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SARA PENS A SPECIAL NOTE FOR MOM
10 VIVACITY

Dance of death & destruction in Bengaluru

Irked at FB post by Cong MLA's relative, mob runs riots, torch police station, MLA's house; 3 killed, SDPI leader among 110 held

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Three people were killed after police opened fire to quell a mob that went on a rampage in a locality Bengaluru rirked over a Facebook post put out by a Congress MLA's relative, with the Government terming the violence as a "well-planned act."

"Three people have died (in police firing)," Bengaluru Police Commissioner Kamal Pant told PTI.

Further, 110 people have been arrested in connection with the rioting at Pulakeshi Nagar here. Scores, including around 50 policemen, were injured in the violence that erupted on Tuesday night and continued till the wee hours of Wednesday, apparently triggered by the online post.

SDPI leader Muzamil Pasha has been arrested by Bengaluru Police for his role in the mob violence.

Curfew has been imposed in the affected areas in and around the affected areas, DJ Halli and KG Halli.

Pulakeshi Nagar MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthys residence and a police station at DJ Halli were among those targeted by the angry mob. The house of the MLA, who was not at home at the time, was set on fire by the rioters.

"The manner in which the riots were perpetrated shows that it was a well planned act and was intended to spread to other parts of the city.

These are traitors," Revenue Minister Ashoka told reporters after meeting Congress MLA in his office at Vidhana Soudha.

The Minister said the MLA's house was completely damaged, belongings, including Sarees and jewels, were looted and the rest, including vehicles, were set on fire

"It is clear from the intensity of vandalism that the intention was to attack and finish off Srinivasa Murthy. It has to be investigated whether any corporator or anti-social elements from within the state and outside were involved," Ashoka said.

Tourism Minister CT Ravi said, "It is clear and evident that yesterday's violent attack was carried out by a Muslim mob in a pre-planned manner."

Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai said six companies of the Central Reserve Police Force are being dispatched to the violence-hit areas of Bengaluru.

Three companies from Hyderabad and three from Chennai will be deployed in DG Halli and KG Halli police station limits, he told reporters at Udupi before leaving for Bengaluru.

He said the situation is now under control and additional police forces are deployed in the area. Rapid action force and the "Garuda" force are also being deployed, the Minister added.

Meanwhile, the State Government on Wednesday announced that a district magistrate would conduct an enquiry into the violence.

The Government also decided to recover losses caused to public property during the violence from the rioters.

BJP MP Shobha Karandlaje who visited Pulikeshinagar, in a tweet said, "PFI-SDPI conspired this violence, they targeted only Hindu houses & burnt public properties. I strongly condemn this behaviour of a communal elements & urge @CMofKarnataka to take stringent actions against the culprits."

Pant said Naveen, said to be a nephew of the legislator, who allegedly put out the social media post has been arrested.

Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa said the "attack on the residence of the MLA, the police station and rioting are condemnable.

Police and residents walk past charred remains of vehicles vandalised by a mob over a FB post by a relative of a Congress MLA in Bengaluru on Wednesday PTI

ACTIONS-REACTIONS

- About 50 cop injured in attack
- The manner in which the riots were perpetrated shows that it was a well planned act and was intended to spread to other parts of the city. These are traitors, said Revenue Minister Ashoka
- The Government has decided to recover losses caused to public property from the rioters
- Naveen, a nephew of the MLA, who allegedly put out the social media post, has been arrested

India among 20 nations for Sputnik V

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India, Brazil, Mexico, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are among the 20 countries from Asia, Latin America and West Asia which have shown interest in Russian vaccine "Sputnik V" the first registered vaccine for coronavirus disease in the world.

A Russian website dedicated to the "world's first registered Covid-19 vaccine" has claimed that India along with 20 other countries have shown interest in getting the vaccine.

"At least 20 countries had expressed interest in obtaining the Sputnik V, including UAE, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Philippines, Brazil, Mexico and India," the statement said.

Dismissing experts concern over rapid approval of the coronavirus vaccine, Russia on Wednesday announced that the first batch of the Russian vaccine against coronavirus is expected to be released within two weeks. Russia also said it already received foreign requests for 1 billion doses.

"Within two weeks, the first batch of the vaccine will be released," Russian Health Minister Mikhail Murashko announced on Wednesday. Murashko said that vaccination against coronavirus will be voluntary for everybody, including healthcare workers. The vaccine that is being developed by Gamaleya Center enjoys the support of the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF).

RDIF plans to conduct Phase 3 clinical trials in different countries, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Brazil, India and the Philippines, and start mass production in other countries in partnership with local sovereign wealth funds, including India, South Korea and Brazil, Saudi Arabia.

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL

CASES: 23,94,738
DEATHS: 47,130
RECOVERED: 16,92,157
ACTIVE: 6,54,977

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	5,48,313	18,650	3,81,843
Tamil Nadu	3,14,520	5,278	2,56,313
Andhra Pradesh	2,54,146	2,296	1,61,425
Karnataka	1,96,494	3,511	1,12,633
Delhi	1,48,504	**4,153**	1,33,405
Uttar Pradesh	1,36,238	2,230	84,661
West Bengal	1,04,326	2,203	76,120
Bihar	90,553	474	60,068
Telangana	84,544	654	61,294
Gujarat	74,390	2,713	57,493
Assam	69,000	161	45,074
Rajasthan	56,100	822	41,648
Odisha	50,672	358	36,479
Haryana	44,024	503	36,694
Madhya Pradesh	41,604	1,048	31,239
Kerala	38,144	127	24,922

COVID-19 IN MADHYA PRADESH

Dists	Total Cases	Fresh Cases
Bhopal	7961	91
Indore	9069	169
Gwalior	3100	36

No improvement in Pranab's condition

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The condition of former President Pranab Mukherjee continues to be critical and he remains on ventilator support, the Army's Research and Referral hospital said on Wednesday. He was admitted to the hospital in Delhi cantonment on August 10 and was operated for removal of a clot in the brain.

The 84-year-old had also tested positive for Covid-19 prior to the surgery on Monday.

IAF wants negative scene from Kargil Girl deleted

Writes to Central Board of Film Certification

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taking exception to its alleged "negative portrayal" in the film *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl* made by Dharma Productions owned by Karan Johar, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has written to the Central Board of Film Certification in this regard.

The IAF in its letter has complained that as per initial understanding the production house had agreed to depict the IAF authentically and make all efforts to ensure that the film helps to inspire the next generation of IAF officers.

However, the trailer of the movie showed that certain scenes and dialogues were found to portray the IAF in an "undue negative light," the letter said.

It also said in the aim to glorify the screen character of 'Ex-Flt Lt Gunjan Saxena, M/s Dharma Productions presented some situations that are misleading and portray an inappropriate work culture especially against women in the IAF.

The story of the movie is based on the first Indian Air Force woman pilot who was part of the 1999 Kargil war. Gunjan was the first woman helicopter pilot to fly in a combat zone and was involved in the evacuation of injured soldiers. She was awarded the gallantry Shaurya Vir Award for displaying courage during the war.

The IAF in its letter said the Service has always ensured an equal opportunity to both male and female personnel and the organisation is gender neutral. The IAF has also annexed the summary of the scenes and dialogues of the script, which are considered objectionable due to the presentation of incorrect gender bias with the letter.

It also said Dharma Productions was informed about the objectionable portion of the movie and was advised to delete/modify the same. However, the production house has not deleted the scenes but it proposed a media plan in the run-up to the release and inserted a disclaimer in the movie.

The IAF stated that it feels that a mere media plan and disclaimer would not be adequate to prevent the presentation of incorrect facts about the IAF.

"In view of the above, the issue of grant of NOC for the release of the movie will be considered after deleting or suitably modifying the scenes in order to cater to the observations mentioned," the IAF stated.

Incidentally, about a fortnight back, the Defence Ministry had written to the CBF, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeITY) and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, to advise production houses to obtain No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Defence Ministry before the telecast of any film, documentary or web series on military.

CAPSULE

CONG LEADER RAJIV TYAGI DIES OF HEART ATTACK

New Delhi: Congress leader and spokesperson Rajiv Tyagi passed away on Wednesday after suffering a heart attack.

UNION MINISTER NAIK TESTS COVID POSITIVE

New Delhi: Union Minister Shripad Y Naik on Wednesday said he has tested positive for coronavirus infection and has opted for home isolation. The Minister of State for AYUSH and Defence said he opted for self-isolation as he is asymptomatic and added his vitals are within normal limits.

COP ON DUTY DIES AS BUILDING ROOF CAVES IN

New Delhi: A 49-year-old Assistant Sub-Inspector of Delhi Police died and his colleague was injured when the roof of a building in north Delhi where they gone as part of a tenant verification drive collapsed, officials said on Wednesday.

1,113 COVID-19 CASES,14 DEATHS IN DELHI ON WED

New Delhi Delhi recorded 1,113 fresh coronavirus cases taking the caseload to over 1.48 lakh, while the death toll has risen to 4,153, authorities said on Wednesday. According to a Delhi Government health bulletin, 18,894 samples were tested for COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, of which 6,472 were RT-PCR tests and 12,422 rapid antigen.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan with his wife Sadhna Singh offers prayers at Laxmi Narayan Birla temple on the occasion of Janmashtami festival in Bhopal on Wednesday Pioneer Photo

Pawar snubs grandnephew's demand for CBI probe into Sushant's alleged suicide

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a rare outburst, NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Wednesday publicly debunked grandnephew Parth Pawar's demand to hand over the Sushant Singh Rajput case to the CBI, by saying that the latter's demand "is not worth a nickel" and that he had 100 per cent confidence in the Maharashtra police.

Talking to mediapersons here, the NCP chief strongly disapproved of Parth's demand for a CBI probe into Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajpuit's death. "His statement is not worth even a nickel. He is immature. I have 100 per cent confidence in the investigation skills of the Maharashtra police".

Parth is the son of Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar who incidentally is the nephew of the NCP chief.

Sr Pawar's disapproval of Parth's demand came in the wake of the latter meeting State Home Minister Anil Deshmukh and handing him over a letter demanding a CBI inquiry into the Sushant Singh Rajput death case.

When asked to comment on the NCP chief's comment, Parth said: "I have nothing to say on Pawar saheb's comment".

The NCP chief's disapproval of Parth's demand for CBI probe into the Sushant Singh Rajput case should be context of the Opposition BJP's demand that the sensational case be handed over to the Central agency in view of the allegations linking the case to Maharashtra Minister Aaditya Thackeray, who is the son of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, in the case involving the actor's alleged suicide.

On its part, the Maharashtra Government has opposed the transfer of the Sushant Kumar Singh suicide case to the CBI on the jurisdiction issue.

Kamal Nath holds Janmashtami celebrations at his residence

BJP calls it pre-poll gimmick

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Having exhibited extraordinary enthusiasm during the foundation laying of Ram temple in Ayodhya on Aug 5, Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee chief Kamal Nath exhibited his devotion to lord Krishna by celebrating Krishna Janmashtami festival at his residence in Bhopal on Wednesday.

The BJP for obvious reasons has called it a pre-poll gimmick, while the Congress party has termed this adherence to Sanatan dharma.

MPCC chief Kamal Nath who is a known devotee of lord Hanuman, was among first leaders of the Congress party nationally who had greeted the foundation laying of Ram temple in Ayodhya that took place on Aug 5.

For the first time under his leadership, MPCC had opened gates to devotion and faith in full-fledged manner and celebrated the occasion in Bhopal with full fervour with slogans of Jai Sri Ram in highest possible pitch.

As the occasion of Krishna Janmashtami has arrived, now the MPCC chief hosted another celebration at his official residence in State capital by arranging Krishna Janmotsava and putting up a tableau. Ahead of Ram temple foundation laying, Nath's residence had seen holding of Hanuman chalisa so was the case with several party leaders and workers.

However, ruling Bharatiya Janata party which had taken objection to 'pretentious' Ram temple devotion of Congress party, has again slammed the grand old party again with affinity to lord Krishna.

BJP Spokesperson Rajneesh Agrawal said that it was nothing but pretention and pre-poll gimmicks asking why the Congress party did not remember lord Ram and Krishna earlier. "The party which earlier talked about sacrifices of goat, iftar parties and appeasement politics has now painted itself saffron," added Agrawal.

Congress spokesperson JP Dhanopia however claimed that it's no pretention adding Kamal Nath has always been follower of Sanatan Dharma. Why the BJP leaders have problems, do they have patent on religion and God, asked Dhanopia.

The Congress party in accordance with the Sanatan Dharma tradition had undertook a purification drive against those who had deserted the party and 'cheated the public'.

3-day Lalit Parva on Janmashtami begins

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Three-day event 'Lalit Parva' is being organized on the occasion of Janmashtami. The online event began from today.

Being organized by Government of Madhya Pradesh, Department of Culture, Triveni Art Museum, Ujjain the event is all about regional folk music and lecture based on Lord Krishna.

The event is being broadcasted on the social media platform YouTube Channel. The entire event is being hosted by renowned anchor and narrator Vinay Upadhyay. It is to be noted that during the event, an art exhibition of 64 arts on Krishna from Guru Sandipani and 14 pictures was also held. This was followed by, Krishna devotional songs of Nimari, Malvi, Bagheli and Bundelkhand were performed from Lokparampara of Madhya Pradesh.

After that, Kalpana Dwivedi started her lecture on the life-vision, propounded by Lord Krishna by Mainpuri, he said that five thousand two hundred and forty-six years ago, sixteen roops of Lord Krishna emerged. Lord Krishna established the ideal time to act according to the situation, he first created the principle of karma.

In the Mahabharata period, when Arjuna sees his family in Kurukshetra in front of him, he gets distraught, then Lord Krishna, who became the charioteer of Arjuna, not only inspired Arjuna to move on the path of karma but he got it on the path of karma from his Gita preaching. Dwivedi also shared other stories related to Shri Krishna's life.

As part of the presentation on August 13, traditional folk songs in Malwa, Nimar, Bundelkhand, Baghelkhand and Chambal regions of the state will be presented. Bhagwat Sharan Shukla, Varanasi will present a lecture based on human civilization and Lord Krishna.

Online painting competition starts in Bhopal

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Observing Janmashtami, an online painting competition is being held in the city. The three-day event began from Wednesday on the theme 'Different roles of Lord Krishna'.

The registrations for the online competition have already begun from Wednesday. Children participated extensively in this competition organized on the theme of Lord Krishna. The participants are beautifully depicting the different roops of Lord Krishna. The participants beautifully portrayed their perception with colourful paintings over the canvas. The competition is divided into three categories based on students' age criteria. School students from 6 years to 16 years participated in the competition. Besides, the art lovers can also participate in the competition in another category. The participants can submit their paintings by August 15.

Krishna's life unfolds in each painting and the different seasons and moments of his life are depicted with colourful costumes celebrating the many festivals. The participants are going beyond imagination and are creating paintings based on different traditions.

A devotee offers prayers to Lord Krishna in a temple on the occasion of Janmashtami festival in Bhopal on Wednesday
Pioneer Photo

Webinar on National Librarians day held

PNS ■ MHOW

A National Webinar was organized on Wednesday on the occasion of National Librarians Day at B.R.Ambedkar University of Social Sciences, Mhow. Prof Kishore John, webinar coordinator, welcomed all the guests and presented the opening statement.

On the 128th birth anniversary of S.R. Ranganathan, Ajay P Sing, Director, Rajaram Mohanrai Library Foundation, Calcutta has elaborated on the achievements of Ranganathan's life and his significant contributions to the development of library science in India. The Keynote Speaker of the Webinar Sangeeta Gupta, Professor of Jammu University, Jammu said that Ranganathan gave his presentation on the topic Librarians as the Pillar of Knowledge, who said that knowledge management is considered to be a very important aspect in today's information world.

Sajjay Kataria, Librarian of Benet University, Greater Noida, said that S.R. Ranganathan's life has been very simple and highly-minded, he was always very fond of his profession. He was very punctual and was so fond of his profession that even on his wedding day he took only half day leave. He further added that Ranganathan was very hard workeing and his communication skills were of high level.

Special Guest G.D Aggarwal, President, Indore Division Library Association said that Even though S.R Ranganathan's life has been full of struggles and challenges, he continued to work in the field of library development in India.

It was only due to the efforts of Ranganathan that Madras Library Act was passed in India in 1948. Subsequently, the Library Act has been passed in 19 states so far.

The process of passing the Library Act in Madhya Pradesh is underway and Library Act will be implemented in M.P. very soon. Special Guest Prof Arvind Sharma, Department of Library and Information Sciences, Government Post Graduate College, Gwalior said that Dr. S.R Ranganathan's contribution was the Five Laws of Library Science which was published in 1931.

It was told by Ranganathan's son that he embraced Indian philosophy and theology in his life, which is reflected in his contributions.

Delivering the Presidential Address, Prof Asha Shukla, Vice Chancellor, said that Ranganathan Chair has been established in the University keeping in mind the contributions of Ranganathan in the area of Library Science and there are plans to undertake works in the area of Library Science which will be implemented after Covid-19. Prof. Kishor John offered the Vote of Thanks.

Pendown announces awards for authors

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Dinesh Verma, founder, and CEO of Delhi based Pendown Press recently announced the Awards for Authors.

At the time of a pandemic when people are going through a plethora of emotions the Pendown press, an offshoot of The GullyBaba Publishings took this initiative to encourage and salute the Authors who did not allow any depressive thought to overcome them.

Right from the coming international book fair Pen down press will have awards in 5 different categories. Pendown people's choice awards, lockdown loyalty awards, the best debutant author award for male authors, the best debutant

author award for female authors, and the Author of the decade are all the awards that will be presented to the authors.

The most gripping awards amongst all are the 'Lockdown loyalty award' which has been introduced to honor those authors who braved lockdown and came out with a book that spellbound the readers. Verma talks about the awards and its specialties.

"When a female author will get the best debutant female award, her contemporaries will feel motivated. Similarly, when a person will come to know post-Covid that someone got Lockdown Loyalty Award, he or she will feel motivated," he added.

Verma talks about the silver lining during the lockdown.

"Lockdown has thrown the life of the people out-of-gear. But, the silver lining is that it has given them ample amount of time to revisit their inner self. So, I think those who dare to do what others dither, deserve an award. Our Lockdown Loyalty Award is completely driven by lockdown during Covid."

Health insurance policy cover during Covid-19 must: Chhabra

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

With each passing day, several new cases of coronavirus infection are being reported in different parts of India as well taking the total count of Indian patients to 2 million of which 40,000 people have already lost their lives due to Covid-19.

Amit Chhabra, Health Business Head, *Policybazaar.com* said while the possibility of invention of a vaccination for coronavirus infection still looks like a far cry, the Government is leaving no stone unturned to maximize the usage of existing infrastructure to contain the virus and make sure that minimum people are infected with the novel virus.

Chhabra further said that the Government continues to play its part, it is also the responsibility of the citizens to take all precautionary measures to contain the spread of the virus.

One of the most important things we all need to do is stay adequately protected by covering ourselves under a comprehensive health insurance policy. If you get hospitalised for treating the coronavirus infection, your health insurance plan will safeguard medical expense and will pay for the treatment cost.

You can buy a health insurance policy with an adequate sum insured for as low as ₹800 to ₹1,000 per month, Timely Product Intervention by the IRDAI.

Protem Speaker of Madhya Pradesh Assembly Rameshwar Sharma called on Governor Anandiben Patel in Bhopal on Wednesday. Principal Secretary of the State Assembly AP Singh was also present on the occasion
Pioneer photo

New collection of books launched at S V library

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A new collection of books was released at Swami Vivekananda Library. The books are suggested by the members of the library.

One of the books is No Filter. It is the Inside Story of How Instagram Transformed Business, Celebrity and Our Culture: In this book written by Sarah Fryer, working at Bloomberg, she explained how Instagram became the most liked app of this generation that has changed our culture.

In this book, the author has shown the journey from the founders of Instagram to the people who decide the direction of the company, like Chris Jenner from the beginning of

Instagram till now. Disputes with Facebook founder Mark Zuckenberg and the circumstances in which Facebook was bought by Instagram have also been mentioned.

Another book is Naroji Pioneer of Indian Nationalism. Dinair Patel, who is an Assistant Professor of History at the University of South Carolina, is the author of this book. In it, he has written the story of Naroji, who is a foundation figure in the modern history of India and till India became the first parliament.

How he has awakened people against imperialism all over the world and has played a role in setting Swaraj as India's only goal.

The book collection also includes The Indian Army Author Ach. s. Panag, Overdraft Author Urjit Patel, An Extraordinary Life Author Manohar Parrikar, Hindusim before reform author brain a. Hatcher, The Mirror and Light Author Hillary Mantel, Latitude of Longing Novel Authors Shubhangi Form, Covid-19 Author Doctor Michael Mosley, The Gated Republic Author Shankar Air and more.

Manager Yatish Bhatele said that every Monday a special collection is put on display in the library, so that every member of the library gets a collection of good books in the library.

Rishi Garg appointed as honourary advisor to BRICS CCI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rishi Garg, Executive Director, Madhya Pradesh Industrial Development Corporation has been appointed as Honorary Advisor to BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Chairman of the UNI board of directors Vishwas Tripathi is the chairman of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BRICS CCI), the parent organisation which promotes commerce and industry along-with BRICS neighbouring and friendly nations.

IAS officer of 2013 batch of Madhya Pradesh Cadre, Garg's role is to accelerate the investment drive to MP which though has an agrarian based economy but the state is now poised to take the right measures for industrialisation. Earlier, he was posted as the Commissioner Municipal Corporation, Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh.

An alumni of IIT Kanpur, Garg has done Advanced Management Program in Public Policy from the prestigious Indian School of Business.

He has been awarded Certificate of Appreciation for commitment, strong work ethics, personal integrity and dedication displayed in course of execution of the Madhya

Pradesh Tribal Affairs Automation System (MPTAAS) and also State Award for best electoral practices for Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation program SVEEP in Chhindwara during Vidhan Sabha Elections in 2018.

Garg has also worked as Executive Director, Ujjain Smart City Company Ltd, Managing Director, MP Council of Employment and Training and Additional Commissioner, Tribal Development, Government of Madhya Pradesh.He was also Chief Executive Officer, Zila Panchayat Chhindwara in Madhya Pradesh, Returning Officer, Election Commission of India, Chhindwara Assembly Constituency and CEO, Zila Panchayat Sheopur, Government of Madhya Pradesh.

Garg also worked as Assistant Commissioner in Indian Revenue Service (IRS) from December 2012 to August 2013.

One among 3 miscreants nabbed for stealing liquor worth ₹80K

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Talaiya police have nabbed a miscreant from Saeediya school and recovered stolen liquor worth ₹80000 from his possession on Tuesday; two accused involved in burglary remained absconding.

The nabbed accused identified as Sameer Khan alias Shanu Paatra confessed burglary from liquor with the help of two of his aides Yawar Khan and Faizan Khan.

According to the police, acting on a tip off regarding a man with massive quantity of liquor a team was rushed to the spot and based on the information the man was searched

and nabbed him.

The police seized 20 cartons from his possession worth ₹80000 while the accused confessed that part of the stolen liquor was sold in shanties in the near by areas.

Based on the investigation Yawar and Faizan were searched but they managed to remain absconding.

During the investigation police found that the nabbed accused is mastermind and lured Faizan of opening a big hotel. Faizan used to run a tea stall adjacent to liquor shop and agreed to burgle. The three then targeted the shop. The window was broken to burgle the goods. The three have targeted the shop in the recent lockdown of 10 days. The crime record of the nabbed accused would be searched.

The accused confessed that they were planning to commit crime. Police said that during the interrogation more crimes would be confessed by the nabbed accused.

Valuables worth ₹3.5L, ₹2.8L cash burgled from house

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Valuables worth ₹3.5 lakh including ₹2.8 lakh cash were burgled from Gannakhdedi under Nazeerabad police station area on Tuesday. Police said that the victim Shivraj Singh Meena was asleep and in the morning he found that the valuables were found burgled.

A complaint was lodged with the police by the victim in which the victim stated that he had gone to sleep early while other members later went to sleep. In the night miscreants targeted the house and escaped with valuables in the almirah.

In the morning when the victim woke up he found that the valuables were burgled.

The police said that as part of the investigation, CCTV cameras of the locality will be monitored. The neighbours have expressed ignorance over the burglary.

In the incident gold and silver jewellery and ₹2.8 lakh cash were burgled. The total loss in the burglary is around ₹3.5 lakh.

The locks were broken using cutters and which were found near the house. Within few hours miscreants broke the lock and escaped with the valuables which suggest that the miscreants were aware of the house of the victim.

Domestic help and security guards would be questioned in the further investigation. The police have registered a case under sections 457 and 380 of the IPC and have started further investigation.

Police said that the burglary was done by single person which could be ascertained from the circumstantial evidences.

Man held for dowry death after wife commits suicide

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Gandhi Nagar police booked a 24-year-old man for harassing his 21-year-old wife to commit suicide by consuming poison on June 19 ; police found that the deceased was harassed by her husband. According to the police, the deceased, Afroz Khan was found hanging and was rushed to a nearby hospital where she was declared brought dead. In the initial investigation, police found that the deceased committed suicide while family members were asleep. During the investigation, police have reason behind the suicide that she was harassed for dowry. Initially after the preliminary investigation the body was sent for the post mortem and a case under section 174 of the CrPC was registered by the police. Later in the investigation, police found that the deceased was harassed by her husband and in-laws demanding dowry and claims of harassment were made by her family members in the complaint.The police registered a case under section 304 B of the IPC and section 3 and 4 of the Dowry Prohibition Act against the three accused. Case against Afroz's husband Shawar Khan alais Shabu. During investigation police found that Afroz mentioned was harassed demanding dowry by her husband and his family members.

A child dressed as Lord Krishna breaks an earthen pot (Dahi Handi) during Janmashtami festival celebrations at an old- age home, in Bhopal on Wednesday
Pioneer Photo

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ATMANIRBHAR MADHYA PRADESH

Four groups of Mins formed to prepare roadmap

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that works at wide scale will be carried out in the field of education, health, transport, employment, potable water, tourism, infrastructure including good Governance in the State and these works will become witness of Atma-Nirbhar Madhya Pradesh.

He mentioned that participation of national level has took place in the webinars held from August 7 to 11, in which better suggestions in substantial number have been received from the subject experts.

In the interest of Madhya Pradesh, these important suggestions are being included in the roadmap. Groups of Ministers have been formed to prepare a draft of the roadmap. Reports to be submitted by the groups of ministers will be finalized after the contemplation with the NITI Aayog.

In order to prepare the roadmap of Atma-Nirbhar Madhya Pradesh, four groups comprising senior ministers have been formed.

These groups have been formed on the basis of subjects decided in the webinar. The Physical Infrastructure group comprising Minister for Public Works, Cottage and Village Industry Gopal Bhargava and I.C.P. Keshri as coordinating officer has been formed. The Good Governance group has Minister for Home, Jail, Parliamentary Affairs and Law Narottam Mishra and S.N. Mishra as coordinating officer. The Education and Health Group comprises Minister for Medical Education, Bhopal Gas Tragedy, Relief and Rehabilitation Vishwas Sarang and Mohammad Suleman as coordinating officer.

Similarly, the Economy and Employment Group has Minister for Commercial Tax, Finance, Economic and Statistics Jagdish Devda and Rajesh Rajoura as coordinating officer. Other minister will also be included in all these four groups.

Chouhan has informed that the Groups of Ministers will present their reports with important suggestions to be included in the interest of Madhya Pradesh by August 25. The report presented for the development of Madhya Pradesh and Reforms programme will be discussed again with the members of the NITI Aayog.

Later, the final shape will be given to the roadmap of Atma-Nirbhar Madhya Pradesh. The action plan decided in the roadmap will be implemented with the target of 3 years. The Chief Minister further informed that it will be our first priority to fulfill the resolution within the stipulated time frame, taken for Atma-Nirbhar Madhya Pradesh.

The Chief Minister expressed gratitude towards Union Ministers, Members of Parliament including NITI Aayog as well as all organizations and representatives, who took part in the webinar and gave their important suggestions to help realizing the Atma-Nirbhar Madhya Pradesh.

Mahila Congress activist ties Rakhi to Congress State President Kamal Nath during Raksha Bandhan celebration at his residence in Bhopal on Wednesday Pioneer photo

NUJ-I to observe its golden jublee year from January, committee formed to organise event

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The National Union of Journalists-India (NUJ-I) is going to observe its Golden Jubilee Year from January next year and organizing committee has been formed for the event.

Former Vice Chancellor of Makhanlal Chaturvedi Journalism University and noted journalist of the country Achyutanand Mishra will be the convener of this organizing committee. NUJ-I officials and supporters have been included in this committee. This committee will guide the events throughout the year. The first event will be held in Delhi on a large scale. After this, there will be events in the respective states throughout the year. The outline of which is being made.

NUJ-I President Manoj Mishra and General Secretary Suresh Sharma issued a statement informing this effect. The statement said that Achyutanand Mishra will be the convener in the committee set up for organizing the NUJ-I Golden Jubilee.

Members in the committee are all KN Gupta, K.K. N. Malik, Hiranmay Karlekar, Ram Bahadur Rai, Rajendra Sharma, Prabhat Jha, Balbir Punj, Balmukund Bharti, Shyam Khosla, G.K. Mohanty, PK Rai, Jagdish Upasane, Baldev Bhai Sharma, Gulab Batra, Atmadeep, Upala Laxman, Vijay Kranti, Prafulla Ketkar, Ashutosh Bhatnagar, Harshvardhan Saxena, Ashok Malik, Hemant Vishnoi, Rambhuvan Singh Kushwaha, Jitendra Tiwari, Vichitra Sharma,. Manoranjana and Ravindra Bajpai.

NUJ-I President Manoj Mishra, General Secretary Suresh Sharma and Treasurer Umesh Chaturvedi will be ex-officio members of the committee.

BHEL employee succumbs to burn injuries in hospital

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A 56-year-old BHEL employee who had sustained burn injuries at Deep Nagar on August 7 succumbed to injuries while undergoing treatment at hospital late in the night on Tuesday; deceased got injured at house while cooking, Awadhpuri police have started investigation. According to the police, the deceased Suraj Bai sustained burn injuries at her house and was rushed to a nearby hospital and later she died on Tuesday.

In the initial investigation it was found that the deceased sustained burn injuries after stove exploded at house.

After the preliminary investigation the body was sent for the post mortem and a case under section 174 of the CrPC was registered. The reason of the fire could not be ascertained and would be investigated. The condition of the deceased deteriorated he died late in the night on Tuesday.

During the investigation police found that the deceased was used to work with BHEL and live with his son.

CM to launch 'Sahyog se Suraksha Abhiyan'

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will launch the 'Sahyog se Suraksha Abhiyan' on August 15. The main theme of the campaign is 'Sahyog aur samarthan se hi vijay, Corona Samapti ka drida nischay' (only cooperation and support can help us win, firm resolve to end Corona.

Government departments, voluntary organizations, trade organizations, religious leaders and public representatives will take part extensively in the Sahyog se Suraksha Abhiyan. This campaign will be conducted in collaboration with all sections.

The main objective of the campaign is to instill a sense of security among the common man through public awareness.

The campaign will generate awareness among so that they learn to live with the problem of Corona infection.

The Health Department will also make efforts to make people adopt safe practices. They will encourage communities to make preventive measures a part of their lifestyle.

The goal is to maintain continuity of the campaign in order to make prevention from infection a general practice. In the campaign, efforts will be made to change people's habits through simple and clear messages.

Many times people are confused due to wrong and misleading information, efforts will be continuously to counter this and explain what is right to the people through various means so that people can get actual information.

A time-bound programme has also been set for campaign activities. Oath taking programmes will be organized during the campaign.

Nodal officers have been appointed in the government departments associated with the campaign, to give pace to the activities of the campaign.

Fitness enthusiasts perform exercises after the re-opening of gym and yoga fitness centres with some ease in the restrictions by the district administration authorities,in Bhopal on Wednesday Pioneer Photo

Plantation on Mhow-Ghattabillod highway divider causing accidents

PNS ■ MHOW

The 27 kilometer long Mhow Ghattabillod four lane which begins from Mhow tehsil of Indore district and ends at Ghattabillod of Dhar tehsil has become dangerous for the people moving on this highway as the plantation on the divider of these highway has grown towards both the sides of the highway.

The branches are hanging on both the sides of the highway thus covering around 7 feet road on both sides also the animals cows and buffaloes are also sometimes crossing these dividers and all of sudden they come on road and it is very difficult for the driver to pre

The branches are hanging on both the sides of the highway

locate them due to the hanging branches of trees, besides people say that some petrol pump owners and colonizers have themselves broken the divider of the highway and made approach road towards their colony and petrol pump which is also invisible behind these trees of the divider and sometimes suddenly two wheeler and four wheeler come on the road from the other side of four lane which invites accidents. Also, due the rain there are many big potholes at some places on this highway which needs an immediate repair or filling because the four wheelers and two wheelers get stuck in these pot holes.

The Pioneer has informed the MPRDC officer Poonam Kushwaha few weeks ago about this road for which she told that she has conveyed the message to the authority but no improvement is seen on the road till yet.

When *The Pioneer* contacted Dhar collector Alok Kumar Singh regarding problems of this Mhow Ghattabillod four-lane road he told that immediately all the problems will be cleared so that the safe and smooth traffic can be restored on the Mhow Ghattabillod four lane.

Police nab two who secured bail with forged documents

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

MP Nagar police have arrested two men involved in securing bail using forged documents on Tuesday; accused were nabbed after their documents were checked when court found them suspicious.

According to the police, the accused Rakesh Meeena of Raisen and Ramratan Sharma of Vidisha had produced forged documents to secure bail and when the documents were verified he was nabbed by the police they were found to be forged.

Police said that the fraud came to fore after JMFC PC Gupta grew suspicious and issued orders to verify the documents and during the investigation it was found that the documents provided were forged.

After the preliminary investigation the police registered a case under section 420, 467, 468 and 471 of the IPC and started further investigation.

The documents of the property produced for the bail were forged which was found in the investigation. During the investigation police found that two used to work as mediator for providing bail using fake and forged documents.

In the further investigation the number of accused helped by two and his accomplices would be searched and investigated. The accused were presented in the court on Tuesday and sent under police custody.

1,113 fresh Covid-19 cases reported in national Capital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

At least 1,113 fresh cases of coronavirus reported on Wednesday, taking the tally in the city to 1.48504 lakh, while the death toll from the disease rose to 4,153.

Twelve fatalities have been recorded in the last 24 hours, according to the Delhi health department bulletin. The active cases tally was 10,946. According to the bulletin, out of the total number of beds in Covid hospitals, 10612 are vacant.

The national capital had reported the highest single-day spike of 3,947 cases on June 23. Also, 3620 beds in Covid care centres are occupied by persons under quarantine, including travellers who have returned by 'Vande Bharat Mission' and bubble flights, it said.

The number of tests done per million, as was 65, 407, it said. A total of 133405 patients have recovered, migrated or been discharged.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research, suspected individuals who test negative for COVID-19 in rapid-antigen tests should undergo RT-PCR to rule out the infection.

Rapid-antigen testing requires a prescription and an ICMR form filled by a registered doctor, and a government identity proof, same as that for RT-PCR test.

Testing was ramped up June 18 onwards, when Delhi started conducting tests through the faster rapid-antigen methodology. Since then, tests have increased almost threefold -- from an average of around 7,000 a day during June 12-18 to an average of around 20,000 per day at present.

LANDDISPUTE

Tension between builder, villagers in Maidawas

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

A long pending land dispute between Emaar builders and villagers of Maidawas has taken an ugly turn.

The builder has developed a high-end residential township named Emerald Estate at Sector 65.

A resident of the society had uploaded a video on social media and alleged that some villagers allegedly barged inside the society on Tuesday night and uprooted trees and damaged the badminton court.

However, no RWA representative of the society came forward for the comments. But the guards deployed at the society have confirmed the incident.

When contacted, villagers who don't wish to be named said they didn't uproot any tree nor damaged any property of the society but they did admit that the matter was related to the land dispute.

According to the villagers, at the time of building the project the Emaar builder had assured the village panchayat that they will build a community center in lieu of taking the village land which approaches the cremation ground of the village.

"It was our long pending demand to the builder to build a community center as there is no space left in the village as some area of the project came on the village land. In 2017, the panchayat passed the proposal that the builder will build a community center in lieu of the land and submitted it to the top officials, but the builder didn't meet our demands and allegedly grabbed the village land," said a villager on the condition of anonymity.

In connection with the matter the villagers had also filed a complaint on the CM window as the case was long overdue.

"Acting on the complaint, a team of the Block Development and Panchayat Officer (BDPO) broke the wall of the society in the presence of the police force on July 27. Along with this, the basketball court inside the society was also broken," he said.

The villagers further alleged that it was the builder who illegally cut the trees inside the society without obtaining permission from the forest department and blocked the way.

While contacting the Forest Department about the matter the forest official Karmbir Malik said, "We have received information about cutting of trees and investigating the matter. If anyone found guilty action will be taken as per the law,".

121 police personnel awarded Union Home Minister's Medal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The "Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation" for the year 2020 was awarded to 121 police personnel, including 21 women officers on Wednesday. The Delhi Police six police officers were also among the awardees.

Rajesh Deo, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Inspector Neeraj Kumar, Inspector Vijay Kumar Samaria, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Arvind Kumar, Inspector Satish Kumar and Sub-Inspector Vishnu Dutt Tiwari are Delhi Police officers who were awarded with Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation on Wednesday.

Deo, the DCP, Crime Branch was awarded for his investigation into the triple murder case of senior citizen couple and their women nursing attendant took place inside their house in Vasant Apartment, Vasant Village in

Deo, the DCP, Crime Branch was awarded for his investigation into the triple murder case of senior citizen couple and their women nursing attendant took place inside their house in Vasant Apartment

city.

The incident occurred in June 2019. The blind murder case was taken by the Crime Branch and within two days, through 'Call Detail Record' the accused Manoj Bhatt and Preeti Saharawat (which was daughter of a colleague of the deceased) were arrested from Gurugram.

At the instance of Manoj Bhatt, the clothes which were worn by Manoj Bhatt and Preeti Saharawat during the commission of crime, the knife and the screwdriver used in commission of crime were recovered. During police custody, at the instance of accused persons the entire robbed jewelry worth about 10 lakhs was recovered and taken into police possession through seizure memo. The daughter of the deceased later correctly identified the jewelry item in TIP.

Among the other personnel receiving these awards, 15 are from CBI, 10 each are from Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra Police, 8 are from Uttar Pradesh Police, 7 each are from Kerala and West Bengal Police, and the remaining from the other States/UTs. These include twenty one (21) women police officers.

This medal was constituted in 2018 with the objective to promote high professional standards of investigation of crime and to recognize such Excellence in Investigation by investigating officers.

SDMC eases conversion of leased commercial properties to freehold

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) has eased the process of conversion of leased commercial properties to freehold in markets transferred from Government of India's Land and Development Organisation (L&DO). With the move, the person does not need to seek permission from the authority concerned before transferring the leasehold property.

The Standing Committee Chairman Raj Dutt Gehlot has informed that a total of 79 markets transferred by the department out of which 38 falls under the jurisdiction of SDMC. "There are 1,252 shops, which are on leasehold basis, including 392 shops which are on license fee basis out of which 352 shops in markets such as Mohamadpur shopping complex, Lodhi Road Complex I and II, M B Road, Pushp Vihar Sector I to IV markets, Hudco Place, Sadiq Nagar Market and Y-Shaped building near ITO, which as per the cabinet decision taken in year 2000 do not come under the purview of conversion as these markets have been listed as non-ownership markets," he said.

Besides this, there are 803 shops which have already been conferred ownership rights in which case lease deeds are to be executed and also shops which are still on license fee basis to whom ownership rights are to be conferred, he said. According to the present conditions, a lessee cannot sell leasehold property without permission of the lessor. After approval of a proposal by the Standing Committee held on Tuesday, the condition of seeking mandatory permission from the concerned department of the South Delhi Municipal Corporation for selling the property is not mandatory.

3 journalists reporting on riots assaulted in northeast Delhi, complaint lodged

NEW DELHI: Three journalists, including a woman from a news magazine were allegedly assaulted by a mob in northeast Delhi, where they had gone to report on the riots that had taken place in February. A senior police official said that they have received complaints from both the sides (magazine and locals) and are looking into them.

The Caravan magazine alleged that the incident took place on Tuesday afternoon. The magazine, in a series of tweets on Tuesday, said, "Today afternoon, in the Subhash Mohalla locality in north-east Delhi, a group of men and women assaulted three staffers of @thecaravanindia @Prabhtalks @shahidtantray and a third staff member— to stop them from reporting."The magazine alleged that the mob physically assaulted the staffers, threatened to kill them and also used communal slurs. ***SR***

Govt to cancel event on I-Day at Chhatrasal Stadium

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has decided to cancel the mega cultural programme of the Independence Day celebration at the Chhatrasal Stadium Considering Covid- 19 pandemic in mind.

A small programme will be organised at the Delhi Secretariat to celebrate Independence Day.

2 desi LCH deployed in Leh to guard LAC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to further strengthen operational readiness at the volatile Line of Actual Control(LAC)in Ladakh, two indigenously designed and produced light combat helicopter (LCH)are now deployed in Leh. They will back up the IAF efforts to secure the border and plug gaps if any at high altitude.

The helicopters manufactured by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited(HAL) are there to be pushed into service to support the IAF at any spot at the border at short notice, HAL officials said on Wednesday.

"It is the lightest attack helicopter in the world designed and developed by the HAL to meet the specific and unique requirements of Indian Armed Forces reflecting the crucial role of HAL in Atma Nirbhar Bharat," said R Madhavan, Chief Managing Director, HAL.

Last week, Vice Chief of IAF, Air Marshal Harjit Singh Arora took part in one such operation in Ladakh along with HAL test pilot, Wing Commander Subash P John (Retired) by taking-off from high altitude location to a forward area for a simulated attack on a high-altitude target.

This was followed by a landing at one of the most treacherous helipads in the region. The LCH successfully demonstrated its quick deployment prowess to forward locations in extreme temperatures, the HAL said.

The IAF and Army together need around 160 LCHs and the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has approved an initial batch of 15 LCHs. The IAF has since issued the Request for Proposal (RFP) for 15 Limited Series Production (LSP) helicopters(10 for IAF and five for Army) and the HAL has submitted its response.

Technical evaluation and the price negotiations have been concluded and the order is expected shortly, the HAL said adding as a proactive measure it has launched production of LSPs in anticipation of orders at its Bengaluru facility.

The indigenously manufactured helicopter is a potent weapon platform with state-of-the-art systems and highly accurate weapons capable of hitting any type of target by day or night.

Other features of the LCH include its ability to operate in the complete 'Area of Responsibility' (AOR) and altitudes and has the ability to carry adequate weapon load at high altitudes under varied conditions.

The latest deployment comes in the backdrop of the five newly arrived Rafale fighter jets now undertaking practice sorties in Himachal Pradesh's mountainous terrain. The state shares LAC with China.

After the familiarisation sorties in the rugged mountain terrain of Himachal Pradesh, the Rafales are likely to conduct practice flights in Ladakh in the coming weeks, sources said. The Rafales came to India from France on July 29 and are now undergoing paces in Indian conditions. The jets are stationed at the Ambala air base.

Given the ongoing tension at the LAC with more than three-month old stand-offs and the Chinese increasing its military strength there, the IAF has also taken measures like deploying most of its frontline fighter jets at the forward bases all along the 4,000 km long LAC. They include SU-30s, Jaguars and MIG-29s.

The newly inducted Apache attack helicopters along with Chinook heavy lift transport helicopters are also flying regular sorties near the LAC in Ladakh.

Covid-19 infection cases in paramilitary forces touch 17K mark

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Two of the biggest paramilitary forces—CRPF and BSF have surpassed the 5,000 mark in terms of Covid infection with both recording around 5,500 cases each. The two forces have recorded 42 deaths due to the pandemic.

Total Covid infection for the five paramilitary forces—CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP and SSB— have touched the 17,000 mark excluding the tally of infected personnel from the National Security Guards (NSG) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), both of which are deputationist forces drawing personnel from the paramilitary ranks. As per the last count earlier this month, the NSG had reported around 500 cases of Covid infection besides about 100 in the NSG.

The combined death toll of the five paramilitary forces is 64 and 7,287 patients in the five forces continue to be active out of a tally of 16,961 Covid-19 infections. The combined death toll of the five paramilitary forces is 64 and 7,204 patients in the five forces continue to be active. The five paramilitary forces have added over 4,000 new cases of infection in their ranks in the last 10 days.

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has recorded a tally of 5,467 cases of which 2,846 are active, which is the highest number of infected personnel in a paramilitary force. As many as 2,597 patients had recovered and 24 personnel succumbed to the infection in the CRPF. The casualty figures of the CRPF is also highest among the paramilitary forces.

The Border Security Force (BSF) has reported 5,404 cases of Covid-19 in its ranks till date including 1,912 active patients and 3,474 personnel who have recovered from the viral infection besides 18 deaths.

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has reported 2,763 cases of Covid-19 infection. Out of th 2,763 cases, as many as 774 continue to be active and 1,974 have recovered. The paramilitary has suffered casualties of 15 personnel due to the disease induced by novel coronavirus.

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has reported 2,113 cases of infection from the pandemic including 1,170 active cases and 941 recoveries besides three deaths.

The Sashatra Seema Bal (SSB) has recorded 1,214 cases of the deadly disease out of which 585 continue to be active and 625 patients have recovered. It incurred loss of lives of four personnel due to the viral disease.

The CISF has reported 2,763 cases including 14 deaths and the SSB has 1,214 cases and four deaths.

As on August 1, the paramilitary forces, including NDRF and NSG had reported around 13,000 cases of Covid-19 infection.

121 cops get HM Medal for Excellence in Investigation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The "Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation" for the year 2020 has been awarded to 121 Police personnel. Among the personnel receiving these awards, 15 are from CBI, 10 each are from Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra Police, eight are from Uttar Pradesh Police, seven each are from Kerala and West Bengal Police. 21 women police officers are also included in the medal list announced by Ministry of Home Affairs.

This medal was constituted in 2018 with the objective to promote high professional standards of investigation of crime and to recognise such Excellence in Investigation by investigating officers. "A thorough Investigation plays a pivotal role in delivering justice. I congratulate all the recipients of 'Medal for Excellence in Investigation-2020'. This is recognition of the outstanding service and commitment of our police personnel. India is proud of them!," tweeted Home Minister Amit Shah.

The recipients are from Constable to Deputy Commissioner of Police ranks. State Police, CBI, NIA personnel involved in the investigation duty are considered for this annual medal.

Covid-19: SC seeks response from Centre on plea to ban disinfection tunnels

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has sought response from the Centre on a PIL seeking an immediate ban on use, installation, production and advertisement of disinfectant tunnels set up to curb the spread of coronavirus.

A three-judge bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and M R Shah issued notices to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare while seeking their replies.

PIL by law student Gursimran Singh Narula

"Issue notice to respondent Nos. 1 to 3...Counsel for the petitioner may serve a copy of the petition in the office of the Solicitor General, who may obtain instructions. List the matter after two weeks," the bench said.

The top court was hearing a PIL filed by law student Gursimran Singh Narula seeking ban on usage, installation, production, advertisement of disinfection tunnels involving spraying or fumigation of organic disinfectants for the purposes disinfecting human beings.

Rahul takes dig at 'Modi hai toh mumkin hai' over GDP prediction

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday took a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi citing BJP's election slogan "Modi hai toh mumkin hai" while attacking the Government over reported claims that India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth may be lowest since Independence.

Taking to Twitter, Rahul shared Infosys co-founder N.R. Narayana Murthy's purported remark that "GDP growth may hit the lowest point since 1947". "Modi hai toh mumkin hai," he tweeted.

Last week, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said India's real GDP will contract in the first half of FY21 as well as full financial year.

The former Congress chief has been vociferously targeting the Prime Minister and BJP-led government over several issues including the standoff with China, economic distress, and COVID-19 handling.

Flagging fears that the country's GDP growth may even touch its lowest since independence in the backdrop of coronavirus pandemic, Murthy on Monday said the economy should be brought back on track and people should be prepared to live with the pathogen. He also pitched for developing a new system that should allow every player in every sector of the country's economy to operate at full steam with suitable precautions.

"India's GDP is expected to shrink by at least five per cent. There is a fear that we may even reach the lowest GDP (growth) since independence, since 1947," Murthy said.

Couple of days ago, Rahul had hit out at the centre over the unemployment issue accusing the Narendra Modi government of failing to meet its promises.

He accused the Narendra Modi government of failing to meet its promise of jobs for two crore people every year, and then enacting policies that "destroyed India's economic structure" and left crores without jobs. He launched the "Rozgar Do" campaign and urged young people without jobs to raise their voices, speak out and "awaken the government from its slumber".

Recovery rate crosses 70% for Covid-19 patients in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's Covid-19 recovery rate crossed past 70 per cent on Wednesday with 16,39,599 people having recovered from the disease so far in the country, while active cases comprise 27.64 pc of the total caseload, the Union Health Ministry said.

The case fatality rate has further declined to 1.98 per cent, it said.

The highest single-day recoveries at 56,110 are the result of the successful implementation of effective containment strategy, aggressive and comprehensive testing coupled with standardised clinical management of the critical patients based on holistic standard of care approach, said the Ministry.

The coordinated efforts of the central, state and UT governments have resulted in continuously increasing average daily recoveries, it said.

"In the first week of July, the daily average recovered cases were at 15,000 which jumped to more than 50,000 in the first week of August," it said.

"With more patients recovering and being discharged from hospitals and home isolation (in case of mild and moderate cases), the total recoveries have crossed the 16 lakh-mark and recovery rate has reached another high of 70.38 per cent," it added.

There are 6,43,948 active cases of coronavirus which is "actual caseload" of COVID-19 in the country and currently comprise 27.64 per cent of the total positive cases.

They are under active medical supervision.

With a consistent and sustained increase in recoveries, the gap between recovered patients and active COVID-19 cases has reached nearly 10 lakh, the Ministry stated.

Focus on improved and effective clinical treatment in hospitals, use of non-invasive, improved and coordinated services of the ambulances for ferrying patients for prompt and timely treatment have resulted in seamless efficient patient management of Covid-19 patients.

India's 'test, track, treat' strategy has achieved another peak with 7,33,449 tests done in 24 hours on Tuesday. This has taken the cumulative tests to more than 2.6 crore. The tests per million has jumped to 18,852, it stated.

States advised not to chart separate ways for procuring vaccine shots once ready

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The national expert group on vaccine administration for Covid-19 which met for the first time on Wednesday to deliberate on various issues pertaining to the procurement mechanisms for the vaccine has advised all the States not to chart separate pathways of procurement of the shots whenever they are readied.

The suggestion came to ensure the central control on the distribution of the vaccine and the States do not start purchasing the vaccine at their whims and fancies as had happened in the case of the purchase of rapid antigen testing kits, some of which were later found to be faulty.

"Some States had purchased the RT-PCR and rapid antigen kits which created lots of confusion. In the matter of vaccine, we want the process to be smooth and distribution is as per requirements," said a senior official who attended the meeting chaired by Niti Aayog Member, Dr. V K Paul, with Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan as co-chair.

Three vaccine candidates are in different stages of human clinical trials in India -the Covid-19 vaccine candidate developed by University of Oxford by Pune-based Serum Institute of India, the inactivated virus vaccine by Bharat Biotech and the DNA vaccine by Zydus Cadila.

In the meeting the group deliberated on conceptualisation and implementation mechanisms for creation of a digital infrastructure for inventory management and delivery mechanism of the vaccine, including tracking of vaccination process with particular focus on last mile delivery.

The group also deliberated on the procurement mechanisms for Covid-19 vaccine, including both indigenous and international manufacturing along with guiding principles for prioritisation of population groups for vaccination.

They discussed broad parameters guiding the selection of the Covid-19 vaccine candidates for the country and sought inputs from the Standing Technical Sub-Committee of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI).

Besides this, it also discussed the financial resources required for procurement of the Covid-19 vaccine and various options of financing the same. Available options in terms of delivery platforms, cold chain and associated infrastructure for roll out of Covid-19 vaccination were also taken up.

India's support to its key neighbours and development partner countries for Covid-19 vaccines was also taken up.

Govt misrepresented implications of Draft EIA Notification 2020: Ramesh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after Union Environment Minister Prakash Javedekar said that the draft Environment Impact Assessment notification is yet to be finalised, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh accused the Government of "misrepresenting" the implications of the Draft on the country's environmental regulatory framework and its impact on environment calling it "fundamentally flawed."

In a letter to Javadekar, Ramesh a former Environment Minister, said the Standing Committee met on August 7 and was apprised by officials on the Draft EIA Notification 2020.

"I am compelled to say that you are misrepresenting the implications of the Draft EIA Notification, 2020, on our country's environmental regulatory framework and its impact on the environment," Ramesh said, adding that he has read his reply in conjunction with the presentation made by the officials, along with the feedback received from various stakeholders.

He suggested the Government to keep the Notification in abeyance until the Standing Committee has examined it.

"The notification is fundamentally flawed and makes a mockery of the prime minister's many statements on the need to protect the environment and India's leadership in this regard," he said.

The Congress leader asked how can a subordinate legislation override the parent Act from which it is derived like the Draft EIA Notification 2020 does vis-a-vis the Environment Protection Act, 1986.

"Your claim that the clearance is not an ex post facto one as 'it is prospective in nature, and previous actions will be penalized' is contrary to how it will actually play out in reality.

"If the clearance permits the illegally constructed portion of the project to remain or the illegal operating part of the project to continue, and there is no direction for demolition of the illegal portion or reduction of the illegally enhanced capacity -- then it is not a prospective clearance. It is being granted ex post facto, and it is regularizing the illegality committed by the project proponent," he said.

"It appears from the processes proposed in Clause 22 of the Draft Notification that the government's objective is to give all the violators an opportunity to regularize their illegal activities," he alleged.

Covid-19 Impact: Patients with aplastic anemia at receiving end

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Poverty, Government apathy and Covid-19 induced-lockdown restricting travel proved fatal for little Kishan, a 11-year-old boy suffering from Aplastic anemia, a life-threatening blood disorder condition in which the bone marrow and stem cells do not produce enough blood cells

Facing severe financial constraints and waiting timely medical aid, first at Safdarjung Hospital and then AIIMS, both Government hospitals in Delhi, Kishan's life was cut short in March this year amid Covid-19 pandemic.

However, Kishan's is not a lone case. Dr Nita Radhakrishnan, paediatric haemato-oncologist at Super Speciality Paediatric Hospital, Noida, Uttar Pradesh says that as the deadly Coronavirus captured the attention of the nation in the most unprecedented manner, the non-Covid patients particularly those with the Aplastic anemia have suffered the most in the crisis.

She gave instances of her two teenage patients who succumbed to blood disorder in the Covid catastrophe. "Manish (name change), a 17-year-old was suffering with on-and-off fever, gum bleeding, and melena for three months, he came to us in December last year just when Coronavirus had started spreading its tentacles from China to other parts of the world."

The boy was diagnosed with severe Aplastic anemia and was recommended requisite treatment like regular hospital visit for red cell transfusion before he could be given bone marrow transplant (BMT), a life saving treatment.

"However, while the family was not able to visit our hospital in Noida due to the covid-lockdown, no blood products

were available at the hospital near to the patient's locality. In want of blood, Manish could not survive more days.

13-year-old Suresh (name change) too faced similar fate. While Government funds could not be sanctioned for his BMT in time the boy could not visit the Noida hospital for further follow-up due to travel restrictions. Two weeks later, Suresh died due to hemorrhage at his native place, lamented the doctor.

These are just two reported cases from the NCR hospital located near the country's capital. Several have gone unreported. The Government has no policy nor any long-term plan for such patients.

"The prognosis of severe aplastic anemia in our country is dismal. The incidence of 4–6 per million population of childhood aplastic anemia in India and other Asian countries is higher than what is observed in the West," explains Dr Radhakrishnan. The scenario is gloomy for the patients afflicted with the disease as they need blood transfusion almost every 20 days.

A significant proportion of patients of aplastic anemia (around 30 per cent) die before any definitive treatment is initiated. A study by AIIMS based on a recent series of patients follow-up showed that out of 1501 patients diagnosed over last seven years, only 303 ie 20 per cent received the definitive treatment modalities through either BMT or IST with ATG and cyclosporine, says Dr Radhakrishnan in her case report "Aplastic anemia: Non-COVID casualties in the Covid-19 era," published in the latest edition of Indian Journal of Palliative Care.

The doctors have sought urgent intervention. Dr Radhakrishnan says that "as we await the peak of Covid-19 in our country and possibly secondary and tertiary waves thereafter, patients with aplastic anemia who are the sickest among all hematological illnesses would benefit greatly from urgent intervention from the Government to ensure timely treatment."

A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF PATIENTS OF APLASTIC ANEMIA (AROUND 30 PER CENT) DIE BEFORE ANY DEFINITIVE TREATMENT IS INITIATED

"Those suffering with Aplastic anemia, there is mostly delay in diagnosis, delay in initiation of treatment due to monetary constraints, non-inclusion of the disease under government schemes such as Ayushman Bharat and NHM and delay in sanction of money from other Government schemes such as Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi, Chief Minister and Prime Minister's relief fund often due to lack of proper documents, she added.

Delay means, risk of contracting fungal infections and increase in drug-resistant bacterial infections increase which further hamper the treatment, point out Dr Ravi Shankar and Dr Savitri Singh in the study.

Though the Union Health Ministry, after few days of lockdown period, issued directions for continuing treatment for essential health services including reproductive and maternal health services, newborn care, severe malnutrition, and NCDs including cancer care, palliative care, dialysis, and care of disabled, unfortunately those with Aplastic anemia got ignored.

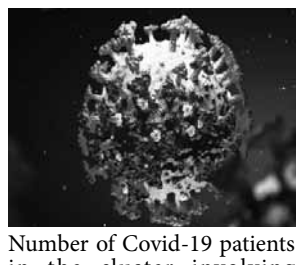
This despite of the fact that these patients are at the highest risk of death following a break in the treatment of few weeks, notes Dr Radhakrishnan.

Because of the closure of offices and absence of staff, during the lockdown period, there was delay in sanction of usual grants due to the lockdown of offices and inability in generating documents such as income certificate from the tehsils.

"For instance, Suresh and Manish, both our patients received the Government grant after around 3–4 months of applying for the same. But both had died before they could reach the hospital for treatment," lamented the hematologist.

TN: 5,871 +ve, 119 die on Wed

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI



Tamil Nadu on Wednesday diagnosed 5,871 new persons with Covid-19 while 119 patients succumbed to the pandemic during the 24 hours that ended at 6 pm on Wednesday, said a medical bulletin issued by the Department of Health.

There were 52, 929 active cases as on Wednesday evening all over the State. Number of patients subjected to testing on Wednesday saw an increase as 69, 697 persons were tested across the State thanks to the 133 laboratories.

Till Wednesday, the State has tested 3.14 lakh positive cases while 2.56 lakh has been cured of the pandemic. Number of Covid-19 patients in the cluster involving Chennai, Chengalpet, Kancheepuram and Thiruvallur districts remained high compared to other districts.

Chennai had 993 patients as on Wednesday while Chengalpet had 439 patients. Kancheepuram (371) and Thiruvallur (407) did not show any signs of abatement of the pandemic.

Jawan hurt as terrorists target QRT convoy on Srinagar-Baramulla highway

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In the run up to the Independence day celebrations in Kashmir valley, terrorists on Wednesday targeted a Quick Reaction Team (QRT) of the Indian Army along the Srinagar-Baramulla National Highway injuring one soldier.

High alert has already been sounded along the vulnerable stretches of different highways and interior road links across Jammu & Kashmir to prevent any major strike by terrorists or IED attack on security convoys in the coming days.

Quick reaction teams and sniffer dogs have been pressed into service along with road opening parties to thoroughly sanitise the road networks ahead of the movement of security convoys.

Meanwhile, in another anti-terrorist operation, the joint teams of the security forces eliminated a local commander of pro-Pakistan terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen while one jawan of the Indian Army sacrificed his life during the operation in Kamrazipora area of Pulwama.

The terrorist killed in the operation has been identified as Hizb-ul-Mujahideen commander Azaad Lalhari.

Police said, "Azaad Lalhari was involved in the killing of police head constable Anoop Singh on 22 May 2020 at Prichu Pulwama where he fired at a naka party".

At least six FIRs were registered against him for different terrorist related incidents of violence in the area.

According to Srinagar based Defence Spokesman, Col Rajesh Kalia, "Terrorists fired at a Quick Reaction Team (QRT) of Indian Army on wednesday. The QRT was moving from Baramulla towards Gulmarg on the Srinagar-Baramulla National Highway near Trumgund Hygam crossing. One Army soldier was injured. Search operation in progress".

Sharing details of Operation Kamrazipora, Pulwama, Col Kalia said, "One terrorist was killed. 01 AK along with grenades, pouches & other war like stores recovered. One soldier laid down his life in the line of duty".

He said the martyred army jawan has been identified as 25 years old Sowar Jilajeet Yadav of Jaunpur district in Uttar Pradesh.

Before dispatching his mortal remains to his native village, Lt Gen BS Raju, Chinar Corps Commander and all ranks paid homage to the braveheart.He is survived by his wife, Punam Devi.

Covid positive to virus negative for a price?

Operators' salary withheld

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

The Health Department has transformed the corona era into an opportunity for corruption. The data operators posted here are wrongly entering the name-address, mobile number after taking bribe from the people. ACM-2 Ranjit Singh has revealed the data operators posted at Deendayal Hospital to have a breach in records at the time of sampling of a jeweler's son. One month salary of three operators has been withheld. They have also been given notices. This action has caused panic in the health department.

The case relates to a jewelers family running a jewelery shop near Meenakshi Bridge. The family hails from Prayag Mill Compound. Saraf and his wife and one son underwent antigen test at Deendayal Hospital on August 4. In this test, husband and wife were found to be infected, while the son was found to be negative. On this, the couple was sent on home isolation and the son's sample was sent for RTPCR investigation. On August 7, he was found positive with corona virus. It is said that on this, the administration tried to find him based on the records, but the mobile number written in the record started going off. A person with that name was also not found at the address. On DM's order, ACM-2 Ranjit Singh started investigation. This made the data operators nervous and corrected the young man's name on the record. On 10 August, the young man was caught. During interrogation of the youth, it was revealed that the father had misnamed his son's name with the help of the data operators. He was sent to grand mother's house when the report came positive.

According to ACM-2, one month's salary of accused data operators Shivam, Ravi and Tarun has been withheld. The matter is very serious. They have been given notices. All three are on contract. Along with this, two lab technicians Pushpendra and Omar have also been found to be doing negligient work in registering name, address and mobile number. A warning has been given to them for such negligience and carelessness in the name of bribe.

Gold bars imported as Qurans, alleges Kerala BJP chief

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Two serious allegations have been made by two prominent Opposition leaders in Kerala against the CPI(M)-led Government. K Surendran, BJP State Chief alleged that the consignment from UAE Conuslate received by KT Jaleel, higher Education Minister who is also the former SIMI leader, were gold bars and not Qurans.

The Minister had claimed from day one onwards that the boxes contained Quran for distribution in the State. But the UAE Embassy officials in New Delhi had made it clear that the West Asian country never sends Quran to other countries as a matter of policy.

The Customs officials who inspected the C APT (Centre for Advanced Printing and Training), a Government of Kerala organisation that comes under the Higher Education Department had found that the consignment was brought to this office before it was sent to other places in the State in Department Vehicles.

Surendra said that the gold smuggling through diplomatic channel was the handiwork of big sharks and not small fish. "Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan knows who are the persons behind the massive gold smuggling syndicate as many people in his office were associated with it," said Surendran while addressing a virtual rally at Palakkadu.

Ramesh Chennithala, leader of opposition, while addressing reporters at the State capital said that the situation in Kerala due to Covid-19 was pathetic because the Chief Minister and his council of Ministers failed to tackle the spread of the pandemic.

1,212 new cases in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Kerala Government has managed to bring down the number of new coronavirus patients on Wednesday to 1,212 according to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

Briefing the media on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said that 880 persons were cured of the pandemic and discharged from hospitals. But out of the 1,212 persons tested positive on Wednesday, 1,068 contracted Covid-19 through local contact. 45 persons who tested positive failed to give the details of the source from where they contracted the pandemic," he said.

The Chief Minister said that though some regions showed abatement of the pandemic, situation in most districts remained critical.

"The superintendents of police in the districts are devising strategies to counter the pandemic and it will definitely bring down the Covid-19 in the State," said Vijayan.

He said 28, 664 samples were tested during the last 24 hours while five persons succumbed to the pandemic. Thiruvananthapuram which tested 266 positive cases remained the district with the highest number of covid-19 patients.

According to Vijayan, Kerala continued to be the State with the best Covid-19 management and administration.

People coming out to support three-language formula in TN

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Close on the heels of Prof E Balagurusamy, former Vice-Chancellor, Anna University, who lambasted the Tamil Nadu Government and the Dravidian parties for their opposition towards the three-language formula proposed by the Centre in its National Education Policy, more social activists, educationists and parents have come out questioning the propriety behind the resistance to introduce other languages in Tamil Nadu. An educationist has called for a referendum on the issue of introducing a three-language formula.

Vanathi Srinivasan, vice-president, Tamil Nadu BJP who has been fighting to get the impeded irrigation projects in the State's fertile Kongunadu region going, charged the Dravidian politicians who play with the future of the children. "None of them send their children to Government Schools but to public schools which charge exorbitant fees where Hindi, Sanskrit are all compulsory. But these politicians make sure that Hindi is not taught in Government -run schools because they want to keep students from poor and rural families in perpetual ignorance," said Srinivsan.

An apolitical person like Vijayashree Ramesh, lawyer and activist, pointed out that Chennai is the headquarters of Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha because the founder, Mahatma Gandhi, wanted students in Tamil Nadu as well as other South Indian States to learn Hindi. "Interestingly, the owners and proprietors of private schools which teach Hindi as a compulsory subject are the ones who oppose the introduction of Hindi or three-language formula in the State. It is sad and shocking that students in Tamil Nadu do not get the opportunity to learn in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya. The opposition to Hindi by the Dravidian political parties are causing havoc in the lives of poor students in Tamil Nadu," said Ramesh.

Srinivasan said the opposition of Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswai was only because of DMK president Stalin's opposition to Hindi. "Palaniswami fears that if he supports Hindi, he may lose out to Stalin in the race for Chief Minister's chair in the next assembly election," she said.

Mizoram to boost Covid testing capacity

Aizawl: The Mizoram Government will Purchase 10,000 more rapid antigen kits to boost the states Covid-19 testing capacity, Chief Minister Zoramthanga said on Wednesday.

The Chief Minister made the announcement at a meeting with officials of the state government, NGOs, churches and doctors, according to an official.

Every citizen should take precautionary measures as community transmission can take place at any time.

The preventive measure is for our safety against the pandemic. Testing should be done in a massive way and more rapid antigen kits will be purchased, Zoramthanga was quoted as saying by the official.

It was agreed at the meeting that the existing safety protocol will be enforced more strictly in the wake of the spurt in cases, the official said.

Funerals with maximum 50 people will henceforth be held either at church halls or community halls but not in private residences to ensure that social distancing is strictly followed, he said. ***PTI***

87 infected in Nagaland, tally rises to 3,118

Kohima: Nagaland on Wednesday reported 87 New Covid-19 cases while 129 people recovered from the virus in the state, an official of the Heath department said.

With the 87 fresh cases, the state's Covid-19 tally has increased to 3,118 of which 1,991 are active cases as 1,113 people have recovered from the disease, eight have died and six have migrated to other states, the official said.

"87 new +ve cases of Covid-19 have been detected out of 614 samples tested. 48 in Dimapur, 35 in Kohima, 3 in Zunheboto & 1 in Wokha. Necessary contact tracing have activated. Wear Mask, Keep Distance, Stay Safe," Nagaland Health minister S Pangnyu Phom tweeted.

Additional Director, Health and Family Welfare, Dr Denis Hangsing said 129 Covid-19 patients tested negative for the virus on Wednesday, taking the total number of recovered people to 1,113.

This has improved the recovery rate of the state to 35.69 per cent from Tuesdays 32.49 per cent, he said.

On August 6 the state had reported the highest number of 134 recoveries. Nagaland reported the first three Covid-19 cases on May 25 while the highest single-day spike was recorded on August 4 with 276 cases. ***PTI***

Assam flood: 3 districts remain submerged

Guwahati: Dhemaji, Baksa and Morigaon Districts of Assam continued to remain submerged on Wednesday, even as floodwaters receded from most parts of the state, according to an official bulletin.

At present, 14,205 people are suffering due to the deluge in these three districts while 7,009 hectares cropland is affected, according to the daily flood bulletin of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA).

Dhemaji is the worst-hit district with 12,908 people affected, followed by Baksa where 1,000 people are suffering, and Morigaon with 297 people hit by the calamity. On Tuesday, 13,800 persons were reported to be affected across the three districts.

The total number of people losing their lives in this year's flood and landslide stands at 136 across the state. Of them, 110 persons were killed in flood-related incidents and 26 died in landslides. ***PTI***

Maha records spike with 344 deaths, 12,712 +ve cases

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Breaching the 300-fatality mark on the third occasion during the current month, Covid-19 claimed 344 more lives and left 12,712 others infected in various parts of Maharashtra on Wednesday.

Maharashtra, which had witnessed 334 pandemic deaths on August 5 and 390 deaths on August 9, recorded 344 deaths on Wednesday, thus taking the total number of deaths to 18650.

With 12,712 fresh infections, the total number of infections in the state jumped to 5,48,313. Of the 344 deaths reported on Wednesday, Mumbai accounted for 50 deaths, followed by 41 deaths in Pune and 33 in Thane district.

Apart from deaths reported in Mumbai, Pune and Thane, there were 29 deaths in Nagpur, 28 deaths in Nashik, 19 in Kolhapur, 16 each in Jalgaon and Latur, 14 in Sangli, 13 in Palghar, 11 in Solapur, and 10 in Nanded, 8 deaths in Satara, 7 each in Parbhani and Osmanabad, 6 in Ahmednagar, 4 each in Nandurbar and Amravati, 3 each in Raigad, Dhule, Aurangabad and Jalna, 2 each in Ratnagiri, Beed, Akola and Gondiya and death each in Hingoli, Yavatmal, Buldhana, Washim, Bhandara and Chandrapur. In addition, two persons from other states died in Maharashtra.

With 50 fresh deaths, Mumbai's Covid-19 toll rose from 6,893 to 6,943, while the the total number of infected cases rose by 1,132 to touch 126,356 now.

In a related development, as many as 13408 patients were discharged from hospitals in the state after full recovery, taking the total number of patients discharged from various hospitals after full recovery since the second week of March this year to 3,81,843. The recovery rate went up to 69.64 per cent. The mortality rate in the state is 3.4 per cent. The state health authorities pegged the number of "active cases" in the state at 1,47,513

Pune, which has emerged as the second worst-affected district in terms of spread of the pandemic, has recorded 1,19,628 infections and 2865 deaths till now.

With 108399 infected cases and 3125 deaths, Thane continued to be the third-worst hit district in Maharashtra.

Out of 29,08,887 samples sent to laboratories, 5,48,313 have tested positive (18.84 per cent) for COVID-19 until Wednesday.

Currently, 10,15,115 people are in home quarantine while 35,880 people are in institutional quarantine.

Bengal reschedules lockdown days, Opposition sees politics

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Bengal Government on Wednesday rescheduled the bi-weekly lockdown dates for the third time in the past two weeks triggering strong criticism from the Opposition parties some of which called it a "Tughlaqi system at work" while others like the BJP attacked Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for "planning community-based political lockdown."

Under the new scheme there will be no lockdown on August 28. Earlier in order to break the corona chain the State Government had ordered lockdowns on August 20, 21, 27, 28 and 31 which was in addition to the two lock downs in the first week of this month.

A Government circular said, "Several communications have been received citing difficulty to conduct of businesses and banking operations because of 2-days lockdown during Thursday and Friday in the last week of August 2020 followed by one-day lockdown on the following Monday."

This would lead to lockdowns for five consecutive days which would hamper banking services, officials said.

Hence "State Government has considered the requests for relaxation of lockdown as would be necessary and essential. Lockdown on Friday 28 August 2020...is hereby withdrawn and statewide complete lockdown shall now be observed on: Thursday 20 August; Friday 21 August; Thursday 27 August and Monday 31 August," the order said.

Meanwhile, coming down heavily on the Government for running a "Tughlaqi system," Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Chowdhury said "it is difficult to understand how an elected government can work like this… The Chief Minister herself sat several occasions with her officers to plan out things in the presence of the media… in spite of so many qualified people including the Chief Minister working on the days they could not decide on the exact dates and had to change the days five times.

"It is ridiculous. More so because while the Government is struggling with scheduling and rescheduling the lockdown days the corona virus is attacking more and more people. The doctors are dying, nurses are doing, policemen are dying, the private hospitals have been left to loot the people at will and they are scheduling and rescheduling the lockdown days."

5-year-old girl raped, admitted in critical condition to Raj hospital

Kota: A five-year-old girl was admitted to hospital in a critical condition after she was raped allegedly by a 19-year-old man in Rajasthan's Baran district, police said on Wednesday.

The incident took place in Shahabad area on Tuesday evening, they said. According to Shahabad Circle Officer Kajodmal, the girl was profusely bleeding after the incident and was rushed to Baran district hospital on Tuesday night.

Later, she was referred to Jay Kay Lon hospital in Kota, the officer said.

The girl underwent one surgery on Wednesday afternoon and there would be two more surgeries, he said. The accused in the case has been detained, said Shahabad SHO Hariprasad Rana.

The girl, who belongs to a tribal community, had gone outside to attend nature's call at around 5 pm on Tuesday when the suspect, who was in an inebriated condition, allegedly attacked her, the station house officer said. ***PTI***

Institute of Horticulture Technology
Guwahati, Mandira, Kamrup – 781127

Expression of Interest

The administrative officer ofInstitute of horticulture Technology invites Expression of Interest in Seal cover from Institutes, public sector undertaking, private entrepreneur, agenesis. Project from Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India New Delhi ""Establishment of Biotech-KISAN Hub at IHT Mandira Assam " Banana micro propagation unitWe invite the EOI companies interested to quote on Turnkey basis. Including all material, as per our work plan details available on our website .Total duration of completion of project is 20 days of from date of order, the sealed Expression of interest should be submitted to this institute on or before in21 days from the date of publishing of this EOI , the technical bid will be open at the same date at 11:00 am, and financial bid next day at 11:00 am in the office of Institute of Horticulture Technology Mandira, Kamrup -781127. The sealed envelopes technical and commercial bid separately and 2% EMD of THE project cost, in technical bid envelop should be mentioned the project name

sd
Administrative officer
Institute of Horticulture Technology
Email Id: enquiry@iht.edu.in

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY
KANKE, RANCHI-834006 (JHARKHAND)

NOTICE

Director, Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi invites the applications for the posts of Senior Residents. Details of vacant posts are as under.

1. Senior Resident - **15 posts**
   Psychiatry - 10 (Un-reserved-04) (Reserved (Vertical) ST-01, SC-02 & OBC-03, (Horizontal) PH-1)
   Neurology - 04 (Un-reserved-02, SC-01 & ST-01)
   Radio-diagnosis-01 (Un-reserved)

Desirous candidates fulfilling the qualification may appear for the walk-in-interview with their application in the prescribed format giving full details of academic records and experience alongwith original and attested photocopy of the relevant documents with recent photograph on 04.09.2020 at 9.30 A.M. at this institute. Details can be seen on the institute's website **www.cipranchi.nic.in**

Sd/-
Director

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

SR. No.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	PWD B&R, HISAR	CONSTRUCTION OF GOVT. INDUSTRIAL TRAINING INSTITUTE AT BHAKLANA IN DISTT. HISAR (PDG. CCTV CAMERA SYSTEM ONLY). + 9 OTHER WORKS	13.08.2020 21.08.2020	36.70 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01662-225651/ pwd-eeed-hissar@hry.nic.in
2	PWD B&R ,BAHADURGARH	RENOVATION OF OFFICE BUILDING OF DISTRICT INDUSTRIES CENTRE AT BAHADURGARH IN JHAJJAR DISTRICT	05.08.2020 17.08.2020	21.91 LAKHS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	8901333000 pwdeepdbahadurgarh@hry.nic.in
3	PWD B&R, HISAR	PDG. MGP & ALLIED WORK IN CHC AT SISWAL IN DISTT. HISAR + 4 OTHER WORKS	13.08.2020 28.08.2020	77.72 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01662-225651/ pwd-eeed-hissar@hry.nic.in
4	PWD B&RCHANDIGARH.	PROVIDING SECURITY GUARDING/FRONT DESK/HOUSE KEEPING SERVICES OF NIRMAN SADAN BUILDING IN SECTOR-33-A, CHANDIGARH WITH 10400 SQ. METER COVERED AREA FOR THE YEAR 2020-21 (I.E. FROM 01.07.2020 TO 31.03.2021). + 1 OTHER WORK	11.08.2020 31.08.2020	42.38 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0172-2618279 pwd-eecd-chanidgarh@hry.nic.in
5	PWD B&R, SONEPAT	IMPROVEMENT BY PROVIDING WIDENING & STRENGTHENING & 30MM THICK B.C. ON VARIOUS ROADS OF BARODA CONSTITUENCY IN PROVINCIAL DIVISION NO.1, SONEPAT (ROAD- ID 6173, 6162, 6170, 6161, 2642, KILOI TO PUGTHALA ROAD (VILLAGE BHAINSWAL) & MOI HOODA TO KHANPUR KALAN (VILLAGE SIKANDERPUR MAJRA) (ROAD ID- 6174) IN SONEPAT DISTT. (GROUP–I) + 3 OTHER WOKRS	CLOSING DATE 21.08.2020	1066.95 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0130-2244690 pwd-eepd1-sonepat@hry.nic.in
6	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA GOHANA	REPLACING THE EXISTING PIPE CULVERTS WITH 1200MM HUME PIPE ON VARIOUS DRAINS OF BARODA CONSTITUENCY. + 4 OTHER WORKS	14.08.2020 20.08.2020	265 LACS	www.hid.gov.in	Sanjeev Kumar Executive Engineer.
7	FOREST DEPARTMENT DIVISION, PINJORE, DISTT. PANCHKULA	ESTABLISHMENT OF TEN MIST CHAMBERS (1040 SQM) IN TWO BLOCKS WITH TWO HARDENING CHAMBER (1000 SQM) AT SEONTHI (KKR)	07.08.2020 18.08.2020	2.15 CRORE	https://etenders.hry.nic.in (Tender No. 138739 Dt.07/08/2020)	01733-230726
8	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT BAWAL	(TENDER NO. 2020_HRY_139038) OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF 1 NO. STP/ MPS 3.00 MLD STP AT NANGLI PARSAPUR ROAD, BAWAL TOWN DISTT. REWARI BASED ON MBBR TECHNOLOGY (FOR CIVIL WORKS, ELECT. & MECH INSTALLATION, HORTICULTURE, WATCH & WARD ETC.) AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERE TO." + 1 OTHER WORK	11.08.2020 18.08.2020	16.79 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01282-260062 eebawal@gmail.com
9	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT HARYANA YAMUNA NAGAR	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF UV-VISIBLE SPECTROPHOTOMETER, PH,COND,TDS , TURBIDITY METER AND ION METER COMPLETE IN ALL RESPECT AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERETO	11.08.2020 19.08.2020	8.07 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in TENDER NO 2020_HRY_138973_1	01732-237826 / ee2ynagar@phedharyana.gov.in
10	PANCHAYATI RAJ PANIPAT	CONST. OF COMMUNITY CENTRE AT VILLAGE GARHI BHALOUR, BLOCK PANIPAT + 1 OTHER WORKS	14.08.2020 21.08.2020	35.65 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	8607592660
11	PANCHAYATI RAJ JHAJJAR	CONST. OF ONE C.CENTRE, ONE GENERAL CHAUPAL, ONE PIPE LINE AND 3 NOS. RASTA. (RE-TENDER)	10.08.2020 24.08.2020	120.74 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01251-254118 /prexeeng.jjr @hry.nic.in
12	PANCHAYATI RAJ KURUKSHETRA	CONSTRUCTION OF VILLAGE KNOWLEDGE CENTERS.	11.08.2020 31.08.2020	383.20 LACS	https://etender.nic.in	01744-251090 94161-91639 prexeeng.krk@ hry.nic.in
13	PANCHAYATI RAJ, HISAR.	TENDER FOR CONSTRUCTION OF 11 NOS MULTI GYM WORKS 1 NO MULTI GYM 16 STATIONS 1 NO MULTI GYM 12 STATIONS 5 NO MULTI GYM 10 STATIONS 4 NO MULTI GYM 5 STATIONS	11.08.2020 24.08.2020	19.60 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	94672-51500 prexeeng.hsr@hry.nic.in
14	PANCHAYATI RAJ, AMBALA	CONST. OF BRICK PAVED RASTA AT VILLAGE KHATOULI , BLOCK AMBALA-II (RE-CALL)	06.08.2020 13.08.2020	18.70 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0171-2551368/ prexeeng.amb@hry.nic.in

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Women legal heirs

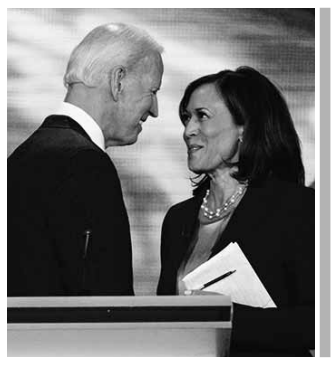
SC allows daughters to claim their rights on parental property with retrospective effect in a landmark ruling

Giving hope to millions of women, who have traditionally been denied a share in their parental property owing to the cultural preference for a son and the idea of "keeping the wealth within the family", the Supreme Court has said that daughters now have a birthright to parental property with retrospective effect. In essence, this allows women to challenge past injustices, coercion and denials and claim restoration of their economic rights. A three-judge Bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra ruled that a Hindu woman's right to be a joint heir to the ancestral property does not depend on whether her father was alive or not when an old segregatory law was amended in 2005. The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 gave Hindu women the right to be coparceners or joint legal heirs with men but did not clarify whether it could apply retrospectively. Not only does the ruling take away the gender bias from inheritance, one that has disempowered girls socially and led to their differential upbringing and value systems, the court also lauded daughters as more suitable and responsible heirs who deserve a share of parental legacy. "A son is a son till he takes him a wife...a daughter is a daughter all of her life," Justice Arun Mishra said while reading out the order. "A daughter remains a loving daughter throughout life," he added, emphasising the compassionate nature of women as care-givers. This also clears the decks for settling countless appeals on the issue that have been pending before different High Courts and subordinate courts on whether the amendment would be time-bound or not. Now that its applicability is crystal clear, this will not only open the floodgates for thousands of ancestral property-related disputes that had been put to rest but will also give women and their children, especially those who are not too well-heeled or financially independent, a fallback cushion. Traditionally, women have been denied a share in their fathers' property in the belief that a girl's share is given to her in the form of dowry and that one day she would inherit the property of her in-laws. Some enlightened families may have been reformist of their own accord but this has largely been the accepted social code. Yet it has been erroneous, for most women have been denied a share in the in-laws' ancestral property after the husband's death. Another drawback among women so far has been their poor or no legal awareness of their status as rightful stakeholders in family affairs. Even if they were aware of their rights, most women have been hesitant to claim their share in family estates as that would have meant going against their own flesh and blood for a piece of land or house. Plus, with most women in India brought up in a patriarchal society, they were made to believe that in case of a marriage going south or their single status, they would be supported by their father and in his absence, by the brother. Hence, most of them, over the years, have meekly given up their rights on property in exchange for this familial anchor. While mindset changes will only come with time, the ruling of the apex court unfetters those who are willing to stand up for their coparcenary rights.

It is no secret that access to property empowers women economically, provides them with a sense of security and self-worth and strengthens their decision-making powers. Research shows that ownership of property by women has reset the asymmetry in gender relations, resulting in reduced domestic violence, both physical and psychological. Owning assets also gives women caught in abusive relationships an exit route, which they might not have had otherwise, particularly if they are not financially independent. All in all, this judgment is a reassertion of the constitutional value of equality to women in personal law without any pre-conditions. However, one aspect that is being largely ignored in the media over the jubilation on this ruling is that there is a flip side, too. Coparcenary right is an undefined liability and any liability of the father, including the family debt and other dues, will be extended to daughters as well. So, it is not just about the right, it is about inheriting responsibility as well. Besides, what of women in other religious communities, who are governed by separate personal laws in several matters, including inheritance rights? While Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains are governed by laws on property rights codified in the amended Hindu Succession Act of 2005, Christians and Parsis are governed by the Indian Succession Act, 1925. Property rights of Muslims — both Shias and Sunnis — are yet to be codified. Till we uniformly address gender inequalities in the area of inheritance and have a representative civil rights framework for women across the spectrum, they would be subjected to abuse.

Kamala blooms

Kamala Harris is the third woman to stand for Vice-President of the US. Can she do better than the earlier two?



Kamala Harris' selection as the running mate of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden is a momentous one. She is just the third woman to stand for Vice-President of the United States after Geraldine Ferrero in 1984 and Sarah Palin in 2008 but the first woman of colour to do so. This, four years after Donald Trump unexpectedly defeated Hillary Clinton, the first female US presidential candidate for the White House. In India, too, Harris' nomination is being celebrated since her mother was a Tamilian. Yet, it's not her origin but what she represents that might just tilt the scales. Biden has been less than charismatic and Harris' activism and focussed campaigns on the Afro-American cause give the Democrats a sales pitch to fall back upon, that of upholding civil rights. Not new really, but tested enough. And likely to find some resonance when race relations have taken centrestage following the killing of George Floyd by a White officer. Besides, the Black community has been the worst affected by Trump's selective pandemic management. In all issues, be it of race, gender, healthcare and law enforcement, Harris has maintained a centrist record. But her drive has helped her push walls so far. Which is why Trump made his discomfort very much visible by calling her "extraordinarily nasty." He also accused her of being "the meanest, most horrible" of all US Senators.

With the US extremely fractured today, Harris possibly stands the best chance ever of having a woman occupy one of the top offices. That said, everyone expected Hillary Clinton to win in a landslide in 2016 and we all saw what happened. With Biden's mental acuity being questioned by many and Trump mobilising the Republican base, it would be fatal for the Democrats to take things for granted, particularly in some crucial battleground states which Trump snatched unexpectedly. While Harris was brought up single-handedly by her mother, after her parents divorced when she was five, and her father, the Jamaican-born economist Donald Harris, did extensive work in India, she identifies herself as a "Black" woman to build her political capital. Despite several in the Indian community urging her to recognise her heritage, she has consistently sought to downplay it. Incidentally, she is distantly related to India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. So while many in the Indian diaspora will celebrate her nomination, her politics is more often than not at variance with Indian interests. Indeed, she is as guilty as several other politicians of making some major policy flip-flops over the years. But with global geopolitics undergoing a sea change over the past few years and with China increasingly asserting itself, her views on India might change as well.

Politics of defection

MLAs jumping ship and resort politics are condemnable. There's a lot that our elected representatives need to learn from what Gandhi had expected of them

JS **RAJPUT**

One can easily recall umpteen instances of MLAs changing their ideological and political loyalties for reasons best known to them. Leaders who defect justify it as "the wish of the people." When the floor-crossing happened for the first time in Haryana, when an MLA switched party thrice in a day, the term, *Aaya Ram Gaya Ram* (party-switching) gained prominence in the political discourse — right from the chaupals to the Central Hall of Parliament — but was brushed aside as an "aberration." Slowly but steadily, the practice gained ground. Who can forget Bhajan Lal, the former Chief Minister of Haryana, who migrated to the then newly-elected ruling party at the Centre, lock, stock and barrel and retained his position?

The practice was subsequently polished and upgraded by leaders of all hues. One could go on counting the number of luxury hotels that have been used by parties to house their MLAs on numerous occasions. What happened in Rajasthan says it all. The MLAs, who enjoyed a comfortable stay in hotels at different locations in Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat, were convinced that if they went to their home State and their constituencies, they would not be able to resist the temptation of lucrative offers that would be waiting outside to change hands.

What normally should be considered as a humiliating slur by any dignified individual is now taking shape as an "unwritten" but "acceptable" code across the board and has become a parliamentary practice in Indian democracy. Every major political party has tried this on several occasions. One wonders how these MLAs would react if Mahatma Gandhi walked into their room and asked them, "*kaise hain aap*? (How are you?)" The Rajasthan episode is almost over and nobody condemned the happenings, not even those who have risen on several occasions to express their concern regarding the attack on constitutional values. I find their silence amazing.

What's even more surprising is that those, who usually come up with joint statements expressing concerns about what they consider "Constitutional impropriety, an attack on secular values and ethical lapses", never come up to denigrate this unethical and immoral practice that makes fun of democracy and lowers the esteem of the elected representatives themselves. It is a shameless strategy that should not find a place in a vibrant, functional democracy.

Why isn't there all-round condemnation of the Rajasthan drama of MLAs being herded from one hotel to the other — under strict State security — as unconstitutional, unethical and immoral? Even known groups of retired bureaucrats — who suddenly appear on the scene to showcase their concerns about the erosion of social cohesion, religious amity and constitutional propriety — never thought it fit to condemn this derogatory practice of herding of elected representatives. Do they find this practice to be in sync with the Constitutional framework and in consonance with moral and ethical considerations?

In 1922, Gandhi*ji* had written in a letter that Swaraj would not bring happiness to his people. He had said that four things would weigh heavily against it. Three of them were injustice, burden of administration and treachery of the rich. The fourth, that surprised me the most when I came to know about it, related to "defects of elections." How could he write about defections in 1922? I was told the Mahatma had studied the British election system very thoroughly. Gifted with a prophetic futuristic vision, he could anticipate the shape of things so accurately.

I often wonder whether the MLAs in Rajasthan, who enjoyed a comfortable all-expenses-paid stay in luxury hotels, even remember that they are inheritors of the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Rajendra Prasad and other stalwarts of the freedom struggle. These worthy elected representatives are, in fact, *panch parmeshwars* of democracy. They are occupying a seat, the incumbent of which is bound to the Constitution by an oath of affirmation.

One wonders how many of them are aware of that eternal eye-opener sentence by Mahatma Gandhi: "If, instead of insisting on rights, everyone does his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind." Are such herded stays part of the duty of the elected representatives? Do they not realise that they are being presented in public as weaklings, who would not be able to resist monetary temptations if allowed to move out of the hotel?

If these worthies could sit together with their family members, including their children, and seek their opinion on being made a part of the "pliable group", one is confident they would get the right advice. No child would like his parent to be treated as a saleable commodity. Many of them may have read or attended speeches where references were made to a query put before Mahatma Gandhi: What is your message to the people? He replied, "My life is my message." Would our MLAs be in a position to tell their children that they could derive strength from their experiences? It appears that everyone — right from the Chief Minister to the Speakers; the party in power to those in the Opposition; and all others who matter — have their interpretations of the Constitution and Constitutional propriety. It is worthwhile to recall that under the Government of India Act of 1935, elections were held in 1936-37 in various provinces and provincial Governments were formed. All Ministers of the then Congress Government had resigned in November 1939. Gandhi*ji* was ever vigilant, he consistently expressed his opinion on how legislators and Ministers should be performing their new duties and they should always think about the welfare of the people. He was, in a way, educating the legislators and Ministers in those days when his overarching presence on the scene itself was a deterrent against anyone breaking the norms: "The holding of any office in the Congress Government must be in the spirit of service, without the slightest expectation of personal gains."

Our distinguished legislators can ponder over Gandhian thoughts: "There is a beauty and an art in simplicity which he who runs may see. It does not require money to be neat, clean and dignified. Pomp and pageantry are often synonymous with vulgarity." It is indeed a pity that our young ones are witnessing a political world in which — exceptions apart — elected representatives, Ministers and legislators have forsaken the Gandhian philosophy, ideas and dreams. They are doing all this knowing it fully well that it would hurt the Mahatma's memory.

When reports emerge of legislators' assets multiplying by a factor of say 500, the common man's reaction is obvious — it would definitely be devoid of respect, confidence or a connect. In 1937-39, those who became legislators and Ministers were men and women who had entered the freedom struggle — not a political party but a national movement that offered only sacrifice, toil, sufferings and jail terms. Elections and legislative positions came just by chance. But allurements were still there and senior leaders were alert to guide and to "examine the utility value of the legislators."

And for the Ministers, the guidelines were: "The Ministers are [the people's] servants. They can do nothing against the express wishes of the people. They will not stay in office a day longer than the people wish." There is much more for the Chief Ministers, Ministers and the legislators to ponder over. Are the Gandhian ideas totally out of bounds for those who still swear to be the inheritors of his legacy? If not, how could they ignore Gandhi*ji*'s words and deeds? "This office-holding is a step towards either greater prestige or its total loss. If it is not to be a total loss, the Ministers and the legislators have to be watchful of their own personal and public conduct. They have to be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion in everything. They may not make private gains for themselves or their relatives or friends."

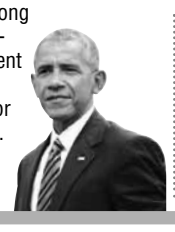
The least people expect from their legislators is that they do not surrender courage of conviction that a citizen can be proud of, particularly those who are in public life and are expected to enjoy the trust and confidence of their electors. They must ultimately be true to the people. They must not subjugate themselves to the whims and fancies of those who wish to retain power or gain power at any cost.

There is a lot for the elected representatives to whom Gandhi*ji* advised not to "arrogate to themselves greater knowledge than those experienced men who do not happen to occupy the ministerial chairs." Obviously, this applies equally to every elected person.

(The writer works in education and social cohesion)

SOUNDBITE

I have known Harris for a long time. She is more than prepared for the job. She's spent her career defending our Constitution and fighting for folks who need a fair stake.



Former US President
—Barack Obama

This whole insider vs outsider debate was not supposed to be an ugly witch-hunting battle. It was supposed to be debate, a conversation

Actor
—Sandhya Mridul

With Harris as his political living will, he (Biden) is surrendering control of our nation to the radical mob with promises to raise taxes, cut police funding and appease socialist dictators.

American consultant
—Katrina Pierson

Every cricketer goes through a rough patch. I am sure this break would have helped us both unwind and chalk out a plan. It's a matter of time before we click.

Indian cricketer
—Mithali Raj

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Clear old accounts

Sir — There are huge amounts in unclaimed deposits at post-offices and many of these account holders may have even died. There are chances of fraud happening, with unscrupulous persons staking claim to such deposits. The Department of Posts should send letters to account holders who have not operated their accounts in, say, the last three years and give them reasonable time to either renew or close them. If no response is received, all such unclaimed money may be frozen in some fixed account, which may be allowed to be withdrawn by legal heirs after careful verification.

Madhu Agrawal
New Delhi

Long road ahead

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "*Atmanirbhar raksha*" (August 11). With a view to boost defence manufacturing in India, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced a ban on a range of defence imports. Defence manufacturing under the *Atmanirbhar Bharat* scheme is estimated to save about four lakh crore rupees. No matter how lofty the goals appear, the fact is that India's defence sector suffers from a few drawbacks.

Already, projects worth ₹3.5 lakh crore under the Make in India scheme are stuck in the pipeline. Projects are often not completed on time. Recently, India became a global exporter of arms but we ranked 23rd in the list of major arms exporters for 2015-2019 and 19th for 2019.

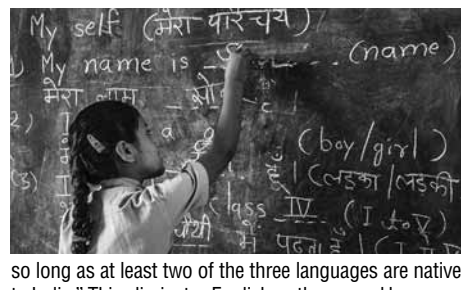
Another grey area is the quality of products. The ammunition supplied by the Ordinance Factory had damaged tanks, field guns and caused fatalities. The French company that manufactures Rafale fighter planes had expressed doubts about the manufacturing quality of Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL) during the defence deal. HAL-made Jaguar and Mirage-2000s have caused many fatalities. While defence manufacturing under *Atmanirbhar Bharat* looks ambitious to make India self-reliant in defence manufacturing, there's a long way to go. The Government must overcome existing challenges.

Venu GS
Kollam

Language discrimination

In the repeated invocation of culture in the National Education Policy, (NEP) — the distaste of its frequent repetitions apart — one finds a long-term strategy to resurrect a particular culture in India. The civilisation that flourished between 3300 BCE and 1300 BCE in South Asia, popularly called the Harappan or the Indus Valley civilisation, is an important era in our recorded history. And 600-700 years after the Harappan civilisation waned, a new culture evolved with the arrival of the Eurasian Steppes pastoralist groups. A new language and lifestyle emerged. The Vedic culture and the ancient Harappan civilisation were unlike each other in every aspect. Researchers have converged on the view that the present-day gods, religion, literature and traditions in most of India are adaptations from the Brahminical Vedic culture, which was rooted in caste system and rituals, and not from the ancient Indus Valley civilisation. There are, therefore, reasons to doubt the loud advocacy of culture, heritage and traditions in the NEP.

The NEP professes, "the three-language formula will continue to be implemented while keeping in mind the Constitutional provisions, aspirations of the people, regions and the Union and the need to promote multi-lingualism as well as promote national unity." The catch here is, "the three languages learned by children will be the choices of States, regions and, of course, the students themselves



so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India." This eliminates English as the second language automatically as it is not treated as a language native to the country. Incidentally, both English and Hindustani (Hindi and Urdu) belong to the Indo-European language family. This prescription puts South India at a great disadvantage. English has been the link language for this region for over a century, though Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam are of the Dravidian language family. The phenomenal growth of the knowledge-based industry in the South is credited mostly to its proficiency in English. The three-language formula, with a prescription tagged to it, would be detrimental to economic growth.

Haridasan Rajan
Kozhikode

Wake-up call

Sir — Back-to-back fire cases at COVID-19 facility centres are a wake-up call for the Government. All such tragic events have proved that those bearing the responsibility of safety regulations have paid lip service. Exemplary action is the need of the hour, or else such cases will continue to occur.

Aman
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRSTCOLUMN

Staff health is company's asset

We will survive this contagion but the key to this is adaptation. Till that happens, all firms must take care of their employees

HIMA BINDU **KOTA**

The pandemic has changed the way we perceive every aspect of our daily lives as we struggle to adapt to a new normal. The World Health Organisation's (WHO) statistics on the magnitude and scale of the outbreak have a mind-numbing impact. There are currently 1.97 crore active cases around the world, in 216 countries. The most disturbing aspect is that global casualties have crossed the seven lakh mark. India has 2.2 million active cases and there have been 44,000 deaths. Needless to say, some aspects of the Indian economy and the corporate landscape have changed forever, and that includes the way businesses are conducted.

The economy is in turmoil and the corporate sector is having to bend over backwards to ensure that businesses stay viable. As companies struggle to find balance in these critical times, lay-offs have become common, instilling fear and insecurity among the remaining employees who, in addition to their own work, are being piled up with the duties of their erstwhile colleagues. These conditions are stressful and a drain on the psyche of the employee as s/he fights fears of unemployment, financial insecurity and rising expenses. In these conditions, the mind and body are being stretched to their limits with major collateral damage to human health.

This staff distress is unfortunately paving the way for what is being increasingly termed as "non-Coronavirus casualties." According to data compiled by a group of researchers led by public interest technologist GN Thejesh and Kanika Sharma, 338 deaths have been recorded on account of the lockdown-spurred unemployment, financial distress and isolation. The work from home (WFH) conditions are also making it an uphill task for the Human Resource departments of firms to gauge the physical and psychological health of their staff. Sometimes problems like depression are identified too late in the day.

The Bengaluru-based Suicide Prevention India Foundation (SPIF) conducted a study on the rising spate of suicides in the country and the results are not reassuring. The study based its findings on the responses received from 300 therapists, who found that suicide ideation and self-harm intentions have risen sharply during the pandemic. Out of this, 76 per cent of the people feared job loss. Additionally, 30 per cent of the patients of the therapists have already inflicted some sort of self-harm. This data is alarming to say the least and does not bode well for the future of the corporate sector.

Recently, people have been experiencing a slew of emotions due to social isolation, change of lifestyle and loss of personal income. In a recent study of 673 workers in China, their mental health showed disturbing signs with a significant proportion recording conditions of post-traumatic stress disorder, moderate or severe anxiety, depression, stress and insomnia. Other psychiatric symptoms that are prevalent are worries about physical health, anger, discrimination during the outbreak, paranoid ideations, hallucinations, suicidal thoughts, alcohol usage and intent to hurt others. In the COVID-19 scenario, the corporate sector is already learning the ropes quickly and is trying to maintain employee health. But haemorrhaging profits and lay-offs tell a different story. There needs to be a turnaround in the manner employee mental and physical health is being managed, not only in the best interests of the company but for the larger good of the economy as well. There are a slew of measures being taken across the global corporate landscape which can have a direct relevance for India. Many businesses around the world are taking the current stressful times as an opportunity to connect with their employees and are comforting them. Health and fitness are being accorded priority over productivity. This, among other things, showcases the humane side of the management.

In order to secure the health of the employees, the Indian corporate sector must encourage its staff to share their daily exercise routines with Human Resources managers and instead of over-burdening the employees with work-related Zoom and Skype calls, they must focus on some rest and recreation interactions, too.

The critical aspects impacting the health of any employee are broadly three: Fear of job loss, financial insecurity and a rising workload. The corporate sector must design rehabilitating measures that seek to address these three issues, but for this, financial well-being of the companies is a must and this is where timely Government assistance comes into the picture.

There is no saying when this mayhem will get over. But once things start becoming clearer, would businesses return to their normal self or will the "new normal" become permanent? Although we may not like the answer, the "new normal" is likely to stay. However, humans are known to adapt. That is the underlying strength that ensures the survival of our species. We will survive this contagion but the key to this is adaptation. Till that happens, it is the responsibility of all firms to take care of the mental and physical health of their staff.

(*The writer is Associate Professor, Amity University, Noida*)

POINT**COUNTER**POINT

OUR FRIENDS WHO HAD GONE AWAY HAVE COME BACK. I HOPE THAT WE WILL DO AWAY WITH OUR DIFFERENCES AND FULFIL OUR RESOLVE TO SERVE THE STATE.
—RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER
ASHOK GEHLOT

I AM PAINED BY THE KIND OF WORDS THAT WERE USED. BUT I HAVE NOT MADE ANY DEMANDS. I AM AN MLA AND I WILL DO WHATEVER THE PARTY ASKS ME TO DO.
—CONGRESS LEADER
SACHIN PILOT

EVs not the best choice

The FAME policy is pumping ₹10,000 crore of taxpayer money into an industry which is strategically counter-productive. It needs a broader definition of e-mobility and innovations in sustainable storage

ARIJIT **DAS**

The Delhi Government recently announced its electric vehicle (EV) policy aimed at faster adoption of cleaner vehicles in the national Capital. This policy is on the same lines as the Centre's Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles or FAME-II scheme, 2019. Under Delhi's EV policy, purchase incentives will be given worth ₹30,000 for e-autos, e-rickshaws, goods carriers and up to ₹30,000 and ₹1.5 lakh for e-two-wheelers and e-cars respectively, depending on their battery capacity. This will be in addition to the existing incentives provided by the Centre.

The good thing about Delhi's EV policy is its detailing but it falls apart when it comes to fund allocation. FAME-II offers an incentive of ₹1.5 lakh to electric four-wheelers with an ex-factory price cap of ₹15 lakh and it also has a provision for an incentive of ₹50,000 for three-wheelers, including e-rickshaws and ₹20,000 for e-two-wheelers. E-buses can claim subsidy up to ₹50 lakh at a rate of ₹20,000 KWH battery capacity.

Given the incentives being offered, two questions should be considered. First, are EVs environmentally sustainable? Second, are they viable options for the Indian economy in the long-run? The answers to both these questions are debatable.

To produce an Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicle, 10 metric tonnes of CO_2 are released in the atmosphere and it is the same for an EV without the battery. Manufacturing of a 30 KWH battery releases 5.3 metric tonnes of CO_2 while manufacturing a 100 KWH battery releases 17.5 metric tonnes of CO_2. A petrol/diesel car emits an average of 5.2 metric tonnes of CO_2 in a year whereas the average usage emission from EV is 2.02 metric tonnes per year. EVs are non-polluting (at the level of the vehicle), and by design, if and only if, renewables are used as the power source. This is an unlikely phenomenon in the near future as a wide spectrum of allied infrastructure needs to be built around EVs to ensure renewable use for charging.

More than 90 per cent incentives (especially for two-wheelers and three-wheelers) are availed by lead-acid type batteries and they are environmentally hazardous. These batteries were already in high demand and competitive against the fossil fuel at least for slow vehicles. Even e-rickshaws were a hit much before the FAME scheme was announced. Over-incentivising lead acid batteries can significantly harm the environment.

Coming back to the economics of EVs, FAME correctly identified that the cost of batteries is a major price differential but failed to investigate intricate details behind such a difference. It is a common mistake often made while evaluating eco-friendly solutions. EVs should not be compared with ICEVs or regular car engines in totality. EVs are a combination of an engine and life-time fuel whereas ICEVs are valued only for the engine. Anyone buying an EV is essentially pre-owning fuel for a lifetime. Both EV and ICEV engines are comparable and cost the same. Providing an incentive to EVs is against fair competition norms and gives an undue advantage to the EV producer, which ultimately is going to hurt the technological advancement of the automobile industry as a whole.

Plus, about 40-50 per cent of the cost of manufacturing an EV accounts for reliable fuel storage i.e. the Li-ion batteries. These are the best storage options available but highly unsustainable. The raw material required for manufacturing is limited and concentrated in a very few countries. Not only that, a significant tendency is observed to capture such reserves through mergers and acquisitions. The raw material comprises approximately 60 per cent of the total cost of manufacturing Li-ion batteries. So, the price is not likely to decline if we use more of these batteries, unlike what we had observed for other electronic items like computers, solar panels and LEDs. The price of these batteries will increase in future if demand exceeds a certain limit as the price of raw materials will rise. For instance, the price of lithium increased from $8,500 per tonne in 2015 to $17,000 per tonne in 2018. Similarly, the price of cobalt rose from $30,000 per tonne to $95,000 per tonne between 2015 and 2018. These increases were in anticipation of a growing EV market but later their price dropped on its dismal performance. India does not have any lithium reserves, supply chain or an ecosystem to manufacture Li-ion batteries in order to ensure a steady supply. So EVs are not an economically-viable option for the country.

> FOR A TYPICAL MIDDLE CLASS AND UPPER MIDDLE CLASS FAMILY, A CAR IS AN ASPIRATION AND AN INVESTMENT WITH REASONABLE RESALE VALUE. AT PRESENT EVs HAVE NO RESALE VALUE, HENCE, IT IS UNJUSTIFIED TO EXPECT A CUSTOMER TO INVEST HARD-EARNED MONEY IN AN UNTESTED, RISKY TECHNOLOGY IN THE NAME OF POLLUTION CONTROL WHILE THERE IS NO DEFINITE PROOF THAT IT IS A CLEANER ENERGY OPTION

Both FAME and the Delhi EV policy talk about setting up public EV charging stations around Delhi's congested roads. This would require vast swathes of public land to serve a handful of wealthy owners and violates the basic principles of public good. Plus, parking is a major issue in Delhi, so allowing public charging is only going to legitimise capture of sidewalks. Also, charging an EV in the blazing summer sun in Delhi is neither advisable nor safe.

The China factor: Li-ion batteries account for almost 50 per cent of the cost of an EV. While China has a thriving lithium chemical, battery cathode, battery cell and EV supply chain, India has none. China dominates the battery supply chain and around three-quarters of the global battery cell manufacturing capacity is in our neighbouring country. On top of that, Chinese companies have unparallel control over battery raw materials and processing facilities. At present, almost all Li-ion batteries used for EVs are imported from China. This means incentives aimed at Indian manufacturers are directly going to Chinese battery producers. For example, buying a ₹15 lakh EV (with Li-ion batteries) in India means a transfer of ₹7.5 lakh to China, including ₹3 lakh of the taxpayers' money. The amount could go up to ₹1 crore for an e-bus. Strategically, too, over-dependence on China is dangerous and given the current geo-political scenario, it is not advisable to take such risky steps.

The way forward: FAME or other State Government clean vehicle schemes are an excellent platform to promote indigenous production of EVs. They should stick to the principles of *Atmanirbhar* (self-reliant) *Bharat* to promote localised production at global standards and stop incentivising unsustainable means of storage technologies.

Unbundling of EVs: Separating the vehicle from its fuel, i.e. batteries, is a necessary condition for the development of the EV market in India. At present, EVs have a low-capacity engine with super-expensive fuel options. This is an absurd arrangement and makes a mockery of fair competition. It is like British Petroleum selling cars for their oil or Ford digging oil wells for their car, leading to inefficiency in both the segments.

Make it consumer-centric: At present, EVs are policy-centric. They hardly consider consumers as end-users and rather aim to cater to the needs of development activists. Consumers need flexibility in choosing a fuel source, mileage, durability and so on. Their mobility requirement also varies from a few kilometres to hundreds of kilometres in one run. They possess varied tastes, concerns and limitations. Unless consumers are given such flexibility and choices, EV sales in India won't pick up. For a typical middle class/upper middle class family, a car is an aspiration and an investment with reasonable resale value. At present EVs have no resale value, hence, it is unjustified to expect a customer to invest hard-earned money in an untested, risky technology in the name of pollution control while there is no definite proof that it is a cleaner energy option.

Competing alternatives: The FAME policy is biased towards EVs, which might be discriminatory against other environment-friendly mobility options like hydrogen fuel cell buses. We already have experience in running CNG buses and we can run hydrogen cell variants, too. These buses can be manufactured in India without any fuel constraint as hydrogen is the most abundant element in the universe and multiple renewable sources can easily be used to generate it. Apart from being zero-emission, it does not have to face logistical challenges like EVs. In a nutshell, FAME is pumping ₹10,000 crore of the taxpayers' money into an industry which is strategically counterproductive and not even environment-friendly. This policy should immediately be replaced with a guideline which uses a broader definition of e-mobility, encourages innovations in sustainable storage that rely on the *Atmanirbhar Bharat* ethos.

The worst is the increasing tendency to use public money for the elite. If pollution is a concern, then why not give induction cookers to the poor or ban diesel generators? Automobiles do not require State backing, consumers will automatically adapt to EVs if they fit in with their requirements.

(*The writer is Fellow, India Development Foundation. Views expressed are personal*)

Collective effort will make India *atmanirbhar*

Self-reliance is not a short race, it is a marathon and can be completed only when all engines start firing together in the desired direction

PRIYA **GUPTA**

If the Centre's biggest agenda is the revival of the economy, then it can only be achieved by implementing the *Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan.* We may get some idea if we analyse the progress of our neighbouring nation, China. In 1987, its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was almost equal to India's GDP at $279 billion. Then, in December 1978, Deng Xiaoping announced the "Open Door Policy" and it was a major turning point for the Chinese economy. Beijing experienced 15 per cent growth year on year at a time the global economy was not even growing, dipping to a rate of three per cent.

This brought China from the 32nd position in global exports to first position in 2013. The Chinese Government checked all the right boxes, whether it was a lower tax regime, industry-friendly wage rules, cheap capital, free land or even allowing the misuse of patent and knowledge laws.

When multinational corporations (MNCs) realised that manufacturing costs in the US and Europe were skyrocketing due to the high cost of manpower, land and their stringent pollution norms, they began looking for alternative locations and evaluated a few South Asian countries like Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Indonesia and many more.

They ignored India due to the Licence Raj, stiff labour laws, unclear policy on land acquisition, poor power supply, lack of skilled manpower, a closed foreign trade policy and many more such hurdles. We were one of the lowest-ranked nations on the Ease of Doing Business index.

Upon the evaluation of all South Asian countries, it was found that China was best suited for moving manufacturing business from the US and Europe, as it had a huge population which could be skilled and brought into the workforce. It had huge tracts of land, too, for setting up manufacturing bases.

Now, given the global anger against Beijing due to the spread of the Coronavirus contagion, nations are looking to shift their manufacturing businesses and supply chains out of China. This is another opportunity for India to attract global business. But we need to check all the right boxes like Beijing did.

It might take time, maybe five-six years minimum to savour the fruits of an *atmanirbhar* (self-reliant) *Bharat* instead of the very next quarter like many people are hoping. If we want to act on self-reliance, we need to focus on all segments of manufacturing, starting from big manufacturing companies to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), which can feed the former.

However, unless we invest in Research and Development (R&D), unless we create products that are better and more economical than products made around the world and in China, we can't sell them in internal or global markets. If we want to make *Atmanirbhar Bharat* more than a slogan, then we need to provide capital-rich global players an equal footing for their investment and have an open and consistent trade policy; an easy land acquisition policy; cheap and skilled labour and a consistent power supply.

According to the Government, the five pillars of the *Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan* focus on the economy, infrastructure, the system, a vibrant demography and the creation of internal demand. An economy is the sum total of many small components of business, starting from the consumer, markets, traders, banks, utility companies, manufacturers, Government policies and institutions. Hence, any leakage of resources will not bring about effective use of the same.

Infrastructure always remains a talking point in our country but no one has ever worked seriously towards developing it. As a result of this, many infrastructure projects have been delayed by as much as 20-25 years. It is difficult to believe that projects conceptualised at a cost of ₹20 crore in 1968 cost ₹200 crore in 2010 and are still pending. If we are really interested in an *Atmanirbhar Bharat,* then fiscal self-discipline is mandatory and it must start from Government departments. Plus, we need to fix responsibility for time and cost overruns in order to get work done on time. India still lacks good infrastructure and *Atmanirbhar Bharat* will not be possible if we don't connect all the dots.

Consistent Government policies on trade and taxation are key to creating any manufacturing base as it takes time to reap the benefits of the same. The Government must announce policies for 15-20 years which can't be changed by any new Government of the future. Projects of national importance must not be scrapped or altered by a new set of Ministers.

Another key component that must be aligned is demography. Though India is a democratic country and everyone has the right to follow their own free will, if we want to make India *atmanirbhar,* then we need to have a "India First" policy.

Self-reliance is not a short race, rather it is a marathon and can be completed only when all engines start firing in the desired direction and in synchronisation with each other. Start-ups can act as a catalyst and be stakeholders in manufacturing, service delivery and a support element in creating a consensus among the masses for this mega project.

The Government will act as the agent to expedite and bind the entire process by easing policies around it. Involve all stakeholders and give adequate compensation to them. If this is implemented, then it can be the biggest employment generator, forex earner and a huge support to the Indian economy.

To achieve a $5 trillion economy from a $2.8 trillion one in about five years, we need to achieve a growth rate of more than 15 per cent per annum. It can be done only by firing all engines of growth, including MSME and big industries.

(*The writer is Associate Professor, JNU*)

FOREIGN EYE

MANY WAYS TO RESIST CHINA

Freedom of speech and of the Press, both vital to the rule of law and the city's vibrancy, are under attack. China is extending to Hong Kong the regime of media regulation and repression that it applies on the mainland. Today, it's the media. Tomorrow, who knows who will be China's next targets. But Hong Kongers will respond then, too, by demonstrating solidarity creatively.
(*The NYT* editorial)

Surprised that Biden picked 'disrespectful' Kamala: Trump

Washington: US President Donald Trump said he is surprised that his Democratic Party challenger for the presidential elections Joe Biden has named Indian-origin Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate despite knowing how "nasty" and "disrespectful" she has been towards him.

Harris, 55, whose father is an African from Jamaica and mother an Indian, is currently the US Senator from California.

"We'll see how she works out. She did very, very poorly in the primaries as you know. She was expected to do well. She ended up at right around two per cent," Trump told reporters at a White House news conference.

"She had a lot of things happening and so I was a little surprised that he (Biden) picked her. I've been watching her for a long time, and I was a little surprised," Trump said, offering his first reaction to Biden's pick of Harris.

Harris had launched her presidential campaign in January 2019. Her campaign could not take off and by the end of the year, she withdrew from the race.

Harris is the first person of colour to be selected as a vice presidential candidate and also only the fourth woman and first-ever African American and Indian American to be running for the second highest political position in the country.

Responding to questions, Trump told reporters that Harris has been nasty to Biden.

"As far as Kamala is concerned, she's a big tax raiser. She's a big slasher of funds for our military. And she's got a lot of difficult things that she's going to have to explain. Plus she was very, very nasty — one of the reasons it surprised me — she was probably nastier than even Pocahontas (Senator Elizabeth Warren) to Joe Biden. She was very disrespectful to Joe Biden," Trump said, referring to the Democratic Party debates. ***PTI***

Harris says her mom's advice drives her every single day

Washington: "Don't sit around and complain about things, do something."

This was the mantra given to Kamala Harris by her mother, Shyamala Gopalan, who was born in Chennai and immigrated to the US to attend a doctoral programme at UC Berkeley.

And today the 55-year-old Indian-orign Senator from California who on Tuesday became the running mate of Democratic Party's presidenital nominee Joe Biden, says, her mother's advice is what drives her every single day.

Her father, Donald Harris, a retired professor of Stanford University, immigrated to the US from Jamaica to study economics.

Her mother told her growing up, "Don't sit around and complain about things, do something," which is what drives Kamala every single day, according to the Biden-Harris joint campaign website.

"The first Black and Indian-American woman to represent California in the United States Senate, Kamala Harris grew up believing in the

promise of America and fighting to make sure that promise is fulfilled for all Americans," it says.

She graduated from Howard University and earned a law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of Law.

Kamala has been married to her husband Douglas Emhoff, a lawyer, for the past six years. She is the stepmother of two children, Ella and Cole who are her "endless source of love and pure joy," the website says. ***PTI***

Biden 'nailed this decision': Obama

Washington: Former US president Barack Obama has joined top Democrats, including Hillary Clinton, to praise Indian-American Senator Kamala Harris' selection as the party's vice presidential candidate in the November election, saying Joe Biden has "nailed this decision".

Presumptive Democratic party presidential nominee Biden on Tuesday named 55-year-old Harris as his vice presidential running mate, making history by selecting the first black woman to compete on a major party's presidential ticket.

Harris, whose father is from Jamaica and mother an Indian, is currently the US Senator from California.

"Choosing a vice president is the first important decision a president makes. When you're in the Oval Office, weighing the toughest issues, and the choice you make will affect the lives and livelihoods of the entire country — you need someone with you who's got the judgment and the character to make the right call," Obama said in a statement. ***PTI***

'Harris' nomination adds fuel to fire for China-US conflict'

Beijing: China on Wednesday officially declined to react to US Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's move to pick Indian-origin Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate but the official media here said that her nomination will add "fuel to fire" to the current conflict between the two sides given her strong stand on human rights issues relating to Xinjiang and Hong Kong.

Biden on Tuesday picked Harris as his running mate, recognising the crucial role Black voters and Indian-Americans could play in his bid to defeat Trump in the US presidential election in November.

Harris in the past called for increasing pressure on China for human rights violations against Uygur Muslims of Xinjiang and the crackdown against the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong.

But she also rejected President Donald Trump's tariff war on China, saying that it would hurt the business of California for which she was the Senator and increase the prices of consumer goods.

Asked for his reaction at a media briefing here on Wednesday to Biden nominating Harris to be his vice-presidential nominee, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian declined to comment.

"The Presidential election in the US is an internal affair. We don't have the interest to interfere," he said, apparently referring to US official's allegations that China, Russia and Iran may try to influence the US Presidential poll in November this year.

William Evanina, head of the National Counterintelligence and Security Centre (NCSC), in a statement last week said China "prefers that President Trump - whom Beijing sees as unpredictable - does not win re-election" and has been "expanding its influence efforts" ahead of the vote.

While Zhao was guarded in his reaction, state-run Global Times quoted Chinese observers as saying that Harris' nomination won't help end the two parties' playing of the China card.

Harris once gave herself a Chinese name, He Jinli, which translates to "intricate and beautiful," while the surname means "celebrate," according to the Global Times report. But this should not be misinterpreted as goodwill toward China. ***PTI***

Over 1K detained in latest Belarus election protests

Minsk: Police detained over 1,000 people in Belarus during the latest protests against the results of the country's presidential election, officials said Wednesday.

Rallies took place in 25 Belarusian cities on Tuesday and overnight, Interior Ministry spokeswoman Olga Chemodanova told The Associated Press. Thousands have demonstrated in the capital of Minsk and several other cities for three nights to contest the election results.

The Central Election Commission reported that President Alexander Lukashenko won a sixth term in Sunday's election with 80% of the vote.

Top opposition candidate Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who had attracted massive crowds at campaign events where voters expressed frustration with the authoritarian Lukashenko's 26-year rule, got just 10%.

Police deployed to break up the post-election protests used batons, stun grenades, tear gas and rubber bullets. One protester died Monday amid the crackdown in Minsk, and scores were injured. ***AP***

Outcry in Somalia as new bill would allow child marriage

Johannesburg: An outcry is rising in Somalia as parliament considers a bill that would allow child marriage once a girl's sexual organs mature and would allow forced marriage as long as the family gives their consent.

The bill is a dramatic reworking of years of efforts by civil society to bring forward a proposed law to give more protections to women in one of the world's most conservative countries.

The new Sexual Intercourse Related Crimes Bill "would represent a major setback in the fight against sexual violence in Somalia and across the globe" and should be withdrawn immediately, the United Nations special representative on sexual violence in conflict, Pramila Patten, said in a statement Tuesday.

The bill also weakens protections for victims of sexual violence, she said.

Already more than 45 per cent of young women in Somalia were married or "in union" before age 18, according to a United Nations analysis in 2014-15.

Somalia in 2013 agreed with the UN to improve its sexual violence laws, and after five years of work a sexual offenses bill was approved by the Council of Ministers and sent to parliament.

But last year the speaker of the House of the People sent the bill back "in a process that may have deviated from established law" asking for "substantive amendments," the UN special representative said. ***AP***

New Zealand scrambles to find source of new infections

Wellington: Health authorities in New Zealand were scrambling on Wednesday to trace the source of a new outbreak of the coronavirus as the nation's largest city went back into lockdown.

Authorities had confirmed four cases of the virus in one Auckland household from an unknown source and were awaiting the test results of four more people they suspect have infections — two work colleagues and two relatives of those in the house.

The cases this week were the first known local transmission of the virus in New Zealand in 102 days.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said more than 200 people with connections to those in the house were contacted Wednesday. ***AP***

China blasts US for Taiwan visit while virus spreads at home

Beijing: A Chinese official lashed out at US Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar on Wednesday for visiting Taiwan amid an ongoing pandemic back home, accusing him of putting politics ahead of the lives of the American people.

The comments came a day after Azar accused China of failing to warn the rest of the world about the coronavirus.

"He abandoned the millions of people who are struggling with illness and visited Taiwan instead to stage a political show," Foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said at a daily briefing.

"We don't know how he has the confidence and courage to shamelessly criticise China's anti-epidemic achievements." Speaking Tuesday in Taiwan, Azar said that China's ruling Communist Party "had the chance to warn the world and work with the world on battling the virus." "But they chose not to, and the costs of that choice mount higher every day," he said.

The Trump administration has repeatedly accused China of withholding information from the World Health Organization and the international community as the virus began to take hold. China denies the charge, saying it communicated information as soon as it had it.

Azar's trip to Taiwan angered China because it considers the self-governing island part of its territory. He is the highest-ranking official to visit since the U.S. Cut formal diplomatic ties in 1979, switching recognition to Beijing as the government of China. ***AP***

Around the Globe

London: British Transport Police say three people died and six were taken to hospital after a passenger train derailed in northeast Scotland amid stormy weather. The train's driver was among the dead in Wednesday's incident, which occurred after heavy rain.

Skopje: Police in North Macedonia say they have discovered 148 migrants, including Indians and Pakistanis, crammed into trucks in two separate operations in central and northern parts of the country, and have arrested two men on suspicion of trafficking migrants.

Johannesburg: Mauritius says it is seeking compensation from the owners of a Japanese ship that spilled oil after it grounded in the shallow waters off the Indian Ocean island nation, while urgent efforts continue to pump out the remaining fuel.

Beijing: China and Nepal should firmly support each other's core interests and major concerns, a senior Chinese official said on Wednesday as the two countries held their annual diplomatic consultations.

Phnom Penh: A construction crane in Cambodia's northwestern city of Poipet on the border with Thailand collapsed Wednesday, killing at least five people and injuring four others.

Lahore: Former Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif's daughter Maryam is among over 300 Opposition PML-N leaders and workers who were booked by Lahore police on Wednesday for hooliganism and attacking law enforcement officers.

Iranian hard-liners in parliament reject president's nominee

Tehran: Iranian hard-liners in parliament on Wednesday voted against President Hassan Rouhani's nominee for trade minister in the first showdown between the rival camps since the house resumed work in May despite the struggles to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

According to the parliament's website, lawmakers rejected Hossein Modares Khiabani's nomination for minister of trade and industries.

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said the vote was 140-104 against the nominee. There were 254 lawmakers at the session and 10 abstained. The parliament has 290 seats.

The vote marked the first serious confrontation between the newly elected house, dominated by conservatives and the bloc of supporters of the relatively moderate Rouhani. Under the law, Rouhani must introduce new nominees to his Cabinet in the next three months. ***AP***

Iran's president, FM lash out at new US push on arms embargo

Tehran: Iran's president and foreign minister lashed out on Wednesday at a revised proposal by the US that would extend a UN arms embargo on Iran indefinitely, the latest in the Trump administration's maximum pressure policy against Iran.

The US on Tuesday circulated the revised draft at the UN, seeking to gain more support in the 15-member Security Council where veto-wielding Russia and China have voiced strong opposition.

The revised draft, which eliminated some provisions from the earlier version that diplomats said went beyond the extension of the arms embargo, may be put to a vote as early as Friday. Still, with Russia and China sharply critical of the US effort to indefinitely extend the arms embargo, the two will likely use their veto powers even if the draft got the minimum nine "yes" votes in the council, which appears unlikely. The US push to make the arms embargo permanent follows President Donald Trump's 2018 withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal between major world powers and Tehran, aimed at preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

Tehran has repeatedly insisted it does not seek to produce a nuclear bomb. The nuclear deal, endorsed by the Security Council, includes a provision lifting the arms embargo on Iran on October 18.

Rouhani lambasted the revised draft, saying its "initiators will be responsible for the consequences" if the Security Council adopts the new resolution. He did not elaborate on what steps Iran could take. ***AP***

बिहार राज्य भवन निर्माण निगम लि०, पटना
(बिहार सरकार का उपक्रम)

Govt. of Bihar

E-RFP INVITING NOTICE NO. - 04(Cons.)/2020–21

1- OFFICER INVITING BIDS : CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER , Bihar State Building Construction Corporation Ltd. Patna.

2- PERIOD AND PLACE OF SALE OF BID DOCUMENT LAST DATE AND TIME : DATE **25.08.2020** to **15.09.2020** up to 03.00 PM

3- TIME, DATE AND PLACE OF PRE-BID MEETING (Virtual Online) : DATE **27.08.2020** , TIME 03.00 PM PLACE: Bihar State Building Construction Corporation Ltd., Patna

4- LAST DATE AND TIME FOR SUBMISSION OF BID. : DATE **16.09.2020** up to 3.00 PM

5- PLACE OF SALES/RECEIPT OF Bid Documents : Only on website www.eproc.bihar.gov.in

6- TIME AND DATE OF OPENING TECHNICAL BIDS : DATE **17.09.2020** Time: 15.00 Hour / (03.00 PM).

7- TIME AND DATE OF OPENING FINANCIAL BIDS : After disposal of Technical bid by Competent Authority

8- LAST DATE OF BID VALIDITY : 120 days from Last date of Bid submission

9- Following work:-

Sl. No.	Dist	Name of the work	Consultant Fee for Preparation of DPR	Cost of Bid document (In Rs.)	Bid Processing Fee	Time of completion of work	Name Of PIU
1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9
1	Patna, Buxar Kaimur, Gaya, Darbhanga, Bhagarpur, Munger	**RFP - Selection of Consultant for Preparation of DPR for THEME PARK, UPGRADATION OF MUSEUM AND ITS INFRASTRUCTURE IN DIFFERENT SEVEN (7) LOCATIONS IN BIHAR** **1)** Theme park depicting the life of the Jana-Nayak Karpoori Tahkur, environment and ecology of rural Bihar in the campus of the Smriti Sangrahalaya **2)** Heritage Theme park in Taradih, Bodhgaya **3)** Theme based Landscaping & beautification of Museum of Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh Museum, Darbhanga **4)** Theme based Landscaping & beautification of Museum of Sita Ram Upadhyay Museum, Buxar **5)**Theme based Landscaping & beautification of Bhagalpur Museum and its Up gradation of Museum Design, Museum Infrastructure depicting customs, tradition and local art and culture of rural Bihar **6)** Museum Design, itsInfrastructure and development of Art Gallery representing customs, tradition, local art and culture of Munger Museum, Munger **7)** Construction of a Theme park ,Based on the concept of Shailasraya Theme at Kaimur District (H.Q.) * In financial bid rate quoted by consultant is lamp sum basis for each work (Including of GST)	As per offer	₹5,000.00	₹1180.00	**04** (Four) Months	Patna,

10- Registration certificate from Council of Architecture of Principal / Partner / Director and also of other Architects in the firm.
11- Evaluation of technical details of the firm to base on eligibility criteria.
12- Evaluation of technical documents shall be done by the evaluation committee. Bidder found responsive in technical bid shall be invited to make presentation in before jury member. Financial proposal of the successful Bidder shall be opened in presence of the bidder/their representative.
13- Details regarding e-RFP can be procured from Help-Desk, 1st floor, Plot no. M/22, road no. 25. Sri Krishna Nagar, Bank of India Compound, Patna 800001. Ph. no. 9939035696, 06122523006.E-tendering invitation notice can be seen fro state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar also.
14- Interested bidders should have to get registered with **E-Procurement**, details of which are available on the website. Bidders need to procure DSC (Digital Signature certificate). Bidders can participate in the E-tendering process with user id, password, DSC and internet connection.
15- The bidders need to upload the technical documents pertaining to the firm on the website. The date and time of opening of RFP or any correction in the regard will be published on the website www.bsbccl.bih.nic.in.
16- The RFP documents fee (Non-refundable) should be in form of bank draft drawn on any nationalizedbank in favour of DGM BSBCCL **, Patna (PIU)** payable at **Patna**, and submitted in original in the office of **DGM BSBCCL, Patna (PIU), G.M.(SOUTH) BSBCCL, Patna , C.G.M. BSBCCL, Patna** before the date and time of opening of Technical bid..
17- The RFP shall pay the Bid processing Fee including GST through Internet Payment Gateway (Credit / Debit Cards) or Internet Banking or NEFT / RTGS Challan to be credited to Bid processing Fee Account of BSEDC prior to the last date & time of down loading the tender document. It is mandatory failing which the tender shall not be considered.
18- RFP is available on the website www.eproc.bihar.gov.in in the view format. The RFP Document Fee in Demand Draft (**original is mandatory**) to be submitted in the office of DGM BSBCCL, **Patna (PIU)**, G.M.(South), BSBCCL, PATNA., C.G.M. BSBCCL, PATNA before the date and time of opening of Technical bid.
19- **BSBCCL** reserves the right to cancel all the tenders without any information.
20- For any additional information bidder may contact to Sr. Architect, BSBCCL, Patna AND Tender related issues may contact to dgm (gaya), Mobile no-9264493032

Chief General Manager
Bihar State Building Construction Corporation Ltd. Patna

PR. No. 004735(Ni.Ni.) 2020-21

नोवल कोरोना के संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी एवं सहयोग हेतु Toll Free No.: **104** पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।
खाद्य सामग्री– संबंधी किसी तरह की जानकारी अथवा सुझाव हेतु दूरभाष संख्या 0612–2217636 पर सम्पर्क किया जा सकता है।

CANCELLATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS DUE TO LOCKDOWN IN WEST BENGAL ON 20/08, 21/08, 27/08, 28/08 & 31.08.2020

In view of lockdown declared on **20/08, 21/08, 27/08, 28/08 & 31.08.2020** in entire West Bengal by State Govt, following trains will remain **cancelled** on those days : **(1) 02024/02023 Patna-Howrah-Patna Special** (JCO 20/08, 21/08, 27/08, 28/08 & 31.08.2020). **(2) 02302 New Delhi-Howrah AC Special** (JCO 19/08, 20/08, 26/08, 27/08 & 30.08.2020). **(3) 02301 Howrah-New Delhi AC Special** (JCO 20/08, 21/08, 27/08, 28/08 & 31.08.2020). **(4) 02308 Jodhpur-Howrah Special** (JCO 18/08, 19/08, 25/08, 26/08 & 29.08.2020). **(5) 02307 Howrah-Jodhpur Special** (JCO 20/08, 21/08, 27/08, 28/08 & 31.08.2020). **(6) 02377/02378 Sealdah-New Alipurduar-Sealdah Special** (JCO 19/08, 20/08, 21/08, 26/08, 27/08, 28/08, 30/08 & 31.08.2020). **(7) 02303 Howrah-New Delhi Special** (JCO 29.08.2020). **(8) 02304 New Delhi-Howrah Special** (JCO 30.08.2020). **(9) 02381 Howrah-New Delhi Special** (JCO 20/08 & 27.08.2020). **(10) 02382 New Delhi-Howrah Special** (JCO 21/08 & 28.08.2020). **(11) 02201 Sealdah-Bhubaneswar Special** (JCO 21/08, 28/08, & 31.08.2020). **(12) 02202 Bhubaneswar-Sealdah Special** (JCO 22/08, 29/08 & 01.09.2020). **(13) 02357 Kolkata-Amritsar Special** (JCO 18/08 & 25.08.2020). **(14) 02358 Amritsar-Kolkata Special** (JCO 20/08 & 27.08.2020). Passengers are requested to plan their journey accordingly. Inconvenience is regretted.

Chief Passenger Transportation Manager
EASTERN RAILWAY

PIONEER AGRO EXTRACTS LIMITED
Regd Office- Chhoti Nehar Malakpur Pathankot-145025 (Punjab)
www.pioneeragro.co.in CIN : L15319PB1993PLC012975
Telephone No. : 0186-2345352/53/55. E-mail : complianceofficer@pioneeragro.co.in
Extract of unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter ended June 30, 2020
(Rs. in lakhs)

S. No.	Particulars	Year Ended 31.03.2020	Quarter Ended 30.06.2020	30.06.2019	31.03.2020
1	Total income from operations	67.97	8.34	8.65	43.23
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before exceptional items and tax)	37.12	(0.67)	(0.96)	35.40
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after exceptional items)	37.12	(0.67)	(0.96)	35.40
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after exceptional items)	31.93	(0.67)	(0.96)	30.21
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	31.93	(0.67)	(0.96)	30.21
6	Equity Share Capital	435.85	435.85	435.85	435.85
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as show in the Audited Balance Sheet of the pervious year	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00
8	Earning per share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)				
	- Basic	0.74	0.00	0.00	0.70
	- Diluted	0.74	0.00	0.00	0.70

Notes: The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly / Yearly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and other Disclosure Requirements) Regulation, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Financial Results are available on the website of the Stock Exchange www.bseindia.com and on the Company's website www.pioneeragro.co.in

On behalf of the Board of Directors,
(Jagat Mohan Aggarwal)
Managing Director
Din : 00750120

Place : Pathankot
Dated : August 12, 2020

LOAN RECAST

NBFCs' refinancing needs likely to increase: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

With the Reserve Bank allowing restructuring of loans that are facing stress due to the Covid-19 pandemic, non-banking finance companies are likely to see an increase in their refinancing requirements, says a report.

Last week, RBI gave permission to lenders to go for one-time restructuring of corporate and personal loans facing stress due to the disruptions caused by coronavirus.

"The Reserve Bank of India's decision allowing lenders to restructure loans would increase their refinancing requirements, especially for non-banking banking companies (NBFCs)," India Ratings and Research said in a report.

"This is in view of their large contractual debt repayments, as scheduled cash inflow gets deferred, though the severity of the same would depend upon the proportion of loan portfolio restructured and terms of restructuring (i.E complete moratorium vs partial payments)," it added.

A higher quantum of restructured assets would clearly reflect higher asset quality challenges for NBFCs and can restrict their ability to mobilise funds from banks and capital markets, it said.

At the end of June 2020, a substantial portion of loan book of NBFCs was under moratorium. Housing loans had the least portion of the book under moratorium, while wholesale lenders had the maximum portion of their loans under moratorium, the report said. Collection efficiency, reflecting the repayment behaviour of customers, has improved since April 2020 with easing of lockdown restrictions.

However, regional lockdowns did impact collections during July 2020. Collection levels across asset classes/segments were far below pre-COVID levels.

Businesses still did not generate cash flows sufficient enough to make their timely debt repayment, the agency said. "We believe a high proportion of loans to certain segments such as real estate developers, commercial vehicle owners and micro small medium enterprises will be restructured, given the weakness in these sectors," it said.

The report said 70-80 per cent of real estate loans were under moratorium at end-June 2020.

Sensex snaps 4-day rally as bulls take a breather

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The BSE Sensex snapped its four-session winning run to close marginally lower on Wednesday as investors pocketed gains in finance, banking and consumption stocks amid mixed global cues.

After touching a low of 38,125.81 during the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex pared most losses to end 37.38 points or 0.10 per cent lower at 38,369.63.

On similar lines, the NSE Nifty slipped 14.10 points or 0.12 per cent to close at 11,308.40. Kotak Bank was the top loser in the Sensex pack, skidding 2.10 per cent, followed by Sun Pharma, Bajaj Finserv, L&T, Bajaj Finance, TCS and Titan.

On the other hand, HCL Tech, SBI, Tech Mahindra, Maruti, M&M and UltraTech Cement were among the gainers, climbing as much as 4.86 per cent.

According to traders, market sentiment was weak following lacklustre macroeconomic data and concerns over rising coronavirus cases.

India's industrial production declined by 16.6 per cent in June on account of disruption in normal business activity following the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic, government data showed on Tuesday.

The number of cases around the world linked to Covid-19 has crossed 2.02 crore, with India breaching the 23-lakh mark.

"The encouraging response to the fundraising by the lending firms has boosted the investors' sentiment towards the banking stocks... Helping the benchmark to sustain at the higher levels while other sectors are taking a breather after a substantial rally.

"Since we're largely mirroring the global markets, further developments on the stimulus package announcement and US-China trade tension would be actively tracked by the participants for cues. Traders should maintain their focus on the selection of stocks as we're still seeing enough opportunities across the board," said Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking.

BSE healthcare, consumer durables, metal, realty, telecom and FMCG indices fell up to 1.46 per cent, while auto, utilities, power, IT and teck closed higher.

Broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices slipped up to 0.29 per cent. Global equities were largely positive despite deadlock over fresh stimulus in the US and the UK slipping into its deepest recession in the June quarter.

Bourses in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul ended with gains, while Shanghai settled in the red.

Most stock exchanges in Europe were trading on a positive note in early deals.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 1.48 per cent higher at USD 45.16 per barrel. In the forex market, the rupee slipped 5 paise to close at 74.83 against the US dollar.

Tesla stock up 7% after car maker announces 5-1 share split

IANS ■ SAN FRANCISCO

Elon Musk-run Tesla has announced a five-for-one split of its common stock that goes into effect on August 21.

The move that could help smaller investors afford Tesla stock resulted in Tesla stock surging 7 per cent in the extended session on Tuesday.

"The Board of Directors has approved and declared a five-for-one split of Tesla's common stock in the form of a stock dividend to make stock ownership more accessible to employees and investors," Tesla said in a statement.

Each stockholder of record on August 21 will receive a dividend of four additional shares of common stock for each then-held share, to be distributed after close of trading on August 28.

"Trading will begin on a stock split-adjusted basis on August 31, 2020," said Tesla.

Tesla shares have gained 229 per cent this year.

Apple has also announced a 4-for-1 stock split after shares of the iPhone maker surged more than 80 per cent in the past year.

Tesla reported profits for the fourth straight quarter last month

Making $6 billion in revenue and $104 million in net income in its June quarter even as the Covid-19 pandemic shut its factories.

₹ drops 5 paise to 74.83 against $ on weak IIP data

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee declined by 5 paise to close at 74.83 against the US dollar on Wednesday due to losses in equity markets and weak industrial production data.

Forex traders said the rupee traded in a narrow range as muted domestic equities and weak industrial output data weighed on investor sentiment while sustained foreign fund inflows supported the unit. The local unit opened flat at 74.78 at the interbank forex market but later lost ground to settle at 74.83 against the US dollar, down 5 paise over its last close of 74.78. During the session, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 74.77 and a low of 74.93 against the greenback. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.03 per cent to 93.59.

India's industrial production declined 16.6 per cent in June on account of disruption in normal business activity following the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic.

The decline in factory output was widespread across the sectors, including manufacturing, mining, power generation, capital goods and consumer durables, according to the data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. The BSE Sensex snapped its four-session winning run to close marginally lower due to profit booking. Sensex ended down 37.38 points or 0.10 per cent at 38,369.63. The NSE Nifty slipped 14.10 points or 0.12 per cent to close at 11,308.40. Foreign institutional investors were net buyers in the capital market as they purchased shares worth Rs 1,013.66 crore on Tuesday, according to provisional exchange data. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.99 per cent to USD 44.94 per barrel. Meanwhile, the number of cases around the world linked to COVID-19 has crossed 2.02 crore, and in India, the number of infections topped the 23-lakh mark.

PM to launch 'transparent taxation' platform

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday will unveil the next phase of direct tax reforms aimed at easing compliance and rewarding honest taxpayers, as the government looks to rebuild the pandemic-hit economy.

"The Prime Minister will launch the platform for 'Transparent Taxation – Honoring the Honest' via video conference on August 13, 2020," an official statement said on Wednesday.

While the statement did not give details of the reforms to be unveiled, the launch of the platform is expected to further carry forward the journey of direct tax reforms undertaken during last six years.

The reforms include reduction in corporate tax last year to 22 per cent from 30 per cent for existing companies and 15 per cent for new manufacturing units, scraping of dividend distribution tax and faceless assessment.

"The focus of the tax reforms has been on reduction in tax rates and on simplification of direct tax laws. Several initiatives have been taken by the CBDT for bringing in efficiency and transparency in the functioning of the I-T Department," it said.

The Budget for 2020-21 fiscal unveiled on February 1, had announced a 'taxpayer charter', which is expected to have statutory status and will empower citizens by ensuring time-bound services by the Income Tax department.

The charter will ensure trust between a taxpayer and the administration and reduce harassment, as well as increase efficiency of the department, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharman had said her Budget speech.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), which is the apex decision making body in direct tax matters, administers personal income tax and corporate tax.

Bharat Forge posts ₹127.3 crore loss in April-June

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bharat Forge on Wednesday reported a consoldiated loss of 127.3 crore for the quarter ended June 30.

The company had posted a consolidated profit of ₹171.9 crore in April-June period of the previous fiscal, Bharat Forge said in a filing to the BSE. The company's income during April-June period declined to ₹1,199.2 crore from ₹2,372.7 crore in the year-ago period.

The spread of Covid-19 has severely impacted business in many countries, including India, and there has been severe disruption to regular business operations due to lockdown and other emergency measures, Bharat Forge said.

The group has made assessment of liquidity, recoverable values of its financial and non-financial assets, including carrying value of its subsidiaries, and has concluded that there are no material adjustments required in the interim financial results.

Tata Power June quarter profit grows 10 % to ₹268 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Power on Wednesday said itsconsolidated net profit rose by 10 per cent to Rs 268 crore for quarter ended June on the back of reduced expenses.

The company had posted a net profit of ₹ 243 crore during the same period a year ago, Tata Power said in a BSE filing. During April-June, the company reported a total income of ₹6,540 crore as compared to ₹7,874 crore in the year-ago quarter. Total expenses during the quarter under review stood at₹ 6,555 crore as against ₹7,228 crore in the year-ago period.In a separate statement, the company said, it was able to maintain stable performance despite lower profits from Solar EPC businesses mainly on account of lower financing cost and stable performance across all clusters.

"All our business clusters have reported robust performance despite the challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic. We aim to continue our progress in our low carbon journey by achieving 50 per cent generation from clean and green sources by 2025 and set new benchmarks in operational efficiencies," Tata Power CEO and MD Praveer Sinha said.

"The proposed renewable InvIT (investment trust), will be the growth engine and we intend to grow this to be India's largest renewable InvIT. At present, it has about 2.6 GW (gigawatt) of operating plants and 1.5 GW of capacity in the pipeline taking the total capacity to 4.1 GW. This InvIT provides the option to recycle capital once the assets are operational." Besides adding capacity in the renewable generation space in the next five years, the company will also be scaling the solar cells and modules manufacturing business along with the solar EPC business.

Vodafone India Foundation launches portal on digital literacy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Vodafone India Foundation, the CSR arm of mobile service provider Vodafone Idea, on Wednesday launched a portal to help marginalised communities become digital literate and self-reliant. The portal, Digisakshar.Org, which has been developed in partnership with IT and business consulting services firm CGI and NASSCOM Foundation, was launched at a virtual event.

In addition to offering digital literacy to communities, Vodafone India Foundation said that the self-learning portal also drives them towards better job and entrepreneurship opportunities helping them become self-reliant.

The free to use portal provides over 40 courses in both Hindi and English, designed for all age groups and curated to cover basic.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is publically notified that I am the owner of Plot No. 356, Block-A, Sector-46, Noida, That the original registered General Power of Attorney of the above said plot vide Reference No. 20013 dated 23-11-2011 and challan No. 115401 dated-06-10-2010 which has been put into a White Cloth Bag has been lost somewhere and not traceable till date inspite of my best efforts. I have lodged an eFIR vide eFIR No. 057505/2020 dated 10-08-2020. If any one will recover the same he/she may contact at my above noted address.

Bhushan Lal Bajaj
A-356, Sector-46, Noida
Ph. No. 9910037349

Reliance Foundation partners with W-GDP, USAID to bridge gender gap

New Delhi: Under the Womens Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative, a new partnership between the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and Reliance Foundation will bridge the gender and digital divide in India.The partnership was announced at a W-GDP event on Tuesday, hosted by US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun along with special guest, Ivanka Trump, Advisor to the US President, and Deputy USAID Administrator Bonnie Glick.

Ivanka Trump said: "The W-GDP Fund was created to source and scale the most innovative programs to advance women's economic empowerment. We are leveraging the resources and expertise of the U.S. Govt and the private sector so that activities have enduring, deep effects on the communities they reach."

Global cues, profit bookings closed equity market lower

IANS ■ MUMBAI

The Indian equity market closed marginally lower on Wednesday after six consecutive sessions of gains.

Analysts opined that profit booking, along with negative global cues, depressed the market. Sector-wise, the top gainers included BSE Auto, Power and IT indices, whereas BSE Healthcare, CD, Metal and Realty indices lost ground.

Globally, major Asian markets have closed on a mixed note.However, European indices like the FTSE and CAC ended higher.

Index-wise, the NSE Nifty50 closed at 11,308.40, down by 14.10 points, or 0.12 per cent, from its previous close. The Sensex closed at 38,369.63, lower by 37.38 points, or 0.10 per cent, from the previous close of 38,407.01.

It had opened at 38,321.13 and touched an intra-day high of 38,414.37 and a low of 38,125.81 points.

"Technically, while the Nifty has ended lower, the underlying short term trend remains up. The uptrend could accelerate once the immediate highs of 11,322 are cleared," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities.

"Crucial supports to watch for any trend reversal are at 11,130."According to Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services: "Indian benchmark indices closed out a volatile day, flat, with a negative bias. Global cues added to the uncertainty with doubts emerging about the expected US stimulus measures and continuing US-China tensions."

"Profit booking continued in the Pharma sector. Markets are reacting uncertainly to global cues and this uncertainty is expected to continue. Downside looks limited but investors are advised to remain cautious, considering the valuations of some of the stocks."

DLW achieves record production of 31 locomotives in July

Varanasi: Under the leadership of General Manager YP Singh, Thirty One electric locomotives have been produced by Diesel Locomotive Works, Varanasi in July, 2020. Despite low progress at the beginning of month due to restrictions imposed to contain spread of Covid-19, DLW achieved record production of 31 Electric Locomotives in the month of July, 2020. The achievement becomes more significant because same was achieved after following all guidelines of Central and State Government to contain spread of Covid-19. During the production, all steps like regular sanitization of work place, social distancing were taken to safeguard staff against spread of Covid-19.

On this occasion, General Manager Shri Y.P. Singh congratulated all the Heads of Departments and their staff.

Due to the lockdown announced by the Government of India, to contain spread of Covid-19, production of DLW has also been affected like other industries. But DLW is leaving no stone unturned to make up the deficit in production caused by lockdown. In the current financial year 2020-21, DLW has manufactured 28 electric locomotives till June, 2020. The production of 31 locomotives, in July alone, is a milestone in itself.

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

OPEN TENDER

No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162 Date : 10.08.2020. The following **e-Tenders** can be accessed under the link **www.ireps.gov.in**. Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link **www.ireps.gov.in → login → E-Tender Stores/Supply**. Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding particular tender or IREPS related information if any, Dy. CMM/HQ/CLW/Chittaranjan, 0341-2525594 or SMM/CON/HQ, 0341-2535631. **Sl. No.; Tender No.; Brief Description of Item; Quantity.; Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees); Tender Closing Date & Time (IST): [1]; 83200052A;** SET OF ROLLER BEARING EACH SET CONSISTING OF 01 NO. OF ROLLER BEARING NU 224E/C4, 01 NO OF ROLLER BEARING NJ219E/C4 and 01 NO. THRUST COLLER HJ219 E TO CLW'S SPECN. NO. 4TMS.096.065 (LATEST VERSION); **136 set;** 1,26,780; **03.09.2020 at 11:00 am. OFFICE ADDRESS :** Dy.CMM-HQ/CLW/Chittaranjan, 9163340711 or SMM/HQ, 9163340704.

Principal Chief Materials Manager
AD76 - 066 CLW/Chittaranjan

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SEARCH OF MISSING

Gambhir

General public is hereby informed that one person (depicted in the photo), **Namely:** Gambhir, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** H.No. WZ-3355, Rajouri Garden, Delhi, **Aged:** 39 years, has been missing from ISBT Anand Vihar, Delhi since January 2015. In this regard a case **vide DD No. 61A, Dated 29.07.2020, has been lodged at P.S. Patparganj Ind. Area, Delhi.** His physical description is as under:
Height: 5'10" Feet, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Round, **Physique/Build:** Thin, **Clothing:** Pant, Shirt and Chappal in feet.
Any person is having any information/clue about this missing person, may inform SHO, P.S. Patparganj Ind. Area, Delhi at **E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.nic.in or website : http://cbi.nic.in Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641**

S.H.O
P.S. Patparganj Ind. Area, Delhi
Tel. 011-22146491, 22146492

DP/152/ED/2020.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

VICKY

General public is hereby informed that one boy namely **Vicky S/o Lt. Lalan Jha** R/o C-226 SS Nagar WPIA, Delhi, has been missing/kidnapped from the area of P.S. Ashok Vihar, Delhi since 18.07.2020. In this regard, a vide **DD No. 52-A, dated 24.07.2020 has been registered at P.S. Ashok Vihar Delhi.** The description of the missing boy is as under.
Age: 20 Years, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Height:** 5' 6", **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** White Colour Shirt Blue Colour half pant & hawai chaapal in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out him but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing boy then please inform P.S. Ashok Vihar, Delhi at following Tel No. / e-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in and Website: http://cbi.nic.in

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639

Sd/- S.H.O.
P.S. Ashok Vihar, Delhi
Ph: 011-27243066

DP/301/NW/2020

Govt. of Bihar

OFFICE OF THE SENIOR PROJECT ENGINEER
BIHAR RAJYA PUL NIRMAN NIGAM LTD.
EXTERNAL PROJECT DIVISION NO.- 02, KISHANGANJ

Short Notice Inviting Tender on EPC Mode

National Competitive Bidding
(Only through e-tendering system on Website (www.eproc.bihar.gov.in)

NIT No.-BRPNNL/KNG/C00 / 799

Bihar Rajya Pul Nirman Nigam Ltd (BRPNNL), A Government of Bihar undertaking, invites Proposals in two Bid System (Technical and Financial) from eligible Firms/Contractors/Agencies or Companies registered in appropriate category with RCD, Govt. of Bihar/BRPNNL/MES/CPWD/Railways or Central Government/ any State Government or any PSU for the following work on EPC Mode. Those not registered with BRPNNL will have to get registered with BRPNNL after issue of LOA and before executing the agreement.

Sl.No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of Bid Document (Rs.) (Non Refundable)	Earnest Money (Rs. In Lacs)	Bid Processing Fee (Rs) (Online Payment) (Non Refundable)	Time of Completion of work
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Construction of (1) Boundary wall (2) Main Entrance Gate and Guard Room- One Unit (3) Toilet Block with all facilities - One Unit (4) One no. of High mast lighting, 6 unit of street lighting pole and 12 lights (5) Road development (PCC Main Road and foot path from main gate) (6) Drainage and Cross Drainage (7) Covered Chabutra- One Unit (8) Staff Quarter- One Unit (9) Tube Well- One Unit (10) Hand pump- One Unit (11) Notice Board- One Unit (12) Silapat- One Unit work etc. of Krishi Bazar Samiti, Thakurganj, Phase -1 (As per AA)	465.52	10,000.00	9.31	*17,700.00*	6 Months

2. Document Download Start Date — Date 17-08-2020 to 22-08-2020 till 3.00 pm from www.eproc.bihar.gov.in
3. Pre-bid Meeting — 19-08-2020 at 3.00 pm (HQ, BRPNNL, Patna)
4. Last Date & Time for submission of bid (Bid closing date) — Date 23-08-2020 till 3.00 pm can be submitted on www.eproc.bihar.gov.in
5. Technical Bid Opening Date & Time — Date 25-08-2020 at 3.30 pm on www.eproc.bihar.gov.in
6. Financial Bid Opening Date and Time — To be intimated later
7. Contact person:- Sri Munindra Thakur, P.E., Ext. Project Division No.-02, Kishanganj, Mob No.– 9006371769

For further details please visit website www.eproc.bihar.gov.in or **state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar**
For clarification and further enquiry, if any, regarding e-tendering process and registration, the bidder may contact e-procurement Helpdesk, 1st Floor, M/22, Bank of India Building, Road No. 25, S.K. Nagar, Patna – 800001 (Tel 0612-2523006, 7542028164)
Note: Bidders are requested to keep themselves updated with the website www.brpnn.bih.nic.in. **on regular basis for any Amendment / Clarification / Notification in respect of this NIT.**
For further details please visit website **state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar**

Sr. Project Engineer
Bihar Rajya Pul Nirman Nigam Ltd
External Project Division No.-02, Kishanganj

PR. No. 004698 (Ni.Ni.) 2020-21

नोवल कोरोना के संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी एवं सहयोग हेतु Toll Free No.: **104** पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।
खाद्य सामग्री– संबंधी किसी तरह की जानकारी अथवा सुझाव हेतु दूरभाष संख्या 0612–2217636 पर सम्पर्क किया जा सकता है।

Trend Blazer

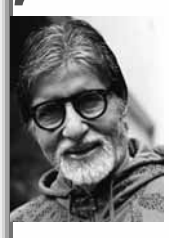
Sara pens special note for mom

On turning 25, actor **SARA ALI KHAN** penned a special message for her mother **Amrita Singh**.

She shared a couple of throwback pictures of Amrita on Instagram, which reflects her love for dogs.

"Quarter Century *Ho Gayi!!* From being a Pup Mommy to a Human Mommy... Love you Maa," Sara captioned the pictures.

Sara turned a year older on Wednesday, and she had a low-key celebration with her brother Ibrahim Ali Khan in Goa. Taking to Instagram, Sara posted a couple of pictures and videos from her birthday celebrations.



'Have you ever noticed that it is the ones who haven't been loved who grow up to hate so much? I believe in the emancipation of women but not at the cost of one's home. For in their emancipation, women are losing what has always made them emotionally superior to men — their tenderness and essential warmth of heart.'
—Amitabh Bachchan

Actor-comedian **VIR DAS** all set to debut an unscripted homegrown comedy special, *Inside Out,* created from his 30 virtual shows during the lockdown.

Das said, "Week on week, the encouraging response kept pouring in and we knew there was enough material to make a special. We recorded all the virtual shows in advance. I decided to talk about our collective fears and give it a light touch. In such times when we don't know when is our next physical gig or shoot, we thought it'd be a way to work with the changing times. This isn't the new normal but this is a novel alternative, for now."

Priyanka lauds Kamala Harris

Actor **PRIYANKA CHOPRA JONAS** has congratulated the US Democratic vice-presidential candidate **Kamala Harris** on becoming the first person of Indian descent to achieve that honour.

Priyanka took to Instagram and posted a picture of Harris.

"This is a historical, transformational, and proud moment for all women. All women of colour, all Black women, and all South Asian women. Congratulations on becoming the first Black woman and First Person of Indian descent to compete on a major US party's presidential ticket. #representationmatters. Ps. To my younger self: look how far we have come!" she wrote.

AGENT BINOD

The term perhaps became more viral than the Coronavirus. Trend creators ABHYUDAYA MOHAN and GAUTAMI KAWALE of the YouTube channel, Slayy Point, explain how. By Team Viva

In the list of major events and people of 2020, a new name has been added — Binod— which has become the buzzword for netizens and social media users. The trend began after a video by the YouTube channel, Slayy Point, in which its creators Abhyudaya Mohan and Gautami Kawale are seen roasting the comments section of popular videos, went viral. Titled, *Why Indian Comments Section is Garbage,* it highlighted how even asinine and silly entries get hits and "likes". In this case, a user called Binod had simply typed in his name in the commentary chat and had still elicited seven likes. And then Binod trolled several notable social media handles with what can best be described as mumbo jumbo but still got noticed. So much so that it generated memes.

The #Binod memes so hogged the limelight that even brands like Airtel, Paytm, Netflix and Tinder didn't leave any stone unturned in making it their new marketing word. While the dating app tweeted, "Yes, Binod is on Tinder," the digital payment app changed its Twitter username from Paytm to Binod for a short period. Food-ordering app Swiggy tweeted, "We think Binod will be the first person to call and wish us at 12 tonight," celebrating its birthday. Reality show Bigg Boss' Twitter handle also posted, "Now who's saying Binod is a contestant this year?" Other handles such as Mumbai Police, Nagpur Police and Jaipur Police used the word for awareness of traffic rules and safety.

Well, it isn't the first time a bizarre trend has got unprecedented attention from netizens. Who wouldn't remember the viral *"Selfie Maine Le Li Aaj"* by Dhinchak Pooja or *"Hello friends, chai peelo!"* or even trends like #IHaveAJoke and #MyQuarantineInSixWords! But why does such content grab attention?

"Yes, there have been bizarre trends in the past. However, I think that things that strike a chord among the audience grabs their attention. For instance, Binod has just a 30-second presence in our video. Even then, not the rest of the video but 'Binod' grabbed eyeballs. It completely depends on the viewers. We present a platter but it could be just one thing that grabs their attention or it could be the entire video as well," says Abhyudaya, who never thought that after this video, rappers like that DJ Snake and Honey Singh would be using the term for comments.

With Coronavirus being the permanent trending hashtag on social media over the past few months, hashtag Binod certainly came as a clutter breaker and social disruptor. For Gautami, Binod became an "emotion" for people in lockdown, a byword for an alternate universe, or a flighty fun exercise to destress themselves. Says she, "If one is sad, s/he is using Binod. One is typing Binod to wish someone good morning! There's absolutely no head or toe to this. This has really been a clutter breaker as brands and celebrities too accepted 'Binod' to communicate. Personally, we really liked Airtel India's tweet,

"Receive every call with *'Haan #Binod bol'*."

The YouTube video also took a dig at the outlandish comments to show how trashy they are, with the creative team pressing all the keys of the keyboard at once so that it typed random alphabets. The 100-word paragraph of alphabets was then posted in comments of a video, which, in turn, surprisingly grabbed even more bizarre comments.

Is this, then, the new theatre of the absurd? Says Gautami, "There's no formula or tutorial about how to go viral or how to start a trend. It depends on the audience, their preferences and likes and when we see the audience talking about it constantly, that's when the content trends. I think platforms like Twitter and YouTube play a huge role in spurring the growth of such trends among the masses."

So why is it important to note what comments are being posted? Is it any kind of marketing strategy? Abhyudaya refuses. He says, "Well, no! It's not any kind of marketing strategy. Binod's comments were solely for entertainment because there is no such thing as trend marketing."

Binod even raided the Prime Minister's Twitter handle. What did the disruption mean? He adds, "We heard about it and checked PM's Live. People were commenting 'Binod' everywhere. We could then say that's the power of Binod (laughs). I think Binod for them came as a voice of licentiousness in these times of lockdown. We are overwhelmed that it's a trend and people are communicating through Binod rightfully, meaning that it's in the '*Janta*'s hands' (in hands of the citizens). We are just the medium."

Well, the #Binod raids have even reached the comments section of some international artists and Nasa Live sessions! But beyond grabbing eyeballs, a few laughs and generating some revenue for creators, is there any point to this dumbed down pursuit of time-kills?

POWER OF THE YOUNG

Choreographer ASHLEY LOBO says that the International Youth Day this year has helped young people find balance without their peers and props at home. By Team Viva

For choreographer, Ashley Lobo, there is no energy as that of youth on his dance floor. He loves their moves, their hope, and the vibrancy they bring to any class. On International Youth Day, Ashley stressed that it is the youth which is embracing the 'new normal' and helping the not-so-savvy world adjust to the digital age, which has swamped all of us.

He says, "Being at home and not with their peer group is not how the youth would have ever imagined their lives but given their proximity to gadgets and the online world, they are doing a pretty good job. I miss their vibrancy in my studio since offline classes are stopped. But when youngsters dance, it is obvious that they like to be free and that spirit is visible in whatever they do."

The pandemic has affected youngsters profoundly, for better or for worse. Through videos and virtual means, youth across

the country have been expressing themselves in unique ways and it is believed that the performing arts are only helping to liberate them even more. For Ashley, in the art form of dance, there is, after all, no perfection, only being one with the self and realising one's true emotions and passion by dancing from the heart. "I have seen students over the years feel relaxed and happy after a dance session. This is because during the class, stress levels drop and the endorphins take over. This, in turn, makes the mind calm. It can be an extremely therapeutic and spiritual experience. When one dances, one connects to the music and to the self. In that one moment, you become one with yourself and the universe and that strain is the best mantra to get over the pandemic blues," adds he.

Ashley, who has choreographed for Bollywood films such as *Dhoom, Jab We Met, Cocktail,* and many others, feels it is important for the youngsters to be guided properly and the importance of discipline should be instilled early. "And then, be it a crisis, pandemic, or any other trouble, you will always see the young rise above and show the discipline in every facet of life," he says.

The current imbroglio which has stopped dancers worldwide from running riot on the dance floor and forced to channelise their energy online is seeing quite a bit of heft in the youth. Despite being confined to their homes and missing their friends, the youngsters are doing wonders with dance and the arts. "They will become stronger once this is all behind us because even now the youth in my online classes can find balance in dance through the turbulence of the global pandemic. That is the power of the young and restless," says Ashley.

Shawn and *The Boys*

Gearing up for a more diabolical season two of the series, *The Boys,* it is all set to introduce an intriguing character — Lamplighter, into the Supes' universe. A former superstar and one of the original members of *The Seven,* Lamplighter will be played by *X-Men* fame Canadian television and film actor, Shawn Ashmore.

Speaking on roping in Shawn, showrunner and executive producer, Eric Kripke said, "We were thrilled that Shawn, who is, let's be honest, an OG superhero, wanted to play the crucial part of Lamplighter. He brings so much depth, menace, and world-weary humanity to this former member of *The Seven*. Shawn is a really good guy. We're grateful to have him join our bloody little family."

Having mysteriously been replaced by our very own Starlight (played by Erin Moriarty) in season one, the new season will unravel what truly happened with the fire inducing Supe and The Boys previously. Their tragic history will be in shambles as Lamplighter enters again and dredges up painful memories, poke at their raw nerves and change everything.

The Boys 2 will premiere on Amazon Prime Video with the first three episodes on September 4. New episodes will be available each Friday, culminating in an epic season finale on October 9. This season, the series will also have an after-show titled, *Prime Rewind: Inside The Boys* hosted by Aisha Tyler, which will debut on August 28.

PEACE, PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY

A series of road and highway projects is on the cards to give impetus to growth in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. By ASHOK TANDON

Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, founder of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (predecessor of the present day Bharatiya Janata Party), sacrificed his life spearheading a nationwide Satyagrah (non-violent agitation) demanding complete integration of the state of Jammu & Kashmir into the Indian Union. Dr Mookerjee had defied the entry-permit order of the government on the J&K border on May 10, 1953 and courted arrest chanting: *Ek desh mein do vidhan, do pradhan aur do nishan nahin chalenge* (There can't be two constitutions, two prime ministers and two flags in one nation).

He was taken to Srinagar jail, where he died under mysterious circumstances on June 23, 1953. Little would have Dr Mookerjee then realised that his mission would be accomplished when a second generation party leader from Gujarat will lead the party.

The NDA government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 5, 2019, revoked the special status granted to the state of Jammu & Kashmir under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. It enabled people of the state to access all central government programmes and laws including right to reservation for disempowered, right to education and right to information, besides Minimum Wages Act and Minority Act.

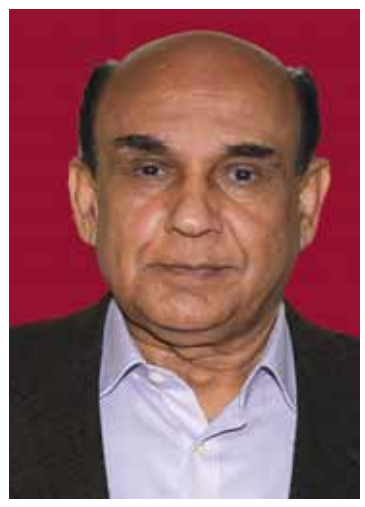
The historic presidential order nullifying all the provisions of autonomy granted to the state was followed by another landmark and strategically significant State Reorganisation Act, 2019, dividing the state into two Union Territories — Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Since then the NDA government, over the last one year, has been grappling with a series of challenges on various fronts, including border security, constructive engagement with international community on the J&K issue and domestic political resistance to converting the state into two union territories. And then there was stupendous challenge of fast-tracking all round development ensuring peace, prosperity and welfare of the people and providing corruption free governance in all the three regions.

The central government converted these challenges into an opportunity to undo the betrayal inflicted upon the people of J&K as well as Ladakh in the name of Article 370 by the family-run political parties who ruled the state for most of the last seven decades.

PM's personal appeal to the youth in the region, particularly the misguided elements in the Kashmir valley, "to be a part of this historic journey and walk together for a greater cause" has shown tangible results on the ground.

With both J&K and Ladakh as union territories (Jammu & Kashmir not permanently) directly under the centre, the Modi government unfolded an ambitious roadmap of peace and progress ushering in a new era of inclusive development and transparent governance in the entire region.



The Team-Modi adopted an integrated approach to build a state-of-the-art infrastructure and unleashed fast-track social welfare and employment generation schemes, especially among the Small, Medium & Micro Enterprises,(MSME), including cottage, handicraft, handloom and horticulture enterprises.

Good quality all-weather roads and national highways enhancing the hitherto lacking inter-region and intra-region connectivity has gone a long way in promoting and creating fresh employment opportunities in the post-bifurcation period.

A region-wise performance audit of the promises made, over the last one year, gives a fairly good account. Although a complete transformation in the landscape of this beautiful region will be on canvas once all the ongoing projects, especially several strategically important national highways, including tunnels in the tough terrains, become operational capable of coping with extreme weather conditions.

KASHMIR

The Road Transport and Highways Ministry, with its arms like the NHAI and NHIDCL, in concert with the BRO and the state PWD, are currently engaged in completing a series of projects which will give impetus to growth and help the start-ups in establishing producer companies with focus on further development of sericulture, cold water fisheries, woodwork, cricket bats, saffron, handicrafts and horticulture produce.

The ongoing projects include Srinagar-Jammu-Lakhanpur highway, the Qazigund-Banihal tunnel and Srinagar ring road.

JAMMU

Jammu, with rapidly growing rail and road connectivity, including the Jammu ring road, is getting a huge boost to its economy with flourishing religious tourism and start-ups in businesses like wood grain work, mills, basmati rice trade, rice mills, carpets, electronic items and electric goods.

LADAKH

Ladakh is witnessing an unprecedented boost to the infrastructure development with all-weather roads and highway network coming up in a big way in difficult terrains and strategic locations. Domestic and international tourism promotion has been given a big push.

Sky seems to be the limit of central financial packages to Ladakh resulting in a phenomenal growth in its farm-based economy through enhanced agriculture and livestock activities. An augmented irrigation facility for horticulture and cash crops has improved productivity putting additional money in farmers' pocket.

Last but not the least, the abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of the state into two union territories has given the local communities in all three regions greater sense of participation in public discourse. It is discernible with the youth in the valley joining security forces and civil services and excelling in the field of education and sports.

Today there is greater awareness about women rights and girls education in Kashmir as well as in Ladakh. People are coming forward to join hands with local administration in isolating anti-social elements and exposing Pakistan-sponsored attempts at radicalisation of youth.

(The author is a senior journalist and a member of Prasar Bharati Board.)

DDA goes digital

In order to facilitate the public interface, Land Disposal department of Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is successfully implementing e-mutation (Online Mutation Application System) under the computerisation project "IDLI System" for plotted properties.

Now, they are introducing two more public services namely e-conversion (online system for conversion from leasehold to freehold of plotted properties) and e-EOT (online application for extension of time).

In order to contain the spread of novel Coronavirus, this initiative will also help in applying and monitoring DDA's online public services without visiting offices. This service would be inaugurated and opened to public today by Anurag Jain, Vice Chairman, DDA. It will reduce the time of processing and bring in transparency. It will be easy to apply, process and monitor the property conversion and extension of time application online from anytime and anywhere.

No offline application for conversion and EOT (extension of time) of plotted properties will be entertained. It is the first end to end public service interface of DDA, which is conceptualised and executed by Subu R Commissioner (Land Disposal) of DDA.

All the three services can be availed through single username and password.

For applying online conversion application, applicant have to register with DDA public services portal of LD department. An one time password will be sent on the registered email and mobile of the applicant for login. After that, applicant will fill applicant's detail, relation with allottee, property detail, uploading the scanned copy of requisite documents and making online payment of initially conversion charges/processing fee. A registration ID of e-conversion and e-EOT will be sent through an auto generated e-mail for future reference. Stage-wise alerts will be sent to applicant.

IDLI System is also working on e-restoration (restoration of cancelled lease of plotted properties) and e-appointment (online public appointment).

GM Northern Railway holds performance review meeting

Rajiv Chaudhry, General Manager Northern & North Central Railways held a performance review meeting with the departmental heads of Northern Railway through video conferencing. Among other things special emphasis was given on train operations during the rainy season. The running of trains has its own challenges in the monsoons which includes water logging, inundation and collection of mud and pebbles on the tracks. He advised everyone to be active and vigilant to maintain top operational capabilities. He also added that intensive checking of tracks, major and minor bridges and crossings should be thoroughly checked by increasing patrolling.

He also called upon the concerned department to clear vegetation from the embankments of the track. Due to the rainy season, the fast growth in vegetation, infringing the tracks and overhead electric wires is another major issue. The divisions have taken permission from the civil authorities and the Forest Department for tree chopping wherever required.

Indian Railways is focusing on increasing the mobility of the passenger and freight trains under the project 'Raftaar.' Sections have been defined in all zones where infrastructure is to be upgraded to facilitate running of trains upto 160 kmph. GM emphasised on the need of periodic overhauling of the rolling stock i.e. locomotives, coaches and wagons to increase their working abilities. Doubling and electrification of high density routes are to be taken up, for this Detailed Project Reports (DPR) should be prepared and submitted on priority.

Taking note of the working of the Business Development Units of the five divisions, GM lauded their efforts. He stated that freight transportation, both inter and intra state, should be targeted upon.

OFB ENHANCES EFFICIENCY

As a part of the observance of the '*Atma Nirbhar* Week', three facilities of Ordnance Factory Board were dedicated to the nation by the Minister of Defence. They are:

❒ Manufacturing facility for sighting devices for T-90 Tanks at the Opto Electronics Factory, Dehradun.

The facility comprises ISO-6: Class 1,000 and ISO-7: Class 10,000 level clear environment rooms for the production of various high end Opto Electronics and electronics assemblies/sub-assemblies of T-90 systems and Stabilised Remote Controlled Gun (SRCG) project.

❒ The automated assembly line for the production of Pinaka Rockets at the Ordnance Factory, Chandrapur.

The system has been conceptualised and developed indigenously by OF Chanda with M/s Godrej and Boyce, Mumbai. The automated assembly will not only enhance the production capacity but would also be more efficient as it seeks to do away with most of the manual operations. The assembly line has automated safety features and facilities for monitoring the quality of production.

❒ The assembly and testing facility of SRCG at the Ordnance Factory, Tiruchirappalli.

The SRCG is a 12.7 mm M2 NATO standard Machine Gun for marine applications. The modern facility with specialised buildings and equipment is for the assembly and for conducting factory acceptance tests of this gun.

These modern, indigenously conceptualised facilities will go a long way in enhancing productivity, quality and efficiency.

LIC revives lapsed policies

To encourage continuation of risk cover in the current circumstances of high risk, LIC brings an opportunity for its policyholders to revive their lapsed policies. It has decided to launch a Special Revival Campaign from August 10 to October 9 for its customers to revive their individual lapsed LIC policies.

In view of the prevailing circumstances, no concessions are being offered in medical requirements and the same are limited to late fee only; under plans other than term assurance and other high risk plans.

Under this campaign, policies of specific eligible plans can be revived within five years from date of the first unpaid premium subject to certain terms and conditions. Policies which are in lapsed condition during the premium paying term and not completed policy term as on the date of revival are eligible to be revived in this campaign.

The campaign is launched to benefit those policy holders who were not able to pay premiums due to unavoidable circumstances and their policy lapsed. It always makes better sense to revive an old policy to restore insurance cover.

LOVE FOR WRITING

Literature has always acted as a torchbearer for the society. Whether it be the intellectual renaissance or the dark phases when everything seems to go haywire, literature has been the soothing soul. At this juncture when literary fraternity needs fresh voices who can act as a doyen, literary agency, Literia Insight signs a two book deal with IRS Officer, Neha Chakravarthy.

A science graduate, Chakravarthy has an insatiable passion for writing and considers it as a medium to connect with inner soul. Her passion has increased manifold since she started to scribble. She is now ready to make a mark with her two poetry collections, *Impressions* and *Reflections*.

In the words of Nitish Raj, Co-Founder; Literia Insight, "We are delighted to sign Chakravarthy who brings a huge amount of talent and unparalleled creativity in her writings. She is surely going to be one of the doyens of the literary fraternity in future and we are more than happy to pitch her masterpieces with Big Foot Publications."

IN SHORT

Kolkata Metro has been observing cleanliness week from August 10 to 16. Special focus has been given to cleanliness of track, station offices, platform and adjoining areas, toilets, railway colonies, drains, water vending points, work sites and hospital. Emphasis is being given to the collection and disposal of plastic wastes in these areas.

As per the directive of the Railway Board, under Swach Rail Swach Bharat, special cleanliness drive is being organised in the Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW). It will be carried out in all the offices and workshop premises. It will also be carried out in the Dankuni Unit of CLW.

GAIL (India) Limited has been included in the international FTSE4Good Index Series for the fourth time in a row, affirming the company's commitment towards Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) practices in the oil and gas sector. The index series measures the performance of companies demonstrating strong ESG practices. The FTSE4Good indexes are used by a wide variety of market participants to create and assess responsible investment funds and other products. GAIL Chairman & Managing Director Manoj Jain said, "I am pleased that the company has been included in the series for the fourth year. This is a proof of our commitment towards sustainable development while also doing business responsibly and focusing on our stakeholders."

Government-owned Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC), a NBFC, signed a MoA with District Administration, Siddharthnagar, Uttar Pradesh for construction of two modular operation theatre rooms in the district hospital. Under the MoA, PFC will provide financial assistance of close to ₹94 lakh to the District Administration under its CSR initiative. M Prabhakar Das, CGM (CSR&SD), PFC and Dr Dinesh Kumar Chaudhary, Dy CMO, Siddharthnagar signed the agreement on behalf of respective organisations. The pact is intended to provide support to the Siddharthnagar District Administration to develop the necessary infrastructure to reduce Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR).

Max Bupa introduces ReAssure insurance plan

Max Bupa — one of the standalone health insurers, has introduced 'ReAssure' — a comprehensive health insurance plan that provides unlimited sum insured for any type of hospitalisation including the ones related to COVID-19. This allows consumers to make as many claims as required for themselves or for family members covered in the same policy, for same or different illness in a year, at no additional cost. A single claim under ReAssure benefit will be payable up to the base sum insured amount. In a nutshell, the customers will never fall short of coverage which is critical to protect against unforeseen medical expenditure towards all kinds of diseases, including COVID. Even in case of critical illnesses like kidney dialysis or cancer, when patients often need hospitalisation multiple times in the same year, unlimited coverage in the product will prove to be extremely useful.

For instance, a family of four are insured with Max Bupa ReAssure policy with ₹10 lakh floater sum insured. In case one of them gets diagnosed with COVID or any other disease covered in the policy and needs hospitalisation, then s/he can claim coverage up to ₹10 lakh along with the ReAssure benefit getting triggered. Next claim onwards an additional amount of ₹10 lakh per claim for as many number of claims as needed will be available for any insured or any illness in the same year. The benefit will be triggered from the first claim, even if two family members get hospitalised at the same time.

The product comes with a 'Booster Benefit' that doubles the sum insured in just two claim free years. If no claim was made during the year, then for the next year the sum insured will increase by 50 percent. If in the second year also there is no claim, then there will be another 50 percent increase in sum insured which amounts to a total 100 per cent increase in sum insured in just two years. Moreover, in case a claim is made only for COVID in a year, there will be no impact on Booster Benefit which means sum insured will not be impacted and will still increase by 50 percent; up to a maximum of 100 percent.

Commenting on the launch of ReAssure Health Insurance Plan, Krishnan Ramachandran, MD & CEO, Max Bupa Health Insurance said, "ReAssure Health Insurance promises our customers three things which are relevant in times of COVID — Assurance in the form of multiple customer benefits; Accessibility through our quality network across the country and Affordability through the various financial benefits available under the product. The Max Bupa Covid-19 survey shows that 71 percent people now realise the benefits of health insurance and 57 percent have a strong preference for comprehensive health insurance plans for protection against any unforeseen medical emergencies."

Dr Bhabatosh Mishra, Director – Products, Underwriting & Claims, Max Bupa Health Insurance said, "India is one of the most under penetrated health insurance markets globally, with people either having no health insurance cover being inadequately covered. Considering this, we have launched ReAssure which has the potential to revolutionise how people perceive and utilise health insurance in the country. Each product benefit has been conceptualised with the intent that every customer is adequately covered at any given point in time. At Max Bupa, we acknowledge that people want to be financially secured in these difficult times, hence we have designed a truly cashless product that will ensure there is no financial burden on them once they opt for this policy."

The ReAssure plan is available on individual and family floater basis, with sum insured ranging from ₹3 lakh up to ₹1 crore.

HARYANA CM
INAUGURATES PLASMA BANK

Manohar Lal Khattar, Chief Minister of Haryana & Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Labour & Employment, Govt of India inaugurated plasma bank at ESIC Medical College and Hospital, Faridabad (Haryana) through video conference from Haryana Bhawan on Friday.

Heera Lal Samariya, Secretary, Govt of India, Anuradha Prasad, Director General, ESIC and officers of MoLE, ESIC & Govt of Haryana also graced the occasion.

Khattar informed about the efforts of Haryana Govt in combating COVID-19 pandemic. He also briefed about the starting of plasma therapy at three different locations — Panchkula, Rohtak and Gurugram. At the end, he made an appeal to the COVID recovered patients to come forward and donate their plasmas to save the lives of others.

During his address, Gangwar informed that the ESIC has been working to provide social security to its insured persons. In the last 67 years of journey, that day, the services of ESIC have expanded to about 566 districts out of 722 and about 12 crore beneficiaries are receiving ESI facilities.

In this crisis situation, 21 ESIC hospitals have been converted into dedicated COVID hospitals. More than 2,400 isolation beds, 550 ICU/HDU beds with 200 ventilators have been made available. Quarantine facility (1300 Beds) has been made functional in four ESIC hospitals at Alwar (Rajasthan), Bihta, Patna (Bihar), Gulbarga (Karnataka) and Korba (Chhattisgarh). Besides, Covid-19 testing facility has been made available at ESIC hospital, Faridabad (Haryana), Basaidarapur (New Delhi) and Sanathnagar (Hyderabad). Plasma therapy is also being provided at ESIC Hospitals, Faridabad and Sanathnagar for the treatment of serious COVID patients. Gangwar commended the efforts being made by ESIC, an organisation under his Ministry, to combat COVID-19.

Indian captain Sunil Chhetri with his Bangladeshi counterpart PTI

No action for Blue Tigers this year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian football team will not see any action this year with the Asian qualifying matches for the 2022 FIFA World Cup on Wednesday getting postponed to 2021 owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Asian Football Confederation postponed all men's qualifiers scheduled in October and November for the 2022 World Cup and the 2023 Asian Cup. India's last international match was the joint qualifying round match against Oman in Muscat in November last year, which they had lost 0-1.

Though out of contention for a place in the next round of World Cup qualifiers, India are still in the reckoning for a spot in the 2023 Asian Cup. They were scheduled to play Qatar at home on October 8 followed by matches against Afghanistan (home) and Bangladesh (away) in November.

A third-place finish in the group will help India get a direct berth in the third round of the qualifiers for the 2023 Asian Cup.

Both FIFA and AFC stated that the decision was taken keeping in mind the safety of all participants during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The games will be rescheduled in 2021.

India are currently fourth in Group E with three points from five games. Qatar top the table with 13 points with Oman a point behind them in second.

Eight group winners and four best runners-up will progress to the continent's 12-team final qualifying stage for the World Cup.

LATE WINNER

Ocampos' 88th minute header break Wolves hearts; Shakhtar thump Basel to reach semis

Sevilla players celebrate after Lucas Ocampos scores Spanish club's first goal against Wolves Europa League/Twitter

AFP ■ DUISBURG

Sevilla qualified for the semi-finals of the Europa League on Tuesday after Lucas Ocampos' late header broke Wolverhampton Wanderers' hearts, while Shakhtar Donetsk thumped Basel 4-1 to join the Spaniards in the last four.

Five-time competition winners Sevilla face Manchester United in Cologne on Sunday thanks to a brilliant header from Argentine Ocampos with less than two minutes left on the clock which gave them a deserved 1-0 win, while Shakhtar take on Inter Milan on Monday in another intriguing tie.

Sevilla dominated their English opponents over the course of the match, as a tired-looking Wolves' dreams of European glory ended with a whimper.

"I am very proud of my players. We needed to have lots of patience against a very good team," said Sevilla coach Julen Lopetegui, whose team are now unbeaten in 19 matches in all competitions, to *BT Sport*.

"We have ambition we work very hard... but we are going to play against Manchester United... the biggest team in world football."

Premier League outfit Wolves thought they were set to make the perfect start in the 11th minute when Adam Traore set off on a sensational surge towards goal from his own half and was chopped down in the area by Diego Carlos.

However, Raul Jimenez, who had scored all of his previous eight penalties for Wolves, sent a weak spot-kick towards Yassine Bounou, who could hardly believe his luck as he batted the Mexican's tame shot aside.

There were claims that Bounou had left his line while Sevilla players seemed to enter the area before the penalty was taken, but in any case, that was to be Wolves' last shot on target of the match as chances became hard to come by.

In Gelsenkirchen, Shakhtar booked their spot in the last four with a commanding win over Basel that will give Inter Milan something to think about ahead of their semi-final clash on Monday.

"I'm feeling amazing because we have worked hard and we trust we can reach the final," said goalscorer Junior Moraes.

"If you want to test yourself, you have to play against teams at this high level."

The Ukrainian side got off to a flyer thanks to Brazil-born Moraes, who headed home Marlos' corner with less than two minutes on the clock, and they never looked back from that point on.

Taison put Shakhtar two ahead 20 minutes later when his deflected shot flashed past Basel's bamboozled goalkeeper Dorde Nikolic.

Alan Patrick put the result beyond doubt from the penalty spot with 14 minutes left after Taison's burst into the box was ended by a clumsy challenge from Basel defender Yannick Marchand.

Shakhtar rounded off a fine display in the 88th minute when right-back Dodo combined with Tete before smashing home a superb finish.

Ricky van Wolfswinkel's close-range strike for Basel a minute into stoppage time made no difference to a thumping defeat for the Swiss.

SINGLES

3 INDIANS IN LPGA EVENT FOR FIRST TIME

North Berwick: In a first for Indian women's golf, three leading players — Aditi Ashok, Diksha Dagar and Tvesa Malik — will tee up at an LPGA event together, the Ladies Scottish Open, starting on Thursday. Diksha plays with Stephanie Kyriacou and Yu Liu at 7.15 am while Aditi plays with Scottish star Carly Booth and South African Lee-Ann Pace at 9.58 am. Tvesa has been drawn with Yealimi Noh and Emily Pedersen, and they tee off at 12.22 pm.

BARCA PLAYER TESTS CORONA POSITIVE

Barcelona: A Barcelona player has tested positive for the novel coronavirus after reporting back for pre-season training, the La Liga side said in a statement on Wednesday . Barca said the player was isolating in his home and was asymptomatic, adding that he had not been in contact with any of the players who are to travel to Lisbon for the Champions League Final Eight tournament.

LIVERPOOL SET FOR RECORD PAYDAY

Liverpool: Liverpool will receive a record 175 million pounds payout for winning the Premier League after all 20 clubs in England's top-flight agreed to postpone any reductions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. *The Times* reported on Wednesday that teams will receive their entire payout for last season and rebates to broadcasters, which could amount to 330 million pounds.

DELHI'S SUDEVA FC TO PLAY IN I-LEAGUE

New Delhi: Sudeva FC will become the first ever football club from Delhi to play in the I-League as the All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Wednesday approved the city side's participation in the second-tier domestic competition from the upcoming season. The AIFF also announced Visakhapatnam side Sreenidhi FC's entry into the I-League from 2021-2022 season.

SPURS SIGN SOUTHAMPTON'S HOJBJERG

London: Tottenham Hotspur have signed Denmark midfielder Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg from Southampton on a five-year deal with full back Kyle Walker-Peters moving in the opposite direction on a similar contract. Financial details of the transfer were not disclosed but British media reported that Spurs have paid Southampton an initial fee of around 15 million pounds to sign the 25-year-old Hojbjerg who had a year left on his contract. **Agencies**

Serena sets Venus clash in Top Seed Open

AFP ■ LEXINGTON

Serena Williams had to fight for a winning return from her six-month coronavirus lay-off on Tuesday, defeating lowly ranked Bernarda Pera in three sets at the WTA Top Seed Open tournament in Kentucky.

Serena, who before Tuesday had not played a competitive game since a Fed Cup appearance in February, came from behind to defeat American world number 60 Pera 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 in two hours and 15 minutes at the Top Seed Tennis Club in Lexington.

Venus Williams started her campaign with a straight sets wins over Victoria Azarenka in a a battle of former World No 1 players. The 40-year-old American won 6-3, 6-2 and set up an exciting encounter between the Williams sisters in the second round.

Rising American star Coco Gauff had to work hard for her straight-set win over qualifier Caroline Dolehide, winning 7-5, 7-5 while Canadian qualifier Leylah Fernandez knocked out seventh seed Sloane Stephens in their opener.

This week's tournament — the first WTA event in the US since the Covid-19 pandemic — is taking place without spectators.

Williams, 38, later revealed that the sedate surroundings had suited her game.

"It was a really calm atmosphere, it was really chill," Williams said. "I can't say I disliked it. I didn't mind it at all. I've been through so many things in my career and this was totally different. I think I won today because I was calm for once in my career. Kind of reminds me of junior days. Something nostalgic about that. I kind of enjoyed it."

The 23-time Grand Slam singles champion looked to be flirting with an early exit in the second set, but recovered from 0-40 down at 4-4 before holding and eventually winning the set.

"I just knew I could do better," Williams said. "It was an interesting game. I just had to get used to her game a little bit. She played really well."

CSK expect Dhoni to play until 2022

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chennai Super Kings CEO Kasi Vishwanathan feels their talisman Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who has not played any competitive cricket since last year's World Cup semifinal, will be part of the franchise in 2021 and 2022 IPLs.

The 39-year-old Dhoni is set for a return to competitive cricket in the upcoming IPL, to be played in the UAE from September 19 to November 10.

"We can expect MS Dhoni to be part of both (IPL 2020 and 2021) and probably for even the next year — 2022," Viswanathan was quoted as saying by *indiatoday.in*.

"I am getting updates through the media only, saying he has been training in Jharkhand in indoor nets. But we don't have to worry about the skipper, boss. We don't worry about him at all.

"He knows his responsibilities and he will take care of himself and the team."

N Srinivasan, the vice-chairman and managing director of India Cements, owners of the CSK franchise, in January said that Dhoni would be retained by the team for the 2021 IPL mega-auction.

CSK have planned a short training camp at their base from August 16 to 20.

While CSK are hoping to leave for the UAE on August 21, Vishwanathan confirmed that all the players will assemble in Chennai on August 14.

"It will be a skill-based plus training camp. It can't immediately start off with skills because they are coming back after a long off," he said.

RR fielding coach tests virus +ve

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rajasthan Royals' fielding coach Dishant Yagnik has tested positive for Covid-19, the IPL team announced on Wednesday, making it the first such case among the league franchises ahead of their departure next week to this year's tournament venue, the UAE.

Yagnik is currently in his hometown Udaipur and has been advised to get admitted to hospital for his 14-day quarantine.

"Post 14 days, Dishant will be undergoing two tests as per the protocols of BCCI. On return of two negative reports, he will be allowed to join the team after self isolating for 6 days and receiving 3 further negative tests upon his arrival in the UAE," said Royals in a statement.

Unacademy to fight for IPL title sponsorship rights

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Education technology company *Unacademy*, which is already one of IPL's sponsors, is eyeing the league's title sponsorship rights now and is set to submit its bid to replace Chinese mobile phone company Vivo this season.

A BCCI official confirmed that *Unacademy* has picked up the bid papers but refrained from making any comments beyond that.

"I can confirm that *Unacademy* has shown interest and picked the bid papers. I have heard they will be submitting a bid and are pretty serious. So *Patanjali* if they bid, will have competition," the senior official told *PTI*.

Vivo, which annually paid ₹440 crore, dropped out as title sponsor this year due to the Sino-India border standoff.

The BCCI is now looking at a lesser value — between ₹300 to 350 crore — for a period of four months and 13 days.

The official said *Unacademy* is a part of IPL's central sponsorship pool with other companies like *Dream11* and *Paytm*.

"Yes, *Unacademy* is already in IPL's central sponsors' pool from 2020 to 2023," the BCCI official said.

Sri Lanka, UAE kept as back up for 2021 WT20

NEW DELHI: Sri Lanka and United Arab Emirates are the two back-up countries being zeroed in on by the ICC, in case India is unable to host next year's T20 World Cup.

While there is still one year to go before the mega event which was set to be held in Australia this year but got postponed due to Covid-19.

According to a report in *ESPN Cricinfo*, "Sri Lanka and the UAE are among the back-up venues for the 2021 men's T20 World Cup, should the Covid-19 pandemic make India an untenable host."

The ICC confirmed last week that India will host next year's tournament as scheduled in the original FTP while this year's postponed edition in Australia goes ahead in 2022.

However it is a standard protocol to have back-up venues listed for any global event.

"Identifying potential back-up venues is standard practice for every ICC event, but it takes on extra significance in this time because of the nature of the pandemic.

"India is currently the third-worst-hit country in the world in terms of cases, according to most data studies, with over 2 million cases so far and over 45,000 deaths.

"The current situation has forced the BCCI to relocate the IPL to the UAE, and only tentative plans are in place for the domestic season," the website further stated. **PTI**

Hafeez breaks bio-bubble

Mohammad Hafeez tweets picture with a 90+ year old lady at Golf course

PTI ■ KARACHI

The Pakistan Cricket Board is is furious at former captain Mohammad Hafeez for his apparent breach of the biosecurity protocol imposed by the England and Wales Cricket Board for the ongoing away series.

The former skipper, who is not a part of the Test squad is there for the limited overs leg.

On Wednesday, Hafeez tweeted a picture of himself with an elderly lady from the golf course adjacent to the team hotel despite strict instructions that they shouldn't interact with anyone outside the bubble.

A source close to the Pakistan team said Hafeez's breach of protocol had upset everyone as all players had been told specifically to avoid interaction with anyone outside the bio secure bubble, since the course is open to the public in Southampton. Hafeez put himself in trouble when he posted a tweet of himself and the lady terming her as inspirational.

The ECB medical team is aware of the breach of protocol and Hafeez will most likely have to isolate himself for five days and then undergo two negative Covid-19 tests before he rejoins the team again.

The ECB is taking any breach of the biosecurity protocol very seriously and fast bowler Joffra Archer was also reprimanded and was dropped for the second Test against West Indies after he also breached the biosecurity bubble by going to his apartment in Brighton.

Eng will sweep Pak series: Vaughan

SOUTHAMPTON: Former England captain Michael Vaughan predicted the hosts will sweep the three-test series against Pakistan despite the absence of talismanic all-rounder Ben Stokes for the last two matches.

Stokes was part of the England team which pulled off a thrilling three-wicket victory in the first Test at Old Trafford.

"He (Stokes) plays a big, big role in that dressing room," Vaughan wrote in a blog, although he had no doubts about the depth in the England squad.

"Even though Ben Stokes is out I think England will be too strong. England will win the series 3-0, that's my prediction."

He also felt England might rest veteran quick James Anderson in the second Test beginning on Thursday.

"I'd be surprised if he plays back-to-back games, so I think he will be rested. Maybe Sam Curran will come in for him or Mark Wood," he added. "Zak Crawley will probably come in for Ben Stokes." **Agencies**

National hockey camps to resume on Aug19

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The training camps for India's national hockey teams will go ahead as scheduled from August 19 in Bengaluru despite half a dozen men's team players, including skipper Manpreet Singh, being hospitalised after testing positive for Covid-19.

Both the men's and women's teams will resume training at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) South Centre in Bengaluru.

"...The Indian men's and Indian women's hockey teams are scheduled to resume sports activities from, Wednesday 19th August 2020, following the completion of their 14-day quarantine period," the SAI said in a statement on Wednesday.

The decision was taken after a discussion with the game's stakeholders, including Hockey India officials and chief coaches of both the teams.

"...After giving the utmost priority to the safety and well-being of all the athletes, it has been decided that the sporting activities will be resumed at SAI's National Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, as scheduled earlier."

The camp for male hockey players was uncertain after six of them tested positive for Covid-19. The women's camp, however, was never in doubt after all of them tested negative for the dreaded virus.

Currently, 33 male and 24 female players are in Bengaluru for the camp.

The light intensity national camp is expected to continue till September 30.

Men's hockey team chief coach Graham Reid said the health and wellbeing of the players and support staff will be the top priority during the camp.

The six Covid positive players will be integrated into the group once they recover from the virus.

"They are in good spirits, and are looking forward to a quick recovery. Once recovered and after following protocol of quarantine, we look forward to have them back with us," Reid said.

All 6 players shifted to hospital

BENGALURU: Five Covid-19 positive hockey players have been shifted to a hospital in Bengaluru as a precautionary measure after striker Mandeep Singh was transferred to the facility following a dip in his blood oxygen level, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on Wednesday.

"...The Sports Authority of India decided to shift the other five players, to SS Sparsh Multi-speciality hospital in Bengaluru on Tuesday afternoon, as a precautionary measure," the SAI said.

"The decision to hospitalise them was taken so as to ensure that the players were attended to at all times and could be given the best possible treatment. All six athletes are in good health and recovering well." **PTI**

Robinson replaces Stokes for 2nd Test

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Fast bowler Ollie Robinson replaced Ben Stokes as England on Wednesday named a 14-member squad for the second Test against Pakistan, starting Thursday at The Ageas Bowl.

The 26-year-old trained with the squad during the West Indies series and took eight Hampshire wickets during his subsequent appearance in the Bob Willis Trophy.

But whether he makes a Test debut at Ageas Bowl on Thursday could depend on how the England attack that played in a three-wicket win in the first of a three-match series recovers from their exertions at Old Trafford last week.

Shakib could return from ban during SL tour

PTI ■ DHAKA

Serving a ban for not reporting corrupt approaches, Bangladesh's premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is likely to return to the national fold for a tour of Sri Lanka later this year, with his suspension ending on October 29.

The southpaw was banned for two years, one year of it was suspended, for failing to report corrupt approaches by an alleged bookie during the IPL.

Bangladesh's tour of Sri Lanka is more or less confirmed and given the schedule, Shakib could feature in the proposed three-match T20 series.

"I think Shakib being out for a year is not that much different to the rest of our squad who have been out for six or seven months as well," Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo was quoted as saying by *ESPNcricinfo*.

"We are hoping all the players are fit. Obviously, there are standards that they need to attain in terms of fitness level. We have to organise a bit of game time for Shakib, as well as for all the players."

The all-rounder's fitness will be taken into consideration before picking him. "It is very difficult to get into international cricket without any sort of cricket. I think we need to try to find some opportunities for him to play some games. He is a world-class player so I am sure he will get back into it pretty soon, but fitness is an important thing," the coach said.

According to the report, Sri Lanka Cricket chief executive Mohan de Silva said the two boards have reached an agreement on Bangladesh's departure date, which has been set as September 24.

But there are still discussions over whether it will be a two or three-match Test series after the BCB requested a three-match T20I series in addition to the original schedule.

Shakib is set to start training at the BKSP facility ahead of his return to competitive cricket.

Domingo, however, added that Shakib would have to play unofficial cricket matches as a suspended cricketer before he is drafted into the national team.

"It is something that we have to discuss with the selectors. I don't think he can play any official game before October 29, so all games that he plays have to be unofficial games. It might be inter-squad games but we need to have clarity if he is allowed to play that."

"He has to make sure he is fit and that he starts hitting balls and bowling some balls. Once we assemble before heading off to Sri Lanka — when that tour is confirmed — we will get closer to making a decision," he said.