle between 32 and 25 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile, IMD data show that three districts in Delhi have recorded 'deficit' rainfall, while four districts have gauged 'excess' precipitation so far this monsoon. Only North-East Delhi has recorded 'large deficit' rainfall – 154 mm of rainfall against the normal of 491.6 mm since June 1 – when the monsoon season starts.

East Delhi gauged 297.8 mm of rainfall so far, which is 39% less than normal. South Delhi (371.6 mm) has also recorded 24% less precipitation till now.

On an average, the Capital has received 431 mm of rainfall against the normal of 412.1 mm precipitation since June 1. Central Delhi, which was the most raindeficient district in India till July 11, has recorded 26% more rainfall – 617.1mm against the long-period average of 491.6 mm.

The monsoon arrived in Delhi on July 13 – normal onset date is June 27 – making it the most-delayed in 19 years.

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# On Shanti Path, Afghan refugees seek road to peace, better future

They have been waiting outside Embassies of Australia, Canada for three days

JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ

A number of Afghan refugees have been standing at the roundabout outside Ashoka Hotel on the road leading to Shanti Path.

They have been knocking on the doors of Embassies that dot the stretch, seeking a "road to peace".

The hope for documents to seek refuge in Australia, Canada and some European countries has kept the Afghan nationals on the street, which is a stone's throw away from the Prime Minister's residence, for three days now.

Meanwhile, the Australian Government has said there are no plans to evacuate Afghan nationals from India.

'Have not lost hope'

"Every human being in this world has hope. We will never lose our hope that we can go back to our country and rebuild it one day. Afghanistan has a glorious past but it has been torn apart by other nations as well as the Taliban. They say that a friend in need is a friend indeed and right now we are asking for friends to help us survive," says Mahadia Ahmedi, who came to Delhi to study engineering and now is complet-

Dirty picture



Afghan nationals outside the Australian High Commission in New Delhi • SANDEEP SAXENA

Ragpickers collect items from a heap of garbage at Nabi Karim near the New Delhi railway station on Friday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A 26-year-old man and his accomplice were arrested for alleg-

edly killing their colleague fol-

lowing a verbal spat with him,

The accused have been identi-

fied as Pawan Kumar and Ravi Singh Chauhan, both residents of

Vijay Vihar Phase-II in north-west

On Wednesday at 8.48 a.m., a

PCR call was received at the

Prashant Vihar police station that

a man's body with stab injuries

was lying in an open area adja-

cent to Japanese Park, a senior of-

Salman Ali, a resident of

The deceased was identified as

the police said on Friday.

Delhi, they said.

ficer said.

Two men arrested for killing

colleague after verbal spat

Manhunt on for third accused, say police

Kanjhawla.

The police got a tip-off about the presence of the accused duo

at Crowne Heights. They con-

ducted a raid and arrested the

two, Deputy Commissioner of

Police (Rohini) Pranav Tayal said.

confessed to the crime and also

revealed the identity of the third

co-accused Ravi Dibakar, Kumar

had enmity with Ali as they often

landed in arguments at their

On the day of the incident,

The accused later stabbed Ali

Chauhan asked the deceased to

and fled from the spot, police

said. Efforts are on to nab the

accompany them for drinks.

third accused, they added.

workplace, he said.

During interrogation, they

day. It is better to die with

pride than in the hands of

Mr. Ahmedi came as a stu-

dent and is now unsure of

his future. Like him, many

others have been in the

country as refugees for over

five years but have not found

'Unemployment in India'

"We do not want anything

for free. We are willing to

work hard and make a life

for ourselves. Our country

has been torn apart but we

are proud to be from Afghan-

istan. We hope that the

countries, which promised

us peace and the future, will

take responsibility for allow-

ing the Taliban to take over.

They should shelter us," says

the Taliban."

This problem is not just for the people of Afghanistan. India,

Pakistan and the entire region will face it too. This is the end of the United States of America as a world power as they have failed to provide peace in Afghanistan

AFGHAN REFUGEE

ing his MBA from a private university in Greater Noida. Mr. Ahmedi adds. "We are

Mr. Ahmedi adds, "We are all human. We are depending not upon nations but fellow humans to think about our situation and provide us with a future so that we can go back to our country one

Ahmed Walim, a refugee. Mr. Walim says he "under-

Mr. Walim says he "understands the unemployment problems in India" and hopes that some country will let him enter for work.

"This problem is not just for the people of Afghanistan. India, Pakistan and the entire region will face it too. This is the end of the U.S.A. as a world power as they have failed to provide peace in Afghanistan. Our future is hanging in the balance," says another refugee.

Other students who came to the country to study said they had hopes that they would be able to study in India and return to Afghanistan and start a business but their hopes have been dashed. "We need to know what the world is planning for us. India needs to protect us. If they can't do that, they should let whoever can. We are embarrassed that the Taliban flag is flying in our country, but we are helpless," says a student.

The Australian government, in a statement, said "Afghan nationals who are based in India and who have protection concerns should register with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) if they have not already done so."

# Online petition seeking asylum for Afghan women gets 3L signatures

'Made plea in memory of cousin who was killed by Taliban'

SHINJINI GHOSH

New Delhii
Adeeba Qayoumi, a 21-year-old woman who fled to India from Herat, Afghanistan, in 2019, has started an online petition in memory of her 29-year-old cousin Farishta – a civil rights activist killed by the Taliban last year.

As of Friday evening, the online petition, which urges the Central government to grant asylum to women and children who are fleeing Afghanistan, had received over three lakh signatures.

Speaking to *The Hindu* about her cousin, who she lost to the Taliban, Ms. Qayoumi said: "She [Farishta] was a civil rights activist and always raised her voice for the rights of women and children. Even while many of us left, she continued to stay in Afghanistan and kept raising her voice. That is why the Taliban shot her. Even her brother got shot while he was trying to save her."

With Kabul falling to the

My cousin [Farishta] ing rela vas a civil rights activist... Even when many of us left [in 2019], she stayed in Afghanistan and kept raising her

ADEEBA QAYOUM

Taliban, people are now reminded of events that took place two decades back when the country was under the strict Taliban regime, she said.

voice. That is why

the Taliban shot her

'People staying indoors'
"People are so afraid that
they are almost behaving as
if a lockdown has been imposed. This is happening because people know how the
Taliban can behave and to
what extent they can go. People are afraid that the same
things will be repeated and
hence, they are choosing to

remain indoors. It is becom-

ing worse by the day. All my relatives and friends are also trying to desperately leave Afghanistan," said Ms. Qayoumi, who now works as a translator in Delhi.

"I appeal to all governments to give these people asylum if possible, especially to the women and children who are not safe in Afghanistan. In India we are safe even though a lack of identity sometimes becomes a barrier in getting employment," she said.

Once an MBBS student at Herat University, Ms. Qayoumi said: "I had to leave Afghanistan because my mother, who is also a civil rights activist was receiving death threats from the Taliban. I had to leave my childhood and my entire life there and come to India. When I see doctors these days, I often ask myself why did this have to happen to me? Even you could have become a doctor Adeeba if things were different. I tell myself."

# Man held for conspiring to harm Tihar jail official

Audio clip of accused planning to procure an AK-47 goes viral

STAFF REPORTER

A conspiracy to harm a Deputy Superintendent of Tihar jail has been unearthed with the arrest of a 28-year-old criminal after his audio clip on planning to procure an AK-47 rifle went viral, the police said on Friday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) P.S. Kushwah said the accused has been identified as Sattender alias Satte – sharpshooter of Rohit Chaudhary gang.

The police said that in the audio, the caller on one side can be heard asking his accomplice to arrange for an AK-47 to execute the killing of a person to settle a personal score.

"Satender is also talking of causing harm to a Deputy Superintendent of Central Jail at Tihar, Delhi, to avenge the death of their accomplice – namely Ankit Gujjar in jail," Mr. Kushwah said.

**'DS sought ₹1 lakh'** Ankit was found dead inside the jail on August 4. His family alleged that he was beaten to death because the DS had asked for ₹1 lakh as "protection money" and they had only paid ₹50,000.

Subsequently, after the post-mortem report, a case on charges of murder was registered against the DS and three staffers and all of them were suspended.

While working to identify the two callers, Special Cell found that the two were Satte and one Ajay Gujjar after which surveillance was mounted on their movement. On August 17, he was arrested near Chirag Delhi.

The police said he disclosed his plan to harm the DS to avenge the death of Gujjar. He also asked Ajay to arrange for the rifle to show their power and establish supremacy in south Delhi.

Satender has over 20 criminal cases registered

against him, an officer said. Along with accomplices, he used to collect money from property dealers, satta operators and bookies, builders in south Delhi by threatening them. He was released on bail in July, the police

### Man commits robbery to 'purchase gift for girlfriend'

STAFF REPORTER

A 22-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly robbing a person at knife-point in Dwarka, the police said on Friday.

DCP (Dwarka) Santosh Kumar Meena said the accused, Virat Singh, is a resident of Dabri. "On the intervening night of Friday and Saturday, an incident of robbery was reported at Dabri police station. The complainant alleged he was going home when four men robbed him of his phone, ₹5,500 and ID + cards at knife-point near Sitapuri bus stand. He said they also stabbed him," Mr. Meena said.

The police on Tuesday received information regarding the criminals involved in the incident after which a team reached near Gurjar Dairy in Najafgarh and apprehended Singh.

"During interrogation, he disclosed that he worked in a call center in Gurugram but during the lockdown, he lost his job. He committed the crime because he wanted money to purchase a gift for his girlfriend on her birthday," Mr. Meena said, adding that the phone has been recovered.

# HC rejects bail plea of woman for threatening man with rape charges

'She had demanded ₹2 lakh, mobile phone, TV from him'

STAFF REPORTER

The Delhi High Court has declined the anticipatory bail plea of a woman who has been accused of threatening a man with rape charges if her demand of ₹2 lakh, a mobile phone, and a TV were not met.

Justice Subramonium Prasad noted that the investigation was at a nascent stage and it was yet to be ascertained if the woman was involved in any other cases. "The petitioner's [woman] voice sample has to be taken and the investigation has also to be conducted as to whether there are any other cases in which the petitioner is involved...," the court said.

The court also highlighted that the woman is accused of an offence under Section 328 IPC, which is a serious offence. "This court feels that this is not a fit case where the petitioner should be granted bail in the event of arrest. Accordingly, the petition is dismissed," the court said.

Section 328 IPC provides for punishment of upto 10 years for administration of intoxicating drug with intent



to cause hurt or commit or to facilitate the commission of an offence.

The FIR, in the present case, stated that the complainant had gone to the house of a man known to him, who introduced the accused woman to the complainant as his girlfriend.

It is claimed that after consuming a soft drink, the complainant started feeling dizzy and became unconscious.

After regaining consciousness, the complainant said he was shocked to see the woman with him in an objectionable position.

The complainant then narrated the incident to his friend. However, his friend and the woman started demanding a mobile phone, a TV and ₹2 lakh in cash from

The complainant said he

was threatened that if the demands were not met the woman would file a case of rape against him. Later, the woman filed a case of rape against him.

"A reading of the FIR shows that this is a case of honey trap. The allegation against the petitioner is that she has threatened the complainant and has demanded money," the High Court said.

"Material on record shows that only when the complainant filed the instant FIR, the petitioner filed her complaint under Section 376 [rape] of the IPC against the complainant herein," the

complainant herein," the court added.

It noted that there was "some justification" in the contention of the public prosecutor that the conduct of the woman "does show that there is a likelihood of her

fleeing from justice and that she would not cooperate with the investigation".

The probability of the woman and her boyfriend threatening the complainant also could not be ruled out at this stage, the court said

threatening the complainant also could not be ruled out at this stage, the court said while rejecting the anticipatory bail plea.

A ND-NDE

# TROUSER & JEANS Wedding Collection ARROW PARK AVENUE PUNCHKUIAN ROAD, Garwal Bhawan, (Near Jhandewalan, Gole Chkr.) WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh) JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543 NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

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# Constable suspended for assaulting fireman

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

A constable has been suspended for allegedly assaulting a fireman in Samaypur Badli, the police said on Friday.

Constable Jitender assaulted and abused a Delhi Fire Services employee who stopped him from driving on the wrong side of the road on Thursday at 6 p.m., they said.

p.m., they said. Video of the incident shows the constable [in plain clothes] abusing and assaulting a fireman.

The constable can be

The constable can be seen holding a wooden stick and trying to snatch the fireman's phone. The fireman was at that time heading towards the fire station to refill the vehicle, the police said, adding that Jitender was not drunk at the time of the incident.

Based on the complaint of the fireman, a case under relevant sections has been registered.

### Timings DELHI

SATURDAY, AUG. 21 RISE 05:54 SET 18:55 RISE 18:30 SET 04:18 SUNDAY, AUG. 22

RISE 05:55 SET 18:54 RISE 19:12 SET 05:24 MONDAY, AUG. 23

RISE 05:55 SET 18:53 RISE 19:48 SET 06:26

**Delhi Weather** Safdarjang

Delhi Palam Today 32°C Few spells of light to moderate rain and thunder-shower would continue. Light winds with cloudy sky to overcast sky.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow** 33°C Rain would decrease few spells of light rain and thunderstorm possible with cloudy sky and gentle winds

THE HINDU



### Delhi reports zero deaths, 57 fresh infections

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Capital recorded no deaths due to COVID-19, according to the health bulletin released on Friday. This is the eleventh time since the start of the second wave of the pandemic in Delhi that zero fatalities have been logged over a 24hour period.

A total of 57 new cases were reported, taking the tally to 14,37,274 on Friday. As many as 73,718 tests were conducted over the past 24 hours and the test positivity rate was 0.08%. The death toll remains at 25,079. Over 14.11 lakh patients have recovered from the virus and there are 459 active cases in the city, up from 448 on Thursday.

The number of people under home isolation is 135, and the number of containment zones has gone up to 237.

On Thursday, only 25 new cases of COVID-19 were reported – the lowest since April 15, 2020.

Since April 19, 2021, both daily cases and singleday deaths count had been spiralling up, with over 28,000 cases and 277 deaths recorded on April 20; rising to 306 fatalities on April 22. On May 3, the city registered a record 448 deaths. However, the number of cases have shown a downward trend and the positivity rate too has been shrinking in the last several weeks. The number of deaths per day, has also been showing a decline in the last several days.

### Vaccination drive

Under the vaccination drive on Friday, 1,44,929 beneficiaries were vaccinated over 24 hours out of which 1,06,733 received their first dose. A total of 1,21,00,127 beneficiaries have been vaccinated out of which 34,29,474 have received both doses.

The government said the vaccine stock will last two days and that it has 2,04,990 doses of Covaxin and 2,02,280 doses of Covishield left as on Friday morning.

# Panel on oxygen-scarcity deaths rejected by Centre again: Sisodia

Allegations by Delhi govt. draw strong criticism from L-G office, Opposition BJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government on Friday locked horns with Raj Niwas and the Delhi BJP over oxygen-scarcity deaths in the national capital during the second wave of COVID-19.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said the Centre had yet again rejected the high-level committee of medical experts set up by the Delhi government to get to the bottom of the matter.

Raj Niwas termed Mr. Sisodia's allegations "misleading" while the Delhi BJP accused the AAP government of floating conspiracy theories to hide its own failure when it came to ensuring adequate supply of oxygen during the second wave.

"The Delhi government has constituted a panel to probe the number of deaths... so that the reason behind these deaths could be investigated and compensation of ₹5 lakh could be gi-



Manish Sisodia

ven to the families of the victims, but the Lieutenant-Governor has yet again rejected this committee," Mr. Sisodia told reporters.

The L-G is of the view that no oxygen-scarcity deaths occurred in Delhi, so there is no need to form an inquiry committee, he alleged Mr. Sisodia said that on the one hand, the Centre

was asking States for details on oxygen-scarcity deaths, and on the other was not approving the inquiry committee to investigate the matter.

"It is a matter of shame that in the 21st Century, the

Centre is saying there should be no probe into such deaths. During April-May, the gross mismanagement of oxygen by the Centre, whether deliberate or unintentional, is a matter of investigation," he added.

"The Centre is responsible for the mismanagement of oxygen. Today, it is trying to hide the facts by avoiding a probe," said Mr. Sisodia.

All for probe: Raj Niwas Sources from Raj Niwas, however, sought to clarify that neither the L-G nor the Centre had said that deaths due to oxygen shortage "should not be probed."

In both instances related to the formation of an inquiry panel by the Delhi government - first on July 6 and then on August 8 – the AAP government was told that a panel constituted as per Supreme Court directions was already looking into the matter, said Raj Niwas sources,

This committee has sub-

mitted its interim report and is working on the final report, the sources added.

The L-G and the Union Health Minister had reiterated that this panel should be "allowed to do its work" and that setting up another committee for the same purpose "will only create confusion".

Responding to this, the Delhi government alleged it was clear that the L-G's office, "under Centre's pressure", was trying to scuttle any probe into the deaths.

'The scope of the panel set up by the SC is only to look at oxygen supply issues in Delhi, not to probe the oxgen-scarcity deaths," the Delhi government alleged. "Why is the Centre on the

one hand asking us to submit data on the deaths, and on the other hand using the L-G office to stop us from compiling this data? Why is the Centre so desperate to hide the truth regarding these deaths" the Delhi government demanded.

# AAP govt. notifies policy to be self-reliant in medical oxygen

It incentivises early investment in production, storage

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Delhi government on Friday notified the Medical Oxygen Production Promotion Policy of Delhi, 2021, with an aim to make the city self-reliant in the production of medical oxygen.

According to the government, the policy will ensure time -bound fulfilment of the requirement of medical oxygen by incentivising early investment in the production and storage infrastructure for medical oxygen.

"The Aam Aadmi Party government is committed towards strengthening its infrastructure healthcare and has a vision to make Delhi self-reliant in times of crisis. The policy provides several incentives to the private sector to set up oxygen production plants and storage facilities," Health Minister Satyendar Jain said.

"This will help us tackle the problem of oxygen shortage in the future and avert a crisis like we saw in the past.



The policy will help us tackle the problem of oxygen

shortage in the future and avert a crisis like we saw in the past

Delhi Health Minister

The Delhi government is preparing to combat any future waves of COVID-19 on a warfooting and is devoted towards ensuring that it is better equipped for any such crisis," he added

The objectives of the policy include making Delhi selfreliant in medical oxygen production and supply by setting up new manufacturing enterprises or expanding the production capacity of existing units.

It also seeks to facilitate storage and transportation of medical oxygen, and setting up of liquid oxygen manufacturing facilities of minimum 50 MT capacity, up to a total of 100 MT, and of noncaptive oxygen generation plants of minimum 10 MT and maximum 50 MT capacity, up to a total of 100 MT.

Cryogenic tankers

Captive oxygen generation plants of minimum 500 LPM (flow rate) capacity at hospitals and nursing homes to cater to their peak demand for medical oxygen up to a total capacity of 200 MT will also be set up, the government stated. It will also seek the setting up of cryogenic tankers of minimum 10 MT capacity for exclusive purpose of ferrying liquid medical oxygen (LMO) up to a total capacity of 500 MT and LMO storage tanks of minimum 10 MT capacity up to a total ca-

## Nod for CBI probe into DTC scam spells downfall of AAP govt.: BJP

Gupta seeks removal of Transport Minister, erring officials

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Delhi BJP on Friday said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is "neck-deep in corruption' and that the Centre's nod for a CBI probe into the alleged 'multi-crore DTC scam' was the beginning of the AAP government's downfall.

State unit president Adesh Gupta said the Ministry of Home Affair's recommendation for a probe by the CBI was "not an ordinary thing" as there was a similar CBI probe which had led to the discovery of the Commonwealth Games scam in 2010.

"There are direct charges against Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot. People will surely throw this government out in next year's municipal corporation elections,"



Adesh Gupta

Mr. Gupta said, adding that Mr. Gahlot and all officials responsible for the scam should be sacked before the agency begins its probe.

'Suppressing issue' Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said when Rohini BJP MLA Vijender Gupta had raised the matter in the

House he was not allowed to speak. "From the very beginning, the Kejriwal-led government had been trying to suppress the issue," Mr. Bidhuri said.

Mr. Gupta, who filed a

complaint related to the case on the basis of which the CBI probe has been ordered, alleged that when the entire country was grappling with the pandemic, Mr. Kejriwal, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and Mr. Gahlot were hatching a conspiracy to take out ₹3,500 crore from the State exchequer in the name of maintenance of buses. "It is for the first time that a politician was made the head of DTC so that the siphoned off money in this manner could be easily dig-

ested," Mr. Gupta said.

### BJP robbed civic bodies of ₹2,640 crore, says AAP and every resident is a wit-

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Friday accused the BJP of having "robbed" the Capital's civic bodies of ₹2,640 crore by using the advertisement sites under them without "paying a penny".

AAP spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj said each hoarding costs around ₹1 lakh-₹2 lakh to put up and the BIP had installed countless hoardings "for free".

"Every road of Delhi bears proof of BJP's corruption ness to their scams. Most of the hoardings, especially the ones put up on municipal sites, belong to the BJP," Mr. Bhardwaj said, adding: "These hoardings are put up at municipal sites, which are supposed to be paid for, but they don't. Crores of rupees, which can be earned from these hoardings, are robbed by the BJP. The BJP politicians don't pay a single penny for these hoardings.

In response, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said Mr. Bhardwaj had raised the issue to try and shift focus from the "burning topic" of the CBI inquiry being initiated in the Delhi government's alleged DTC bus purchase scam.

"It will be better if Mr. Bhardwaj, instead of raising frivolous issues, tells the people of Delhi how the DTC caravan has been looted in the last seven years. The people of Delhi are not interested in frivolous issues but want to know the Delhi government's reply on the DTC

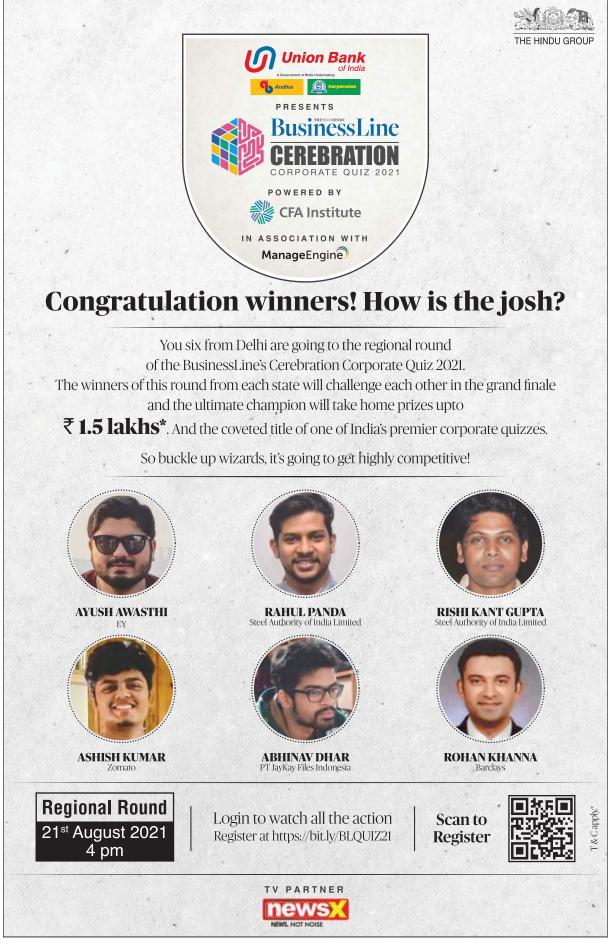
scam," Mr. Kapoor said. Meanwhile, former North

pacity of 1,000 MT.

Delhi Mayor Iai Prakash accused the Delhi government of having "consumed" wheat and rice meant for students studying in municipal schools. "It is the responsibility of the Delhi government to provide wheat and rice to corporation schools in the dry ration kit. The North body has been continuously writing letters to the Delhi government since April 6 to provide wheat and rice," Mr. Jai Prakash alleged.

A ND-NDE





### Saini release: Minister seeks removal of AG, vigilance chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA CHANDIGARH

After the Punjab and Haryana High Court ordered release of former Punjab DGP Sumedh Singh Saini in a cheating case, State Cabinet Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa on Friday sought removal of the Advocate General, Home Secretary and Vigilance Bureau chief for their "professional incompetence." However, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, while responding to Mr. Randhawa's sharp remarks, asked the Ministers and party colleagues to "check facts" before making any statement.

The High Court on Thursday night had ordered release of Saini, who was arrested on charges of cheating, forgery and corruption among others.

"In view of the fiasco in Sumedh Singh Saini case, I chief Minister @capt\_amarinder to immediately remove Advocate General, Home Secretary and Chief Director Vigilance, for their professional incompetence," said Mr. Randhawa in a tweet.

The Jails Minister also tagged Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh

# BJP unable to tolerate criticism, says Gehlot

'It is destroying democratic institutions'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Friday said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was unable to tolerate criticism because of its "inherent anti-democratic character", which had led it to believe that any disagreement with its ideology amounted to sedition. Such an approach would only weaken the country's democratic traditions,

Addressing a virtual event marking the 77th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Mr. Gehlot said the BJP government at the Centre was destroying democratic institutions and targeting the Opposition parties. "Ironically, the BJP came to power through democracy [which was] kept intact by Congress." Mr. Gehlot said.

"It is very easy to ask what the Congress did during its 70 years in power. My reply is that the Congress kept the country united and strengthened the roots of democracy... Unlike Pakistan, India did not fall under military rule," Mr. Gehlot said.

The Chief Minister said India had got independence as a result of sacrifices made by the Congress leaders. "The governments in the country keep coming and going. But



Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot

the present government [at the Centre] is playing the game of toppling the governments in the States by unfair means," he said.

Rajiv Gandhi praised

Addressing the event, titled "Rajasthan innovation vision: IT for good governance", Sam Pitroda, who served as advisor to Rajiv Gandhi, said India had made progress in telecommunication, literacy, immunisation and education and marched ahead through e-governance as a result of Rajiv Gandhi's vision. He said the BJP government was discouraging scientific temperament and suppressing the civil society groups.

Mr. Gehlot launched a Kisan Sathi portal for the convenience of farmers and released an e-book prepared by the Agriculture Depart-

# 2 protesting farmers charged with sedition in Haryana

136 others booked under various IPC sections, Home Minister tells Assembly

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij on Friday informed the State Assembly that during the ongoing agitation against agriculture laws in Haryana, two farmers have been booked for sedition, while 136 other protesters have been booked under different sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC).

This information was given by Mr. Vij in a written reply during the first day of monsoon session of the State Assembly.

According to the Minister, two FIRs were registered under Section 124-A (sedition). One case was registered on July 11, 2021 in Sirsa, and according to the complaint recorded by the duty magistrate, the agitating farmers attacked the convoy of Depu-



ty Speaker of Haryana Vidhan Sabha. The second case, registered on January 15, 2021 in Bahadurgarh of Jhajjar, was based on a video uploaded on social media by the accused who is seen saying that if the government did not pay heed to the protesting farmers, he would attack the government with a

Earlier Congress MLAs marched to the Assembly, led by former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda on the issues of paper leak scam, atrocities on farmers, rising unemployment, inflation and rising crime graph in the State.

gans against the BJP-JJP government and displayed placards.

The party MLAs raised slo-

Mr. Hooda said the present government is trying to

suppress all the scams including liquor, registry, mining, electricity meters and paddy purchase. "The government also wants to cover up the recruitment paper leak scam, but the Congress demands that there should be a CBI inquiry into the matter under the supervision of the sitting judge of the High Court," he said.

'Bid to stop Cong. MLAs' "Ii is the responsibility of the Opposition to raise the voice of the public from the street to the House on issues of public interest. The government does not want the Opposition to raise public issues in the House and hence today an attempt was made to stop the Congress MLAs by putting up barricades far away from the Assembly," he

### Five die as soil collapses in Rajasthan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Four labourers and a minor girl were killed when a retaining wall and a portion of soil collapsed on them during digging of land for construction of a water tank in an industrial area near Bhagli village in Rajasthan's Jalore district on Friday.

The labourers, who were digging the land at six-foot depth to lay the tank's foundation in a granite factory, were buried under a huge mound of soil after the retaining wall collapsed.

Three-year-old Anushka, daughter of one of the labourers, who was accompanying the group, was buried along with them.

A Disaster Response Force team, which rushed to the site, extricated the victims. They were pronounced brought dead at the Jalore district hospital.

# PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. PC

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Shan S/o Sh. Igbal R/o 632, Katra Rang Mahal, Chandni Mahal, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case registered vide FIR No. 143/21, U/s 379/411/34 IPC at Police Station - Chandni Mahal, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Shan could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Shan has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Shan is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 05.10.2021. By Order

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Ms. Prigya Gupta Metropolitan Magistrate-08. Room No. 272, 2nd Floor. DP/948/CD/2021 (Court Matter) Tis Hazari Court. Delhi

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### WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

Commercial Department Tender Notice No. - C-481/4/3/VOI-II/36/2021 & C-481/15/VOI-II/ BAZ / 37 / 202 Date - 17.08.2021

For & On behalf of President o India Sr. Divisional Commercial manager, WCR, Kota invites open E-tender for below mentioned work. For this tender any offer received manually will not be considered. S.No. - 1, NIT No. - C-481/4/3/VOI-II/36/2021 Name of work - Running of Car Parking contract for one Year at Kota Station (Circulating area of PF-1 Side Area 4081.67 Sq.Metre Assessed Value of Tender (Rs. (For One Year) - Rs.50,51,158/-Fifty Lakh Fifty One Thousand One Hundred and Fifty Eight Rs.Only) + 18% GST Extra applicable. EMD (Rs.) -Rs.2,52,600/- (Two Lakhs Fifty Two Time & Date for closure for submission of F-tender document - 07.09.2021 upto 15:00 hrs through online website www.ireps.gov.in in only. S.No.2 NIT No. - C-481/15/VOI-II/ BAZ / 37 / 2021 Name of work - Running of Cycle / Scooter / Motor Cycle / Car Parking Contract for one Year at Baran Station (Circulating area of PF 1288.00 Sq.Metre.) Assessed Value of Tender (Rs.) (For One Year) - Rs.6,96,955/- (Six Lakh Ninety Six Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Five Rs. Only)+18% GST extra applicable. EMD (Rs.) Rs.34,900/-/- (Thirty Four Thousand Nine Hundred Rs. Only) Time & Date for closure for submission of E-tender document - 07.09.2021 upto 15:00 hrs through online website www.ireps.gov.in in only. Tenderer must have Class III DIGITAL SIGNATURE & registration on IREPS portal. Only registered tenderers will be able to bid and all documents need to be uploaded a time to e-tendering. Complete details and information for this tender is available on www.ireps.gov.in Sr Divisional Commercial Manage

West Central Railway, Kota

कोरोना को है हराना, <u>तो टीकाक</u>रण जरूर कराना

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

3 PoK boys

repatriated

Three boys from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), who crossed the Line of Control (LoC) inadvertently on August 18, were repatriated on Friday at the Pir Panjal valley's Poonch district.

"The children were treated very humanely and compassionately, beholding the finest traditions of the Indian Army. They were safely repatriated to PoJK on Friday," Army spokesman Lt. Col. Devender Anand said.

They were apprehended after the Army spotted them "through a well-coordinated and effective surveillance network".

The children were from Chhatra and Troti Dharmshal across the LoC and claimed to be labourers excavating sand from river and nallah beds. "They had crossed the LoC for fishing," the Army said.

### Flood fury



A family takes shelter on the rooftop after their house got submerged in floodwaters in Sahibganj district of Jharkhand. • PTI

# COVID-19 patient missing from hospital for 3 months

Allahabad High Court fumes at apathetic condition of Prayagraj hospital with non-functional CCTV

The Allahabad High Court has raised concern over the "apathetic condition" of a hospital in Prayagraj and the "gross negligence" of its doctors and staff in the disappearance of an elderly CO-VID-19 patient whose whereabouts are unknown ever since he was admitted there more than three months ago.

The court directed the Uttar Pradesh government to ensure that the patient was traced before the next date

Estimated cost

of hearing, August 27, and submit a report.

The family of Ram Lal Yaday, formerly a junior engineer in the Electricity Department in New Delhi, had filed a habeas corpus petition seeking his release from the custody of the T.B Sapru Hospital in Prayagraj, where he was admitted after testing positive for COVID-19.

He went missing from his bed since the morning of May 8, as per a report of the hospital's Chief Medical Superintendent.

The court said neither the

Prayagraj district administration nor the police or the hospital appeared "to be serious about the missing of the person although more than three months have passed" since the missing report was registered.

es Surya Prakash Kesarwani and Piyush Agrawal said it was as "a matter of serious concern that gross negligence" was prima facie shown by the officers, doctors and staff of the hospital.

A division Bench of Justic-

"The facts stated by the Senior Superintendent of Police, Prayagraj, in his personal affidavit also indicated the apathetic condition of the T.B. Sapru Hospital...where even CCTV cameras are non functional," the court said in an order dated August

'Dereliction of duty'

Not only it was a case of dereliction of duty and gross negligence but also "indicates total carelessness in treatment, look-after and safety of COVID patients" at the hospital, the Bench

The DM Prayagraj, in a personal affidavit, informed the court that a fact-finding inquiry had been set up on August 18 under the City Magistrate Prayagraj to enquire into the matter and submit a report within a week.

The court also directed the government to immediately ensure that all infrastructure facilities and security equipment, safety and security measures of high standards be installed with inbuilt provisions of its regular maintenance and periodical audit.

2 elephants

in Assam

electrocuted

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Two adult female elephants

were electrocuted in north-

western Assam's Baksa dis-

Officials said the inci-

dent happened in the Ko-

roibari area near the Bata-

bari Forest Range in the

district, where frequent

man-animal conflicts have

into contact with a live elec-

The elephants had come

been reported.

trict on Friday night.

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### PUBLIC NOTICE



Haryana and Ms. Shivika Arora, daughte of Mr. Darshan Kumar Arora, resident of C 8 Parvana Vihar Plot 52, Sect 9, Rohini, New Delhi 85 both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1959. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this regard can be made by Email (ex2.kuwait@mea.gov.in) Email (cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in) / letters / telephonic calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125).

(K.S Rathore) First Secretary (CA)

CM YK

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all concerned that my client(s)
Sh. Ashok Khullar Xio Sh. Bahadur Chand
& Smt. Renu Khullar Wio Sh. Ashok Kullar
both R/o E-2/45, Gali No. 2, Shastri Nagar,
Delhi-52 have disowned and severed their
relation with their Son Mr. Manik and his
wife Mrs. Suchima. My client(s) have also
debarred them from their all moveable and
immoveable properties and hereafter shall
not be responsible for their acts, deeds
and things whatsoever. Sanjay Aggarwal (Advocate)

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I Hemanti Dwivedi W/o Shri Ashol Kumar R/o SL-11 A-105 Shalimar Gdn Ex 2 Sahibabad Gzb UP have changed my name to Hemanti Devi for

I Ashok Kumar Dwivedi S/o Sh Lila Nand R/o SL-11 A-105 Shalimar Gdn Ex 2 Sahibabad Gzb UP have changed my name to Ashok kumar for

### EASTERN RAILWAY Abridged Tender Notice No 02HWHCONII of 2021-22 for

e-tendering, dated: 19.08.2021. Seale Open tender notice for e-tendering i invited by Dv. Chief Engineer/Cor Telkolghat, Howrah-711101 from reputed financial capability and having proper and Widening of Traverser Bay - II 6 to 7 rai and pit type to surface type with allied jobs at Liluah Workshop. **Tender Value** Rs 7.82.77.204.50. Earnest Money: 0.00 Date of Opening: 21.09.2021 a 12.30 hrs. Details of tender notice from time to time along with required eligibility criteria are available at websit www.ireps.gov.in. The bidding for the tender is to be submitted through the e tendering on above website. Manual offer are not allowed against this tender and manual offer if received shall not be accepted and will be summarily rejected CON-18/2021-22 Tender Notices are also available at Website www.er.indianrailways.gov.in/www.ireps.gov.in

### Last date for online bid preparation is Dt. 27.08.2021, up to 14.00 Medical Officer of Health NMMC RO PR Adv no./643/2021 Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation

Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation web site

https://nmmc.etenders.in tenderers are require to note the same.

Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation

consumables for NMMC Hospitals

Details regarding above mentioned tender is available on

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Re-Tender- notice no.NMMC/HEALTH/ 160/2021/Second Extension

Details Of work - Tender for Purchase of RTPCR lab

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE No.: NIT/11/21/12, Dated: 11.08.2021. On behalf of the President of India, The Sr. Divisional Materials Manager, Soutl East Central Railway, Bilaspur Division invites e-tender for the following items . Tender No. Due Date Due Time Tender Cost ₹ EMD ₹ 11215327 06.09.2021 10.30 00 00

Description: Supply, Installation, Commissioning and Testing o Programmable Digital drop insert multiplexer Complete with all accessories with power supply as per RDSO Specification No. IRS:TC/68/2012 Rev. 0 with Amendment 1 including connection cable required for connection to existing proposed SDH equipment. The MUX shall be wired and equipped for 30 Channels with 12 Nos. VF 2w/4w E&M Circuit, 12 nos. 2w subscriber loop nterface circuit with ringer 02 Nos. 2w exchange loop interface circuit & nos. 2w hot line circuit with 100 pair MDF & IPM with three E1 interface and expandable up to five E1 interface facility on multiplexer etc. Compatible with existing "PUNCOM" MUX Link and NMS. Installation to be done at various stations in CIC section of Bilaspur Division, South East Central Railway Warranty as per IRS condition, Make: - Coral, PUNCOM, WEBFIL. The work s not for new installation it is related to replacement in the existing system Tenderer please visit IREPS website at https://www.ireps.gov.in Note: Ir

CPR/10/136 Sr. Divl. Materials Manager/Bilaspur.

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### tric fence installed around a paddy field. The accused, identified as Hareswar Daimary surrendered at the Singra police station. Officials said he will be taken into custody for further investigation and booked under the Wildlife Protection Act.

Forest officials said the elephants had come down from the hills of adjoining Bhutan for food.

### A.P. man sets ablaze his girlfriend

STAFF REPORTER

A man allegedly doused his girlfriend with petrol and set her ablaze at Chowduvda village of Pusapatirega mandal of Andhra Pradesh's Vizianagaram district on Friday.

The woman was admitted to hospital with about 40% burn injuries, where her condition is said to be stable

According to the police, Rambabu, 26, of Narava village, reportedly was in a relationship with Ramulamma, 21, for the last two years. Both their family members had agreed for their marriage and the date for the marriage was about to be fixed in the fourth week of August.

Rambabu allegedly refused to marry her, accusing her of talking to other youngsters. The woman's family approached the Pusapatirega police, who counselled him and made him agree for the marriage.

Rambabu, who was allegedly manhandled in the police station, reportedly wanted to take "revenge" on the woman and allegedly poured petrol on her and set her ablaze. Ramulamma's sister and her son, who tried to save her, suffered injuries.

The police took the accused into custody.

"The incident shocked everyone. Fortunately, we could ensure timely medical aid for the woman. We have shifted her to Visakhapatnam for better treatment. The police have been directed to speed up investigation," Deputy Chief Minister Pamula Pushpa Srivani said.

Meanwhile, the TDP staged a protest, alleging that there was no protection for women under the YSRCP's rule.

# Palm oil plan enthuses farmers

Cultivators of rubber in Kerala evince interest in making a switch

 $\frac{\text{NAVAMY SUDHISH}}{\text{KOLLAM}}$ 

The National Mission on Edible Oils-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP), a ₹11,040 crore project by the Union government to maximise cultivation and production, is expected to bring in remarkable growth prospects for the palm oil industry in Kerala.

While both farmers and refiners find the scheme extremely encouraging, it can also revitalise the estates run by the Oil Palm India Limited and the Plantation Corporation of Kerala. Since India is heavily dependent on imports when it comes to crude and refined palm oils, the industry stakeholders believe that the current development will be highly beneficial for the sector.



**Promising sector:** Oil palm plantation under Oil Palm India Limited at Yeroor in Kollam district.

The NMEO-OP proposes to extend cultivation of oil palm, considered a top oil crop, to an additional 6.5 lakh hectares so that the crude palm oil (CPO) production touches 11.20 lakh tonnes by the 2025-26 financial year.

In the total financial outlay of ₹11,040 crore, the share of the Centre will be ₹8,844 crore while the State share of ₹2,196 crore includes the viability gap fund-

ing as well. Reportedly, the State government was considering some projects to expand cultivation even before the scheme was announced.

### Sites identified

Potential sites for cultivation were identified in Wayanad and Palakkad districts while projects to rope in more farmers are also being discussed.

"COVID-19 had affected the industry like any other

sector, but even before that the situation was not good. But now rubber farmers seem interested in switching to oil palm and the new scheme will attract more. I think all these new developments will definitely revive the sector by 2022," says Vijayan Kunissery, former chairman, Oil Palm India Limited.

Oil Palm India Limited maintains a 3,500 ha plantation in the State while Plantation Corporation of Kerala has a 705-ha estate. While NMEO-OP offers a special assistance for the rejuvenation of old gardens, it is also expected to generate more employment in the sector.

"In Kerala, we have plantations, factories, seed farms and research facilities, but so far the Centre had opted to neglect the State. With adequate support from the Centre we can produce oil required for at least four States," says S. Jayamohan, trade union leader.

### Panel to probe university paper leak

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Satavahana University in Karimnagar has constituted an inquiry committee to probe the alleged leak of physics question paper of sixth semester bachelor's degree examination after a few students were found to be going through the paper on a WhatsApp group before the examination.

The university constituted a four-member committee headed by the Registrar to investigate the alleged leak of the paper and told to submit a report within four days. "If there is any role by private college managements, we will take action against them as well," Vice-Chancellor S. Mallesham said.

Authorities on condition of anonymity said that some private colleges were promoting such illegal practices.

TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Saturday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, west Uttar Pradesh, Sikkim, Bihar, Gujarat, west Madhya Pradesh, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Mahe. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Punjab, Haryana, Jharkhand, Telangana and Yanam

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	5	32.2	25.6	Kozhikode	0.2	32.0	24.4
Ahmedabad		29.7	25.7	Kurnool	2	32.1	24.3
Aizawl	2.8	27.0	19.5	Lucknow	14.2	32.8	26.6
Allahabad		34.3	26.4	Madurai		36.8	25.6
Bengaluru	7	28.6	20.5	Mangaluru	2.2	28.8	23.9
Bhopal	12.2	27.5	22.4	Mumbai	21	27.6	23.4
Bhubaneswar	25.6	30.7	25.4	Mysuru	7	30.2	21.0
Chandigarh	21	30.3	24.6	New Delhi		32.8	27.3
Chennai	11	33.2	24.0	Patna	44	34.2	–
Coimbatore		32.2	22.4	Port Blair	9	31.3	23.8
Dehradun	26	25.4	23.6	Puducherry	0.1	31.6	24.6
Gangtok	59	20.0	17.7	Pune	1.4	27.1	21.3
Goa	4	30.5	24.1	Raipur		31.2	25.8
Guwahati	2	32.4	25.6	Ranchi		30.4	23.6
Hubballi		28.0	21.0	Shillong		25.0	18.1
Hyderabad	–	28.7	23.0	Shimla	30	21.4	16.1
Imphal	14	28.1	21.0	Srinagar		31.9	17.7
Jaipur	–	35.1	27.6	Thiruvananthapuram.		32.1	24.7
Kochi	2	30.2	24.2	Tiruchi		35.1	25.2
Kohima	9	24.2	17.6	Vijayawada		31.6	27.4
Kolkata	16	29.6	25.4	Visakhapatnam	10	28.8	24.2
(Rainfall data	in mm;	temper	ature in	Celsius)			

### Yester

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Ambala, Haryan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score o 215 indicating an unhealth level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 16

Visakhapatnam 16 .48 .55 ....44 ...69 ....■

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO:: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues

....57 ...52

....25

28 .22 110

....37 ...41

NO2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and prematur death in people with heart or lung disease

## Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation certified Water Plus

First in State to get the Swachh Bharat certificate

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has been certified as Water Plus by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA) on Friday. It has become the first local body of Telangana to achieve this coveted status in the Swachh Bharat certifications, a statement from the GHMC said. The certifications ranged from ODF (Open Defecation Free), ODF+, ODF++ and Water+, of which the GHMC had already achieved ODF++ sta-

For this certification, the

GHMC was assessed through third party inspections against nine indicators, respectively with regard to safe discharge of sewage, safe cleaning practices, mechanical equipment support, treatment capacities, reuse of treated water, maintenance of drains, cost recovery, grievance redress mechanism, and establishment of sanitation authority and response units.

The GHMC statement has attributed the certification to the 25 sewage treatment plants set up by the HMWS&SB and three by the HMDA for treatment of

waste water released from households and commercial establishments.

A total of 772 million litres of sewage per day is effectively treated in all these STPs, before being discharged, it claimed. The treated water is reused for parks, construction of roads, and public toilets before being let downstream for agricultural needs.

This is in line with the government's focus on water conservation and reuse in consonance with Sustainable Development Goals on clean water and sanitation, the note said.

# Minister's faux pas puts soldier's family in a fix

He offered martyr's solatium to them

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HUBBALLI

In a faux pas, Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment A. Narayanaswamy promised a government job and land to an 'in-service' soldier in Gadag district of Karnataka, thinking he had been martyred. Later, it turned out that the statement was the result of a miscommunication between him and local BJP leaders.

As per the Minister's itinerary, he was to visit the residence of a soldier at Mulagund. Mr. Narayanaswamy, who was behind schedule, was in a hurry when he

reached Mulagund.
Visiting the house of sol-

dier Ravikumar Kattimani, who is deployed in Kashmir, the Minister enquired about the condition of the family members. And much to the shock of the family members, he announced that a government job would be provided to one of the family members, apart from land.

Realising the faux pas by the Minister, a party worker immediately made a video call to Mr. Kattimani and asked the Minister to speak to him. An embarrassed Mr. Narayanaswamy felicitated the family and left.

### WEST

# I have been made a scapegoat in phone call leak controversy'

IPS officer Rashmi Shukla has moved High Court to quash FIR

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

IPS officer Rashmi Shukla told the Bombay High Court on Friday that she was made a scapegoat in the alleged leak of phone calls regarding transfers of police officials.

A Division Bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and N.J. Jamadar was hearing a criminal petition filed by Ms. Shukla seeking to quash the FIR and charges against her under the Indian Telegraph Act and the Official Secrets Act. The FIR filed by an unidentified person has booked Ms. Shukla for leaking confidential documents related to corruption in police transfers in Maharashtra.

Senior advocate Mahesh Jethamalani, representing Ms. Shukla, contended that she was illegally transferred from the State Intelligence Department as Director General Civil Defence, a post that did not exist prior



Bombay High Court

to her transfer. Mr. Jethamalani said, "I have not challenged that, but I am pointing this out to show mala fides. Ms. Shukla has not been paid since January. This is the treatment meted out to one of the most upright officers."

Mr. Jethamalani said she was made a scapegoat for this alleged leak. The whole reason for filing this FIR was to prevent transfer of documents from the State to the Central Bureau of Investiga-

tion. He said the intercepted calls were about the transfer of 150 police officers of whom nine postings were being bargained through brokers. Mr. Jethamalani will continue his arguments on Saturday.

**Letter by Fadnavis**The case dates back to

March, when Leader of the Opposition Devendra Fadnavis in Maharashtra cited a letter allegedly written by Ms. Shukla to the then Maharashtra Director General of Police Subodh Jaiswal about alleged corruption in police transfers. The letter is believed to have relied upon leaked conversations by Ms. Shukla.

Thereafter, Maharashtra Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte, in a report to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, alleged that Ms. Shukla had leaked the confidential report to Mr. Fadnavis which led to the FIR.

# Dabholkar murder: hearing on framing of charges postponed

Defence counsel seeks copy of forensic report submitted by CBI

STAFF REPORTER

A special court on Friday adjourned till September 3 the hearing of arguments on the framing of charges in the Dr. Narendra Dabholkar murder after the defence counsel submitted that the CBI had not furnished the accused with a copy of the 2017 report from the Gujarat Directorate of Forensic Science (DFS) which had analysed the firearm retrieved from one of the alleged shooters in the case.

Advocate Prakash Salsingikar, counsel for Sanatan Sanstha member Vikram Bhave, one of the five charged accused, submitted an application before the court of Special UAPA Judge S.R. Navandar seeking the Gujarat DFS report, which the CBI had submitted to the Bombay High Court in January 2017

Advocate Mr. Salsingikar said neither was a copy of the report given to the accused as per the Bombay High court directions nor was it submitted by the agency to the



Narendra Dabholkar

special court.

"We brought it to the court's notice the Bombay High Court's order of January 20, 2017, pertaining to the Gujarat DFS' report and submitted that the CBI must clarify its position on whether or not it was relying on this report. The CBI itself had earlier pointed to contradictions between the ballistic report from the Gujarat DFS and that received form the Forensic Science Laboratory in Mumbai," Mr. Salsingikar told *The Hindu*.

The judge asked CBI's counsel Prakash Suryawanshi about the report, to which the latter said he would consult the investigating officer and make a submission.

### 13 labourers killed, two hurt as truck overturns

PRES TRUST OF INDI

Thirteen labourers were killed and two others injured after a tipper truck carrying them along with steel overturned due to a pothole in Buldhana district of Maharashtra on Friday, the pol-

The incident occurred near Dusarbid village at Tadegaon Phata on Sindkhedraja-Mehkar road around 12 p.m. when the labourers were being taken to work of the Nagpur-Mumbai

Samruddhi Expressway project, an official said. A total of 16 labourers, including a girl, were travelling in the vehicle. "The tipper was speeding and it overturned due to a large pothole on the road," Buldhana Superintendent of Police Arvind Chavria told *PTI*.

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India's National Newspaper

Executive Engineer
R&B Project Circle Division 1st,Srinagar

e to a large pothole on perintendent of Police

# 6 contestants to battle it out at *BusinessLine* Quiz tomorrow

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Mumbai regional round of the *BusinessLine* Quiz, Cerebration 2021, one of India's premier corporate quiz championships, will be held at 4 p.m. on August 22. This time, the 18th edition of the quiz competition is being held in a virtual format.

The quiz is designed for corporate executives, business professionals, B-school students, and MBA aspirants. The preliminary round was held from August 4 to August 11 to shortlist top six contestants from each of

the six cities – Chennai, Bengaluru, Kochi, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Delhi.

For the Mumbai regional round, the six participants will battle it out and only one of them will qualify for the grand finale on August 28.

Quiz enthusiasts can witness the Mumbai regional round by registering at https://bit.ly/BLQUIZ21 or scanning the QR code.

The title sponsor of event is Union Bank of India. The event is powered by CFA Institute and being held in association with ManageEngine & BSE IPE.

# Schedule for Rajiv Gandhi award announced

Maharashtra govt. will present the award in five categories to IT firms

STAFF REPORTER

The Maharashtra government on Friday announced the procedure and schedule for Shri Rajiv Gandhi Excellence Award to honour the organisations that have excelled in the field of Information Technology. The Maha Vikas Aghadi governmentannounced the award days after the Central government renamed the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award as

Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award.

"The use of science and technology for the social and economic development of the country is the focus of modernisation.

Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi had em-

phasised on the dissemination of science and technology, information technology tools and its effective use in the nation's development," said Congress leader and Minister of State for Information Technology Satej Patil. Mr. Patil claimed that the decision on award was taken much before the Centre's announcement of renaming the Khel Ratna award. He said the State would ho-

nour IT companies from various categories which had achieved targets such as to increase entrepreneurship, to encourage use of IT in society, to create more jobs and to conserve environment.

The award will be presented in

The award will be presented in

five categories: IT Engineering Service Software, IT Enabled Services (BPO/KPO), IT Infrastructure (Data Centre), Most Promising Startups and special award for contribution to Maharashtra. The award consists of a memento and a certificate of excellence.

The advertisement will be published as a Mahalling probability of the IT and the IT.

blished on MahalT website (www.mahait.org) and the last date for submission of nominations will be September 15. The selection committee's final meeting will be held on or before October 20. Mr. Patil said the award would be announced in the last week of October and the award ceremony would be held in the same week.

DIPK-6940/21

# NIT No PCD-RnB-32 of 2021-2022 Dated:-18 /08/2021 Bid/ Job No. (NH-44-J&K-2020-21-99)Dated 01/02/2021 The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways through Public Work (R&B), J&K is engaged in the development of National Highways and as part of this endeavor, it has been decided to Construction of flyover at Nowgam Junction including its Approaches, Km 290+725 to Km 291+575 of four lane with paved shoulders of NH-44 at Srinagar in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir ne Engineering, Procurement & Construction (EPC) mode. Bidder must submit its Financial bid and Technical Bid at https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app and Technical BID on the BIMS Portal (www.bims.gov.in) (BIMS portal for reference purpose only) on or before due date. Bids received online shall be opened as per schedule date The PW(R&B), Jammu & Kashmir represented by the Chief Engineer PW(R&B), Kashmir, now invites bids from eligible contractors for the following project: State NH No Name of Work Estimated Cost (Cr.) J&K NH-44 Construction of flyover at Nowgam Junction including its Approaches, Km 290+725 to Km 291+575 of four lane with paved shoulders of NH-44 at Srinagar in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir on Engineering, Procurement & Construction (EPC) mod Position of AAA/TS Approved Position of flunds Available

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) PROJECT CIRCLE DIVISION 1ST, SRINAGAR

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	Construction (EPC) mod									
	ion of AAA/TS Approved	Position of funds Available								
		eavor to adhere to the following schedule:								
SI. No.	Event Description	Date								
1.	Invitation of RFP (NIT)	18/08/2021								
2.	Last date for receiving queries	31/08/2021								
3.	Pre-BID meeting	Due to COVID -19 Pandemic there shall be no pre-bid meeting in the office of the Chief Engineer PW(R&B) Department Kashmir. However the clarification be sought through mail Two (2) days before pre-bid meeting date is.a.31/08/2021 upto 02.00PM. Reply to queries shall be replied online by Office of the Chief Engineer PW(R&B) Department Kashmir through mail. Mail ID of Chief Engineer is cepwdrnbkmr@yahoo.in								
4.	Authority response to queries latest by	06-09-2021 upto 2.00 Pm								
5.	Last date of Request for BID Document	16-09-2021 up to 04.00 Pm								
6	BID Due Date	16-09-2021 at 04.00 Pm								
7.	Online Submission of Bid Securing Declaration /POA etc	16-09-2021 at 04.00 PM								
8.	Opening of Technical BIDs at venue 2.11.4 (I)	18-09-2021 at 11.30 AMin the Office of the Chief Engineer PW(R&B) Department Kashmir								
9.	Declaration of eligible / qualified Bidders	Later On								
10.	Opening of Financial BID	Later On								
11.	Letter of Acceptance (LOA)	Later On								
12.	Return of signed duplicate copy of LOA	Later On								
13.	Validity of BID	120 days from BID Due Date								
14.	Submission of Performance Security (PS) and Additional Performance Security (APS), if any	The provision of Performance Security (PS) and Additional Performance Security (APS), will be as per Latest office Memorandum of Ministry of Finance Department of Expenditure procurement Policy Division vide their No.F.9/4/2020-PPD dated:- 12/Nov/2020 (The bidder has to provide 3% of PS within 30 days of receipt of LOA)								
15.	Signing of Agreement	Within10 days from the receipt of 50% of Performance Security and 50% of Additional Performance Security, if any								



### Reboot to reset

With Indo-U.S. trade deal off, it is time India reorients its global economic engagement

ndia's largest trading partner, and one with whom it has a significant trade surplus, the U.S., is no longer Linterested in securing a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA), as per indications from the Joe Biden administration. An official acknowledgement of this, from Commerce Minister Pivush Goval, suggests that years of negotiations towards a 'mini-trade deal' followed by a full-blown trade pact that Mr. Biden's predecessor oversaw may well be infructuous now. The Government will now seek to work on market access issues on both sides, he said, adding that lowering of non-tariff barriers, mutual recognition pacts and adopting common quality standards can also help Indian exports in the interim. There is a possibility that even these issues, which include long-festering dissonances over providing access to U.S. agricultural products or easing import duties on automobiles and Bourbons, would have to be discussed afresh. On Friday, the U.S. envoy to India met Mr. Goyal for what he said was a parley on attaining the \$500 billion bilateral trade vision of the U.S. President. The trade target, set when Mr. Biden was the Vice President in the Barack Obama regime, remains unchanged, but the tools for achieving it are no longer clear. India was pulled out of the U.S.'s Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) that granted some tariff relief to its exports by the Trump government in 2019, and hopes of its reinduction through a mini-trade deal now appear bleak. While India was expected to gain from the Sino-U.S. trade wars under the Donald Trump administration, its retaliation to the GSP status revocation with hiked tariffs on U.S. products had led to frictions that perhaps stymied the conclusion of a mini-trade deal before the change at the helm in the White House.

The U.S.'s no-go stance on the FTA implies ambitions may have to be pared down but also provides an opportunity for India to holistically review its stance on global trade. It is refreshing that Mr. Goyal has signalled a revamped approach towards FTAs and reminded Indian industry there cannot be one-way traffic. This needs to be matched by actions that start unwinding India's creeping walls of import tariffs. The Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign has further exacerbated that view – as the advent of a protectionist 'closed market' project. Strenuous exhortations that the self-reliance drive is one that seeks to integrate with global value chains can only go so far. Trade policy cannot be perpetuated in isolation and, in fact, affects investments too. Having walked out of RCEP, India needs to demonstrate to its potential FTA partners, including the EU and the U.K., with which rivals like Vietnam have already sealed a deal, that it is a viable alternative to China in a post-COVID world. To be a major trading and manufacturing nation, India can illafford to keep sending mixed signals.

### Faith and marriage

Dubious legislation cannot be allowed to criminalise inter-faith marriages

regressive and patently unconstitutional feature of recent anti-conversion laws enacted by diffe-**\**rent States is the criminalisation of inter-faith marriages by treating them as a means to convert one of the parties from one religion to another. While anti-conversion laws, euphemistically called in some States as laws on 'freedom of religion', have always sought to criminalise conversions obtained through fraud, force or allurement, the recent enactments or amendments have created "conversion by marriage" as one of the illegal forms of conversion. In its interim order protecting parties to inter-religious marriages from needless harassment, the Gujarat HC has made it clear that the "rigours" of the State's amendments introduced earlier this year will not apply to marriages that do not involve any fraud, force or allurement. So, it has stopped the initiation of criminal proceedings against those who have married across religious faiths, unless there was any of these illegal elements. A Bench has rejected the State government's attempt to adopt an innocent reading of the provisions of the Gujarat Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Act, 2021, by claiming that inter-faith marriages that did not involve fraud or coercion and leading to conversion would not attract the penal provisions. The argument is obviously contrary to the wording of the amendment, which makes conversion "by marriage" or "by getting a person married" or "by aiding a person to get married" an offence. The court said, "A plain reading of Section 3 would indicate that any conversion on account of marriage is also prohibited."

It is regrettable that Hindutva votaries continue to believe in medieval-minded laws aimed at curbing inter-faith marriages. Despite clear Supreme Court rulings that it is no more constitutional to police private lives and beliefs, sections in the polity still believe that inter-religious marriages are aimed at religious conversion, that they have an adverse impact on public order and invariably involve coercion or deceit. It was always clear to the secular minded and legal experts that constitutional courts will not see such marriages as events that impinge on public order, and that making their solemnisation a ground for prosecution under anti-conversion laws was unlikely to be upheld. It is clear that the Gujarat law's provisions "interfere with the intricacies of marriage" and an individual's right to choice, thereby infringing Article 21 of the Constitution. The principle that the right to marry a person of one's choice is integral to Article 21 flows from the verdict in Shafin Jahan vs Asokan. The order stalling criminal action against those entering into a valid inter-faith marriage constitutes a significant judicial pushback against disconcerting attempts by various States to foment communal divides through dubious legislation.

# The fall of Kabul, the future of regional geopolitics

The post-American power vacuum in the region will aid China and shape India's strategic choices and behaviour



HAPPYMON JACOB

The fall of Kabul in the wake of the American withdrawal from Afghanistan will prove to be a defining moment for the region and the future shape of its geopolitics; it would be as defining, if not more, as the Soviet intervention in 1979 and the American one in 2001. While a lot depends on the Taliban's actual conduct both domestically as well as on the southern and western Asian geopolitical chessboard in the months ahead, the Taliban are likely to continue as a 'useful villain' in the unfolding great power competition. For New Delhi, the fall of Kabul is a moment of reckoning and it must rethink its regional strategies and options. Unfortunately, of the latter, it does not have many.

What is most disconcerting is the regional power vacuum in the Eurasian heartland created by the haphazard manner in which the Un-States withdrew from Afghanistan and its potential knock-on effects. An axis of regional powers such as China, Pakistan, Russia, and the Taliban, have already started filling this power vacuum, shaping, thereby, the contours of the region's geopolitics based on their individual and common interests. Iran might also jump on this opportunistic bandwagon under the Chinese lea-

What is abundantly clear is that each of these countries harbour deep anti-American feelings in varying degrees which will further shrink the American influence in the Eurasian heartland. While it is too early to determine whether what these countries have on their hands is an opportunity or a ticking bomb, the U.S., as a direct consequence of the formation of this

axis, might decide to explore new ways of working with them to stabilise the region, if it desires to do so, and remain relevant there. If indeed that happens, could it result in a potential softening of the American rhetoric against China, Pakistan, Russia and perhaps even Iran? More so, what would that mean for India? While a healthy conversation among the great powers - the U.S., China and Russia – on global and regional challenges is a good sign, India is neither a great power nor present at the table. New Delhi must ensure that it does not become a casualty on the south-western Asian geopolitical chessboard.

### **Advantage China; extremism**

The post-American power vacuum in the region will be primarily advantageous to China and its grand strategic plans for the region. Beijing will further strengthen its efforts to bring every country in the region, except India, on the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative bandwagon, thereby altering the geopolitical and geoeconomic foundations of the region. More so, the much-feared Chinese encirclement of India will become ever more pronounced. Having been further emboldened by the U.S.'s withdrawal and in stamping its writ on the region, Beijing is likely to become less accommodative towards India including on the Line of Actual Control. Even in trade, given the sorry state of the post-COVID-19 Indian economy, India needs trade with China more than the other way round. Unless New Delhi can find ways of ensuring a rapprochement with China, it must expect Beijing to challenge India on occasion, and be prepared for it.

The bigger challenge for India though would be a near-certain increase in terrorism and extremism in the region. The U.S. presence in Afghanistan, international pressure on the Taliban and Financial Action Task Force worries in Pakistan had a relatively moderating effect on the region's terror ecosystem. With the Taliban now back in

Kabul, things are bound to change. The visuals of the Taliban releasing terrorists from Afghan jails would send a powerful message to their fellow travellers, handlers, and sympathisers in the region.

While the neighbouring countries are also worried about terrorism emanating from Afghanistan, the reality is that they are busy making their own private deals with the Taliban to not host terror organisations targeting them. There is little appetite for a regional approach to curbing terrorism from a Taliban-led Afghanistan. This enables the Taliban to engage in a selective treatment towards terror outfits present there or they have relations with. Moreover, given that the international community may have no choice but to recognise the Taliban regime - UN Security Council members such as China and Russia have already indicated their intent to do so would also mean that the Taliban would hold more power in a bargain on the terror question. Sanctions are unlikely to deter an outfit that does not need to bother about the next election.

It is unlikely that the Taliban will proactively export terror to other countries unless of course for tactical purposes by, say for instance, Pakistan against India. The real worry, however, is the inspiration that disgruntled elements in the region will draw from the Taliban's victory against the world's sole superpower.

To that extent, the triumphalism in Pakistan over the Taliban's victory in Afghanistan could eventually become counterproductive tan Prime Minister Imran Khan refers to them as a force that has 'unshackled the chains of slavery' or the country's deep state considers them as a strategic asset, the reality is that many anti-Pakistan terror organisations would be emboldened as well.

### Impact on regional interests The return of the Taliban to Kabul

has effectively laid India's 'mission Central Asia' to rest. If New Delhi could not find its way to Central Asia with encouraging partners such as Iran and the Hamid Karzai/ Ashraf Ghani governments, the possibility of New Delhi doing so now is next to nil. India's diplomatic and civilian presence as well as its civilian investments will now be at the mercy of the Taliban, and to some extent Pakistan. If there is a concerted effort by China, Pakistan and the Taliban to erase the Indian presence from Afghanistan, there is little India can do about it. Had New Delhi, as I had argued earlier, cultivated deeper relations (which by no means would have meant recognising the outfit) with the Taliban, Indian interests would have been more secure in a post-American Afghanistan. New Delhi's lack of strategic foresight will prove to be costly.

What is perhaps not yet understood is how the rise of the anti-America axis (China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan and a Taliban-led Afghanistan) and anti-American sentiments in the region would impact India's regional interests given that it has become closer to the U.S. than ever before in its history. We have to wait and see what this mismatch between the region's mood and India's strategic choices would mean for the country. There is little doubt that because of these developments, India's regional ambitions will take a major hit in the months and years ahead.

The fall of Kabul and the consequent knock-on effects in the region will have several potential implications for India's foreign policy and its strategic choices and behaviour. For one, given the little physical access India has to its north-western landmass, its focus is bound to shift more to the Indo-Pacific even though a maritime grand strategy may not necessarily be an answer to its continental challenges. Second, New Delhi might also seek to shed the arrogance it displayed towards its smaller neighbours during Modi 1.0 and cultivate friendly relations with them. Myanmar is a case in point. India has already indicated that it would not challenge the junta on the coup and its widespread human rights violations. This policv is likely to continue even if the Joe Biden administration seeks New Delhi's help in turning up the heat on Myanmar's generals. The last thing New Delhi needs now is an angry neighbour rushing to

### **India-Pakistan ties**

Third, the developments in Afghanistan could nudge New Delhi to seek stability, if not peace, with Pakistan. While there is little desire in New Delhi today to reopen a broad-based dialogue process with Pakistan, even a 'cold peace' would be in India's interest. For Pakistan too, such a 'cold peace' will help it to focus its energies on consolidating its interests and gains in Afghanistan. As a result, both sides might refrain from indulging in competitive risk-taking unless something dramatic happens which is always a possibility between the two rivals. That said, stability between India and Pakistan depends a great deal on how politics in Kashmir plays out, and whether New Delhi is able to pacify the aggrieved sections in the

The lesson for India in the wake of these developments is clear: It will have to fight its own battles. So it must make enemies wisely, choose friends carefully, rekindle flickering friendships, and make peace while it can.

Happymon Jacob is Associate Professor, Organization and Disarmament, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal

# In battleground Uttar Pradesh, a churn in Dalit politics

The marginalised are ready for their share in developmental opportunities, which the BJP has recognised



n an emerging and new situation, the political mobilisation of Dalits and the marginalised in Uttar Pradesh is now becoming complex. It is no longer simple and unidirectional as it was in the

decades of the 1990s During my visits to various Dalit bastis (hamlets) in and around Allahabad, Banaras/Varanasi and a few other district towns nearby, I met several people who are Scheduled Castes (SCs) and who used to, for years, cast their votes in fayour of the Bahujan Samai Party (BSP). They were staunch BSP supporters, and without doubt, its vote bank. But things have changed after the advent of the Seva project of the Rashtriya SwayamsevakSangh (RSS). They have begun to admire the RSS, with some of them even beginning to send their children to the Saras wati Shishu Mandir, the Vidya Bha-

rati-run chain of schools in India. The section that is being influenced by the Hindutva mission – which is reaching to them either through the politics of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) or the Seva

Karya (the social service project of the Sangh) – is growing by the day in Uttar Pradesh. The slums and bastis inhabited by the migrant poor, mainlyDalits, are evolving into a centre of activities of Sanghinspired organisations who are health and microfinance. Various governmental schemes of the BIP government, at the Centre and in the State of Uttar Pradesh, are impacting the BSP's vote base and finding resonance among the marginalised communities of the State. The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (affordable housing), the Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojana (LPG connections to women of Below Poverty Line families) and various cash transfer schemes are rapidly changing the politico-socio landscape of the Dalits and marginalised communities. The strategies of the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath, to focus developmental initiatives on the most marginalised communities such as the Mushahars and Bantangivas are evolving new constituencies for the BJP among Dalits and the marginalised.

### **Real empowerment**

The marginalised need empowerment in a real sense beyond ideologies and political positioning. They are ready to receive their share in developmental opportunities be it in the form of support

from the right, left or centre. Those who have to 'dig a well every day to drink water (roj kuwan khodana, roj pani pina)' are more aware now, which the middle class with facilities and access to the power of social media may not be able to comprehend. One should not perceive the Dalits and the marginalised as a vote bank for a certain kind of politics. The shift in their voting patterns in the last few vears shows that considering them as a homogeneous vote bank of a particular political party may be a myth. They are open to any political party which may offer them an appropriate package which enables them to partake in the country's developmental projects and representation in democracy.

In the decades preceding the 1990s, the dreams that the national freedom movement evoked more or less worked as a binding thread by keeping them mobilised towards the Congress despite being let down at times in terms of meeting their aspirations.

Gradually, things began to

change and became visible in States such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar; the Kanshi Ram initiated Bahujan movement which later emerged as the BSP in the northern part of India especially in Uttar Pradesh was an example of this. It democratic politics of the State. 1990s, the Ram Janmabhoomi movement attracted a section of marginalised communities towards Hindutva mobilisation.

### **Centres of mobilisation**

The RSS's work among these communities, in the form of seva karya (opening schools, hospitals, highlighting sanitation and cleanliness and other support services), and their cultural project to provide cultural and religious dignity, offered the Hindutva stream as another alternative for Dalits and subalterns in a State such as Uttar Pradesh. So, the Bahujan and Hindutva are the two centres of mobilisation that have emerged in the socio-cultural and political arena of Dalits in Uttar Pradesh. Both are reshaping Dalit aspirations in their own way. The Bahujan positioning, which was earlier a socio-political project, has now been reduced to political campaigns that try and create aspirations among the marginalised for their share in power. In contrast, Hindutva mobilisation is trying to provide them socio-cultural religious dignity in various ways and also working to

ensure their share in power by providing them space in the politics of the BJP. There are also a few other political options in the form of Samajwadi politics (in U.P.) which also offer them space in the

### Other factors

Another side of this growing heterogeneity in terms of their political mobilisation is the result of constant changes that are taking place in the making of the community. The impact of the liberal economy, the rise of the Dalit middle class, and exposure to the mainstream and alternative media have encouraged aspiration among the marginalised and subalterns and working as a motivational force to search for ways to ensure their de-

velopment and empowerment. Dalit mobilisation in Uttar Pradesh is undergoing a big churn. One can easily see how multiplicity is emerging in their political choices. This is the result of various changes taking place in the social-political and developmental mobility of the community and the constantly changing nature of politics in Uttar Pradesh in recent

Badri Narayan is Professor and Director at the G.B. Pant Social Science Institute, Prayagrai, Uttar Pradesh, He is the author of the recently published book, 'Republic

### $LETTERS\ TO\ THE\ EDITOR\quad \textit{Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.}$

### Afghan policy

Let not India be led by the reactions of the western nations towards the regime change in Afghanistan. It needs a fresh draft on foreign policy towards the new dispensation in Kabul. If history is a teacher, it shows the very same western blocs who are now making a U-turn as far as the Taliban are concerned. India is caught between the power sharks and should tread cautiously. Our stakes in Afghanistan are already in peril. SIVAMANI VASUDEVAN,

Day of remembrance The statement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi

henceforth be known as "Partition Horrors Remembrance Day" lacks statesmanship let alone political marksmanship. It is hardly the expression to use, and will be counter productive. On the eve of Independence day, the Prime Minister is expected to remind people of the struggles and sacrifices made in securing freedom from colonial exploitation. Only this would consolidate the spirit of freedom-loving people in building a new India. Far from it, reminding the people of the horrors of Partition and the

massacres of and atrocities

committed against millions

that August 14 would

would only accentuate the communal divide and consolidate communal forces, which will not help in nation building. No nation can be built on hate and divide. The Government rather than indulging in such gimmicks should spell out its constitutional ideals and work towards consolidating the nation, and not the party in power. N.G.R. PRASAD.

■ A democratic polity would require any declaration such as instituting August 14 as 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day' to be based on long, informed and open debates, both among

the public in general and domain experts in particular, as to the purpose, manner and nature of marking that day. As for Partition itself, it is not certain whether and indeed why people geographically and historically removed from the horrors should hold similar emotions about it as held by the people from regions and communities directly affected by the violence. Indeed, it is unfair and absurd to expect the same response to the event from an inhabitant of the Andamans or Bastar as would perhaps emerge among those coming from the Punjab, Bengal or even the erstwhile United

Provinces. One wonders

whether the objective behind marking the day is really about atonement, a healing of wounds and ensuring that such violence is never repeated. Or is it to keep burning the embers of hate and violence? FIROZ AHMAD, New Delhi

### **Decorum in Parliament**

Much has been written about the irreverent acts of some o our learned MPs in Parliament. Much of the hand-wringing later can be averted if a code of behaviour is evolved. Our elected MPs are expected to bring repute to Parliament. But it is pathetic to note that some of them are bent on making a

mockery of our democracy MANI NATARAAJAN,

### **Guide to health**

Though the Mahatma's experiments with truth are known, we are hardly aware of his tips on health and hygiene, and treating common ailments (OpEd page, "A Hundred Years Ago - August 20, 1921", August 20). As the simple guide is said to be based on his knowledge of treatises and his own experience, it would prove invaluable in the midst of the pandemic. One hopes that the book is republished. N. RAMA RAO,

# The rumbling hills of Himachal Pradesh

In a State where hydro power projects, dams and construction activities are increasing, landslides too are becoming common. **Vikas Vasudeva** reports on the concerns of the people in the fragile Himalayan region



The landslide in Batseri village in Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh on July 25 destroyed a bridge on the Baspa river. (Below): Several youth from the district hold a meeting at Kalpa to voice their concerns to the authorities over the new hydel power projects coming up in and around the district. • V.V. KRISHNAN

was a relatively warm monsoon afternoon on July 25 when Arjun Devi, 65, was sitting outside her house, legs stretched out. Her house is located in the middle of an apple orchard in Batseri village in Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh. It was a picture of calm and quiet when suddenly, Devi sprang up in alarm hearing a rumbling noise. She hurried upstairs. From her rooftop she watched transfixed as boulders came rolling down from the steep hilltop at great speed, not too far from her house. They crashed into a mini-bus on Sangla-Chitkul road, killing nine people, all tourists, Devi learned later. The boulders severely damaged the Sangla-Chitkul and Sangla-Batseri link roads. They destroyed a bridge on Baspa river, on the banks of which Batseri is located. Several mature trees that got in their way fell like ninepins. All this happened in just a few minutes.

"I have never seen such a horrific scene in my life," says Devi. "The previous day too, some stones fell down the hill, but July 25 was different. When I heard the loud noise and went to the rooftop, I saw huge rocks come thundering down. They fell some distance away from my house. Only when they stopped falling did I heave a sigh of relief."

This wasn't a one-time calamity. Nature unleashed its fury again on August 11 in Kinnaur, this time in Nigulsari village. Twenty-eight people lost their lives that day when a State transport bus, a truck, and three small vehicles were completely damaged after they were hit by boulders and mud on National Highway 5. Such was the force of the landslide that the bus rolled down several feet towards the Sutlej river, along with the debris.

The residents of Kinnaur are scared, angry and frustrated. Such incidents are becoming common, they say, thanks to the development model adopted by successive governments. Reports urging a rethink of the development model are frequently brought out but they lead to little change. The beautiful Himalayan region is only becoming more fragile and susceptible to disasters, they say.

### A double-edged sword

In the last two months alone, several landslides have been reported in Himachal Pradesh, especially in the tribal districts of Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur which have seen incessant rains. From June 13 to August 12, as many as 248 people lost their lives in various incidents relating to heavy rains. Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, who visited Nigulsari to oversee the rescue work after the incident, said the State government would conduct a geological survey of the area.

Jai Vijender Negi, 45, an orchardist at Batseri, says development has become a double-edged sword. He urges the go-



vernment to review its policy on hydro power projects. "These incidents are a wake-up call for us. The dams and hydro power projects have brought prosperity to the region, but they have also brought suffering. During the construction of these power projects and dams, the use of rock blasting and heavy machinery in construction sites, besides tree felling, have damaged the fragile hills," he says.

Om Prakash, who has been working at a tourist camping site in Batseri since the late 1990s, says landslides used to occur earlier as well but their number and intensity have increased in recent times. "For the tourism sector to flourish here, road connectivity is key, but I feel that converting single roads into double lanes and more is not a good idea. When roads are constructed, debris is thrown into the valley and falls into the rivers. The government should focus on the maintenance of existing roads instead of opting for unregulated development. Scientific disposal of debris is very important," he says.

These are not mere observations of residents. In its 2012 State Strategy and Action Plan on Climate Change, Himachal Pradesh's Department of Environment, Science and Technology had pointed out that deforestation, land-slides, land degradation, desertification and Glacier Lake Outbursts Floods are some of the common but critical environmental issues in the Himalayan region. The environment is facing major challenges given the escalation of such issues due to changes in the atmosphere and interferences by many it said.

and interferences by man, it said.

"Himachal Pradesh, though a small Himalayan State, is nevertheless playing a very crucial role in sustaining the livelihoods of downstream areas. The conservation, sustenance of these ecologically fragile regions is the biggest challenge being faced at the moment which can get further aggravated due to financial constraints and limited resources... Therefore, it can be safely stated that climate change will manifest most in Himachal Pradesh," it noted.

The report also stated that warming, erratic rainfall and rainfall changes, floods, and change in precipitation patterns are commonly observed events or

are likely to occur in the region.

### In a state of denial

Urni, a tiny village along National Highway 5 in Kinnaur district, witnessed a major landslide in 2014 which resulted in the erosion of several bighas of agricultural land and cracks in many houses. Ramanand Negi, 77, of Urni village, says the signs of ecology degradation are clearly visible, yet successive governments have been in a state of denial. "The key problem is that the government is quick to declare landslides as natural disasters. But these are manmade disasters. In July 2014, a big portion of our village was destroyed and so were several acres of agricultural and horticultural land including the orchards of over 20 families. The livelihoods of people are at stake," he says. People now live in fear, he adds.

The government gave relief to the affected families, but they have have been demanding compensation, Negi says. "The administration maintains that flood irrigation could have triggered the landslide, but we don't have any natural water sources here, so how can we use the method of flood irrigation? Our village is situated right above the intersection of the flushing tunnel, head race tunnel and two Adit tunnels of the 1091 MW Karcham Wangtoo project built on the Sutlej River (commissioned in 2011). These tunnels were constructed using heavy machinery and rock blasting. We used to feel the vibrations when the blasting was done," Negi says. He drops his head in despair as he points to the damaged portion of the hill slope.

Sita Ram, another resident, says he was a sub-contractor on the Karcham Wangtoo project. "During construction, blasting was done for digging tunnels in the mountain. Cracks developed as a result, and the soil got eroded. Later, when heavy rain struck the region, there were landslips," he says.

Manshi Asher, an environmentalist associated with the Himdhara Environ-

ment Research and Action Collective, an advocacy and research group working on issues of environmental justice and forest rights in the Himalayan region, says the climate crisis has exacerbated the frequency and intensity of disasters over the past few decades. "But the most critical factor that gets hidden behind the label of 'natural calamities' is the kind of development model that we have adopted. It has led to deforestation, increased erosion and slope destabilisation which not just trigger more disasters but multiply the damage caused. The State Disaster Management Authority report on Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment 2015 stated that 90% of the State is in the high-risk zone. Areas like Kinnaur, Chamba and Lahaul-Spiti are particularly sensitive. Yet, the focus of policymakers and government departments is on management rather than prevention," she says.

The State's 2015 Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment report, which Asher refers to, reads, "Hilly areas of Himachal Pradesh are vulnerable to landslides due to geological, meteorological and anthropogenic factors. Several devastating landslides have occurred in Himachal Pradesh... The hydro-meteorological conditions and fragile structural fabric of geological strata of Himachal Pradesh increase the possibility of landslides. Anthropogenic factors such as removal of vegetation cover, overloading of slopes by debris also contribute to a great extent. Development activities like construction of roads, tunnels and excavation for hydro projects have further accentuated the problem." The report was prepared by the Disaster Management Cell of the Department of Revenue.

It adds: "Most of the area under... Himachal Pradesh is under threat of landslides. It is the topographical profile of the state and the extreme climatic conditions which makes it susceptible to landslides. Hazard risk map of the state depicts that the area of the state falling

under the three categories of hazard proneness viz. low, medium and high hazard. Most of the area under... Himachal Pradesh is under high hazard."

chal Pradesh is under high hazard."

There are 932 hydropower projects in Himachal Pradesh, which include mini, small, large, and mega projects. Most of these projects are in Kinnaur, Chamba and Shimla districts. Asher says there is plenty of evidence on how these calamities are not natural but such evidence is not fed into policy decisions. This is why governments continue pushing for more hydro power projects and four-lane highways, she says.

### Protests against projects

Several residents of the tribal districts are now up in arms against the setting up of new power projects. Many assert that the projects severely impact the fragile mountain slopes and cause significant loss to life and property. As Kinnaur continues to bear the brunt of catastrophes, a group of youngsters at Kalpa gathered for a meeting on August 10 to craft a strategy to intensify their State-wide campaign of creating awareness against the setting up of new hydro power projects in the district.

"There should be a ban on such projects. Already substantial damage to the fragile ecology is visible, yet the government in the name of national interest is continuing to play with the lives and livelihood of locals. Today, we have gathered here to discuss the proposed construction of the Jangi Thopan Powari hydroelectric project plant of 804 MW capacity near Jangi village. This project, to be built by SJVN, will impact people and natural resources of at least six panchayats - Spillow, Kanan, Moorang, Jangi, Akpa and Rarang. Our purpose is to create awareness in all the villages about this upcoming project and others as well. Any decision on the commissioning of a project should be based on discussions with the gram sabhas," says

Sunder Negi, a member of the group.

Negi says the group got in touch with youth clubs of different villages. Through regular meetings, they are conveying these villages of the "ill-effects of power projects". He believes that people should be aware about the impacts of such projects on water, forest and land and should come forward to speak up their mind "before it's too late".

The Jangi Thopan Powari hydroelectric project envisages the construction of a concrete gravity dam of 48-metres high from the level of the riverbed across the river Sutlej near Jangi village and an underground powerhouse on the right bank upstream of Tehsil boundary (Kashang Nallah). It proposes to excavate a circular-shaped head race tunnel of 9.40-m wide and 12-kilometres long using tunnel boring machine. The tentative land requirement for the project is 295.93 ha out of which 270.43 ha

is forest land and 25.5 ha private land. The construction of the dam will result – in the submergence of about 156.2917 ha of land of which 143.2093 ha is forest land and 13.0824 ha private land.

Abhishek Wazir, 25, of Moorang village says this is a "fight to save 'Zangti' (golden water) of Sutlej River." Dinesh Negi, 32, from Kanan village,

remarks that this is more that that; it is a fight for survival. "The indigenous pine nuts (chilgoza) trees are under threat here. As transmission lines of hydro projects pass through forests, trees are cut. This impacts not only the environment but our livelihoods too," he says.

"We have to save Kinnaur at any cost, and so we are mobilising the youth. We will make it a mass movement," says Bharat Bhushan, 35, of Kalpa.

Jiya Negi, a Kinnaur-based environmentalist and activist, says the entire stretch of the Sutlej is filled with debris that is thrown into the river from construction sites of power projects, dams and roads. No one, he says, bothers to ensure the scientific disposal of debris.

Deputy Commissioner (Kinnaur) Abid Hussain Sadiq says the administration is always there to look into the concerns of people. "The decision to set up power projects is taken in national interest, but at the same time there's no doubt that the concerns of people are to be understood and addressed. A balance has to be struck between national interest and the concerns of the local people. We are always willing to work towards that," he says.

A power sector expert and head of the Jangi Thopan Powari hydroelectric project, Roshan Negi, asserts that the construction of tunnels does not damage the ecology as the work is done in a scientific manner. "All the necessary precautions are taken while we construct tunnels. If the environment was at risk of damage, the Government of India would have not allowed the setting up of these projects. However, I believe that there should always be a consensus with the locals before setting up a project. The projects that have been set up and the allied activities have given a boost to the local economy and infrastructure. They have benefited the residents over the years," he says.

All these explanations don't make much sense to Devi. She doesn't know why, but she knows that landslides in the Sangla Valley have been increasing over the years. "For some 30 years it used to snow heavily in this area, but in recent years I have seen more rain than snow. At the same time, many dams and roads have come up and landslides have become common. Our rivers are turning muddy as they carry debris. The government must take steps to preserve our mountains. Development is welcome, but not at the cost of human lives," she says.





### FROM PAGE ONE

### Oppn. leaders call for unity to take on BJP

Sources claimed though the Bahujan Samaj Party was sent an invite, there was no response; the Aam Admi Party, however, was not invited by the Congress.

Apart from Chief Ministers of some of the Opposition-ruled States including Jharkhand's Hemant Soren, other top leaders included Sharad Pawar (NCP), Farooq Abdullah (National Conference), Mehbooba Mufti Sitaram Yechury (CPI-M), D. Raja (CPI), Tejaswi Yadav (RJD) among others.

Ms. Gandhi set the tone for the meeting by pointing out that Opposition unity was in full display during the monsoon session of Parliament. "I am confident that this unity will be sustained in future sessions of Parliament as well. But the larger political battle has to be fought outside it. Of course, the ultimate goal is the 2024 Lok Sabha elections for which we have to begin to plan systematically with the single-minded objective of giving to our country a government that believes in the values of the Freedom Movement and in the principles and provisions of our Constitution,"

"We all have our compulsions, but clearly, a time has come when the interests of our nation demand that we rise above them " Ms. Gandhi added.

### 10 demands

As reported by The Hindu earlier, the joint statement which touched upon a host of issues, put forward 10 de-

However, Ms. Banerjee suggested that the demands be reduced to five key issues including a judicial probe into the Pegasus snooping controversy, vaccination for all, repeal of the three farm laws, ₹7,500 monthly cash transfers to those outside income tax bracket and the immediate rollback of the hike in fuel and cooking gas

After the meeting, CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury said, "The new India is a Modi project which is based on disruption and destruction of the Constitution and erecting the RSS' intolerant Hindu Rashtra."

At the meeting, CPI's D. Raja too talked at length about RSS 'redefining' the notion of the Indian State and democracy.

(With inputs from

### Reign of terror is never permanent, says PM

The Prime Minister, who is also the chairman of the Somnath temple trust, emphasised the need to strengthen religious tourism, citing examples of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, the Somnath temple and other landmark religious and pilgrimage centres.

Religious tourism and pilgrimage would provide new employment opportunities and ensure that the future generations would remain connected with India's history, its traditions and its heritage, he noted.

The reconstruction of the Somnath temple to grand renovation was due to centuries of strong will and ideological continuity and contribution by great men like Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel and K.M. Munshi, who had to face difficulties for this campaign even after Independence, the Prime Minister said. The projects he inaugurated or laid foundation for include a Somnath Promenade, a Somnath Exhibition Centre, and the reconstructed temple precinct of Old Somnath.

### Zycov-D, first vaccine for those over 12, gets nod

"This vaccine had already exhibited robust immunogenicity and tolerability and safety profile in the adaptive Phase I/II clinical trials carried out earlier. Both the Phase I/II and Phase III clinical trials have been monitored by an independent Data Safety Monitoring Board," the DBT statement added. The vaccine has been developed in partnership with the Department of

Biotechnology under the 'Mission COVID Suraksha'. The three-dose vaccine once administered produces the spike protein of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and elicits an immune response.

"The plug-and-play technology on which the plasmid DNA platform is based can be easily adapted to deal with mutations in the virus, such as those already occurring," the DBT noted.

### Delta variant driving infections in India: report

### The most concerning variant

A look at samples processed in the genomic surveillance conducted by INSACOG, as on 16 August 2021, showed that the Delta variant remained the major SARS-COV-2 variant of concern in India

Variants of Concern (VoC)	Distribution				
Delta	20,324				
B.1.1671.1 & B.1.617.3	5,407				
Alpha	4,218				
Beta	218				
Delta Plus	61				
Gamma	2				
Total	30,230				
Cumulative samples	49,867				
Proportion of VoC	60.62%				

"Continuing outbreaks are attributable to Delta, a susceptible population, reduced vaccine effectiveness and opportunities for transmission. Public health measures to reduce transmission and vaccination remain

critical," says the note. Globally, there are believed to be 13 sublineages of Delta with characteristic genetic mutations. AY.1, AY.2 and AY.3 are the predominant ones and also found in India. AY.3.1 is a recently classified sublineage of AY.3 in the United States. AY.12 is a sublineage of delta recently classified from Israel.

India is currently adding about 35,000 new cases a day, with about 75% coming from only two States: Kerala

and Maharashtra. "Vaccination throughs are common during Delta outbreaks and are expected in India as well. Concern regarding appearance of new variants should be calibrated in the context of such data. As of now sequencing of vaccination breakthroughs in India is also showing a very high proportion of Delta variant. Investigations for any new variants are ongoing," the note adds.

# Arrest is not always a must, says Supreme Court Bench says provision in the law does not mean that govt. can use power indiscriminately to crush personal liberty

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

House disrupted: A scene in the Rajya Sabha on August 11,

Venkaiah in a fix over

complaints against MPs

Discrepancies exist between two lists

when many protests were held. •PTI

SOBHANA K. NAIR

The complaint filed by Lead-

er of House in Rajya Sabha

Piyush Goyal for disruptions

caused on the last two days

of the Monsoon session has

put Chairman Venkaiah Nai-

The government com-

plaint lists 18 opposition

MPs while on directions of

the Chair 40 opposition

members have been named

for "persistently and willful-

ly obstructing" the proceed-

ings of the House, leaving

Mr. Naidu with the question

on whom to punish and

which members to con-

On Friday, the Rajya Sab-

ha secretariat sent out a

draft analytical status note

to Mr. Naidu, citing prece-

dents and the action that

has been taken in such cas-

There are a few key dis-

crepancies between the two

lists for example, Samajwadi

Party's Vishambhar Prasad

Nishad who has been listed

by the Rajya Sabha, does not

figure in the government

complaint. CPI(M) Elama-

ram Kareem does not figure

in the Rajya Sabha list, while

he has been named in Mr.

In the last two days of the

Monsoon session of Parlia-

ment on August 10 and Au-

gust 11, the Opposition prot-

ests turned violent. On

August 10, the government

pushed through a debate on

"the agricultural problems

Goyal's complaint.

Last two days

du in a difficult position.

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has held that merely because law allows arrest does not mean the State can use the power indiscriminately to crush personal liberty.

"We may note that personal liberty is an important aspect of our constitutional mandate. The occasion to arrest an accused during investigation arises when custodial investigation becomes necessary or it is a heinous crime or where there is a possibility of influencing the witnesses or accused may abscond. Merely because an arrest can be made because it is lawful does not mandate that arrest must be made," a Bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Hrishikesh Roy said.

A distinction must be made between the existence of the power to arrest and the justification for exercise of it, it noted.

"If arrest is made routine, it can cause incalculable harm to the reputation and self-esteem of a person. If the Investigating Officer has no reason to believe that the accused will abscond or disobey summons and has, in fact, throughout cooperated with the investigation we fail to appreciate why there should be a compulsion on the officer to arrest the accused," the court observed in its recent order.

The order was passed in a plea for anticipatory bail

and solutions" while the Op-

position refused to settle for

anything less than repeal of

On August 11, the govern-

ment pushed for The Gener-

al Insurance Business (Na-

tionalisation) Amendment

2021 even when the entire

Opposition wanted the Bill

to go to a select committee.

The Bill was passed in an ex-

traordinary situation even

as the Opposition MPs were

having a tussle with the Par-

liamentary security officials

who had swarmed the Rajya

The Rajya Sabha Bulletin 1

that publishes a record of

the day's events in the

House also names the mem-

bers who caused disrup-

The members have been

named for "entering the

'Well' of the House, display-

ing placards, shouting slo-

gans and persistently and

willfully obstructed the pro-

ceedings of the House,"as

per the bulletins of the two

days. The August 10 bulletin

names 34 members while

the August 11 one names 33

members. There are 27

names which are common

have filed counter com-

plaints alleging that they

were manhandled by the

Parliamentary security offi-

They have further alleged

that male marshals have as-

saulted the women mem-

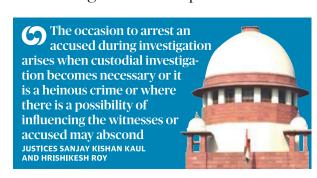
to these two bulletins. Many Opposition MPs too

Sabha chamber.

tions.

**Record of events** 

the three farm laws.



filed by businessman Siddharth, represented by senior advocate Pramod Kumar Dubey and advocates Ravi Sharma and Rahul Shyam Bhandari. The Allahabad High Court had rejected his bail application in July.

The case concerns an FIR registered against him for allegedly entering into a con-

spiracy and criminal breach of trust involving former ministers and high-ranking officials in relation to a project initiated by the Uttar Pradesh government in 2007 to build parks and museums, including the Ambedkar Samajik Parivartan Asthal, Asthal Kashiram Smarak

Gautambudh Nagar Upvan

Echo Park and Noida Ambedkar Park. The FIR alleges a loss of ₹ 14,000 crore to the public exchequer.

'Wrongly interpreted' Mr. Dubey argued that his client had joined the sevenyear-old investigation. There was no need for his custodial interrogation. There was no apprehension that he would abscond or tamper with evidence. Mr. Dubey said Section 170 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) has been wrongly interpreted by the police and trial courts to make arrest of the accused mandatory at the time of filing of the charge sheet. He argued that the word "custody" in Section 170 had been

interpreted as

Agreeing with the senior lawyer, the Supreme Court clarified that "the word 'custody' appearing in Section 170 does not contemplate either police or judicial custody but it merely connotes the presentation of the accused by the Investigating Officer before the court while filing the charge sheet".

"The trial courts are stated to be insisting on the arrest of an accused as a pre-requisite formality to take the charge sheet on record in view of the provisions of Section 170 of the CrPC. We consider such a course misplaced and contrary to the very intent of Section 170 of the CrPC," the court laid down the law.

# TRS' Dalita Bandhu scheme flayed

wrongly

It is ad hoc and reactive to political situations, says BJP's Muralidhar Rao

NISTULA HEBBAR NEW DELHI

The Telangana government's income support scheme for farmers, the Rythu Bandhu scheme, received universal acclaim and was even replicated at the Central level. but its scheme for Scheduled Caste communities, the Dalita Bandhu scheme, has led to criticism from all quarters of the political spectrum, not least because the pilot project has been launched in a bypoll bound Assembly

The Huzurabad Assembly seat was vacated after former Health Minister in the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS)-led government, Eatala Rajendra, quit and joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) a couple of months ago. Belonging to the Backward Class community, his exit created some discomfort in the TRS. Following Mr. Raiendra's exit, Chief Minister



K. Chandrasekhar Rao

K. Chandrashekhara Rao wasted no time in announcing the Dalita Bandhu scheme, touted as one of the biggest direct cash benefit schemes in the country, the pilot project for which would be launched in the Huzurabad Assembly seat, bypolls for which are due.

The scheme provides finance of up to ₹10 lakh to Dalit families under 30 different projects without bank linkages. In Huzurabad itself, the pilot project envisages scrutiny of 20,929 families for benefits under the

### Plan extended

Later, on August 8, the scheme was extended to Mr. Rao's adoptive village of Vasalamari in Yadadri district, and a sum of ₹7.60 crores was set aside for it. The overall State-wide budget for the scheme is pegged ₹80,000-₹1,00,000 crore.

Former national general secretary in the BJP, P. Muralidhar Rao, says that the scheme is being criticised by his party for the ad hoc way in which it is being implemented. "The Rytha Bandhu scheme had a policy architecture that was robust. This scheme is reactive to political situations and Dalit communities deserve better than to be made a beneficiary in a scheme that has been launched and is being taken

forward in such an ad hoc manner," he said.

Madhu Goud Yaskhi, campaign committee chairman for the Telangana Congress said that his party, too, had a problem with the manner in which the scheme had been brought in. "If you go by past promises made by the TRS government, Dalit communities are owed ₹1 crore individually as the government had promised three acres of land, scholarships for Dalit students and other benefits before every poll. We demand that the government fulfil all promises made to the Dalit community," he

The Election Commission is yet to notify polls in Huzurabad, but going by the way the TRS has taken on the exit of Mr. Rajendra, it will be a tough contest, and hanging in balance would be the support of 18% of Dalit voters in the State.

### Remembering a leader



Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Congress chief Sonia Gandhi interacting before paying tributes to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his birth anniversary at Parliament House in New Delhi on Friday. • PTI

# Cong. forms party-govt. panel for coordination in Punjab

Friction between Amarinder and Sidhu still remains

VIKAS VASUDEVA CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh and his detractor Navjot Singh Sidhu, the new State Congress president, on Friday agreed to set up a 10-member 'Strategic Policy Group' to further expedite the implementation of various government programmes in the State. The move comes even as recent appointments by Mr Sidhu strongly indicate his unrelenting slant against the Chief Minister.

"To ensure better coordination between the ruling party and the State government, and to further expedite the implementation of the various government programmes and reform initia-



Navjot Singh Sidhu, left, with CM Amarinder Singh

tives, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh and Congress president Navjot Singh Sidhu on Friday agreed to set up a 10-mem-'Strategic Policy Group'," said an official

To be headed by the Chief Minister, the group will have Local Government Minister Brahm Mohindra, Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal and Social Security Minister Aruna Chaudhary as members, along with Mr. Sidhu, the four party working presidents – Kuljit Singh Nagra, Sukhwinder Singh Danny, Sangat Singh Gilzian and Pawan Goel - besides Pargat Singh.

The decision was taken when Mr Sidhu, along with Mr Nagra and Mr Pargat, called on the Chief Minister to discuss Punjab related issues and steps to strengthen party-government coordination.

### Chhattisgarh Cong. gets new offices in six districts

CM inaugurates the premises

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel inaugurated Congress offices in six districts on Friday, coinciding with the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

On August 20 last year, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi chaired the foundation-laying ceremony for these party offices and renovation of the existing

The ceremony of inauguration of the offices at Koriya, Surguja, Durg, Dhamtari, Jagdalpur and Sukuma was attended by State in charge P.L. Punia and national secretary Chandan

Yadav. Another 10 offices are under construction and four

will soon begin construction in another five districts and land is being acquired for another three. Party offices will also be constructed at four newly minted districts. Mr. Baghel said on the oc-

being renovated. The party

casion, "The organisation plays an important role for any party to win the election. And a party office helps an organisation to function more effectively."

The new headquarters of the Chhattisgarh Pradesh Congress Committee in Raipur was constructed when the party was in the Opposition. It was inaugurated in 2018 by Mr. Gandhi.

"The new Rajiv Bhawan played a positive role in our campaign for the Assembly elections," Mr. Baghel stat-

### takes down post by Rahul SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT Social media giant Face-

Facebook

book has removed the post by former Congress president Rahul Gandhi that identified the family of a nine-year-old victim of alleged rape and murder in Delhi as it violated the platform's policies.

The social media giant informed Mr. Gandhi, as well as the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), of the removal of the posts Facebook Instagram.

In an emailed reply to a query, a Facebook spokesperson said, "We have taken action to remove the content as it was in violation of our policies."

According to Facebook, in this case, the family has pleaded for their safety in the court, and in view of their safety and to maintain the dignity of the victim, the company decided to take down the content from its platform.

The social media company's action followed the NCPCR's direction to Facebook to take appropriate action against Mr. Gandhi's Instagram profile over the violation of provisions of Acts such as the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, and the Indian Penal Code.

Earlier, on August 7, Twitter too had locked Mr. Gandhi's account, and subsequently several other handles associated with the Congress, for posting/ sharing a photograph of the parents of the 9-yearold victim. A week later, on August 14, Twitter restored Mr. Gandhi's account, after the company claimed that the Congress leader had submitted a consent letter from the victim's family.

### One hundred days of governance



The Chairperson of The Hindu Publishing Group, Malini Parthasarathy, called on Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin at his residence in Chennai on Friday. She presented the Chief Minister with two volumes of a selection of The Hindu's editorials. Lok Sabha Member of Parliament Kanimozhi was also present at the meeting. • S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

**7** Development and economic about making the rich richer. They are that the oppressed and marginalised are benefited from such efforts to achieve growth. philosophy is based on that inclusive social justice model And that is what my government wants to achieve <sup>(</sup>

# Quota benefit can't be availed simultaneously in 2 States: SC

Court clarifies on reservation in reorganised States

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Supreme Court has ruled that a person belonging to a reserved category is entitled to claim the benefit of reservation in either of the successor States of Bihar or Jharkhand, but cannot claim benefit of the quota simultaneously in both the successor States upon their reorganisation in November,

The top court also held that members of the reserved category, who are residents of the successor State of Bihar, while participating in open selection in Iharkhand, shall be treated to be migrants, and they can participate in the general ca-



tegory without claiming the benefit of reservation and

A Bench of Justices U.U. Lalit and Ajay Rastogi decided the "peculiar question" after a resident of Jharkhand, Pankaj Kumar, a member of a Scheduled Caste, filed an appeal against the 2:1 majority High Court order, denying him appointment in the State Civil Service examination of 2007, on the ground that his address proof showed that he was a permanent resident of Pat-

"It is made clear that per-

son is entitled to claim benefit of reservation in either of the successor State of Bihar or State of Jharkhand, but will not be entitled to claim benefit of reservation simultaneously in both the successor States and those who are members of the reserved category and are resident of the successor State of Bihar, while participating in open selection in State of Jharkhand shall be treated to be migrants and it will be open to participate in general category without claiming the benefit of reservation and vice-versa," the Bench said.

### CBI seeks details from Bengal DGP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The CBI has written to the West Bengal Director General of Police seeking details of the cases of alleged murder and sexual abuse of women, in compliance with the Calcutta High directive Court Thursday.

The court has ordered a CBI probe into such cases in connection with the alleged violence that followed the Assembly elections earlier this year. It has earlier urged the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to constitute a committee for an inquiry into allegations.

### **Probe suggested**

On July 13, the committee submitted a report suggesting a CBI investigation.

In its order, the court said: "All the cases where, as per the report of the committee, the allegations are about murder of a person and crime against women regarding rape/attempt to rape, shall be referred to CBI for investigation. The committee, NHRC, any other Commission or Authority and the State shall immediately hand over entire record of the cases entrusted to the CBI for investigation."

### Four teams

The agency has set up four teams, each headed by an official of the Joint Director rank, to conduct the courtmonitored probe under the supervision of an Additional Director.

The court has also directed the CBI to submit a status report on its findings

# Elopements most prosecuted under child marriage law: study

But forced weddings often go unpunished in the country

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Legal proceedings against child marriages are commonly undertaken against elopements whereas forced child marriages often go unpunished, finds a new study.

The report – "Child Marriage Prosecutions in India" brought out by Partners for Law in Development (PLD), a Delhi-based legal resource group, analysed 83 high court and district court verdicts in cases relating to child marriage from 2008 and 2017.

It selected for analysis judgments and orders in which child marriage was specifically mentioned. These included cases filed under the Prohibition of Child Marriages Act, 2006, as well as legal action initiated under other laws in relation to child marriage such as Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), 2012, and the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

The study found that legal prosecution of child marriages was twice as much against elopement or self-arranged marriages by girls with such cases accounting



### Warning signal negligible prosecution, finds

Type of marriages	Cases prosecuted						
Elopement	<b>54</b> (65.06%)						
Arranged child marriages	<b>25</b> (30.12%)						
Forced child marriages	<b>04</b> (4.82%)						
Total	83						

for 65% ( 54 out of a total 83 cases) of the total cases studied. Only 30% of the cases were those of arranged child marriages, and a mere 5% were forced child marriages (such as those that involved kidnapping, enticement or marriage parents).

### Seeking custody

An analysis of who initiated the legal proceedings shows that it was primarily the parents of girls who approached the legal system with a complaint. A total of 56 of the 83 cases, or 67.4%, were initiated by parents or relatives. These included cases where parents sought custody of their daughter who had eloped or to prosecute the husband.

Only 7% of the cases were initiated by a child marriage prohibition officer - the State functionary designated for implementing the law. Another 7% of the cases were filed by a third party, including an NGO, or suo moto action by the court.

Girls accessed the law on their own the least, with only 3.5% of the cases filed to seek the nullification of their arranged marriage or to initiate criminal legal action against their parents for arranging an underage mar-

Further, the punishment for elopement versus forced and arranged child marriag-

es were hugely disproportionate. The former could invite a punishment of 10 years to life imprisonment if convicted for rape under the IPC or a jail of 20 years to a maximum punishment of death under the POCSO Act. whereas the latter under the PCMA comes with no minimum sentence and a maximum sentence of imprisonment for two years and/or a fine. The study terms this "weaponisation of the law to settle family dishonour". That the law is tilted

against older adolescents is also borne out by national crime data. In 2019, 525 cases were registered under the PCMA, compared with 6,590 children who were "deemed" to have been kidnapped on account of an elopement or love relationship and 12,724 cases of children who were kidnapped for the purpose of marriage.

"The unintended harm of the law needs to be corrected. Law reform in this area must aim to shield the young in self-arranged marriages,' says Madhu Mehra, the lead author of the study and Head, Research and Training, at PLD.

### Cong. goofs up over Uddhav's presence at Oppn. meet

NAME OF WORK/NOTICE/TENDER

epartment of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Govt. of Punjab invite:

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, according to sources, had to be placated after mismanagement of the virtual meeting organised by the Congress

The meeting was chaired

by Congress president Sonia Gandhi and attended by 19 parties.

According to sources, Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury had to step in and speak to Mr. Thackeray after he objected that it was Nationalist

**GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB** 

Congress Party (NCP) leader Sharad Pawar who was dealing with the Shiv Sena instead of the Congress.

"While Ahmed Patel was alive, he was the pointsman who would call each and every Opposition leader. His absence is being sorely felt as the coordination work is being left to the lower rung of Congress leaders," a senior Opposition leader said.

Mr. Thackeray, sources said, threatened to not attend the meeting.

It was at this point that Mr. Yechury intervened and spoke to him, urging him to participate.

DETAILS/EMAIL

9779700100

punjab.gov.in

RO Code : 26/12/183/2021/7016

DPRPB 26/12/183/2021/7016

# NIA inquires into explosives-laden tiffin box

The aftermath: People inspecting a damaged house near the

encounter site in Pampore area of Pulwama. • NISSAR AHMAD

the troops but was neutralised.

The second terrorist continued

to fire but was contained in the

house by the troops. By 9:15

a.m., the second terrorist was al-

an almost 100-day violent eco-

nomic blockade from June to

September 2017 over the de-

After Mr. Gurung left the hills.

Mr. Thapa and Binay Tamang,

another GJM leader, entered in

talks with the West Bengal go-

vernment and normalcy gra-

themselves as the leaders of the

Both of them announced

dually returned to hills.

GTA chief to form new party

**Gurung exit** 

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PEERZADA ASHIQ

day morning.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has initiated an inquiry into the dropping of a tiffin box containing five hand grenades, 100 cartridges, an explosive sub-

Two Hizb-ul-Mujahideen mili-

tants were killed in an encounter

in Pulwama's Khrew area on Fri-

the Hizb. They were responsible

for civilian killings in south Kash-

mir. One of them, Musaib Mus-

taq, from Khrew, was involved in

the killing of Javid Ahmad Malik,

a peon in a school in Pastuna [on

July 23, 2021]," Inspector Gener-

anti-militancy operation. An Ar-

my spokesman said, "The opera-

tion was launched at 1 a.m. The

search party drew heavy volume

of fire from the terrorists hiding

fire continued throughout the

night. "At 6:30 a.m., one terro-

rist tried to escape by firing on

In a significant development that

may have a long-standing impact

on the Darjeeling hills, Anit Tha-

pa, chairperson of Gorkhaland

(GTA), on Friday announced that

he will be setting up a new party.

Mr. Thapa, who has been head-

ing the GTA, a regional autono-

mous body in the hills, said that

the details of the party will be

brought before the public in the

Mr. Thapa emerged in the pol-

first week of September.

Administration

The intermittent exchange of

in the village at 2:40 a.m.".

SHIV SAHAY SINGH

They were encircled in a joint

al of Police Vijay Kumar said.

The duo was a 'hit squad' of

switch and a remote control device in Amritsar on August 8.

The police suspected that it was dropped by a drone operated from across the border in Pakistan. The NIA is investigating

Hizb 'hit squad' members killed

One among the duo was involved in recent killing of a civilian: IGP

stance weighing over 2 kg, a the explosions at the Jammu Air Force station on June 27, which were carried out using drones

In the past couple of years, security forces have come across several instances of drones having been used by Pakistan-based elements to transport weapons, ammunition and drugs from across the border. Some drones were also shot down. The government has been exploring various technological solutions to counter the threat from drones.

# FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND CORRIGENDUM & ADDENDUM IF ANY, KINDLY VISIT : foodsuppb.gov.in,www.eproc.punjab.gov.in CENTRAL POWER RESEARCH INSTITUTE

NAME OF DEPARTMENT

irector Food, Civil Supplies and

### **ADVERTISEMENT No. CPRI/21/2021 RECRUITMENT** CPRI invites applications from eligible candidates for the following post Name of the No. of Level & Pay in 7th | Age Vacancy CPC Pay Matrix No Level – 6 with Initial **UR**-Category pay of Rs.35,400/-Junior and other **Hindi Translator** \*( Including allowances as per Years 1 Anticipated Govt. of India vacancy)

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For and on behalf of State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited, sealed tenders are invited for the auctior sale of the following units taken possession U/s.29 of State Financial Corporations Act 1951, "AS IS WHERE IS" basis

escription of the property 45.11 10,000/-Land (3.61 acres) & Building S.No.373/2C, EthiloduVillage 20.47 10.000/lakottai Taluk, Dindigul Distric Land (9.45 acres) at S.No.287/ 291/5 Mulvoy Village, Arakona Taluk, Ranipet District. Machinery only at SIPCOT dustrial Park, Gummidipoon Rs.4.750/ 5.000/

DIPR/2470/TENDER/2021

No.:- NIT/2021-22/8543 E-NIT NO. 1/2021-22

Jharkash Tehsil Hindoli District Bundi. (2) Construction of anicut on Mei River near village Sadera Tehsil Nainwa District Bundi. (3) Construction of anicut on Mei River near village Badgaon Tehsil Hindoli District Bundi, 3 nos. Works Total amounting Rs. 4944.20 lacs is invited from interested bidders from 12.08.2021 (9:30 Hr) to 02.09.2021 till 18:00 Hr. Other particulars, terms & conditions may be seen on the procurement portal http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in & http://sppp.rajasthan.nic.in and www.dipr.rajasthan.gov.in & www. water.rajasthan.gov.in.

JBN NO. ITEM 1 WRD2122WLOB00695 UBN NO. ITEM 2 WRD2122WLOB00696 UBN NO. ITEM 3 WRD2122WLOB00697

> Chief Engineer Water Resources Zone Kota



**TENDER NOTICE** 

OPENING DATE



### HAFFKINE BIO-PHARMACEUTICAL CORPORATION LTD.

Haffkine (Govt. of Maharashtra Undertaking)

Acharya Donde Marg, Parel, Mumbai-400012, Maharashtra, India Phone No.022-24129320-22.022-24150628 Email:mm@vaccinehaffkine.com

### e-TENDER NOTICE

Haffkine Bio-Pharmaceutical Corporation Ltd, A Govt. of Maharashtra undertaking company is seeking tenders from companies/firms with multi-domain expertise to Establishment of BSL3 Drug Substance Bulk Vaccine (110 million doses per annum capacity) Facility for Covid-19 vaccine on Turn-Key basis.

Scope of Work: - The Scope of the work under the tender includes.

(1) Civil, PEB electrical and plumbing work for the facility (2) Floor finishing including epoxy coating, coving PU Painting (3) Critical utilities system piping and Pendent based distribution (WFI/PW/DI/CA/PS etc.) (4) HVAC system including AHU and ducting (5) Cold rooms, Deep Freezers (6) Supply and installation of all process and clean room equipment for vaccine manufacturing (7) Electrical MV and LV system (8) Integrated Building Management systems including access control, CCTV, fire alarm system, public address system, public address system, fire hydrant, ETP STP (9) This is a turnkey tender which involves purchase of equipments, installation, calibration, validation, regulatory clearance/ certification and final handover to HBPCL (10) Miscellaneous works.

Qualification Criteria:- Eligibility criteria for the prospect vendor (s)/contractor (s) should

1. Successfully completed 3 similar BSL-3 or higher containment Laboratory projects with at-least one project of value of Rs. 20.00 Crores.

. Shall have an Average Annual turnover during last three financial years upto Rs. 80

. The Firm shall have more than 2 ongoing AMC contracts for BSL-3 or higher

containment Laboratories

4. Other criteria as specified in Tender Document.

Details of this e-tender is available on https://mahatenders.gov.in and https://www.vaccinehaffkine.com. Interested bidders should sent authorized representative of their firm along with authority letter & PAN Card of the firm to collect technical specification & BOQs in hard copy from above mentioned office address.

Confidential agreement to be signed before taking technical documents before

(Mob: - +91 9969302019) for any query. Timelines: - Timelines for tender submission and work completion are as indicated below 1. CDA Execution and taking the Technical specification & BOQ of bid documents before

27.08.2021 by 16:45 Hrs.

2. Bid Published Date:- 19.08.2021 at 16:45 Hrs

27.08.2021. Please contact to Mr. B. G. Dhekane, Materials Manager

3. Pre-bid meeting: - 01.09.2021 at 11:00 Hrs at above mentioned office address. 4. Last date for bid submission of completed bid: 08.09.2021 by 16:30 Hrs

5. Date of Technical Bid Opening: 09.09.2021 by 16:30 Hrs

MATERIAL MANAGER **Managing Director** 

Haffkine Bio Pharmaceuticals Corp Ltd. Acharya Donde, Parel. Mumbai - 400 012

itical scene of the Darjeeling hills GTA and expelled Mr. Gurung in 2017, when Gorkha Janamukti from the party. Speaking to The the hills, Mr. Thapa maintained Morcha (GJM) president Bimal Hindu Mr. Thapa said that the that there is a need for holding DIPR/C/8084 Gurung had to flee the hills after time had come for the people of elections to the GTA.

destination," he said.



so neutralised," the Army said.

The police said one AK-47, one

pistol and other war-like stores

were recovered from the terro-

While emphasising that by setting up a new party, he was giving an option to the people of

tential as an important tourism

### Office of the Chief Engineer, Water Resources Zone, Kota Date 11-08-2021

Bids for (1) Construction of anicut on Mej River near village

(Rajeev Choudhary)

DGIPR/2021/2022/1667

'Govt. jobs for

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Assam Chief Minister Hi-

manta Biswa Sarma on Fri-

day marked the comple-

tion of 100 days of his

government by handing ov-

er appointment letters to

the kin of six policemen

killed in firing on the

State's boundary with Miz-

Dr Sarma's Bharatiya Ja-

"The government jobs

nata Party-led coalition go-

oram on July 26.

vernment had

charge on May 10.

kin of slain

policemen'



modern Arunachal: CM

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandhu has sought a social awakening against polygamy and a proper debate on property rights for the girl child. Polygamy is prevalent in several of the 26 tribes and more than 100 sub-tribes in the frontier State. Mr. Khandu said polygamy needed to become obsolete in the modern world.

### **Assam Rifles seizes** cigarettes worth ₹6.5 cr.

In a major recovery of smuggled items in Mizoram, the Assam Rifles has seized 502 cases of foreign origin cigarettes in Champhai district with an estimated market value of ₹6.5 crore. In another incident, a major haul of arms and ammunition was made in Lawngtlai district.

### Taj to open for night viewing from today

After remaining closed for over a year for night viewing, the Taj Mahal will open from August 21 for visitors who want to explore the marble monument under moonlight, officials said on Friday Night viewing of the monument had closed on March 17, 2020, during the first lockdown. PTI

### **Curfew in Shillong** relaxed for 13 hours

Meghalaya CM Conrad K. Sangma on Friday said no major untoward incident was reported in the capital during the past 24 hours and curfew was relaxed for 13 hours during the day. Curfew was imposed in Shillong on August 15 following the violence that erupted during the funeral of a former militant leader, PTI

# J&J seeks approval for COVID vaccine trials on adolescents

Pharma major's single shot candidate was granted emergency use permission

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

U.S. pharma major Johnson & Johnson (J&J) has applied for permission to conduct clinical trials of its singleshot COVID-19 vaccine on adolescents aged 12-17 years in India.

The company has moved an application to the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) seeking approval.

A J&J India spokesperson, in a statement, said: "We are committed to facilitating global equitable access to CO-VID-19 vaccine and recognise the unmet needs of children. On August 17, 2021, we submitted an application



Fighting the virus: J&J vaccine has demonstrated 85% efficacy in staving off severe COVID-19 disease. • REUTERS

clinical trials continue to

move forward in this popula-

tion, and we remain deeply

to the CDSCO to conduct a study of the J&J COVID-19 vaccine in India in adolescents aged 12-17 years."

committed to the critical "To ultimately achieve work needed to make our herd immunity, it is impera-COVID-19 vaccine equitably tive that COVID-19 vaccine accessible for all

Previously in August, J&J's single-dose COVID-19 vaccine had been granted emergency use approval (EUA) in India, and the Health Ministry has said it was in talks to

groups," said the statement.

get the vaccine available to the general public as soon as possible. The five COVID vaccines granted EUA in India are Serum Institute's Covishield, Bharat Biotech's Covaxin,

Russia's Sputnik V, Moderna

and now Johnson & Johnson

(J&J).Coronavirus vaccine developed by J&J has demonstrated 85% efficacy in staving off severe COVID-19 disease in its phase 3 trials.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Odisha Chief Minister Na-

veen Patnaik on Friday

launched the distribution of

a smart health card, which

will help families get treat-

ment up to ₹5 lakh per an-

About 3.5 crore poor peo-

ple will benefit from the

State-funded health debit

BHUBANESWAR

card system.

'No frill system'

### ₹3.2 crore-aid for children who lost parents to COVID

Kerala issues guidelines for assistance

STAFF REPORTER THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

parents/guardians

COVID-19.

The Kerala government has sanctioned ₹3.2 crore as financial assistance for 87 children who have lost their

In a statement here on Friday, Minister for Women and Child Development Veena George said funds for a ₹3-lakh fixed deposit and a monthly payment of ₹2,000 till the time the children turned 18 had been sanctioned. Besides this, education expenses till the children graduated would be met from the CM's Distress Relief Fund

Ms. George said Integrated Child Development Services personnel had conducted house visits and

Naveen launches smart health

About 3.5 crore deprived people to benefit from the system

card for the poor in Odisha

collected the details.

The government had issued an order stipulating the guidelines for sanctioning the financial assistance. Children who had lost both parents to COVID-19, those whose parents had become COVID negative but had died owing to related health problems within three months, those who had lost one parent earlier, and had lost the remaining parent to COVID-19, children who had been abandoned by one parent and had lost the remaining parent to the disease, those whose parents had died or abandoned them and who were living with relatives but their guardians had succumbed to CO-VID-19 would be given assis-

without any hassle. It is a

first of its kind service in the

Mr. Patnaik gave the first

smart health card to Sukri

Dhangda Majhi from Bonda,

a Particularly Vulnerable

Tribal Group, at Malkangiri, 650 km from the State capi-

tal. In Malkangiri alone, 1.55

lakh families will benefit by

Mr. Patnaik had an-

country.'

the card.

given to the next of kin of the deceased police personnel is under an exceptional circumstance, not to be cited as an example," the Chief Minister told journalists.

The State government had also provided an exgratia amount of ₹1 lakh to each of more than 40 policemen who were injured in the border skrimish between the two States.

### **COVID-19 relief**

Listing the government's achievements during the 100 days, the Chief Minister announced a one-time COVID-19 relief of ₹15,000 each for the heads of religious institutions and ₹10,000 each for bus drivers, conductors and handymen in the State.

He also said the Cabinet on Friday approved to increase the monthly allowance given to more than 2.2 million women in the State as part of the Orunodoi scheme from the existing ₹830 to ₹1,000 with immediate effect.

The Cabinet also approved the inclusion of Indian and Assam history and geography as compulsory subjects in the syllabus of classes 9 and 10 in all government schools in the



# Moulding a message



In tune with the times: Clay artist Indrajit Paul making an idol of a demon on the theme of the Delta variant of coronavirus, ahead of the Durga puja festival in Kolkata, on Friday. • PTI

# Under the Biju Swasthya Ka-

lyan Yojana (BSKY), women members of the family can get treatment up to ₹10 lakh in a year. With this card, people can avail themselves of quality healthcare service in



about 200 hospital chains in the country, including Od-

According to the government, "in this no-frill system, a person will simply go to a hospital with the card and get all the treatments

### nounced the scheme on the occasion of 75th Independence Day. The card will be given to the beneficiaries phase-wise. Beneficiaries of the national and State food security schemes, Annapurna and Antyodaya yojanas,

### + BJP leader tries to hold banned race Jewellers plan protest against hallmarking shows the sentiment of all

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Jewellers have decided to go on a nationwide token strike on Monday, August 23, 2021 to protest against what they called the 'arbitrarily implemented mandatory hallmarking process' by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

The strike call has been given by the National Task Force on Hallmarking formed by 350 Associations and Federations of jewellers.

The jewellers are upset that despite 10 meetings held, no relief has been offered in writing by BIS or Ministry of Corporate Affairs on the Hallmarking Unique ID (HUID) issue.

# GSI lists geo-tourism sites in NE to visit after 'unlock'

Dip in positivity and rise in vaccination behind the move

GUWAHATI

The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has identified certain geological sites across the Northeast for promotion of geo-tourism as some States in the region prepare

to 'unlock' from September. Sikkim has already opened for tourists while Assam and Nagaland are planning to withdraw COVID-19 restrictions from September in view of the dip in the positivity rate and an increase in the number of vaccinated people.

"Twelve locations in the Northeast are included in



Of much interest: This site in Unakoti district of Tripura has numerous rock-cut sculptures and temples. • FILE PHOTO

the 32 approved geo-tourism or geo-heritage sites in the country. These are scenic places that can be top attractions," a GSI official said, declining to be quoted.

Of the 12 sites, three are in Meghalaya, two each in Assam and Tripura, and one each in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim.

### Some try to evade farmers who are badly hit by the Supreme Court's ban... I police by holding could not reach the spot as it in the morning the police had completely blocked-off roads around a 30 km radius. Respecting the

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

Defying the Supreme Court's ban on bullock cart races, farmers in Sangli's Zare village reportedly staged a race after heeding to a call to hold the same by BJP leader Gopichand Padalkar amid heavy police deployment throughout the district.

The races were reportedly held early morning to avoid the police from cracking down on the 'errant' organ-

While Mr. Padalkar, along with other BJP leaders, were stopped by the police well ahead of the chosen spot, he claimed the races as a victo-



Against the law: Animal activists said only a handful of errant persons held a few rounds of bullock cart race. • FILE РНОТО

ry for the farmers while urging the ruling Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government to contest and get the ban lifted in the Supreme Court on grounds that it was baneful to the rural economy.

Mr. Padalkar, an MLC and an influential Dhangar community leader from Sangli,

had earlier challenged the government and the State police machinery, announcing the race would be held come what may.

'Unfazed by action'

"I have heard through media reports that some farmers escaped the police blockade and held races. This only

prevent mobbing, we had decided to cooperate with the police," Gopichand Padalkar said. Mr. Padalkar said he was least concerned if the State

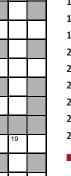
government decided to take action against him for inciting farmers to stage bullock cart races in violation of the court order. Animal activists on the

other hand claimed that it could not be called a 'competition' in any sense. Only a handful of errant persons had staged a few rounds of race using bullock carts, they said.

### Display keystrokes of genius. TH CROSSWORD+ 13332 Type the answers into our online grids.



SCAN TO PLAY



13 According to Spooner, spew insult to get angry (4,1,4) 15 Ships rejecting black grains (4)

16 Just getting loud for quiet couple (4)

17 Vaccinated Hypatia's thought about India... moving back (9)

@ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

21 Rude fellow with insolence, starting to provoke soldier (8)

22 Relieve former parliamentarian visiting Egypt on vacation (6) 24 Risk and Monopoly council overseeing India review images (5,5)

25 Bold kid's retro clothes (4)

26 Bear skin in exhibition near Reading? Just about (6) 27 Director accepts student for University - a high flyer! (6)

1 Warn criminal cutting fine portion in tusker (7)

2 Tree built regularly around country (5)

3 Untie cats (4.3)

5 Ivan the Terrible quietly shows Peter out? (6)

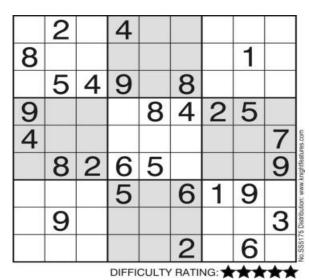
**7** Those who go fast just to lose? (7) 8 Simultaneously running the teammates collect single (2,3,4,4)

**16** Whole calculation, per auditor is over the top (7)

18 Instrument engineer unties with a bit of luck (7) 19 Revolutionary city clothing for each king (7)

20 Harry royal supporting terrible company (6)

### **SUDOKU**



### Solution to puzzle 13331 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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### **FAITH**

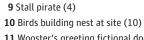
### The Highest Truth

The very first verse of the Bhagavata Purana is invocatory in tone and unfolds the nature of the Supreme Brahman by the skilful use of scriptural terms, words and phrases, pointed out Sri B. Sundarkumar in a discourse. It says, "Satyam Param Dheemahi." "We meditate on that Truth Supreme, Satvam Param." By this is meant the Highest and Absolute Brahman whom the scriptures describe as the One with no second, 'Ekameva Advitiyam.'

The uniqueness of the Highest Truth is that it exists and remains unchanged at all points of time. Scriptures then explain this truth from the angle of the world of creation and its relation to the Supreme Brahman. This prapancham is superimposed on the Supreme Brahman, that is, Brahman has created this wonderful prapancham. But this prapancham does not qualify to be the Highest Truth as it does not exist always, though it is created and supported by Brahman, and also attains laya in Brahman. It is subject to

The term 'Vyavaharika Satya,' is used in this context to refer to the intermediary state of reality of the jagat in relation to the Absolute Reality of Brahman. The validity of existence of the jagat depends on each one's awareness of this relationship. It is possible for the mind to err with regard to many issues in daily life. Is not one led to believe a piece of shining nacre on the seashore as a piece of silver? Or to imagine a rope to be a snake owing to lack of knowledge and to continue to live in a state of fear until such time the truth is made clear by some means or other? These states are real as long as the misconception is present. So this prapancham is satya to one who is not realised. But realised souls continue to live in this world and know prapancham as non-existent.





ACROSS

1 See water mostly melted? (6)

11 Wooster's greeting fictional doctor sporting head gear (4,2) 12 Pawns in Soho stage shows (8)

4 Excited First Lady welcoming fine daughter (6)

6 Two little kids wearing a hat, hit boxer in a stage show (9)

14 Softly spoke about his agent returning married (9)

23 Goaded horse entering river (5)



### Instapick

India Couture Week: The 14th edition is here and, for the second year, it is a digital affair. Bollywood favourite, Manish Malhotra, will kickstart the proceedings and 18 of India's finest couturiers will follow during the week-long event. Last year saw these designers present fashion films set in luxury resorts and their own farm houses. Wonder where they will take us this time? August 23-29. fdci.org



### **Talking Point**

Afghanistan's protest art: Amid reports of artists taking their work and chat messages off the internet and the questions asked by director Sahraa Karimi comes this thought-provoking image from Afghanistan's first female street artist, Shamsia Hassani. It is titled 'Death to Darkness'. She took up graffiti and street art in 2010 and gives voice to the experience of Afghan women.

### YARN IT!

The next hit web series

Reptilian eye muscles and empty closets — if you have them, do apply

JANE DE SUZA

Since our most committed relationships of late have been with web series through the lockdown, surely we're experts at what makes one

**Bullet-proof chest:** Everyone else gets shot and killed in every action scene. The hero clings on. The bad men are bad shots. Everyone misses the hero. Worrying about him in any episode is useless because he has to survive till the end of the series. Even if he's killed in the first scene as Ganesh Gaitonde is in Sacred Games, he still lives through 16 episodes till that point.

Reptilian eye muscles: Before each break, the camera freezes on someone's face. They never blink. Often with tears that never spill. Don't pretend you've never seen Sony Crime Patrol. This look is supposed to convey deep meaning. But you suspect the cameraman has gone for a hygiene

An empty closet: When a cheating couple is about to get caught, the man hides in a closet where his phone must ring. I don't know which house has a closet not stuffed with wedding saris and gifts to recycle. Mine has clothes I resolve to one day fit back into. I mean – who has an empty closet?

A second empty closet: Screen women shower a lot. Whenever the villain enters, the woman must be showering. The villain hides in the empty closet too. If the villain and the cheating man jump into the same closet together, it may turn into quite another story.

Almost – but never – solve it: So that your viewers binge-watch themselves into paranoia. After the Family Man, hordes of people began to plead to join the Threat And Surveillance Cell of the NIA. When

SREEJITH R KUMAR

their own espionage, calling in ter-

rorist threats from old women's

grocery bags and pigeon poop on

■ ILLUSTRATION

Un

windowsills. Feeble family trees: The actor will be paired with a mother and father who look as different from him as geese from a rhino. Heroes

told it didn't exist, they began to do and heroines could be selling their mother's gold bangles because they are so desperately poor, but you soon suspect that's because they blow it all on designer wardrobes through 10 colourful episodes.

expected

development

Less story per story: If all else fails, do a *Narcos*. Fill each episode with so much violence, orgies,

bloodshed swear words that you only need five minutes of actual story. Bet we could draw Three Little Pigs into a 3-season 30-episode tearjerker. And given the global-warming effect on the wolf's lungs, he could huff and puff for another 10 episodes without blowing the house

Put a Pankaj Tripathi in. Even better! He's so good, you won't even need the story.

**A red herring:** The murderer

is the only one who has no

motive or means, until the last scene where he gets mind-boggling multiples of both. You've watched so many Swedish noir web series that you now sus-

pect the first one in the first episode who has no means or motive, even if it's the fish in the fishbowl.

I'm opening auditions for my new web series. Those with reptilian eye muscles may apply.

Where Jane De Suza, author of Flyaway Boy, pokes her nose into our perfect lives.

### Pick of the week

A mix of in-person and online events and workshops



### Madras Day 2021

While in-person walks might be limited, children can still commemorate the founding of this beloved city by participating in a virtual tour of Marina Beach organised by heritage platform Madras Inherited. August 21, at 5 pm; details at themadrasday.in. In addition, C.P.R. Institute of Indological Research is organising an online guiz competition, with cash prizes

for winners. August 21, at 11.30 am; details at cprfoundation.org. Also follow

for a bunch of events.



### Alternative rakhi

Just in time for the gifting season comes Jaipur Watch Company's Pichwai Collection. The unisex watches have intricate dials with lotus, cow, and peacock motifs. Painted by miniature artists in Rajasthan, each design takes over a week to be made. ₹15,000 on jaipur.watch. Pair this with the Delightful Bites Box by Mad Over Donuts. launched for Raksha Bandhan. Comprising 18 bite-sized donut variants, from double trouble to blueberry and KitKat. ₹800 onwards. madoverdonuts.com



### **Apurba Nandi's crowds**

Raising crucial questions on contemporary urbanism, artist Apurba Nandi's solo show: A **Destinations** is at Palette Art Gallery, New Delhi. Through his art, viewers can 'witness the flow of innumerable human bodies on canvas, concealing the markers of caste and religion'. Till September 11 on paletteartgallery.com. 'Through the Eyes of the Kolis: A reflection on Mumbai's past, present and future', is a digital photography exhibition curated by Bombay61 Studio.

theheritagelab.in



### **Craft crusaders**

handcrafts'

craftscouncilofindia.in

After a long gap, over 100 craft groups and artisans have returned to the capital for Aimed at reviving their livelihoods, the event will feature everything from craft and home decor to apparel. Until August 30, at Nature Bazaar. dastkar.org. At The Crafts Council of India, nominations are invited for their annual Kamala Awards 2021 edition to 'recognise outstanding merit in the field of traditional Indian



### Korea calling

If Korea has been on your radar thanks to K-dramas, this course on Korean culture is for you. Courtesy of a collaboration by Korea Tourism Organization and international start-up CulturaGo, it's for those planning to travel to the country for work, study or

travel. Approx ₹2.400. english.visitkorea.or.kr Conclude the Onam festivities at the DakshinaChitra Heritage Museum with a virtual conversation on flowers, Mohinivattam performances. and more. dakshinachitra.net



### **Blooms and gold lamps**

Flowy dresses, kaftans, and suits in chiffon and cotton feature in designer Ritu Kumar's Autumn Winter '21 collection, Vintage Soiree The recently-launched outfits in geo-retro prints come in celebratory shades of scarlets, deep blues, mustards, greens and teals. Approx ₹1,700 onwards on aarke.in. In Jaipur, Himanshu Jangid of Cartist — that designs furniture using upcycled automobile parts has launched a new range of table lamps, chairs and decor accessories in 'gold'. cartist.in



### **Tracking diamond routes**

To mark World Photography Day (August 19), De Beers <mark>nark</mark> released a set of exclusive photographs from their diamond natural reserves. Seen above is a shot of giraffes at the Venetia Limpopo Nature Reserve, South Africa, which is part of the brand's diamond route. Covering over 32,000 hectares, it belongs to the Mapungubwe National Park. Other images released were of zebras from Jwana Game Park, Botswana, and rough diamonds from Namibia. to name a few. debeers.com



# Summer in

Be it Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia* or Steven Spielberg's Bridge of Spies, several films explore the city's history and landmarks

### NAMAN RAMACHANDRAN

And so, my peregrinations bring me to Berlin, for the first time in summer. I'd only been here for the justly celebrated Berlin Film Festival, which is held during the winter and the act of rushing from screening to screening keeps you warm at what is truly a miserable time, weather-wise, in this great metropolis. Summer in Berlin, on the other hand, is a glorious time. The sun is shining, Covid is at bay, and vaccinated people are back at cinemas, museums,

galleries and restaurants. Pausing only to meet a few filmmaker friends who are based in Berlin, I launched into my musings about films set in this magnificent city without much delay. Leni Riefenstahl's Olympia (1938) in two parts -Festival of Nations and Festival of Beauty - her document of the 1936 Berlin Olympics, is correctly derided as Nazi propaganda, and she was subsequently disgraced. However, there is no denying her immense cinematic talent and the films are beautiful to look at, though the politics and underlying social history cannot and should not be denied.

There is of course Sebastian Schipper's pounding Victoria (2015), where a young Spanish woman in Berlin is caught up in events beyond her control. Set across one night in the city, Victoria is one of those one-shot films featuring nonstop exhilarating action with nary a pause for breath. A dazzling technical achievement which was duly

recognised at the Berlin festival. A key sequence in Victoria takes place at Checkpoint Charlie, that hallowed gateway between the erstwhile East and West Berlin which has been referenced in countless novels and movies. I duly visited the place which now also has a harrowing exhibit detailing the history of Berlin from 1933-45. Martin Ritt's The Spy Who Came in From the Cold (1965) opens at Checkpoint Charlie, James Bond crosses over in Octopussy (1983) and the locale and indeed the Berlin Wall has been

featured time and

(Clockwise from left) A poster, stills from Wings of Desire and Bridge of Spies ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

again in many films dealing with the Cold War including recently, Steven Spielberg's Bridge of Spies (2015).

This can in no way be a comprehensive look at films set in Berlin, so after a quick hat tip to Wim Wenders' Wings of Desire (1987), I'll confine myself now to the various iterations of Berlin Alexanderplatz, named after the vast square in the heart of the city. In 1929, Alfred Döblin wrote Berlin Alexanderplatz, about a small-time criminal who has just been released from prison after being involved in a murder and finds himself in the big, bad city, and inevitably is drawn to those of his own ilk. The book was adapted as a film as early as 1931. The most comprehensive adaptation of the book is Rainer Werner Fassbinder's sprawling 14-part 1980 television series. In preparation for this trip, I pulled out my hitherto unwatched blu-ray of Burhan Qurbani's 2020 adaptation, which changed the lead character to

> an illegal immigrant from Bissau, West Africa, lending layers of complexity to an already dense tale. The film is three hours short and is another breathtaking ode to the city that will continue to give to

> > cine-

# Meet Dr Kirby

Actor Christian Slater on playing the medic who tracks down a killer neurosurgeon in the new mini series, *Dr Death* 



A still from the show • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

MINI ANTHIKAD CHHIBBER

Whether as the young Franciscan novice Adso, playing Watson to Sean Connery's Baskerville in *The* Name of the Rose (1986) or as straitlaced Riley to wildly grandstanding John Travolta in John Woo's Broken Arrow 10 years later, Christian Slater always radiates positive energy in his roles.

That energy is evident as the 51year-old actor talks about his latest role in Dr Death over a video call. The mini-series - based on a podcast that focusses on medical malpractice - was released globally last month and had its India premiere this week. It tells the harrowing true story of a neurosurgeon, Christopher Duntsch (Joshua Jackson), who maimed and killed his patients. Slater plays Dr Kirby who, alongside Dr Henderson (Alec Bald-

win), brings down Duntsch. Slater recalls a scene with Jackson when they were in the operating theatre. "When you are shooting these types of uncomfortable scenes, you tend to find humour. Both Josh and I are so inept as surgeons that I found those moments to be quite humorous," he says.

Though Slater had plans to meet Kirby, COVID-19 made it impossible. For the surgical aspects, he says he spent time with his brotherin-law who is also a vascular surgeon like Kirby. Admitting to playing characters that possess energy and charisma, Slater says he and Kirby are similar in a few ways. "I enjoy life; I have a good time. I do have an energy that I think I need to taper a little bit. In order to play this character, I needed a certain amount of freedom, and I am grateful to Patrick [Macmanus, creator] for allowing me to be creative in the moment. That lent to the type of energy that came across."

Jackson, 43, had to go into some dark spaces as Duntsch. "For a large part of the show he does not know that he is the bad guy. He did not have the ability to see the effect of his actions," says the actor. The show, with criss-crossing timelines and disturbing content, is a gripping one and credit for that goes to Macmanus, he says. "Patrick had the entire show, every image of it catalogued in his mind. He was an

unbelievable resource.' Dr Death is streaming on Lionsgate Play

### GEORGINA MADDOX

The third edition of the Hurun India Art List was released last week. Technically, the artist who topped it this year as well, Anish Kapoor, with sales worth ₹20.64 crore at public auctions last year, doesn't even live in India. The Londonbased sculptor's conceptual work has made it to the Venice Biennale and the Royal Academy of Arts (the first living artist to be given a solo there). He has won renown with landmarks such as the Cloud Gate in Chicago and Britain's ArcelorMittal Orbit. Interestingly, there's no mention of Hurun on his social media. One wonders if it matters to him or if he is even aware of it.

Many artists are not. When I reached out to Vasundhara Tewari-Broota, whose husband Rameshwar Broota is number three on the list, she was surprised. "He is not someone who looks at these lists," she tells me. How about the news that she has clocked in at number eight on Hurun's Women Artists' list?

"It is a pleasant surprise," smiles the artist, whose figurative paintings explore the psychopolitical existence of the female body. But she quickly adds that "it brings me back to the old argument: the artist never gets a share in these astronomical sales [that puts them on these lists in the first place]. They have usually sold the artwork long ago for a sum that looks meagre when placed next to the current auctioned price, which is usually in crores of rupees."

This is just one of the uncomfortable questions that lists such as Hurun's (which draws its data from online resource artprice.com) bring up. Do rankings affect how galleries showcase artists or how collectors invest in art-

work? Does knowing where the artists are from - West Bengal contributed the most number in the list (10 entrants), followed by Kerala and Maharashtra – help, beyond making good headlines? Most often, it's a no.

"Anish Kapoor is represented in our international Post War and Contemporary auctions across the globe," says Deepanjana Klein, International Head, Department for Contemporary Indian & Southeast Asian Art at Christie's Auction House. "His price points are very different and do not reflect the Indian art market or have an impact on it, as the majority of his works are bought mainly by international collectors."

### Let's talk money

But before we get to the questions, do these lists matter? Many come out each year, from Forbes to Time to Business Standard. Internationally, Shanghaibased Hurun Report, the wealth research firm, puts

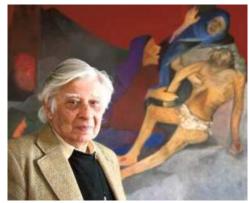






(Clockwise from far left) Sculptor Anish Kapoor, his 'Mirror' artwork, Anjolie Ela Menon, Deepanjana Klein of Christie's, Krishen Khanna, Vasundhara Tewari-Broota and one of her artworks special arrangement





# Art lists and the questions that arise

out several – from rich lists and top philanthro-The verdict on lists like the pists to global art top 50s. But do artists and collectors care about them? "I don't know who ac-

> co-founder of Chennai-based Ashvita gallery, stating that Hurun India's numbers are off. "I don't know what their source of data is. If it is public auctions, then Krishen Khanna sold more than ₹6.87 crores last year!" Meanwhile, Sharan Apparao, of Apparao Galleries, says, "Seasoned collectors don't refer to lists when buying high-end art, and it's not important to artists either because their prices aren't con-

trolled by these." One of the few she looks at is ArtReview's Power 100 in the Art World (and that too, occasionally). What such lists can do, however,

is be conversa-

Hurun India Art report tually looks at them," says Ashvin E Rajagopalan, may be mixed, but they stimulate discussions that deserve priority — from royalties for artists to how technology can actually help track resales

> tion starters. For example, about the need for royalties in the art world. "Artists don't really benefit from auction sales, not directly at least," says Anjolie Ela Menon over the phone from her studio in Nizamuddin. Incidentally, the 81-yearold contemporary artist, whose solo show, By The River, is on at the AICON Gallery in New York, is number eight on the Hurun list. "Just

before the pandemic, we were proposing the

formation of a board that would oversee issues of 7% royalties to the artist of every auction sale, authentication and other such matters. But because everything shut down, it got halted and I doubt it will be formed any time soon."

> Menon points out that an artist like Tyeb Mehta never made any direct earnings from the auction sales, though it has

raked in crores (in 2018, his painting, Kali, was purchased anonymously for over ₹26 crore) and put him on innumerable records. "

A percentage should come to the artist every time their work is sold," she says, along the lines of what Artist Resale Rights has achieved in Europe, the UK and California. "But, currently. there's a sense of helplessness; we must form at least an artists' union."

Anas Rahman Junaid, who heads Hurun India, the organisation that brings out the annual list, says he's been closely observing the transitioning of India's entrepreneurial landscape from being largely run by family businesses, to the era of new-age entrepreneurs and their revolutionary business ideas. "Rapid advancements in technology have enabled the 'millennial entrepreneur' to show great enthusiasm towards this new economic culture," he says, adding that auction prices follow the 'trickle down theory' and affect gallery prices as it indicates global acclaim of the artworks. "I believe that the next decade presents a great opportunity for India to reposition herself. My continuing mission for the Hurun report is to find these synergies and contribute value to the entrepreneurial landscape."

### The NFT debate

Technology is one of the ways open to artists to keep track of their work and get just rewards. Mumbai-based artist Santanu Hazarika believes blockchain will dismantle the culture of gatekeeping in a bid to empower artists. If the authentication of artworks can be digitised – with

blockchain keeping track of sales automatically - it would be easier to ensure a percentage goes to the artist as royalty. At present, several international NFT platforms, such as SuperRare, offer this. Artists get 5%-15% royalty every time their artwork is resold. However, he says, it's still early days in India. "We will have to wait and watch, as it is a growing market that needs many kinks to be ironed out. For instance, the difficulties around obtaining authentication certificates when the artist is no more. Or tracing the provenance of artworks that have been resold more

Auction houses, however, are more cautious. "It is true that an NFT is inscribed on a blockchain and so the provenance history is forever publicly accessible. But to date auction houses cannot offer NFTs all around the world, as there are no general guidelines in place, which would include the question of copyright," says Klein. Christie's pioneered NFTs in the global auction market and is leading this category with \$93.2 million in sales this year.

Meanwhile, the lists will continue. And whether we take them as definitive voices celebrating wealth creation or not, as Junaid points out, "Most newcomers to the art world almost always refer to a power-list." It's up to us how best we utilise them and what conversations we

### FOOD SPOT

Sadhya on a banana leaf, even though not a community celebration this year, was special, with home delivered goodness



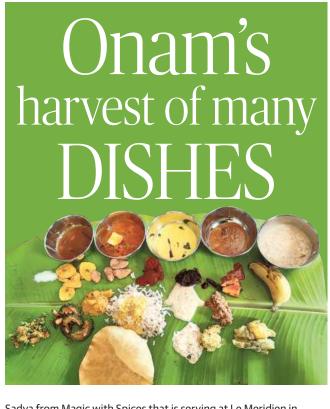
The freshly washed banana leaf placed in front of me sparkled with all kinds of dishes. I broke a piece of the papadam, and began a memorable meal.

We were at a friend's place for an Onam sadhya before the pandemic. Since then, I have been waiting for COVID-19 restrictions to lift, to be able to enjoy a communal meal. That will happen one day, I am sure, but meanwhile – on the occasion of Onam this year – I had *sadhya* food at home.

Sadhya, as we all know, is the festive feast of Kerala. Because of the pandemic, home chefs and restaurants have started delivering a full *sadhya* to all those pining for it. One of the outlets is the Gurugram-based Magic with Spices, run by chef Rekha Raghavan. She is offering a special Onam lunch at Le Meridien in Gurugram today and tomorrow, and is also delivering food for the occasion (₹1100 plus taxes; ph: 9773613978).

Likewise, Zambar has an Onam special for dinner and lunch till August 23 at the Ambience Mall in Gurugram (₹999 plus taxes; ph: 9958564400). It has a sadhya hamper delivery service across Delhi-NCR, too (₹1,095 plus taxes). Zambar has chef Vetri Murugan, a southern coastal cuisine specialist, at the

It's difficult to do justice to the wide spectrum of dishes that figure in a traditional Kerala banana leaf meal. Chef Rekha, who describes herself as a corporate slave turned passionate chef, tells me that peo-



Sadya from Magic with Spices that is serving at Le Meridien in Gurugram, (below) from Zambar • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ple traditionally serve nine dishes at home. But the number of dishes can go up to 25 or more – as it does in both these sadhyas.

There is nothing *not* to like in this vegetarian meal, so let me focus on the dishes that I enjoyed the most. I began with red rice, a small helping of ghee and parippu curry (yellow moong dal cooked with coconut), velvety and light. It set the tone for the varied flavours that followed.

I loved the spiciness of the rasam, and the mildly tart taste of the sambar, pepped up with seasonal vegetables. The morru *kachiyatha* – a yoghurt dish seasoned with herbs and shallots – was superb as was the aviyal, cooked with yam, carrot, raw banana, drumstick, beans,

potatoes, bottle gourd, eggplant, and other veggies. Chef Rekha added coconut paste to it along with some curd and topped it with coconut oil.

Then there was kalan, a dish of yogurt, raw banana and grated coconut. The eriserry pumpkin, red beans, and coconut – had all the right flavours, as did the nicely crunchy beans thoran. I particularly enjoyed chef Murugan's kootu curry, prepared with raw bananas, black chana, and grated coconut. The olan, ash gourd and red beans in creamy coconut milk, was good too.

The sadhya meal has a lot of add-ons – pickles, banana chips, chips coated with jaggery and so on. The *inji* curry – ginger, tamarind, and jaggery chutney - was deliciously tart, and made for a great side

I ended the meal with two types of payasam, and loved them both. The pal payasam with dry fruits and rice in milk was rich and smooth, as was the scrumptious ada pradhamam, rice flakes with coconut and jaggery.

What more can I say, but Happy Onam?

The writer is a seasoned food critic

Singer Sona Mohapatra's documentary premiering at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne this month covers everything from protest art to gender disparity



Mohapatra and Gupta, the poster, and the singer on stage - SPECIAL

(Clockwise from left)



# An act of love, a war cry

ANURAG TAGAT

Is Sona Mohapatra and Deepti Gupta's documentary Shut Up Sona the kind of story you only get to tell once? "Let me tell you, there's a 'Please Sing Sona' sequel that's happening," Mohapatra says of the film based on her 'unrelenting fight for an equal space in modern day India'. Irony and wit are among the narrative devices of Shut Up Sona, which is currently getting its Australia premiere at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne this month. Originally slated to take place in theatres, a worrying wave of COVID-19 cases in the city caused organisers to

launch it virtually. For Mohapatra – who had her own billboard at Times Square, New York, in July as part of the Spotify 'Equal' global campaign and filmmaker-cinematographer Gupta, this was an addition to the tumultuous four-year journey of making, editing and showcasing documenthe tary. Slated to release on an OTT

platform later

this year in India, it shines the spotlight not just on the musician and the pushback she receives for being an outspoken, sometimes mercurial woman in India, but also the state of cultural discourse.

At the festival circuit Gupta says it originally started with just the two friends taking on the project, being joined by Mohapa-

was heartbreaking, because

er, composer Ram Sampath, and editor Arjun Gourisaria. "We were both learning everything for the first time. All the well-wishers came up saying, 'Oh, you did an India premiere, now (so) none of the big international festivals are going to take up your film'. That

> we didn't know any better," says Mohapatra of the film (produced by her) that had its premiere at the Mumbai Academy of Moving Image (MAMI) Film Festival in Mumbai in 2019. Nevertheless, the team persevered to take it to the International Film Festival Rotterdam in 2020 and several countries.

> > **Battling the** system

Counting the film as  $\,$ "symbolic catharsis" for both of them, Gupta was driven by not just Mohapatra's music but also her continual battle against systemic, patriarchal is-

sues. "There are many notes that the film is hitting, like how when we protest as an artist for equality, what is the price to pay for it professionally," says Gupta, referring to the times Mohapatra has taken the music industry to task. The singer recounts, "I was being accosted and literally ambushed in my house by a reporter from a news channel." Gupta was coincidentally at Mohapatra's house, after they had wrapped up shooting a music video, gathered around for tea time on a Sunday evening.

Mohapatra recounts, "Deepti thought this was an opportunity for the documentary. But that camera person who had come with the reporter started telling Deepti which is a better place for her to shoot me from, and started

directing her. She captured that." This, along with the sequence of Mohapatra watching a male-dominated mixed doubles match featuring Roger Federer, are left in Shut Up Sona to "leave an unconscious impression on the viewer",

according to Gupta. Mohapatra feels documentaries are not that well understood in India among the masses, but the popularity of OTT platforms is changing that and Shut Up Sona

fits right in. "It's not one of those artsy, niche documentaries. It's a fully masaledaar, musical, gaali-galoch film... everything else that you would not expect," concludes Mohapatra.

Shut Up Sona premieres at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne on August 26

Watch the duo in conversation with Anurag Tagat on weekend.thehindu.com

### INTERVIEW | LISA CURTIS

# 'Both Trump and Biden administrations responsible for Afghan situation'

It was an extremely hasty withdrawal, and the move to pull out 16,000 contractors, all at once, literally pulled the rug out from under the Afghans, says Lisa Curtis

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

A concerted international commitment is necessary to prevent a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, says Lisa Curtis, former South and Central Asia Director of the U.S. National Security Council. Ms. Curtis, who is currently Director of the Indo-Pacific Security Program at the Center for New American Security, discusses what led to the current situation with the Taliban, the U.S.' counterterrorism interests, and the future of U.S.-Pakistan ties. Excerpts from the interview:

I wanted to talk to you about Afghanistan. Very broadly, what went wrong? Could anybody have foreseen that the Afghan security forces would not really fight back?

■ I think there are several factors that have contributed to the disaster that we're seeing today. And I think both the Trump and the Biden administrations bear responsibility for the way things are playing out. First, there was a very weak agreement that was negotiated with the Taliban during the Trump administration. It undermined the legitimacy of the government, by being weighed very heavily toward the Taliban. The U.S. forced [Afghan President Ashraf] Ghani to release 5,000 Taliban prisoners, before the Taliban had even really committed to a genuine peace process. So, I think that contributed to undermining the legitimacy of President Ghani, as well as the U.S. negotiator talking about an interim government, of which Ghani would not be a part. So, I think that fuelled the political divisions that were already there among the Afghan political elite. The second factor is the way in which the Biden administration withdrew. It was an extremely hasty withdrawal, and the fact that they thought necessary to withdraw 16,000 contractors, all at once, it literally was pulling the rug out from under the Afghans.

So, I think that there are a lot of things that have contri-

buted. Not to mention the Taliban safe haven in Pakistan all these years. No U.S. administration – going back four administrations – was ever able to do anything about that safe haven. So, that's certainly contributed to the Taliban's ability to make these rapid military gains.

So there's a combination of factors that have led us to this point. And I think what is important now is that we relocate as many Afghans as possible, resettle them in the U.S. These are people who have helped us, who supported the mission in Afghanistan, we have a moral responsibility to take care of them. Second, we need to prevent a humanitarian disaster. This will require a concerted international commitment to making sure that the people of Afghanistan are fed, that they find places to stay. There's a lot of IDPs, internally displaced people, so that has to be dealt with. And lastly, I don't think that the international community should rush to recognise the Taliban, any diplomatic re-



Taliban safe havens in Pakistan certainly contributed to the insurgents' ability to make these rapid military gains

cognition should be conditioned on human rights, respect for human rights, women's rights in particular, and counterterrorism. And until we see action, not just words, but action on these issues, they certainly don't deserve international recognition.

The Trump administration was and is being criticised for, by and large, leaving out the Afghan government from its negotiations for a settlement in Afghanistan. It sounds like based on what you're saying, there were

differing voices within the Trump administration. Why did they end up cutting out the Afghan government from those talks and is what we're seeing today a consequences of that?

■ Well, the decision to hold direct U.S.-Taliban talks and not insist to the Taliban that the Afghan government be there, which is what the U.S. was doing in previous years (the Taliban did not want the Afghan government at the table, said they were illegitimate) – and the U.S. had respected that for many, many years - the decision was made in 2018 by the Trump administration to allow the U.S. to engage directly with the Taliban. The U.S. felt that its hands would forever be tied and it would not be able to reach any kind of political accommodation, without being able to engage directly with the Taliban. The idea was always that eventually the Afghan government would be brought into those talks. And I think there also was an expectation that the U.S. would represent Afghan

interests. But unfortunately this is not what happened. What we saw was a consistent undermining of the Afghan government. It was easier to extract concessions from the Afghan government and give concessions to the Taliban. Unfortunately, there was not a balanced handling of that process, it wasn't a 'peace process'. We didn't get the Taliban actually breaking from al-Qaeda. The only thing the U.S. got out of the Doha Agreement was the fact that Taliban did not shoot at U.S. forces as they were departing the country. So it really should be [called] the Doha Withdrawal Agreement, not the Peace Agreement.

Officials in the Biden administration have said alternatives to the way in which the exit was actually conducted would have come with their own human costs borne largely in these counterfactual situations by American soldiers and their families. What would you have suggested, in terms of an exit?

counterterrorism interests.

Speaking of safe havens for

Speaking of safe havens for terrorists, what's unfolding in Afghanistan is a gift of sorts to Pakistan, and PM Imran Khan has not hidden his appreciation for the turn of events. How do you think this is going to impact America's relationship with Pakistan?

Like I said earlier, it's a fundamental failure of U.S. policy that across four administrations, we were not able to deal with the Taliban sanctuary inside Pakistan. The Trump administration had cut security assistance to Pakistan... at least we didn't have U.S. taxpayer money funding a military that was supporting our enemies. I don't foresee any reinvigoration of the relationship or any great efforts made to try to re-establish an alliance with Pakistan. I don't see the relationship plummeting, either. I think it will just probably remain rather stagnant over next several years. (Full version is available at https://bit.ly/LisaCurtisTH)

# Reports of targeted Taliban killings spark Afghans' fears

Militants tortured and killed Hazara men in Ghazni province, say eyewitnesses

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Reports of targeted killings in areas overrun by the Taliban mounted on Friday, fuelling fears that they will return Afghanistan to the repressive rule they imposed when they were last in power, even as they urged imams to push a message of unity at Friday's prayers.

Terrified that the militants would commit such abuses and despairing for their country's future, thousands have raced to Kabul's airport and border crossings. Others have taken to the streets to protest the takeover.

An Amnesty International report provided more evidence on Friday that undercut the Taliban's claims they have changed.

The rights group said that



For a way out: Afghans gathering near the airport in Kabul on Friday, hoping to get on a flight to flee the country. •AFP

its researchers spoke to eyewitnesses in Ghazni province who recounted how the Taliban killed nine ethnic Hazara men in the village of Mundarakht from July 4 to 6. It said six of the men were shot, and three were tortured to death. Hazaras are Shia Muslims who were previously persecuted by the

Taliban and who made major gains in education and social status in recent years.

The brutality of the killings was "a reminder of the Taliban's past record, and a horrifying indicator of what Taliban rule may bring," said Agnes Callamard, the head of Amnesty International.

It warned that many mo

killings may have gone unreported because the Taliban cut cellphone services in many areas they've captured.

Separately, Reporters without Borders expressed alarm at the news that Taliban fighters killed the family member of an Afghan journalist working for German's Deutsche Welle on Wednesday. The broadcaster said fighters conducted house-to-house searches for their reporter, who had already relocated to Germany.

Meanwhile, RHIPTO Norwegian Center for Global Analyses, which provides information to the UN, said it obtained evidence that the Taliban have rounded up Afghans on a blacklist of people they believe worked for the previous administration or with U.S.-led forces.

# NATO urges Taliban to allow evacuation

Biden says he couldn't guarantee the final outcome of 'one of the most difficult airlifts'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE BRUSSELS

NATO on Friday called on the Taliban to allow people being evacuated to leave Afghanistan, and vowed that the allies would remain in "close coordination" while operations continue.

The joint declaration by NATO's 30 member countries was made following an emergency video conference of their Foreign Ministers to discuss evacuation efforts and the next steps to take to resolve the crisis.
"We call on those in posi-

tions of authority in Afghanistan to respect and facilitate their safe and orderly departure, including through Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul," they said.

"As long as evacuation operations continue, we will maintain our close operational coordination through allied military means at" the airport.

The U.S. and NATO allies have been flying their citi-

zens, Afghan staff and their families out of Kabul since the weekend, when the Taliban overran the capital and regained power.

■ I personally think that the

U.S. could have kept a limited

presence. There are some

3,500 troops when Biden

took office in January, along

with the 7,000 to 8,000 NA-

TO troops. And I think that there are ways to protect

those forces. When I engaged

with senior military leader-

ship before the decision was

made to go to zero, they had

assured me that there were

capabilities, there were ways

to protect U.S. forces, and al-

so to respond. It's not as if

the U.S. were sitting ducks -

we had ways to respond to

the Taliban. So, that would

not have been a solution that

would defeat the Taliban, it

would have largely been a

holding position just a way

for the U.S. to continue to

protect its counterterrorism

interests, and give the go-

vernment, an opportunity to

perhaps negotiate a better

deal with the Taliban... I

think the thinking behind

keeping a small CT (counter-

terrorism) presence there,

while not solving the pro-

blem completely, it would

have at least protected fun-

While thousands have been evacuated so far, NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said at the start of the videoconference that foreigners and Afghans were struggling to reach Kabul airport.

President Joe Biden said on Friday he could not guarantee the final outcome of the emergency evacuation from Kabul's airport, calling it one of the most "difficult" airlift operations ever.

"This is one of the largest, most difficult airlifts in history," Mr. Biden said in a televised address from the White House. "I cannot promise what the final outcome will be."

"I don't think anyone of us can see these pictures and not feel that pain on a human level," Mr. Biden said, but "now I'm focused on getting this job done."

### ELSEWHERE



ex-Deputy PM as leader

Malaysia's longest-governing political party reclaimed the premiership it lost in a shock 2018 election defeat, after the King on Friday named its candidate, Ismail Sabri Yaakob, as the country's new leader. Mr. Ismail was the deputy Prime Minister under the government of Muhyiddin Yassin, who resigned on Monday. AP

### Japan battles worst wave of COVID-19 infections

Japan plans to dramatically ramp up daily COVID-19 tests as it battles its worst wave of infections, mainly driven by the Delta variant. New infections exceeded 25,000 on Thursday for the first time, a tally by national broadcaster NHK showed, with the surge mainly among those in their 40s and 50s, most of whom are unvaccinated.

### Merkel asks Putin to free Kremlin critic Navalny

German Chancellor Angela Merkel asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to free his jailed opponent Alexei Navalny on the anniversary of a nerve-agent attack on the politician, whose life was saved by Berlin doctors. "I demanded from the Russian leader that he free Navalny," Ms. Merkel said, standing next to Mr. Putin in Moscow. AFP

### China formally passes three-child policy into law

Move is aimed at boosting birth rates

ANANTH KRISHNAN

China's legislature on Friday formally amended the country's family planning rules to allow couples to have three children, also announcing a number of policy measures aimed at boosting declining birth rates.

The Standing Committee

of the National People's Congress, or Parliament, passed an amendment to the Population and Family Planning Law, state media said, adding that the amended law calls on the authorities to "take supportive measures, including those in finances, taxes, insurance, education, housing and employment, to reduce families' burdens as well as the cost of raising and educating children."

The ruling Communist Party announced in May that couples in China would for the first time be allowed to have a third child in a relaxation of family planning rules. In 2016, a "two-child policy" was introduced that largely failed to boost birth rates.

China's regulators in recent weeks have taken drastic measures to reduce education costs - cited in many surveys as a main reason why many couples prefer to have only one child - including by overhauling the booming private education industry, which may be ordered to go non-profit according to reports in the

Chinese press.

The changes come in the wake of China's once-in-ten year population census that recorded rapidly declining birth rates over the past decade. The National Bureau of Statistics said on May 11 that 12 million babies were born last year, the lowest number since 1961.

**'Biggest challenge'** The census said China's

population was 1.41 billion in 2020, an increase of 72 million since the last census in 2010. The census recorded 264 million in the age group of 60 and over, up 5.44% since 2010 and accounting for 18.70% of the population. Those in the 15-59 age group were 894 million persons, down by 6.79% since 2010 and accounting for 63.35% of the population. China's workforce in the 15-59 age bracket peaked at 925 million in 2011, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security said previously. That number was down to 894 million in this census and would drop to 700 million by 2050.

Huang Wenzheng, a fellow at the Center for China and Globalisation, in Beijing, told China Global Television Network (CGTN), an official broadcaster, following the release of the census that the ageing crisis "might be the biggest challenge the Chinese nation faces in the next century."

### Beijing passes tough online privacy law

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

China passed a sweeping privacy law aimed at preventing businesses from collecting sensitive personal data on Friday, as the country faces an uptick in Internet scams and Beijing targets tech giants hoovering up personal data.

Under the new rules, State and private entities handling personal information will be required to reduce data collection and obtain user consent.

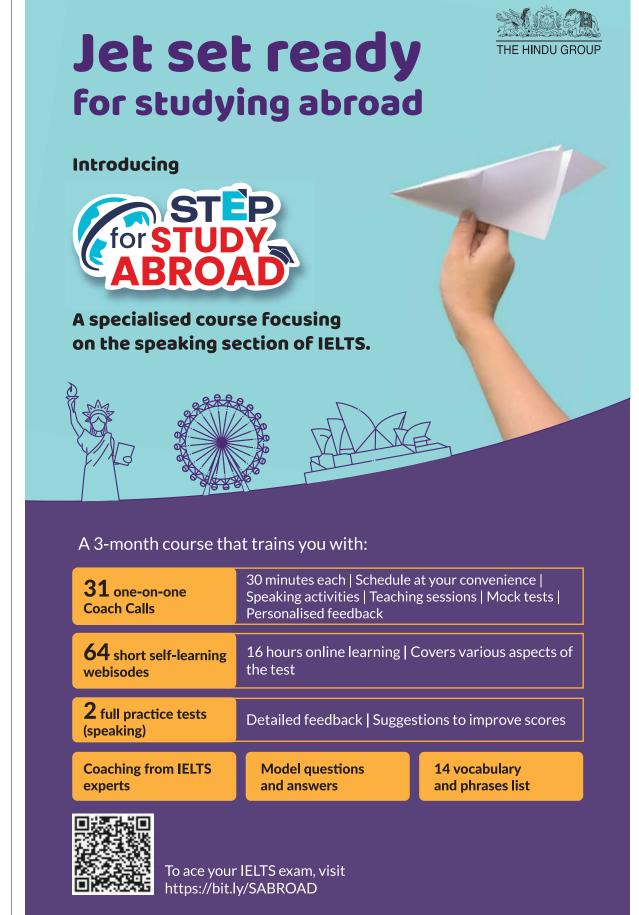
The Chinese state security apparatus will maintain access to swathes of personal data, however.

# Two killed in suicide attack in Pakistan

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE QUETTA

At least two children were killed and a Chinese citizen was wounded in a suicide attack in the port city of Gwadar on Friday, the latest assault targeting Chinese citizens in the country, officials said.

Chinese-funded projects have sparked resentment, particularly among separatists, who say locals see little benefit, with most jobs going to outsiders. Last month, nine Chinese nationals were killed in a suicide attack targeting a bus.



...

**EXCHANGE RATES** 

except yen at 4 p.m. on August 20									
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL							
Euro	86.57	86.95							
British Pound	.100.94	101.38							
Japanese Yen (100)	67.59	67.91							
Chinese Yuan	11.41	11.46							
Swiss Franc	80.8	81.15							
Singapore Dollar	54.42	54.66							
Canadian Dollar	57.47	57.74							
Malaysian Ringitt	17.5	17.58							
Cource Indian Bank									

### Facebook rolls out loan initiative for SMBs

NEW DELHI Facebook India on Friday announced a lending initiative to help small and medium businesses that advertise on its platform to access credit via lending partners. The company said India is the first country to see the roll-out of the 'Small

# MPC's Varma flags risks of policy stance

Positing COVID may linger 'for 3-5 years', he says 'keeping policy accommodative for long is difficult'

Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) member Jayanth Varma has expressed serious reservations about the RBI's "accommodaprotracted tive" policy stance in light of uncertainty about the duration of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, contending that the forward guidance and stance were becoming "counter productive".

"By creating the erroneous perception that the MPC is no longer concerned about inflation and is focused exclusively on growth, the MPC may be inadvertently aggravating the risk that inflationary expectations will be disanchored," he was cited as having said at the August 4-6 meeting of the central bank's rate-setting panel, the minutes released by RBI on Fri-

The MPC decided unani-



Long haul: COVID-19 is looking more and more like TB which

mously to hold the policy repo rate and by a 5-1 majority voted to continue with the accommodative stance as long as necessary to revive and sustain growth, with Mr. Varma the sole dissenter.

"As the pandemic continues to mutate, it appears to me that the balance of risk and reward is gradually shift-

kills a large number of people every year, says Mr. Varma. • AFP ing" meriting a hard look at the stance, Mr. Varma said.

### 'Neutron bomb'

Contending that COVID-19 was beginning to look more and more like tuberculosis which kills a large number of people every year without inflicting major damage to the economy, and thus resembling a 'neutron bomb', he said the ability of monetary policy to mitigate a human tragedy of this nature was very limited as compared to its ability to contain an economic crisis.

"The possibility that CO-VID-19 will haunt us (though with lower mortality) for the next 3-5 years can no longer be ruled out. Keeping monetary policy highly accommodative for such a long horizon is very different from doing so for what was earlier expected to be a relatively short crisis," he said.

Arguing that monetary policy was much less effective than fiscal policy for providing targeted relief to the worst affected segments of the economy, he said: "monetary accommodation appears to be stimulating asset price inflation to a greater extent than it is mitigating the distress in the economy".

Emphasising that inflationary pressures were beginning to show signs of greater persistence than anticipated earlier he said, "There are indications that inflationary expectations may be becoming more widely entrenched. Most worrying of all, there is now a reduced degree of confidence that demand side inflationary pressures would remain quiescent."

Mr. Varma also argued that the reverse repo needed to be raised from 3.35% so as to allow the MPC room to keep the policy repo rate at 4% for a longer period.

"At a time when the economic recovery is still nascent, it is extremely important that monetary policy serves as an anchor of macroeconomic stability. That would reduce the inflation risk premium" and stabilise long-term rates, he said.

### RBI, IRDAI nod must for FDI in bank-led insurance

Regulators will ensure compliance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Applications for foreign direct investment in an insurance company promoted by a private bank would be cleared by the RBI and IR-DAI to ensure that the 74% limit of overseas investment is not breached.

The changes took effect following amendments to the Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) Rules, 2019, as per the gazette notification issued by the Finance Ministry on August 19.

"These rules may be called the Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) (Second Amendment) Rules, 2021," it said.

In March, Parliament passed a bill to raise the foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in the insurance sector from 49% to 74%. The



Insurance Act, 1938 was last amended in 2015, raising the limit to 49%, resulting in foreign capital inflow of ₹26,000 crore over 5 years.

"Applications for foreign direct investment in private banks having joint venture or subsidiary in insurance may be addressed to the Reserve Bank for consideration in consultation with the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)," to ensure that the foreign investment limit is not breached, the notification said.

### SFL plans to raise exports to 50% of turnover

Will focus on EV components: Krishna

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Sundram Fasteners Ltd. (SFL) is planning to increase exports to 50% of the total turnover by focussing on electric vehicle (EV) components, said chairman Suresh Krishna.

"The newly commissioned unit in SEZ Sri City is totally committed to exports," Mr. Krishna told shareholders.

"We are also getting substantial orders from major customers outside of India for EV components," the chairman added.

During FY21, SFL exported products worth ₹1,010 crore that accounted for 34% of the total turnover. In Q1 of FY22, exports grew by 39% to ₹356 crore.

"We will reach 50% of ex-



Suresh Krishna

ports of total turnover from the existing 40%, as it would provide tremendous amount of cushion for the company in case of a downward trend in the domestic market," the chairman said.

"During FY21, SFL incurred a capex of ₹140 crore for existing and new products. The capex was incurred in tandem with the production plans of key customers," he added

### TTK Health eyes higher sales volume

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAL

TTK Healthcare Ltd. is eyeing higher sales volume in the current fiscal as it expects a revival in demand.

Despite the disruption during most part of Q1 due to the COVID-19 second wave, revenue from operations grew to ₹171 crore from ₹116.40 crore. Though the second

wave did have an impact in Q1, the firm is on course to deliver an improved performance in the year, said chairman T.T. Jagannathan while addressing shareholders. Engaged in pharma, consumer products, medical devices, protective devices and the food business, the company reported revenue from operations of ₹637 crore in FY21 compared with ₹646 crore.

# Eicher shareholders reject reappointment of Lal as MD

Proposal fails to win 75% votes, remuneration seen as issue

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Shareholders of Eicher Motors, the manufacturer of Royal Enfield motorcycles, have voted against the reappointment of Siddhartha Lal as managing director (MD) of the company.

According to a regulatory filing, the special resolution to consider and approve Mr. Lal's reappointment for a period of five years and payment of remuneration, failed to muster the requisite majority at the 39th AGM.

A total of 21,74,67,139 votes were cast for this special resolution, of which only 15,88,49,543 votes (73%) were in favour of the resolution, with the rest against. For a special resolution to be



Siddhartha Lal

passed, 75% votes need to be in favour of the resolution.

**Institutional investors** More than 70% of institu-

tional investors who participated had voted against the resolution, likely due to the proposal relating to Mr. Lal's remuneration.

While the company did not specify details of the

proposed remuneration in the notice for the AGM, Eicher had said the total remuneration payable to Mr. Lal for any financial year 'shall not exceed 3% of its net profits'. According to the compa-

ny's annual report for 2020-21, the total remuneration for Mr. Lal, who is credited with turning the company around, stood at about ₹21 crore for the financial year ended March 31, 2021. This included salary of ₹7.38 crore, commission of ₹6.7 crore and perquisites of ₹7.04 crore.

Meanwhile, a separate ordinary resolution to reappoint Mr. Lal as a director was passed with more than 86% shareholders voting in favour of the resolution.

### Natco shares slip 4% on U.S. court order

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Natco Pharma shares fell 4% to ₹925.60 apiece on Friday in the wake of a U.S. District Court ruling against the drugmaker and its marketing partner Alvogen in a patent litigation related to AbbVie subsidiary Pharmacyclics' anti-cancer drug Imbruvica.

Natco said in a filing: "A U.S. District Court has issued a decision in favour of Pharmacyclics (a subsidiary of AbbVie), the brand owner of Imbruvica, in a Para-IV litigation involving the product."

Natco said it would review the judgment with Alvogen Pine Brook LLC, which is its marketing partner in the U.S. for the product, and evaluate options to appeal.

### TV PICKS

AFC Cup 2021: Star Sports 1 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 4.30 p.m. &

**Premier League**: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 5 p.m., 7.30 p.m.

Bundesliga: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 7 p.m. & 10 p.m.

### IN BRIEF



### Aditi starts steady at British Open

CARNOUSTIE Aditi Ashok opened the women's British Open golf with a steady one-under 71 to lie tied 22nd at the challenging Carnoustie Links here. Aditi scored four birdies against three bogeys. The Indian is four shots behind the three co-leaders - Nelly Korda, Sei Young Kim and Madelene Sagstrom, who all had a matching five-under 67 in the opening round. PTI

### Lahiri keeps his hopes alive

JERSEY CITY Indian golfer Anirban Lahiri carded a two-under 69 in the opening round of The Northern Trust to keep alive his hopes of extending his run in the FedExCup Playoffs here. The 34-year-old needs to jump inside the top-70 this week and his cause was helped with a solid showing at Liberty National Golf Club in New Jersey. PTI

### Kapur, Chawrasia begin well at Czech Masters

Shiv Kapur & S.S.P. Chawrasia produced a matching two-under 70 in the opening round to lie T-18 at the D+D RFAL Czech Masters golf. Ajeetesh Sandhu was two-over 74. Maverick Antcliff and Henrik Stenson shared the first-round lead after carding five-under par rounds of 67. PTI

# Jagan Kumar clinches pole

Allwin Xavier to start in the front row in the Novice category

### **MOTORSPORTS**

SPORTS REPORTER

CHENNAI The seasoned Jagan Kumar of TVS Racing began his title defence in the premium Pro-Stock 165cc Open category by clinching pole in the MRF MMSC FMSCI Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship 2021 here on Fri-

Meanwhile, Sparks Racing's Allwin Xavier, put in some consistent laps in the qualifying session, to grab position, clocking 02:09.552 in the Novice (Stock 165cc) category which will see 39 riders taking the start in Saturday's race.

Also qualifying for pole positions in their respective

HYDERABAD: The 3-year-old filly

Miracle, who is in great heart, should win the Deccan Fillies Championship Stakes (Gr.3), the

first classic of the Monsoon racing season here on Saturday (Aug.21).

Rails will be announced one hour

1 OCEAN STAR PLATE (Div. II) (1,400m) 5-y-o & upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat.III) – 1.00 p.m.: 1. Max (7) Abhay Singh 61.5, 2. Mind

Max (7) Abhay Singh 61.5, 2. Mind Reader (6) B.R. Kumar 61, 3. Call Of The Blue (5) Deepak Singh 60.5, 4. Blickfang (10) Mukesh Ku-mar 59.5, 5. Ashwa Arjun (9) Gaurav Singh 58.5, 6. Brisbane (3) Surya Prakash 57, 7. Solo Winner (1) R.S. Jodha 56.5, 8. Star Racer (4) A.A. Vikrant 55.5, 9. Silver Set (8) Md Ismail 53 and 10 Hashtag

(8) Md. Ismail 53 and 10. Hashtag

1. MAX, 2. STAR RACER, 3. CALL OF

SULTANA

2 (1,200m) (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat.II) – 1.30: 1. Bandit

King (11) G. Naresh 56, 2. November Rain (2) Ajinkya 56, 3. One

More Time (4) Nakhat Singh 56, 4. Star Cruise (6) Mukesh Kumar 56,

5. Cosmic Run (1) Kiran Naidu 54.5, 6. Exotic Dancer (8) Md. Is-

mail 54.5, 7. Galwan (3) Akshay Kumar 54.5, 8. Inception (5) Ajit

Singh 54.5, 9. Mehrnoosh (12)

PLATE

2 RAZIA

before the first race.



Good start: Jagan Kumar began his title defence by clinching the qualifying session on Friday. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Miracle should win Deccan Fillies Championship Stakes

categories were Navaneeth Kumar from Puducherry (TVS One-Make Championship, Open), Baddam Deepika Reddy from Hyderabad (Girls, TVS One-Make Championship) and Prakash Ka-

B.R. Kumar 54.5, 11. Shelly Anne (13) Santosh Raj 54.5, 12. Thanks

(7) Neeraj 54.5 and 13. Total Darc (10) Afroz Khan 54.5.

1. THANKS, 2. GALWAN, 3. TOTAL

3 SANDOWN PARK PLATE (Div. II) (1,200m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat.III) – 2.05: 1. All Time Legend

(3) A.A. Vikrant 60, 2. Loch Stella (11) B.R. Kumar 59.5, 3. Different

(1) Md. Ismail 59, 4. Blue Valentine (8) Surya Prakash 58, 5.

Fatuma (6) Ajeeth Kumar 57, 6. Whiskey Martini (10) Zervan 56.5,

7. Star Dancer (7) Kiran Naidu 55, 8. Art In Motion (2) N.B. Kuldeep 54.5, 9. Armani Candy (9) Santosh Raj 53, 10. Crackershow (4)

Rafique Sk. 53 and 11. Team Player (5) R.S. Jodha 52.5.

1. ALL TIME LEGEND, 2. BLUE

VALENTINE, 3. WHISKEY MARTINI

1. Peaky Blinders (7) Sandesh 60,

2. Mark My Word (3) R.S. Jodha 59.5, 3. Falcon Edge (5) Akshay

Kumar 57, 4. Crazy Horse (1) A.A. Vikrant 56, 5. Dandy Man (2) Ashad Asbar 55.5, 6. The Special One (6) Koushik 54.5, 7. Francis

Bacon (4) Nakaht Singh 53.5 and 8. Red Snaper (8) Ajeeth Kumar

mat from Bokaro Steel City (Idemitsu Honda India Talent Cup, CBR 150).

The results (Qualifying): National Championship: Pro-Stock 165cc Open: 1. Jagan Kumar (TVS Racing) (1:57.043s);

FALCON EDGE, 2. PEAKY

5 NAWAB MEHDI JUNG BAHADUR MEMORIAL CUP (1,600m), rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II) – 3.15: 1.

Havelock Cruise (3) Deepak Singh 60, 2. Reno Star (1) Abhay Singh 58.5, 3. Sovet Pride (6) Sandesh

58, 4. Strategist (4) Afroz Khan 53, 5. Ashwa Yashobali (5) Gaurav Singh 52.5, 6. British Empress (7)

Akshav Kumar 52 and 7. Long

1. SOVET PRIDE, 2. BRITISH EMPRESS, 3. ASHWA YASHOBALI

SANDOWN PARK PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m) rated 20 to 45

(Cat.III) – 3.50: 1. Castlerock (2) Ajeeth Kumar 60, 2. Big Brave (11)

S.S. Tanwar 57.5, 3. Appenzelle (6) Akshay Kumar 57, 4. Painted

Apache (1) Surya Prakash 57, 5. Blissful (3) Nakhat Singh 56.5, 6.

Blink Of An Eye (10) Afroz Khan

55, 7. City Of Passion (8) Ashad As-

bar 54, 8. Space Walk (5) C.P. Bopanna 52.5, 9. One For All (4)

Rafique Sk. 51, 10. Top In Class (9) Santosh Raj 51 and 11. California Beauty (7) G. Naresh 50.5.

1. APPENZELLE, 2. BLISSFUL, 3.

7 DECCAN FILLIES CHAMPION-

SHIP STAKES (Gr. 3) (1,600m)

(Terms), Fillies 3-y-o only -4.25:

Range (2) B.R. Kumar 52.

BLINDERS, 3. FRANCIS BACON

2. Deepak Ravikumar (TVS Racing) (1:58.043s); 3. Senthil Kumar (Idemitsu Honda SK69 Racing) (1:59.309s). Novice (Stock 165cc): 1. All-

win Xavier (Sparks Racing, Thrissur) (2:09.552); 2. Udayi Prakash (Rockers Racing, Coimbatore) (02:09.556); 3. Sarvesh Hanumannavar (Sparks Racing, Hubballi) (02:09.580). TVS One-Make Champion-

ship - Open (Apache RR 310): 1. Navaneeth Kumar (01:56.916); 2. Yashas R.L. 01:57.130); 3. Jagadeesh N. (01:57.741). Girls (Apache RTR 200): 1.

Baddam Deepika Reddy (02:14.675); 2. Rakshita Srihari Dave (02:15.381); 3. Adlin Seles (02:18.090).

Idemitsu Honda India Talent Cup - CBR 150 (Novice): 1. Prakash Kamat (02:11.914); 2. Rakshit S. Dave (02:12.157); 3. Vivek Gaurav (02:12.469)

1. Alicia (4) Zervan 56, 2. Beastia

(5) Bhawani 56, 3. Limoncello (8) Akshay Kumar 56, 4. Miracle (6) P.S. Chouhan 56, 5. New Look (2) Nakhat Singh 56, 6. Ohanna (7) Neeraj 56, 7. Pecanwood (3) Ashad Asbar 56 and 8. Scintillating Less (1) Sandesh 56

1. MIRACLE, 2. ALICIA, 3.

Angel Tesoro (9) Gaurav Singh

61.5, 2. Once More (8) Nakhat Singh 61.5, 3. Linewiler (10) Abhay

Singh 61, 4. Dunkirk (11) Akshay Kumar 60.5, 5. Rhythm Selection

(1) Mukesh Kumar 59, 6, Dillon (5)

Ajit Singh 57, 7. Nearest (Ex: Cincia Azzurra) (7) G. Naresh 56.5, 8.

Red River (4) C.P. Bopanna 53, 10.

and 11. Sputnic (3) Ajeeth Kumar

1. LINEWILER, 2. SPUTNIC, 3. SUN

Mini Jackpot: (i) 2, 3, 4 & 5. (ii) 5,

Treble: (i) 1, 2 & 3. (ii) 3, 4 & 5. (iii)

DANCER

Day's Best: MIRACLE

Tanala: All races.

Jackpot: 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8.

ing Lass (1) Sandesh 56.

### Two FIA-backed events to Ankita loses in make their debut in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The FIA-backed Formula Regional Indian Championship and Formula 4 Indian Championship are set to make their debut in the

Hosted by Racing Promotions (RPPL), the championships will commence in February 2022, across four cities – New Delhi, Chennai, Coimbatore and Hyderabad.

The F4 Indian Championships and Formula Regional

Championships, Indian which will be based on F3 cars, are both certified by the FIA.

In a first for India, FIA Super License points will be given to winners of these

championships. Additionally, Indian Racing League will run as a support race to Formula Regional and F4 India. It is also expected to act as a feeder series to promote talent to the two FIA licensed cham-

### Paine backs Langer after 'robust discussions'



Clearing the air: Tim Paine says the team is looking forward to the next six months with Justin Langer. • GETTY IMAGES

### **CRICKET**

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Test skipper Tim Paine on Friday backed embattled Australian coach Justin Langer after "robust discussions" among senior players amid dressing-room leaks and reports of discontent over his management

Langer has come under a barrage of scrutiny in the wake of consecutive whiteball series losses to the West Indies and Bangladesh. Paine told national sports

radio network SEN he held an emergency meeting with vice-captain Pat Cummins, limited-overs skipper Aaron Finch and Langer. "We've had some really robust conversations amongst our leaders in the last few days and we're really looking forward to the next six months with JL," he said.

"It was important that myself, Aaron Finch, Pat Cummins and the leaders of Australian cricket around him."

# quarterfinals

SPORTS BUREAU

Mona Barthel and Yu-Chieh Hsieh defeated Ankita Raina and Ekaterine Gorgodze of Georgia 7-5, 6-2 in the doubles quarterfinals of the \$115,000 WTA tennis tournament here.

### PKL Season-8: 59 players retained

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A total of 59 players have been retained ahead of Season-8 of the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL), which will take place in December, organiser Mashal Sports announced on Friday.

"A total of 59 players were retained with 22 in the Elite Retained Players (ERP) category, six in the Retained Young Players (RYP) category, and 31 in the New Young Players (NYP) category as the teams begin assembling their squads for Season-8 slated to take place in December," said a release from the PKL.

players, including all squad players from PKL Seasons 6 and 7, will go under the hammer at the auctions in Mumbai from August 29 to Defending champion

non-retained

Bengal Warriors has retained captain Maninder Singh along with Mohammed Nabibaksh. Pawan Kumar Sehrawat

has been retained by Bengaluru Bulls for a second consecutive season while Naveen Kumar has been retained by Dabang Delhi.

# Sathiyan and Manika create Pro Tour history

With a resounding win in the mixed doubles final, they become the first Indian pair to bag a title at the level

### WTT CONTENDER

K. KEERTHIVASAN

7. Sathiyan and Manika Batra couldn't have asked for a better beginning to their preparations for the next Olympic cycle.

After announcing that they would compete as a duo till the 2024 Paris Olympics, Sathiyan and Manika made it a memorable outing at the World Table Tennis Contender at Budapest on Friday by clinching the mixed doubles crown with a resounding 11-9, 9-11, 12-10, 11-6 win over Nandor Ecseki and Dora Madarasz of Hungary in the final. They became the first Indian pair to win a mixed doubles title on the Pro Tour.

### Hardly challenged

Sathiyan and Manika combined wonderfully well throughout the tournament. With Sathiyan's deft receives, an attacking forehand, and nimble-footedness backed by Manika's attacking forehand and the backhand pushes and jabs on the longpimpled rubber, they were hardly challenged. In the four rounds, they had lost just three games.

It was clear within minutes into the summit clash that Madarasz was the weaker link.

She doesn't possess any particular weapon to win points, exerting more pressure on Ecseki. The latter wilted under it, making quite a few errors.

In the third game, the Hungarians had a game point at 10-9 but couldn't convert. That was the only time they came close to winning something.

Sathiyan and gained 400 points each and a total amount of \$3000. "It was great. We didn't expect to be this good! We just had a



What a start! G. Sathiyan and Manika Batra made their first campaign together on the Pro Tour a memorable one. • TWITTER

day to practice. "My quickness on the table and Manika's intelligent play, and her much-improved forehand

enabled us to win the tournament," said Sathiyan.

He said beating the World No. 7 and the top-seeded duo

of Lubomir Pistej and Barbora Balazova of Slovakia in the quarterfinals was a moralebooster. "We will next play in

I am very happy to win my first mixed title for India on the ITTF Tour

MANIKA BATRA

the WTT Doha event and the Asian TT championships," Sathiyan added.

"I am very happy to win my first mixed title for India on the ITTF Tour," said Manika, who is expected to return to India on Saturday.

The results (all finals): Men: Truis Moregard (Swe) bt Kilian ORT (Ger) 3-11, 11-9, 12-10, 9-11, 11-7, 9-11, 11-9; Doubles: Tobias Hippler & Kilian ORT (Ger) bt Vladimir Sidorenko

& Kirill Skachkov (Rus) 11-3,

11-7, 6-11, 11-7. Women: Xiaoxin Yang (Mon) bt Elizabet Abraamian (Rus) 11-9, 12-10, 11-6, 11-1; Doubles: Szandra Pergel & Dora Madarasz (Hun) bt Yana Noskova & Olga Vorobeva (Rus) 11-7, 11-6, 11-6. Mixed doubles: G. Sathiyan 8 Manika Batra bt Nandor Ecseki & Dora Madarasz (Hun) 11-9, 9-11, 12-10, 11-6.

Rafael Nadal ends season

because of foot injury

See you soon: Nadal, who skipped Wimbledon and the Tokyo Olympics, vowed to make a comeback in 2022. • AP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Rafael Nadal will miss the US Open after announcing on Friday that he is ending his season because of an injury to his left foot that has troubled him for most of the year.

"Hello everyone, I wanted to inform you that unfortunately I have to end the 2021 season," the Spaniard wrote on Twitter.

"Honestly, I've been suf-

fering a lot more than I should with my foot for a

"I need to take some time to resolve this problem or at least improve the situation (if I want to be able to play) the next few years."

Following his defeat to Novak Djokovic at Roland Garros, Nadal skipped Wimbledon and the Olympics before making a return to the courts in Washington earlier this month.

# India will win at least 15 medals: Chef de mission

### **PARALYMPICS**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gursharan Singh, Chef de Mission for the Tokyo Paralympics, said India will come up with its best ever performance, returning with at least 15 medals including five

India will field 54 athletes, its largest ever contingent, in nine sports – para archery, para athletics, para badminton, para canoeing, shooting para sport, para swimming, para powerlifting, para table tennis and para taekwondo.

"I am confident that these would be our best ever Paralympic Games.

"Our Para-athletes have worked very hard and shown great results in international competitions. They are raring to go," the secretary-general of the Paralympic Committee of India said in a release.

We are expecting around 15 medals including five

The new normal: Flame-lighting ceremonies were held without spectators across Tokyo on Friday. • AFP

gold. We have high medal hopes in para athletics, para badminton, para shooting and para archery."

India has won 12 medals, including four gold, in 11 appearances.

The first batch of the Indian team, led by PCI president Deepa Malik, arrived in

T. Mariyappan, who will be the flag-bearer, also arrived in Tokyo and there will be a lot of expectations from the para high jumper to clinch his second gold.

India's other medal hopefuls include the para javelin throwers, led by two-time Paralympic champion Devendra Jhajharia (F46).

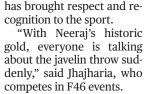
Reigning world champion Sundar Singh Gurjar and Aieet Singh (F46), world champion and world record holder in F64 Sandeep Chaudhary and Navdeep Singh (F41) are the others to watch out for.

### Jhajharia hopes to emulate Neeraj Chopra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Two-time gold medallist Devendra Jhajharia is aiming to build on the unprecedented gains made by javelin throw at the upcoming Paralympic Games, following Neeraj Chopra's landmark gold at the Tokyo Olympics.

His gold medal with a world record in the 2004 Athens Paralympics had almost gone unnoticed but Jhajharia is happy with the hype before the Tokyo Games.



Jhajharia, the first Indian

Paralympian to win two

gold medals at the Paralym-

pic Games (Athens 2004

and Rio 2016), said Neeraj

"I know that after the Olympic gold, everyone would be looking at me to win a third paralympic gold," said the 40-year-old.



Expectations high: Jhajharia will be aiming for a third gold at the Paralympic Games. • AP

# Shaili tops qualification round

STAN RAYAN

Chaili Singh, one of India's Obrightest prospects for the 2024 Paris Olympics, entered the women's long jump final after topping the qualification round with 6.40m at the World Athletics under-20 championships in Nairobi on Friday.

The 17-year-old from Jhansi, coached by Robert Bobby George at the Anju Bobby Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, opened with 6.34m, narrowly missing the automatic qualification mark of 6.35. Saili then produced her best in the last round. Sweden's under-20 Euro-

pean champion Maja Askag, who won the triple jump on Friday with an effort of 13.75m, was second in qualification with 6.39.

While Shaili was flying high, another medal hope Kunwer Ajai Raj Singh Rana (73.68m) was fifth in men's javelin while teammate Jay Shah (70.74m) was sixth. Finland's Janne Laspa won the gold with 76.46m.

Nandini Asagara was sixth



Sailing through: Shaili's leap of 6.40m was the best of the day and carried her to the final. • TWITTER/SAIMEDIA

in her women's 100m hurdles semifinal in 14.16s. She was 19th overall. She had clocked 14.18 in round one.

In men's 110m hurdles, Tejas Shirse was fifth in his heat in 13.87s and crashed out. Pooja was far away from her personal best (4:19.58s) in the women's 1500m heat. clocking 4:37.85, and finished 11th in her group and 19th overall. Sunil Joliya was also 11th in the men's 3000m steeplechase heat (22nd overall) with 9:49.23s. Shanmuga Srinivas was below his personal best (21.03s) in the men's 200m first round. His 21.33 for the fifth spot in his heat (23rd overall) was not enough. Frenchman Erwan Ko-

nate (long jump, world-leading 8.12m), Belarus' Matvei Volkov (men's pole vault, 5.45m), Czech Republic's Jan Dolezalek (men's hammer throw, 77.83m), host Kenya's Jackline Chepkoech (women's 3000m steeplechase, 9:27.40s) and neutral athlete Violetta Ignatyeva (women's discus, 57.84m, born in Russia) won the other golds on

### Hakim critical

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Football Olympian S.S. Hakim has been admitted to a hospital in Gulbarga following a cardiac arrest on Friday.

The 82-year-old son of the legendary football coach S.A. Rahim is said to be critical and in the ICU.

### 'Chris Cairns off life support'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Former New Zealand allround Chris Cairns is off life support and is recovering following a heart surgery, his lawyer said on

Cairns had suffered a major medical emergency - an aortic dissection earlier this month and was

put on life support. Aortic dissection is a serious condition in which a tear happens in the inner layer of the body's main

"I'm pleased to advise that Chris is off life support and has been able to communicate with his family from hospital in Sydney," his lawyer Aaron Lloyd said in a statement.



Chris Cairns. • FILE PHOTO

### Kohli, BCCI top brass chat 'informally' over roadmap



Way to go: Saurav Ganguly may have provided a broad direction to Virat Kohli on the T20 World Cup. • FILE РНОТО

### T20 WORLD CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Indian team is fully focused on winning the ongoing Test series in England but both skipper Virat Kohli and the BCCI top brass are also discussing the roadmap for the upcoming T20 World Cup which will be an acid

It is learnt that BCCI president Sourav Ganguly, secretary Jay Shah and vice-president Rajiv Shukla had an informal meeting with the captain during the second Test at Lord's, and various aspects related to T20 World Cup came up for discussion.

'Yes, the BCCI top bosses did meet Kohli but let's say that it will not be fair to divulge the finer details of the discussion. But with very little time left for the T20 World Cup and India not having any games prior to the (IPL), discussion was more about the roadmap going into the event," a senior BCCI official said on condition of anonymity.

The India-England Test series will end on Sept. 14 after which the players will assemble in the UAE for the

Under Kohli, India has lost in the 2017 Champions Trophy final, 2019 ODI World Cup semifinal apart from this year's WTC final. Not being able to clear the ICC semifinal or final hurdle will be something the India skipper would want to

With the team selection slated for next month, there are multiple issues that need to be sorted out, including bowling workloads, all-rounder's position, wrist spin-ners and like-for-like replacements.

There are a few questions that the chairman of selectors Chetan Sharma, coach Ravi Shastri, Kohli and the BCCI top brass need to answer in order to get the team in top gear in the shortest format.

### Domestic squads to be capped at 30: BCCI

U-19 one-dayers will kick start season

AGENCIES

Each squad can have a maximum of 30, including the players and support staff, for the upcoming domestic season, the BCCI has informed its State units. The number of support staff has been capped at 10.

The Ranji Trophy, which wasn't held last season due to COVID-19 and the logistical obstacles in having an extended bio-bubble for 38 teams, will run from January 5 to March 20.

The senior men's programme will begin on October 27 with the Syed

India claimed two more sil-

ver medals after Sanju Devi

and Bhateri lost their respec-

tive final matches at the

World junior wrestling

championships here on

Sanju was beaten 10-0 by

home wrestler Alina Kasa-

bieva in the women's 62kg

summit clash. Following

Sanju's passive approach,

Alina employed two leg at-

tacks to amass points com-

fortably and win the bout on

the basis of technical supe-

Bhateri lost to Irina Ringa-

ci of Moldova 12-2 in the 65kg

final. Bhateri defended well

after conceding four points

inside the first 30 seconds

and closed the gap to two

points through a takedown

early in the second period.

riority in the first period.

SPORTS BUREAU

Mushtaq Ali Trophy.

The Vijay Hazare Trophy (National one-dayers) will be played from December 1 to 29 while the senior women will play their first tournament – National onedayers – from October 20 to November 20.

For the Ranji, Vijay Hazare and Syed Mushtaq Ali trophies, the 38 teams will be divided into six groups. There will be five Elite Groups with six teams each and one Plate group with eight teams. The season starts with the women's and men's under-19 one-dayers (Vinoo Mankad) on Sept. 20.

Silver for Sanju Devi, Bhateri

■ TWITTER/SAIMEDIA

Sanju and Bhateri added to India's medal tally.

However, the Moldovan

was too good with her at-

tacks to establish a 10-point

lead and win the bout with

Saneh retired midway

through her 72kg bronze

medal match against Rus-

sian Mariam Guseinova. The

Indian was trailing 0-3 in the

technical superiority.

### Babar, Fawad rescue Pakistan

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE KINGSTON (IAMAICA)

Babar Azam and Fawad Alam rescued Pakistan from a horror start on the opening day of the second Test against the West Indies on Friday. The visitors were 118 for three after an hour's play in the second session.

Skipper Babar was batting on 59 (120b, 10x4) while left-hander Fawad was unbeaten on 51 (102b, 8x4), their fourth-wicket stand worth 116 so far.

Earlier, the tourists were tottering at two for three. The scores: Pakistan 118/3 in 40 overs (Babar Azam 59 batting, Fawad Alam 51 batting) vs West Indies; Toss: WI.

opening period when her

right knee got awkwardly

twisted due to an attack by

the Russian. She was stretch-

Five Indian Greco-Roman

wrestlers in action crashed

out of the medal race after

facing defeat in initial

ered off the mat.

# opponents worked: Ashok

The plan to confuse

HOCKEY

S. DINAKAR

A penalty corner combines delicate touch and accuracy with brutal power. In other words, it is a tango of a ballet and a boxer's sledgehammer blow.

The Indian men excelled at penalty corners during their memorable bronze medal run at the Tokyo Olympics.

The side's video analyst C. Ashok Kumar told The Hindu, "Everyone knew Rupinder Pal Singh and Harmanpreet took our penalty corners. But, by adding Varun Kumar and Amit Rohidas to our list of potent penalty-corner takers, we managed to confuse our opponents. They could not

"Our penalty corners had speed, accuracy and power. We tried different variations and were quick on rebounds," he added.

Having worked with the men's and women's junior National teams, the 30-year-old Ashok, a defender who represented Nilgiris in hockey apart from being a qualified umpire, joined the senior team in 2019.

Ashok said the role of the "first rusher" was most crucial in stopping penalty corners. "He has to give the drag-flicker as little time as possible. Then, of course, our goalkeeper Sreejesh was

Providing an insight into the team's commitment, Ashok said, "I would be off every morning at 7 a.m. and would return to the room late. We had to watch all the matches, well past mid-



night. Even then, our senior players would be waiting for me to give inputs and watch the videos of our opponents.

"Britain had two players

who took penalty corners and each one would hit to a different part of the cage. I told Sreejesh about this ahead of the quarterfinal and it worked." The video analyst said he had one-on-one sessions

with the players on strategy.

"The weather was hot and

humid and we could not go

all out in those conditions.

We had to hold the ball," said Ashok. He felt that the team erred by going defensive after having the better of the exchanges till half-time against Belgium in the semifinal. Ashok was, however, relieved that the side picked it-

self up for the bronze playoff. "We were spot on with our tactics against Germany. Whenever they raised the tempo and attempted to play fast hockey, we slowed down the game. This denied them rhythm while we could still hit them on the break."

The man from Nilgiris was delighted that Indian hockey reached heights in Tokyo.





### New role for Lalremsiami

Indian hockey player Lalremsiami, who was part of the women's team which finished fourth at the Tokyo Olympics, has been appointed as the chief coach, a group-A post, under the Mizoram sports and youth services department. The Mizoram government on Thursday offered the Group-A post to Lalremsiami as an appreciation for her performance at the recently-concluded quadrennial event. PTI



**Komal Thatal joins** Jamshedpur FC

JAMSHEDPUR Komal Thatal, one of the stars of the 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup Indian team, has signed a three-year deal with Jamshedpur Football Club (JFC) ahead of the upcoming Indian Super League (ISL) season. The 20-year-old will be with JFC till May 2024, a release from the club said on



Benzema signs contract extension with Real

Karim Benzema has signed a contract extension with Real Madrid through 2023, the Spanish club said on Friday. The 33-year-old France striker has helped Madrid win four Champions League titles and three Spanish league titles since he joined from Lyon in 2009. Benzema became the main attacking threat for Madrid when Cristiano Ronaldo left in 2018. AP



**Pulisic tests positive** for COVID-19

Chelsea winger Christian Pulisic has tested positive for COVID-19 less than two weeks before United States players are due to report for camp ahead of their 2022 World Cup qualifying campaign. Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel said on Friday that the 22-year-old American had tested positive and was in self-isolation, ruling him out of Saturday's game against Arsenal, AP



Arsenal completes Odegaard signing

Arsenal completed the signing of midfielder Martin Odegaard from Real Madrid on Friday. The 22-year-old Norway international was on loan in the second half of last season and returns on a long-term contract after Arsenal paid a fee reported to be €35 million (\$41 million).



Vinales and Yamaha part ways

Maverick Vinales, who has already signed to ride for Aprilia next season, will leave the Yamaha MotoGP team with immediate effect following disagreements between the two, the Japanese manufacturer said in a statement on Friday. AFP

# Chelsea to unleash Lukaku on Arsenal

Liverpool and Manchester United will look to build on a promising start

### PREMIER LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Arsenal's miserable start to the Premier League season could get even worse as Chelsea unleashes record signing Romelu Lukaku for his debut on Sunday, while Liverpool and Manchester United look to build on a promising start to their title challenge.

The Blues believe the Belgian striker can be the final weapon needed to turn a squad that already won the Champions League last season into a Premier League title contender.

Lukaku is already in the top 20 all-time Premier League goalscorers with 113 to his name for West Brom, Everton and Manchester Un

**Under pressure** 

Manager Mikel Arteta is under pressure after a 2-0 defeat to newly-promoted Brentford to open the new Back in the mix: Romelu Lukaku, who did not have a good time with Chelsea earlier, will be eager to turn it around. • FILE РНОТО season. City's title defence got off to a faltering start with a 1-0 defeat to Tottenham last weekend with the future of Harry Kane still hanging over

According to reports,

Kane remains unhappy at Spurs chairman Daniel Levy's stubborn stance to not negotiate with City despite the English champions' willingness to break the Premier League transfer record for

the second time this month. City's bid for the England captain could go as high as £150 million before the window closes, but Pep Guardiola will have to continue with-

out the number nine he

Norwich. Guardiola's men should

craves for Saturday's visit of

be much stronger for an extra week's training with the likes of Kevin De Bruyne, John Stones, Kyle Walker, Rodrigo, Oleksandr Zinchenko and Aymeric Laporte in contention after starting on the bench against Spurs due to their limited pre-season after reaching the latter stages of Euro 2020.

### **Full house**

Sean Dyche's men return to Anfield in very different circumstances this weekend in front of the first full house for a Premier League game since before Liverpool ended a 30year wait to win the title in 2020.

In front of a home crowd, Klopp's side has not lost a league game since 2017.

United will also be confident of building on its opening 5-1 win over Leeds when the Red Devils travel to Southampton on Sunday.

# Bayern's new-look defence shows promise



A good buy: Bayern Munich's Dayot Upamecano in action against Monchengladbach on the opening night. • AFP

### **BUNDESLIGA**

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE BERLIN

After thwarting Dortmund star Erling Braut Haaland, Bayern Munich's new centre-back pairing Niklas Suele and Dayot Upamecano can help the defending champion claim its first Bundesliga win this season at home to Cologne on Sunday. The pressure was on Suele and Upamecano to forge a partnership after the departures of double Champions League winners Jerome Boateng and David

Having wobbled on occasion in last Friday's 1-1 draw at Monchengladbach, the duo earned praise from Bayern coach Julian Nagelsmann after victory at Dortmund in the German Super Cup. "We defended very well and were very aggressive. Niki and 'Upa' were vesaid Nagelsmann.

# Roma's Mourinho leads a manager merry-go-round in Italy

### SERIE A

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Jose Mourinho is the biggest name to arrive on a Serie A bench this summer but the once Special One's shock move to Roma is one of 12 managerial changes in Italy's top flight in a chaotic summer. The two-time Champions League winner's arrival came like a bolt from the blue for Roma's trophystarved supporters, who reacted to the shock appointment as though they had signed a superstar

Massimiliano Allegri returns to Juventus and will be looking to con-



Jose Mourinho. • AP

tinue his streak of league titles after guiding the Old Lady to four straight league and cup doubles between 2015 and 2019.

Simone Inzaghi – a Lazio legend – jumped into the huge hole left by Antonio Conte and has a job on his hands to defend Inter's Serie A title after the departures of Romelu Lukaku and Achraf

Luciano Spalletti inherits a talented Napoli squad which missed out on Europe's top competition by a single point and will again be a serious contender for the top four positions.

After Maurizio Sarri's arrival at Lazio, Rome derbies will have an interesting clash of styles now that 'Sarriball' will face off against arch pragmatist Mourinho.

He has talent at his disposal with the likes of Sergej Milinkovic-Savic and Luis Alberto backing up Italy forward Ciro Immobile.

# Barcelona continues post-Messi era rebuild

Atletico and Real will also aim to continue winning ways

### **LALIGA**

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Barcelona faces Athletic Bilbao on Saturday in its first away match since the departure of Lionel Messi, hoping to back up a promising LaLiga opener last weekend, while Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid also look to notch second straight wins.

The Catalan giant is also still without injured winger Ousmane Dembele and close-season arrival Sergio Aguero as it looks to rebuild.

Braithwaite Martin stepped into the six-time Ballon d'Or winner's shoes



Strike force: Barcelona will need Martin Braithwaite, Memphis Depay and Antoinne Griezmann to fire. • AP

last Sunday by grabbing a brace, while Memphis Depay impressed on his debut after joining from Lyon.

Messi. "We no longer have a player who can decide the fate of matches on his own Koeman admitted after now it will be a collective effort," said the Dutchman.

the win over Sociedad that other players in his team Veteran centre-back Ge-

Athletic. Diego Simeone's Atletico on Sunday welcomes Elche to the Wanda Metropolitano, where fans will be present to celebrate its 2021 title triumph.

rard Pique, who scored last

weekend, could miss out

with a calf problem against

### Plenty of change

Real has also seen plenty of change in the close-season, with coach Zinedine Zidane departing the club to be replaced by former boss Carlo Ancelotti.

Ancelotti brought Gareth Bale back into the fold for a 4-1 thumping of Alaves last week when Karim Benzema netted a double.

LeBron James

# BFC will be keen to put behind loss to ATKMB Back-to-back success

To lock horns with BPL champion Bashundhara Kings

### AFC CUP

SPORTS BUREAU

Dengaluru FC will be keen Dto put behind the opening-day loss to ATK Mohun Bagan (ATKMB) when it takes on Bashundhara Kings in an AFC Cup Group D clash in Male on Saturday.

Kings, the Bangladesh Premier champions, are coming off a 2-0 win over Maziya S&RC in their first group stage game. "We're up against a team

that scored 55 goals in the League and are champions," said BFC coach Marco Pezzaiuoli, ahead of the match.

"They conceded only nine goals in the League, and won their first group game 2-0. They are compact at the back and counter very well. Our plan will be to maybe go backwards a bit and create bace behind them to score goals and create chances."

Pezzaiuoli felt that the defeat to ATKMB would not set the team back, more so when the squad has seen significant upheaval in the summer. "I choose to take the positives. We had almost 70% ball possession. I think we only need to improve in certain aspects. We want to better our free-kicks and corners, and create better chances and finish them."

The Kings made their AFC Cup debut last season in a campaign that was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic and retained the 2020-21 Bangladesh Federation Cup in January, and this season the team scored 67 goals in all competitions.



Star player: BFC forward Sunil Chhetri will hope to come good against Bashundhara Kings. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

# is what ATKMB seeks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

On a high after a clinical performance in its opener, ATK Mohun Bagan (ATKMB) will eve back-to-back success and move closer to qualifying for the knockout stage when it faces Maziya Sports & Recreation of Maldives in the AFC Cup here on Saturday.

The Kolkata side defeated Bengaluru FC 2-0, registering more shots on target despite having only 32% possession. A victory on Saturday

could put ATKMB on the verge of a knockout berth from Group D.

Habas said: "We are going from match to match and we have another opponent waiting. It's the same idea. Give absolute respect to the

opponent and develop our football on the pitch. You could have one bad day or situation that could change the outcome."

need to step up without

### **Intensity**

The Spaniard said the team has to play with intensity throughout.

"We know how Maziya Sports & Recreation played with other teams, but we have to see how they will perform against us, because maybe they might play differently."

The home side is coming into the match after a 2-0 defeat at the hands of Ban-Bashundhara gladesh's Kings, but head coach Risto Vidakovic is hoping to build on the second-half performance to upset ATK Mohun

### fuelled by poll snub AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LOS ANGELES

LeBron James is taking issue with a pre-season poll that doesn't give him a vote in the discussion about who is the NBA's best player entering the 2021-22 campaign.

An ESPN survey of 10 NBA executives and scouts was evenly split between Kevin Durant of the Brooklyn Nets and Giannis Antetokounmpo, who led the Milwaukee Bucks to their first NBA crown in 50

"THANK YOU!" James tweeted on Thursday. "As if I didn't need more to (fuel) ME!" with a gas pump emoji symbolising the snub's energising im-

## 'I gave an outlet for athletes to speak up about mental health'

Biles has no regrets in opting out of Olympics midway

### **GYMNASTICS**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

Simone Biles didn't plan for her second Olympics to become a flashpoint in the evolving conversation about the role proper mental health plays in all levels of sports.

Then again, she's hardly complaining. If anything, she's leaning into it.

The American gymnastics star has no regrets about her decision to opt-out of five of the six finals in Tokyo because of a mental block, calling it a small price to pay if it lets others realise they retain the right to say "it's OK not to be OK" no matter how bright the spotlight.

"I wouldn't change anything for the world," said Biles,



who left Japan with a silver medal from the team competition and an individual bronze on balance beam.

"I gave an outlet for athletes to speak up about their mental health and their well-being and learn that you can put yourself (as a person) first before the ath-Asked if she had any clar-

ity on what might have brought on "the twisties," Biles thinks it may have been the build-up of various issues she's faced over several years, she said.

# We are gathering momentum nicely: Morgan

Continuously trying to get better, says England skipper ahead of T20 World Cup

### **CRICKET**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

England captain Eoin Morgan says his team is "gathering momentum nicely" as the last edition's runner-up hopes to improve on its showing in the upcoming T20 World Cup.

Moved out of India due to the threat posed by the CO-VID-19 pandemic, the mega event will be held in the UAE and Oman from Oct. 17 to Nov. 14.

Morgan, whose team won the last edition of the tournament in 2016, has stressed on the importance of continuing to play in the manner it has in the last two years.

### **Biggest strength**

"I think our biggest strength is the consistency with which we've performed at over the last two years.



strength. • GETTY IMAGES

"I think in T20 cricket because the game can change quite quickly, I think every game is important to us." said Morgan during a chat with the ICC on Friday.

### **Key factor** The 34-year-old skipper feels

adapting to the conditions in the UAE, where England have not played a T20 International since 2015, will be one of the key factors for them in the tournament. "I think we're gathering

momentum nicely, and the important side to that from our perspective is that we're continuously trying to get better and learn as we go on, simply because the tournament is held away from home. We're really looking forward to it."

In 2016, England finished

waite smashed four consecutive sixes off Ben Stokes in a dramatic last over of the final to take the West Indies to a title triumph.

runner-up as Carlos Brath-

### **Hugely significant** "The evolution of T20 crick-

et and the role it's played in our great game is hugely significant for the development of the game and the popularity of the game. It's huge. It's been a long time coming. We haven't had one since 2016," said Morgan.

South Africa and Australia

join England and the West

Indies in Group 1 of the Sup-

er 12s along with the two yet-

to-be-determined qualifiers from Round 1 for this year's men's T20 World Cup. England will open its cam-

paign in the 2021 edition of the tournament against the West Indies in Abu Dhabi on October 23.

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