



RNI No. GUJENG/2014/57876 ગરવી ગુજરાત GARVI GUJARAT

(Published Daily from Ahmedabad)



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Volume-07 • Issue-043 • Dt. 14-09-2020 Monday • Page-04 • Rs.00.50 paisa

Expect vaccine by early 2021: Vardhan Flyers can take photos, videos in flights, clarifies DGCA

New Delhi (Gns). A COVID-19 vaccine is likely to be available by early next year and the government is considering its emergency authorisation for high-risk people, Union Minister Harsh Vardhan Sunday said, asserting he will take the first shot to address any "trust deficit" over its safety.

According to a Health Ministry statement, he said while no date has been fixed for the launch of a vaccine, it may be ready by the first quarter of 2021, and made available first to those who need it the most, irrespective of their paying capacity, the minister made these remarks during interaction with his social media followers on the 'Sunday Samvad' platform. He covered a multitude of queries concerning not only the current COVID-19 situation, but also the government's approach to it, the changes expected in the post

COVID world and the steps taken by the Modi dispensation.

Vardhan stated the government is taking full precautions in human trials of vaccines and the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 is drawing up a detailed strategy on how to immunize the majority of the population.

"Issues like vaccine security, cost, equity, cold-chain requirements, production timelines etc., are also been discussed intensely," he stated.

Further, he said the government is considering emergency authorisation of COVID-19 vaccination especially for senior citizens and people working in high-risk settings.

"This shall be done after a consensus has been

reached," he was quoted as saying the statement.

To allay any fear regarding the safety aspect of vaccines, he said he would be happy to take the first



dosage "if people have a trust deficit".

On vaccine candidates and their development in the country, he said India is actively partnering with Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and trials of several vaccines at different phases are underway at labora-

tories (private or public) and hospitals.

The Department of Biotechnology and the Indian Council of Medical Research have been proactive in responding to the emerging situation, he said. It is hoped that a consensus will emerge in the next few months over the desired level of protective herd immunity in any community, he said.

The minister, however, also noted that a safe and effective vaccine will help in establishing immunity to COVID-19 at a much faster pace as compared to the natural infection, the statement said.

Vardhan said the government has directed all states and UTs to fix a reasonable price for COVID-19 treatment in private hospitals for making it affordable for the common man.

Free coverage up to Rs 5 lakhs for COVID-19 patients for those who are eligible under the Ayushman Bharat PMJAY package was announced, the statement said.

He added that the Central government has also asked states and UTs to proactively engage with the private sector health providers and consider pooling in public and private healthcare facilities, as this will help in providing prompt, good quality and reasonable health care to COVID-19 patients.

He has himself appealed to the private hospitals to refrain from overcharging COVID patients, the statement stated.

The minister said measures have been taken to ensure accessibility and affordability of all drugs and other therapeutics to all, irrespective of their paying capacities.

New Delhi: Aviation regulator DGCA "clarified" on Sunday passengers can take photos and videos inside flights but can't use any recording equipment that creates chaos, disrupts flight operations, violates safety norms or is banned by the crew members.

On Saturday, the regulator had said that a scheduled flight will be suspended for a period of two weeks if anyone is found taking photographs inside the plane.

Two days back, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation had asked IndiGo to take "appropriate action" after it found alleged violation of safety and social-distancing protocols by mediapersons in the airline's Chandigarh-Mumbai flight that had actor

Kangana Ranaut as a passenger.

According to a video of the incident that took place



inside the flight on September 9, reporters and cameramen were jostling and bunched up to get a comment from Ranaut, who was sitting in one of the front rows of the plane.

The DGCA order on Sunday "clarified that a bona fide passenger traveling in an aircraft engaged in scheduled air transport services may do still and video photography from inside such an aircraft while

in flight; take off and landing" as per its circular dated December 9, 2004.

"However, this permission does not include use of any recording equipment which imperils or compromises air safety; violates prevalent norms; creates chaos or disruption during operation of flight or expressly prohibited by crew," the order noted.

Action may be initiated against those persons found in violation of above guidelines, the order added.

The Sunday order is a clarification on top of the Saturday order that said, "It has been decided that from now on, incase any violation (photography) occurs on any scheduled passenger aircraft - the schedule of flight for that particular route shall be suspended for a period of two weeks from the next day (of the incident)."

Sena targets Akshay Kumar for silence on Kangana row

Mumbai (Gns). The Shiv Sena has now trained guns on actor Akshay Kumar asking why other Bollywood stars are silent about the conspiracy to defame Mumbai.

"Not all, but at least half of them should have expressed their views about Mumbai's defamation and said Kangana Ranaut's stand was not that of the entire Hindi film industry. Is Mumbai only for making money to them?" asked Sena MP Sanjay Raut.

Mumbai has given them everything. The bigger artists like Akshay Kumar should have come forward for Mumbai. But they feel pain when it comes to expressing grati-

tude for Mumbai, he said in his weekly column Rokhthok (forthright) in the Sena mouthpiece Saamana on Sunday.



Referring to Kangana's statements, Raut said, 'An actress calls Mumbai as Pakistan. She uses derogatory language against the Chief Minister

of Maharashtra by sitting in Mumbai, but the people of the state should not react on it. What kind of one-sided freedom is

part of this conspiracy. Some people think that Maharashtra will automatically collapse by damaging the glory of Mumbai, he added.

Raut also slammed the Maharashtra BJP for supporting Kangana in this matter. "It is really unfortunate that the BJP, which is the main opposition party in the state, has stood behind the actress, who has called Mumbai as Pakistan and BMC as Babar. They want to win elections in Bihar by backing Kangana. For this, it is okay for them to insult Maharashtra. Not a single Marathi Union minister in Delhi has felt bad about Maharashtra's insult, he said.

assured their support for the smooth functioning of the House. He expressed the hope that Lok Sabha will transact a good amount of business.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi along with Arjun Ram Meghwal and V Muraleedharan, ministers of state in the same ministry, also attended the meeting. Joshi said the government is ready for discussion on all issues which will be decided in the BAC. He said the meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere, and floor lead-

Afghan forces, Taliban continue to clash even as peace talks start

Kabul (Gns). Taliban and Afghan government forces clashed across Afghanistan hours after the start of long-awaited peace talks in Doha on Saturday, officials said, underscoring the uphill challenge of settling a 19-year insurgency.

Talks between the two sides were to begin shortly after a US-Taliban agreement in February, but began only over the weekend after months of delays, caused in part by continuing Taliban offensives in the war-torn country.

"With the start of intra-Afghan talks we were expecting the Taliban to reduce the number of their attacks, but unfortunately their attacks are still going in high numbers," Fawad Aman, a spokesman for the Afghan defence ministry, said.

Representatives from a number of countries who spoke at the inauguration

of the peace talks called on the Taliban to announce an immediate ceasefire before negotiators sat down to find a way to end



decades of war in Afghanistan.

The Taliban did not say anything about a possible ceasefire at the ceremony.

Achieving a significant reduction in violence and how to get to a permanent ceasefire would be among the first issues the sides would discuss when they

meet on Sunday, the head of Afghanistan's peace council, Abdullah Abdullah, told Reuters on Saturday.

No meeting between

guration of the talks, the Taliban had carried out 18 attacks against government forces and installations across the country, inflicting heavy casualties.

"We don't have exact information about Taliban attacks on Saturday, but I can say the number of attacks has increased instead of decreased".

Taliban attacks on Saturday night were confirmed by officials in the provinces of Kapsia and Kunduz.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement that the insurgent group attacked a convoy of Afghan forces that had arrived to launch an operation along a key highway in Kunduz.

He added that security forces carried out air and artillery strikes on Saturday night in the provinces of Baghlan and Jowzjan.

Opp wants talks on stand-off at LAC, economic slowdown

NEW DELHI (Gns). Opposition parties have sought a discussion in Lok Sabha on the issues of economic slowdown, unemployment and stand-off between Indian and Chinese forces during a meeting of floor leaders of the House on Sunday to discuss the agenda for the Monsoon session, DMK leader TR Baalu said.

A day before the start of the session, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla chaired the meeting of the business advisory committee (BAC) of the lower house.

Opposition leaders have sought discussions on the stand-off between India and

China at the LAC, unemployment and economic slowdown, Baalu said.

The DMK leader said he has also sought a discus-



sion on issues such as revising the creamy layer for OBC and non-payment of states' share of revenue collected under GST.

Birla told reporters after the meeting that the leaders of all parties have

assured their support for the smooth functioning of the House. He expressed the hope that Lok Sabha will transact a good amount of business.

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Joshi said the government is ready for discussion on all issues which will be decided in the BAC.

He said the meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere, and floor lead-

ers will again meet on Tuesday to deliberate upon the agenda for the parliament session.

Asked whether the government is ready for a discussion on the stand-off between India and China at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Joshi said it will be decided while keeping in mind national security and the country's strategic interests.

According to sources, Lok Sabha will be adjourned briefly on Monday as a mark of respect to former president Pranab Mukherjee and a sitting MP who died recently.

Uttar Pradesh government to set up special security force

Lucknow (Gns). On Sunday, the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh said that a special security force will be constituted, which will have the powers to search without any warrant.

This comes after an Allahabad High Court expressed its displeasure over the security at civil courts in December 2019.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Awanish Awasthi, said late Sunday, "The state government has given orders for the consti-

tution of a special security force. A roadmap in this



regard has been sought from the Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police (DGP)."

"Members of this force can arrest any person with-

out the orders of a magistrate or a warrant," he said, adding that five battalions will be constituted in the first phase, and will be headed by an additional director general (ADG)-ranked officer.

"This is a dream project of the Uttar Pradesh chief minister. The basis of this force is an order of the High Court, which had expressed that there should be a specialised force for civil courts. In all,

there will be 9,919 personnel in the force. Expenses incurred in the first phase will be around Rs 1,747 crore," Awasthi added.

On December 18, 2019, the Allahabad court had pulled up the Uttar Pradesh government over a shootout at a Bijnor courtroom. On December 17, three assailants opened fire in the court of the Bijnor chief judicial magistrate, killing a murder accused and injuring three others — two police personnel and a court employee.

Former JNU student Umar Khalid arrested in connection with North-East Delhi riots

New Delhi (Gns). Delhi Police arrested former Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) student Umar Khalid under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for instigating the North-East Delhi riots that broke out in February this year.

"Khalid was one of the main conspirators of riots in which 53 persons died and over 400 were injured," special cell of Delhi Police said after the arrest.

The former JNU scholar has been questioned twice by the police over the last two months for speeches he delivered at the

Shaheen Bagh protest site. According to the police, India slogans inside the JNU campus along with for-



Khalid had planned the riots with former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain.

Khalid was charged with sedition and arrested in February 2016 too, for allegedly shouting anti-

mer student union president Kanhaiya Kumar and others.

"We arrested Umar Khalid late Sunday night," said a senior police officer associated with the probe,

requesting not to be named.

On August 3, the suspended AAP councillor had reportedly confessed to his crime and told the police that he was given the task to collect as much glass bottle, petrol, acid, stones as possible during the violence.

Communal violence broke out in Delhi between anti-CAA and pro-CAA protesters in February this year. Hundreds of people were detained in connection with the violence and police faced criticism for their slack management of protesters and ineffective handling of the riots.

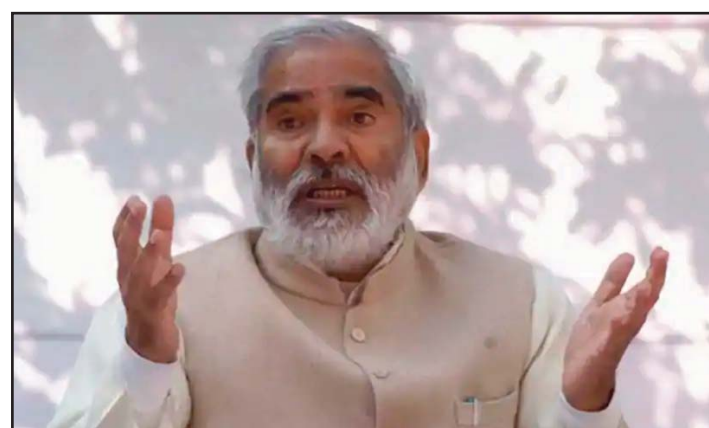
Raghuvansh Singh's family refuses to take his body to RJD office in Patna

Patna (Gns). The family of Former Union minister Raghuvansh Prasad Singh who passed away on Sunday in Delhi refused to take his mortal remains to the RJD office in Patna after party workers continued to ask for the same. Singh had resigned from RJD on September 10.

His family members said that the party workers were pressuring them to take the body to RJD office.

"Ever since we left Delhi, RJD party workers were pressuring us to take the body to their office. But we are against it. When my father was alive and sick

for the past three months, days back?," said



no one came to visit him from the RJD. Why are they restless now when he had already resigned three

Satyaprakash Singh, Raghuvansh Singh's son.

Singh's close aide Vinod Panjiyar said that three let-

ters written by Singh when he was sick reflect his suffering.

"He always stood for the RJD, but the RJD kept sending businessmen to the Rajya Sabha," he said.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Vidhan Sabha Speaker Vijay Chaudhary, Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, Leader of all the parties including Leader of Opposition, Tejashwi Yadav were present at Vidhan Sabha where Singh's mortal remains were kept for people to pay their last respects. PM Modi also paid a moving tribute to him.

Editorial

Yoga, chyawanprash for patients

Yogasana, Pranayama, meditation and intake of chyawanprash are among some of the suggestions given by the Union Health Ministry in its new management protocol for patients who have recovered from COVID-19. Calling for a holistic approach for follow up care and well-being of all post-COVID recovered patients, the Health ministry said such patients must continue COVID appropriate behaviour by use of mask, hand and respiratory hygiene, physical distancing. The protocol provides an approach for managing patients who have recovered from COVID-19 for care at home. However, the procedure is not meant to be seen as preventive or as a curative therapy. The recovery period is likely to be longer for patients who suffered from more severe form of the disease and those with pre-existing illness, it said. At individual level, the protocol suggested drinking adequate amount of warm water (if not contra-indicated), taking immunity promoting AYUSH medicine prescribed by a qualified practitioner of AYUSH and if health permits then regular household work to be done. It advised people to resume professional work in a graded manner. Daily practice of Yogasana, Pranayama and meditation, as much as health permits or as prescribed, breathing exercises as prescribed by treating physician and daily morning or evening walk at a comfortable pace as tolerated were among other measures. The protocol also called for self-health monitoring at home of temperature, blood pressure, blood sugar (especially, if diabetic), pulse oximetry etc (if medically advised). "If there is persistent dry cough/sore throat, do saline gargles and take steam inhalation. The addition of herbs/spices for gargling/steam inhalation. Cough medications, should be taken on advice of medical doctor or qualified practitioner of Ayush. Look for early warning signs like high grade fever, breathlessness, unexplained chest pain, new onset of confusion, focal weakness," it said. At the level of community, the Health ministry said that recovered individuals should share their positive experiences with friends and relatives using social media, community leaders, opinion leaders, religious leaders for creating awareness, dispelling myths and stigma.

Ayush focus in Centre's post-Covid protocol

All the medicines, whether based on allopathic or Ayush systems, need to be taken under strict medical supervision.

In its first detailed guidelines on managing post-recovery symptoms exhibited by coronavirus disease (Covid-19) patients such as fatigue, body ache, cough, sore throat and breathing difficulty, the Union health ministry has relied heavily on the "immunity promoting" Ayush (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy) products.

From starting the mornings with one teaspoonful of Chyawanprash and warm turmeric milk, to mulethi (liquorice root) powder, and Giloy (Tinospora cordifolia) powder, many Ayurvedic medicines have found mention in the health ministry's post Covid-19 management protocol.

"These medicines are not just to build immunity and treat common post Covid-19 symptoms but also to improve lung health," said Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, secretary in the ministry of Ayush.

Manoj Nesri, advisor to the ministry, said the management protocol was based on evidence and the

All India Institute of Ayurveda had proof of the immunity-promoting qualities of medicines based on Ayush.

All the medicines, whether based on allopathic or Ayush systems, need to be taken under strict medical supervision.

Doctors of modern medicine say that Ayush medicines can be used as supplementary therapy, but shouldn't be the mainstay of treating post Covid-19 symptoms.

"We have our own set protocol, and as allopathic doctors we cannot prescribe Ayurvedic, homoeopathic or any other form of alternative medicines. We treat post Covid-19 complications symptomatically based on scientific evidence. Medicines from other systems can be used as a supplement to boost immunity etc. but treatment has to be done after a thorough examination and understanding of the complications experienced," said Dr Vikas Maurya, senior respiratory specialist at Fortis Hospital.

The health ministry guidelines also direct people to watch out for high-grade fever, breathlessness, oxygen saturation levels dropping below 95%, unexplained chest pain,

new onset of confusion, focal weakness etc. and seek medical advice. Some recovered patients have complained of experiencing certain symptoms for an extended period post-recovery.

Some people, especially those having suffered

hygiene, and physical distancing, and should drink adequate amounts of warm water. "Take immunity promoting Ayush medicine... to be practiced and prescribed by a qualified practitioner of Ayush. If health permits, regular household work to be done.

that is easy to digest, freshly cooked soft diet; and have adequate sleep and rest. Smoking and consumption of alcohol should be avoided. Taking regular medications as advised for Covid-19 and also for managing comorbidities is important.

be taken only on the advice of a medical doctor or a qualified practitioner of Ayush.

At healthcare facilities The first follow-up, whether physical or on telephone, should be within seven days of discharge, preferably at the hospital where the treatment took place. Subsequent treatment or follow-up visits may be with the nearest qualified practitioner of modern or Ayush medicine. "Poly-therapy is to be avoided due to potential for unknown drug-drug interaction, which may lead to Serious Adverse Events or Adverse Effects," the guidelines say. Those under home isolation should visit the nearest hospital if the symptoms persist.

According to experts, people who suffered severe illness or had some pre-existing illness are the ones who largely complain of long-term side-effects.

"My experience has found while symptoms such as fever and breathlessness go away, what they keep experiencing for a longer duration is lethargy, disturbed sleep, body ache, loss of appetite, feeling feverish," said Dr GC Khilnani, former head of the pulmonary medicine department at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. (Gns).



acute illness, complain of symptoms such as fatigue, bodyache, cough, sore throat, and breathing difficulty.

However, the guidelines are not meant to be used as preventive or curative therapy, warned the health ministry.

At the individual level Discharged patients should observe appropriate behaviour such as use of masks, maintaining hand and respiratory

Professional work to be resumed in graded manner. Depending on the physical condition, mild to moderate exercise daily such as yogasana, pranayama and meditation... breathing exercises as prescribed by treating physician and daily morning or evening walk at a comfortable pace as tolerated," the ministry advised.

The guidelines also say that people should go for a balanced nutritious diet

Patients are advised to keep their doctor in the loop on all medicines that individuals are taking (allopathic and Ayush) so as to avoid prescription interaction. They are also counselled to monitor parameters such as temperature, blood pressure, blood sugar (for diabetics), pulse oximetry and so on. For persistent dry cough or sore throat, saline gargles and steam inhalation helps. Cough medication should

Patna Collectorate Link to Landmark World War II Event

Prayers were offered in temples, mosques and churches, and the poor were fed in the campus of the historic Patna Collectorate as part of events held in the city in September 1943 to celebrate the surrender of Italy during the World War 2, according to archival documents. On September 8, 1943, US Army Gen. Dwight Eisenhower had publicly announced the surrender of Italy to the Allies. Indian soldiers had played a critical role in both World Wars.

According to the archival documents, the Patna District War Committee had organised a host of events on September 11 to mark this landmark event in history, from morning till evening. Going by the rare private collection of the Jalan family of the legendary Quila House in Patna City, the programme for the celebrations of the victory of the United Nations (Allied powers) over Italy began with prayers offered in "temples, mosques and churches" and flags hoisted on all public buildings from 7.30-8.30 am.

This was followed by "feeding of the poor in the Patna Collectorate Compound from 10 am to 12 noon". Ironically, the historic Patna Collectorate complex — Dutch-era Record Room and Old District Engineer's Office and British-era DM Office Building and District Board Patna Building — is planned to be soon demolished by the Bihar government after the Patna High Court in a judgement lifted the interim stay on demolition of the buildings imposed by a bench of the court in September last year.

Delhi-based Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) had filed two PILs on August 30 last year, seeking revoking of the demolition order originally proposed in 2016 and constitution of the Bihar Urban Arts and Heritage Commission, pending since 2012. The heritage commission set up on the directions of the court had recommended demolition of this centuries-old landmark despite opposition from heritage experts and a large number of citizens.

jolt to historians, conservation architects and many other heritage lovers and



experts who have been pleading the Bihar government to not demolish the historic Collectorate, and preserve and restore it as a "rare signpost of history" while linking it to the heritage tourism circuit in the state. Aditya Jalan, 43, the current scion of the Jalan family, said this hitherto unknown connection of the Patna Collectorate to the World War II has come to light thanks to a rare invitation card of 1943 addressed to his great grandfather Dewan Bahadur Radha Krishna Jalan, he accidentally found while going through his family archives recently.

"It is interesting, we found the documents related to a WW2 event when its 77th anniversary just happened," he said. Aditya said he wants to share these "nuggets of history" with people and on August 15 had launched a page on Facebook and Instagram to make history more appealing to them.

Scotland-based researcher Paula Gonzaga de Sa, who curates the posts on the page, said finding the Patna Collectorate's link to the WW2 was such a "priceless find" and it unravelled an "important piece of history" of the city. "This same week, 77 years ago, there were celebrations in Patna following the surrender of the fascist government of Italy during a turning point in World War II. It is touching to see that one of the highlights of these celebrations was a feeding of the

poor in the Patna Collectorate compound," she told PTI.

Parade at Bankipore Maidan (now Gandhi Maidan) in the evening pre-



There is another archival document (letter), from August 10, 1917 - another time of war (World War I) - telling about the Patna Collectorate's staff being intensely involved in organising and distributing food supplies for people affected by monsoon floods in the area, Paula said. The letter was written by then Patna Collector J F Gruning, to R K Jalan, a well-known personality, she said.

"This all points to the important role that the Patna Collectorate, whatever maybe its other functions, played in the community and social fabric of Patna throughout its history. This is a heritage of social participation and inclusiveness that it is fitting to preserve, share, highlight and make available for present and future generations," Paula said. An important historical link and a piece of history will be lost forever if it is demolished, she rued.

Describing more about the rare 1943 invitation card issued by "J. A. Walmsley, Chairman" of the Patna District War Committee, she said the public meeting was held in the evening that day at 7.30 pm at Sinha Institute (Sinha Library campus). The meeting was to be addressed by Sir Sultan Ahmad, a noted barrister, and Member of Information and Broadcasting in the Governor-General's Executive Council, and other speakers. There was a Police

ceded by "procession of Boy Scouts, Civic Guards, and A. R. P. workers" to the maidan, the invite said. (Gns).



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Ladakh standoff: Military talks will show if PLA is ready to disengage

The next corps commanders' meeting between Indian and China, which is expected later this week, is crucial as it will show whether the People's Liberation Army is ready to work on ground towards disengagement and de-escalation after the foreign ministers of the two countries agreed on a five-point agenda during their meeting last week in Moscow.

Sources said all the diplomatic dialogue will mean nothing unless the Chinese military is ready to disengage on the ground. India wants that the status quo ante of April 2020 should be restored, and the Chinese should withdraw their 50,000-odd troops which they have pushed near the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh.

"The corps commanders may meet this week. The dates have not been confirmed yet," the sources said.

'After drawing up the

five-point understanding with all its diplomatic rhetoric, the ball is back in the military field. Wonder how the 'disengagement' and 'proper distancing' is possible without a common reference point or mutually known LAC alignment. India must insist on the

their real intentions. Troops need to remain fully alert, stand firm and not be lulled by diplomatic talks," he added.

This will be the sixth round of corps commanders' talks between the two sides. A major general-level meeting was also held



delineation of the LAC,' former Army Chief Gen. Ved Prakash Malik tweeted on Saturday. 'The Chinese use negotiations to gain time, strengthen positions on the ground and keep the adversary guessing about

meeting to buy time to strengthen their positions in the transgression areas. However, the situation changed after August 29-30 when India occupied some strategic peaks in the Chushul sector, which overlook the Chinese garrison in Moldo. In the Finger area in Pangong Tso, Indian soldiers are now at several points which are higher than the Chinese positions on the ridgelines of Finger 4. The domination at key points by the Indian Army has put added pressure on the Chinese Army. (Gns).

on August 8 at Daulat Beg Oldie to discuss disengagement at the strategic Depsang plains. The last and fifth corps commanders' meeting was held on August 2 at Moldo, where the Chinese had

Khalistan is Pakistan's project designed to subvert national security of Canada, India

Hafiz Saeed, leader of Lashkar-e-Taiba. Saeed directed the terrorist attacks of November 2008 that killed 166 people in Mumbai. He is now in prison. Chawla told an Indian reporter that "Hafiz Saeed is my ideal person". The report added, "For Canadian-Sikh separatists,

lived for years in Pakistan as a senior official of the International Sikh Youth Federation - banned as a terrorist organization in India, Canada, the UK and the US, but not in Pakistan. More recently, two other Canadians, Bhagat Singh Brar and Parvkar Singh Dulai, are fighting their

place of honour. Dulai insists he has nothing to do with Sikh extremists but, until it was banned as a terrorist organization in 2003, he posted on the Internet a photo of himself wearing the colours of the Babbar Khalsa, founded by Parmar. Neither he nor Brar has been charged with any crime in Canada.

According to an official count by the Punjab Police (KPS Gill Undated), the 12 years of Sikh insurgency ending in 1993 were scarred by hijackings, stabbings, shootings and bombings which took a staggering 21,469 lives - and most of the victims, whether civilian, police or separatist fighters, were Sikhs.

Fourteen hundred Punjab policemen were murdered, along with many of their family members. Farmers, judges, teachers, journalists, bankers who lent to the wrong people, and delivery men who brought the wrong newspapers were all butchered. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, on a visit to Toronto in 2010, made a point of condemning Sikh extremism on Canadian soil. "Sikh extremism, separatism and



the Pakistan connection has been problematic, but still essential. As we've seen, Babbar Khalsa terrorist and Talwinder Parmar certainly knew where to go when he fled Canada. A picture from a Pakistani gun bazaar at Darra, near the Afghan frontier, shows him hefting an antique machine gun in July, 1989."

Another Canadian citizen, Satinderpal Singh Gill from Surrey, BC, actually

inclusion on a government no-fly list, after the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) accused them of aiding Khalistani terrorist activities in India. Brar, it said, was among a group of individuals linked to and co-operating with the Pak ISI.

For his part, Dulai has long been a prominent figure at the Dasmesh Darbar gurdwara in Surrey, BC, where "martyr" posters of Talwinder Parmar have a

militancy were a problem in India more than two decades ago," he said. "Today, Punjab is at peace and there is growth and prosperity," he had said.

"It appears, then, that Pakistan wants the Sikhs to be free, but not in Pakistan. The separatists, in turn, clearly know where their patron sets the limits. Even drawing a map which pre-emptively upon Pakistan's generosity is a step too far - one that could sever the lifeline which has sustained the dream of Khalistan for so long. Judging by the silence, even the fiercest Khalistanis feel they must accept this abbreviated, Pakistani version of their new country without a murmur of dissent," writes Terry Milewski.

As per report, Punjabi writer and broadcaster Tarek Fatah, a Muslim who lives in Canada, recalls how in 1973 as a young journalist he had heard Pakistan's then prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto telling a group of reporters that Pakistan would tear off a piece of India - Khalistan - to avenge the loss of the 1971 war with India, in which East Pakistan was torn off and turned into independent Bangladesh. (Gns).

WESTERN RAILWAY FLYING SQUAD CONDUCTS SPECIAL AMBUSH CHECKS

Mumbai. Many incidences of passengers traveling on fake /coloured photocopy tickets in the case of Tatkal were reported. To curb this problem, Western Railway's Flying Squad conducted special checks in specific trains that were reported of several cases of the same. These intensive ambush checks were done on 9th and 10th September, 2020.

According to a press release issued by Shri Sumit Thakur - Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, these incidences were noticed in the case of Tatkal booking of tickets of trains North and East originating. Under the aegis of Shri Pervaz Khan - Assistant Commercial Manager (Ticket Cheking) the

charts of the trains whose complaints were frequently received were scanned in depth. PNRs of tickets booked in Tatkal generated at PRS location of 500 kms and beyond the tickets/ passenger's journey originating station were shortlisted. After a detailed groundwork, few trains and conducive sections of their run on Western Railway jurisdiction were identified for surprise ambush checks. Two teams were made and surprise checks were conducted towards Nagda interchange and Jalgaon interchange for such trains. An intensive 48-hour check was conducted by the teams on 9th & 10th September, 2020 between Jalgaon- Surat- Vadodara- Ratlam section of Western

Railway. Shri Thakur stated that during the check, the Flying Squad team detected 20 passengers in Avadh Express towards Mumbai who did not possess the Original Journey ticket. Since these tickets were generated at locations far away from the journey originating station, chances of their delivery was very small. These passengers were charged as "Without Ticket" and a total of Rs. 31,895/- as railway dues were collected in the last leg of their journey. Two other passengers were detected of traveling on tickets booked for different passenger (Transfer of Ticket) for which Rs. 2810/- were recovered as dues. In another special check con-

ducted on 30th August, 2020 in Train No. 02834 Howrah-Ahmedabad Special train, 19 passengers were found traveling on berths earmarked for Senior Citizens, though they were in underage bracket to qualify as Senior Citizens. These passengers had produced e-reservation slips with modified (higher than actual) age matching as per their identity cards they were holding. An amount of Rs. 28,240/- was recovered as railway dues.

Shri Alok Kansal - General Manager of Western Railway has commended the good efforts of the Flying Squad. Western Railway has urged all rail users to buy proper rail ticket and co-operate with railways.

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha congratulates JEE Main toppers from J&K

Srinagar (Gns). Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha has extended his heartfelt congratulations to Aryan Gupta and Naveed-Ul-Amin from Jammu and Kashmir for cracking the prestigious JEE Mains exam with flying colors.

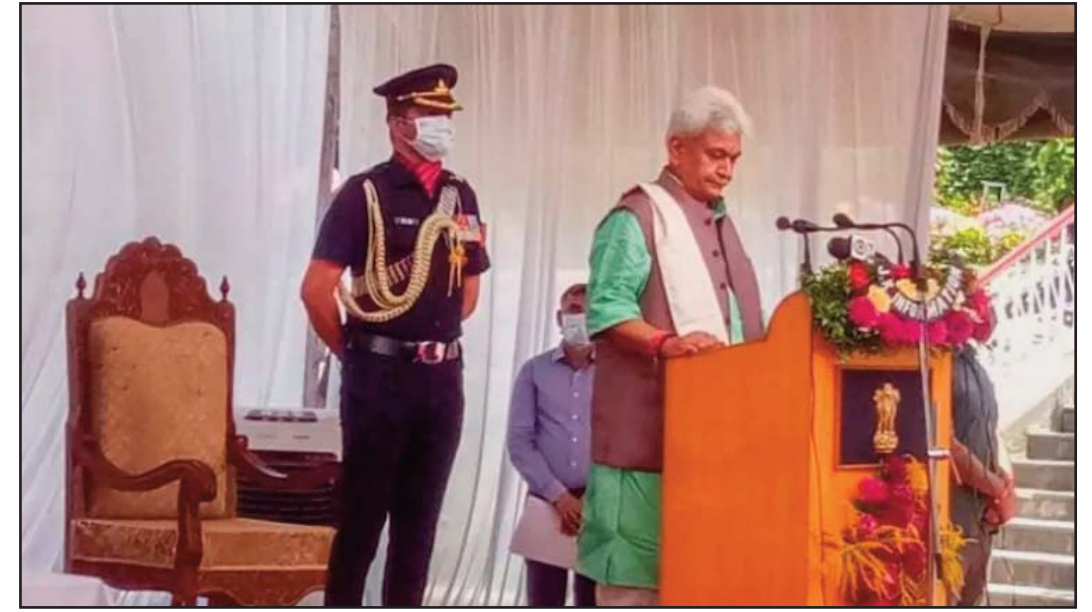
Aryan Gupta of Jammu has scored an outstanding merit of 99.77 percentile to emerge as a topper in entire Jammu and Kashmir while Naveed-ul-Amin from Kashmir has also scored an imposing 99.23 percentile.

In his message, the Lt Governor observed that the youth of J&K inherently are very capable & ambitious and the UT government is committed to providing them with the best enabling

environment to facilitate and nurture their capabilities.

not only a matter of pride for the entire J&K but it will also

and excel at National and International levels. He



The Lt Governor underlines that their success is inspire many more youngsters to prepare, compete, wished all the qualified candidates success in their

Spain to begin clinical trials of Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine on Monday

Spain (Gns). The vaccine to be tested was developed by US corporation Johnson & Johnson. Phase 1 trials were held in the United States and Belgium. The trials in Spain will fall under Phase 2, to be also held in Germany and Belgium.

Three Spsph hospitals will be administering the trials -- the Marques de Valdecilla hospital in Santander will launch then on Monday and the La Paz and La Princesa university hospitals in Madrid will join in on Tuesday, according to Borobia.

The expected pool of participants includes 190 volunteers, of which La Paz University Hospital's share will be 50 adults aged 18-55 and 25 seniors aged over 65, Borobia told Spsph

news agency Servimedia. The participants will get either one shot of the vaccine or two shots a month apart. There will also be a group that will be given a placebo. Doctors will monitor the participants through-



out the entire period of trials.

"If everything goes well," Borobia said, the first wave of vaccination will end on September 22.

While the final results on the vaccine's safety and effectiveness are expected no sooner than in 16 months, Borobia said the transition to Phase 3 clinical trials was permissible upon satisfactory preliminary results.

The epidemiological situation in Spain, which used to be Europe's second-worst outbreak at the beginning of the year, worsened again in July. More than 560,000 cases were confirmed by Spsph health authorities, as of Sunday.

Over the past week alone, 53,000 new cases were detected and 241 people died from the coronavirus.

According to WHO protocols, a candidate vaccine

has to complete three phases of clinical trials to be approved for industrial production.

Phase 1 normally involves small-scale studies on up to 100 participants to determine a candidate vaccine's safety and clinical tolerance. Phase 2 can include up to 1,000 and is more representative in terms of their age, ethnicity, and other statistically significant factors. This phase pursues to determine the optimal dose, intervals between doses, and the minimum necessary number of doses in a target population.

Phase 3 trials are the largest and can include up to 10,000 participants with the maximum representation of target population categories.

13 seats that saw the closest contests in Delhi assembly election

New Delhi (Gns). The Delhi assembly elections saw a close fight in at least 13 constituencies where victory margins ranged from below 7,000 votes to as low as 753. Outgoing deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia and transport minister Kailash Gahlot were also among the 13 winning candidates with the lowest victory margins.

Also, three of the 46 sitting MLAs fielded by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) from the same constituencies as in the 2015 polls lost in this election. These include Nitin Tyagi from Laxmi Nagar, Sarita Singh from Rohtas Nagar and SD Sharma from Ghonda.

Besides, the party had brought 23 fresh faces this time, of which five lost, including Ram Singh Netaji who shifted to AAP from the Congress and lost from Badarpur.

An analysis of poll data suggests there were at least nine assembly constituencies this time where the victory margin was less than 5,000. Margins were over 5,000, but less than 7,000 in four segments.

AAP's Bhupinder Singh

the constituency dominated by the Jat community. In the 2015 assembly election, Sehrawat had won the segment by 19,536 votes.

"Sehrawat, who joined the BJP only months before the elections, used his supporters against the AAP,"



Joon, a fresh face and a lawyer who replaced the party's disqualified MLA Devender Sehrawat, defeated the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Sat Prakash Rana by only 753 votes. Senior AAP leaders blamed Sehrawat for the neck-and-neck contest in

said an AAP member on condition of anonymity.

AAP's Nitin Tyagi, the sitting MLA from Laxmi Nagar, lost the seat to BJP's Abhay Verma in a nail-biting contest. Tyagi, who initially maintained a lead from the east Delhi seat, eventually lost by 880

votes. In 2015, Tyagi had won the seat by 4,846 votes.

The third lowest of all victory margins was that of AAP's Pawan Sharma from Adarsh Nagar. Sharma, a fresh face, defeated BJP's Raj Kumar Bhatia by 1,589 votes. Next was AAP's Madan Lal from Kasturba Nagar who won by 3,165 votes.

CABINET MINISTERS

Among the cabinet ministers in the AAP government, the highest margin belonged to social welfare minister Rajendra Pal Gautam, who won the Seemapuri seat by 56,108 votes. Food and civil supplies minister Imran Hussain registered a victory with a margin of 36,172 votes. Labour minister Gopal Rai won the Babarpur seat by 33,062 votes and chief minister Arvind Kejriwal registered a victory from the New Delhi constituency with a margin

Odisha's COVID-19 Tally Crosses 1.5-lakh Mark; Death Toll Mounts To 626

Bhubaneswar (Gns). The COVID-19 tally in Odisha rose to 1,50,807 after 3,913 more people, including 38 inmates of a jail and a BJD MLA, tested positive for the disease on Sunday, while 10 fresh fatalities took the death toll to 626, a health department official said. The state also registered the recovery of 3,363 coronavirus patients taking the total number of cured people so far to 1,18,642 which is 78.67 per cent.

The state now has 31,486 active cases, the official said. The new cases were reported from all the 30 districts of the state, he said.

Of the fresh cases, 2,348 were reported from various quarantine centres, and 1,565 were detected

during contact tracing, the official said. Three new deaths were registered in Khurda district, two in Cuttack and one each in Balasore, Ganjam, Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj and Subarnapur.

Ganjam accounted for 215 of the 626 fatalities in the state, followed by Khurda (92). Fifty-three COVID-19 patients have died in the coastal state due to comorbidities, the official said.

Khurda district, of which Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the highest number of 556 fresh cases, followed by Cuttack at 382 and Puri at 212. The state has so far tested over 24.23 lakh samples for COVID-19, including

48,504 on Saturday, he said.

Meanwhile, Mayurbhanj District Magistrate-cum-



Collector V Bharadwaj said that 38 inmates and two employees of Baripada Circle Jail tested positive for COVID-19. The infected inmates and employees have been isolated in the

jail housing about 600 prisoners.

In a social media post, ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD)

As the state capital has emerged as a major corona hotspot with 4,735 active cases, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Sunday launched a massive door-to-door health screening in non-slum areas. 'The screening teams are collecting information on people with COVID-19 symptoms and travel history,' a BMC official said.

The coronavirus case-load of the city has increased to 16,240 on Sunday with the detection of 395 new cases. Two more fresh fatalities also raised Bhubaneswar's death toll to 62..

28 MLAs including six ministers and three MPs of Odisha have tested positive for the infection, an official source said.

Coming at a time when the Nepal Army is believed to be assisting China expand its military bases close to Mount Kailash, China seems to be behind the latest move by Nepal, which is seen as a quid pro quo arrangement between the two neighbours.

In return, the Nepal government is promising tonnes of money, land and

Nepal 'buying' citizens in three villages on border

Kathmandu (Gns). With India locked in a standoff with China on the Line of Actual Control, Nepal has started to play its games with renewed vigour. The K.P. Sharma Oli government is increasingly sending feelers to people living in three villages adjoining the Kalapani region in the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand to shift their loyalties to Nepal in order to stake claim over the villages which are administered by India.

Coming at a time when the Nepal Army is believed to be assisting China expand its military bases close to Mount Kailash, China seems to be behind the latest move by Nepal, which is seen as a quid pro quo arrangement between the two neighbours.

In return, the Nepal government is promising tonnes of money, land and

houses along with Nepalese citizenship — most of which is believed to be funded by China.

Sources in the know of the Nepalese 'operation' told this newspaper that for the past few days, 'agents' working for the Nepal gov-



ernment have got in touch with people residing in Kuti, Nabhi and Gunji villages — located a few kilometres from Kalapani territory in Pithoragarh district — asking them to consider shifting loyalties to Nepal.

The locals of these three Indian villages, located at an altitude of over 10,000 feet, who share a 'roti-beti'

relationship with the people of Darchula in Nepal, are getting multiple calls from people on the other side asking them to consider the 'irresistible offer'.

Information reaching Indian security agencies is that these agents have been either been making calls directly to the villagers, claiming to be their 'well-wishers', or taking the other easy way of making the locals of Darchula speak with their friends and relatives in the three villages.

For decades, people on both sides have remained in constant touch with each other, hopping in and out of Indian territory almost every day as they either have business links or relatives on the other side. Many Indian girls have married into Nepali families in Darchula and elsewhere in Nepal.

At least 100,000 Belarus protesters flood streets to demand end of Lukashenko

Moscow (Gns). At least 100,000 Belarusian protesters took to the streets of Minsk on Sunday in one of the biggest demonstrations yet against President Alexander Lukashenko after he claimed a landslide victory in an election his opponents say was rigged.

As public anger continued to build against Lukashenko, who has ruled the former Soviet nation for 26 years, Moscow offered him support by saying it would send paratroopers to Belarus for "Slavic Brotherhood" joint drills.

A wave of protests has swept Belarus since the Aug. 9 presidential election, which demonstrators say was actually won by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya. Key opposition figures have since either been

jailed or fled the country, with Tsikhanouskaya now in Lithuania.



Lukashenko denies the election was rigged and has said foreign powers are behind the protests.

A vast column of protesters marched through the capital Minsk towards a government district on Sunday, chanting "long live Belarus" and "you're a rat," a taunt that has frequently been used against

Lukashenko during demonstrations.

They came to a halt and

chanted "fascists" as hundreds of riot police with shields blocked off the road. Meanwhile in the city of Brest, police used water cannons on protesters, according to the Nexta Live channel.

Police said they had detained about 250 people in Minsk. The atmosphere was

tense, with a large police presence in parts of the capital, and some central areas sealed off with barbed wire, including Oktyabrskaya Square and Independence Square - common focus points of anti-government rallies.

The Interfax Russian news agency reported that shots had been fired into the air to warn off protesters in an area of Minsk where the Belarusian leadership lives.

An interior ministry official denied that any shots were fired in the air.

RUSSIAN PARATROOPERS

The unrest comes as Lukashenko, in power since 1994, prepares to travel to Russia on Monday for talks with President Vladimir Putin.

Delhi HC to hear PIL on same-sex marriage

New Delhi (Gns). The Delhi high court is likely to hear on Friday a public interest litigation (PIL) that seeks a direction that homosexual couples have the right to get married under the 1955 Hindu Marriage Act, arguing that barring such unions was a violation of their constitutional rights.

The PIL, filed on September 8 by four members of the LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex) community and listed before a bench of chief justice of the Delhi HC DN Patel and justice Prateek Jalan, said that nothing in the Hindu Marriage Act mandated that a marriage take place only between a Hindu man and a Hindu woman.

The petition pointed out that in 2018, the Supreme Court read down

Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which criminalized homosexuality.

"The non-recognition of the rights of gay couples, especially when their sex-



uality has been recognised as such as valid by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India is violative of various provisions of the Constitution of India as well as various conventions that India as a sovereign state is signatory to," the petition stated. This is the second peti-

tion to be filed on the issue of same-sex marriage rights. In January, a couple in Kerala - Nikesh Pushkaran and Sonu MS - filed a petition in the

Kerala high court challenging the Special Marriage Act.

The Delhi HC petition was filed by four people - Abhijit Iyer Mitra, Gopi Shankar, Giti Thadani and G Oorvasi.

"In the 21st century, there is no reason that same-sex couples should

not enjoy the same rights as others," said Raghav Awasthi, advocate for the petitioners.

"Equality is important. We have people from the diverse LGBTI communities who are refused by registrars to accept or register their marriage ceremonies. I want to marry my partner, too, and register our relationship," said Gopi Shankar, one of the petitioners.

Shankar pointed to a 2019 Madras high court judgment that upheld the marriage between a man and a transwoman, saying that the word 'bride' in the Hindu Marriage Act also included a transwoman.

"The text of the law does not, on a plain reading, exclude same-sex marriages. However, in practice the law has been understood to exclude them.

For economical empowerment of women, CM announces 'CM Women Upliftment Scheme'

'CM Women Upliftment Scheme' would be launched on PM's birthday on 17th September

Ahmedabad: With an aim to make middle class women an economic pillar of their family, particularly in the social scenario of post-Corona time, Chief Minister Mr. Vijaybhai Rupani has expressed a firm resolution to introduce a revolutionary 'Chief Minister Women Upliftment Scheme' in Gujarat.

The Chief Minister Women Upliftment Scheme would be gifted to Gujarat's women power on Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi's birthday falling on 17th September, 2020. Under this revolutionary scheme over 10-lakh women would be given a financial loan at 'zero' per cent interest.

Under the 'Chief Minister Women Upliftment Scheme' total one lakh 'Joint Liability and Earning Women Groups' would be set up in the state. Of which, 50,000



groups would be made in rural areas and 50,000 groups in urban zones. Each group would be consisting of 10 women as partners. Each group would be given a loan of Rs. One-lakh. Thus, 10-lakh women would be given loans, in phase manner, in total amounting to Rs. 1,000-Crore.

Mr. Rupani expressed determination that as the Gujarat's women who brought 'White Revolution'

through animal husbandry; they would also become 'Economically Aatmanirbhar' (Economically Self-dependent) by initiating small, independent business or 'Gruh Udhog' with the assistance of this loan.

These loans would be made available to these women groups through nationalised banks, cooperative banks and the RBI approved financial institutions. The Chief Minister has urged the banking sector to join enthusiastically in this women's welfare scheme. In this context, the state government would also sign a MoU with the banks in near future.

Besides this, the state government has decided to waive the stamp duty on these loans. And, for this purpose a budget of Rs. 175-Cr has also been allocated by the state government, the Chief Minister said.

Mr. Rupani expressed determination that as the Gujarat's women who brought 'White Revolution'

working for welfare and upliftment of the women, could also take benefits of the scheme for their women members.

It should be noted here that during the financial year of 2019-20 as many as 45,404 self-help women groups (Sakhi Mandals) had availed loans of Rs. 428.72-Cr for their 4.25

lakh women members. The scheme would be implemented in rural areas by 'The Gujarat Livelihood Promotion Company', owned by Rural Development Department, Government of Gujarat. Similarly, the scheme would be implemented in urban areas by 'The Gujarat Urban Livelihood Mission' of Urban Development Department, Government of Gujarat.

Chinese military calls US biggest threat to world peace

Chinese military calls US biggest threat to world peace

Beijing (Gns). China's Defence Ministry on Sunday blasted a critical US report on the country's military ambitions, saying it is the US instead that poses the biggest threat to the international order and world peace.

The statement follows the September 2 release of the annual Defence Department report to Congress on Chinese military developments and goals that it said would have "serious implications for US national interests and the security of the international rules-based order".

Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Wu Qian called the report a "wanton distortion" of China's aims and the relationship between the People's Liberation Army and China's 1.4 billion people.

"Many years of evidence shows that it is the US that is the fomenter of regional unrest, the violator of the international order and the destroyer of world peace," he said.

US actions in Iraq, Syria, Libya and other countries over the past two decades have resulted in the deaths of more than 800,000 people and displacement of millions, Qian said. "Rather than reflecting on itself, the US issued a so-called report

that made false comments about China's normal defense and military construction," he said in the statement.

"We call on the US to view China's national defence and military construction objectively and rationally, cease making false statements and related reports, and take concrete actions to safeguard the healthy development of bilateral military relations," he added.

Running to more than 150 pages, the Defence Department report examined the PLA's technical capabilities, doctrines and the ultimate aims of China's military buildup.

It said it includes becoming a "practical instrument" of China's statecraft with an active role in advancing Beijing's foreign policy and "aims to revise aspects of the international order."

"Certainly, many factors will determine how this course unfolds," the report said.

"What is certain is that (the ruling Communist Party) has a strategic end state that it is working towards, which, if achieved and its accompanying military modernisation left unaddressed, will have serious implications for US national interests and the security of the international rules-based order."

Much of the report was devoted to analysing China's strategy toward Taiwan, a US ally which China considers a part of its territory to be annexed by force if necessary.

China's military capabilities dwarf those of the island of 23 million in numerical terms, although any invasion of Taiwan would be complex and would carry major political risks, the report said.

It also looked at areas where the 2 million-member PLA, the world's largest standing military, has overtaken the US, including in the size of its navy, now the world's largest with approximately 350 ships and submarines compared to around 293 for the US.

China has also built a considerable arsenal of land-based ballistic and cruise missiles and has one of the world's largest forces of advanced long-range sur-



Chinese President's aggressive moves against India 'unexpectedly flopped', says US report

New Delhi (Gns). Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing earlier this week. (Photo: PTI)

In a recent report, a leading US magazine has said that Chinese President Xi Jinping has risked his future with the high-profile incursions into Indian territory that "unexpectedly flopped" in the face of ferocious fightback by the Indian Army.

It also described the Chinese President as the "architect" of recent aggressive moves against India.

The 67-year-old Jinping, who is already roiling the Communist Party with a "rectification" campaign and mass persecution of foes, will launch "another brutal

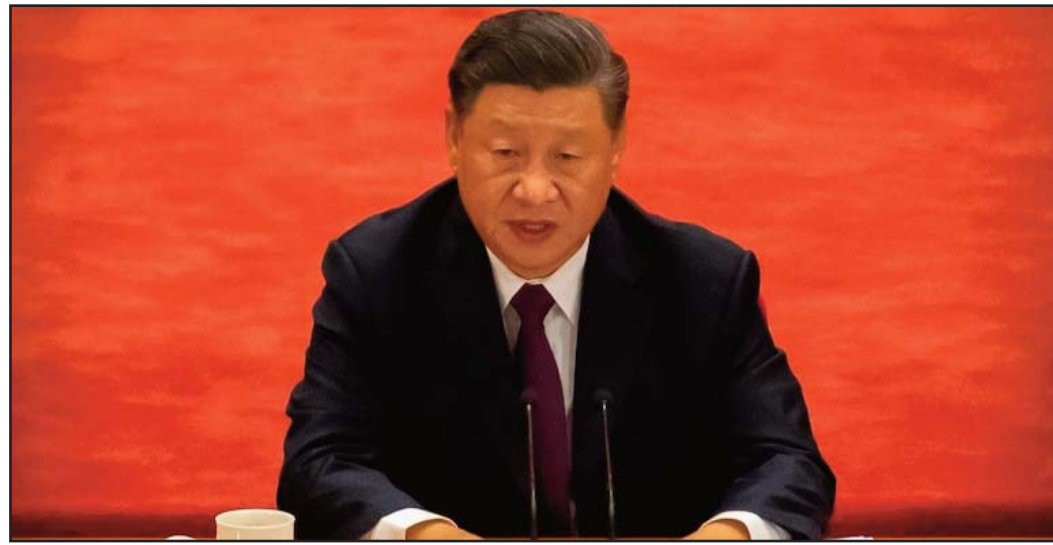
purge" after the Chinese Army's failures on the

manifold along the LAC in eastern Ladakh after the

killed. The Chinese side also suffered casualties,

Jinping, he is the 'architect' of these aggressive moves into India and his People's Liberation Army (PLA) has unexpectedly flopped. The Chinese Army's failures on the Indian border will have consequences," it said, adding, "The recent developments give Jinping an excuse to pick up the pace of replacing adversaries in the armed forces with loyal elements."

"More important, the failures motivate China's aggressive ruler — who as chairman of the party's Central Military Commission, is the leader of the PLA and the ruling Communist Party of China — to launch another offensive against Indian positions," the magazine warned.



Indian border, it said in an opinion piece. Tensions escalated

Galwan Valley clashes on June 15, in which 20 Indian Army personnel were

but it is yet to give out the details. "Unfortunately for

Signed new executive order to lower drug prices: Donald Trump

Washington (Gns). On Monday, US President Donald Trump signed a new executive order aimed at lowering drug prices in the United States by linking them to those of other nations.

"Just signed a new Executive Order to LOWER DRUG PRICES! My Most Favored Nation order will ensure that our Country gets the same low price Big Pharma gives to other countries. The days of global free riding at America's expense are over," Trump tweeted.

"...and prices are coming down FAST! Also just ended all rebates to middlemen, further reducing prices," he added.

"...and prices are coming down FAST! Also just ended all rebates to middlemen, further reducing prices. — Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) September 13, 2020

In July, the Republican President signed an executive order that, among other things, would require Medicare to tie the prices it pays for drugs to those paid by other countries. The previous four executive orders had been designed to reduce drug costs for consumers, in a bid to highlight his commitment to cutting prescription prices before the November 3 presidential election.

After signing the executive order in July, Trump had said in a statement, "By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows: Section 1: Purpose. Americans pay more per capita for prescription drugs than residents of any other developed country in the world. It is unacceptable that Americans pay

more for the exact same drugs, often made in the exact same places. Other countries' governments regulate drug prices by negotiating with drug manufacturer-

Americans finance much of the biopharmaceutical innovation that the world depends on, allowing foreign governments, many of which are the sole healthcare pay-

of wealthy countries abroad," it added.

"Serious economic, health consequences in midst of Covid-19 pandemic' The President had said



ers to secure bargain prices, leaving Americans to make up the difference — effectively subsidising innovation and lower-cost drugs for the rest of the world."

"The Council of Economic Advisers has found that

ers in their respective countries, to enjoy bargain prices for such innovations. Americans should not bear extra burdens to compensate for the shortfalls that result from the nationalized public healthcare systems

that the high drug prices in the US also have serious economic and health consequences for patients in need of treatment. "High prices are also a reason many patients skip doses of their medications, take less

than the recommended doses, or abandon treatment altogether. The consequences of these behaviours can be severe."

He had also said that the need for affordable Medicare Part B drugs is "particularly acute now", in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. "The economic disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic have only increased the burdens placed on America's seniors and other Medicare Part B beneficiaries," the President said in the statement.

The various sections of the July order ranged from relaxing drug importation rules to cutting Medicare payments to drugmakers, but experts claimed they were "unlikely to take effect in the near term". Similar proposals by the Trump administration had stalled amid industry pushback.

Israel enforces second COVID-19 lockdown as fresh cases emerge

After a fresh outbreak of coronavirus cases in Israel, the government on Sunday (local time) announced a three-week lockdown from September 18.

After a fresh outbreak of coronavirus cases in Israel, the government on Sunday (local time) announced a three-week lockdown from September 18.

The Times of Israel has reported that the lockdown will take force at 2 pm on Friday, hours before the start of Rosh Hashanah.

"The medical experts told me to close [the accord] when the health system raises a red flag," The Times of Israel quoted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as saying at a press conference. "They're warning us about the jump

in the number of seriously [sick] patients and from the winter."

He further said that the



schools will be closed from Friday, and there will be strict limitations in place for businesses and public sector employers.

"I know these steps have a high price for all of us and we can't celebrate [the holidays] with the whole family," he said while urging the citizens to wear face masks and follow the social distancing guidelines.

This is the second time the Israeli government had to enforce lockdown in the country in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"For three months, I tried to avoid a lockdown. I did everything so that we could live alongside the coronavirus, with rules here and there," he said. "Under the circumstances that were created, we had no choice."

Citing the latest Health Ministry figures, The Times of Israel reported that there were 2,715 new cases confirmed on Saturday — rates are typically depressed over the weekend. Meanwhile, around 4,000 new cases of coronavirus were registered per day at the end of last week.

According to the latest data by the Johns Hopkins University, 28,841,789 people around the world have tested positive of coronavirus and 921,491 people have succumbed to the disease so far.

Ex-defence secy played key role in AgustaWestland deal: CBI

New Delhi (Gns). Former defence secretary Shashi Kant Sharma was party to several key discussions that led to the February 2010 award of a controversial Rs 3,727 crore contract to AgustaWestland for 12 VVIP helicopters, according to Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) sleuths handling the case, and investigation documents that will form the basis of a supplementary charge sheet in the case.

Sharma was part of contract process in different capacities from March 2005, when the Indian Air Force (IAF) agreed to reduce the flying altitude of the helicopters from 6,000 metres to 4,500 metres, until the eventual decision to award the contract to AgustaWestland five years later, according to documents prepared by CBI.

The agency has contended that Sharma, as Joint Secretary (Air) in the defence ministry at the time, attended a crucial meeting on March 7, 2005 chaired by then deputy chief of air staff JS Gujral and attended by senior officials from the ministry and IAF including (now retired) wing commander SA Kunte, who was project officer for procuring the choppers for VVIPs such as the President, vice-president, Prime Minister and the other dignitaries.

CBI last week sought sanction to prosecute Sharma, Kunte and three other IAF officers, while Gujral was named an accused in its first charge sheet in the case in September 2017.

According to investigators, it was in the March 2005 meeting that the previous operational requirement

(OR) of 6,000 metres flying altitude was reduced to 4,500 metres, and the cabin height of the helicopter was fixed at 180cm. It has been

Sharma later served as defence secretary between 2011 and 2013 and as Comptroller and Auditor General of India between

years and nobody can blame me for any malafide action or decision. I strongly and firmly deny any such frivolous allegation," he told



alleged that these changes in the OR made the AgustaWestland AW-101 helicopters eligible for the contract.

2013 and 2017. Sharma has denied all the allegations against him. "I had a long unblemished service record of over forty

HT last week. According to CBI, when the defence procurement procedure (DPP) 2005 — a process that governs any