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RNI No.2016/1957, REGD NO. SSP/LW/NP-34/2019-21
Established 1864
Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA
Late City Vol. 156 Issue 213
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

OPINION 8
BEING HUMANE

WORLD 11
NEGLIGENCE OR MISSILE MAY HAVE CAUSED BLAST: LEBANON PRESIDENT

SPORT 14
INDIA TO HOST 2021 T20 WORLD CUP

LUCKNOW, SATURDAY AUGUST 8, 2020; PAGES 14 ₹3

the pioneer

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2020 A WAKE-UP CALL: BHUMI
12 VIVACITY

16 die as AI plane breaks into 2

Plane overshoots Kozhikode runway, plunges into valley, both pilots killed

PNS/PTI ■ KOCHI

Sixteen people — pilot, co-pilot and 14 passengers — were killed and several others injured when a Dubai-Calicut Air India Express flight with 191 passengers and crew on board overshot the runway at Kozhikode airport and fell into a valley, breaking into two portions, on Friday around 7.41pm, police sources said. There were 184 passengers, including 10 Infants, and five-member cabin crew when the flight approached the airport.

The Civil Aviation Ministry said the flight IX 1344 operated by B737 aircraft from Dubai overshot runway at Kozhikode at 7.41 PM on Friday. "No fire reported at the time of landing," it noted.

"As per the initial reports rescue operations are on and passengers are being taken to hospital for medical care. We will soon share the update in this regard," the it stated.

While the aircraft broke into two, nearly 50 ambulances were seen coming out of the airport with the injured persons. Kozhikode airport is designated as a table top aircraft (airport atop a hill). Capt Sathe was a wing commander in the Indian Air Force before he switched over to Air India.

"AI Exp flight overshot Kozhikode runway in rainy conditions, went down 35 ft into slope, split into 2... Formal enquiry will be conducted by Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau," said Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

The injured include one of the cabin crew members. Sources in Kozhikode airport said at least 40 passengers have been admitted to various hospitals in and around Kozhikode. The front portion of the aircraft had to be cut open to take the body of the pilot from the cockpit.

According to information coming out of the airport, the aircraft crash landed on the runway from where it skidded off. The first visuals shown by local TV channels were that of a totally damaged aircraft, the front side of which has been damaged totally. It was raining heavily when the aircraft touched the ground. Most of the passengers were heard crying in pain.

The co-pilot has been injured seriously while some of the passengers in the aircraft suffered injuries. The flight was part of the Vande Bharat Repatriation Mission operated by the Government of India.

Rescue work in progress as an Air India Express flight with passengers on board en route from Dubai skidded off the runway while landing in Kozhikode on Friday PTI

ED grills Rhea for 8 hrs for money laundering

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bollywood actor Rhea Chakraborty was on Friday questioned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in Mumbai in connection with a money laundering case relating to film star Sushant Singh Rajput's alleged suicide. Her request to put it off the interrogation was rejected by the agency.

Chakraborty arrived at the agency's office minutes after the 11.30 am deadline. Rhea Chakraborty left the ED office after 8 hours of interrogation.

Her father Indrajit Chakraborty and brother Showik, both accused in the abetment to suicide case lodged by Patna Police, were also seen with her.

Chakraborty's statement was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

Rajput's father Krishna Kumar Singh had in his complaint before Patna Police alleged financial irregularities in the late actor's bank accounts.

In the complaint, Singh alleged ₹15 crore was siphoned off from Rajput's bank account in one year to accounts of persons not known or connected to the late film star.

Two companies linked to Rajput and some financial deals involving Chakraborty, her father and Showik who are stated to be directors in these companies, are under the scanner of the ED, officials said.

Continued on Page 6

Bollywood actress Rhea Chakraborty arrives at Enforcement Directorate office for questioning in connection with a money laundering case in Mumbai on Friday PTI

Bihar seeks in SC dismissal of plea to transfer case

New Delhi: The Bihar Government on Friday sought in the Supreme Court dismissal of Bollywood actress Rhea Chakraborty's plea for transfer of the Patna FIR against her to Mumbai in actor Sushant Singh Rajput death case, terming it "premature, misconceived and non-maintainable". The 28-page affidavit of Patna SSP Upendra Sharma, filed through Bihar's advocate Keshav Mohan, said the state police has the jurisdiction in the case as the consequences of the offence are in Patna as well where the old father of the deceased actor resides. *PTI*

Rhea's call details spark up debate

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Coming ahead of and during her questioning by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) team in the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide case in Mumbai, Rhea Chakraborty's call record details — with the late actor, Bollywood personalities, a senior Mumbai police official and her own family members — on Friday sparked a new debate in the media in connection with the probe into Rajput's death.

She spoke 287 times with the late actor's domestic help Samuel Miranda during a year time.

Continued on Page 6

SC: Full damages for victims before Italian marines' case closure

'Won't pass order without hearing victim families'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court made clear to the Centre on Friday that it would not pass any order on the plea seeking closure of cases against two Italian marines, accused of killing two Indian fishermen, without hearing the victims' families who should be given adequate compensation.

A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde allowed the Centre to file within a week an application making the victims' family members as parties to its plea seeking closure of Italian Marines case. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed the bench, also comprising Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, that Italy has assured the Indian Government that it would prosecute the Marines there as per law.

When the bench insisted that adequate compensation should be paid to the kin of victims, Mehta said Centre will ensure that maximum compensation is given to them.

The bench said it appreciates the steps taken by Italy to prosecute these marines but the court is on the issue of adequate compensation. "We want that adequate compensation be paid to the victims' family".

The SC referred to the case against the marines pending before the special court and said that without applying for withdrawal of prosecution of case how the Centre can come and seek its closure.

Mehta replied that the top court had earlier said that proceedings on the special court be kept in abeyance.

The bench said, "You can apply for withdrawal of prosecution. The victims' families will have the right to oppose it. The victims' families are not even a party here. We will not pass any order without the victims' family being heard", and allowed the Solicitor General to implead family members of the victims as party in its closure application.

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16 die in Idukki landslide as heavy rain batters Kerala

PNS ■ KOCHI

Torrential downpour and landslides across the hilly regions of Kerala early Friday claimed 16 lives while 52 persons were washed away by the fury of the nature. The mishap occurred at Munnar in Idukki district on the slopes of the Kerala side of the Western Ghats.

All 16 who died in the landslide were workers of tea plantation in Munnar of Idukki district and were sleeping in their company quarters (known in local parlance as laayam) when the mishap happened. Though the landslide and the disaster occurred early morning, the outside world came to know about the mishap after five hours. The NDRF from Tamil Nadu reached the site by 4.30 pm and was engaged in rescue operations when reports last came.

Cooking utensils buried in mud, asbestos and tin sheets strewn around were all there to be seen at the area, which was the habitation of around 80 odd workers near a tea plantation, about 30 km from the tourist town of Munnar.

Continued on Page 6

Rescuers work at the site of a mudslide triggered by heavy monsoon rain in Idukki, Kerala on Friday AP

Priest among 5 missing in Karnataka landslide

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Five people, including the priest at Talacauvery, the origin of river Cauvery, have gone missing due to massive landslide at Bramhagiri hills triggered by heavy rain in Kodagu district.

According to Kodagu district administration officials, heavy rain at Talacauvery in Bhagamandala late Thursday night led to landslips at Bramhagiri hills, in which two houses of the temple priests were buried.

Continued on Page 6

707 positive cases in city

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Seven hundred and seven persons tested positive for coronavirus in the city and there were 9 deaths in the city on Friday.

The death toll in city has now touched 138 and there are 5,284 active cases in the district presently.

Among those who tested positive on Friday were 27 people from Alambagh, 21 from Hazratganj, 18 from Mahanagar, 15 each from Rae Bareli road and Thakurganj, 14 each from Naka and Gomtinagar Extention, 13 each from Ashiyana, Mandiyaon, and Indiranagar, 10 each from Chinhat, Gomtinagar and Kaiserbagh, 8 from Talkatora, 7 each from Vikasnagar and Krishnanagar, 6 each from Cantt, Hussainganj, Gudamba, and Sarojininagar, 5 each from Jankipuram, Aminabad, Bazarkhala and Sahadatganj, 4 from Gosainganj, 3 each from Kakori and Suhant Golf city

Meanwhile, the death toll due in Uttar Pradesh reached 1,981 on Friday after a record 63 people succumbed to the disease, while 4,404 fresh cases pushed the infection tally to 1,13,378, an official said.

SII plans ₹225/dose Covid-19 vaccine

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major development, Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII), the world's largest vaccine manufacturer by volume, has entered into a partnership with Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to accelerate the manufacture and delivery of up to 100 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine for India and low-and middle-income countries (LMICs) by as early as 2021.

Created in 2000, Gavi is an international organisation, a global Vaccine Alliance, bringing together public and private sectors with the shared goal to improve access to new and underused vaccines for children living in the world's poorest countries.

As per pact, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will provide $150 million in at-risk funds towards helping the Serum Institute to develop the candidate vaccines, including those from AstraZeneca and Novavax, to be priced at USD 3 per dose (around ₹225). It will be made available in 92 countries in GAVI's COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), the company said in a statement.

The collaboration, which involves GAVI, The Vaccine Alliance, will provide SII with "upfront capital" through the Foundation's Strategic Investment Funds.

This is expected to help the vaccine maker increase its manufacturing capacity to produce either or both vaccines "at scale" for distribution.

"Once they receive regulatory approvals and WHO prequalification, the doses are expected to be produced "as early as the first half of 2021", according to the SII.

The distribution will be done through the COVAX mechanism.

COVAX, co-led by GAVI, as well as the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), and WHO, aims to discourage bilateral agreements for Covid-19 vaccines and instead aims to improve equitable access. This is done by pooling funds from donor countries to purchase vaccines mainly for lower-and middle-income countries, including GAVI nations like India.

Continued on Page 6

Trump cites India's action, bans TikTok

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump, citing India's recent ban on Chinese social media apps, has signed executive orders that would prevent TikTok and WeChat from operating in the US as they threatened America's national security and economy.

The ban comes into effect in 45 days, Trump said in two separate executive orders signed on Thursday.

India was the first country to ban TikTok and WeChat, citing national security concerns. India has banned 106 Chinese apps, a move welcomed by both the Trump administration and US lawmakers.

"The United States must take aggressive action against the owners of TikTok to protect our national security," Trump said in his executive order. In his next executive order he said the country must take "aggressive action" against WeChat to protect America's national security.

In a communique to the Congress, Trump said the spread in the United States of mobile applications developed and owned by companies in China continues to threaten the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the country.

Trump noted that these risks have led other countries, including Australia and India, to begin restricting or banning the use of TikTok and WeChat.

Govt OK's OCIs from Germany, US, UK, France to visit India

New Delhi: Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card holders from the US, UK, German and France, with whom India has signed "air bubble" arrangements, will be allowed to visit the country, the Home Ministry announced on Friday.

Other foreigners from these countries have also been allowed to avail Indian visa facility for business, medical and employment purposes.

"Ministry of Home Affairs has permitted to enter India OCI card holders who belong to countries with which 'air bubble' arrangements have been finalised by Ministry of Civil Aviation," a Home ministry spokesperson said.

ASHA workers on strike over paltry payment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government's Covid-19 fight has hit a major hurdle with around six lakh ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) workers going on a two-day strike from Friday, protesting late and paltry payment besides lack of protection equipment from infection.

There are around ten lakh ASHA workers across the country who have been playing a key role in contact-tracing, conducting surveys, and organising of awareness schemes for the pandemic. They have also been involved in screening inter-state passengers, migrant workers, and others in the community for symptoms of the virus in their respective States.

While the Central Government has been hailing ASHAs as a crucial pillar in the State Governments' success in combating the virus, these workers claim they have remained a neglected lot both during pre-Covid era as well in the current scenario.

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been sporadic protests and strikes by ASHA workers. For instance, in July, around 40,000 ASHA workers went on strike in Karnataka to demand better safety equipment and a hike in fixed salary to Rs 12,000.

However, this is for the first time that the ASHA workers have gone on strike in such a large number and stopped

Continued on Page 6

Whopping over 61K cases in a day

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL

CASES: 20,86,483
DEATHS: 42,564
RECOVERED: 14,25,717
ACTIVE: 6,17,744

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	4,90,262	17,092	3,27,281
Tamil Nadu	2,85,024	4,690	2,27,575
Andhra Pradesh	2,06,960	1,842	1,20,464
Karnataka	1,64,924	2,998	84,232
Delhi	1,42,723	**4,082**	1,28,232
Uttar Pradesh	1,13,378	1,981	66,834
West Bengal	89,666	1,954	63,060
Telangana	75,257	601	53,239
Bihar	71,794	400	46,265
Gujarat	68,885	2,604	51,792
Assam	55,497	132	37,225
Rajasthan	50,159	767	36,195
Odisha	42,550	292	28,698
Haryana	40,054	467	33,444
Madhya Pradesh	37,298	962	27,621
Kerala	31,700	103	19,147

Hockey captain Manpreet, 3 other players test +ve

New Delhi: The Indian men's hockey team captain Manpreet Singh and three other players have tested positive for Covid-19 ahead of the national camp's resumption in Bengaluru, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on Friday.

Besides Manpreet, defender Surender Kumar, Jaskaran Singh and drag-flicker Varun Kumar have also tested positive for the deadly virus. *PTI*

DMs must ensure effective monitoring: CM Yogi

... asks officials to make ICCS operational in dists

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has asked officials to make Integrated Command and Control Systems (ICCS) at district headquarters operational, failing which action would be taken against the district magistrate concerned.

This directive was issued during the high level Team-11 meeting held here on Friday. He said effective steps should be taken to break the chain of coronavirus infection.

"The ICCS is the key to breaking this chain. A better monitoring will ensure better response which in turn will help in controlling COVID-19 spread. It is the responsibility of district magistrates to ensure effective monitoring. They should hold meetings twice a day – morning and evening – to ensure better supervision," he said and added that the district magistrates should involve themselves in strengthening contact tracing and door-to-door surveillance in their area.

"The ICCS should take reports of patients in home isolation on a regular basis. It should provide counselling to the home isolation patients if required," he said.

The chief minister said that all hospitals, both state-run and private, should take effective steps to control the spread of coronavirus infection in their institutions. He said the paramedics and the doctors should be protected from the infection as they were the warriors who were waging a relentless fight against the coronavirus. Yogi also asked officials to take special care of districts like Lucknow, Kanpur Nagar, Prayagraj, Gorakhpur and Bareilly where the number of coronavirus cases had gone up.

The chief minister directed the director general of fire services to check fire-fighting systems in all Covid hospitals in the next three days.

This direction came after eight COVID-19 patients died in a fire in a hospital in Ahmedabad on Thursday.

He said that the hospital employees should be given training to operate the fire-fighting systems too.

In a review meeting held in Bareilly, the chief minister said that the 300-bed hospital should be transformed into a dedicated Covid hospital and control rooms should be set up in other districts of the Bareilly division as in the district headquarters. Yogi also stressed on contact tracing and said that those suspected of having come in contact with COVID-19 patients should be traced and made to take antigen test. He voiced satisfaction over the work being done in the Bareilly district.

During the meeting, presentations were made regarding Covid preparedness in Bareilly, Shahajahanpur, Budaun and Pilibhit.

After the presentation, the chief minister said that paramedics and doctors should be given training and provided personal protective equipment and other kits.

A third of Covid patients in home isolation: Govt

Lucknow (PNS): Despite the spike in coronavirus cases, over one-third of active cases in Uttar Pradesh are either in home isolation or in hotels as they have mild symptoms, thereby easing the immense pressure from Covid hospitals.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi said on Friday that there were 44,563 active cases across the state while the number of recovered patients stood at 66,834 and 3,432 COVID-19 patients were discharged from hospitals today.

"Of the active cases, one-third are recuperating either in their homes or in hotels. There are 15,035 asymptomatic patients in home isolation and 170 in semi-paid hotels and the rest are in government-run or private Covid hospitals," Awasthi said.

With the increase in coronavirus positive cases, the state government has allowed home isolation of patients with mild symptoms. The guidelines say that only those with mild symptoms – low grade fever, sore throat, headache — and no comorbid conditions like diabetes, hypertension, heart and kidney disease will be allowed to remain in home isolation.

Awasthi said the number of coronavirus positive cases witnessed a spike in recent weeks as more tests were being done but the encouraging part was that these patients either had mild symptoms or were asymptomatic. "With their isolation at home, the pressure on Covid hospitals is now less and therefore they can now concentrate on non-Covid patients," he said. The additional chief secretary said that 95,737 tests were done on Thursday and the total Covid tests in the state had reached 28 lakh so far. Of these tests 34,188 were rapid antigen tests. He said 2.24 lakh surveillance teams visited 47,724 areas in the state and visited 1.59 crore houses to medically screen over 8.05 crore people.

CM distributes ₹2,447 cr loans to 98K new units

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday distributed online loans amounting to ₹2,447 crore to over 98,000 new units in the micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) sector.

He said in order to make India self-reliant, the UP government had accorded top priority to the MSME sector and was relentlessly working for creating more avenues of employment.

The chief minister on this occasion also inaugurated the One District One Product (ODOP) online marketing scheme.

A MoU was signed between the AK Technical University and MSME department of UP for the exchange of knowledge and technology.

For bringing maximum number of MSME units on online platform, the MSME department also signed a MoU with e-commerce company ebay. The chief minister also inaugurated

13 common facility centres for ODOP scheme and six common facility centres for export promotion.

The chief minister also distributed cheques to the beneficiaries of the PM Self-Employment Creation Programme, ODOP scheme Yuva Swarojgar Yojana and PM Mudra Yojana.

He said when the entire economy was under lockdown due to COVID-19; Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced packages for different sectors of economy. He said the MSME sector had made best utilisation of the package announced by the prime minister.

Yogi said the UP government, by promoting the MSME sector, was making its efforts to bring positive change in the lives of the common man.

He said the ODOP scheme was being vigorously implemented in the state and clusters of small and traditional industries were being developed. He said the common facility centres had been developed for the purpose of assisting the small and traditional industries covered under ODOP.

The UP government on May 14 had made online distribution of loans amounting to over ₹2,000 crore to 57,000 new units under MSME sector. Later on June 26., loans of ₹45,000 crore were sanctioned to 1.35 lakh new units under MSME sector. So far loans of ₹8,949 crore have been disbursed to over 2.71 lakh new MSME units

SP set to lose two RS seats in UP

Lucknow (PNS): The Samajwadi Party is set to lose two more Rajya Sabha seats from Uttar Pradesh to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Part.

The elections to these seats were necessitated due to the sudden demise of two SP members.

One vacancy was created due to the death of sitting SP member Beni Prasad Verma while the other was due to SP leader Amar Singh's recent death.

The term of both these seats ends on July 4, 2022.

The Election Commission has announced the by-election to the vacant seat of Beni Prasad Verma on August 24.

A total of 31 members are elected to Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh. While two seats are vacant, out of the remaining 29, Bharatiya Janata Party has 15, Samajwadi Party has 8, Bahujan Samaj Party has 4 and the Congress has 2.

The tenure of nine members (SP 4, BJP 2, BSP 2 and Congress 1) is ending on November 25.

With only 45 MLAs in Vidhan Sabha, the SP can get only one of its candidates elected on the basis of first preference votes. The SP could win one more seat with the help of Congress and Bahujan Samaj Party votes, if they decide to vote for the SP candidate. On the other hand, the BJP can win 7-8 seats.

AIMPLB retracts, gives fresh response to bhoomi pujan

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) has withdrawn its controversial statement over bhoomi pujan for construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Earlier, in a statement posted on Twitter, the AIMPLB, while slamming the Supreme Court verdict in Ram Janmabhoomi land dispute case, had referred to Hagia Sofia in Turkey

The tweet was deleted after nation-wide uproar and backlash from people cutting across caste and religion and also unhappiness expressed by senior AIMPLB member and prominent lawyer Zafaryab Jilani. The AIMPLB has now issued a fresh response to recent developments with exclusion of its earlier comparison. On Thursday, the AIMPLB issued a statement through tweets saying, "The Babri Masjid was a mosque and will always be a mosque. Aggressive occupation does not end reality, the Supreme Court has ruled, but it has embarrassed justice."

AIMPLB secretary Zafaryab Jilani said that the earlier statement was posted without approval of the Board's general secretary and it had now been deleted.

"Some words in the statement may have been written irresponsibly but I have nothing to do with it. I would not like to comment about the tweet," he said.

Jilani added, "We respect the SC verdict but our review petition challenging the decision was not heard which is unfortunate. However, we will continue to raise the issue. We condemn the statement made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief minister Yogi Adityanath that the temple existed at the site for centuries."

Earlier, Samajwadi Party MP from Sambhal Shafiqur Rahman Burq had also stressed that Babri Masjid was and would remain a mosque. The SP MP alleged that the BJP government had allegedly pressured the court and laid the foundation stone.

"This is not justice, a huge injustice has been done to us," the SP MP from Sambhal said.

All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) convenor and Lok Sabha MP from Hyderabad, Asaduddin Owaisi, had also criticised the prime minister for attending the bhoomi pujan for Ram temple in Ayodhya.

In a tweet, Owaisi had said, "#BabriMasjid thi, hai aur rahegi inshallah #BabriZindaHai".

A complaint against the AIMPLB and AIMIM convenor Asaduddin Owaisi ,who made similar statements on Twitter, was sent to Delhi Police Commissioner SN Shrivastava by the Hindu Sena.

यू.पी. प्रोजेक्ट्स कारपोरेशन लि.
(उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार का उपक्रम) CIN : U15209UP1976SGC004285
कार्यालय परियोजना प्रबन्धक, इकाई–11, देवकली पुलिस चौकी के पास, देवकाली, अयोध्या
दूरभाष : 05278-244501, ई–मेल : pm_11@upprojects.org
पत्र सं०: 157/पी०सी०एल०/परि०प्रब०/अयो०/ दिनांक: 07.08.2020
अति अल्प कालीन ई–निविदा सूचना
विजिटर शेड एवं नियन्त्रण कक्ष तथा नये शस्त्रागार कार्य हेतु इस कार्यालय की निविदा संख्या 04/2020-21/PCL/PM/Unit-11/Ayodhya/E-Tender, दिनांक 07.08.2020 द्वारा ई–निविदा आमंत्रित की गई है, यह निविदा https://www.etender.up.nic.in के पोर्टल पर दिनांक 11.08.2020 से 18.08.2020 के अपरान्ह 3:00 बजे तक डाउनलोड/अपलोड की जा सकती है, जिसकी टेक्निकल बिड दिनांक 18.08.2020 को अपरान्ह 4:00 बजे अधोहस्ताक्षरी के कार्यालय में खोली जायेगी। निविदा से सम्बन्धित अन्य विवरण शर्ते कारपोरेशन की वेबसाइट www.upprojects.org पर देखी जा सकती है।
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NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
Chief Workshop Manager N.R. C&W Workshop Alambagh, Lucknow invites following e-tender

1.	Name of work	Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract of AJTB Lathe (WS-63) - Make HYT, installed in Wheel Shop for Two Years.
2.	Location	C&W Workshop, Alambagh, Lucknow
3.	Approx cost of the work	Rs. 28,37,900/- (Rupees Twenty Eight Lakh Thirty Seven Thousand Nine Hundred Only).
4.	Cost of Tender form	Rs. 3,000/- (Rs. Three Thousand only.)
5.	Earnest money to be deposited	Rs. 56,800/- (Rs. Fifty Six Thousand Eight Hundred only.)
6.	Completion period of the work	02 Year from the date of issue of Letter of Acceptance
7.	Date & Time for Submissions of Tender	From 27.08.2020 to 10.09.2020 up to 15:00 Hrs.
8.	Format for Certificate	CERTIFICATE AS PER ANNEXURE-A MUST BE SCANNED AND UPLOADED
9.	Opening of Tender	Tender opening will be done any time after the tender closing time. The Tenderers are not required to be present during the Opening.
10.	Address of the office from where the form can purchased	All complete details of Tender Notice/Documents are available at website www.ireps.gov.in
11.	Website particulars where complete details of tender can be seen etc.	

Tender Notice No: 2020-AMV-C and W-Etender-11 Date: 05.08.2020 1717/2020
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अल्पकालीन-निविदा सूचना
पृ0सं0 : 2233–36/लेखा/निविदा/एसएसए/2020–21 दिनांक : 07.08.2020
सचिव उ0प्र0 बेसिक शिक्षा परिषद के कार्यालय पत्रांक–21506/600 दिनांक 25.02.2020 एवं राज्य परियोजना निदेशक समग्र शिक्षा राज्य परियोजना कार्यालय, निशातगंज, लखनऊ, उ0प्र0 के पत्राक–748/2020–21 दिनांक 04.06.2020 के क्रम में जनपद में कार्यरत उत्तर प्रदेश बेसिक शिक्षा परिषद के नियंत्रणाधीन समस्त विद्यालयों में कार्यरत अध्यापक–अध्यापिकाओं का पहचान पत्र तैयार करने हेतु ख्याति प्राप्त एवं अनुभवी फर्मों से ई–निविदा उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार के ई–टेण्डरिंग पोर्टल https://etender.up.nic.in में निम्नानुसार आमन्त्रित की जाती है। ई–निविदा निम्नलिखित कार्यक्रम के अनुसार सम्पन्न की जायेगी।

क्रम सं0	विवरण	दिनांक
1	अध्यापक एवं अध्यापिकाओं हेतु परिचय पत्र के मुद्रण हेतु टेण्डर डाउनलोड प्रारम्भ की तिथि	08.08.2020 प्रातः 10:00 बजे से
2	ई–टेण्डर (तकनीकी निविदा प्रपत्र) आन लाइन अपलोड की तिथि	24.08.2020 को पूर्वान्ह 11:00 बजे से
3	ई–टेण्डर खोलने की तिथि	24.08.2020 को अपरान्ह 12:00 बजे

(राकेश कुमार)
जिला बेसिक शिक्षा अधिकारी
शाहजहाँपुर

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NOTICE
In school record of my daughter's name by mistake mentioned as Alisha Khatoon while her correct name is Alisha Naaz. In future she should recognized, write as Alisha Naaz. Akbar Husain (Father) R/o H.No. 3/22, Sanjay Gandhi Nagar, Prag Narayan Road, Balu Adda, Lucknow.

NOTICE
Be it known to all that I have changed my name from PREM CHANDRA to PREM CHANDRA ANAND. In future I should be known as PREM CHANDRA ANAND S/o- Late Dularey Lal R/o- Village Chaukhariya post Arthapur District Sitapur.

NOTICE
I, have changed my name from REKHA to Manju Singh. REKHA and Manju Singh pertain to one and same person. REKHA W/o Kanhaiya Singh R/o-14 Manasnagar, Mugalchak, Alinagar Post-Mugalsarai, Dist. -Chandauli.

NOTICE
This is to inform that I have purchased a Plot from Smt Bushra Khan located at Vill. Sarosa Bharosa Distt. Lucknow the original sale deed of Bushra Khan has been lost. Any usage of the above sale deed by any other person will be illegal. If it is found by any body pl. Inform to Shailesh Kr. Dubey, R/o 557/23/54 Sujan Pura, Alam Bagh Lucknow Mob. 8081546491.

NOTICE
In my daughter's (Naba Rais) school record father's name by mistake written as Md. Rais while my correct & full name is Mohammad Rais. Mohammad Rais and Md. Rais are one and same person. Mohammad Rais R/o 430/1/5-C, Moazzam Nagar, Amberganj, Lucknow.

Congress demands relief to middle-income group

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The UP Congress on Friday demanded immediate relief for middle-income group families reeling under pandemic-induced financial problems for the past four months.

In Lucknow, Congress workers led by Congress city unit chief Mukesh Singh Chauhan and district chief, Ved Prakash Tripathi handed over a memorandum to the Governor through the district magistrate of Lucknow.

Later on Friday evening, UP Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu said in a statement that the global pandemic had adversely affected lakhs of middle-class families financially.

"They are constantly facing difficulties and in such a situation, the Yogi Adityanath government should immediately announce an economic relief package for these families. The fees of four months of all board students should be waived. At the same time, financial assistance should be given to all employees, including educational staff, of private schools."

Lallu further said that the Yogi government should ensure that there was no alteration in the school textbooks nor school uniforms were changed frequently.

The Congress leader demanded an economic package for all advocates of the state, saying that due to closure of all courts, the income of lawyers had been adversely affected and the government should pay a monthly honorarium of Rs 10,000 to them.

Lallu said that those with annual income less than Rs 2 lakh who had neither benefited from PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana or other government pension schemes should also be helped.

'Ram temple will be able to withstand natural calamities'

Ayodhya (PTI): A member of the trust overseeing the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya on Friday said its structure will be earthquake resistant and withstand natural calamities for a thousand years. Addressing reporters at Ayodhya's Karswakpuram, Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra general secretary Champat Rai said the foundation of its pillars will be deep as the bridges built on rivers, making the temple earthquake resistant. The temple will be strong enough to withstand nature calamities for a thousand years, he added.

Rai said Larson and Turbo, the company tasked with construction of the temple, has told him that the plan of its foundation will be ready soon as it is in its final phase.

"We will get the plan passed by the Ayodhya Development Authority after paying the due fee. We don't want any exemption," he said. Champat Rai said the sculptures found during the digging and levelling of the land will be put on display at the temple. He also said the trust has so far around Rs 42 crore in its bank account and people are donating from Re 1 to Rs 1 crore. He also praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for visiting Ayodhya for the "bhoomi pujan" of the temple on August 5. "In this time of crisis and amid criticism, the PM decided to visit Ayodhya and paid due respect to Ram Lalla by offering a 'saashtang pranaam," he said.

SELECT E AUCTIONEER
SCRAP FOR SALE
e - Auction of 2500 KVA Distribution Transformer and Related Auxiliaries (Auction Id –RE0000381 & RE0000382)
e - Auction will be carried out for disposal of 2500 KVA Distribution Transformer and Related Auxiliaries on whole lot basis on behalf of M/s Hindalco Industries Ltd. on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" on 12th August' 2020. The affected items can be inspected at Hindalco Ind. Ltd. PO Renukoot Dist Sonebhadra (UP) Pin 231217 after taking prior appointment with Ms Pritishiya (SEA) Mobile No.9990224177, Mr. Ajay Sharma (SEA) Mobile No. 9911999047 & Mr. VK Pandey (Hindalco Industries) Mobile no. 8935001246. To participate please register on www.eauctioneer.in. Duly filled Participation Form and DD/UTR for RTGS payments must be provided to M/s Select E Auctioneer Pvt Ltd. at the following address / e-mail id by 11th August' 2020 :
301-302, Samrat, Bhawan, A-7/8/9, Ranjit Nagar Commercial Complex, New Delhi -110008
email: bid@eauctioneer.in
Contact: Ms Pritishiya Massey 09990224177, 09911999047, 25701274-75-76

Snake bite snuffs life out of three minors

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Tragedy struck a Sitapur family when a snake slithered into their house and bit their three minor sons. The victims were rushed to a community health centre where they were not provided treatment and referred to a hospital where they died.

Senior officers later visited the place of occurrence and the district magistrate assured the bereaved family of all assistance. As per reports, daily wager Sunil's wife Rinki was sleeping with their three minor sons on the floor of their home at Pipri Majra village in Sadar area on Thursday night.

Sometime in the night, a venomous snake slithered into that room and bit Shalu (12), Pawan (10) and Ansh (7) in their sleep. The victims raised an alarm after which their mother woke up. She later called her husband and rushed the children to a local community health centre (CHC). The doctors there, without treating the children, asked the couple to take the victims to district hospital. The harried parents decided to take the children at a nearby private hospital where doctors pronounced all three dead upon arrival. The news of the kids' death sent shock waves in the village. After visiting their home, the district magistrate said that he had forwarded a recommendation to the government for financial assistance to the family.

Meanwhile in Azamgarh, a couple died after an old dilapidated house collapsed due to incessant rains on Thursday night. As per reports, Jhinka Ram (55) used to live with his wife Kalawati (51) in an old house in Musriyapur hamlet of Raunapar. While they were asleep on Thursday night, the house suddenly collapsed due to heavy rains. Their neighbours rushed to their rescue and extricated them from the rubble but the couple had died by then.

Despite being informed, the police reached the scene only on Friday morning to complete the formality of autopsy.

Minor killed for family 'honour'

Lucknow (PNS): A day after a couple were torched for saving family honour in Banda, a family killed a minor girl and cremated her in Meerut. However, the police got a wind of the nefarious design and nabbed the accused on Thursday night. As per reports, Yogesh of Macheri hamlet of Daurala lodged a report in June, alleging that his daughter, Deepti (17), was kidnapped by a local youth, Deepak. On July 6, the girl was traced in New Delhi and brought to her home while Deepak was arrested. While being produced in a court, Deepti bailed Deepak out by saying that she had gone on her own volition after which he was set. On Thursday night, the cops came to know that Deepti was killed by her family and she had been cremated. A police team was rushed to the cremation ground and the remains were collected for forensic examination. The police registered a case of honour killing against Deepti's father, Yogesh, mother, Renu, uncle, Neeraj, grandfather, Nepal, and Krishna and arrested them. During quizzing, her father revealed that the girl was in relation with some youths and that she wanted to live with Deepak against their wish. He said that they were so fed up with her "immoral" activities that they eliminated her to get rid of the societal stigma caused by her.

गोरखपुर औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण
संस्थागत सेक्टर–7, गीडा, गोरखपुर
दूरभाषः 0551–2580010, 2580090, फैक्सः 0551–2580020
आनलाईन निविदा सूचना
गोरखपुर औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण गीडा/uplc में विद्युत निर्माण कार्य हेतु 'ए' श्रेणी में पंजीकृत तथा विद्युत सुरक्षा निदेशालय उ0प्र0 शासन से जारी 'क' श्रेणी लाइसेन्सधारी ठेकेदारों से आनलाईन ई–निविदा प्रतिशत दर में अधोलिखित कार्य हेतु टू–बिड्स सिस्टम के माध्यम से निविदा दिनांक 11-08-2020 को पूर्वान्ह 11:00 बजे से दिनांक 01-09-2020 को अपरान्ह 3:00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती है तथा दिनांक 02-09-2020 को अपरान्ह 4:00 बजे प्रीक्वालिफिकेशन/टेक्निकल बिड गीडा कार्यालय में खोली जायेगी एवं प्रीक्वालिफिकेशन में उपयुक्त पाये गये निविदादाताओं के फाईनेन्सियल बिड खोलने की तिथि, कुल प्राप्त निविदाओं की संख्या के आधार पर नोटिस बोर्ड/ई–पोर्टल पर सूचित किया जायेगा। कार्यालय बन्द होने पर या अवकाश होने की दशा में यह बिड अगले कार्यालय दिवस में खोली जायेगी।

क्र. सं.	कार्य का नाम	आगणन धनराशि ₹ जी.एस.टी. व लेबर सेस अतिरिक्त	धरोहर धनराशि ₹	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य जी.एस.टी सहित	कार्य अवधि	पंजीकृत श्रेणी	निविदा की श्रेणी
1	औद्योगिक क्षेत्र सेक्टर–13 के विस्तार हेतु विकास कार्य में विद्युतीकरण का कार्य।	₹ 1,48,07,771.79	₹ 9,40,389/-	₹ 2,950/-	06 माह	'ए' श्रेणी एवं विद्युत सुरक्षा निदेशालय उ0प्र0 शासन से जारी 'क' श्रेणी लाइसेंस	आन–लाईन
2	औद्योगिक क्षेत्र सेक्टर–13 के विस्तार हेतु विकास कार्य में विद्युतीकरण कार्य के अन्तर्गत ट्रान्सफार्मर लगाने का कार्य।	₹ 1,04,97,108.00	₹ 7,24,856/-	₹ 2,950/-	06 माह	तदैव	आन–लाईन
3	औद्योगिक क्षेत्र सेक्टर–13 के विस्तार हेतु विकास कार्य में विद्युतीकरण के अन्तर्गत अन्डरग्राउंड केबिल डालने का कार्य।	₹ 51,02,695.00	₹ 4,55,135/-	₹ 2,950/-	06 माह	तदैव	आन–लाईन

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मुख्य कार्यपालक अधिकारी, गीडा, गोरखपुर

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Printed and Published by Vijay Prakash Singh for and on behalf of CMYK Printech Ltd., 4th Floor, Sahara Shopping Centre, Faizabad Road, Lucknow-226016 and Printed at Tin Tin Printech Pvt Ltd., C-33 Amausi Industrial Area, Nadarganj, Lucknow. Editor: Chandan Mitra. Resident Editor: Vijay Prakash Singh. RNI No. 2016/57. Lucknow Telephones: EPABX: 4036600 Fax: 2345582. Allahabad Office: (0532) 2420818, 2421018, 3290460. Kanpur Office: (0512) 2304006, 2304416. Varanasi Office: (0542) 2414294, 2414295. Delhi Office: No. 6, Behind Gulab Bhawan, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110 002, Phone: 011-40110455. Communication Office: F-31, Sector 6, NOIDA, Gautam Budh Nagar-201301, U.P. Phone: 0120-4879800 & 4879900

District admn monitoring death audits in Lucknow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The death audits are being properly monitored to check if there was any lacunae in shifting of the Covid-19 patients to hospitals from their homes by ambulances, a senior district administration official said on Friday. He said they were also in the process of purchasing five more ambulances with the help of MP and MLA funds to add on to the existing fleet.

The official said there were two types of death audits in Lucknow — one in which deaths have taken place at hospitals and the other in which deaths have taken place in ambulances. "If death audits are taking place in the hospitals, it has to be done by the hospitals concerned. The district administration is looking into the deaths which are taking place in the ambulances," he added.

Citing the reason of deaths in ambulances, he stated: "There are reasons why deaths are taking place in ambulances. We have a lot of such patients who test positive and since home isolation is allowed, based on their symptoms our doctors allot them facilities and allow them home isolation as per protocol or as per government notification," he said. He added that there were some patients who forcefully wanted to stay home.

"For example, if someone has slight fever or slight symptoms as per government order, our doctors do not allow them to stay at home and though our ambulances reach their houses, they do not pick up the calls, hence the ambulances are forced to return. It is then that information is passed on to police and Integrated Command Centre. When the condition of patients deteriorates and they again call us, we send the ambulance and sometimes it is too late," he explained.

CMO Dr Rajendra Prasad Singh said efforts were being made to see that the ambulance response time was quick.

"There have been suggestions by minister Suresh Khanna, who visited the Integrated Control and Command Centre on Thursday and said we should make use of ambulance for one patient only at a time. Normally, an ambulance would pick up one patient and then go to pick another. Suggestions are being taken so that the ambulance picks up one patient and then drops him to the hospital first before going to pick another," the CMO said.

He said efforts were also being made to prioritise the patients as per their symptoms and that the ambulances should be sent first to those patients who have severe symptoms in comparison to those who have mild symptoms.

Meanwhile, SGPGI ICU-1 Covid Hospital incharge Dr Zia Hashim said that in general, recovery of patients is between 7 and 10 days, which is good. "Currently, we have three patients only in ICU-1 and they are on a high oxygen requirement," he said. He added that every single patient discharged from the ICU was a big achievement for them.

Dr Hashim said that over the months, they had understood the approach which should be used for treatment of the patients. "Earlier, we would give certain medication only after the patient's health deteriorated, but now we know that the earlier we give them the medication, the better," he said.

He pointed out that 90 per cent of the patients in the ICU were men, with lesser number of women having severe form of Covid-19.

Meanwhile, spokesperson of Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital Dr Srikesh Singh said they had started shortlisting the patients who had recovered and those who could be called for plasma donation.

MSY ADMITTED TO MEDANTA HOSPITAL

Samajwadi supremo Mulayam Singh Yadav was admitted to Medanta Hospital on Friday. Medanta Hospital director Dr Rakesh Kapoor said he had come with complaints of stomachache, which was later diagnosed as urinary tract infection. Dr Kapoor said that Mulayam Singh Yadav had tested negative for coronavirus.

Army chief calls on CM, Governor

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Army Chief Gen MM Naravane visited the Central Command Headquarters in Lucknow Cantonment on Friday and reviewed operational preparedness of the troops. The Army chief, during his visit to the state capital, also met Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Gen Naravane was briefed by General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) Central Command Lieutenant General IS Ghuman on both operational and administrative aspects, an official release issued by a Defence PRO said. The Army chief met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at his official residence. "It was a courtesy meeting between the two. The Chief Minister presented a memento to the Army chief during the meeting," a state government official said. During his visit to the Central Command Headquarters, Gen Naravane expressed satisfaction on the efforts being made to ensure capability enhancement and operational effectiveness of the forces and development of infrastructure in the central sector, the release said.

He conveyed his appreciation to the Central Command for achieving a high degree of operational preparedness.

The Army chief was appreciative of the efforts being put in by the soldiers in the forward areas operating in very difficult weather conditions in high-altitude areas. Before departing from Lucknow, Gen Naravane also met the Governor at Raj Bhavan.

Army Chief Gen MM Naravane with CM Yogi Adityanath (above) and Governor Anandiben Patel Pioneer

Police crack down on people disturbing communal harmony

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With bhoomi pujan for construction of a Ram temple completed on Wednesday, some miscreants are on the prowl, disturbing communal harmony by posting objectionable messages and celebrating to instigate angry reaction. In this regard, the police arrested half-a-dozen persons from across different communities.

In Lucknow, Popular Front of India (PFI) media in-charge Abdul Majid was arrested for trying to spread communal disturbance by putting up provocative posts on bhoomi pujan in Ayodhya on Friday. The arrest was made from Islamnagar area of Kakori.

A native of Delhi, Majid was accused of putting up provocative messages on social media over bhoomi pujan and one on Kashmir. He was working under a dummy outfit, All India Imam Council, and claimed himself to be its UP head. He was also running a campaign with the hashtag Return Babri land to Muslim and Restore Article 370.

The police also arrested a doctor and his two aides for inciting sentiments from Jarwal area of Bahraich on Thursday. Identified as Dr Aleem Ahmed, Sahibe Alam and Kamruddin, the trio was found uploading objectionable content on WhatsApp from a clinic at Jarwal Road in Bahraich when the police dropped the net on them. Their mobile phones were also seized.

In Lucknow, Popular Front of India (PFI) media in-charge Abdul Majid was arrested for trying to spread communal disturbance by putting up provocative posts on bhoomi pujan in Ayodhya on Friday

On December 31, the UP Police had sought a ban on PFI, days after its complicity was found in the state-wide violent protests against amended citizenship law. The then DGP, OP Singh, had said that they had written to the Centre seeking a ban on the PFI after its UP head, Wasim and 16 other activists were arrested for masterminding the anti-CAA violence in Lucknow.

Meanwhile in Meerut, Bajrang Dal activists tried to disturb communal peace by uploading objectionable video of a saffron flag flying atop a mosque in Rajban area of Sadar Bazaar. They also gathered and chanted `Jai Shree Ram' in front of a mosque after which some Muslims objected. Later, the police swung into action and registered a case against Ankit Tripathi, Arun Thakur, Abhi Patel and Gautam and nabbed Ankit and Arun.

Interestingly, soon after their arrests, a senior Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader of Meerut denied that these accused were members of Bajrang Dal.

Elsewhere in Auraiya, a case was registered against BJP district vice-president, Rajneesh Pandey at Ajeetmal police station after he fired in the air with his licensed gun to celebrate bhoomi pujan in Ayodhya.

In Lakhimpur Kheri, several members of Hindu outfits staged a demonstration and blocked Lucknow-Delhi highway for several hours on Friday, demanding the arrest of some Muslim youths for posting objectionable messages on bhoomi pujan ceremony.

The tension was defused after local BJP MLA, Lokendra Pratap Singh asked the protesters to allow time for the police to take action in the matter. A case was registered against Mohammed Faiyaz Mansoori, Mohammed Arif, Mohammed Shadab and others for trying to hurt sentiments of Hindus through objectionable social media content.

VC represents LU in PM conclave

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday addressed a conclave aimed at discussing the transformational reforms under the National Education Policy via video-conferencing. The conclave was attended by vice-chancellors, educationists, scholars and other eminent personalities from around the country.

LU was represented by Vice-Chancellor AK Rai. Shortly after the Prime Minister's address, Rai was invited to address the conclave with his observations on the NEP. He summarised the policy in a succinct acronym 'LIFES'. "New Education Policy stands for the development of 'L-life coaching', 'I-internationalisation of Indian education', 'F-flexibility', 'E-employability generation', and 'S-structural change in the existing education system'," he explained. Rai welcomed the student-centric approach of the NEP and expressed his belief in everlasting change in the Indian education system via its implementation.

HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhariyal 'Nishank' opened the conclave with his remarks about how the NEP is the 'amrut' (nectar) that has been produced after much deliberation and rumination with representatives from all stakeholder groups. The PM then addressed the conclave and spoke of how the NEP incorporates our existing, traditional and cultural value system into the modern mental and technical infrastructure, and creates conduits between 'human and humanity, and the past and the future'.

Meanwhile, as per the decision taken in the admission committee meeting, admissions to the UG and UG management programmes for the session 2020-21 will be done through the merit list which will be created on the basis of marks obtained in class XII. LU spokesperson said the candidates had to upload their documents so that the merit list could be generated. "Scanned copies of self-attested documents will have to be uploaded. Candidates who do not upload these documents will not be considered in the merit list. If candidates do not have the original marksheets, they can upload the internet copy for now. Verification from original will be done at the time of reporting," he said.

BEd-JEE: LU to use AI

Lucknow (PNS): The Lucknow University will be using artificial intelligence to ensure no substitute candidate appears for BEd- JEE on August 9. Lucknow University Vice-Chancellor AK Rai said some innovative arrangements had been made this time using latest technology. "An innovative face detection system is being used by using Sir-in-Azure, which is the use of artificial intelligence that will be converting the information of a total of 27 points of the candidate's face into digital data. It will be examined in all four directions and will test each candidate by including 13 distinct and personal characteristics, such as hair, glasses, age, gender, etc. In this process, no wrong person will be able to appear for the exam in place of the actual candidate," he said.

As many as 14 nodal centres and four sub-nodal centres have been set up across the state. A total of 4,31,904 candidates at 1,089 centres in 73 districts of the state will appear for the exam. The LU Vice-Chancellor said all the arrangements for conducting the entrance exam had been made properly.

"In keeping with the government and district administration directives and for the convenience of candidates, all the protocols and instructions for the safety of candidates are being fully implemented. The entrance exam will be in two shifts — from 9 am to 12 pm and from 2 pm to 5 pm. Candidates have been advised to reach the exam centre, at least one hour before the commencement of the exam," he said. CCTV cameras have been arranged at each exam centre, which will also record audio. A router has also been installed with the help of which the entire examination will be web-cast. For this, a control room with 100 laptops has been set up at Lucknow University, from where every candidate will be closely monitored. With this arrangement, marks of each candidate will be taken for the identity of the candidates at the time of examination and they will be matched with the fingerprints given by them.

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FOR KIND ATTENTION OF OUR MOST VALUED CUSTOMERS
In our endeavor to consolidate and strengthen our services to our customers. JARAULI branch presently functioning at Vill JARAULI Post Jarauli - Fatehpur - 212620 will be Shifted to ASHOTHER branch of Bank of Baroda ASHOTHER Fatehpur - 212620 and shall function at the said address on or before 14.09.2020. It shall function and eater all types of banking business from the said premises.
We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to you in this regard and assuring you of our best services at all times.
Place: Fatehpur REGIONAL HEAD
Date : 07.08.2020 FATEHPUR REGION

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REGIONAL OFFICE,78 A Nawa Bagh FATEHPUR
FOR KIND ATTENTION OF OUR MOST VALUED CUSTOMERS
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Date : 07.08.2020 FATEHPUR REGION

BJP workers take part in a hawan to pray for the recovery of Cabinet minister Brajesh Pathak who has tested positive for coronavirus Pioneer

Raghvendra Kumar assumes charge

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Raghvendra Kumar from 1999 batch of IRSEE has assumed charge as ADRM (Administration), Lucknow division of North-Eastern Railway (NER). Previously, he worked as senior divisional electrical engineer in the same division. Kumar is a graduate (Electrical Engineering) from Roorkee University. He joined the railways in 2002 as assistant electrical engineer at New Bongaigaon Workshop/North Frontier Railway.

He has served in different capacities. Also, Dhananjay Mishra from 2012 batch of IRSEE has taken charge as senior divisional electrical engineer of Lucknow division of North-Eastern Railway.

Youth had choked girl to death before ending life

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

FOLLOW-UP

In the Krishna Nagar incident in which bodies of a youth and a girl were recovered from a hotel room on Wednesday, the autopsy report revealed that the youth choked the girl to death and attacked her with a fork-like object before ending his life.

ACP (Krishna Nagar) Deepak Kumar said the girl's body had six wounds, apparently inflicted with a fork. "The autopsy report revealed that the girl was stabbed six times and was later choked to death. Rahul died of asphyxia as a cause of death as per the autopsy report," he said.

He said the police suspected that Rahul stabbed the girl with a fork and later strangled her to death during a heated argument. He denied reports that the girl was brought to the hotel forcibly and said nothing of that sort was found during the scanning of CCTV footage.

He also denied reports that the girl had as many as 60-70 wounds caused by a fork-like object. "The girl had only six stab wounds on her body," he insisted. He said the viscera had been preserved for further investigation. The youth was found hanging from the ceiling while the girl found lying dead when police team reached the scene. Earlier, the police had rubbished reports on foul play and said the couple had ended their own lives.

THE AUTOPSY REPORT REVEALED THAT THE GIRL WAS STABBED SIX TIMES AND WAS LATER CHOKED TO DEATH. RAHUL DIED OF ASPHYXIA AS A CAUSE OF DEATH, AS PER THE AUTOPSY REPORT

Meanwhile, the Chinhat police on Friday arrested a youth, who was accused of raping a 17-year-old girl after luring her into running away from her house. Police had registered a case in this connection on July 23 on a complaint of the girl's family and also booked the accused under POCSO Act. The accused was identified as Surendra Kumar Gautam (22) of Barabanki. Gautam had gone into a hiding after his name surfaced in the case. Gautam worked in Chinhat locality and he became friends with the girl. He later lured her into eloping with him and then raped her. After the girl's parents lodged a case, the police started searching for the girl and traced her. She was later sent for a medical test and her statement was recorded.

Meanwhile, a youth was accused of stealing goods and cash from the houses of his neighbours in Para on Friday. As per reports, Ajay Kumar Gupta of Rangrez Market locality in the area woke up around 2.50 am on Friday after he heard a commotion in his house. He was sleeping on the terrace and saw his neighbor's son Ansu Mehta running on the terrace of their neighbor Shivdeep's house.

Gupta raised an alarm but Ansu fled the scene. Gupta later checked the articles in the rooms and found Rs 7,000 in cash, documents like Aadhaar and PAN missing. While he was sharing the details related to the incident to his neighbours, another neighbour Aneeta Pal reached Gupta's house. She later complained that some thieves had stolen Rs 6000 in cash and a mobile phone from her house. "I had a hunch that Ansu burgled both the houses," Gupta stated in the FIR.

Varanasi sees biggest spike in COVID-19 cases, crosses 4K-mark

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The district has seen the biggest spike here on Friday when as many as 312 COVID-19 patients have been detected. For the first time, more than 300 patients were found during a day. With the finding of such a large number of patients, Varanasi has crossed 4K-mark as the total number of patients has increased to 4,065. Earlier, the district had seen more than 200 cases on two occasions including 218 and 210 found on July 5 and 6 respectively.

Besides, the district had also seen two more deaths increasing the toll to 77. During the day, the follow-up reports included 119 patients recovered from home isolation and the total number of patients cured at home has increased to 841 while just 18 recovered from the hospitals. With this, the total number of patients discharged from the hospitals has reached 1,364 while the total number of cured patients is 2,205, leaving 1,783 active patients. However, the only relief is that with the cure of a good number of patients at home isolation, the recovery rate has improved further to 54.24 per cent.

Sealed hotspot in Sonia road (Sigra) in Varanasi on Friday Pioneer

According to the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr VB Singh, in the first report received by 11am during the day, as many as 171 new corona patients were found out of 1,954 reports received from Microbiology department of Banaras Hindu University (BHU). Till then, the total test reports received were 52,888 and the results of 6,897 excluding 937 RTPCR samples collected a day ago are awaited. Out of these, 48,964 were negative reports while 3,924 positive. The total number of samples collected was 60,722. Earlier, a senior local journalist aged 58 from Chupperpur Partrakarpuram Colony (Shivpur) died at Sir Sundarlal Hospital (SSH) in BHU. With the addition of 25 red zones, the total number of hotspots has increased to 1,024 including 387 red zones including five green zones converted into red zones again. Besides, there are 637 green zones including 21 new ones.

Meanwhile, in view of the death of a corona positive journalist, an antigen COVID-19 test camp was organised at Patrakarpuram Colony in which the tests of about 100 persons were done and out of them, three including two of a family related as mother and daughter were found positive. On the occasion, office-bearers of Kashi Patrakar Sangh (KPS) were present and the camp was also attended by CMO. Meanwhile, KPS demanded inquiry into the death of a senior journalist and demanded compensation of ₹ 50 lakh to the bereaved family of the deceased journalist. Besides, rapid antigen testing continued going on at NER Divisional Hospital and ACMO of the hospital Dr RR Singh said that on Friday, the tests of 42 Railway employees were done and all of them were found negative.

180 test positive as 4 die from coronavirus in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The coronavirus is now turning into an epidemic in the Prayagraj district as well. It is because four patients infected in the last 24 hours died during treatment at Swaroop Rani Nehru COVID Hospital. It also includes a 60-year-old corona-infected patient resident of Kydganj, who struggled between life and death for nine days. He was admitted to SRN's ICU and breathed his last there.

The other deceased also hail from different parts of the city. So far 66 corona patients have died in the district, out of which only one patient died in Railway COVID Hospital and all other deaths have taken place in SRN Hospital itself. However, as many as 180 people tested positive for COVID-19 late on Thursday night.

Nodal officer Dr. Sujit Verma of SRN COVID Hospital said that the 45-year-old woman resident of Daraganj was admitted on August 5 after being corona positive. He further said that she had arrived at the hospital late, so it was difficult to save her. She was also afflicted with pneumonia. Another woman hailing from Khuldabad reached the hospital on August 4 and died on Thursday morning. She had a lung infection due to respiratory disease. A woman hailing from Rajarupur Kalindipuram also died on Thursday from corona. Her report came positive on July 31, so she was brought to the SRN itself. She was suffering from diabetes and kidney disease.

As of late Thursday night, 180 positive cases of coronavirus have been reported. These days, the number of corona patients is continuously crossing 100. Corona's growing case has added to the Health department's problems. The number of corona patients in the district has increased to 3,399. Many policemen, health workers and bankers are also among those who are affected by corona.

Five policemen have come under the grip of corona at Dhumanganj police station, including the Inspector of the police station itself and four constables. Two policemen of Kareli police station are also infected. The peshkar of ACM-4, the staff nurse of Beli COVID Hospital and the lab technician of the same hospital are also tested positive. Swaroop Rani Nehru COVID Hospital's ANM and the manager of the city's big mall have also become infected. A corona infection was also found in a CRPF jawan and an employee of the Irrigation department.

Meanwhile, a total of 152 corona patients have been discharged from all COVID hospitals on Thursday. So far, a total of 1,554 corona patients have become completely healthy and have gone home. The remaining 1,613 active cases are under treatment. And 66 corona patients have been killed. Dr. Rishi Sahai said that samples of 1,473 suspected patients have also been taken from different places. The testing of corona samples has also gained momentum these days. On Thursday, more than 5,300 samples were tested in a single day till date. These sampling was conducted by RTPCR, trunate and antigen.

Spike in corona cases continues as Purvanchal crosses 15K-mark

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The spike in finding of new COVID-19 cases continued in Purvanchal (eastern UP). The district has inched further close to touch 4K-mark as by Friday morning the total number of cases reached 3,924 with the detection of 171 new cases. It is the biggest number of cases found in the first morning reports so far. The same is the situation in this region of Purvanchal as a day ago, the total number of cases has crossed 15K-mark. With the finding of 624 new cases on Thursday, the total number of corona positive cases has increased to 15,425 in 10 districts of three divisions of Varanasi, Azamgarh and Vindhyachal (Mirzapur). Seeing the sharp rise in cases, the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had already alerted the district administration of all three big cities of the areas including Varanasi, Prayagraj and Gorakhpur.

With the introduction of rapid antigen testing, the cases have seen a sharp rise as the number of testing has increased sharply. Till a day ago, over 2.71 lakh tests were done in this region and out of these tests, 5.68 per cent suspects were found positive.

The maximum number of tests (50,934) was done in Varanasi, the only district which had already crossed 3900-mark whereas the minimum tests were made in Chandauli. However, Chandauli has become the sixth district of the region where the cases have crossed the four-figure mark.

Earlier, apart from Varanasi, the other districts where the cases are in four figures are Jaunpur (2563), Ballia (2100), Azamgarh (1443), Ghazipur (1418). In the recent time, Ballia and Chandauli have seen rise with the fastest spike as they were among three districts which remained in green zones till the very end of lockdown period. The other such district was Sonbhadra (766 cases). Among the other districts, Mirzapur (978) has inched close to the four-figure mark, while there were 733 cases in Bhadohi and 629 in Mau till a day ago.

Earlier, the maximum number of 218 cases was found in Varanasi on Thursday, followed by 114 in Azamgarh, 101 in Ballia, 63 in Jaunpur, 50 in Mirzapur, 35 in Ghazipur, 27 in Sonbhadra, 24 in Mau, 22 in Chandauli, and eight in Bhadohi.

During this period, the region has seen eight deaths including four in Ballia, two in Varanasi and one each in Azamgarh and Mau. Till then, the region had seen 216 deaths. However, in comparison to other regions of the state as well as the country, the mortality rate in this region is comparatively good as it is 1.40 per cent. However, the region where the recovery rate was good till the start of unlock period has seen worsening conditions when the testing was increased with the introduction of a rapid antigen testing system. In the beginning of this month, the recovery rate was slipped to 47.67 per cent when out of 12,362 patients, only 5,893 were discharged from the hospitals but now the same has started seeing improvement, thanks to the permission of home isolation to asymptomatic patients as a day ago it has increased to 51.66 per cent with 7,969 were cured from home isolation as well as hospitals out of the total number of 15,425 patients.

Allahabad HC raps Prayagraj CMO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The Allahabad High Court on Friday rapped the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Prayagraj for not bringing on record, despite court's previous order, the facts as to how testing of COVID-19 was being done and how reports were being given to persons who were tested without undue delay.

While directing to file an affidavit afresh on the next date with all details of testing and their results, a division bench comprising Justice Siddhartha Varma and Justice Ajit Kumar observed, 'To our utter dismay the affidavit presented today was absolutely silent on the issues we had asked to be clarified. We must record that silence in the affidavit qua the queries made, reflects that office of the Chief Medical Officer, Prayagraj is not functioning in the way it should actually be functioning, considering the manner COVID-19 pandemic has affected the district. What is required is a mere maintenance of record and in this 21st century we fail to understand, when everything is getting digitalised and every statistics of impact of COVID-19 is generated and declared everyday, how records have not been maintained'.

Hearing a PIL seeking better facilities at quarantine centres, the court also expected that the police would fulfil their assurance that they would ensure that the rule of "DO GAZ KI DOORI, MASK BHI JAROORI" would be implemented in letter and spirit.

Earlier, on August 5, 2020, the court while expressing dissatisfaction with the implementation of physical distancing in the state had directed the DMs and SSPs of all the districts of the state to take necessary steps and ensure physical distancing in their districts.

Today (on August 7), in pursuance of the order dated August 5,2020, an affidavit was filed on behalf of the state government stating that all efforts had been made to implement the rule of "DO GAZ KI DOORI, MASK BHI JAROORI".

While taking affidavit on record, the court observed, 'From what we have heard today and from what we have gathered from the documents, submitted before us, we find that the state is now making a consistent effort to have a 24 hours vigil of the police in not only Prayagraj but also in all the other 74 districts of Uttar Pradesh to see that people in Uttar Pradesh maintain physical distancing and that they would see that one person remains at least two yards away from the other'. While fixing August 17, 2020 as the next date for hearing, the court further directed the state authorities to bring on record, by means of affidavits of some responsible officer of every district of Uttar Pradesh to elucidate the method by which they were implementing the circular of the Additional Chief Secretary dated August 6, 2020 in all the districts of Uttar Pradesh to check the spread of coronavirus in the state.

Kal Bhairav temple reopens after 141 days

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

After a long wait of 141 days due to worldwide coronavirus pandemic, the famous Kal Bhairav temple, known as 'Kashi Ke Kotwal', has been reopened on the auspicious occasion of Bahula Ganesh Chaturthi here on Friday. After the opening of the temple, the devotees were seen in line outside the temple premises to offer prayer, maintaining social distancing.

After the start of Unlock 1.0 on June 8, various places of worship including Dwadas Jyotilinga Kashi Vishwanath temple were reopened on June 10 here but many temples remained closed as the management of these temples did not seek permissions for the same. Later, one by one, many other famous temples were also reopened but Kal Bhairav and some others remained closed as the temple management found themselves not in position to maintain social distancing when a rush of devotees would throng there.

There was pressure on Kal Bhaiarv temple management because as per tradition many outsiders first visit this temple and after seeking the permissions from Lord Kal Bhairav they go to Kashi Vishwanath temple. As Kal Bhairav remained closed, many reached there and offered prayers from outside of the closed doors of the temple. Meanwhile, some famous programmes could not be organised as the temple remained closed.

Kal Bhairav temple reopens after 141 days in Varanasi on Friday Pioneer

Meanwhile, scores of devotees reached Bada Ganesh and other temples of Lord Ganesh on the auspicious occasion of Bahula Ganesh Chaturthi. The devotees observed fast on the occasion and offered prayer to Lord Krishna and listened to the Katha of Bahula cow. At the temple, the devotees maintained social distance and from time to time, the premises were sanitised in view of spreading of coronavirus in the city areas.

2 IIT-A students bag prestigious award

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Two students of Indian Institute of Information Technology, Allahabad--Pawan Kumar and Shefali Vinod Ramteke, have won the prestigious award in CISCO Global Problem Solver Challenge 2020. Both have secured IIIrd position in CISCO's India Impact Category in CISCO Global Problem Solver Challenge. They will receive 10,000 US Dollar to support their team and further develop the technology.

CISCO Global Problem Solver Challenge is a global competition where students and entrepreneurs participate from all over the world that has developed a solution that drives economic development or solves a social or environmental problem. The result was declared on August 5. CISCO will provide them with further support and mentorship for a period of three years for advancement in their technology and solution to help them accelerate their breakthrough technology. Over 500 participants took part in the global challenge from over 12 countries including Kenya, USA, Indonesia, Mexico, UK, Poland, Cameroon, Tunisia, and the team went through rigorous screening rounds for 6-8 months. They received feedback, mentorship, and support throughout the challenge duration from CISCO.

Both IIIT-A student have developed an agriculture drone that is supported by the Design Innovation Centre IIIT-Allahabad. The proposed drone decreases the amount of prolonged pesticide exposure to those who manually spray pesticides. It is an AI system that can cover almost ten times the amount of land in an hour that someone can manually do on their own in a day, decreasing the harmful effects of pesticides and increasing the overall output of crops for farmers. The team has been working on drones for the past 3-4 years and now are looking forward to creating revolutionising technology for the agriculture sector in India through their drone solution. Both PhD. scholars are working under the supervision of Dr Suneel Yadav and Dr Pritish Varadwaj at IIIT-Allahabad respectively.

Prof P Nagabhushan , Director , IIIT-A has congratulated both for bringing laurels to the nation as well as IIIT-A

6 held for theft in businessman's house

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

With the arrest of six accused persons involved in the theft of ₹ 1 crore in the house of a businessman in Ashok Nagar area, the Cantonment police on Thursday night worked out the case. The cops had also recovered stolen money and jewellery from their possession.

During the interrogation with the accused, the theft took place in the doctor's house in Dhumanganj was also exposed. The doctor's diamond ring has been recovered by the police. During interrogation, they told that they used to recce the closed houses for several days and target them.

It may be pointed out here that, the accused persons had decamped with ₹5.30 lakh cash and jewellery worth ₹ 1 crore from Arvind's house, a reputed businessman. On Thursday night, the SOG team caught two bike riders near the Circular Road intersection. When questioned at the police station, they were identified as Hamza residents of Manoradas ka Bagh Kareli and Kashish Srivastava alias Vedanta alias Mannu resident of Babaji ka Bagh, Daryabad. Kashish lives in a rented house in Rajrooppur.

SSP Abhishek Dixit said that both of them confessed to the theft that took place in a businessman Arvind's house. On their confession, the cops also recovered money and some jewellery from their house. The rest of the jewellery was given to the jewellery businessman Wasim alias Raju, resident of Manohardas ka Bagh Akbarpur. Some jewels were recovered after Wasim was nabbed.

He told the police that he had handed over the jewellery to Akram Ali resident of Hajinagar Sultanpur Bhava Khuldabad (original address Ajbanagar Masat police station Chanditali Hooghly West Bengal) and Etala Bharte resident of Kalyani Devi temple (original address Madanmoothi taluka Khanapur police station Veerashahar Sangli Maharashtra).

The two told the police that the jewellery was given to the trafficker Rajesh Kumar, a resident of Gujarati Mohalla under Attarsuiya police station to sell them off. The police also arrested Rajesh. The money he had with him after selling jewellery was recovered from him by the cops.

The SHO said that a diamond ring which was stolen from Dr. Bindu Prakash's house in Dhumanganj was also recovered from him. These people used to fulfill their needs. The bike that was recovered was also purchased with stolen money.

The cops had recovered more than one kilogram of gold jewellery, more than one-and-a-half kilograms of silver and coins, ₹13.24 lakh cash and the bike purchased with stolen rupees from their possession, the SSP added..

SEX RACKET BUSTED: The Daraganj police on Thursday night arrested five girls and three youths for being involved in a sex racket. They have been arrested after the raid was conducted in three houses of Daraganj and Naini area. The girls are from Kareli, Khuldabad and Naini areas. Police are inquiring and collecting information about other people related to the racket. Legal action will be taken against those arrested.

On Thursday night, the Daraganj police was tipped off about some girls and youth being present in a house in the area and a flesh trade is going on there. On getting the news, the police raided the said house, then two young girls were found here. A youth was also arrested here. After interrogating them, a woman and a youth were arrested by raiding another house.

The police then raided a house near Phoolmandi near the old Yamuna bridge. Two young girls and a young man were arrested from here. When they were interrogated at the police station, it was learnt that they were involved in the business of flesh trade.

Congress memo to Governor

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Concerned with the adverse impact particularly on middle class because of COVID-19 pandemic, the Congressmen on Friday submitted a memorandum to the district magistrate's office to be forwarded to the Governor demanding for giving instruction to the management of private schools to waive off school fees in view of the present crisis.

Following the directive issued by the party state unit, a joint delegation of district and city units of the Congress Party submitted a memorandum to the ACM-IV in the absence of the DM addressed to the Governor.

The corona pandemic has badly affected the income of the middle class and the advocates are also suffering a lot because of no work in courts, the delegation stated in the memorandum adding, the farmers have also not got the payment of their foodgrain purchased by the Agriculture department from purchasing centres.

In such a situation, the parents are facing problems in paying the school fees of their wards and loan seekers are facing problems in clearing their home loan while the farmers are facing in clearing their agricultural loan, the delegation stated adding, moreover, the staff of various schools are also facing acute financial crunch.

Thus, the delegation demanded the Governor to issue a directive to the managements of private schools to waive off school fees and also direct the state government to sort out the problem being faced by farmers, advocates and persons belonging to the middle class so that they could face the present crisis. The delegation also demanded the Governor to ask the school management not to change the school dress time and again.

The delegation comprised the ex-MP Dr Rajesh Mishra, former state minister Ajay Rai, DCC chief Rajeshwar Singh Patel, CCC Raghvendra Chaubey, Prajanath Sharma, Dr Jitendra Seth and Ajay Singh Shivji.

DC: Experts to monitor critical Covid patients

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Divisional Commissioner Sudhir M Bobde has directed the health authorities to identify senior citizens with uncontrolled diabetes and carry out COVID-19 test on them so that preventive and curative steps could be taken.

He said critical coronavirus positive patients should be given top priority and proper and timely treatment to check the increasing death rate and rising number of coronavirus positive cases.

Dr Bobde said the health department needs to work in perfect coordination and ensure that detailed record are put up in every meeting,

The divisional commissioner said in view of the ever rising number of COVID-19 deaths, it had been decided to use the expertise of four critical care specialists.

He said over 90 per cent of deaths which had occurred were at the LLR Hospital's Level-3 Covid care ICU. He said the expert would personally supervise the working in the ICU and monitor the critical patients.

Dr Bobde said the experts had been directed to identify the reason for the high death rate at LLR Hospital and, if necessary, change the line of treatment so that the death rate could be brought down.

He said directives had also come from the government to monitor the Level-1 and Level-3 Covid care hospitals.

The divisional commissioner said that in view of the acute crisis of bed for COVID-19 patients, additional 15 beds had been set up at the 7 Air Force Hospital and thus the hospital would now function as Level-3 Covid hospital till further orders.

He said it had also been decided to refer all the critical patients to the hospital in advanced life support ambulances.

A special requisition has been made for two more advanced life support ambulances to carry the patients to the hospital.

The divisional commissioner said a a team of two doctors had been sent by the government to find ways to control COVID-19 deaths and rise in the number of positive cases in the city.

Dr Bobde said one of the two doctors who had arrived here from KGMU Lucknow was critical care expert Dr Suhail Siddiqui and the second was respiratory and pulmonary expert, Dr Mansi Gupta. Both the doctors admitted that the pressure was too much on the hospital and thus there should be more Level-3 Covid care hospitals in the city

364 more test positive

KANPUR (PNS): Kanpur Nagar reported 364 new cases of coronavirus infection on Friday.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Anil K Mishra said that 364 more people tested positive for coronavirus infection between Thursday evening and Friday evening, taking the tally to 7,811.

He said with 47 COVID-19 patients being discharged from hospitals, 2,450 infected persons had been cured and there were 4,508 active cases in the city. The CMO said with five more deaths in the city, the death toll stood at 256 on Friday. He said 2,984 samples were taken for testing.

Cured Covid patient tests +ve again

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

With cured COVID-19 patients returning to hospital after testing positive again a month after their discharge from hospital, doubts are being raised on the testing of samples at the Covid laboratory.

A patient from Ratanpur in Panki has tested positive again in a span of one month.

The head of orthopaedics department, Prof Sanjai Kumar, said the case had been referred to the microbiology department and once his report came negative then only his surgery will be performed.

He said a 45-year-old man who, was a case of trauma, was brought to the hospital with a fracture in his leg and his report came positive on July 5.

He said the COVID-19 patient was admitted to the hospital for 12 days and was discharged only after his test report came negative.

He said the youth remained quarantined at his home for one week and then was re-admitted to the hospital for surgery on August 3.

He said as it was mandatory for every patient undergoing surgery to go in for Covid test, he was tested once again and was reported to be positive.

It may be mentioned here that last week, a CCTV footage was shown to the chief secretary of UP government, in which a ward boy was seen carrying out the COVID-19 test.

The ward boys and safai karmacharis had alleged that the senior doctors asked them to perform the test and never entered the laboratory.

CMS Dr Richa Giri claimed that the ward boy and safai karmacharis had made the video in mischief for fun. The issue had been swept beneath the carpet.

If the ward boys can play mischief in a time of pandemic that too inside the Covid laboratory then one can very well imagine the mockery of the whole medical process. The head of orthopaedics department said that he was shocked to find that the trauma patient had tested positive twice in a period of one month and that too in the same laboratory.

Congress memo to Governor

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

City Congress President, Har Prakash Agnihotri leads a delegation to DM on Friday. Pioneer

Congressmen led by party's city president Har Prakash Agnihotri met District Magistrate BR Tiwari on Friday and handed over a six-point charter of demands addressed to the Governor.

The member demanded that the Governor should dismiss the state government on account of rampant corruption and unabated crime.

The Congressmen said in case the government remained apathetic to the problems they will be forced to take to agitational means.

They demanded that four months' fees be waived and the lawyers be given Rs 10,000 per month as honorarium till the courts open normally.

Later, addressing the delegation outside the Collectorate, Agnihotri lashed out at Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and said from the time he had take over the reins of the state there had been a sharp rise corruption and crime.

He said murder, loot, rape and kidnapping had become the order of the day and parents and the common man was today caught between unemployment and starvation and the UP government had failed to do anything in this direction.

He said under the New Education Policy, there was a move to allow schools to change books as per new syllabus and even uniforms. He said the Governor should use his good offices to ensure that this change in schools was not allowed.

He said parents had not been paid salaries for the past four months and they were not able to pay fees. He said the government need to pay Rs 8,000 to all the teachers of recognised and unrecognised schools.

He said the EMIs of people whose income was below Rs 2 lakh per annum be waived for four months if they had taken any loan. He said corruption in appointment of 69,000 teachers and then animal husbandry scandal had brought to fore the corruption rampant in the BJP rule. Prominent among those in the delegation were RR Pal, SD Mishra, Ikhlaq Ahmed, Ashok Dhanvik and Zafar Shaquir.

Cash and jewellery stolen from house of trader

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The house of dairy products trader burgled in Ratan Lal Nagar on Thursday night. Pioneer.

Cash and jewellery worth over Rs 1 crore were stolen from the house of a dairy products trader in Ratanlal Nagar under Govind Nagar police station late Thursday night.

According to reports, the burglars broke into the house of Shyam Narain Tewari through the window after climbing on neighbour's rooftop.

Before to committing theft, the miscreants locked the main gate and all other rooms of the house from outside.

The theft came to light when the family members woke up on Friday morning.

The CCTV footages scanned by the police showed two thieves committing the theft.

Tewari said the thieves took away Rs 5 lakh cash and jewellery and other valuables worth around Rs 1 crore from the almirah. He suspected the involvement of one of their employees who was terminated from service on Thursday.

Loan mela organised at Collectorate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A loan mela was organised at NIC auditorium of the Collectorate in which loans under Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Srijan Yojana, Mukhyamantri Yuva Swarozgar Yojana and Atmanirbhar Bharat Yojana were distributed.

District Magistrate BR Tiwari handed over the cheques to the beneficiaries.

He said the Central and state governments were making every effort to provide loans to deserving people so that they could become self-dependent and help the country in improving economy and also providing employment to the youths.

Deputy Commissioner, Industry, Ashok Kumar said the scheme was implemented by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) as the nodal agency at the national level.

He said at the state level, the scheme was implemented through state KVIC directorates, state Khadi and Village Industries Boards (KVIBs) and District Industries Centres (DICs) and banks.

He said the government subsidy under the scheme was routed by KVIC through the identified banks for eventual distribution to the beneficiaries and entrepreneurs into their bank accounts.

He added that MSMEs could upgrade their competence in terms of business and technologies by getting rated through independent, renowned and professional rating agencies empanelled with NSIC.

He added that the maximum cost of the project or unit admissible in manufacturing sector was Rs 25 lakh and in business or service sector it was Rs 10 lakh.

Under the PMEG plan, a loan of Rs 10 lakh was given to Ramu Jaiswal for ready-made garments. Abhinendra Pal was extended a loan of Rs 8 lakh. for setting up a washing powder unit while Sanjay Kumar Jain was given a loan cheque of Rs 25 lakh for hosiery goods.

Naved Ali was given Rs 2 lakh for ready-made garments, Mr BL Sahu a sum of Rs 5 lakh, Mr Biplab Gupta Rs 3 lakh for opening a medical store.

A total of Rs 423 lakh was distributed to 26 beneficiaries while for six beneficiaries loan amounting to Rs 86.70 lakh were distributed.

Similarly, under the Chief Minister Plan, 16 beneficiaries were sanctioned Rs 248 lakh while for three beneficiaries were sanctioned a sum of Rs 43 lakh.

Under One District One Product scheme, eight beneficiaries were given Rs 17 lakh loan while for two beneficiaries a sum of Rs 20 lakh was given.

Under the PMEG Programme, 11,101 beneficiaries were given a sum of Rs 139.32 crore as loans. Similarly, under Atmanirbhar Bharat Yojana, a total of Rs 63,243 was sanctioned while for 7,757 beneficiaries a sum of Rs 25397 lakh was distributed as loans.

Nutan demands FIR against IPS officer

KANPUR(PNS): Social activist Dr Nutan Thakur has demanded that an FIR be registered against former SSP of Kanpur Nagar, Anant Deo, and former SO of Chaubepur, Vinay Tiwari, for taking money in a gambling racket.

In her complaint to DGP HC Awasthi with a copy to Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi, Nutan said in the phone conversation with his senior officer, slain CO Devendra Misra and mentions about SO Chaubepur taking Rs 1.50 lakh per month for allowing gambling in his area and the former SSP allegedly having taken Rs 5 lakh from Vinay Tiwari for letting him off on the complaint filed by the deceased CO.

Nutan said these acts of Vinay Tiwari and Anant Deo were clearly cognisable under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. She said as Anant Deo was an IPS officer, an FIR could be registered against him only on the direction of the DGP.

Calling it an extremely serious matter, Nutan sought immediate registration of the FIR.

Students of CCSU, affiliated colleges to be promoted without examination

CORRESPONDENT ■ MEERUT

The students of Chaudhary Charan Singh University (CCSU) and its affiliated colleges will be promoted without examination as per the government guidelines. However, the UG, PG final year and semester system final year examinations will be completed by September 30 and the results will be declared by October 15.

The said decisions were taken in the online meeting of the university's Executive Council held on Thursday. In the meeting which was presided over by Vice-Chancellor Professor Narendra Kumar Taneja many other important decisions too were taken. The Executive Council approved most of the decisions of the 'Pronnat Samiti' (promotion committee) of the university. In the university and its affiliated colleges about four lakh students are to be promoted under the semester and annual systems. Under the annual system the examinations of many subjects were held. About eight lakh copies have also been evaluated. It was also decided to make their marks the basis of promotion. Those students who failed in the above examination conducted earlier will be considered as fail. However, the option of giving back paper in front of such students is kept open. All students of different classes of all faculties who have passed in each subject of their class on the basis of evaluation of papers of the examinations conducted by the university before the lockdown/March 18, 2020, or are eligible for the back paper will be promoted in the next year/semester and their remaining examinations will remain postponed.

Apart from it the final semester/final year examinations will be conducted by September 30 following the prescribed protocol and guidelines of the government. If for some reason a student is not able to appear in the final semester/final year university examinations, then in this case her or she will be given an opportunity to appear in the special examination of that course/question paper. It will, however, be conducted later as per the convenience of the university so that the students did not have to face any kind of inconvenience or suffer any loss. This arrangement, however, will be applicable only once for the current academic session i.e. 2019-20.

Meanwhile in connection with the case in which examination results of MBBS students were declared against the rules during the meeting a four-member committee was constituted. The Executive Council has now recommended the designation of assistant professor to the teachers working at Sir Chhotu Ram Institute of Engineering and Technology (SCRIET).

Besides a letter will be sent to the government regarding the affiliation of about 280 colleges and institutes. Prominent among those present during the meeting were Pro-Vice-Chancellor Prof Y Vimala, Registrar Dhirendra Kumar Verma, Finance Officer Sushil Gupta, Controller of Examinations Prof Roop Narayan, Dr Darshan Lal Arora, Prof Beerpal Singh, Prof Alok Kumar, Prof AV Kaur, Dr Ishwar, Dr Seema Jain, Dr Rekha Tiwari, Dr SS Bedar, Dr Sudhir Kumar, Dr Chaman Lal and Dr HP Singh.

CRS to inspect electrified rail section on Aug 10

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Even in this difficult time of corona infection many development works are being completed by North Eastern Railway (NER). In this sequence on Varanasi division's Bhatni-Aunrihar rail section the challenging task of electrification of 125 route kilometers has been completed. This electrified section will be inspected by the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS) on August 10, said Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh. With the electrification of this section, a large part between Gorakhpur and Varanasi will be connected with electrified rail section which will also enable the movement of electric trains on Gorakhpur-Varanasi route. In addition to other benefits there will also be an expected improvement in the punctuality of trains. Railway administration is very conscious about energy conservation. In the same sequence the NER had completed the electrification work of 540 route km railway track last year. In the last few years the electrification in NER has gained considerable momentum. In the year 2016-17 —159.20 route km, in 2017-18 — 167.14 route km and in 2018-19 – 431.23 route km rail section's electrification work was completed. It may be pointed out here that electrification benefits the environment. Besides one will get freedom from noise pollution and at the same time dependence on diesel will end which will reduce fuel expenditure and increase self-sufficiency. In addition to this section the electrification work of Kasganj-Bareilly section (108 route km) on Izzatnagar division has also been completed. This section will be inspected by the Commissioner for Railway Safety on August 11. Meanwhile the Gonda-Subhagpur division (11 route km) of Lucknow division has been inspected by the Commissioner for Railway Safety on July 23. After the electrification of these three sections total 1,967 route km track on NER will be electrified.

One apprehended with heroin

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The Adalhat police police have nabbed one and recovered 15 gms of heroin on Thursday. The Adalhat police was patroling on Thursday that they spotted one suspious-looking person at Biksi market. During interrogation he confessed about his involvement in drug trafficking. After the frisking him the police recovered 15 gms of heroin from his possession. After lodging the FIR under relevant sections the police sent the accused, identified as Harishankar alias Babbal, son of Ayodhya, a resident of Durvasha Ka Pura under Adalhat police station, to jail. Meanwhile the Jigna police nabbed one person who was accused of murdering his grandfather and recovered the weapon which was used for committing the crime. SHO Jigna Chhotak Yadav the since the case lodged the police was active and trying to arrest the accused. He said that on being tipped off by an informer that one accused was standing at Rampur Ghat, the police raided the place and arrested Ravi Shyam Dubey, one of the accused. On clues provided by the accused recovered the hatchet too which was used for committing the crime.

DISTRIBUTED: Superintendent of Police (SP) Dr Dharmveer Singh distributed kits to police stations, police outposts, police lines and the other branches of Police department to protect the staff from Covid-19. Addressing the police personnel the SP said that the safety from Corona

should be their priority while serving the people. He said staff should take the precautionary measures not only at work place but at home too. He said that the kit was being given to not only to keep themselves safe but to make others aware too. He directed the staff to sanitise the barracks, mess, office and premises daily and remain alert while dealing with visitors in view of the pandemic. The kits comprising spray, sanitising machine, gloves, sanitiser and masks were distributed to the 16 police stations, 47 police outposts along with the all branches of the police.

FOUNDATION STONE LAID: UP Minister State for Energy Rama Shankar Patel said that by 2022 the state would be able to provide adequate energy to people. These views were expressed by him at a function organised at Golhanpur village on the occasion of laying of foundation stone of a 33/11 KV power substation of cost Rs. 383.56 lakh recently. He said that through it more than two dozen villages would get rid of problem of low voltage and fault in supply. He said that the sub-station would pave way for the development of the area. He said that the construction of 132 KVA power house was in the pipeline for which land had been finalised. Proposing vote of thanks chief engineer, Power Corporation, RK Srivastava, thanked the minister for donating more than one bigha land for the construction of the sub-station. The minister inaugurated the boundary wall of primary school Koondi and the connecting road of cost ₹8.65 lakh in the village. Prominent among those present were Rajya Sabha member Ram Shakal, DM Sushil Kumar Patel SP, Dr Dharmveer Singh, and veteran BJP leaders Lal Bahadur Singh and Hari Charan Singh.

14-yr-old student dies under suspicious circumstances

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

A 14-year-old student, Ujjwal, died under suspicious circumstances in Punda village under Sahajanwa police station. He was found in an unconscious condition by his family on the second floor of the house who took him to a hospital where the doctors declared him dead. What caused his death would become clear after only after getting the post-mortem examination report, police said. According to information, the family of Vikas Matt, a resident of Punda village, was currently living in Luchui. His son, Ujjwal Bhatt, was on the swing on the second floor of the house around 12:30 pm on Thursday. While searching for him when his mother reached there she found him in an unconscious state and his throat was stuck in the swing rope. His family members immediately took the Sahajanwa community health centre (CHC) where the doctors declared him dead. Ujjwal was a student of VIII and the eldest of three brothers.

Illicit liquor recovered

CORRESPONDENT ■ MAHOBA

During a drive a team constituted by inspector incharge Panvadi Ashok Kumar Singh apprehended two accused from the Nagaraghat canal bridge on Thursday and recovered 30 litres of illicit liquor from their possession. The accused were later identified as Mangal Singh (45), son of Motilal Rajput and Chhatrapal Rajput (40), son of Summilal, residents of Nagaraghat village under the Panvadi police station.

AHEAD OF WB ASSEMBLY POLLS

Join BJP parivar: Nadda to people

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

With the Assembly elections less than a year away the BJP on Friday mounted fresh attacks on the Mamata Banerjee Government holding it responsible for all round deterioration of socio-political and economic situation in Bengal and asked the people to join the saffron outfit in hordes to effect a second Parivartan (change) in the State.

Firing salvos at the ruling Trinamool Congress party BJP president JP Nadda said "Bengal has gone into an eclipse … today there is an all round deterioration in law and order situation, the students do not get jobs , the farmers do not get right prices for their produce."

Calling the people to "join the BJP parivar" he said "today cut money and corruptions reigns supreme in Bengal and whoever wants to protest is either silenced by the goons or the police. This situation cannot run for long and the people of the State have to come forward to change the situation by allowing the BJP to take the lead in doing so."

Nadda was speaking ahead of the beginning of a membership drive by the saffron outfit. The party on Friday launched a massive membership drive keeling in view the next year's Assembly elections.

Speaking on the occasion Bengal BJP president MP Dilip Ghosh said, "we (BJP are referred to as a non-Bengali party … but they forget that our main ideologue Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was from Bengal … As the Vice Chancellor of the Calcutta University he requested Rabindranath Tagore to give a lecture in Bengali … and today they say we are a party of non-Bengalis."

Saying how "thousands of people are joining the BJP not just in Bengal but across the country" he accused the TMC of running a goonda raj saying how the TMC government was indulging in vendetta politics. Ghosh said, "'Our supporters are not safe. Either BJP workers are homeless or in jails in false cases. They are ruining Bengali traditions, culture and education system."

Appealing to the TMC supporters to join the BJP in hordes he said "you had once dreamt of bringing a change in Bengal not only by removing the Marxist Government but also by doing social work but your dreams were shattered by the present Government. But we want to assure you that your dreams will come alive once again when you join the BJP … because after coming to power we will unleash a massive development drive in the State."

The BJP has plans to recruit more than 3 crore members in the State in the coming one year or so.

TMC rejects Modi's claims on NEP

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Tinamool Congress on Friday rejected claims made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi that the State or its Government was consulted before bringing about the new education policy (NEP).

Speaking about the issue, Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee said that "no one from Bengal was consulted on the New Educational Policy" and added whether anyone was privately consulted was beyond his knowledge. "Insofar as the new education policy is concerned … to my knowledge, nothing has happened no one was consulted … not even a single time … with respect to our honourable Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) I can say with my full voice that none from Bengal was included."

Regarding the draft resolution of the NEP he said it is being said that "discussions were held with states for 3 to 4 years but no such discussion took place" and added "may be discussion was held with someone but not with us."

My mission is to end militancy: J&K L-G

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Reaching out to the common people of Jammu & Kashmir the newly appointed Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Manoj Sinha on Friday clearly spelt out his mission in the UT will be to bring peace, end militancy and to ensure development by all means. Sinha also emphasised his priority would be zero tolerance for corruption besides establishing dialogue with the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Interacting with the media persons soon after he was administered the oath of office by the Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir High Court Gita Mittal, Sinha said, "J&K is India's heaven and crown. I have been given a chance to play a role here. August 5 is a historic day and will be remembered in history". Referring to his brief interaction with the section of senior officers, Sinha said, "I met some officers and they told me that in the past one year, there has been a lot of development in all sectors. I will take forward the same process of development with a speed and vigor". Interestingly, the oath ceremony was attended by only BJP and Jammu and Kashmir Apni party leaders. None of the representatives of the National Conference, Peoples Democratic Party and Congress attended the oath ceremony. Listing out his priority areas, Sinha said, "I have no specific agenda and there will be no disparity. There will be equal treatment to all. And we will work for the welfare of people of J&K. I will try on that front and I have spoken to some officers in that regard already". "I will be in touch with the media too besides common people of J&K," he added. The Lt Governor further said that he would like to see Jammu & Kashmir free from militancy and isolation. "We will work within the framework of the Constitution of India to take J&K towards inclusive development and peace. We will also initiate dialogue with the masses to have a better understanding of their problems and issues, and will try to address the same", he said in a reply to one of the questions.

कार्यालय-सचिव, औद्योगिक एवं प्राविधिक शिक्षा परिषद उ0प्र0 मोहान रोड लखनऊ

नीलामी सूचना दिनाँक–29 जुलाई 2020

समाज कल्याण विभाग द्वारा संचालित औद्योगिक एवं प्राविधिक शिक्षण संस्थाओं की परीक्षाओं से सम्बन्धित निम्नलिखित निष्प्रयोज्य परीक्षा सामग्री की नीलामी दिनाँक 11.08.2020 को प्रातः 11.00 बजे औद्योगिक एवं प्राविधिक शिक्षा परिषद उ0प्र0 मोहान रोड लखनऊ (राजकीय गोविन्द वल्लभ पन्त पालीटेक्निक, मोहान रोड लखनऊ कैम्पस में) नीलामी समिति की उपस्थिति में होगी। अधिकतम बोली लगाने वाली फर्म को दिनाँक 11.08.2020 को ही नगद धनराशि जमा कर (02) दिनों के अन्दर नीलाम की गयी सामग्री प्राप्त कर लेनी होगी। नीलामी के प्रतिभागी अपने साथ पासपोर्ट साइज की एक फोटो, पैन एवं आधार कार्ड की एक प्रति अनिवार्य रुप से लायेंगे। नीलामी प्रकिया को आगे बढ़ाने स्थगित करने का अधिकार अधोहस्ताक्षरी में निहित है।

नीलाम की जाने सामग्री (अनुमानित)

क्रम सं0	सामग्री का नाम	मात्रा अनुमानित
1	उत्तर पुस्तिकायें	20 कुन्टल
2	प्रयोगात्मक के कपड़े एवं माडल	50 कुन्टल
3	बासी कागज के पैटर्न	20 कुन्टल

उ0प्र0 154038, दिनांक–04.08.2020, विज्ञापन वेबसाईट www.up.gov.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है। **(पी.के.मिश्रा) सचिव**

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ

E-Procurement Tender Notice No. 20/41 **E-Procurement Tender Notice** Date: 07.08.2020

On behalf of the President of India, **The Principal Chief Materials Manager, North Central Railway, Prayagraj (An ISO 9001:2015 certified unit)** invites the following E-Procurement Tenders.

S. No.	Tender No.	Description	Qty.	Tender Opening Date
1.	40203051	Three Phase Submersible pump set	74 Nos.	31.08.2020
2.	30201014	POH Kit for C3W Distributor Valve	1902 Set	01.09.2020
3.	30202520A	Bogie Centre Pivot Top	937 Nos.	02.09.2020
4.	30192230	Axle Box Housing	600 Nos.	01.09.2020

Note: 1. The complete information of above E-Procurement Tenders are available on IREPS website i.e. http://www.ireps.gov.in. 2. Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders. For this purpose, venders are required to get themselves registered with **IREPS** website along with class III, digital signature certificates issued by **CCA** under **IT Act-2000. 3.** Rates entered into Financial Rate page and duly signed digitally shall only be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form/letter head if attached by vender shall be straight way ignored and shall not be considered. 847/20 (R)

North central railways @ CPRONCR

DIRECTORATE OF FISHERIES, ODISHA, CUTTACK-753001

EoI No. 83 /Marine-XIII.AGRIL-02/2020, Date: 6/8 /2020

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST(EOI) FOR EMPANELLEMENT OF AGENCIES TO SUPPLY "FISHERY MACHINERY/EQUIPMENTS/IMPLEMENTS

M-15

The expression of interest is hereby invited from the registered Manufacturers/ Dealers having valid GST, PAN etc for supply of "Fishery machinery/equipment/implements" such as Aerator- 1HP & 2 HP and Air blower- 5HP & 10 HP to the eligible fishermen, fish farmers, registered PFCS, WSHGs involved in fish/shrimp production in the state through the District Fisheries Officers. The purpose of the EoI is to empanel the genuine firms and to derive an uniform price for a particular brand & specification of fishery machineries/equipments. The interested firms having proven records of manufacturing or dealing with such type of "Fishery machinery/equipment/ implements" with valid GST, PAN are eligible to apply. Interested firms should submit their interest containing the Technical and Financial Bid along with documents supporting their eligibility. Two separate sealed envelope superscribing **"Technical Bid"** and **"Financial Bid"** kept inside a cover superscribing "EOI for supply of Fishery Machinery/Equipment/Implements" by **Regd. Post/ Speed Post/ by hand** to the Director of Fisheries, Odisha, Cuttack on or before 2nd September, 2020 at 3.00 PM. The EOI shall be opened by the committee on dated **02.09.2020 at 4.00 PM** in presence of participating firms or their authorized representatives. The participating firms must bring their original documents for verification by the Committee. The bid documents are available in the Directorate website www.odishafisheries.nic.in & Department website www.fardsec.od@nic.in which may be downloaded for reference. The undersigned reserves the right to cancel the EoI without assigning any reason thereof.

OIPR-06015/11/0008/2021 Director of Fisheries, Odisha

कार्यालय : अधिशासी अभियन्ता, जोन–3 जलकल विभाग, नगर निगम, लखनऊ

पत्रांक–721/EE-3/GL7/2021 दिनांक–07-08-2020

अति-अल्पकालीन निविदा-सूचना

जोन–3 के अन्तर्गत कार्य हेतु जलकल विभाग जोन–3 द्वारा अति अल्पकालीन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा प्रपत्र दिनांक 14.08.2020 को अपरान्ह 3:00 बजे तक शुल्क जमा करके कैश काउन्टर से प्राप्त किया जा सकता है तथा दिनांक 14.08.2020 को अपरान्ह 3:00 बजे तक निविदा डाली जा सकती है तथा प्राप्त निविदायें उसी दिवस को अपरान्ह 4:00 बजे निविदादाताओं अथवा उनके प्रतिनिधि के समक्ष खोली जायेंगी। निविदा विवरण निम्नानुसार है :–

क्र. सं.	कार्य का नाम	निविदा शुल्क	EMD	अनुमानित लागत (लाख में)
1	जोन–3 के अन्तर्गत जानकीपुरम प्रथम भारतेन्दु हरिश्चन्द्र वार्ड मोहल्ला पल्टन छावनी गांव मनोकामना मन्दिर के पास 150 एमएमए डाया 4 इंच पी0वी0सी0 लाइन बिछाने तथा 35 घरों को संयोजन कराये जाने एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्य।	Rs.200/-+ GST 12%	Rs.3700.00	Rs.1,81,495.00 + 12% GST

जमानत राशि अधिशासी अभियन्ता जलकल विभाग, जोन–3 लखनऊ के नाम बन्धक होगा, जमा करना अनिवार्य है। सभी निविदादाताओं का रजिस्ट्रेशन, जी0एस0टी0 नं0 की छायाप्रति निविदा के साथ संलग्न करना अनिवार्य होगा। बिना जमानत धनराशि के व निर्धारित तिथि व समय के उपरान्त किसी भी निविदा पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा। किसी एक व समस्त निविदा को बिना कारण बताये निरस्त करने का अधिकार अधोहस्ताक्षरी अथवा महाप्रबन्धक जलकल विभाग नगर निगम को सुरक्षित होगा। अन्य शर्तें निविदा प्रपत्र में उल्लेखित हैं।

अधिशासी अभियन्ता, जोन-3
जलकल विभाग, नगर निगम

Vijayan lashes out at media over gold smuggling case

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

For the first time since the gold smuggling scam hit the headlines, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan lost his cool in a Press briefing on Friday and issued a stern warning to journalists 'who were out to discredit him in public life'.

"There is a media syndicate working in the State with an intention to tarnish my image. The people in the State know about me. However hard you try, you will not succeed in your attempts," said a visibly upset Vijayan when he was asked about reports attributing to the National Investigation Agency that appeared in a section of the media.

Some media houses had reported quoting a statement made by the NIA to the Special Court that Swapna Suresh, the kingpin in the smuggling racket, was known to Vijayan and she had wielded influence in the Chief Minister's Office. The Chief Minister who was taken aback by the question gave the reporter a piece of his mind in harshest terms. He warned the journalist not to attempt to get an answer from him to suit the former's convenience.

The press briefing, convened to inform the media about the Covid-19 update ended in a not so pleasant note as a section of the media persons expressed their displeasure in private over the ire of the Chief Minister when faced with inconvenient questions.

MADHYANCHAL VIDYUT VITRAN NIGAM LTD HEAD OFFICE- 4A, GOKHLE MARG, LUCKNOW

E-TENDER NOTICE Tenders through e-tendering system are invited from reputed manufacturers with adequate experience for Competitive Bidding for supply of Three Phase Four Wire Direct Connected Static Electronic Energy Meter (10-60 Amp.) Accuracy Class 1.0 DLMS Compliant with Box & Seal with following details. Bidders may quote for minimum 20% quantity with proportionate earnest money :- **1. TENDER SPECIFICATION NO. MEDCO/2516/2020 Item Description** Supply of Three Phase Four Wire Direct Connected Static Electronic Energy Meter (10-60 Amp.) Accuracy Class 1.0 DLMS Compliant with Box & Seal **Quantity (Nos.)** 30,000 **Earnest Money (Rs.)** Rs. 6,90,000.00 **Tender Fee with GST (Rs.)** Rs. 7080.00 Last Date & Time of receiving Tender : 01.09.2020 upto 13:00 Hrs. Due date and time for opening Bid Part-I : 02.09.2020 at 15:00 Hrs. For the above tender the tender Fee shall be deposited in the form of NEFT/RTGS only and Earnest Money, as mentioned above, shall be deposited in the form of Bank Guarantee or RTGS/ NEFT. The scanned copy of Tender Fee and Earnest Money details alongwith tender bid documents shall be uploaded on e-tender website: etender.up.nic.in Detailed information of the tender and tender documents can be seen and downloaded from e-tender website: e-tender.up.nic.in and MVVNL website: www.mvvnl.in In case of amendment and date extension, the information shall be made available on e-tender website: etender.up.nic.in and MVVNL website: www.mvvnl.in **Superintending Engineer (Comm) MVVNL, 4-A Gokhale Marg, Lucknow.** No- 222 Date 7.8.2020 **MVVNL Helpline No. 18001800440/1912** "SAVE ELECTRICITY IN NATIONAL INTEREST, USE **LED** IN PLACE OF **BULB**"

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

E-Tendeing Tender Notice No. 16/2020

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.) N.E. Railway Izatnagar For and behalf of President of India invites "OPEN" e-tender through on Line (E-tendering) for the following work.

S.N.1. Description of works: Welding of rail joints 1560 nos. and supply of welding portion 900nos. of rails joints of 52 kg/90 UTS rails in the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/II/IZN (Under the sanctioned work of (1) Kasganj - Mathura (SL) - TRR (S) BG loops - 21.31Km (2) Farrukhabad - Kasganj - TBR - 66 km (3) Farukhabad - Kasganj Jn. (SL) - TBR - 41 Km (4) Kashganj - Mathura - TBR - 73.00 km.). **Approx. Value:** ₹ 1,19,48,457.60, **E.M.D Money:** ₹ 2,09,800.00, **Cost of Tender Forms:** ₹ 5,000/-, **Completion time/period from the date of issue of acceptance letter:** 12 Month.

S.N.2. Description of works: Supplying & Stacking of 65 mm size machine crushed track stone ballast (25000 Cum) as per latest RDSO's ballast specification with up to date correction slips and loading of the same in to all type of Railway wagons at Lalkuan station. **Approx. Value:** ₹ 3,53,26,750.00, **E.M.D Money:** ₹ 3,26,600.00, **Cost of Tender Forms:** ₹ 10,000/-, **Completion time/period from the date of issue of acceptance letter:** 04 Month.

1. On line e-tender can be submitted up to **15.00** hrs. on dated **01.09.2020.**

2. For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways **IREPS** website **www.ireps. gov.in.**

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg)
CPRO/W-75 Izatnagar

About any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No.: 09794845955

Do not travel with inflammable article in train

1 civilian killed in Pak LoC shelling

Jammu: A civilian was killed and 5 others received injuries during 'unprovoked' ceasefire violation by the Pakistan Army along the line of control in Tangdhar sector of North Kashmir's Kupwara district on Friday. Pakistan army also resorted to ceasefire violations in the Balakote and Krishna Ghati sectors of Poonch at different intervals during the day.

According to ground reports, Pakistan Army targeted several civilian pockets and hit residential structures using long range mortars and other weapons. Hitting back, the Indian army gave them a befitting reply.

Srinagar based Defence PRO, Col Rajesh Kalia said, "Pakistan initiated an Unprovoked Ceasefire Violation (CFV) Friday morning along the LoC in Tangdhar Sector of Kupwara by firing mortars & other weapons".

FROM PAGE 1

ED GRILLS RHEA FOR 8 HRS FOR MONEY LAUNDERING

The ED has also summoned Chakraborty's CA Ritesh Shah for questioning.

The ED has also summoned Shruti Modi, another accused in the case and Chakraborty's business manager besides Rajput's friend and roommate Siddharth Pithani for questioning in connection with the money laundering probe, officials said. The duo's statement will also be recorded under PMLA once they appear on their scheduled dates for Friday and Saturday respectively.

Pithani is said to be out of Mumbai at present and he has claimed in television news channel interviews that he was present in the Bandra flat on June 14 when Rajput (34) was found hanging from the ceiling.

Pithani, an IT professional, was reportedly living with Rajput for about a year. His statement was also recorded by the Mumbai Police as part of their accidental death probe in the case. The agency has already questioned Rajput's Chartered Accountant (CA) Sandeep Shridhar and his business manager and staffer Samuel Miranda twice in the case.

The ED questioning revolved around Chakraborty's investments, business and professional deals and links. A property located in the Khar area of Mumbai, linked to Chakraborty, is also being probed by the ED for the source of its purchase and ownership, sources said.

Sources said Rhea submitted her income tax return and related papers to show that she acquired the properties from her own money.

Meanwhile, the CBI that has taken over the Patna police FIR in Rajput's death case has begun analysing the documents in the case and is awaiting the case diary from the Bihar police. The agency is also taking legal opinions on various issues before a team will be sent to Mumbai for investigation. The CBI has also sought details of the case being probed by the Mumbai police under CrPC section relating to accidental death.

Interestingly, the CBI has entrusted the case to the Anti-Corruption Unit instead of the Special Crimes Unit that usually probes such sensational death cases. The CBI team comprises two IPS officers from Gujarat cadre Joint Director Manoj Sasidhar and DIG Gagandeep Gambhir and the Investigating Officer Additional Superintendant of Police Anil Kumar Yadav has in the past probed the Haren Pandya murder case. Another team member SS Rathi was an IO in the Israt Jehan encounter case probe.

RHEA'S CALL DETAILS SPARK UP DEBATE

On a day when she, her brother Showik Chakraborty and ex-manager Shruti Modi were questioned by the ED officials in Mumbai, her call records apparently leaked to the media by the investigating agencies sparked all kinds of speculation in the electronic media.

Among other things, she had made 25 calls to Sushant between January 20 and January 24, 2020 when the actor was with his sister Rani in Chandigarh. Rhea spoke to her mentor and filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt 16 times in a year over the phone, while she conversed with Uday Singh Gauri for 22 times and Bollywood actor Aditya Roy Kapur 23 times.

Over a period of one year, Rhea had spoken to her father Indrajeet Chakraborty at least 1,192 times, her brother 1,069 times but only 145 times with late Sushant and 4 times with his sister Rani. However, she spoke to 287 times with the late actor's domestic help Samuel Miranda. She spoke to several others, including Modi, 791 times, with Sushant's friends like Siddharth Pithani 100 times and Deepesh Sawant 41 times.

She also talked on the phone with Dream Home Real Estate firm 23 times in the past year.

She made four calls and sent a message in June-July to Mumbai Deputy Commissioner of Police Abhishek Trimukhe, who is investigating the case. While it is too early to contextualise Rhea call data records and their importance in the ongoing investigations into the Rajput suicide case, the electronic media had a field day dissecting the call data records to add sensation to the ongoing media blitzkrieg over the investigations into the actor's death.

16 DIE IN IDUKKI LANDSLIDE

Big boulders are also scattered around the site. Idukki District Collector H Dinesh said that the bodies of the victims had been retrieved and 12 have been rescued with injuries and shifted to hospital. "Most of the people are plantation workers and from neighbouring Tamil Nadu", he said. The tragedy came to light after a forest watchman informed authorities about the landslide. The communication lines have been down in the area since the past three days. The injured have been rushed to Tata General Hospital. Police and fire force personnel and local people first took up the rescue operations amid the rains while the NDRF teams were deployed soon.

According to local residents who were the first to reach the site, 58 persons have been washed away by the flood waters and the chances of finding them are remote.

Elsewhere in Kerala, heavy rains lashed across the State, uprooting trees and electricity poles resulting in power supply failure and communication breakdown. Transport network in the State, especially in the districts of Idukki, Kottayam, Pathanamthitta, Wayanadu, Thrissur and Palakkadu have been affected. Besides Munnar, towns of Pala, Ranni and Erumeli have been flooded.

The Indian Meteorological Departtment (IMD) has forecast extremely heavy rainfall for the next two days in the State. Chances are that the State would receive rainfall in excess of 204.5 mm in 24 hours and this could result in flood, said the IMD. Red alert has been declared in the districts of Idukki, Thrissur, Palakkad and Wayandu for Saturday.

Munnar MLA S Rajendran told the media earlier in the day that it was difficult to reach the spot as a bridge which provided access to the area was washed away in the rain.

"At least 200-300 people live there. There are many lanes and a canteen at the location. Since one of the bridges to that area was destroyed last night, it has become difficult to access the region," he said.

The State health department has dispatched 15 ambulances and a special medical team to provide medical assistance to the victims of the landslide. The office of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said it has contacted the Indian Air Force seeking its helicopter for the rescue mission.

"NDRF has been deployed for the rescue operations in Idukki. The team was already stationed at the district. Another NDRF team is also being moved to Idukki," Vijayan said in a Facebook post.

PRIEST AMONG 5 MISSING

Rescue teams have reached the spot to carry out search and rescue operations, but heavy rains and local conditions are hampering it.

As per the information provided by the rescue teams, one priest had vacated the house and shifted to Bhagamandala, while another was residing near the hills with his family, a release from the Kodagu Deputy Commissioner said. "The information received is that five people residing in one house are missing, they are priest Narayana Achar (about 80), his wife Shanta (about 70), his elder brother Anandateertha Swami (about 86 years) and two assistant priests Pavan and Ravi Kiran," it said

SC: FULL DAMAGES FOR VICTIMS BEFORE ITALIAN MARINES' CASE CLOSURE

At the outset, Mehta referred to the "unfortunate incident" of killing of two Indian fishermen and said earlier there were two issues – one was whether Indian Government have the right to prosecute these marines and the other regarding compensation to kin of victims.

He referred to the recent ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) at the Hague which held that India is entitled to get compensation in the case but can't prosecute the marines due to official immunity enjoyed by them. "You are here after the tribunal's award. You have accepted it and you are not questioning it anywhere," the bench observed.

It said there is "legal difficult" as this does not take care of the adequate compensation which is required to be paid to the family members of victims. "I can bring the family members here," Mehta told the bench, adding that the government will ensure that maximum compensation is paid to them.

"That (payment of adequate compensation) must happen before we pass order," the bench said, adding, "You will have to bring the cheque here in this court and close the matter".

The top court has listed the matter for hearing after four weeks. On July 3, the Centre moved the top court seeking closure of judicial proceedings here against the two Italian marines accused of killing Indian fishermen, off the Kerala coast.

In February 2012, India had accused two Italian marines, Salvatore Girone and Massimiliano Latorre, on board the MV Enrica Lexie — an Italian flagged oil tanker — of killing two Indian fishermen who were on a fishing vessel in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The Centre said the arbitration under United Nation Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS), which was instituted on a request from Italy, has delivered its Award on May 21, 2020.

SII PLANS ₹225/DOSE COVID-19 VACCINE

Under the COVAX umbrella, Gavi is leading a COVAX Facility, which is expected to provide Governments with the opportunity to benefit from a "large" portfolio of Covid-19 candidate vaccines developed using a range of technology platforms. Under the new collaboration, AstraZeneca's candidate vaccine, if successful, will be available to 57 Gavi-eligible countries. Novavax's candidate, if successful, will be available to all 92 countries supported by the AMC, according to SII.

Novavax late on Wednesday announced an agreement with SII. The tie-up allows the Indian firm exclusive rights to supply the vaccine in India and non-exclusive rights "during the pandemic period" to supply to countries that are not designated "upper-middle or high-income" by the World Bank.

ASHA WORKERS ON STRIKE

work citing negligence on the part of the Government to their demand.

The workers under the banner of ten trade unions including INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, AIUTUC, TUCC, SEWA, AICCTU, LPF, UTUC are protesting inadequate assistance from the government in the fight against Covid-19, including lack of safety equipment, payment of salary and even risk allowance. The workers are also opposing moves to privatise basic services at government hospitals and in nutrition schemes.

Congress, BJP slug it out over 'you love China'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress and the BJP on Friday continued to spar publicly levelling 'you love China' allegations against each other.

The Congress on Friday maintained its pressure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the "Chinese incursion" by directly attacking him besides the BJP for just crafting an image and spending millions of rupees to win elections. The party also questioned the influence China wields on Indian establishments and why the BJP took Beijing's help in the Lok Sabha elections by sharing vital data of Indian citizens with it.

The Congress said Modi's love for China is now visible to the world and this dates back to his tenure as the Gujarat Chief Minister in Gujarat. The party also quipped that foreign policy does not mean that the Prime Minister is constantly on aeroplane mode.

Why did you compromise the data security and privacy of crores of Indians by involving Chinese companies linked to the PLA," Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said at the AICC press conference.

The party shared documents about BJP having partnered with those Chinese companies who have now been banned by the Government for their links with the Chinese establishment.

"UC Web Mobile got banned in July this year. In 2019, according to the expenditure report submitted by the BJP to the Election Commission, they hired this very company to run their campaign. It is the same Alibaba-owned company – UC Web Browser – which was also red- flagged by the Modi govt in 2017 for sending crucial data of Indians to China. What was the compulsion of involving the same company for elections which you had red flagged two years ago," Khera questioned.

There is another company called Gamma Gaana Limited (Tencent of China). Po Shu Yueng, one of the directors of this company is also the director in 10c India pvt ltd. Gamma Gaana Ltd is funded by Tencent. Last month, the government banned it saying the company was directly connected with the PLA. This company too was used by the BJP in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the Congress alleged.

According to the Congress, the third company called ShareIT Technology has an app called ShareIT. It was banned by the Government last month for being a threat to the 'sovereignty and integrity of India' but it was also hired by the BJP in elections last year, the Congress charged.

"Our Prime Minister crafted an image for himself – an image of a leader who before 2014, roared on issues of border security. Several companies were roped in, spending crores of rupees to create this image of Modi. The investment paid off and Modi and his party got substantial electoral gains too. But today, we see the same man running for cover when it comes to the issue of Chinese incursions into Indian territory," the party said in a statement a day after former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi accused the PM of lying on the issue.

Cong had MoU with China in 2008, BJP hits back, asks Sonia to explain

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the Congress attacking the Prime Minister, BJP president J P Nadda on Friday took to the field again to direct his volleys at his Congress counterpart Sonia Gandhi and her predecessor Rahul Gandhi. Nadda sought an explanation from them about their party's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with China in 2008 saying even the Supreme Court has expressed surprise on it.

The BJP's attacks on the Congress have heightened with Rahul's continued questioning of Chinese "incursions" on the Line of Actual Control in East Ladakh.

Nadda in a tweet cited the observations of the Supreme Court on a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) and sought an explanation from Sonia and Rahul.

"Even the SC is surprised at the MoU signed by the Congress party with the Chinese Gov… Mrs Gandhi & her son, who led the signing, must explain. Does this explain donations to RGF and opening Indian market for the Chinese in return, which affected Indian businesses?" he tweeted.

Nadda's remark came after the Supreme Court refused to entertain a PIL seeking NIA probe into the alleged 2008 agreement between the Congress and the Communist Party of China.

The apex court asked the petitioner to file his plea before the High Court, but expressed surprise how a political party could enter into an agreement with China.

BJP's national spokesman Sambit Patra who referred to his party president's tweet also asked Congress leaders to explain the nature of the MoU and the alleged dealings with China.

He alleged that even during the Doklam border standoff with China, Congress leaders' conduct was suspect. In line with Nadd'a assertions, Patra said Sonia and Rahul need to clarify their dealings with Beijing.

He also wondered whether a national party could sign an MoU with a political party of a foreign nation.

The BJP spokesman said according to the MoU, both the parties were to exchange information on all regional and international issues.

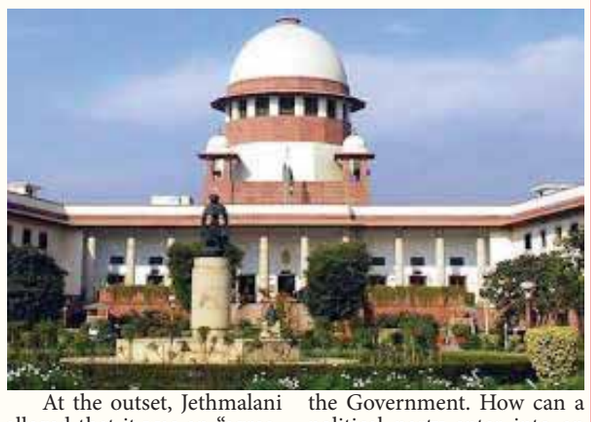
SC refuses to hear PIL for probe against Congress over China pact

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Friday refused to entertain a PIL seeking NIA probe into the alleged 2008 agreement between the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of China.

A bench, headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde, asked senior lawyer Mahesh Jethmalani appearing for PIL petitioners Shashank Shekhar Jha and journalist Savio Rodrigues, to withdraw the plea and approach the high court.

"Every relief which you are seeking can be granted by the high court. Secondly, high court is a proper court. Thirdly, we will have the advantage of high court order also," said the bench, which also comprised Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian.

The top court, in the hearing conducted through video conferencing, allowed the petitioners to "withdraw the petition with liberty to approach the high court."



At the outset, Jethmalani alleged that it was an "agreement between a political party of this country with the only political party in that country (China)" and the issue pertained to national security.

"We find that there is something which appears to be, what might be called, unheard of and absurd in law. You are saying that China has entered into an agreement with a political party and not the Government. How can a political party enter into an agreement with China," the bench observed.

On being stressed by the lawyer that this was the case, the bench said, "We will allow you to withdraw this and file a fresh petition. We will examine what you say in the petition and if we find any false statement, we may prosecute you".

PTI

Modi: NEP has potential to transform entire nation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Outlining that there has not been any allegation of bias against the New Education Policy (NEP) unveiled by his Government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that it has the potential to not only change the education system but to also transform the entire nation. He said the NEP will be the foundation of the 'New India', one that focuses on "how to think" rather than "what to think" that was being stressed upon till now.

Addressing a conclave on 'Transformational Reforms in Higher Education under National Education Policy', Modi also spoke on the contentious issue of mother tongue as the mode of teaching in the initial years. Justifying it, the PM said, "We need to make our students global citizens and yet be rooted in their culture. The learning power of students will improve if the language they speak in and the language in which lessons are taught in school is the same. That is why we have recommended teaching in the mother tongue as far as possible - at least class 5. This will strengthen their foundation.".

Lauding the NEP, he said the fact that there was no allegation from any region or segment that it had any kind of bias or inclination is an indicator that the "changes people wanted to see for years in the education system, they have got to see".

Asking all stakeholders to discuss the ways to implement the new policy, the PM said: "In recent years, there have not been major changes in education and thus the values of curiosity and imagination were not given the thrust. Instead, we moved towards a herd community. The mapping of interest, ability, and demand was needed. We need to develop critical thinking and innovative thinking abilities in our youths. It will be possible if we have purpose, philosophy, and passion of education."

The PM said students should get a chance to follow their passion. "We are also trying to ensure that the talent of India stays in India and works for the development of generations to come, said PM.

"With changing time, a new global system has risen. Thus, it was essential for India to change its education system accordingly. Creating a 5+3+3+4 curriculum, and replacing the 10+2 structure was a step in this direction.

"Often students find that what they have learned is not in line with their job. Thus, to give flexibility to students we have given multiple entries and exit points.

We have also freed education from the stream system. Students will have the flexibility to change their course if they do not think it is right for them. We are moving from thinking when a person is not glued to one profession for the entire lifetime and hence s/he needs to skill, re-skill and upskill. These issues are part of NEP," the PM said about the main features of the NEP. He added that NEP shifts focus from what to think to how to think.

"Till now, we have focussed on what to think but NEP 2020 focuses on how to think," he pointed out.

LoR launched to benefit street vendors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to give access to street vendors who do not have Identity Card (ID) and Certificate of Vending (CoV), the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on Friday launched a Letter of Recommendation (LoR) module to provide benefit to street vendors under the PM SVANidhi scheme. Those who are not included in any survey list also get benefitted from the LoR module.

The module provides for an end-to-end digitally-enabled process wherein an eligible vendor can request for a Letter of Recommendation from the Urban Local Body and on receipt of the same he/ she can apply for the loan under PM SVANidhi. Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary , Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, launched the module.

According to the ministry, for applying for the LoR from ULB through the online module on PM SVANidhi portal, a vendor needs to possess any one of the documents: Proof of availing one -time assistance, provided by certain States /UTs, during the period of lockdown; or the membership details with the vendors' associations; and any other documents to prove that he is a vendor. Further, a vendor can also request ULB through a simple application on white paper to conduct local enquiry to ascertain the genuineness of the claim as vendor. ULBs will have to dispose of the request for issue of LoR within a period of 15 days.

The vendors possessing LoR will be issued Certificate of Vending / ID Card within a period of 30 days. This provision will help in extending reach of the Scheme to the maximum number of beneficiaries.

Since commencement of online submission of loan applications on PM SVANidhi portal, more than 4.45 lakh applications have been received and over 82,000 have been sanctioned in different States and UTs.

This scheme targets to benefit over 50 lakh Street Vendors who had been vending on or before 24 March, 2020, in urban areas including those from surrounding peri-urban/ rural areas. Under the Scheme, the vendors can avail a working capital loan of up to Rs 10,000, which is repayable in monthly instalments in the tenure of one year.

Do not let your guard down: Researchers warn Covid patients who have recovered

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Do not let your guard down", is what researchers have warned patients who have recovered from the coronavirus infection. For, they said, the road to recovery for infection-recovered patients may take months and need vital specialist rehabilitation to ensure quality life.

The researchers found that infection-free patients faced one or many health issues like fatigue, breathlessness, psychological distress - including problems with concentration and memory - and a general decline in quality of life.

The research team - involving multidisciplinary specialists from the University of Leeds, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust and Leeds Beckett University – had followed 100 Covid-recovered patients four-to-eight weeks after being discharged from hospital.

The findings, 'Post-discharge symptoms and rehabilitation needs in survivors of COVID-19 infection: a cross-sectional evaluation', have been published in the Journal of Medical Virology.

It holds importance also for India where the Government has been maintaining that the recovery rate is on the higher side little focussing on life after Covid-19 that is not the same for infection-free patients.

The researchers identified a pattern of longer-term symptoms likely to be experienced by people who were hospitalised with the Covid-19 infection.

Some patients, particularly those who had been in intensive care, had symptoms associated with cases of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). PTSD symptoms are a well-recognised component of post- intensive care unit syndrome caused by a variety of factors including fear of dying, invasive treatment, pain, delirium, inability to communicate, weakness, immobility, and sensory problems and sleep deprivation.

Dr Manoj Sivan, Associate Clinical Professor at the University of Leeds and a Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine at Leeds General Infirmary, who supervised the research project, said: "The emerging evidence is that for some, the road to recovery may take months and it is vital that specialist rehabilitation is on hand to support them. This research gives an important insight into patient needs, and that will help shape services in the community."

More than two-thirds (68.8 percent) of patients in the intensive care group and just under half (45.6 percent) of the other group said their overall quality of life had deteriorated.

India opens to and fro travel with 4 countries

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Friday opened international travel to and from the USA, the UK, Germany and France.

The Union Home Ministry said that Indians can also go to these countries and foreigners including OCIs with valid visa can now travel to these nations and come to India. India's Civil Aviation Ministry has entered into an "air bubble agreement" with the USA, the UK, Germany and France. The Ministry said that soon more countries will be in this bilateral agreement of air travel known as 'air bubble agreement' in the wake of Covid-19 situation.

In the order, Union Home Ministry said that allowing travel will be subject to health checks and only applicable to those who are not having Covid-19 and other norms stipulated by the Civil Aviation Ministry. The MHA also said that the travelers must have valid visa. "Ministry of Home Affairs has permitted OCI cardholders to enter India who belong to countries with which "air bubble" arrangements have been finalised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Other foreigners from these countries have also been allowed to avail Indian visa facility for business, medical & employment purposes. Indian citizens have also been allowed to travel to such countries on any type of visa," said MHA in a statement.

The Civil Aviation Ministry, for its part, said that Delhi Airport has developed new features in their portal for international travelers for "contact-less declarations". The Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) announced that it has developed a first-of-its-kisnd portal where India-bound international arriving flyers can fill the mandatory self-declaration form and also apply online for exemption from mandatory institution quarantine process.

EC settles matter over Baldev Singh appointment as SEC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Disposing of a complaint of Maharashtra Congress leader Sachin Sawant questioning procedures for appointment of State Chief Electoral Officer Baldev Singh in 2019, the Election Commission (EC) on Friday said no action is needed in the matter as the appointment was done after consultation with the State Government. "Singh had been rated outstanding in his performance appraisal records during the five years of his service prior to his appointment," the EC said.

"The Commission having duly considered the matter, does not find any reason for taking any action in the matter. The CEO's appointment is done in consultation with the concerned state government/union terriotory wherein a panel of officers is furnished to the poll body," the EC said in a letter addressed to Sawant.

The EC further said that Baldev Singh, a 1989 batch IAS officer of Maharashtra cadre was appointed by the Commission following due procedure wherein the State Government had clarified that he was clear from the vigilance angle and as per records, he had been rated outstanding in his performance appraisal reports during the five years of his service prior to his appointment as CEO, Maharashtra.

Sawant has alleged that Singh was facing an inquiry initiated by CVC and the ministry of industry and commerce in an alleged irregularity in SEEPZ SEZ. Sawant questioned why the credentials of the CEO were not cross-checked while appointing him to the post and whether the Election Commission of India was working under pressure of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

J&K Bank loan fraud case: ED raids 17 locations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches at 17 locations in Delhi, Ludhiana, Jammu and Srinagar in connection with the J&K Bank loan fraud case involving Hilal Ahmed Rather in a money laundering case worth ₹177.68 crore. Hilal is son of former Minister Abdul Rahim Rather, who served as Finance, Agriculture, Rural Development, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister under the National Conference-led government in the erstwhile State.

The investigation under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act was initiated on the basis of an FIR registered by the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Jammu.

"Investigation conducted by ED revealed that a loan of Rs 177.68 crores was sanctioned by the J&K bank, without verifying documents and in violation of guidelines of RBI, to Paradise Avenue for construction of a residential housing project in Jammu," the agency said in a statement.

A substantial part of the loan was siphoned off by Hilal Rather by transferring the funds from the loan account of Paradise Avenue to various entities and rerouting the funds back to the firm's current account from where it was further withdrawn and transferred for purchase of movable/immovable assets in India, Dubai and USA, the ED said.

The funds were also spent on foreign tours and other personal activities of Rather. As many as three flats in the name of Hilal Rather and family members were acquired in Dubai and one Bungalow was acquired in the name of Hilal Rather and his wife in North Carolina, USA, the agency saud.

The residences of Abdul Rahim Rather in Srinagar and Hilal Rather in Jammu were among the premises searched by the ED. Several incriminating documents and digital evidence have been seized during the search operations, the agency added.

Purchase of 75 Pilatus basic trainer aircraft for IAF: ED raids multiple locations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches at multiple locations in various cities in connection with a money laundering case relating to alleged corruption in the purchase of 75 Pilatus basic trainer aircraft for the Indian Air Force (IAF) in 2009.

The searches were conducted at 14 premises including a dozen in the national capital and one each in Gurgaon and Surat, officials said.

The ED had initiated a money laundering case to probe the deal and is carrying out the search operation to gather evidence under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said.

The case involves absconding arms deal broker and alleged middleman Sanjay Bhandari, who is already facing separate ED and CBI probes for corruption and alleged possession of undeclared assets in the country and abroad.

Bhandari is suspected to be staying in the UK at present and the ED is in the process of initiating extradition proceedings against him.

The CBI had filed a criminal case in the Rs 2,895 crore Pilatus deal in June last year.

The PMLA case was lodged by the ED after taking cognisance of the CBI FIR to probe the money laundering angle in the case and alleged creation and generation of illegal assets by the accused.

The CBI had named Bhandari as an accused in the case along with unidentified officials of the Indian Air Force, the Defence Ministry and Switzerland-based Pilatus Aircraft Limited in the case. The Swiss company was one of the bidders for the contract floated in 2009.

The CBI has alleged that Pilatus had entered into a criminal conspiracy with Bhandari and Bimal Sareen, both directors of Offset India Solutions Pvt Ltd, and dishonestly and fraudulently signed a Service Provider Agreement with Bhandari in June 2010 in violation of the Defence Procurement Procedure, 2008.

The deal was allegedly done to get the contract for supply of 75 basic Trainer Aircraft to the IAF.

The agency had alleged that the company made a payment of CHF 1,000,000 in the account of Offset India Solution Private Limited with the Standard Chartered Bank, New Delhi in two tranches in August and October, 2010.

LUCKNOW | SATURDAY | AUGUST 8, 2020

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Big win for Mahinda

With the pro-China Rajapaksa clan in full control, India has to work on strategic engagement and economic alliances

The Sri Lankans have chosen stability over liberalism, performance over democracy in returning the Rajapaksa clan to power with a massive mandate in the nation's parliamentary elections. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's ruling party, the Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP), won 145 of the 150 seats, that would now allow him to amend the Constitution, expand his executive powers and ensure that his elder brother, Mahinda, continues as Prime Minister. In short, the dynastic hold on Sri Lanka's politics is now absolute. And the brothers could overturn any reformatory attempts that have been made by previous Governments to consolidate their position. Sri Lankans, much like other nations around the world, including India, have voted for nationalist pride and muscular leadership in tough times. The Government's smart COVID-19 management has scored big with the voter, the island nation reporting just 11 deaths and managing the elections without any cluster outbreaks during the polling process. The Rajapaksa brothers are seen as strongmen and deliverers and seem to have consolidated their hold among the Sinhalese Buddhist majority in the aftermath of the Easter bombings, which showed how scattered IS modules were choosing virgin targets. And no matter how militarist Gotabaya may seem, the Sinhalese trust him to tackle terrorism as he cleaned up the Tamil movement ruthlessly, an operation that had earned him the moniker of the "terminator." For India, though, the return of Mahinda Rajapaksa is worrying as he has a hardliner approach to Tamils and has welcomed Chinese strategic interests and investment at our expense. In the past, he accused New Delhi of intervening in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka, propping up his own protege Maithripala Sirisena against him and ensuring he lost the elections. Sirisena's SLFP and ally UNP, whose leader Ranil Wickremesinghe became Prime Minister, formed a coalition Government which was pro-India. The Indian establishment was also too overt rather than being covert about its interventions. So a hurt Mahinda never settled down, his party scoring on local elections till he forced a coup, subduing Sirisena, getting him to sack Wickremesinghe and becoming Prime Minister for 51 days. Gotabaya took charge of Defence and Security, kept the Tamil-majority areas under strict military vigil and put Indian diplomats under surveillance. It is this distrust that needs to be healed now for geo-strategic reasons if we don't want China to run ahead.

Little wonder then that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was one of the first dignitaries to wish Mahinda, with whom he has been in touch over regional COVID-19 management. India's diplomacy in the neighbourhood has to factor in the pragmatism by lesser neighbours, who have successfully played on its anxieties with China and are negotiating the best of both worlds given the competitive muscle-flexing by two Asian majors. Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka are all happily walking the trajectory of "trade ties" with China and "historical linkage" with India to buttonhole both nations into giving concessions. Mahinda, too, seized the moment by calling India a "friend" with whom he had a "long-standing cooperation." The Modi Government is pushing proactive participation over historical assumptions in its Lanka policy. Yet, the Chinese are way ahead in Lanka. They have a 99-year lease on the Hambantota port after Sri Lanka's failure to repay loans and are using it to enhance their military arc in the Indian Ocean region all the way to east Africa. The Chinese have even created an island off Colombo, a new financial hotspot and a key conduit to East Africa, besides controlling the island nation's infrastructure sector, hospitality and supply chains. And while we may have halted Huawei's 5G technology, Sri Lanka has no security fears about the new-generation mobile telephony technology. India has, therefore, to do a very tightrope act with Sri Lanka if it wants to protect its strategic interests amid a Chinese swamp. That, too, without compromising too much on Tamil interests. We need to work on investment and project partnerships, encourage soft diplomacy via people-to-people contacts and strengthen an institution like BIMSTEC to ensure continuous communication. And we must take care to not appear exploitative or patronising.

COVID spiral

As the virus spreads, India must ramp up its testing capacity, focus on the hinterland and come up with a standard protocol

The dreaded community spread has India well and truly in its grip because, from the time the pandemic began in the country, we had recorded 1.5 million cases till July 28 but have added a whopping 5,00,000 infections in just nine days. This is an average of 50,000 fresh cases recorded each day. India has breached the 20-lakh barrier and fatalities have touched the 41,000 mark. The country that has been fighting to rapidly ramp up its poor healthcare infrastructure is now snapping at the heels of Brazil, which has more than 2.8 million cases, and the US, which is leading the list of worst-hit countries with five million cases. And if the experts are to be believed, the community spread has only just begun and the next million cases may take just a little over two weeks if infections continue to spread at the same rate at which they are now. Expert opinion has it that the country needs to shift its focus on the war against the pandemic to rural India, which has multiple challenges of a high population density, patchy administration and a tottering healthcare infrastructure.

Another area where the country needs to improve its performance is testing that has been dismally slow. Till August 5, the country had just tested 16,617 people per million, which is a paltry 1.66 per cent of the population. Compare this to other nations like the US, which has tested 18.8 per cent of its population, Russia 20 per cent, South Africa five per cent and the UK 25 per cent. The Government's excuses of overpopulation and being a poor country hold no water as even a country like Brazil, which has a much lesser GDP than ours, has tested 6.3 per cent of its population. Moreover, a small country like Iran has tested three per cent. If we are to beat the pandemic, we have to ramp up our testing and take it up to five per cent at least, which is around 32 million more people. Testing also helps us map the trajectory of the disease and prepare containment strategies or it would look like we are just flying blind as some Western experts are suggesting. Right now, while the urban centres are bending the curve, unexpected hotspots are emerging, which need to be contained lest they set off a ripple effect that can lead to a "viral" blast. Also, what is needed is a national protocol for a standardised response, better guidance and a balanced allocation of resources. The silver lining in the dark cloud is that the recovery rate in the country is continuously rising and the fatality rate has remained much below the global average. If the figures being bandied about by the Health Ministry are anything to go by, the recovery rate has risen from 51.08 per cent on June 15 to a record high of 67.98 per cent on August 7, while the fatality rate has gone down to 2.05 per cent. These two in tandem have enabled a higher and rising difference of more than 7.7 lakh between the number of recovered patients and active cases in the country, claims the Ministry. Of course, there is still a problem of unaccounted deaths and cases that may completely change the picture. Plus, we have come a long way from the time we faced a shortage of simple things like hand sanitisers to the more complex PPEs and ventilators. Now, after four months, we are actually exporting these to other nations. The two indigenous vaccines are showing promise and developers are preparing to begin simultaneous phase 2 trials that study immune response and additional safety in a large population. In some more good news, pharma major Lupin has launched its Favipiravir drug at a very reasonable price. So, while we may not yet be winning the COVID war, all is still not lost. India can live to fight another day. But we must stick to a mapping and tracking plan and not get complacent. More importantly, not let up. Given our population, we will have recurring waves.

Being humane

Following the pandemic, there has been a resurgence of hatred against stray dogs who are left to fend for themselves. Not many understand how their lives have turned upside down

HIRANMAY **KARLEKAR**

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected human behaviour throughout the world, causing new focal points of irritation to emerge and the old ones to intensify, sometimes to levels where violence follows inevitably. This, in turn, is the result of the fear of catching the disease and boredom caused by prolonged confinement at home, either by choice or compulsion created by lockdowns. Moods marked by irritation and anger intensify old animosities and create new ones. An example is the resurgence of hatred towards stray dogs, who have been an integral part of India's urban and rural population centres since the time of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, if not earlier.

Directly or indirectly, animals and creatures that live in water or the sky feature prominently in the philosophy of the *Upanishads* and the narratives of the *Vedas*, *Brahma Sutra*, the *Puranas* and the epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Examples are many, but two well-known ones merit a mention. In *Mahabharata*'s *Mahaprasthanika Parva* (The Chapter of the Great Departure), a small brown dog began to follow the five Pandavas and Draupadi as they began their final journey out of this world. One by one, Draupadi and four Pandavas fell dead as they climbed Mount Meru. Yudhisthir, the eldest Pandava, and the dog marched on. Suddenly Indra, the king of gods, appeared in his flying chariot and said that he had come to take Yudhisthir to heaven in his mortal body. Assured that Draupadi and his four brothers were already there and well, he asked whether the dog could come with him. On being told that heaven had no place for a dog, he refused to go without the latter. It was then that the dog appeared in his true self as Dharma, the God of Virtue, and said this was Yudhisthir's final test. He would not have been able to enter heaven alive if he had agreed to abandon the dog.

This account is widely known and cited. Another incident is found in the Bengali translation of the *Saptakanda Ramayana* (The Ramayana in Seven Parts) by Krittibas Ojha. It happened when Ram, after defeating Ravan and sending Sita to sage Valmiki's hermitage, was holding court in Ayodhya with Lakshman guarding the entrance. A white dog with red eyes, lame in one leg and limping, with thick patches of congealed blood on his head, indicating that it has hit with a stick, came and touched Lakshman's feet. Asked why he had come, he said he would relate the cause of his sorrow to Ram if the latter granted him an audience.

Told of the dog's request by Lakshman, Ram asked for the dog to be brought before him forthwith. Arriving in Ram's presence, he began to sing the former's praise with folded hands and head bowed. Asked about the reason for his coming, he said, "A *sanyasi* (a mendicant ascetic who has renounced the world) has hit me for no fault of mine. Distressed and hurt after being hit, I have come to your court after starving for three days. The court should please ask the *sanyasi* what was my fault that he should have hit me with a stick?" Ram said that the *sanyasi* should be brought immediately before him so that the court could judge. How could a *sanyasi* be cruel to an animal? (All quotations are from *Saptakanda Ramayana* translated from Bengali to English by this author).

The dog, who accompanied Ram's messenger, identified the *sanyasi* as he was brought before Ram, who asked, "Why have you abandoned your *dharma* and are cruel to animals? One who perpetrates *adharma* has to live in hell. What kind of renunciation is yours when your body is so full of anger? Castigation of others and malevolence towards others are grave sins. A terrible hell is the punishment for a cruel and malevolent *sanyasi*. A sage who has given up greed, illusion and desire, is respected in this world. And, though a *sanyasi*, you suddenly burst into anger! What was the fault of the dog that you hit him with a stick?"

The ascetic replied, "I went to the town for alms after reciting prayers on the banks of the Ganga during the whole day. Begging for alms, the whole body burning with hunger, I found the dog lying in front occupying the whole road. I loudly asked him go give way but he pretended not to hear. He was asleep with one eye closed and looked at me with the other. I became angry and hit him on the head with a stick. Now that I have said all this before the court, you decide what punishment to give me."

On being asked by Ram about the punishment, the courtiers said that the *sanyasi* should be barred from bathing in the Ganges. At this, the dog said that he should not be punished but made the ruler of the kingdom of Kalinjar. The courtiers laughed as Ram made the *sanyasi* the king of Kalinjar. Climbing onto the back of an elephant, his splendour enhanced by the royal sceptre, the *sanyasi* began travelling happily towards Kalinjar as people laughed at his attire — a loincloth — with the royal umbrella over his head.

Asked by the courtiers as to why was the kingdom given to the *sanyasi* when the idea was to punish him, Ram directed them to the dog, who said, "Under a curse by Lord Shiva, death does not alter the king's destiny to be reborn as a dog…I was the king in the previous birth and now I have been reborn as a dog and suffered much. But having seen you, I will now escape from my torment." While everybody said that the *sanyasi*'s worldly possessions have now increased, the dog said, "Have no doubt, whoever becomes the king of Kalinjar becomes a dog in his next birth." He then did *namaskar* to Ram and walked slowly to Varanasi where he fasted to death and attained heaven because he had seen Ram.

Ram's statement that a "terrible hell is the punishment for a cruel and malevolent *sanyasi*" has an echo in a passage in Skanda V, chapter 26 of *Srimad Bhagavata: The Holy Book of God*. It reads, "God has given different forms of livelihood to creatures. Some of these may go against the interests of man. But man should not retaliate against these creatures for two reasons. They are not endowed with the capacity to know that they are doing injury to man; and next, man knows that they will be injured if he retaliates. A person who injures lower creations for selfish purposes goes to a purgatory called Andhakupa and there he will have to live in a low type of body, attacked by the creatures he had injured. In darkness, without sleep, and restless, he will have to drag on a wretched existence." (Translated by Swami Tapasyananda).

The passage quoted from *The Srimad Bhagavata: The Holy Book of God* applies especially to those who inveigh ceaselessly about the "menace" posed by stray dogs. They can neither see the role the latter play as sentinels, whose barking alerts people against the arrival of thieves, robbers and terrorists/insurgents. Precisely for this reason, terrorists in some areas of Jammu & Kashmir and Maoists in parts of central India have asked villagers to kill all dogs in their areas.

In the present situation, how many of India's stray dog haters have tried to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has turned the lives of these canines completely upside down? It has been said often enough to become commonplace knowledge that the closure of hotels, *dhabas* and restaurants have deprived vast numbers of them of their food. It is not just the left-overs thrown into garbage bins that they miss. Many of them, who had been fed regularly by the staff and owners of these eating places, have now to fend for themselves — something to which they have grown unused.

Finally, how many haters of stray dogs have any idea of the love and loyalty that most dogs unconditionally lavish on people? Not surprisingly, Konrad Lorenz writes in *Man Meets Dog*, "The whole charm of the dog lies in the depth of friendship and the strength of spiritual ties with which he has tied himself to man." Author of the landmark book *On Aggression* and perhaps the best-known authority on animal behaviour, he should know.

(The writer is Consultant Editor, The Pioneer, and author)

SOUNDBITE

I would have wanted more opportunities to play Test cricket. In those days, it was difficult to get a spot amid star players like Sachin and Rahul who started opening.

Former cricketer
—Yuvraj Singh

From what I can tell you is that the equation of the industry has not changed. It's an equal playing field. You've to have a huge amount of luck and then things will fall in place.

Actor
—Chunky Panday

What China did is a terrible thing. Whether it was incompetence or on purpose, it was a terrible thing that they did … not only to the US, but to the world.

US President
—Donald Trump

PM Modi congratulated 130 crore Indians during the *bhoomi pujan* but India's population is over 138 crore. The omission of 8 crore people is worrying after CAA/NRC.

Congress leader
—Shashi Tharoor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stand firm

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Now Pak in map war" (August 6). Close on the heels of Nepal's issuance of a map showing Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura under its territory, Pakistan has released a territorially misleading map that includes the former princely State of Junagadh (Gujarat) and Kashmir. This prompted a quick response from India's Ministry of External Affairs, which termed it "an exercise in political absurdity."

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan claimed that the map represented the aspirations of the whole nation and all its political parties. It is likely that Pakistan has China's blessings in producing the map given similar border claims by Nepal recently. Pakistan has expressed its frustration through a series of steps that coincided with the first anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370. It had announced that August 5 would be observed as "day of exploitation" even as the Khan Government again failed to persuade the UN Security Council to come up with a resolution on Kashmir despite having China on its side. The FATF has decided to keep Pakistan on the "grey" list as it failed to check the flow of money to terrorist groups. If it fails to fulfil the FATF's requirements, it could be downgraded to the blacklist. India must firmly disprove the ridiculous claims made by its neighbours and reassert its territorial sovereignty.

Venu GS
Kollam

Gold smuggling gets murkier

It is common knowledge that gold is smuggled into the country by land, sea and air. The Department of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized 4,000 kilograms of gold worth ₹1,300 crore that was illegally brought into Gujarat. In February, DRI officials found about 15 kg of gold valued at over ₹6 crore on the sea bed at Mandapam off the Tamil Nadu coast. There are umpteen such instances. More recently, an influential gang smuggled nearly 230 kg of gold into Kerala, tucked stealthily in the diplomatic parcel bags couriered from Dubai to the Consulate General of the UAE in Thiruvananthapuram. On July 5, Customs officials intercepted the passage of a diplomatic bag, stated to be the 21st in line, which led to the seizure of 30 kg gold. The probe was assigned to the NIA as suspicion of illegal money being used for nefarious activities gained strength. However, the Opposition chose to focus on the association of M Sivasankar (IAS), the Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Kerala, with the accused, Swapna Suresh, and underplayed the issue through the diplomatic channel. In fact, it chose to hammer the Chief Minister. Even after days of interrogation by both the Customs officials and the NIA, it remains unclear if the officer was a victim of misjudgment or had even the remotest role in the murky affair.

And the role of the consulate in the gold smuggling, particularly the attaché, is still shrouded in mystery. An argument doing the rounds is that the attaché is not bound to reveal his travel itinerary to the Government, he being a diplomat. The question here is: Can a diplomat aid terrorism and still leave the country quietly under the cover of diplomatic immunity from prosecution? Politically, the Opposition efforts to besmirch Vijayan's reputation have not registered much success. Meanwhile, the sleuths are preparing to travel abroad for investigations.

Haridasan Rajan
Kozhikode

Tough questions

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "After Ayodhya" (August 6). The pomp and show displayed at a simple event such as the *bhoomi pujan* at Ayodhya was avoidable. The event has raised several questions. Was it correct for the PM to lay the foundation of the temple, one which remained embroiled in a long history of disputes? In a secular democracy, the PM is not expected to represent any particular religion or organisation. For a head of the state, religious affiliations should remain confined within the four walls of his home.

Sritama
Via email

Crisis within crisis

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Monumental apathy" (August 7). The massive explosion in Beirut, Lebanon couldn't have come at a worse time for Lebanon when the country has been battling one crisis after another. Nations across the world as well as international institutions must offer help to Lebanon so that it can overcome the catastrophe.

Prathna
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Transparency is long overdue

The Centre has rolled out a robust and much-desired architecture for the online audit of Panchayati Raj Institutions

DEVENDER SINGH **ASWAL**

Transparency and accountability in the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have been hanging fire for long. After much reflection, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has launched an AuditOnline application for scrutinising the accounts of over 2.50 lakh gram panchayats (GPs). To begin with, the accounts of at least 20 per cent or 50,000 GPs would be audited online for 2019-20. This was long overdue as the GPs have been endowed with substantial powers, authority and responsibilities with the enactment of the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act. Following the recommendation of the 14th Finance Commission (FC), ₹2,00,292 crore was transferred to the PRIs during 2015-16 to 2019-20. The 14th FC, and many others before it, had underlined the need for auditing panchayat accounts as the wisdom, faithfulness and propriety of expenditure were a matter of nagging concern. Guidelines were issued by the Finance Ministry in 2015 to the effect that the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) would examine the release and transfer of the grants-in aid and expenditure in Panchayats and municipalities.

The 15th FC, while recommending allocation of ₹60,750 crore for 2020-21 to the three tiers of the PRIs, comprising the district panchayats, block panchayats and GPs, laid emphasis on ensuring timely availability of audited accounts online so as to strengthen their financial management. Hence, AuditOnline facilitates online and offline checking of accounts of the PRIs with a view to improving transparency and accountability in the utilisation of public money. The accounts of 20 per cent GPs would be audited on a pilot basis and scaled up to 100 per cent in the financial year 2021-22. Owing to the online digital payment mechanism, now integrated with eGramSwaraj, the GPs were able to make online payments out of the14th FC grants. In fact, 1.52 lakh GPs were on the platform and 1.04 lakh GPs made online payments during 2019-20.

Notably, AuditOnline will ease up access to records which can be monitored at the district, State and Union level. It can enable uploading of photos of the work done and geo-tagging of projects to facilitate physical inspection and remote verification of the assets. This will help reduce costs, ensure quicker reviews and sound documentation and enhance environmental sustainability.The timely availability of records was a major issue in the offline system but in the online audit system, the auditors will be able to see all documents related to work approval and payments.

AuditOnline also facilitates online and offline scrutiny of accounts and maintains the past records of the auditee. Plus, the information would be available in public domain. Fully configurable, it is capable of depicting any type of workflow and mapping seamlessly the auditor/auditee engagement and interaction and audit observation tags. Further, its Dynamic Form Designer allows drawing of the forms for case record and fact sheet easily and generation and download of various graphical reports for analysis and monitoring, based on customisable report templates. Another and yet more significant advantage is the fact that the monitoring authorities would get notified instantaneously via e-mail/SMS/System-based alerts at various trigger points, enabling concurrent analysis, mid-course correction and better monitoring. A greater responsibility has been given to the State Accountant General (AG) under AuditOnline rules. The AG, representative of the CAG, shall identify the District Local Fund Auditor (DLFO) for each area. The entire audit process — starting with the identification of the DLFO, audit planning, recording of entry and exit meetings by the auditor, concurrence and approval of the meetings, communication of the draft audit to the auditee, generation of audit report, review of the response and action taken there on, by the auditee with clear timelines — are all unambiguously outlined. The audit report shall be provided to the GP by December 31 every year for consideration and corrective action.

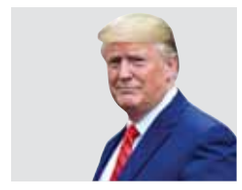
Despite numerous accruable benefits, there are apparent hurdles and technical glitches. How will the online audit take off if the books of accounts are not complete, leaving aside the issue of high-speed internet and uninterrupted connectivity? It's only when the money is spent, brought on account and the accounts closed, a prerequisite for any audit, that the online audit can be undertaken.

However, the Union Government has rolled out a robust and much-desired architecture for the audit of PRIs. In fact, 11 States (Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Telangana, Tripura, and Uttarakhand) have already provided their configuration details and others will follow suit. Extensive online training and hands-on sessions are being carried out with the States. With the successful operation of AuditOnline, hopefully, the image of PRIs will improve with the expanded arch of accountability, encompassing all the three tiers of India's multi-layered and now expanding digital democracy.

(The writer is former Additional Secretary Lok Sabha and an author)

POINT**COUNTER**POINT

MOBILE APPLICATIONS DEVELOPED AND OWNED BY COMPANIES IN CHINA CONTINUE TO THREATEN OUR NATIONAL SECURITY, FOREIGN POLICY AND ECONOMY.
—US PRESIDENT
DONALD TRUMP



CHINA URGES THE US TO CORRECT ITS WRONGDOINGS, STOP POLITICISING ECONOMIC ISSUES AND CRACKING DOWN ON RELATED FIRMS.
—CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON
WANG WENBIN

Embrace the circular economy

As nations move towards a post-pandemic fiscal recovery, they must adopt strategies for long-term sustainable development and create resilient economies

SHILPI KAPUR **BAKSHI** PRAHLAD **TEWARI**

The pandemic and the response to it by various governments around the world have posed unprecedented challenges, the effect of which would be felt for decades to come. People and economies are suffering not only due to the huge loss of lives but also from the slowdown of economic activities during the lockdown. According to the Union Minister of Road Transport Nitin Gadkari, the contagion is expected to cause a loss of over ₹10 lakh crore to India's economy. The World Bank, too, estimates that 12 million people in India could be pushed into poverty. While initially, the most visible impact of the crisis was on the healthcare sector due to shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE), ventilators, critical medical supplies and healthcare professionals trained in the handling of a contagion, its impact is now being felt on the free movement of people, goods and services, too.

A circular economy is based on the principles of reducing our waste and pollution throughout the lifecycle stages, keeping products and materials in use for long and regenerating natural systems. Circular economy-based concepts, such as cascaded reuse of resources to design reusable masks to substitute single-use masks, supported by Government-formulated guidelines and awareness about the same, are steps in the right direction.

The global market for refurbished medical devices is also predicted to witness significant growth. Recently, fuel cell manufacturer Bloom Energy started to refurbish ventilators to meet the supply gap in hospitals in the US. Due to COVID-19, organisations preferred work from home (WFH) and educational institutes preferred to learn from home using virtual platforms for meetings and online classes, which led to an unprecedented surge in demand for refurbished laptops. This cascaded use of refurbished laptops would also be critical in filling the void that has emerged in supporting online education to rural and urban poor students. Measures like these will create new market opportunities, increase the use of existing assets and reduce the pressure on the environment created by the demand for virgin raw materials.

Integrating circularity in various governments' recovery agenda and strategies thus assumes importance. In April, the City of Amsterdam launched its Circular 2020-2025 strategy, which outlines the actions it would take to cut down the use of new raw materials to half by 2030. The local government also considers this strategy to be the basis for economic recovery from the effects of COVID-19. Similarly, the European Union (EU) and South Korea have both adopted "Green Deals" as central pillars to their economic recoveries, both leveraging regenerative models and circular economy principles. The deployment of idle railway coaches by Indian Railways as isolation wards during the surge of Coronavirus infections is adapting the approach to use existing infrastructure to an extent possible. This provides an opportunity for other governments to integrate resilience, low carbon and sustainable growth thinking into their recoveries by avoiding short-term emission-intensive projects.

Rethinking the mostly linear global supply chain systems by adopting a circular economy as a mode of production can help economies withstand supply disruptions like those experienced in the current pandemic. This was particularly visible in the case of stressed food production and distribution, which was experienced during the hastily-implemented lockdowns. By creating new and shorter supply chain connections between producers and consumers, we can ensure a continuous supply of essential goods in vital sectors and help improve resilience through stock availability and competitiveness while not giving up the commitment to achieving the UN-set Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

> THE TIME IS RIPE FOR US TO RETHINK OUR CONSUMPTION PATTERNS, TO BUILD IN RESILIENCE, CIRCULARITY AND AN EFFICIENT RURAL-URBAN CONNECTION TO REDUCE THE VULNERABILITY OF OUR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND MOVE TOWARDS AN *ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT*

In order to support the *Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan,* newer ecosystems need to be envisaged that are based on local, shorter and more distributed supply chains via localised material sourcing. At the start of the pandemic in India, the availability of PPEs was critically low, owning to non-availability of local manufacturers, long gestation period to import their machines and the high cost. In line with the spirit of 'Vocal for Local' and with various Government initiatives, India is today the second-largest manufacturer of PPE body overalls within a short span of four months. There is also a need to engage in collaborative consumption to share resources by replacing traditional ownership of products with lending, borrowing and the availability of repair services to facilitate reuse. This would help reduce panic buying. For instance, the assurance of the Delhi Government to provide "Pulse Oximeters" for monitoring oxygen levels of patients undergoing home isolation is a positive step in this direction. Acceptance of such "pay for services" rather than "owning facility options" would gain momentum if hygiene is ensured. Local waste sites can be turned into resource centres that undertake recovery and recycling of plastics.

Circular innovations can address manufacturing and supply chain shortages within the healthcare sector, too, where circular knitted fabric (washable and reusable) can be used to produce non-medical protective face masks. The need for investment in technology for designing responsible packaging solutions that maintain food safety and quality standards and prevent contamination can enhance the sustainability of the home delivery services that people are increasingly relying upon. Such solutions could also help continue efforts to reduce the usage of plastics and styrofoam. Several initiatives by various Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies and collaborations involving various stakeholders have been done across the globe to minimise single-use plastics.

In addition, enhancing material productivity also plays a significant role in addressing the diminishing cost competitiveness of industries (such as the Indian automobile sector in comparison to China, Singapore, Indonesia, and Bangladesh) due to high material cost. The circular economy emphasises reuse, and through this has the potential to generate not only environmental benefits but cost benefits, too, and create new revenue opportunities. For example, the focus on manufacturing durable goods would help them to generate income from rentals, repairs and refurbishment while reducing the environmental footprint.

In the COVID-19 crisis, digital solutions have promoted virtual workspaces, a mobile Government and a multitude of platforms to monitor and trace infections. Digitalisation has not only been limited to medical solutions or WFH set-ups but has been an instrument in supporting online education modes, too.

Digital technology can play a role in creating city and village systems that are regenerative and restorative by offering dematerialisation opportunities, increasing our knowledge and understanding of data on the lifecycle of materials, people and external conditions, allowing for more informed decisions based on accurate data. This would help close the loop of material cycles and contribute to keeping products/materials in use for a longer period of time.

For example, digital technology can help aggregate local marketplaces dealing in secondary and alternative materials and formalise the informal sector waste-pickers. Real-time tracking technologies provide information on where a product ends up and how it will be reused or recycled.

However, despite the many opportunities that circular thinking presents, ongoing efforts in this direction have been hit due to the pandemic. For example, in the waste management sector where significant work was done to manage plastic waste, many efforts have been halted during the lockdown, particularly in the private recycling space.

Recycling plants are mostly shut or are operating at limited capacity with a lot of the informal sector workers, who played the role of aggregators (such as the junk collectors) leaving urban centres for their native places. Procurement of recyclable waste has also become a challenge. Among plastics, virgin plastic may become even cheaper than secondary raw material plastic due to falling prices of hydrocarbon fuels resulting from the current low demand. This will also affect the economic viability of many plastic recyclers. Efforts would be required to stimulate the demand for recycled materials and close the price gap between virgin and recycled plastics.

As countries step towards economic recovery after COVID-19, they should undertake circular economy strategies for long-term sustainable development and for creating resilient economies. The BRICS nations recently acknowledged the heightening of social vulnerabilities and job losses due to the pandemic and have emphasised on the need for improving the environment and promoting the circular economy in national plans as steps towards recovery. The time is ripe for us to rethink our consumption patterns, to build in resilience, circularity and an efficient rural-urban connection to reduce the vulnerability of our economic and social systems and move towards an *Atmanirbhar Bharat.*

(*Bakshi is Senior Fellow and Tewari is Fellow and Area Convenor, TERI*)

Maintain a healthy digital diet

During this period of social distancing, we should use technology to increase our independence and harness our inner potential

PRAKRITI **PODDAR**

The Coronavirus pandemic has made social distancing the new normal and the majority of us are becoming increasingly dependent on digital technology. Pushed into an uncertain future, we are spending more time to digitally connect with people, work, shop, keep ourselves informed and even entertained.

While a digitally-mediated daily life can keep us safe from the risk of infection, too much exposure to it can harm our mental health. There has been a lot of awareness raised about the impact of exposing oneself to negative influences on social media and the news. The more information we receive the more insufferable the pandemic becomes. We have seen people feel hopeless and helpless as a result of all the information they absorb and unfortunately, sink into deeper mental health issues.

Fake news and conspiracy theories can induce fear and lead us to either fight, freeze or fold up. If you are one of the fighters, the information on digital feeds will help you take action in serving others, hence, limiting your online time.

You may also minimise the understanding of the situation and label all those people, who err at the side of precaution, as hysterical and not abide by the safety rules. Thus, putting yourself and others in danger. If you freeze, then you will lock yourself down and if you fold, you will need support to uplift your mental health.

At all costs, people must keep their digital activity healthy during the outbreak. Let us take a look at three evidence-based tips for a healthy digital diet during the outbreak.

Take control: It is natural to feel powerless and scared in the face of a pandemic but people can use digital technology to regain control and give themselves a degree of autonomy over their life.

This is critical as having control promotes emotional well-being. So, people must think about ways in which they can use digital technology to help them do it. It can be something as simple as using the technology at their disposal to make plans, manage their schedule, organise activities with others and even do online shopping at websites where they get to exert greater choice.

The key is to use digital technology actively instead of letting themselves get passively guided by algorithms. People must think of digital technology as a tool that allows them to extend their autonomy and makes it possible for them to develop strategies to cope better. For instance, people can consider limiting passive screen time and balance passive viewing with more interactive screen time — playing educational games, making YouTube videos, coding a website — where they are in control.

Nurture relationships: While social distancing is good for our physical health, isolation is not good for our mental health. So, we must use this opportunity to digitally connect with old friends, family members or acquaintances that we somehow lost touch with. We must also nurture our existing relationships by scheduling regular chats online and using digital devices to spread positive news, express gratitude to the people serving us and helping others.

For instance, people can order food and groceries online for friends, family members and neighbours who are not digitally-enabled. Helping others can give life more purpose and allay anxieties. Organise group chats and regular virtual meet-ups — seeing a familiar face, even on a phone screen, can be reassuring. People must use this time as an opportunity to rebuild affiliations with those who matter.

Be smarter: Our well-being is also influenced by our competence, ability to rise above challenges, take smart decisions and experience a sense of achievement and degree of success. Hence, people must use this opportunity to take online courses, learn new skills and do things that engage them.

People must consider using digital technology to look after their body and mind during this period of confinement. They may not be able to hit the gym but they can use digital reminders and prompts to move and exercise more — even if they are confined inside a restricted environment. People can consider downloading a nutrition app, exercise, mindfulness or relaxation app. They must think about how they can use digital technology to improve exercise, sleep and diet regimes.

People can use digital technology to be smarter about their information diet, too. Use fact-checking services to counter conspiracy theories, unfounded rumours, urban legends and misinformation. Reduce information intake to one or two trustworthy sources. Most importantly, get information from reputable sources instead of regurgitating what they read on social media.

The way towards digital well-being: Our increased digital dependency can be of benefit to our well-being instead of a hazard. We need to use our screens positively and promote greater autonomy, relatedness and competence. To be balanced, people must schedule their downtime, off-screen time, exercise time and fun time. This will form the core of their emotional well-being and hold them in good stead.

People must remember not to reach for their phone as soon as they wake up. They must give themselves the time to get ready, eat and then get to their device. We should use technology to increase our independence, further our well-being and harness our inner potential. Doing so will not only help us get through the pandemic but will also ensure that we emerge stronger from it.

(*The writer is Director of a Wellness company and heads a foundation*)

FOREIGN EYE

YETI A BOON TO TOURISM

Taunting anthropologists and researchers, the elusive Yeti continues to confound science. Ecologist Daniel Taylor found a trail of footprints during a 1983 search of the Barun but eventually concluded that it is more likely to be a bear. Yetis still court controversy as we saw recently with the aborted Visit Nepal Year 2020 sculptures, but they also boost tourism.
(*Nepali Times* editorial)

Sensex, Nifty end flat on negative global cues

Sensex advanced 433.68 points this week

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Domestic equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty ended flat on Friday as negative cues from global markets and spiking COVID-19 cases in the country kept investors on the edge.

After touching a low of 37,787.38 during the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex clawed back lost ground to end 15.12 points or 0.04 per cent higher at 38,040.57.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty rose 13.90 points or 0.12 per cent to finish at 11,214.05.

During the week, the Sensex advanced 433.68 points or 1.15 per cent, while the Nifty rose 140.60 points or 1.26 per cent.

Asian Paints was the top gainer in the Sensex pack on Friday, spurting 4.44 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finserv and Maruti.

On the other hand, Titan, HCL Tech, Infosys, M&M and Sun Pharma were among the laggards, skidding up to 2.65 per cent.

Mahindra & Mahindra on Friday reported a 94 per cent decline in consolidated profit at Rs 54.64 crore for the June quarter, adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Global markets tumbled after US President Donald Trump signed an order prohibiting American residents from transacting with Chinese apps WeChat and TikTok, ratcheting up US-China tensions.

China has vowed to retaliate against the executive order, which comes into force in 45 days.

According to traders, negative overseas cues and mounting COVID-19 cases in the country kept investors jittery.

Registering over 60,000 cases in 24 hours for the first time, India's COVID-19 tally galloped past 20 lakh on Friday, while the number of recoveries surged to 13.78 lakh, according to Union Health Ministry data.

The number of cases around the world linked to the disease has crossed 1.9 crore.

"The unrelenting pace of virus infections and other uncertainties led to the benchmark indices ending flat today with volatile trades. Global cues were also mostly negative, after Asian markets ended in losses following US actions on popular Chinese apps, and anticipating retaliatory action from China.

"However on a weekly basis, Indian benchmark indices ended up by around 1 per cent, following gains in the latter half of this week, on expectations of RBI policy easing to support economic revival," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.BSE power, telecom, utilities, industrials and basic materials indices rose as much as 1.21 per cent, while consumer durables, IT, teck and healthcare closed with losses.

Broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices rallied up to 1.44 per cent. In rest of Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tokyo ended in the red, while Seoul finished with gains.

Stock exchanges in Europe were trading on a negative note in early deals.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.86 per cent lower at USD 44.70 per barrel.On the currency front, the rupee ended almost flat at 74.93 against the US dollar.

Wall Street stalls; S&P 500 dips after 5-day winning streak

AP ■ NEW YORK

Wall Street is stalling on Friday, as a whirlwind of worries about rising U.S.-China tensions and whether Congress can deliver more aid for the economy threaten to halt its big run.

The S&P 500 was edging 0.1% lower in early trading, after a five-day winning streak had brought it back within 1.1% of its record for the first time since February. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 73 points, or 0.3%, at 27,317, as of 9:40 a.M. Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite pulled 0.1% back from its record.

Markets around the world got a small boost before trading began on U.S. Stock markets when a report showed that the U.S. Job market strengthened more last month than economists expected. But the bump for U.S. Treasury yields and European stocks proved short-lived.

It's a busy day for markets, with investors also focused on Capitol Hill, where Congress and White House officials have been negotiating on a hoped-for deal on more aid for the economy. A marathon meeting Thursday left both sides still far apart on key issues, and they both said the future of talks is uncertain.

Investors say it's crucial that Washington pump more money into the economy, which has shown signs of improvements since the spring but is still hobbling amid worries about a resurgence in coronavirus counts.

Even though Friday's jobs report was healthier than the market expected, it also showed that hiring is already slowing following two months of acceleration and remains far below where it was before the pandemic.

Trump is considering executive orders to address some of the issues if Congress doesn't reach a deal, such as evictions and unemployment insurance, but they appear unlikely to have much impact.

Increase in gold loan LTV will heighten risks for banks: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The increase in loan-to-value (LTV) ratio for gold loans, or the quantum of borrowing against a given quantity of the precious metal, will heighten credit risks for banks, a ratings agency said on Friday.

The RBI had on Thursday increased the LTV ratio for gold loans by banks to 90 per cent from the earlier 75 per cent, in a bid to make money available to people affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

"...An increase in the LTV ratio to 90 per cent increases the credit risk for banks as the collateral available in the form of gold ornaments or jewellery may not be sufficient to fully cover both principal and interest components on these loans," Brickworks Ratings said.

Its Director for Ratings, Vydianathan Ramaswamy, said the increase in LTV will result in a "negative carry" for banks as the total exposure will exceed the value of the pledged gold.

"It could adversely impact the recoverability and asset quality of banks in the case of a weakening in the borrower credit risk profile and/or sharp decline in gold prices, which have seen a strong rally over the last few months," he added.

However, given that the higher LTV is only till March 31 next year, the risk on the portfolio is for a limited period, the agency said in a note.

Also, gold loans are mostly short-tenure loans of anywhere between 3 to 24 months, it said.

The agency said given that the RBI's announcement on higher LTV gold loans is limited to the banking sector, banks are bound to garner a larger market share vis-a-vis their non-bank peers in loans against the pledge of gold in fiscal 2021.

At present, non-bank financiers and unorganised lenders like local pawn brokers with a wider network enjoy a large market share in loans against gold ornaments and jewellery.

They also charge high rates on these loans, which can range anywhere between 20 per cent to 50 per cent, whereas banks charge much lower interest rates, it said.

Gold, silver prices continue to climb; touch record levels

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price surged for the 16th straight session on Friday and touched an all-time high of ₹57,008 per 10 grams in the national capital, according to HDFC Securities. Silver too continued its upward movement, with the price touching a record-high of ₹77,840 per kilogram. Silver price jumped by ₹576 compared to the closing level of ₹77,264 per kg on Thursday.

In the previous trade, gold had closed at ₹57,002 per 10 grams. On Friday, the price increased by ₹6 to ₹57,008 per 10 grams.Prices of both the metals recorded all-time high prices, HDFC Securities said.

"Spot gold prices for 24 carat in Delhi continued to scale new highs by gaining ₹6. Gold prices are trading higher for the 16th consecutive day in India," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said. In the international market, both gold and silver were trading marginally lower at USD 2,061 per ounce and USD 28.36 per ounce, respectively.

NIFTY 50

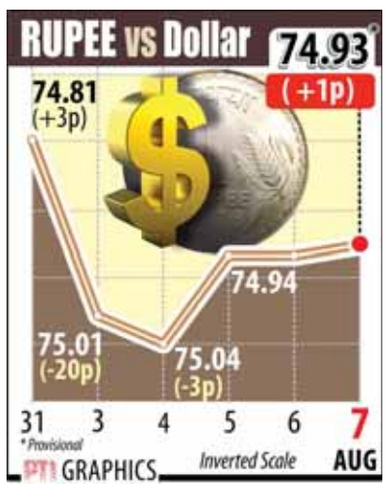
SCRIP	OPEN	HIgh	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	11186.65	11231.90	11142.05	11214.05	13.90
ASIANPAINT	1727.55	1816.90	1725.70	1807.80	80.25
BAJFINANCE	3333.00	3481.45	3310.00	3470.30	125.10
UPL	465.50	484.90	465.50	480.10	16.20
BAJAJFINSV	6285.00	6500.00	6250.00	6470.00	174.30
INDUSINDBK	496.00	513.35	492.00	507.90	13.00
BPCL	412.50	421.40	411.05	419.50	9.95
BRITANNIA	3865.00	3945.00	3850.00	3942.35	84.70
TATAMOTORS	117.00	119.70	116.00	118.90	2.10
MARUTI	6498.00	6749.50	6481.85	6665.00	109.25
GAIL	96.25	97.40	95.65	96.90	1.25
ZEEL	149.45	151.30	148.75	150.10	1.35
BHARTIARTL	556.00	563.40	552.05	560.00	4.70
ADANIPORTS	323.90	328.35	321.55	326.45	2.65
ONGC	78.15	79.40	78.10	78.60	0.55
COALINDIA	129.50	130.35	128.55	129.70	0.85
TATASTEEL	395.90	406.70	393.10	403.05	2.60
SHREECEM	21900.00	22074.15	21621.30	21849.50	126.65
RELIANCE	2129.80	2157.80	2120.20	2146.00	11.90
TECHM	657.75	668.00	654.40	664.00	3.65
NESTLEIND	16668.90	16899.00	16555.90	16759.00	81.85
GRASIM	634.00	641.90	628.25	636.95	2.75
INFRATEL	192.00	193.80	188.00	192.25	0.70
BAJAJ-AUTO	2991.80	3019.00	2975.00	3001.95	10.15
KOTAKBANK	1341.50	1347.80	1323.25	1344.60	4.50
ITC	195.50	197.00	194.15	196.00	0.65
HDFCBANK	1034.85	1047.20	1020.60	1043.85	3.15
CIPLA	738.00	739.65	724.50	732.80	1.70
HDFCLIFE	607.90	613.85	605.45	607.60	0.70
EICHERMOT	21700.00	22142.85	21560.00	21694.00	12.70
POWERGRID	175.80	177.95	175.25	176.00	0.10
HEROMOTOCO	2710.00	2720.00	2670.10	2706.00	1.55
AXISBANK	431.45	437.00	427.15	433.20	0.20
JSWSTEEL	236.80	241.00	235.80	239.45	-0.05
SBIN	191.45	192.10	189.55	190.85	-0.10
DRREDDY	4590.00	4707.00	4560.55	4579.65	-3.40
ICICIBANK	359.45	359.65	353.15	358.10	-0.65
HDFC	1774.95	1781.80	1763.00	1779.90	-3.85
HINDALCO	176.45	179.00	175.35	177.40	-0.60
NTPC	86.20	86.70	85.35	85.85	-0.30
HINDUNILVR	2223.00	2234.80	2205.00	2208.80	-11.65
TCS	2308.00	2328.00	2287.00	2295.00	-13.10
ULTRACEMCO	4026.00	4072.00	3982.45	4004.95	-23.40
WIPRO	281.05	281.85	276.40	277.95	-1.70
LT	922.55	926.85	914.10	916.05	-6.10
IOC	87.70	88.40	85.65	86.40	-0.80
M&M	610.10	616.50	598.70	602.60	-7.05
SUNPHARMA	532.30	535.45	522.60	526.00	-6.25
INFY	969.45	969.45	949.00	951.65	-19.20
HCLTECH	699.90	699.90	685.00	689.90	-15.00
TITAN	1114.95	1131.40	1086.05	1092.15	-28.00

NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIP	OPEN	HIgh	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	27127.50	27193.85	27022.85	27130.45	66.00
ADANITRANS	234.00	253.30	234.00	252.50	21.40
HINDZINC	240.00	257.50	236.50	254.95	19.95
BERGEPAINT	529.40	558.00	526.85	556.00	27.15
BANKBARODA	46.40	48.85	46.10	48.60	2.35
BOSCHLTD	13050.00	13790.00	13049.95	13646.00	580.30
PIDILITIND	1329.80	1393.70	1323.10	1374.00	42.05
SRTRANSFIN	663.00	680.00	659.00	677.05	16.30
BANDHANBNK	300.25	309.30	300.25	307.20	7.15
DIVISLAB	2748.00	2820.00	2722.40	2799.80	61.75
MUTHOOTFIN	1211.00	1234.65	1191.00	1216.75	24.25
NHPC	20.15	20.50	20.10	20.50	0.40
PNB	32.50	32.95	32.25	32.90	0.55
COLPAL	1436.70	1467.45	1432.05	1457.00	20.00
NMDC	88.10	89.45	87.80	88.90	1.20
MCDOWELL-N	582.60	593.60	580.45	587.55	7.90
BAJAJHLDNG	2672.90	2717.15	2660.40	2696.00	35.60
DABUR	507.90	513.70	506.05	512.10	5.30
UBL	960.00	974.90	954.30	966.60	8.70
HAVELLS	606.15	612.00	603.30	611.45	5.30
ABBOTINDIA	16248.55	16298.70	16079.05	16254.00	99.50
CADILAHC	390.30	395.30	387.55	390.90	2.05
IGL	388.20	391.05	381.00	389.15	0.95
PEL	1464.00	1519.95	1454.95	1467.20	3.25
PGHH	10320.00	10425.00	10251.25	10300.00	9.45
NAUKRI	3348.00	3367.00	3275.10	3319.05	0.05
GICRE	141.10	143.00	140.30	140.80	0.00
ICICIPRULI	474.00	476.60	462.40	471.25	-0.35
GODREJCP	690.90	701.55	687.10	689.70	-1.15
MARICO	369.00	371.95	365.50	368.80	-0.65
SIEMENS	1158.00	1164.80	1142.10	1154.80	-4.65
AUROPHARMA	914.00	923.00	898.00	905.90	-3.85
SBICARD	757.50	765.00	753.00	755.40	-3.15
HDFCAMC	2380.90	2384.00	2352.25	2369.00	-10.60
PETRONET	245.15	247.20	242.05	245.00	-1.20
MOTHERSUMI	99.25	101.10	97.75	99.45	-0.50
INDIGO	947.30	947.30	928.00	940.00	-5.25
DLF	143.90	143.90	141.00	141.75	-0.90
SBILIFE	879.90	883.85	862.15	869.75	-5.65
DMART	2170.00	2176.40	2133.00	2136.05	-14.50
ACC	1407.00	1423.05	1392.50	1396.65	-9.55
PFC	86.75	87.90	84.95	85.50	-0.75
OFSS	2985.00	2985.00	2918.60	2929.00	-26.75
HINDPETRO	223.00	223.00	212.40	213.40	-2.70
CONCOR	460.00	462.50	449.10	452.75	-6.05
TORNTPHARM	2974.95	2991.25	2927.00	2937.00	-39.45
ICICIGI	1375.00	1379.00	1345.20	1357.00	-18.95
AMBUJACEM	222.00	226.25	218.60	219.70	-3.25
BIOCON	409.00	411.85	396.05	400.00	-7.45
PAGEIND	19400.00	19499.95	18980.00	19000.00	-358.15
LUPIN	906.65	918.40	874.10	881.95	-54.30

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP
Security Name	Open	High	Low	LTP
RELIANCE	2124.55	2157.00	2120.10	2146.70
BAJFINANCE	3336.00	3480.00	3306.00	3466.00
AXISBANK	430.20	437.00	427.40	433.20
BANDHANBNK	300.90	309.00	300.10	307.45
IDEA	7.90	8.93	7.64	8.83
HDFC	1772.10	1781.60	1764.00	1777.95
TATACONSUM	487.75	530.10	482.75	518.40
HDFCBANK	1036.00	1047.00	1022.50	1044.00
RBLBANK	174.55	193.35	171.60	191.30
MARUTI	6489.00	6740.00	6472.95	6679.55
INFY	970.85	970.85	949.00	950.75
ICICIBANK	359.20	359.50	351.00	357.85
ASIANPAINT	1729.90	1816.50	1727.55	1805.05
CAPPL	649.00	686.00	567.55	584.80
INDUSINDBK	495.50	513.20	492.50	509.10
TCS	2318.90	2327.00	2287.80	2294.95
SBIN	191.80	192.05	189.60	190.65
IBULHSGFIN	190.80	199.50	190.25	193.30
TATAMOTORS	117.00	119.70	116.25	119.10
TATASTEEL	395.30	406.75	393.25	404.00
APOLLOTYRE	116.00	124.90	114.50	123.45
HINDUNILVR	2219.00	2234.80	2205.05	2210.75
LUPIN	908.00	915.80	874.90	879.40
DRREDDY	4575.00	4707.15	4554.80	4571.25
AUROPHARMA	920.00	923.05	898.25	906.65
MUTHOOTFIN	1225.00	1234.00	1191.10	1216.80
HINDPETRO	224.90	224.90	212.45	213.55
TITAN	1118.00	1130.95	1087.00	1090.70
IOC	87.15	88.45	85.75	86.45
DLF	144.80	144.80	141.05	141.95
CIPLA	739.00	739.60	724.75	728.60
GAIL	96.25	97.45	95.65	97.00
PIDILITIND	1330.00	1392.80	1322.15	1376.90
GLENMARK	465.00	467.20	451.30	453.50
BHARTIARTL	553.50	563.00	552.00	560.60
M&MFIN	135.85	138.00	134.35	135.20
KOTAKBANK	1337.20	1346.80	1323.40	1342.10
DIVISLAB	2750.00	2815.00	2724.10	2784.25
SRF	3844.00	4122.55	3841.60	4080.50
BAJAJFINSV	6296.00	6499.50	6251.15	6469.20
JINDALSTEL	197.00	201.05	195.25	199.45
BPCL	412.90	421.30	411.35	419.70
TORNTPOWER	334.90	357.50	334.80	336.75
UPL	467.00	484.90	465.50	480.35
ULTRACEMCO	4037.35	4070.00	3984.25	4005.15
ITC	195.35	197.00	194.15	196.05
HINDZINC	240.00	257.20	236.30	253.40
ALKEM	2868.00	3089.55	2868.00	2980.30
BRITANNIA	3893.90	3945.00	3850.65	3934.15
M&M	609.00	616.05	599.00	600.60
LT	922.50	926.50	914.10	915.70
STAR	526.00	537.75	514.75	524.05
PEL	1480.00	1519.60	1454.60	1464.35
APOLLOHOSP	1704.80	1752.85	1703.85	1744.45
GRANULES	325.40	328.90	309.20	315.60
MANAPPURAM	157.00	162.10	155.70	161.65
EICHERMOT	21700.00	22138.50	21549.05	21793.20
GILLETTE	5000.00	5003.90	4948.05	4958.75
LAURUSLABS	1040.00	1041.95	1010.00	1022.80
HCLTECH	700.50	700.50	685.00	689.55
GMM	4315.00	5141.15	4300.00	5059.15
ZEEL	151.00	151.20	148.75	150.20
DEEPAKNI	569.75	619.00	569.75	610.70
ESCORTS	1134.00	1147.60	1120.50	1123.85
TORNTPHARM	2978.00	2990.85	2927.75	2940.60
SRTRANSFIN	663.00	680.00	659.00	676.95
FEDERALBNK	52.65	55.00	52.30	54.60
BEML	654.15	666.40	647.10	656.35
L&TFH	62.70	63.65	61.65	63.45
SUNPHARMA*	532.20	535.25	522.70	525.80
FRETAIL	107.70	112.65	107.00	108.85
NIITTECH	2020.00	2036.70	1971.50	1987.20
BAYERCROP	6070.00	6449.00	6070.00	6138.90
BATAINDIA	1265.10	1271.40	1252.15	1258.40
UBL	957.25	974.35	954.30	965.50
ADANIENT	181.00	195.00	181.00	192.75
PIIND	2073.00	2154.35	1936.85	1947.70
VEDL	124.95	126.60	122.50	122.85
TVSMOTOR	422.20	429.95	414.95	421.25
ADANIGAS	153.00	163.40	153.00	162.10
APLLTD	1110.00	1128.00	1045.00	1051.45
IDFCFIRSTB	27.05	28.60	26.75	28.45
DELTACORP*	101.00	115.50	100.10	108.35
BOSCHLTD	13100.00	13798.10	13036.05	13668.80
ONGC	78.50	79.35	78.10	78.65
BANKBARODA	46.80	48.80	46.10	48.45
GODREJCP	693.55	701.00	686.80	688.60
ADANIGREEN	345.00	375.65	342.65	371.00
HONAUT	27655.00	31500.00	27655.00	31007.85
HINDALCO	177.50	178.90	175.55	177.70
CEATLTD	888.00	911.00	880.65	891.55
TATAELXSI	998.00	1002.65	978.45	989.40
SAIL	37.05	38.20	37.05	37.70
CENTURYTEX	305.15	325.90	305.05	323.50
ASHOKLEY	49.50	50.40	48.90	49.95
CADILAHC	389.00	395.40	387.85	390.70
BALKRISIND	1360.00	1382.45	1347.00	1349.50
BHEL	35.50	35.60	34.90	35.25
BIOCON	407.55	411.90	396.10	399.35
WIPRO	280.10	281.55	276.50	277.25
JSWSTEEL	239.05	240.95	235.85	240.25
SUDARSCHEM	439.35	475.95	426.55	448.75
BHARATFORG	405.50	413.15	405.40	408.00
HEROMOTOCO	2724.00	2724.00	2670.70	2705.65
MEGH	64.50	69.75	64.50	67.65
GRASIM	632.55	641.15	628.55	636.70
DABUR	505.50	513.00	505.50	511.95
ADANIPORTS	327.70	328.15	322.25	326.65
JUBLFOOD	1891.90	1895.30	1862.40	1871.05
TECHM	660.00	667.85	655.00	662.35
MRF	61427.15	63286.55	61414.20	62678.00
SUMICHEM	286.90	294.00	285.00	286.80
PNB	32.15	32.95	32.15	32.80
MCX	1708.80	1750.00	1660.35	1672.05
BSOFT	145.70	148.70	139.80	142.85
LICHSGFIN	258.40	265.15	258.40	259.60
INDIGO	946.00	946.00	928.00	939.50
BERGEPAINT	531.80	557.50	529.55	555.05
TEAMLEASE	2098.70	2104.00	2046.30	2072.90
IGL	390.00	390.70	380.85	388.10
BLISSGVS	133.00	133.00	128.00	130.15
HEG	769.90	821.80	769.30	786.40
SBICARD	759.50	764.75	753.50	757.80
INFRATEL	194.90	194.90	188.00	192.55
HDFCLIFE	608.25	613.55	605.30	607.05
NESTLEIND	16757.00	16893.20	16554.60	16761.45
NATCOPHARM	759.00	794.70	759.00	781.60
WOCKPHARMA	316.55	322.05	308.25	309.10
MGL	985.00	988.70	959.30	969.10
RECLTD	107.65	108.75	103.55	105.75
ACC	1409.00	1422.15	1392.35	1396.80
COLPAL	1433.10	1467.00	1433.00	1457.80
TATAPOWER	49.80	50.60	49.20	49.65
TATACHEM	297.00	304.20	295.80	300.90
TATACOFFEE	100.60	107.00	99.05	106.20
AARTIIND	1057.85	1076.50	1057.85	1067.65
MINDTREE	1131.00	1156.55	1118.70	1151.90
EMAMILTD	239.50	263.70	237.50	257.65
ICICIPRULI	475.00	476.20	462.40	470.50
BAJAJCON	185.00	187.00	179.55	182.35
IDFC	20.25	20.50	20.00	20.30
ADANITRANS	237.70	253.55	233.50	249.95
ECLERX	472.20	487.50	470.40	480.95
MOTHERSUMI	100.70	101.05	97.80	99.80
DIXON	7721.00	7850.00	7529.00	7779.10
BAJAJ-AUTO	2978.05	3019.15	2974.65	3001.70
INDIAMART	3095.00	3146.80	3021.00	3083.40
BOMDYEING	64.75	68.00	63.10	67.00
COALINDIA	129.85	130.35	128.55	129.70
CANBK	102.40	102.80	101.50	101.95
GSPL	204.20	211.00	204.20	207.10
NMDC	88.65	89.45	87.85	89.15
INDIACEM	115.70	118.00	113.55	116.95
PFC	86.75	87.90	84.95	85.40
VAIBHAVGBL	1699.00	1719.00	1650.05	1689.60
RCF	48.55	51.60	48.40	50.95
NOCIL	112.70	117.45	110.90	114.85
EXIDEIND	158.40	163.25	156.15	161.75
POWERGRID	176.00	177.85	175.30	175.90
GUJALKALI	337.00	363.95	336.00	344.25
SUNTV	398.00	402.35	392.80	394.25
CUB	117.50	123.40	117.50	122.80
CHOLAFIN	204.80	209.80	203.15	208.95
PNBHOUSING	218.80	225.50	214.65	218.25
JUBILANT	841.90	856.45	834.00	838.95
BIRLACORPN	640.10	682.00	640.10	653.05
BALRAMCHIN	125.00	132.30	125.00	130.20



PCJEWELLER	17.00	18.85	16.45	17.37
CASTROLIND	119.70	122.70	119.70	121.45
DMART	2169.60	2178.00	2135.00	2139.05
NAVINFLUOR	1851.00	1950.00	1851.00	1939.75
JSWENERGY	45.40	50.65	44.75	48.15
ITI	134.80	138.65	132.75	134.80
FDC	337.50	344.00	333.20	336.65
RELAXO	630.00	638.80	620.45	637.30
NAM-INDIA	265.90	278.35	264.00	273.50
TATACOMM	873.90	882.60	807.85	814.00
FCONSUMER	12.10	12.10	11.66	11.75
IRCTC	1344.00	1344.00	1330.10	1331.75
AUBANK	725.00	730.65	707.00	708.85
DBL	336.70	347.80	325.40	338.65
BEL	99.25	100.65	98.40	99.20
GRAPHITE	179.00	192.75	176.95	186.05
RAYMOND	252.05	255.90	247.80	254.15
BANKINDIA	48.00	49.80	48.00	48.90
SUNTECK	237.90	242.00	227.10	233.80
NTPC	86.95	86.95	85.40	85.75
BDL	420.95	429.55	416.80	419.05
LTI	2461.00	2508.15	2447.30	2468.35
GODFRYPHLP	921.40	953.65	920.90	943.35
PERSISTENT	964.00	1009.00	964.00	996.75
SOUTHBANK	7.09	7.16	6.92	6.98
HDFCAMC	2391.50	2391.50	2353.75	2369.55
AMBUJACEM	224.00	226.25	218.65	219.60
SYNGENE	472.90	478.50	467.55	471.85
PAGEIND	19303.00	19480.00	18987.85	19019.80
TRENT	552.00	597.95	552.00	578.90
KEI	358.10	381.75	355.00	376.95
GICRE	140.05	142.55	140.05	140.90
PVR	1126.00	1138.25	1090.00	1127.50
WABCOINDIA	7004.00	7010.00	7000.10	7002.00
RALLIS	299.00	306.70	298.35	303.20
SPICEJET	45.80	47.00	45.80	46.20
PHILIPCARB	106.20	110.95	106.20	107.60
UJJIVAN	232.20	243.50	232.20	240.40
CANFINHOME	372.20	377.70	367.80	372.75
VBL	755.00	787.05	738.00	744.00
EQUITAS	50.80	51.45	50.10	50.90
HAVELLS	605.90	611.95	604.20	609.55
PRESTIGE	222.35	232.00	222.05	224.75
COROMANDEL	808.00	808.00	785.10	789.85
RAMCOCEM	695.00	697.00	681.95	687.60
CUMMINSIND	413.85	421.75	412.00	418.90
MARICO	369.95	371.90	365.40	370.00
HAWKINCOOK	4477.00	4636.00	4326.00	4615.45
PETRONET	246.00	247.00	242.25	244.45
RAIN	98.00	101.20	96.80	100.10
IDBI	39.50	41.45	38.85	40.30
VARROC	234.90	241.00	226.60	230.25
NAUKRI	3330.00	3390.00	3275.60	3311.10
UNIONBANK	29.40	29.60	29.05	29.50
SIEMENS	1135.50	1164.40	1135.50	1152.30
NBCC	23.10	23.55	23.00	23.25
HFCL	14.50	15.27	14.10	14.30
JAMNAAUTO	33.90	34.55	31.50	33.95
AVANTI	480.00	497.40	478.85	485.10
SPARC	185.00	185.20	180.20	180.90
CONCOR	459.30	462.00	449.45	455.60
AJANTPHARM	1655.00	1718.30	1655.00	1691.75
LTTS	1565.00	1625.00	1546.20	1594.00
TATAMTRDVR	41.00	41.60	40.50	41.00
SHK	82.45	82.70	79.15	79.65
AMBER	1720.00	1801.00	1700.00	1785.15
SBILIFE	882.00	883.20	862.50	868.60
DALBHARAT*	815.60	824.55	756.00	764.35
ABCAPITAL	58.50	59.80	57.95	59.10
INTELLECT	181.00	182.45	179.80	182.45
LINDEINDIA	642.30	706.10	642.30	675.80
PGHL	4401.80	4727.20	4395.65	4667.60
JINDALSAW	59.00	62.25	59.00	60.85
PTC	53.55	53.70	52.80	53.15
POLYCAB	828.35	854.55	828.35	842.60
DEEPAKFERT	159.00	159.00	151.45	152.15
JKTYRE	65.00	68.15	64.45	65.55
ISEC	483.75	498.35	473.45	492.75
KAJARIACER	414.00	415.00	404.75	407.50
NATIONALUM	35.00	35.25	34.45	34.90
HEXAWARE	391.00	397.55	388.95	393.25
BBTC	1350.00	1378.50	1332.90	1360.45
SCI	55.45	58.35	54.95	57.00
LALPATHLAB	1859.00	1917.25	1859.00	1903.05
CHAMBLFERT	157.00	158.00	154.35	155.40
ADANIPOWER	35.20	36.90	35.15	36.65
SUZLON	4.41	4.51	4.34	4.39
AFFLE	1810.00	1896.35	1

LANKA PARLIAMENTARY POLLS

Rajapaksa registers landslide victory

Gets two-thirds majority

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa greets Buddhist monks following his election victory in the general election at his residence in Tangalle Sri Lanka on Friday AP

Colombo: Mahinda Rajapaksa will be sworn in as Sri Lanka's Prime Minister for the fourth time on Sunday after his party registered a landslide victory in the general election, securing two-thirds majority in Parliament needed to amend the Constitution to further consolidate the powerful Rajapaksa family's grip on power.

The Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP), led by prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, won in 145 constituencies, bagging a total of 150 seats with its allies, a two-thirds majority in the 225-member Parliament, according to the results announced by the election commission on Friday.

It won all but four of the 22 electoral districts on offer, polling 6.8 million votes (59.9 per cent).

The 74-year-old Prime Minister Mahinda thanked the Sri Lankan people for putting their faith in the SLPP and said that the country will not stand disappointed during its tenure.

"Heartfelt gratitude to all SriLankans for placing their trust in President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, myself and the PodujanaParty and voting for the 'Saubhagye Dakkama' election manifesto in overwhelming numbers. We will ensure Sri Lanka will not stand disappointed during our tenure," he said.

Mahinda will be sworn in as the new prime minister for the fourth time on Sunday at a ceremony at the historic Buddhist temple of Kelaniya, a north Colombo suburb, according to an official statement.

He created a record in polling over 500,000 individual preference votes, the highest ever recorded by a candidate in the history of elections.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the first world leaders to congratulate Mahinda on the outcome of the elections and said the two sides will work together to further advance all areas of bilateral cooperation and to take their special ties to ever newer heights.

"Thank you PM @narendramodi for your congratulatory phone call. With the strong support of the people of #SriLanka, I look forward to working with you closely to further enhance the long-standing cooperation between our two countries. Sri Lanka & India are friends & relations," Mahinda tweeted.

The Rajapaksa family has dominated Sri Lankan politics for two decades. Mahinda was previously president, from 2005 to 2015. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had won the November presidential election on the SLPP ticket.

In the parliamentary election, he was seeking 150 seats mandatory to execute constitutional changes, including to repeal the 19th Amendment to the Constitution which had curbed the presidential powers while strengthening the role of Parliament.

Activists, already alarmed by the diminishing space for dissent and criticism in the island nation, fear such a move could lead to authoritarianism. *PTI*

POWER TUSSLE WITH OLI INTENSIFIES

Nepal: Prachanda tells party workers to prepare for worst

Kathmandu: Nepal Communist Party's executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has asked the party workers to prepare for the "worst" as the ongoing power tussle between him and Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli has intensified with no solution in sight.

Oli and Prachanda have held at least ten meetings in recent weeks to sort out the differences between them. But, as the Prime Minister did not accept the condition of a one-man-one-post, the talks failed. Oli has refused to give up his post as prime minister as well as a co-chairman of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP).

A bitter internal feud has been brewing in the ruling NCP since the last few weeks after top party leaders, including Prachanda, demanded Oli's resignation, saying his recent anti-India remarks were "neither politically correct nor diplomatically appropriate." The opponents of Oli are also against his autocratic style of functioning.

"Our main concern is not about gaining power, what we want is to follow the proper procedure while running the NCP. We are not focusing on gaining any position, but our fight is against the wrong trend developing in the party," Prachanda told a select group of journalists during a special briefing on Wednesday.

He held the press conference along with three senior party leaders Madhav Nepal, Jhalanath Khanal and party spokesperson Narayan Kaji Shrestha, according to Nagarik daily.

The dissident group accused Oli of trying to damage the image of other senior leaders of the party, the daily reported.

Prachanda and Nepal have claimed that the majority of the powerful Central Working Committee members have supported them while raising voice against Oli.

Prachanda also alleged that while the Standing Committee meeting was in progress, at the initiative of Prime Minister Oli a new party was registered under the name of a lesser-known person at the Election Commission with the intention to split the ruling party.

"If one chairman (PM Oli) does not follow the proper procedure of the party then how can the unity of the party remain intact," he wondered.

Prachanda claimed that he and other senior leaders of the party were trying to save the party by creating a favourable situation.

"We are trying for the best outcome but the communists of this country should also be prepared for the worst thing to happen," Prachanda told media persons, indicating a possible split in the ruling party.

"I had agreed to make Oli Prime Minister for a full 5 years term and enjoy the executive chairman's position in the party for creating a better environment within the party," said Prachanda.

"Oli has dragged the party towards anarchism by calling separate gatherings," Prachanda said. *PTI*

TikTok threatens legal action in US over Trump order

Washington: Video-sharing app TikTok on Friday threatened to take legal action in US courts against Donald Trump's executive order banning anyone under US jurisdiction from doing business with the company's owner ByteDance.

"We will pursue all remedies available to us in order to ensure that the rule of law is not discarded and that our company and our users are treated fairly — if not by the Administration, then by the US courts," TikTok said in a statement. *AFP*

Negligence or missile may have caused blast: Lebanon President

Beirut: Lebanese President Michel Aoun says there are two possibilities behind Tuesday's blast — either negligence or "external intervention" by a missile or a bomb.

Aoun said on Friday that he asked France for satellite images to see if there were warplanes or missiles in the air at the time of the blast.

The blast is believed to have been caused when a fire touched off 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate that had been stored at the port since it was taken from an impounded ship in 2013. The cause of the initial fire is not known.

Aoun told journalists that he received information on July 20 about the stored material and "immediately ordered" military and security officials to do what was necessary. He did not elaborate. He said several governments in charge since 2013 received warnings about the material.

He said the investigation is concentrating on 20 persons. He rejected an international investigation into the blast, saying that it will make us "lose the truth." *AP*

Leader denies Hezbollah role in Beirut blast

Beirut: Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah says the explosion at the Beirut port reveals nepotism and corruption that can't be ignored in Lebanon and that those responsible should be brought to justice.

Nasrallah denied in a speech on Friday that his group was responsible for Tuesday's blast or exercised any power at the port. He was responding to claims that his group may have stored explosives at the port. Still, Nasrallah didn't rule out a missile attack or an act of sabotage. He said that storing explosive materials like ammonium nitrate at the port for so long means "it is partially an issue of negligence, corruption, nepotism" that should not be ignored. *AP*

Belgian court rejects move to extradite ex-Catalan Minister

AP ■ BRUSSELS

A Belgian court on Friday rejected Spain's demand to have a former high-ranking politician from the region of Catalonia extradited, in yet another set back for the country's efforts to try several officials in exile over their alleged roles in an independence referendum that Madrid branded as illegal.

The Brussels prosecutor's office said the court had decided not to enforce the European arrest warrant for former Catalan culture minister Lluis Puig on the grounds that "the Spanish authorities who issued the warrant are not competent to do so."

Puig has been living in exile in Belgium since he, former Catalan President Carles Puigdemont and a number of their associates fled to Belgium in October 2017, fearing arrest over their alleged roles in the secessionist push and the holding of an independence referendum that the Spanish government had banned.

The vote sparked a police crackdown and led to one of Spain's biggest political crises in decades as mass protests roiled the relatively wealthy northeast region of 7.5 million people.

Polls and recent elections show that Catalans are roughly equally split by the secession question. Spaniards as a whole are strongly against it.

Kabul opens traditional council on release of 400 Taliban

Kabul: A traditional council met on Friday in Afghanistan's capital to decide whether to release a final 400 Taliban prisoners, the last hurdle to starting negotiations between Kabul's political leadership and the Taliban under a peace deal with the US.

The negotiations are a critical step toward lasting peace in Afghanistan.

The talks will decide what a peaceful Afghanistan might look like, what constitutional changes will be made, how the rights of women and minorities will be protected and the fate of the tens of thousands of heavily armed men on both sides of the conflict. Besides Taliban fighters, warlords in Kabul maintain thousands of armed militias loyal to them.

The Taliban in a statement on Friday rejected the Kabul gathering, saying it had no legal status. A statement by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo issued late Thursday made it clear that the 400 prisoners had to be released if peace talks with the Taliban were to move forward.

"We acknowledge that the release of these prisoners is unpopular," Pompeo said. "But this difficult action will lead to an important result long sought by Afghans and Afghanistan's friends: reduction of violence and direct talks resulting in a peace agreement and an end to the war." *AP*

China sentences 4th Canadian to death on drug charges

Beijing: China has sentenced a fourth Canadian citizen to death on drug charges in less than two years following a sharp downturn in ties over the arrest of an executive of Chinese tech giant Huawei.

Ye Jianhui was sentenced on Friday by the Foshan Municipal Intermediate Court in the southern province of Guangdong.

Ye had been found guilty of manufacturing and transporting drugs, the court said in a brief statement. Another suspect in the case was also given the death penalty and four others sentenced to between seven years and life in prison. Death sentences are automatically referred to China's highest court for review. Ties between Canada and China have nosedived over Canada's late 2018 arrest of Meng Wanzhou, a company executive and the daughter of Huawei's founder, at Vancouver's airport in at the request of the US, which wants her extradited to face fraud charges over the company's dealings with Iran. Her arrest enraged Beijing, which calls it a political move aimed at constraining China's rise as a global technology power. *AP*

Malaysia's Mahathir forms new party in fightback attempt

Putrajaya (Malaysia): Two-time former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad announced on Friday that he is forming a new ethnic Malay party more than two months after he was sacked from his previous party during a political struggle with his successor.

Mahathir, 95, quit as prime minister in protest in late February after fellow party member Muhyiddin Yassin withdrew their Bersatu party from the ruling coalition, triggering its collapse less than two years after a historic victory in 2018 national polls.

Muhyiddin was sworn in as new prime minister in March with a new government supported by ex-Prime Minister Najib Razak's corruption-tainted party that was ousted in 2018.

Mahathir, who was sacked from Bersatu along with his son and three other senior members, said Muhyiddin had hijacked the party and helped revive what he called a kleptocratic government.

He accused Muhyiddin of using money to buy support in Bersatu, causing it to stray from its goal of fighting graft. Mahathir said he believes many grassroots members are unhappy and still support him. *AP*

'Malaysia wants to send Zakir Naik to other place, but not many countries willing to accept him'

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia was looking for a country except India to send Zakir Naik, but not many countries are willing to accept the controversial preacher, former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad has said.

Naik, a 54-year-old radical Islamic preacher wanted by the Indian authorities for alleged money laundering and inciting extremism through hate speeches, left India in 2016 and subsequently moved to the largely Muslim Malaysia, where he was granted permanent residency when Mahathir was the prime minister.

Claiming that the fugitive Islamic preacher "would not be safe from the Indian public", the 95-year-old politician, who is eyeing a comeback, said he would like to send Naik to some country "where we feel he will be safe."

"For the time being he (Naik) can stay here but we would like to send him to some other country where he would be safe. Unfortunately, not many countries are willing to accept him," Mahathir was quoted as saying by the WION news channel.

When asked whether he would extradite Naik if he becomes the Prime Minister of Malaysia again, Mahathir said, "Well, we would like to send him to some country where we feel he will be safe."

He once again refused to send Naik to India, saying "at this moment we feel that he would not be safe from the Indian public."

Naik has been banned from any public activities in the multi-ethnic country after his controversial remarks against Malaysian Hindus and Chinese last year. *PTI*

Dawood continues to get 'patronage' in neighbouring country: India to UNSC

United Nations: India has told the UN Security Council that Dawood Ibrahim, who perpetrated the 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts, and other UN-designated terrorists "unsurprisingly" continue to enjoy "patronage" in a neighbouring country, calling for focused international efforts to address threats posed by the fugitive gangster and terror groups Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed.

India said this in a statement on Thursday to the High Level Open Debate of the UNSC on "Addressing the Issue of Linkages between Terrorism and Organised Crime."

"India has been a victim of terrorism sponsored from across our border. We have experienced first-hand the cruel linkage between transnational organised crime and terrorism.

"An organised crime syndicate, the D-Company, that used to smuggle gold and counterfeit currencies transformed into a terrorist entity overnight causing a series of bomb blasts in the city of Mumbai in 1993. The attack resulted in the loss of more than 250 innocent lives and damage to property worth millions of dollars," India said in the statement.

The perpetrator of the Mumbai blasts, "unsurprisingly, continues to enjoy patronage in a neighbouring country, a hub for arms trafficking and narcotics trade, along with other terrorists and terrorist entities that have been proscribed by the United Nations," the statement said without naming any country.

India underlined that the success of collective action against the ISIL serves as an example of how focused attention by the international community yields results.

"A similar focus on addressing threats posed by proscribed individuals and entities such as Dawood Ibrahim and his D-Company, the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammed, will serve humankind well," it said.

India added that terrorism is one of the most serious threats that mankind faces today and the scourge of terrorism does not distinguish between countries and regions.

"It is the grossest affront to the enjoyment of the inalienable human right to life and to live in peace and security. India strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. There can be no justification of any form of terrorism. And looking for root causes for terrorism is akin to finding a needle in a haystack," it said.

India underscored that it is important to hold States accountable for activities that support or encourage terrorism from territories under their control. The resolutions of the Security Council make clear the primary responsibility of Member States in countering terrorist acts and in preventing and suppressing their financing.

It further said that Member States which suffer due to poor governance and inadequate oversight on financial institutions are more vulnerable for exploitation by the terrorist entities and organised criminals.

"Implementation of recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in strengthening the capabilities of governance structure of financial and economic assets should be one of the topmost priorities to counter the menace," it said.

India said the UN needs to enhance its coordination with bodies like the FATF which have been playing a significant role in setting global standards for preventing and combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

It emphasised that today it is a widely accepted fact that terrorist organisations and organised crime groups both constitute "transnational criminal groups".

India said that organised criminal networks also help terrorist groups funnel funds into legitimate businesses.

"There is documented evidence where smuggling of narcotics, natural resources and cultural artefacts are sustained by safe transit corridors provided by terrorist entities. We have seen the destruction created by the narcotic trade in our region that has sustained and funded terrorist networks.

Belgian court rejects move to extradite ex-Catalan minister

Brussels: A Belgian court on Friday rejected Spain's demand to have a former high-ranking politician from the region of Catalonia extradited, in yet another set back for the country's efforts to try several officials in exile over their alleged roles in an independence referendum that Madrid branded as illegal.

The Brussels prosecutor's office said the court had decided not to enforce the European arrest warrant for former Catalan culture minister Lluis Puig on the grounds that "the Spanish authorities who issued the warrant are not competent to do so."

Puig has been living in exile in Belgium since he, former Catalan President Carles Puigdemont and a number of their associates fled to Belgium in October 2017, fearing arrest over their alleged roles in the secessionist push and the holding of an independence referendum that the Spanish government had banned.

The vote sparked a police crackdown and led to one of Spain's biggest political crises in decades as mass protests roiled the relatively wealthy northeast region of 7.5 million people.

Polls and recent elections show that Catalans are roughly equally split by the secession question. Spaniards as a whole are strongly against it.

Puig's lawyers had argued that Spain's Supreme Court does not have the jurisdiction to judge him and that only a Catalan court is competent to do so, and they said the Belgian court agreed with them.

Lawyer Paul Bekaert told reporters that the Spanish constitution only allows the country's Supreme Court to issue this kind of arrest warrant when it concerns members of parliament. He underlined that Puig has never been a lawmaker.

The Belgian prosecutor's office is mulling whether to appeal the Brussels court ruling.

It's the third time that a European arrest warrant against exiled Catalan politicians has been rejected.

Bekaert accused Spanish authorities of abusing the European arrest warrant system for political purposes.

Portland protesters cause mayhem again, cop hurt

Portland: Portland's nightly protests turned violent again even after the city's mayor pleaded for demonstrators to stay off the streets and a police officer hit by a rock early Friday suffered what was described as a serious injury. The protesters who came out Thursday night clashed with officers near a police precinct station and also used metal bars to disable police vehicles, police said in a statement. The nightly clashes this week have ratcheted up tensions in the city after an agreement was reached last week between state and federal officials for federal agents to pull back from their defence. *AP*

US RECORDS OVER 2,000 VIRUS DEATHS IN A DAY AFTER THREE MONTHS

Washington: The United States has recorded more than 2,000 coronavirus deaths in 24 hours, the highest number of daily fatalities in three months, Johns Hopkins University's real-time tally showed on Thursday.

The country, which has seen a major resurgence in coronavirus since the end of June, added 2,060 deaths in one day as well as more than 58,000 new cases, the Baltimore-based university showed at 8:30 pm (0030 GMT Friday). *AFP*

Federal suit filed against Saudi crown prince by ex-official

Dubai: A former top Saudi counterterrorism official has filed a federal lawsuit in the United States against Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, alleging the royal tried to trap and kill him in the US and Canada.

The lawsuit filed by Saad Aljabri is the latest effort by the former intelligence official to try and bring about international and public pressure on the crown prince, following years of silence in exile abroad.

Aljabri's lawsuit claims the crown prince has detained two of his children in Saudi Arabia in an attempt to force him back to the kingdom because of the sensitive information he knows regarding the inner workings of the royal court and kingdom's leadership. It also alleges that the prince's efforts to kill him continue to this day. Attempts by Saudi Arabia to forcibly return certain citizens who reside abroad began attracting global attention after the killing of Saudi critic Jamal Khashoggi, who was killed by Saudi agents who worked for the crown prince. Khashoggi was slain inside the Saudi Consulate in Turkey in an operation the Saudis claim was initially an effort to forcibly bring him back to Saudi Arabia.

The crown prince denies he had any knowledge of the operation, but Western intelligence agencies and the US Senate have declared the prince ultimately responsible for Khashoggi's killing. Aljabri's lawsuit follows years of silence by the former intelligence official, who left the kingdom quietly around the time his former boss, Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, fell from power. Prince Mohammed bin Nayef had been the kingdom's feared interior minister and was crown prince before he was ousted from the line of succession and stripped of his powers in 2017 by Prince Mohammed bin Salman, whose father is king.

SHORT CIRCUITS

BHUMI PEDNEKAR

What Mumbai saw in the last two days was devastating amount of rain. There were some places that were badly affected. The videos and articles are so scary and heart-breaking. This year has been a wake-up call. Development is important but there has to be a balance. Small changes make a huge difference.

MAHESH BABU

A kind request to my dear fans. I feel blessed and thankful to have all of you. I truly appreciate all the good deeds you do to make my special day worth remembering. Since we are battling a global pandemic this year, safety is indispensable. I request all my fans to avoid any social gatherings on my birthday. Please stay safe.

SHALMALI KHOLGADE

I keep away from controversy because I am rather focussed on making music, writing songs, finding various avenues to channelise my creativity. What else should I do? Pointing fingers on people will not do any good to music. I am not just here for making music in Bollywood. I look beyond that.

RAJA KUMARI

We shot *Peace*'s video in the middle of quarantine. Although I'm used to having a big crew on set to handle everything from location scouting to glam and make-up, all I had in LA was me and Shawn Thomas (long-time director and collaborator) and the help of my manager and assistant. It definitely was a challenge.

VAANI KAPOOR

Ayushmann is one of the most talented actors of our generation and I am only thrilled about our first film together to be this beautiful love story. I have always wanted to work with Abhishek Kapoor, being so inspired by his films. This feels like an amazing opportunity to be part of his vision.

CONVERSATION 45 MINUTES

BEYOND THE DARK WHIMS

Pakistani filmmaker ASIM ABBASI talks to SAKSHI SHARMA about how his leading women have given a positive spin to the term '*churail*' in his eponymous web series and the need to share stories about the under-represented

The term *'Churail'* has been used to refer to witches or to a woman who practises dark magic. You might have heard women being called as *churail, dayan, bhootni,* spellcaster and other such names for their "wrong" actions. But how often have you heard them being used to question the patriarchal status quo and represent strong-willed women?

Pakistani filmmaker Asim Abbasi, who is now foraying into the web series space with his series, *Churails,* believes that the term rightly represents his lead protagonists as it has nothing to do with dark magic. Says he, "The term has historically been used to label women negatively for their courage, aggression, ambition — all the qualities that I associate with a strong woman, were deemed negative. She is the uncanny outsider who comes to shake up the patriarchy. And it is the fear that she elicits in the guardians of the status quo (often men), that drives men to label them in a derogatory way. So our characters are taking this term, ripe with symbolic value, to give it a positive spin. Every woman, according to me, should aspire to be a *churail.*"

Set in Karachi, it is a story of four women from different walks of life who come together to open a covert detective agency to expose cheating husbands amongst the city's elite. These self-proclaimed women run their operations under the guise of a fashion store named 'Halal Designs' that specialise in conservative women's attire. As their operations expand, they come to be the saviours of abused, mistreated and harassed women, and their search for a missing girl brings them face to face with the exploitative world of talent agencies, escort services, and cosmetic companies. It features Pakistani actors Sarwat Gilani, Nimra Bucha, Yasra Rizvi and Mehar Bano. Excerpts:

❒ The series stars four women reeling from personal miseries who further open a detective agency under the pretext of a burqa shop. How did you conceptualise it?

The themes of gender politics, particularly power dynamics, between a man and a woman, and the resultant misogyny are topics that I wanted to address in my writing for a while. But I did not want the starting point of the series to be heavy-handed. I wanted the darkness to slowly creep in. So my natural, perhaps humorous inclination, was to first make my characters colourful spies, who gradually turn vigilantes. I was interested in talking about the lack of autonomy that a woman has over her body. Often in patriarchal societies, women are dressed and undressed at the whims of the society, and are being told what is appropriate and what is not. Hence, the store specialises in modest-wear for women to showcase this irony.

❒ The poster of the project has a caption: '*Hojayein tayaar, khwateen aur hazraat. Especially hazraat. Jald arahi hain kuch rangeen churailein, aapki deep-rooted misogyny ki band bajaanay.*' Another scene showed a sign at a store: 'Pets and men not allowed.' How do such strong statements establish the idea of the series?

The store titled 'Halal Designs' is a safe space that women have created for other women. The clients need to feel protected, hence, the idea of it not being open to men. The sign for the store is a replay of boards saying 'women and dogs not allowed' that actually existed in prestigious members clubs in the subcontinent before the Partition, under the British Raj.

❒ Your narratives have usually centred around strong female characters. Are there any personal instances that have shaped your choices?

I have grown up in a household of a lot of women and have been surrounded by them all my life. So I tend to gravitate towards their experiences. As a filmmaker, it is my duty to tell stories about those who are under-represented or the ones I believe are not represented fairly in the mainstream media. Female-centric stories on Pakistani television usually regurgitate the same trope about a damsel in distress who needs rescuing by a prince. Those stories are not a representative of the women I know. And those are not the stories I believe our daughters should grow up with.

❒ In one of your interviews you mentioned, "It's not message per se, I prefer to raise questions." What do you aim to achieve through your work?

Well, apart from entertaining audience by providing a thrilling, edge-of-your-seat experience, I hope that the show stays with them long after the 10 hours of viewing experience is over. They should be able to reflect on the questions the series raises. I wish them, particularly men, to become more open to working towards a more equitable society, where women are respected and treated fairly.

❒ There has been a surge of grey roles in online content now. Filmmakers and actors don't like putting characters in a box. Do you think the same can be said about your four leads?

Absolutely. I deliberately set out to tell a tale of four very flawed individuals. They are not always going to do the right thing. They are going to make mistakes and may not even apologise for them but these traits are all very human to have. All good content, which seeks to create empathetic characters that the audience can root for, should be moving away from the binaries of black and white.

❒ You had earlier said, "It's very difficult to put *Churails* into a genre. It's discussing serious issues, but the show itself doesn't take itself too seriously." What did you mean?

In terms of genres, I would say the series has elements of drama and thriller but I tend to find the whimsy in the darkest of moments, and I feel my work reflects that. The themes that the series addresses are posed as questions rather than preachy messages. My characters find something to smile about even when everything around them is falling apart.

❒ On the artistic front, are we ready to nurture cross-boundary collaborations, irrespective of the political environment?

Yes, because art has nothing to do with institutional politics. Its sole purpose is to provide a cathartic experience for the public by emphasising our shared humanity and it aims to do that by bridging the differences.

❒ Do you think the audience for the series might get affected from the Pak-India rivalries?

I don't think so. People on both sides of the border are well aware that they have similar life realities and are eager to have a dialogue and cultural exchange.

❒ Can we call this an opportunity for the country to attract other global platforms and entertain the idea of producing Pakistani content?

Absolutely. We have not had web content come out of Pakistan that could compete in the global market before. This is a small but important step in getting our stories out to the world. I am hopeful that it will attract more investment into Pakistani talent and filmmakers.

(The series will stream from August 11 on Zee5.)

STUDIO CHAT 15 MINUTES

Celebs go vocal for local

On the occasion of National Handloom day, Bollywood actresses including Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Kangana Ranaut, Vidya Balan, Dia Mirza, Taapsee Pannu and Janhvi Kapoor urge people to support Indian weavers and Indian organic fabric industries. The handloom sector is one of the major symbols of the cultural heritage of India.

"Most of us have more than we can consume. Fashion industry has become one of the most damaging industries for our environment. New challenges call for new resolves. Let's promote our own Indian organic fabric industries and preserve the planet. When we choose handloom, we choose to elevate our poor weavers out of poverty, we choose vocal for local, we choose our mother earth, we choose love for every single being on this planet," said Kangana via a tweet.

Vidya posted a few pictures in mustard silk saree on Instagram and wrote, "Let us all resolve to support our weavers across the country in these difficult times by buying and wearing their beautiful creations in our everyday life and also help keep #India'sHandloomLegacy alive. Appreciate the labour of love."

Priyanka posted a picture in a green saree and wrote on Instagram stories, "Indian handlooms are known to be unique and a work of craftsmanship. Let's lend our support to the weavers and artisans of the textile industry."

Janhvi shared an image of her most favourite handloom saree. "The weavers and artisans in our country are truly unmatched in skill and creativity. The best in the world," she wrote.

Dia Mirza said she is proud of Indian heritage. "Our weavers need all our support and love. This National Handloom Day, let's celebrate the rich legacy of our Indian weaves and textiles. There is nothing like a handloom saree," she wrote along with an image.

—With inputs from agencies

Open to new ideas: Anushka

Actor Anushka Sharma became the youngest female producer in Bollywood at the age of 25 with the clutter-breaking revenge thriller *NH10* and she has since then only shown her passion to tell remarkably new stories. From experimenting with genres to backing fellow outsiders to shine bright in Bollywood, Anushka, through Clean Slate Filmz, has been an entrepreneur who at her core, is a diverse storyteller.

Anushka feels her Army background has shaped her content choices majorly. "Being Army kids, we are always open to new ideas and all that travelling really helped us understand local stories. Such experiences has not only helped us in storytelling, but it also makes you look at things in different ways rather than a set societal perspective," says Anushka, who runs the business with her brother Karnesh.

She adds, "Watching films doesn't always help you understand movies better. Our life experiences have helped us in this business. We have approached everything with a fresh mind. If we have taken the less travelled path, it is because we have followed our instincts."

Anushka is riding on back to back successes as a producer with both *Paatal Lok* and *Bulbbul* doing incredibly well. She reveals that there is no formula for success when it comes to content production. "The business of production is very tricky and even the most experienced can't say that they have figured it out. You just learn from your mistakes. Even when things don't work the way you wanted, they give us learnings," says she.

RAISE THE BAR AT HOME

Here are some must-follow tips to set up your personal bar and enjoy your favourite cocktails at home. By ASMANI SUBRAMANIAN

A well-set bar is one thing every grown-up home should have. It is not just about honing skills to hosting some family and friends over for drinks, but also about taking some time out for yourself and enjoying a drink at home. Well, this applies the most to the times we are living in now. By setting up a bar at home, you wouldn't be missing your favourite cocktail at your most-visited outlet. The bar can also add an unexpected element of design to your home. But it will definitely be a space that will inspire you to try new things and upgrade your mixology skills.

WHERE TO BEGIN FROM

Creating a home bar isn't as intimidating as it may seem. An important step is deciding what you want to stock your bar with. However, there are a few more things to consider before making the jump from a few bottles of spirits and a chilled beer in your refrigerator, to several variety of liquor, mixers and tools on display in your home bar.

If space is a constraint to create a full built-in wet bar, you could always have a portable bar designed that will help you to move the essentials to the area of your gathering. A well-made cocktail trolley is the best fix. Be it a make-shift bar or a cocktail trolley, both are readily available in leading e-commerce portals to add to your cart. If nothing else, transform your already available wooden console table into a bar top table by just adding a simple yet aesthetic serving tray.

Once you have narrowed down on some space for your bar, the next step is to set a budget aside to arrange for all the must-haves including your choice of spirits, bar tools, bitters, glassware, mixers and garnishes — that is where the visual appeal kicks in!

WHICH SPIRITS TO GO FOR

The budget that you decide on will help you set a base for the spirits that will bring your home bar to life. I suggest adding different types of spirits to enjoy on various occasions and settings. It'll also help you master your skills at cocktail making as you will have a multitude of liquor categories to experiment with. Expert tip: Stock up on distinct flavours that will meet the wider spectrum of your audience.

THE ABSOLUTE MUST-HAVES

Scotch Whisky — A variety of some blended scotches, which have a distinct maturation element to them such as the Black Dog Triple Gold Reserve, a classic single malt such as the Singleton of Glendullan and a limited-edition collectable collection such as the Johnnie Walker Black Label Origin Series, are the liquids that add an extraordinary essence to the bar.

Trust me, there is no single way to enjoy whisky. It can be consumed in the manner you want and recent trends suggest that scotch cocktails are a great way for the new generation to venture into knowing whisky. Try to explore whisky cocktails and experiment with flavour notes available. If it's a social occasion like a brunch with a close group of friends or even a cozy movie night indoors, a Highball will accompany the mood perfectly. Expert tip: One such highball is also Johnnie Ginger — Simple, understated and easy to create at home.

Take a tall glass (highball) and fill it with ice. Add 45 ml of Johnnie Walker Red Label, top with ginger ale and drop in a slice of fresh ginger, orange or cherry to garnish.

Vodka — Another spirit perfect for cocktails. I would recommend having your choice of vodkas in your freezer. Frozen Smirnoff is great to try with any mixer but if you are looking for more complex flavours and wish to try your hand at a *Bloody Mary* cocktail, Ketel One Vodka will make it a well-rounded drink.

Gin — It is a great accompaniment when it comes to brunching. No one can go wrong with a classic gin cocktail. Tanqueray London Dry Gin will be a best choice to fix up a refreshing gin and tonic. Take 30 ml Tanqueray, 60 ml tonic, lots of ice in a wine glass with your choice of citrus fruit sliced up to garnish.

Other additional spirits which you can stock up your bar with are Rum and Tequila to serve at your indoor gatherings.

Vermouth — An element added to your bar for you to make a great martini with your choice of vodka.

Bitters — For enjoying your very own Negroni.

Important tip: Once you have set up your home bar, do try your hand at experimenting with mixology but remember to drink responsibly.

ESSENTIAL BAR TOOLS

Few things that you would need to enhance your mixology skills and serve some great cocktails for your friends and family are essential bar tools, glassware, shrubs and syrups.

Cocktail shaker: A cocktail shaker is essential to make sure you blend in all the ingredients of your cocktail. I would recommend that you invest in a three-piece shaker, which has an in-built strainer and helps in serving a drink, especially when you're short of time. If you are just starting out and don't have one, a 500 ml recycled bottle with a wide mouth works just as well and can result in preparing three serves at a time.

Jigger or peg measure: As a responsible host, it is always wise to measure every drink. This is especially useful in portioning out your cocktail when you are trying out a new recipe.

Pourers: Use a pourer while pouring your drinks into a glass to avoid spillage.

Cocktail strainers: A Hawthorne or Julep Strainer, that is simple in design, is handy to use for stirred cocktails. For those that are shaken, use a fine strainer (tea strainer) to filter the ice that breaks into ice chips while shaking or to separate fresh fruit and herb sediments that may float in your drink.

Muddler: While using local/seasonal fresh fruits and herbs in your drink, use a muddler to bring out the utmost freshness and juice of the ingredients.

Chopping board and knife: A wooden chopping board and sharp knife is useful while slicing fruit. A small knife and peeler helps to peel citrus fruits for garnishing. A *Cosmopolitan* is never the same without a fresh orange twist.

Bar spoon: A bar spoon is good to stir your martinis or to muddle the sugar cube in an *Old Fashioned*. Chopsticks also come in handy for stirring.

Mixing glass or pint glass: Who doesn't love a well-made, stirred, dry martini or a negroni in a fancy mixing glass? A pint glass or a recycled bottle works just as well.

Citrus press / Mexican elbow juicer: For all those who love their sour cocktails, use the right tools while making a sweet lime soda. A measure of gin makes it a Tom Collins or Gin Fizz.

Juice containers or punch bowl: This helps when you are hosting an intimate gathering for friends and family where you can pre-mix the cocktails and store them in the fridge.

Spill mat and kitchen towels: Very useful in keeping the surface clean as bar tops tend to get wet with spilt liquids pretty often. A mat keeps the moisture in check.

Ice cube tray: Ice is the most important element in a cocktail and big ice cubes help the drink stay chilled for a longer duration. Small paper cups or 100 ml steel tumblers make good alternatives. Expert tip: Don't add your ice until you're ready to shake or stir, melted ice makes the drink too weak and unenjoyable.

Glassware: The right glassware gives the best first impression of a great drink. Research reveals that beautiful glassware not only enhances the perception but also has a lasting impact. Here are some recommendations.

- A highball glass is great for tall drinks like whisky highballs, mojitos and vodka with OJ.
- For cocktails like *Old Fashioned* and straight drinks, a rocks or whisky glass is preferable.
- Some wine glasses for red/white wine or a gin and a tonic.
- A martini or a cocktail glass, which brings in the bond moment is a must-have.
- A beer glass serves as an excellent utility glass through the evening.

Mixers: Stock up on mixers that you enjoy to create simple and easy cocktails. This also works well for your guests who may look for something other than an alcoholic drink. Here are some mixers that one must have.

- Aerated drinks like soda water, tonic, ginger ale, lemonade
- Fresh and chilled fruit juices like orange, cranberry, pineapple, tomato
- Sweet and sour mix like margaritas, whiskey sours
- Equal parts of fresh lime or apple cider vinegar and sugar syrup work well too
- Having a selection of honey, preserves, shrubs and flavoured syrups in your pantry brings in complexity to your drink and never fails to wow your guests
- Spices and herbs help you add some the unique flavours to your drink
- Through local seasonal fruits, you can make a whisky sour right at home, throw in a bit of ginger to add plenty of complexity to the drink
- Using citrus fruits for garnishing are brings a sense of freshness to your drink. It's always great to have a bundle of kafir lime leaves or mint leaves as a brilliant garnish, uplifting the entire cocktail experience.

Essential bitters: What salt does to food, bitters do to your cocktails. Try stocking up on an Angostura bitter in you bar. If you can't find one, use your favourite spices, steeped tea or spent coffee in vodka gives your drink its own homemade tincture.

Well, one last tip: Drink and enjoy responsibly!

(The writer is the Brand Ambassador, Diageo India.)

RECIPES

STRAWBERRY, WALNUT & DATE SMOOTHIE

WHAT YOU NEED

- Strawberries (halved): 200 gm
- California Walnuts: 50 gm
- Pitted dates (roughly chopped): 3
- Natural yogurt: 100 gm
- Milk: 100 ml

METHOD

- Place all the ingredients in a smoothie maker or blender and blitz until smooth.
- Pour into two glasses.
- Serve sprinkled with extra chopped walnuts.

Courtesy: Chef Sabyasachi Gorai.

ALMOND PUMPKIN *KEBAB*

WHAT YOU NEED

- Pumpkin: 500 gm
- Green chillies (chopped): 1 1/2 tsp
- Garlic and ginger (chopped): 2 tbsp
- Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
- Cracked coriander: 1 tsp
- Red chilli powder: 1 tbsp
- Nutmeg powder: 1/8 tsp
- *Chat masala:* 1 tbsp
- Dry mango powder: 1 tbsp

- *Desi ghee:* 40 gm
- Almonds (slivered): 20 gm
- Almonds (chopped): 40 gm

METHOD

- Peel, de-seed and grate the pumpkin.
- Heat *desi ghee* in a thick bottom casserole pan and sauté ginger and garlic, green chilies, cumin seeds and all the spices.
- Add the pumpkin. Cook for 15-20 minutes till the water has dried out.
- Add the chopped almonds and cook for another five minutes. Let the mixture cool down. Cut them into rough, thin patties of 30 gm each. Coat them with slivered almonds.
- Heat *desi ghee* in a pan and place the patties in medium hot oil. Cook till the bottom is caramelised and then carefully turn the patties. Cook them till they are crisp from outside.

Courtesy: Chef Manish Mehrotra.

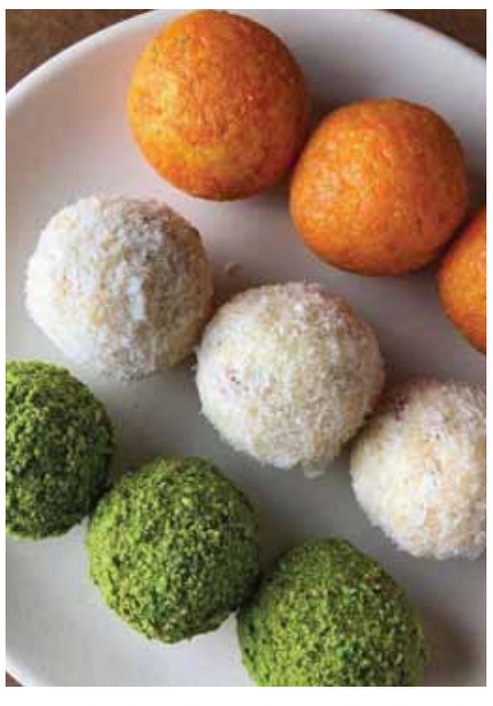
TRICOLOUR *LADDOO*

WHAT YOU NEED

- Desiccated coconut: 1.5 cup (additional 1/4 cup for garnishing)
- Sweetened condensed milk: 1/2 cup
- Clarified butter: 1 tsp
- Cardamom powder: 1 tsp
- Milk: 1 tsp
- Saffron (for orange colour): 2 tsp
- Pistachio powder (for green colour): 2 tsp

METHOD

- In a non-stick pan, heat *ghee* and add coconut. Stir it on medium heat until it turns golden brown.
- Take it out and add condensed milk in same pan, mix it well for a minute.
- Now add coconut in it and mix well until it observes the moisture. Keep stirring constantly, then add cardamom powder and mix well until the mixture becomes thick.
- Further take three equal portions of the mixture in different bowls.
- Add saffron milk in one, pistachio powder in second and keep the rest natural white. Cool down the mixture completely and make *laddoos* from it.
- Coat it with desiccated coconut and serve.



Courtesy: Head Chef Ritesh Shabani, Madchef.

SMOKED SALMON FISH CAKES

WHAT YOU NEED

- Smoked salmon: 400 gm
- Mashed potatoes: 300 gm
- Melted butter: 2 tbsp
- Wholegrain mustard: 2 tbsp
- Fresh dill (chopped): 1 tbsp
- Fresh parsley (chopped): 1 tbsp
- Fresh chives (chopped): 1 tbsp
- Lemon juice
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Flour (seasoned): ½ cup
- Eggs, beaten: 2
- Breadcrumbs: 1½ cups
- Oil: 100ml

METHOD

- Preheat the oven to 190 degree Celsius.
- Place the salmon in a roasting dish, cover with foil and place in the oven for 15 minutes to heat through.
- Flake the salmon with a fork and place in a large bowl together with the mashed potatoes, butter, and mustard. Mix well.

- Add the dill, parsley, chives, lemon juice and zest. Season well with salt and pepper and mix thoroughly.
- Divide the mixture into 12 portions and form into balls. Flatten each ball to about 1cm thick.
- Dip each fishcake in the seasoned flour, then the beaten egg and finally the breadcrumbs to coat each one.
- Fry the fishcakes in 2 tbsp oil over medium-high heat for five to eight minutes on each side until golden brown and crispy.

Courtesy: Le Creuset.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and ICC Chief Executive Manu Sawhney pose with the Women's World Cup trophy @cricketworldcup/Twitter

India to host 2021 T20 World Cup

Australia gets 2022; Women's 50-over WC now in 2022

PTI ■ DUBAI

India on Friday retained the right to host the 2021 T20 World Cup while Australia will conduct this year's postponed edition in 2022, the ICC announced on Friday after its board meeting, straightening out a schedule that went topsy-turvy due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This year's edition had to be postponed because of the raging pandemic, which has severely impacted all sports calendars globally.

"The International Cricket Council (ICC) today (on Friday) confirmed that the T20 World Cup 2020 that was postponed due to Covid-19 will be held in Australia in 2022. India will host the T20 World Cup 2021 as planned," the ICC stated in a press release.

The global body also confirmed that next year's women's ODI World Cup in New Zealand has been postponed until February-March 2022 because of the impact the pandemic has had on cricket globally.

ICC Chief Executive Manu Sawhney said: "We now have absolute clarity on the future of ICC events enabling all of our Members to focus on the rescheduling of lost international and domestic cricket.

"We will now proceed as planned with the Men's T20 World Cup 2021 in India and host the 2022 edition in Australia."

The format of the 2021 T20 World Cup will remain as it was for 2020 and all teams that qualified for that event will now participate in India in 2021.

A new qualification process will be started for the 2022 edition in Australia.

"BCCI were never keen to host the 2022 event which would have meant that they had to host back to back ICC events including the 50-over World Cup in 2023. That wasn't a viable option," an ICC Board member told *PTI*.

However, it was a big setback for the women's game with the much-awaited World Cup being pushed by a year.

Sawhney said the decision would "give players from every competing nation, the best opportunity to be ready for the world's biggest stage and there is still a global qualifier to complete to decide the final three teams.

An ICC Board member said that due to various countries facing different situations with regards to the Covid case load, it would have been difficult to hold the qualifiers in time.

The postponement also raises doubts about the future of India legends such as Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami, who probably would have played their last ICC tournament in 2021.

The decisions were taken by the IBC (the commercial subsidiary of the ICC) following an extensive contingency planning exercise which took into account the health, cricket and commercial impact of Covid-19 around the world.

The format of the postponed World Cup will remain as it was for 2021. Five teams have already qualified for the event and that will stand for 2022.

The original global qualification event to determine the final three teams to contest the event was scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka in July this year, but was postponed due to Covid-19.

The qualification event will now be held in 2021.

"There has been no women's international cricket played since the conclusion of the women's T20 World Cup earlier this year and due to the varying impact of Covid-19 globally that is likely to remain the situation for a number of the teams," Sawhney spoke about the impact of the pandemic.

"Moving the event by 12 months gives all competing teams the chance to play a sufficient level of cricket...So the integrity of the tournament is maintained."

Eng tour of India postponed until early 2021

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's white-ball series against England, scheduled at home in September-October, was on Friday postponed to early 2021 with both the boards citing the Covid-19 pandemic, which wrecked the international calendar and created space for the IPL during this window.

Both teams were scheduled to play three ODIs and as many T20s and the matches could now be held after the Test series between the two in India early next year.

The series was to be a preparatory one ahead of the T20 World Cup, which was originally scheduled from October 18 to November 5 in Australia, but has now been postponed.

"BCCI and ECB are in consultation with a view to confirming the 2021 schedules for an all-formats England men's tour to India to run from late January to late March and for India's Test tour to England due in the summer of 2021," the BCCI said in a statement.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah added: "The BCCI and ECB are working closely to finalise the day-wise schedule as we move towards the resumption of cricket.

The five-Test series to be hosted by India could be trimmed to four to accommodate the white-ball games next year.

Wolverhampton Wanderers' Conor Coady embraces Olympiakos' Omar Elabdellaoui after the Europa League match AP

Wolves send Olympiacos packing

AFP ■ WOLVERHAMPTON

Wolves battled into the quarter-finals of the Europa League on Thursday while Sevilla, Bayer Leverkusen and Basel enjoyed far more comfortable victories in the matches that brought the Europa League round of 16 to a belated close.

Raul Jimenez scored the only goal from the penalty spot in the ninth minute and Wolves survived a series of scares to edge Olympiakos 1-0 at Molineux for a 2-1 aggregate win in a tie that began in Athens on March 13.

At Molineux, Bobby Allain, the visitors' Franco-Scottish goalkeeper, failed to control a back pass in the seventh minute.

Daniel Podence, who scored for Olympiakos at Tottenham in September but moved to Wolves in January, darted in and stole the ball.

Allain clumsily bundled his former clubmate over and Jimenez converted the penalty.

The Greek champions created a string of chances but were thwarted by good saves by Rui Patricio, a tight offside decision and their own inaccurate finishing.

Wolves, who began their Europa League campaign on July 25 last year against Crusaders in the second qualifying round, will next face Sevilla at Duisburg on August 11.

Sevilla were also in Duisburg on Thursday where they took the lead against Roma after 22 minutes. Captain and right back Jesus Navas switched play with a cross-field pass to left back Sergio Reguilon that caught Roma flat-footed.

Reguilon surged past two defenders and into the box before sliding a low shot past Spanish goalkeeper Pau Lopez's foot.

Sevilla added a second on the counter-attack in the 43rd minute.

Lucas Ocampos burst down the right and after Lopez failed to cut out the low cross, Youssef En Neysri finished into an empty net from close range.

Sevilla, coached by former Spain boss Julen Lopetegui, dominated as they stretched their unbeaten run to 18 games in all competitions and kept on course to add to their record five Europa League titles.

In Basel, defender Fabien Frei scored the only goal in the 88th minute as the home team won 1-0 to complete an aggregate 4-0 victory over Eintracht Frankfurt.

In Leverkusen, Moussa Diaby scored the only goal after 51 minutes to complete a comfortable victory for Bayer, who won 3-1 in Glasgow in March.

In the quarter-finals, Bayer will make the short trip to Dusseldorf to face Inter Milan on August 10, Basel will play Shakhtar Donetsk in Gelsenkirchen the next night.

Pak opens 127-run lead

AP ■ MANCHESTER

England was bowled out for 219, a 107-run first innings deficit, after losing six wickets to Pakistan's leg-spinners on the third day of the first Test at Old Trafford on Friday.

At tea Pakistan stretched its lead by another 20 runs to take control despite Shan Masood's duck.

Ollie Pope's 62 was as good as it got for the England batsmen, with the majority of those runs scored on day two, with Yasir Shah claiming 4-66 and Shadab Khan taking the last two wickets.

England resumed the day on 92-4 with Pope and Jos Buttler hoping to continue the rescue mission they had started the previous evening.

Pope had 46 to his name when he walked out but almost fell short of his half-century, deflecting Shaheen Afridi over the top of the stumps in an early scare. He got there soon after, off 81 balls, but the first hour was little more than a trial for the home side.

Just nine runs came off the bat in that time, outscored by the 10 extras Pakistan contributed, with the three-pronged pace attack of Shaheen, Mohammad Abbas and Naseem Shah working up a head of steam.

Buttler edged the third ball of Naseem's spell just short of second slip but after that it was a string of plays and misses. Somehow the duo reached the drinks break without any crucial nicks and when both hit their first boundaries of the day there was a small hope they had weathered the storm.

Tentatively, the fifth-wicket stand crept up to 65, every run hard-earned, before Naseem produced a memorable delivery to claim his deserved reward.

Pope was hardly to blame, reeling back and fending to gully after the teenager got one to kick viciously off the surface. Barring an early blow to the helmet for new man Chris Woakes, the remainder of the session was better for England as they eased the score out to 159-5.

Buttler had scrapped his way through to 38 but fell to his second ball after lunch, leaving a gap between bat and pad that allowed Yasir enough room to part the stumps.

The experienced spinner was buoyed by the success and made short work of Dom Bess, producing the turn and bounce that left Asad Shafiq with a diving catch at slip. He claimed his third wicket of the spell and fourth overall when Woakes lost his patience and his shape, bowled for 19 swinging hard to leg.

England were in turmoil at 170-8t but had Stuart Broad to thank for two tail-end stands that added 49 to the total.

He finished unbeaten on 29, with three boundaries in a row off Shaheen and a slog-swept six off Yasir under his belt, but all-rounder Shadab did enough at the other end to see off Jofra Archer and James Anderson.

Broad then chipped in with the ball, getting Masood caught down the leg-side for a duck to go with his career-best 156 from the first innings.

Anderson should have made it two down by tea but Ben Stokes dived in front of Root and spilled the chance to leave Pakistan 20 for one.

1st Test, Day 4
Live from 3:30pm IST
SONY SIX NETWORK
England batsman Chris Woakes, right, is bowled out by Pakistan's Yasir Shah during the third day of 1st Test at Old Trafford on Friday AP

Barca may need youth to get past Napoli

AP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona vs Napoli
Live from 12:30am IST
SONY TEN 2 NETWORK

Barcelona coach Quique Setién says that he is ready to count on youngsters Ansu Fati and Riqui Puig to eliminate Napoli and advance to the Champions League final eight in Portugal.

Barcelona will be without midfielders Sergio Busquets, Arturo Vidal and Arthur for Saturday's second leg of their round-of-16 tie. The match will be played five months after the Spanish side earned a 1-1 draw at Napoli before the pandemic brought most sports to a halt.

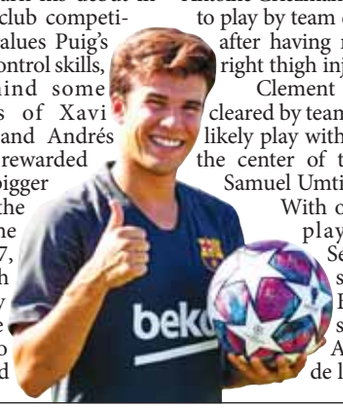
"Both Rique and Ansu are ready to play," Setién said on Friday. "They have performed and played pretty well and could perfectly well start (against Napoli). And if they do start, I am sure they will be guaranteed to play well."

The 20-year-old Puig has a good chance to earn his debut in Europe's top-tier club competition and Setién values Puig's passing and ball-control skills, which remind some Barca fans of Xavi Hernández and Andrés Iniesta, and rewarded him with a bigger role during the final stretch of the La Liga. Fati, 17, made a huge splash this season by becoming the youngest player to score in La Liga and the Champions League, among other precocious scoring milestones.

With Lionel Messi and Luis Suárez set to start in attack, Fati could get picked over fellow forward Antoine Griezmann, who was cleared to play by team doctors on Friday after having recovered from a right thigh injury last month.

Clement Lenglet was also cleared by team doctors and will likely play with Gerard Pique in the center of the defence with Samuel Umtiti still injured.

With only 13 first-team players available, Setién has called up seven members of Barcelona's youth squad, including American Konrad de la Fuente.



Sindhu, Praneeth & Sikki resume training

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

World champion PV Sindhu, along with B Sai Praneeth and N Sikki Reddy, hit the courts for training on Friday under strict safety protocols at the SAI Pullela Gopichand Badminton Academy in Hyderabad, ending a four-month-long coronavirus-forced hiatus.

This was after the Sports Authority of India (SAI) decided to resume the national badminton camp for the eight Olympic hopefuls following Telangana Government's approval on August 1.

"I am very happy to have our elite shuttlers back for on-field training after this long break. We are fully equipped to resume training in a safe environment," Chief national coach Pullela Gopichand said.

PV Sindhu poses for photograph after resuming practice at Pullela Gopichand Academy in Hyderabad on Friday

The eight Olympic hopefuls also include London Bronze-winner Saina Nehwal, former world No 1 Srikanth Kidambi, women's doubles player Ashwini Ponnappa and men's doubles pairing of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj. Saina, who is based in Hyderabad, didn't train on Friday, while the others, who had gone to their respective homes in March, and are yet to return to the city.

On Friday, Sindhu was the first one to train with Gopi and foreign coach Park Tae-Sang separately.

"Sindhu trained today from 6:30am to 8:30am. Gopi and Park were also present. She will be training everyday at the same time this week. In the evening, she will have her fitness training at Suchitra academy for agility and endurance," the Rio Olympics Silver-medallist's father, P V Ramana said.

"She has been training at home so physically she is in good shape but there are no tournaments till October, so she can afford to go easy, no point exerting too much. We have to be careful."

After Sindhu, Praneeth and Sikki also trained at the academy from 8:30 to 10:30 am.

Chirag-Satwik to wait for 2 weeks before deciding on attending camp

NEW DELHI: Wary of the Covid-19 threat, Olympic hopefuls Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy will wait for another couple of weeks before deciding on joining the national badminton camp, which resumed in Hyderabad on Friday.

The men's doubles pair is currently apart with Shetty at his home in Mumbai and Rankireddy lodged at his base in Amalapuram in Andhra Pradesh.

"It is great to hear that the training camp has resumed but we will have to wait for a couple of weeks before we take a call on joining the camp," the 23-year-old Shetty, who alongwith Rankireddy won the Thailand Open and finished runners-up at the French Open last year, told *PTI*.

Shetty said the coronavirus threat is real and he would not feel safe travelling at this point. Rankireddy is based closer to Hyderabad, which is just over 450km from his home town. **PTI**

Svitolina, Bertens withdraw from US Open

AGENCIES ■ NEW YORK

Women's world number five Elina Svitolina and Kiki Bertens, ranked seventh, on Friday joined a growing list of players withdrawing from this month's US Open due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"I understand and respect all the efforts they are putting to make it happen in a safe environment, but I still don't feel comfortable to travel to US without putting my team and myself at high risk," Ukrainian Svitolina, who reached last year's semi-finals in New York, said on Twitter.

The United States has close to 5 million cases of Covid-19 and almost 160,000 people have died.

"The situation around Covid-19 is still worrying and the health of everyone and the control over this virus is priority," said the 28-year-old Bertens on Instagram.

The US Open organisers are creating a bio-secure bubble in New York to hold the tournament from August 31 without spectators. But concerns remain about whether players would face mandatory quarantines upon returning home from the US Open.

"Our prime minister indicated yesterday that we should be quarantined for 14 days after coming back from the States," Bertens said.

"Of course we respect this as a team and this would disturb our preparation for my beloved clay court tournaments in Rome and Paris."

Murray, Clijsters get wild cards

WASHINGTON: Former champions Andy Murray and Kim Clijsters were on Thursday both handed wild cards for the US Open.

Former world No 1 Murray, currently ranked 129 after a lengthy period battling a hip injury, narrowly missed direct entry.

The 33-year-old won the first of his three Grand Slam titles at the 2012 US Open, becoming the first British male to win a major since Fred Perry in 1936.

While Clijsters will be looking to repeat her magic from the 2009 US Open, when she famously won the women's singles title as a wild card after returning from an initial retirement, during which she became a mother.

The three-time US Open champion (2005, 2009-10), who came out of a more than seven-year retirement earlier in 2020, will be playing the US Open for the first time since she stepped away from the game following the 2012 tournament. **AFP**

NSW offers to host 2021 Aus Open

SYDNEY: The Australian state of New South Wales (NSW) has offered to host the 2021 edition of the Australian Open alongwith other sporting events that are usually held in neighbouring Victoria.

The Australian Open is first of the four Grand Slams during the season and usually starts in late January. Victoria's capital Melbourne has been the host venue since 1972. However, the state is currently under a second lockdown and has nearly 8,000 active Covid-19 cases, while NSW has about 800.

"Some of these events down in Victoria are national events hosted in Victoria," NSW deputy premier John Barilaro told *2GB* radio. "It's important for the economy, important for the Australian psyche when it comes to sport.

"Absolutely we should be able to work with Victorians to find ways to make sure these all happen, these events are far too important in this crisis to not have." **IANS**

Manpreet, 4 other players test corona +ve

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian men's hockey team captain Manpreet Singh and four other players have tested positive for Covid-19 but the national camp will resume in Bengaluru as scheduled with those who are fit to train, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on Friday.

Besides Manpreet, defender Surender Kumar, Jaskaran Singh, drag-flicker Varun Kumar and goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak have also tested positive for the dreaded virus.

The players tested positive after returning to the national hockey camp at the SAI South Centre in Bengaluru following a month-long break.

A SAI source, however, said that the camp will resume from August 20 as planned with the fit players.

"As of now the camp is on and will resume as planned. The fit players can start their individual training and the players who have tested positive for Covid can resume later after recovering but they will have to pass a fitness test," the source said.

According to the SAI source all the players who have tested positive were part of a 10-member group who have travelled together and there are chances of more positve results come out.

The SAI further said that all the five players initially tested negative in the rapid test.

But when Manpreet and Surender began to show some Covid-19 symptoms, they along with 10 other players, who had travelled together, were made to undergo the Quantitative RT-PCR test on Thursday.

"...And the five have been found to be Covid positive. Though the test results have still not been handed over to SAI, but the state Government has informed the test results to the SAI authorities," the SAI said.