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PREITY ZINTA UNVEILS POSTER OF VIKASH VERMA'S NEXT, NO MEANS NO

Talks fail, farmers ready for long haul

KARNAL PROTEST Officials and farmer leaders stated that talks between protesting farmers and the Karnal Administration had failed for the second time that day, as the farmers prepare for a long protest outside the district's mini secretariat. The protest in Karnal is part of the larger farmers protest against three central laws—The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, and The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act.

Midnight tea, cards, discussions keep farmers busy in Karnal

CHHAVI BHATIA
Karnal

It is 2 in the morning and Mahendra Kapoor blares Mere Desh Ki Dharti Sona Ugle from a loudspeaker close by, piercing through the dead of the night of the town that otherwise goes to sleep by 10. Outside the mini-secretariat where thousands of farmers have dug in their heels since September 7, however, the flurry of activity doesn't show any sign of abating. After three rounds of talk between farmers and the Haryana government failed, around two lakh farmers marched towards the DC office to gherao it indefinitely. The farmers are demanding suspension of IAS officer Ayush Sinha who was caught on camera giving orders to "break heads of farmers" during the August 28 protest. A farmer reportedly died due to injuries sustained in the lathicharge by cops. Kisan flags fly high on light poles along with tricolour—countering the slander that farmers are "anti-national".



Young and old are sitting on durries as a large number of cops keep a watchful eye on them. While some try to catch a few winks, a lot of them are discussing the events of the day and the strategy ahead. Few tans are playing cards while gurgling on hookahs. Keeping their energy levels high are endless rounds of tea being served by Khalsa

Aid volunteers, who make an announcement every half an hour that tea and biscuits langar is on. Ration has started to come in from locals and people from Chandigarh and Mohali after word spread on social media that agitation here will go on indefinitely. "We were prepared that the egoistic Khattar government won't agree to sack that officer

and we won't be left with much choice but to camp here. So we started to mobilise food and water from morning itself. A lot of help has started to arrive from nearby cities too," said Ajay Pal Singh, a farmer from Charkhi Dadr. Earlier in the day, farmers had broken barricades set up by the district police to prevent them from reaching



"The protests will not stop. The government will not accept our demands. We will sit here till our demands are met. This is a struggle for the freedom of farmers from a government of corporates. Karnal will be another centre of protest like the Delhi borders if our demands are not met."



RAKESH TIKAIT,
a leader of the Bharatiya Kisan Union

HIGHLIGHTS

- Haryana Minister Anil Vij says govt ready for impartial probe into 'entire Karnal episode' as farmers' protest enters day 3
- They were demanding suspension of the then Karnal SDM Ayush Sinha for his briefing to police personnel on August 28 where he told them to "crack their (farmers') heads". The same day, protesting farmers were lathicharged at Bastara toll plaza as they were opposing a state-level meeting of the BJP.

the district administration complex. A few hours later, the protesting farmers had converted those barricades into beds, telling sign of their ingenuity; some are sleeping outside shops opposite the mini-secretariat that were shut

in the morning ahead of the On one of the pavements, a young man is fanning someone sleeping under a tree at a furious pace. A group of farmers, on the other hand, have huddled around the person who turns out to be Bharatiya

Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait. On the other end of the protest, BKU(Charuni) chief Gurnam Singh Charuni is sleeping. Supporters of both the leaders gush about them for being with them since morning. "They are sleeping on the road when they could have easily slept at someone's house. Media won't show this or write about it because it only wants to portray us in bad light," Sandeep Singh, a farmer from Hisar lashes out at government-friendly media. Meanwhile, a few cops ask for bottles of water from farmers, refusing offer to have tea. By crack of the dawn, the loudspeaker is turned off and

HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

- 1 **Shouldn't become sanctuary for terror groups to attack others: Brics on Afghanistan**
- 2 **Deadline to file Income Tax Returns extended to December 31**
- 3 **Former Army Officer Gurmit Singh Appointed Uttarakhand Governor**

Centre hikes MSP of wheat by Rs 40, mustard by Rs 400



NEW DELHI: The minimum support price (MSP) for Rabi crops were hiked by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), which fixed the prices of all mandated crops for Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2022-23. The highest absolute increase in MSP over the previous year has been recommended for lentil (masur), along with rapeseeds and mustard (Rs 400 per quintal each), followed by gram (Rs 130 per quintal). In case of safflower, there has been an increase of Rs 114 per quintal, in comparison to last year. The support price for barley has been raised by Rs 35 per quintal.

Women cadets now allowed into NDA



NEW DELHI: The Union government informed the Supreme Court that it has decided that women, too, can join the Pune-based National Defence Academy (NDA). The Centre's submission in the top court came as a 2-judge bench took up a plea seeking directions for necessary steps to be taken to allow eligible female candidates to appear in the upcoming NDA examination, which is scheduled to be held on November 14. "There's some good news. A decision has been taken at the highest level of forces and government that girls will be inducted for permanent com-

mission through the National Defence Academy. The decision was taken late evening yesterday," Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the central government, informed the bench, according to Live Law. Bhati described it as a "path breaking" and "generational reform." The Centre, however, also sought an exemption from allowing women candidates for this year's paper. On this, the bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul directed the government to put on record a detailed affidavit by September 20, mentioning details such as steps being mullied, timeline etc. The next hearing in the matter will take place on September 22, it announced. **AGENCIES**

FEARLESS AFGHAN WOMAN



This powerful picture says it all—a fearless Afghan woman standing face-to-face as a Taliban armed man points a gun at her chest. This was one of the many compelling images that emerged from the protests in Kabul on September 7. The Taliban fired shots into the air to disperse hundreds of people who had gathered at several rallies on the streets. **AGENCIES**

Russian NSA, CIA chief meet Doval a week after British MI-6 chief's visit



NEW DELHI: Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) chief William Burns and Russian National Security Advisor General Nikolai Petroshev have met NSA Ajit Doval and other top security managers over the past two days. Their conversation came a week after the visit of British intelligence chief Richard Moore. The visits are part of a flurry of exchanges between world leaders, particularly the US, as they try to develop and understand the implications of the takeover of Afghanistan by a covert terrorist group. Former diplomat Burns met

Doval on Tuesday. Sources said the purpose of his visit would logically be to share intelligence, but the veteran diplomat would have touched on an expanded G-7 that could capture the Taliban's assurances before it is recognized. The US State Department has said it is concerned about the affiliations and backgrounds of some members of the Taliban cabinet. Patrushev, the other prominent visitor, held talks with Doval and Jaishankar, and later on Wednesday met PM Modi. Russia has a functional embassy in Kabul and is one of a handful of countries in-

Could not make it end differently: Ashraf Ghani apologises to Afghans

KABUL: Former Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani apologised to his countrymen—nearly three weeks after fleeing the country as the Taliban seized power with the fall of Kabul on August 15. Reiterating that his "commitment to the Afghan people has never wavered and will guide me for the rest of my life", Ghani apologised that he "could not make it end differently". "I owe the Afghan people an explanation for leaving Kabul abruptly on August 15 after Taliban unexpectedly enter the city. I left at the urging of the palace security who advised me that to remain risked setting off the same horrific street-to-street fighting the city had suffered during the Civil War of the 1990s," Ghani said in the statement that he shared on Twitter. "I offer my profound appreciation and respect for the sacrifice of all Afghans, especially our Afghan soldiers and their families, through the last 40 years," he concluded. **AGENCIES**

Can't presume all Covid deaths during second wave were due to negligence: SC

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court refused to entertain a petition which wanted all Covid-19 deaths during the second wave of the pandemic to be presumed as a result of medical negligence and compensation for the kin of those who died. "To assume that each death due to Covid-19 took place due to negligence is too much. The second wave had such an impact across the country that it cannot be presumed that all deaths happened due to negligence. Courts cannot have a presumption that all Covid deaths happened due to medical negligence, which your petition does," a Bench led by Justice DY Chandrachud said. It asked the petitioner Deepak Raj Singh to approach the competent authority with his suggestions. The Bench said it has already passed an order in June to the National Disaster Management Authority to recommend within six weeks appropriate guidelines for ex-gratia assistance on account of loss of life to the family members of persons, who died due to Covid-19. "The government is yet to come out with the policy. If you have any suggestion with regard to implementation of that policy, you can approach the competent authority," it said. The Bench also refused to pass a general order to the authorities for door-to-door vaccination, saying it was "not feasible". "With one brush you want an order for the entire country. The vaccination drive is already in progress and over 60 per cent of the population has been administered the first dose," the Bench told counsel for petitioner Youth Bar Association. Termining it a matter of governance, the Bench said it can't scrap the existing policy. It sought to highlight the fact that the situation in Ladakh was different from that in Kerala, Uttar Pradesh or any other state. Similarly, in urban areas, the situation was different from that in rural areas, it said, adding "There are different kinds of problems in every state in this vast country." **AGENCIES**

PLI scheme may weave success for textile sector

The recent Cabinet's approval of a Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the textile sector, which targets at the man-made fibre (MMF) and technical textiles segments, is a belated acknowledgment by the Government that the ground has inexorably shifted in the global textiles trade. A relentless shift in consumer preferences and fashion trends saw MMF surpass cotton as the fibre of choice in the 1990s, since vaulting its share in worldwide textile consumption to about 75%. India's textile and clothing exports on the other hand have continued to remain dominated by cotton and other natural fibre-based products, with MMF having contributed less than 30% of the country's \$35.6 billion in overall sectoral exports in 2017-18. And MMF's share remained relatively unchanged in the last fiscal as well when the sectoral exports were about \$33 billion. While policy makers have been cognisant of the need to bolster support for the MMF segment, the task of crafting a meaningful initiative that would engender enhanced investment in capacity creation, leading to increased exports, has been a while in coming. Wednesday's decision on the focused PLI scheme, with a budgeted outlay of Rs 10,683 crore, is the second time in 11 months that the Cabinet has approved what is broadly the same plan, with the Government using the intervening period to incorporate amendments to the incentive structure based on industry feedback. The aim of the scheme is to focus investment attention on 40 MMF apparel product lines, 14 MMF fabric lines and 10 segments or products of technical textiles. The scheme's operational success is likely to hinge on how new entrepreneurs and existing companies weigh the risk-reward equation, especially at a time when the pandemic-spurred uncertainty has already made private businesses leery of making fresh capital expenditure.



HARSH V. PANT HIGHLIGHTS EMERGING CONSENSUS ON NEED TO FUNDAMENTALLY REASSESS ASSUMPTIONS

The changing security discourse

The global security landscape is undergoing a churn, creating complexities and new realities unlike any time in the recent past. From a rising China to the pressures of climate change; from the challenges of counter terrorism to a seemingly never-ending COVID-19 pandemic (the four Cs), the old order is collapsing much faster than the ability of nations to create the foundations of a new one. National security debates and discourse are, quietly but surely, undergoing an almost revolutionary transformation. While the academic world has long talked about the need for a 'holistic' conception of national security, much of that debate was considered far too esoteric by practitioners. Today, it is the policymakers and practitioners themselves that are leading the emerging consensus on the need to fundamentally reassess our assumptions about national security thinking.

Change in the U.S.

The U.S. policymakers have started changing their cognitive lens when it comes to national security policy making. A process that was started by former U.S. President Donald Trump has been taken forward with gusto by the Biden Administration. Asserting that "foreign policy is domestic policy and domestic policy is foreign policy," U.S. President Joe Biden's National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan has suggested that his team's task is to re-imagine American "national security for the unprecedented combination of crises we face at home and abroad: the pandemic, the economic crisis, the climate crisis, technological disruption, threats to democracy, racial injustice, and inequality in all forms". He has gone on to argue that "the alliances we rebuild, the institutions we lead, the agreements we sign, all of them should be judged by a basic question. Will this make life better, easier, safer, for working families across this country?"

The U.S. Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, too has reiterated this message



in his comments that "more than at any other time in my career — maybe in my lifetime — distinctions between domestic and foreign policy have simply fallen away" and that "our domestic renewal and our strength in the world are completely entwined, and how we work will reflect that reality".

Both Sullivan and Blinken have taken their cue from their boss, President Biden, who had campaigned on a "foreign policy for the middle-class" and has been unabashed about the need for the U.S. "to invest in our people, sharpen our innovative edge, and unite the economic might of democracies around the world to grow the middle-class and reduce inequality and do things like counter the predatory trade practices of our competitors and adversaries".

There is a growing bipartisan acknowledgement in the U.S. today that if the requirements of American national security during the Cold War could be largely met by its fleets of bombers, nuclear missiles, aircraft carriers and overseas bases, today's strategic environment requires a different response: one that shores up domestic industrial base, helps in maintaining pre-eminence in critical technologies, makes supply chains for critical goods more resilient, protects critical infrastructure from

cyberattacks, and responds with a sense of urgency to climate change.

Not a novel idea

The idea that foreign and domestic policies are tightly intertwined is not a novel one. All serious grand strategic thinking in democracies, at the end of the day looks for sustenance in popular public support. Trump's rise and his ideas challenged both the liberals and the conservatives in the U.S. foreign policy establishment as they underscored the widening gulf between the policy community and the American hinterland. Biden and his team have learned their lessons. Sullivan is working towards integrating the National Security Council with the other components of the White House such as the National Economic Council, with the Domestic Policy Council, with the Office of Science and Technology Policy. This will inevitably present its own sets of challenges but there is no shying away from this new reality.

The Indian situation

In India too, we have seen a greater recognition of the challenges emanating on national security from domestic vulnerabilities. One of the most significant consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, underscored by Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself, has been to reveal how deeply India has been dependent on Chinese manufacturing for critical supplies. At a time when Indian armed forces were facing the People's Liberation Army across the Line of Actual Line, this exposed India to a new realisation that dependence on overseas supply chains is a national security challenge of the highest order, one that cannot be overlooked any more. India has since moved towards shoring up domestic capacities in critical areas and also started looking at free trade agreements through a new lens.

The Indian Army chief, General M.M. Naravane, in his remarks, has also made it apparent that views of the military leader-

ship in this country are also evolving. He has argued that "national security comprises not only warfare and defence but also financial security, health security, food security, energy security and environment security apart from information security" and suggested that instead of viewing national security "primarily from the perspective of an armed conflict, there is a need to take a whole-of-government approach towards security".

Highlight the synergies

In the post-pandemic world with a serious strain on national resources, it will be important for policymakers to underline the synergies between the civilian and the military spheres. The Army chief has rightfully pointed out a range of tangible and intangible ways in which investment in the armed forces contributes to the national economy such as indigenisation of defence procurement, providing an impetus to indigenous industries, aid to civil authorities or Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations protecting infrastructure, demand for hi-tech military products by the armed forces spurring entire industries, and transportation and logistics capacities of the armed forces acting as force enablers for the Government in times of emergencies.

The Army leadership has done well to highlight the role of armed forces in sustaining a broader conception of national security than primarily focusing on war fighting. As nations across the world reconceptualise their strategic priorities to bring their ends, ways and means into greater balance, questions of resource allocation will become even more contentious and policymakers will need to think more creatively about the roles of various instruments of statecraft. National security thinking is undergoing a shift. India cannot be left behind.

Harsh V. Pant is Director of Research, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi and a Professor of International Relations, King's College London. Views are personal



PRITAM SINGH EXPLORES HOW GREEN HYDROGEN MAY ACT AS AN ALTERNATIVE, TRULY CLEAN FUEL

A new ally for a zero-carbon future in making

Scientists and technocrats have for years been engaged in the quest of discovering alternative fuels to fossil fuels which are responsible for the production of over 830 million tons per annum of carbon dioxide, in turn catalysing human-induced global heating. The latest studies by a battery of scientists representing about 195 countries have signalled the crucial issue of climate vulnerability, especially for the Asian countries. The forthcoming 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow from November 1-12, 2021 is to re-examine the coordinated action plans to mitigate greenhouse gases and climate adaptation measures.

In order to achieve the goal of an alternative source of energy, governments are placing large bets in the hope of adopting a multi-faceted practical approach to utilise 'Green hydrogen' as a driving source to power our industries and light our homes with the 'zero emission' of carbon dioxide.

Energy-rich source

Hydrogen is the most abundant element on the planet, but rarely in its pure form which is how we need it. It has an energy density almost three times that of diesel. This phenomenon makes it a rich source of energy, but the challenge is to compress or liquify the LH2 (liquid hydrogen); it needs to be kept at a stable minus 253°C (far below the temperature of minus 163°C at which Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) is stored; entailing its 'prior to use



exorbitant cost'.

The production techniques of this 'Energy-Carrier' vary depending upon its applications — designated with different colours such as black hydrogen, brown hydrogen, blue hydrogen, green hydrogen, etc. Black hydrogen is produced by use of fossil fuel, whereas pink hydrogen is produced through electrolysis, but using energy from nuclear power sources.

'Green hydrogen', the emerging novel concept, is a zero-carbon fuel made by electrolysis using renewable power from wind and solar to split water into hydrogen and oxygen. This 'Green hydrogen' can be utilised for the generation of power from natural sources — wind or solar systems — and will be a major step forward in achieving the target of 'net zero' emission. Presently, less than 0.1% or say ~75 million tons/year of hydrogen capable of generating ~284GW of power, is produced.

The obstacle of cost

The 'production cost' of 'Green hydrogen' has been considered to be a prime obstacle. According to studies by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IREA), the production cost of this 'green source of energy' is expected to be around \$1.5 per kilogram (for nations having perpetual sunshine and vast unused land), by the year 2030; by adopting various conservative measures.

The global population is growing at a rate of 1.1%, adding about 83 million human heads every year on the planet. As a result, the International Energy Agency (IEA) forecasts the additional power demand to be to the tune of 25%-30% by the year 2040. Thus, power generation by 'net-zero' emission will be the best solution to achieve the target of expert guidelines on global warming to remain under 1.5°C. This will also be a leap forward in minimising our dependence on conventional fossil fuel; in 2018, 8.7 million people died prematurely as result of air pollution from fossil fuels

A power hungry India

India is the world's fourth largest energy consuming country (behind China, the United States and the European Union), according to the IEA's forecast, and will overtake the European Union to become the world's third energy consumer by the year 2030. Realising the impending threats to economies, the Summit will see several innovative proposals from all over

the world in order to reduce dependence on use of fossil fuels.

The scale of interest for 'plucking the low hanging fruit' can be gauged by the fact that even oil-producing nations such as Saudi Arabia where the day temperature soars to over 50°C in summer, is prioritising plans to manufacture this source of energy by utilising 'idle-land-banks' for solar and wind energy generation. It is working to establish a mega \$5 billion 'Green hydrogen' manufacturing unit covering a land-size as large as that of Belgium, in the northern-western part of the country.

India is also gradually unveiling its plans. The Indian Railways have announced the country's first experiment of a hydrogen-fuel cell technology-based train by retrofitting an existing diesel engine; this will run under Northern Railway on the 89 km stretch between Sonapat and Jind. The project will not only ensure diesel savings to the tune of several lakhs annually but will also prevent the emission of 0.72 kilo tons of particulate matter and 11.12 kilo tons of carbon per annum.

It is high time to catch up with the rest of the world by going in for clean energy, decarbonising the economy and adopting 'Green hydrogen' as an environmentally friendly and safe fuel for the next generations.

Pritam Singh is a retired Officer from an R&D institution in Dehradun. He delivers scientific lectures in colleges and universities on vehicular pollution. Views are personal

FIVE OBSERVATIONS

NOW DEADLY NIPAH VIRUS ASCERTAINED IN KERALA

- 1 SURGE IN COVID CASES**
The state, solely accounting for over 50 per cent of the country's Covid-19 caseload for the past few weeks, is already struggling to contain the surge of coronavirus cases.
- 2 CHALLENGING**
Now, it also has the unenviable challenge of another health catastrophe that looms if strict preventive measures are not followed.
- 3 NO CURE**
Given that the fatality rate of Nipah-infected patients is a steep 70 per cent, and there is no cure yet, it is essential that the spread of the virus is nipped in the bud.
- 4 NIPAH RO**
The fact that Nipah is mainly a localised outbreak and, with a reproductive rate (RO) of 0.48, less transmissible (than Covid), contributes to a more effective containment strategy.
- 5 MANY CASES WITH INFECTION**
In the previous year, when Kerala had been struck by this virus, it had suffered a loss of 17 lives out of the 18 cases of infection. It had then equipped itself with a better response for future.

BOOKS: REVIEW

Father's death during isolation toughens Siraj

Mohammed Siraj is a beautiful story that can always invoke an entire gamut of emotions — sadness for the tragedies he has endured, thrill for the way he is attaining mastery over his craft and joy for his success at the highest level.

A match-haul of eight wickets at Lord's recently was a testimony that success Down Under earlier this year wasn't a mere flash in the pan and the Indian cricket team's most adorable "miyaan" is here to stay for some years.

Siraj is one of the multiple stories of grit and glory chronicled in a new book on Indian cricket — 'Mission Domination: An Unfinished Quest' — co-authored by Boria Majumdar and senior PTI sports journalist Kushan Sarkar.

The book has been published by Simon & Schuster.

The manner in which Siraj scythed through the lower-order with two sets of double breakthroughs just when it seemed the match was meandering to a draw, not only spoke volumes about his high skill-sets but also gave a peek into his mental fortitude in pressure situation.

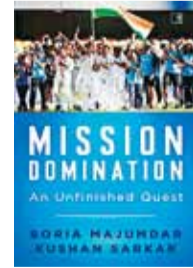
This Indian team management always knew that Siraj is cut out for the big league having watched him from close quarters during the tour of Australia, when he lost his father Mohammed Ghaus, who died after a brief illness.

An excerpt from the new book reads: "Siraj had lost his father during the statutory period of 14 days hard quarantine in Australia in November. What this meant was that none of his teammates could even go to his room to give him a shoulder to cry on. At the time there were cops outside every

At the time there were cops outside every room just in case the Indians tried to violate protocol. They were being guarded as prisoners who could export Covid to Australia!

room just in case the Indians tried to violate protocol. They were being guarded as prisoners who could export Covid to Australia!"

"As a result, his teammates were on video calls with him all day and were concerned he wouldn't do something drastic or damaging to himself. Only the physio could go to his room to treat him, and Nitin Patel used the window to go and console the young man who was in mourning.



Mission Domination: An Unfinished Quest
By Boria Majumdar & Kushan Sarkar
S&S India
173 pages; Rs339

"Siraj broke down on multiple occasions, which is only natural but never gave up. He was steadfast and resolute. He wanted to fulfil his father's wish of doing his best for India and when the opportunity came his way at the MCG on the huge occasion of the Boxing Day Test, he just did not want to let it go."

Before his Test debut on the Boxing Day, Siraj had played a few white ball games for India without much success and wanted to make it count.

Marnus Labuschagne, who I had bowled to and had success against while playing for India A. Then why couldn't I do so at this stage? I had to. There was no turning back."

The 13 wickets in Australia earned Siraj overnight stardom. "Siraj did not turn back. 13 wickets later he ended up as India's highest wicket-taker. It was only fitting that his teammates handed him the tricolour during the team's victory march. He was so much more than a cricketer. He was a young boy who had turned into a man in the course of the two months in Australia."

The book also has anecdotes on how Rishabh Pant and Navdeep Saini performed in the most hostile confines of Delhi District & Cricket Association and how Dinesh Lad convinced a teen-aged Shraduk Thakur's father to allow him to come to Mumbai to give himself a fair shot at top flight cricket.

Arvind Pujara spoke at length about how his son Cheteshwar went and played an U-19 match days after his mother's death, without shedding a drop of tear.

Ayushmann Khurrana finished three new films during the pandemic

Ayushmann Khurrana has swiftly finished three big films during the pandemic and he can't wait for these to release in theatres! The versatile actor's Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui, directed by Abhishek Kapoor, Anek, directed by Anubhav Sinha and Doctor G, directed by Anubhuti Kashyap, are among the most-awaited films that are set to be released on the big screen. Ayushmann says, "I'm fortunate to have finished three new films during the pandemic. I can't wait for audiences to watch these real gems, as they are diverse and will give people a new viewing experience."

The star credits all the film-makers of his projects for providing a safe shooting experience for everyone. He says, "Producers and directors of all these projects have achieved a massive feat during such tough times. They have run a tight ship and ensured that the shoots happened smoothly in a perfect bio-bubble." Ayushmann is confident that his projects will play a hand in bringing people back to the theatres. He says, "I'm hugely excited about Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui, Anek and now Doctor G — all the projects have unique scripts." **AGENCIES**



PREITY ZINTA unveils poster of Vikash Verma's next, No Means No

Preity Zinta recently unveiled the poster of No Means No on social media. Releasing on November 5 this year, the film is the first Indo-Polish sports thriller based on a story of women empowerment. Preity herself has always championed the cause of sports, as she is the co-owner of cricket team Punjab Kings in the IPL. Sharing the poster, Preity Zinta wrote, "Congrats and all the best Vikash & Dhruv for your movie. Looking forward to seeing the film on 5th of Nov..." Directed by Vikash Verma, the movie marks the Bollywood debut of Dhruv Verma.

Interestingly, Preity Zinta and



Vikash Verma, both are from Army families. While Preity's father was a Colonel, Vikash's father was a Naval officer. Thus, the two have a strong bond. In fact, Preity had recently posted a video message for Vikas' film. Since the film is an Indo-Polish joint venture, it will see a lot of well-known stars from India as well as Poland. The story of the film takes a beautiful turn when Dhruv, playing the role of a skiing champion, goes to Poland and falls in love with a Polish girl, and soon realises that his fate is no longer in his hands. **AGENCIES**

Manchester test to go ahead after Indian players test negative for Covid-19



Trafford match following positive Covid-19 tests in London. India beat England by 157 runs in the fourth Test at the Oval on Monday -- a result that left the tourists 2-1 up with one match to play.

But media reports in India said another member of the backroom staff had now tested positive following a fresh round of testing on Wednesday.

The ESPNcricinfo website named assistant physiotherapist Yogesh Parmar as the affected individual.

Earlier, a Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) source told AFP: "The training session today was called off and all the players have undergone new tests."

And the negative results now appear to have enabled the showpiece match to go ahead, with India bidding for just their fourth series win in England and the hosts looking to avoid losing two series -- they were previously defeated by New Zealand -- in a home season for the first time since 1986.

Parmar had to take charge during the fourth Test after lead physio Nitin Patel was forced to self-isolate after being identified as a close contact of Shastri. **AGENCIES**



all subsequent PCR tests from within the India squad had produced negative results and that the Test match "goes ahead".

India head coach Ravi Shastri, bowling coach Bharat Arun and fielding coach Ramakrishnan Sridhar had already been ruled out of attending the Old

Afghanistan's acting PM appeals to past govt officials to return; assures 'full protection'

PESHAWAR/KABUL: Afghanistan's acting Prime Minister Mullah Mohammad Hasan Akhund has appealed to former officials of past governments to return to the country and assured them "full protection", saying the period of bloodbath is over and they face a humongous task to rebuild the war-ravaged nation.

"We paid a heavy price for seeing this historic moment in Afghanistan," Mullah Hasan said on Wednesday, a day after the hardline Islamic insurgents unveiled an interim Cabinet after seizing power in Kabul.

"We appeal to the officials of past governments to return to their country as we will give them full protection of their lives. We are faced with the huge task of rebuilding and reconstruction of war-ravaged Afghanistan," he said.

He said the period of bloodbath was over in Afghanistan and reiterated the Taliban's promise of amnesty for anyone who has worked alongside the previous governments following the US-led invasion in 2001, Al-Jazeera news channel reported.

The Taliban seized control of Afghanistan in mid-August, ousting the previous elected leadership which was



backed by the West. The interim Cabinet is consists of high-profile members of the insurgent group.

Citing a Taliban spokesman, TOLO news reported that the new government will be led by the insurgent group's chief Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada. The spokesman did not disclose Mullah Hibatullah's designation in the interim government or his role in the state affairs.

At least 14 members of the Taliban's interim government are on the UN Security Council's terrorism blacklist, including acting Prime Minister Mullah Hasan and his both

deputies. Specially designated global terrorist Sirajuddin Haqqani, who carries a reward of USD 10 million US bounty on his head, is the acting interior minister.

The 33-member interim Cabinet includes four of the five leaders known as the "Taliban Five" who were once held at the Guantanamo Bay prison.

The Afghan Cabinet members are expected to take oath on September 11, the day marking the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. However, the Taliban leaders said it is not final.

Meanwhile, former Afghan

prime minister and Hizb-e-Islami leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar has announced unconditional support to the interim government of Afghanistan led by the Taliban.

Citing former officials of the Taliban, Khaama news said they believe that the interim cabinet will last for six months and then the official cabinet will be announced.

It also said that the Taliban officials and technical teams from Qatar and Turkey are busy working in Hamid Karzai International Airport and the airport will be fully ready for international flights in the next three days. **AGENCIES**

Latin American films win big at KASHISH 2021

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

The Chilean film "Forgotten Roads" (by Nicol Ruiz) won the Best Narrative Feature film, the Argentinian film Canela (by Cecilia del Valle) won the Best Documentary film, and young Brazilian trans actress Maria Eduardo Mia won the Best Performance in a Lead Role (for her role in Advent of Mary) at the recently-held 12th edition of KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival, South Asia's biggest LGBTQI film festival.

The awards were announced at a glittering online Closing & Awards Ceremony on September 5th, which also featured performances by LGBTQ+ community members and allies like popstar Shalmali & dancer/choreographer Sandip Soparrkar. "Latin American films are exquisite since they have a certain filmmaking aesthetic that is raw and palpable, and convey complex emotion with a simplicity that is unique. Most of the winners -- spread across three continents -- went against all odds and faced many challenges to tell these beautiful stories that the jury chose not only for their diverse ethnicity, but also in the LGBTQIA+ communities they represent," said



Sridhar Rangayan, founder festival director.

The winners in the Indian categories are "Are We There Yet?" by Bhanu Ballal & Kashyap Swaroop as Best Indian Narrative Short, while Radhika Prasadha won the Riyad Wadia Award for the Best Emerging Indian Filmmaker for her film Begum Parvathi. Receiving special jury mentions are: Kirnay Bhatt's "Keep Punching" in the Indian Narrative Shorts category and Swati Jaiswal's "Nothing But A Human" in the Documentary Shorts category.

The other awardees include Cypriot film "The Man With The Answers" (by Stelios Kammitis) for Best Narrative Screenplay, the Macedonian film "Snake" (by Andrej Volkashin) for Best International Narrative Short, the Portugal/USA film "Tracing Utopia" (by Nick Tyson & Catarina de Sousa) for Best Documentary Short, and the Israeli film "On A Path" (by Lihi Lubetkin) for Best Student Short. Special jury mentions include the UK film "Rebel Dykes" (by Harri Shanahan & Siân A. Williams) in the

Documentary Feature category, the Pakistani film "Stray Dogs Come Out At Night" (by Humza Bangash) in the International Narrative Shorts category, and the French film "Today" (by Francis Chillet) in the Student Shorts category.

Nicol Riuz, director of the winning feature Forgotten Roads, a heartwarming film about two elderly women falling in love in the small Chilean countryside, expressed hope in connecting based on love and compassion, and speaking about freedom in kindness. Maria Eduarda Maia won the best actor award for her role of a transgender youth in "Advent of Mary," directed by Vinicius Machado.

Radhika Prasadha, who won the Riyad Wadia Award for Best Emerging Indian Filmmaker, thanked 'KASHISH 2021' for creating the

platform, and the jury for instituting the prestigious award that supports and encourages debut filmmakers telling queer stories.

The super eminent jury members who announced the award winners were Ritesh Batra, Gauri Shinde, Satya Rai Nagpaul, Cary Sawhney & Selvaggia Velo (Narrative Jury); Bina Paul, Gargi Sen & Nandan Saxena (Documentary Jury); Dr. Anjali Monteiro, Ketki Pandit & Viveck Vaswani (Student Shorts Jury); Jerome Marrel (Poster Design Contest) and Roy Wadia (Riyad Wadia Award).

The festival partners were Morgan Stanley, IBM, General Mills, Consulate General of Canada, the Québec Government Office in Mumbai, AtEase, Consulate General of Sweden, Consulate General of the Kingdom of Belgium in Mumbai, Embassy of Israel, and Danish Cultural Institute. The award partners were Lotus Visual Productions, K.F.Patil Charitable Trust, Anticlock Films, Wadia Movietone, Whistling Woods International, Abhay Kulkarni and Jerome Marrel.

KASHISH 2021 screened 221 LGBTQIA+ films from 53 countries -- out of which 55 films were in competition -- from August 19 to September 5 with the closing ceremony featuring festival team song 'Let's All Unlock With Pride'.

A complete **KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE**

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