

## HC declines Afghan man's plea to direct wife, kidsto return with him

**NEW DELHI, AUG 19/-** The Delhi High Court has declined the plea of an Afghan national to direct his wife and their two children, who have obtained refugee status in India, to return with him, after the three expressed their unwillingness to live with him. The court also denied him visitation rights to meet his children whenever he comes to India noting that the two, aged nine and four years, have expressed their reluctance to meet him.

A bench of justices S Muralidhar and Vinod Goyal noted that the man's wife has obtained refugee status in India herself and the two children under the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and their refugee ID cards are valid till April 12 next year.

The court said there was nothing on record to indicate any threat to the safety and security of the children or that they were in inconvenience or their overall development harmed during their stay in India. "Consequently, the court has no hesitation as far as the present petition is concerned in declining the relief sought for by the petitioner," the bench said while dismissing the man's plea. His counsel also sought an order regarding visitation rights to the father whenever he visits India. However, as the children were not inclined to meet him, the bench said it was not possible at this stage to issue any omnibus order regarding visitation rights and that he may seek the relief in other appropriate proceedings available to him under the law. In pursuance to the court's earlier order, the children had met their father at the high court's mediation centre. The court noted that the children were reluctant to meet their father and even his wife was unwilling to return with him. According to the plea of the Afghan national, he married the woman in 2008 in Kabul and two sons were born to them in 2009 and 2014. All of them had come to India on tourist visa on February 18, 2017 and were staying in Kalkaji in south Delhi at a close friend's residence, the petition said.

It also said that the wife had gone to a park with the kids on March 8, 2017, but did not return home. The petitioner's habeas corpus application approached the police, but it lodged a complaint only on March 14 last year, the plea alleged.

The police, thereafter, traced the woman and both she and her husband (the petitioner) were called to the Kalkaji police station on March 24 last year. At the police station, the woman said she does not want to live with him and it was then that he came to know that she and the kids have obtained temporary refugee status, the petition has claimed. (PTI)

## Blood donation camp at Rorathang



**SANJAY AGARWAL** Limited has organized a day-long blood donation camp at Scorpion complex Rorathang East Sikkim with the help of a team of technical experts from STNM Hospital Blood Bank.

## Unsung heroes bring smiles to stranded in rain ravaged Kerala

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG 19/-** Braving inclement weather and risky conditions, a young Air Force officer dramatically winched up a toddler to safety from the roof top of a marooned house in rain-battered Kerala where thousands of people are battling all odds to survive as the death toll has touched 197 in the past 10 days in the second spell of monsoon fury since August 8.

Wing Commander Prashanth slid down a rope to the terrace of the two-storey house which seemed from above like a toy floating on the yellowish murky waters. TV visuals showed the officer airlifting the two-year-old boy with care, pressing him to his body and winching him to safety. The proud officer later handed over the baby to his anxious mother waiting inside the chopper. The woman, who was almost in tears, was all gratitude and smiles as she received her bundle of joy in her hands. Prashanth is one among many unsung heroes who have brought smiles to the faces of anxious and panic-stricken people of Kerala, reeling under the worst floods of a century.

Another TV grab showed some girls, trapped in their hostel room for days without food and water, making a lucky escape after an IAF helicopter came to their rescue. They cried and hugged each other after all the stranded were safely pulled up into the copter yesterday. Commander Vijay Varma, who saved a pregnant woman in labour by winching her up in a helicopter from a stranded building, was later happy to hear that she had successfully delivered a baby boy. "This was a very challenging task. We got an SOS and we traced them out. There is tremendous satisfaction, both professionally and personally," the officer said later.

The social media was all praise for the exceptional courage shown by the Indian Navy's Captain P Rajkumar, who airlifted over 25 persons battling challenging conditions. The visual of a man kneeling down in muddy waters to help women step on to him to get into rescue boats went viral today. The man in a blue shirt was seen kneeling, with his face hardly a few inches above the flood waters, and women stepping onto his back to climb up to a rescue boat.

The act of IAS officers M G Rajamanikyan and N Umesh who unloaded rice sacks at the Wayanad Collectorate for distribution at relief camps was also celebrated by netizens. As soon as news of the devastating floods and the plight of the stranded came out, 600 odd fishermen immediately turned up with their country and mechanised boats to help rescue those marooned in various parts of the state. Thousands of people, including women, children and college students are tediously working at various centres across the state free of cost to gather essential materials, including food, medicines, cloths to send to relief camps. Union Tourism minister K Alphonso, who visited some relief camps here today, said they are the 'unsung heroes'. Many people are still stranded in their homes with no food and sheaths of water around them at various places in Alapuzha, Thrissur and Ernakulam districts. The maximum death toll has been reported from Idukki district, where 43 people have lost their lives so far, as per official estimates. (PTI)

## Cleanliness drive by church at Rangpo



**SANJAY AGARWAL** Organized under the leadership of pastor Tarzan Chettri and elder Lokesh Rai delegates from Rangpo Nagar Panchayat Lal Kumar Rai and Rodrick Lepcha, the initiative was appreciated by the members of RNP.

**RANGPO, AUG 19/-** Mashi Mandali Church Rangpo has organised a day-long cleanliness drive under Swachh Bharat Mission at Rangpo Bazar playground.

## Street play on consumer right awareness in West Sikkim

**SANJAY AGARWAL** technical team of Sajid Hussain and Gyacho Sherpa are presenting street plays on consumer rights and duties in different public places in West Sikkim. The team has the target to reach more than 15 bazaars and public places.

## Blood donation camp at Mamring



**SANJAY AGARWAL** under one district one programme had appealed all the clubs under this district to organize a blood donation camp or awareness camp at their respective branches and within two days a camp has been organized where 66 units of blood were collected from 36 men and 30 women.

**RANGPO, AUG 19/-** Lions Club of Rangpo Gateway of Sikkim in collaboration with ZYDUS Wellness Mamring has organized a day-long blood donation camp at Mamring, Lions Club International 822 F

## If no way out, Centre could opt for legislative route for construction of Ram temple: UP Dy CM

**LUCKNOW, AUG 19/-** Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya today said he was hopeful that if the need arose and there was no way out, the Centre could opt for the legislative route in Parliament for the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya, when it has adequate numbers in both Houses. "When such a need arises that there is no way out except bringing a Bill, I am fully confident that in such a situation and when we have adequate strength (in both Houses of Parliament), remember these two things", he said without elaborating.

Present in Parliament, he did not have adequate strength. Because even if we bring the matter in Lok Sabha, our strength in the Rajya Sabha is less, and it will definitely be defeated. Every devotee of Lord Ram knows this. The court will soon give its judgement. "The day we have the strength, it will be constructively used and not misused (Lekin Jis din hamare paastakothoga, us takat ka sadpurog hoga, durgyonahiniga) Maurya told PTI. He said the matter was being heard in the Supreme Court.

The deputy chief minister was also asked whether the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill will anger BJP's core vote bank.



**'Chori' (Daughter), a short film by Sikkimese filmmaker Tribeny Rai has been selected in the first Nagao International Short and Documentary Film Festival. The film festival would take place at Nagao in the Assam on September 8 and 9. Rai, 27 years, hails from Nandok near Ranipool in East Sikkim.**

## Ops stepped up to rescue people in Karnataka

**BENGALURU, AUG 19/-** More than 3,500 people have been rescued in Karnataka's Kodagu district till today, where six people have lost their lives due to floods and landslides. President Ram Nath Kovind spoke to Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy over phone to enquire about the situation in the rain-battered southern district, bordering Kerala. Kumaraswamy informed Kovind that the district administration was managing the rescue-and-relief work efficiently along with the army, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and other agencies, and has rescued more than 3,500 people so far, the chief minister's office said in a statement. Operations are on to rescue those stranded at various places. Kumaraswamy, who had conducted an aerial survey in Kodagu yesterday, undertook another one for more than an hour in Sunwarpet, Suntikoppa, Madapura, Mukkollu, Harangbackwaters, Sidapura, Kishanagar and surrounding areas. (PTI)

## Coast Guard undertakes 'Operation Water Baby' in Kerala

**MUMBAI, AUG 19/-** From flood-ravaged Kerala comes a story of grit of the Coast Guard and armed forces personnel who saved a newly-born baby in a night-long rescue operation near the Idukki dam two days ago. The rescue operation began after a call from the Mumbai Coast Guard about rising water level in the Idukki dam area, the Army officer, who led the team, said. "We were in the danger level," Lt Col Shashank Waghmode said.

Lt Col Waghmode, an assault engineer officer, currently on deputation to the Coast Guard, volunteered to lead the team and within 30 minutes, the team members were selected. Many Coast Guard personnel were called from various ships, he told PTI when asked about the operation. They were equipped with boats, outboard motor, ropes, digging tools, survival ration and

medical kits, he said. "After the briefing by District Commander DHQ-DIG Sanathan Jena, the team, comprising 16 Coast Guard divers, started the journey at night," he said. The terrain was as challenging as Idukki Mahashaytra. In Idukki, they found a number of landslides. There were waterfalls and poor visibility due to fog. The nullahs (drains) and rivers were overflowing, he said.

The team had to cross the Chappat bridge as the dam gates were going to be opened at 4.30 am. "I had taken along drivers experienced in the hilly terrain and after nine hours we managed to cross the bridge at 4.30 am, half an hour before the dam gates opened," said Lt Col Waghmode, an alumnus of the Sainik School at Satara in Maharashtra. In Idukki, they found that all the villages were evacuated and hotels, shops, ATMs and petrol pumps were shut. There was no place to take shelter, he said. For the next four days, the Coast Guard team rescued many people in Manjunatha and nearby villages and cleared debris and boulders. "I was leading a special team comprising personnel from the Coast Guard, the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. I was given the best sea divers of the Coast Guard, Navy nursing assistants, vehicle drivers of the Army and the Air Force," he said. "On August 16 night, just as we reached an abandoned government hospital for forest after four days of non-stop work, the local police officer, villagers and NDRF officials came to us, asking to save the life of a woman who had just given birth," he said.

The locals told the rescue team that the woman and her five family members were stuck in a flooded house without food and water for four days, he said. The team then launched a night-long rescue mission, calling it "Operation Water Baby". Lt Col Waghmode said. The woman's house was two km from the point where the rescue boat was unloaded, he said. "The best six members of the team were selected and the operation began at 10.30 pm in pitch dark and against the water current," the officer

said. The outboard motor was not effective as there were lot of stones, debris and mud mounds below but the team pushed the boat for about 2km against the water current, which was around 15 knots, he said. The team reached the house, guided by local policemen who accompanied them in the boat, at 1.30am. "The family was in a bad state. They were not aware that someone was coming to their rescue. Due to medical issues of the newborn baby and the mother, we decided to wait till sunrise and continued the operation early morning with the help of a local doctor," he said. "On our way back, wherever there was less water, we lifted the boat with family members inside it. After we reached a safe spot, the woman told us that she will make her baby boy join the armed forces," the officer said. After this rescue operation, the team was given a choice to return or rest, but the personnel chose to proceed to Chengannur and join another rescue operation, he said. (PTI)