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USUAL SUSPECTS SWAPAN DASGUPTA

Media's influence on voting pick minimal

In the daily life of a nation, there are controversies and issues that have a very short life span. The pattern these days is for an issue or a stray remark to be noticed by a few over-zealous individuals, publicised in the social media — the new colloquialism is "going viral" — and then outraged over in the electronic or, more infrequently, the print media. The issue has a life span of anything between 36 and 48 hours and is then forgotten, only to be replaced by the next item of outrage.

Last week, West Bengal experienced such a three-day outrage over a remark by Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Maitra. The MP who also combines her constituency responsibilities and national public speaking roles with the more daunting post of being the president of the Nadia district TMC, was undertaking a meeting of polling booth committees in preparation for next year's Assembly polls. These events invariably tend to be chaotic, not least because too many people want to be seated on the dais and the media insists on access. It was this last issue that provoked Mahua to ask why the "two-paise media" had been granted access. Alas, in this age of over-intrusiveness, someone recorded her outburst on video and circulated it.

The results were predictable. Taking on the media as a collective is akin to taking on the might of a trade union. The outcome can never be satisfactory for any individual, least of all a politician. The MP for Krishnanagar was mercilessly berated on print, TV and the social media. The anger of the journalists was complemented by Bengali 'intellectuals' who, frustrated by their inability to attack the TMC directly — because it may end up helping the BJP in West Bengal — chose to direct their fire at one errant MP. They were helped by the fact that some TMC leaders were grudgingly forced to concede that Mahua should have been a bit more careful with her choice of words.

My own experience also suggests that the importance of the media in moulding public opinion is grossly over-stated by politicians. People in public life may feel irritated at the media's unending — and even needless — hostility towards them. The larger question is: does the coverage of a media organisation shape public perception or is public opinion moulded by people's own experiences? I personally believe that it is the latter. The media is important but not central to people's voting preferences

to the Bengali media, particularly at a time other advertising revenues are down. In short, they are repaying the TMC Government for the monetary lifeline that has been thrown at them.

I don't know the extent to which journalists working in media organisations favoured by the Chief Minister actually support the editorial stance of their proprietors. My own experience with the media suggests that there is a degree of alienation because journalists, being fiercely opinionated and with a self-image of intellectual independence, don't like being dictated to. This may explain the ferocity with which Maitra's stray comment was attacked. It also explains why a large number of individuals involved in the cultural life of Bengal joined in the outrage. Their target wasn't really one individual. The real focus of their attack was the Mamata Government. However, because this wasn't possible given the constraints that bind the media in the State, the guns were instead trained on Maitra. This is a familiar pattern in totalitarian states and it is amusing to see it being replicated in a corner of India.

My own experience also suggests that the importance of the media in moulding public opinion is grossly over-stated by politicians. People in public life may feel irritated at the media's unending — and even needless — hostility towards them. The Kolkata-based *The Telegraph*, a daily where I have been writing a fortnightly column since 2003 — without, I may add, any hint of censorship — is irrationally anti-Narendra Modi in its editorial views. Its front pages are often pamphleteering diatribes against Modi, a reason why the TMC loves it. However, in highlighting everything allegedly evil about the Modi Government, it glosses over local news that presents the State Government in an unfavourable light. The larger question is: does the coverage of a media organisation shape public perception or is public opinion moulded by people's own experiences?

I personally believe that it is the latter. The media is important but not central to people's voting preferences.

Farmers brace for long haul

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the farmers' protest at the borders of Delhi has yet not found a breakthrough even on the seventeenth day, farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, continued to protest on the borders of the national Capital amid showers on Saturday.

Addressing a Press conference at Singhu Border, farmers on Saturday said if the Government wants to hold talks, they are ready but the farmers will first discuss repeal of three new farm laws.

"The farmers from Rajasthan's Shahjahanpur will start their Delhi Chalo march on Sunday around 11 am. They would be coming in thousands through Jaipur-Delhi highway," said Kanwalpreet Singh Pannu, farmers' leader.

Pannu said farmers from other parts of the country are also on their way to join the protesters here and they will take the agitation to the next level in the coming days.

"If the Government wants to hold talks, we are ready, but our main demand will remain the scrapping of the three laws. We will move onto our other demands only after that," the farmer leader said.

Farmer union leaders will also sit on a hunger strike between 8 am and 5 pm on December 14 against the new agriculture laws, he said.

Pannu alleged the Government tried to weaken the agitation, but the protesting farmers did not let it happen. The farmer leader vowed to keep the protest peaceful.

Following the call given by farmers to block toll plazas, police had made adequate arrangements and these include multi-layered barricading and deployment as many as 3,500 police personnel.

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Farmers shout slogans during their Delhi Chalo protest march against the new farm laws at Singhu border in New Delhi on Saturday. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Agri laws will better farmers' lives: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after several Central Ministers alleged that "divisive elements" have infiltrated the farmers agitation on the outskirts of Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday strongly defended the new agricultural laws saying farmers would benefit the most from the investments in the agriculture sector and will also get new markets and opportunities.

Backing the new farm laws, Modi said all the walls between the agriculture sector and associated sectors have now been removed to provide new opportunities to the farmers across the country.

"Recent farm reforms will

give farmers new markets, access to technology and help bring investments in agriculture that will benefit them," he said as protesting farmers persisted with their demand for rolling-back of three farm laws which allow trade and contract-farming in the agriculture produce and remove all restrictions in hoarding by amending essential services act.

"In a vibrant economy, when a sector grows, it has a direct influence on other sectors as well. Reforms that we're doing are removing all such needless frameworks. Our economy doesn't need hurdles between sectors, but bridges to support each other," said the Prime Minister.

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More coming from across nation to join stir; hunger strike on Mon

India being tested in LAC stand-off, says Jaishankar

'Country will rise to occasion and meet challenge'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Termining the "events" along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) very disturbing, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday said India was being tested in the seven-month long standoffs with China in Eastern Ladakh.

Making this observation here, he, however, expressed confidence that the country will rise to the occasion and meet the challenge. This assertion came two days after he had said the relations between India and China were at their worst phase in the last 30-40 years.

In an interactive session at the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Jaishankar also said what has happened in eastern Ladakh was not actually in China's interest as it has significantly impacted public sentiment in India.

Calling the "events" along the LAC very disturbing, the External Affairs Minister said they have raised some very "basic concerns".

Asked whether it will be a long haul or a breakthrough is expected soon, Jaishankar said: "I would not go into prediction zone at all whether it is going to be easy or not, and what will be the timelines and so on."

"I also believe that what has happened is not actually in the interest of China. Because what it has done has significantly impacted public sentiment (in India). Professionally, I have seen the evolution of how the Indian public feels about China over the last many decades and I am old enough to remember much more difficult days, espe-



cially in my childhood and in my teens," the Minister said.

Jaishankar said a lot of work had gone into developing the relationship on both sides. "I do not believe that the events of this year have helped at all. In fact I think the real danger is that the goodwill which was so carefully developed will dissipate."

"But I also would say that, yes, we are being tested. I have every confidence that we will rise to the occasion; we will meet that national security challenge. But beyond that, at this time, I would really frankly keep my own counsel," Jaishankar said.

His comments came in the backdrop of talks at the military and diplomatic level to defuse the situation at the 1,700 km long LAC in eastern Ladakh failing. The ninth round of Corps Commander level talks between India and China are likely to take place soon.

Though India has all along favoured dialogue to address the outstanding issues, its forces are operationally ready to meet any challenge. The Army has deployed specially trained troops in mountain warfare in Ladakh besides ensuring uninterrupted logistical back up.

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MHA calls back 3 IPS officers responsible for Nadda's security

Move is likely to escalate tussle between Centre, Mamata Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after West Bengal's Chief Secretary and DGP denied the summons, the Union Home Ministry on Saturday directed three IPS officers of West Bengal to report on Central deputation. The three officers — Bhalanath Pandey, SP of Diamond Harbour;

Praveen Tripathi, DIG of Presidency Range and Rajeev Mishra, ADG of South Bengal — were responsible for the security of the BJP chief JP Nadda, whose motorcade was attacked by the TMC cadre.

The move is likely to further escalate the ongoing tussle between the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress Government in West Bengal and the BJP-led Central Government following the attack on the convoy of Nadda two days ago.

"Three Indian Police Service officers belonging to the West Bengal cadre have

been called to serve in Central deputation in view of the lapses that led to the attack on Nadda's convoy in West Bengal," an MHA official said.

The decision has been taken under the rules governing the all India service officers, the official said. Usually, the State Government's consent is taken before any all India service officer is called to serve in Central deputation.

In February 2019, Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar was also in a similar way repatriated to Central deputation.

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People walk on a snow-covered bridge after the town received fresh snowfall in Srinagar on Saturday. PTI

Lalu's kidney functioning at 25%, situation alarming: Doc

Ranchi: The physician of jailed RJD chief Lalu Prasad, Dr Umesh Prasad, on Saturday said that the latter's kidney is functioning at 25 per cent and the situation can deteriorate at any time in future.

Dr Prasad has updated the authorities of Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), where Lalu is admitted, in writing about this situation.

"I have said earlier also that it is true that Yadav's kidney is functioning at 25 per cent. And this situation is alarming from this logic that his kidney functioning can deteriorate anytime. It is difficult to predict exactly when," he told ANI.

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'My fight is an expression of loyalty to zamindars'

SWARN KR ANAND ■ NEW DELHI

My fight is an expression of my loyalty to the 'zamindars' (farm owners), on whose well-being our lives hinge on," explains Mahak Bhatia, 25, who is part of the sit-in by a huge crowd of farmers protesting against the three farm laws, at Delhi's Singhu Border, "I have to support their cause as the new farm laws will not only affect their income, but will also destabilise the socio-economic system that has worked well till now. And this is the compulsive urge that has brought me and thousand others here."

The resident of a village of Tohana in Fatehabad, Haryana, and the only son of his mother, Mahak recently lost his job with Cafe Coffee Day in Chandigarh during Covid-triggered economic slowdown and



Farm law protesters in conversation with The Pioneer at Singhu Border in Delhi. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

is seeking a "non-farming" employment in Delhi-NCR. However, his primary occupation at present is to actively

completely broke. I don't have any means of sustenance of my own, but I am grateful to my zamindars for ensuring my mother and I have no scarcity of food. I have never been a farmer nor I have any farm land, but the landed farmers always take care of us. Now it's my turn to reciprocate their immense help by raising my voice against the maleficent laws that will diminish the riches of the 'zamindars' and in turn affect our lives," Mahak articulates, feeling assured that his loyalty will be acknowledged.

However, he quickly corrects himself on the word "zamindars". "They are all farmers but they employ farm workers as there are various other jobs to do in the farms. We live in the same village and we have cordial and fair rela-

tions. All are equal in the village. You can witness the cohesion here. All of us who have gathered here come from different backgrounds, castes and regions. But everything here is for everyone," Mahak clarifies, but hesitates to let the camera snap a photo of his puffing on the community hookah. His comrades-in-arms on the carpet, however, encourage him to smoke the pipe for a group photo.

"Even non-farming communities have thrown their weight behind the groundswell of support for the farmers. I will soldier on till the farmers feel safe," says Mahak.

There are many like Mahak from non-farming communities bogged down in the morass of popular antipathy to the farm reform laws.

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HOME THEATRE

Thriller helmed by women



A CALL TO SPY
Amazon Prime Original
*ing: Radhika Apte, Sarah Megan Thomas, Stana Katic
Rated: 7/10

War-time spy thrillers come with their own shades of a bygone era of conquest and cruelty. *World War I* stars in such big screen saga in a big way and pretty often but this one comes as a women's special, made even more special by the sterling performances of all the ladies involved — one Jew, the other part Indian and yet another a French woman. These three women are employed for the first time ever in war territory, by British establishment, and the three of them, guided by a Jewish head of

operations back in London, weave a story that keeps you on edge despite the slow moving events. Radhika Apte as a sufi signals woman stands out not just because of her exotic looks but also because of her short spunky performance in a role that is small but highly impactful. The arresting thing about this spy story is the fact that it is helmed by women, unthought of in that era. The story has been spun from a no-nonsense to the bone plot which leaves no space for pauses. So sit tight and enjoy this true story of spies who wore skirts, were courageous, innovative and determined to save the world from Hitler and his dreaded Gestapo even as country after country falls to the Jewish pogrom.

Confusing humdrum

I AM YOUR WOMAN
Amazon Prime Original
*ing: Rachel Brosnahan, Arinze Kene, Marsha Stephanie Blake, Bill Heck, Frankie Faison, Marceline Hugot, James McMenamin
Rated: 4/10



This underworld story, not so much about the underworld, but its fallout on the families of criminals, is slow moving, a bit boring and sometimes confusing. In the end, however, it grows on you as the story progresses. A desperado does shockingly loving things like presenting a child to his wife who can have her own. Then he vanishes, leaving his wife and the little one to go on the run.

The story goes on in the badlands of a 70s America where co-criminals are on the hunt for the wife of this desperado Eddie to find out where he is. The run gets interesting when an ex-wife pops up along with a son and lover who is helping the women be safe. Not too much of anything to write home about.

Has heart in right place



TORBAAZ
Netflix
*ing: Sanjay Dutt, Nargis Fakhri, Rahul Dev
Rated: 5.5/10

Here is a film that has a lot of promise and after a bit of a shaky start, it manages to suck one into the lives of those who have lost everything and hence hope and chance to pick themselves up and start over in a war-torn country like Afghanistan where the

only hope for the children is to not get sucked into a system that will put them on a path of death and destruction. Girish Malik's *Torbaaz* takes you on a journey that is full of emotions, has a message, is touching and told from a very different fresh perspective. It is rare for Hindi cinema to tell such powerful stories. But then it has kids, there is bound to be a message and some tears involved. It is good to see Sanjay Dutt play a man who plays the role of an Army man here and despite his personal loss is able to once find purpose when he comes in contact with the children in a refugee camp. His transformation from a man who wants nothing to do with a country where he suffered a loss to a man who is willing to give up his life for the sake of one change for the kids is not without making one sentimental and find a connection— how a parent would do anything to protect his kids and give them a purpose. Together with the kids who give a stellar performance, Dutt carries the movie on his shoulders rather well. Sadly, Nargis Fakhri doesn't have much to do here. Rahul Dev plays the part of the Taliban well. His body language makes him fit for the role. The barren landscape is in keeping with the whole idea of how desolate the lives of the people in refugee camps are and how little they have in terms of a good future. Overall a movie for those who are love good subject and content.

— Shalini Saksena

Low on scare quotient

DURGAMATI: THE MYTH
Amazon Prime Video
*ing: Bhumi Pednekar, Arshad Warsi, Jisshu Sengupta, Mahie Gill
Rated: 5.5/10

The general premise is that remakes never live up to the expectations of the people. This is because one expects Bollywood to do a better job done by makers from regional cinema. Or it could be that since there are more Hindi speaking audience. But the truth is that if one has already seen something, the copy is never better. The original *Dev Das* was much better or should one say closer to what was in the book by Sarat Chandra. So *Durgamati...* directed by G Ashok, is not an exception to the case in point for those who have seen the Tamil-Telugu version... *Bhaagamathi* directed by him. This is a tad strange why a director who gave a better version in the original version would fail to evoke the same enthusiasm and not better his fare; that is the whole point of a remake — to make the next one better. More so since it is the Hindi version. The problem here is not that Bhumi Pednekar has failed to give her best, she has done a great job. The problem here is that there is very little when it comes to the scare quotient. Those that are there don't manage to give you goosebumps. A haunted house, a witch and a folklore steeped in history, all fall flat due to cliches. Then there is the whole how a politician can never be honest; but here he can't do anything wrong. We have seen enough Bollywood movies that what one sees is not the truth. Hence what happens at the climax is not a surprise. Not good for a crime thriller. Still all is not lost here if one has not seen the original version. For them, *Durgamati...* is a welcome change. But if one is watching it for horror one will be disappointed.

— Shalini Saksena



TELLY TALE

FACE THE ELEPHANT'S WRATH



Sony SAB's fantasy show *Baalveer Returns* is set to take an astonishing twist as the upcoming episodes guarantee thrill with each scene. After failing to lure Vivaan (Vansh Sayani) into his trap, Ray is planning an attack on Baalveer (Dev Joshi) and Vivaan's society with the help of a Siberian elephant. The forthcoming episodes are ready to take the viewers on an adventurous ride as Vivaan's mother Karuna (Jaya Binju) becomes a victim to a mother elephant's wrath.

After a grand comeback, Baalveer returns to Veer Lok with his original powers. Frustrated with his failed attempt of keeping Baalveer dead, Ray (Shoaib Ali) schemes his next havoc on earth with the help of a Siberian elephant. Ray transforms himself into Vivaan and takes away the baby elephant from its mother. An agitated and furious mother elephant marches to the society in search of Vivaan and destroys everything on her way.

Baalveer tries to stop the elephant, but his powers fall short, and he soon realises the situation is out of his control. The elephant marches towards Vivaan to kill him, but Karuna instantly stands in front of Vivaan to protect him. The elephant instead takes away Karuna along with her.

How will Debu and Vivaan save Karuna and find the baby elephant? Dev Joshi, essaying the role of Baalveer said, "It was exciting to make a comeback as Baalveer. Playing the ghost was an entirely new experience in itself but I certainly missed wearing my Baalveer costume. The upcoming episodes are exciting and a visual delight in itself. Debu and Vivaan will be in a fix as Karuna has been taken away by an angry Elephant and now their biggest task is to find the baby Elephant to bring Karuna back. But the real struggle is the fact that both Vivaan and Debu have no idea of the baby elephant's whereabouts. It will be interesting to watch how they try to find the baby elephant and if they'll be able to save Karuna on time."

SIKANDAR FINE WITH AUDITIONS
ALTBalaji & ZEE5's recently released *Mum Bhai* has been the talk of the tinsel town ever since the series has been dropped on the leading OTT platforms. Apart from the stylish setting of the '90s, the one factor that has won the hearts of the fans is the enthralling characters of the show. Needless to say, audiences are loving

the look of Sikandar Kher, who plays Rama Shetty, a criminal and on-screen best friend of the protagonist, Angad Bedi, a cop. Depicting the underworld era, the narrative of the show revolves around the friendship between a cop and a criminal, and has become an instant success!

But did you know that Sikandar Kher was almost not cast for the role of Rama Shetty? Kher recently revealed that the makers of the show had almost selected someone else for the show. "I gave the audition for the show and did not receive any confirmation for a long time. Much later, Apoorva Lakhia, a dear friend and one of the creators of the show, called to ask why I did not inform him about the audition. I didn't want anyone to refer me for the role or call people to zero down on



me for the role. They had almost selected someone else for the role, but later chose me for Rama."

Speaking about giving auditions for shows, Sikandar said, "I am an actor, and it is a part of my job to give auditions. Much bigger actors in Hollywood are called for auditions, and they do it graciously. The same goes with me, if I get direct calls for the role and I like the role, I accept the offer, or else, I have no problem in auditioning for the same."

Streaming on ALTBalaji and ZEE5, *Mum Bhai* is a crime drama that dives into the Mumbai underworld. The narrative revolves around the friendship between a cop and a criminal, set in the milieu of Mumbai's underbelly from the late eighties to early 2000.

STUDENTS SPECIAL WEEK ON KBC

The upcoming week on *Kaun Banega Crorepati* (KBC) will welcome some of the brightest young minds from across the country, as they channelise their power of knowledge on the Hot Seat. It comes at a time when live online learning emerged as a key leveler of knowledge in these unprecedented times and helped kids continue learning engagingly. This Students Special Week on KBC will see kids between the age group of 10-16 years take the Hot Seat by a storm! Will the audience get to witness a young crorepati?

Facilitating this Students Special Week, Vedantu, a popular Live online learning platform, conducted V Quiz — a



live Host quiz on its platform. Students who participated in this quiz, played consistently and maintained top scores, qualified to be featured on *KBC*. With a high level of participation and engagement, Vedantu witnessed a two fold increase in its daily active users and nearly five times increase in daily V Quiz attendees. From amongst the ones who qualified, eight students will be seen contesting for the Hot Seat.

KBC has gone beyond its capacity as a show year after year, putting the common man at the forefront and celebrating human virtues of self-belief, patience, perseverance, courage, confidence, optimism and intelligence. This season has been no different with people from various walks of life who considered setbacks as a stepping stone for a greater comeback and won Big! In this season, *KBC* has witnessed three *crorepatris* already.

EXPLORING LOCALES OF PATIALA

Star Plus has announced the launch of its new serial, *Shaurya Aur Anokhi Ki Kahani*, which will go on air in December. It is the story of Anokhi Bhalla (played by Debattama Saha) an ordinary, young girl from small-town Punjab who has very ordinary dreams like having a career and becoming independent. However, she faces numerous challenges from the deeply patriarchal and chauvinistic society. Karanvir Sharma (Shaurya Sabharwal) and Debattama Saha (Anokhi) who will soon be seen essaying lead roles in the show have recently spent a few days shooting the opening episodes in Patiala which is Punjab. The entire shoot in Patiala was conducted with utmost precaution ensuring the safety of the cast and crew members.

Talented actor Karanvir Sharma who shoots for his first outdoor sequence amid the pandemic shares his experience and much more. "We began shooting for the show a few days back in Mumbai although few scenes from the opening sequence were balanced as they were required to be shot in a real location to give viewers an authentic feel. Also since the show depicts a Punjabi background, an outdoor shoot was decided to be held especially in Patiala. My co-star, Debattama, and I along with a small cast and crew traveled to Patiala. We shot for a few days and returned to Mumbai safely. It was indeed a memorable experience."

'It was fun to be part of a teleplay'

From Dev Malik in *Des Mein Nikla Hoga Chand* to Ambar Sharma in *Mere Dad Ki Dulhan*, it is always a pleasure for the viewers to see VARUN BADOLA on screen. MUSBA HASHMI chats up the actor for his teleplay *Wrong Turn*

■ What is your role in Zee Theatre's teleplay Wrong Turn?

I play a man who is caught in a wrong situation. He gets stuck in a snowstorm and decides to take refuge in a bungalow where four friends, who are retired lawyers, play a mock trial with everyone who visits that bungalow. They tell my character that you won't be able to move out from this place till morning because of the snowstorm, so why don't you join us in the game. They do a mock trial and find my character guilty of the murder and try to prosecute me. This is what the whole story is and how the story pans out is interesting to watch. It is actually the adaptation of a German play, *Breakdown*.

■ How interesting was to be a part of such a story?

It was fun. The interest quotient lies in the way the story progresses. The process of making that character and evolving it over time was also thrilling. We rehearsed for it for 20 odd days. That was extremely fun because it was something we don't get to do in TV or films. That part was interesting.

■ What made you take up a teleplay?

The reason was that I wanted to explore this genre as well. It's been a long time since I have been on stage and have performed in continuity. It is different feel to shoot something in one go. That was something that attracted me towards this teleplay. And Thank God that I said to it because it was a fantastic experience.

■ You don several hats, that of a writer, director and an actor. Where do you find yourself most comfortable in?

There is no comfort zone as such. Every field demands a different amount of dedication. When you are acting, you have to justify your character. Only if you will justify the character, you will justify the story. As a writer, you have to create all the characters, so that the actors can justify them on screen. And as a director you have too see



There is no internal conflict between a writer and an actor in me. Because ultimately there is one brain which is driving both of them. But yes, the writer in me does help the actor in a lot of ways

everything. **■ Is there a conflict between the writer, director and actor in you?** There is no internal conflict between a writer and an actor in me. Because ultimately there is one brain which is driving both of them. So while donning these two hats, one has to be completely bipolar to negate yourself. But yes, the writer in me does help the actor in a lot of ways. At times, while doing TV, one tend to gets stuck. The idea here is not to get technical but find solutions to the problems. Here the writer does help you get out of tricky situations a lot of times. **■ In all these years of your career, is there a change that you have seen in the TV industry?** Yes. There were times when TV got better, than it saw for improvisations. **■ How do you define acting?** It is a simple thing. Read what is written, understand it and just do it on camera. That is all. Then comes the interest quotient of course. It is like you have to write ABC only, but it is up to you how fancy you want it to be. It is your choice to play with the fonts and styles. You can keep on beautifying it. The best thing about acting is that there can be hundreds of interpretations of a single situation. One can cry in a lot of ways and laugh in a lot of different ways and each way will portray a different meaning. **■ Yes. There were times when TV got better, than it saw**

a downfall and vice versa. It has seen both ups and downs. Many things have been improved now. But if I talk about the time, when I used to watch TV and DD was the only channel, I feel probably we had better stories to tell back then. Then came a time when everything became content-driven and we shifted to commercialisation. A lot of things got ruined during this shift. Now, we are going towards resurrection, though at a small level. **■ Do we need entertainment for seven days a week? Why not take inspiration from international series and make them time bound?** Like I mentioned before, when we will shift from being content-driven to commercially-driven we will see this happening. The reason is the priority now is not to show good content, but to not let go the huge chunk of audience that you have received, even at the cost of compromising on the quality. This mindset needed a change yesterday or even day before yesterday, but we don't let it happen.

Farmers force open Gzb toll gates for free ride

STAFF REPORTER ■ GHAZIABAD

On the seventeenth day of the farmers protest, the farmers freed the tolls in the Ghaziabad area. Following the call given by farmers, they were stationed at all the toll points in Ghaziabad and let the vehicles pass through it without any payment.

Farmers on Saturday also took out a protest march on the UP-Gate. The farmers started gathering at Pilkhua and Duhai toll plazas since morning.

There was heavy police force deployed at both the tolls. Despite this, the farmers completely free both tolls as per the schedule. During this time, the farmers took out vehicles for two hours at both the tolls

without paying any toll.

Although the officials present on the spot tried to convince the farmers and even forbade them to do so, the farmers refused to obey them and freed the toll.

Meanwhile, during the agitation, an ambulance arrived during the farmers' strike on NH-9, to which the farmers gave way. Farmers stayed on NH-9 even in the mild drizzle in the morning.

At the same time, agitating farmers intensified the agitation today demanding the repeal of the Agricultural Law under the flyover at UP Gate. According to the announcement, farmers mostly made toll plazas free. The toll on all roads connecting Delhi was made free.



Delhi Covid daily count down 1,935

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital on Saturday reported 1935 new cases of Covid-19 taking the total number of people infected with Coronavirus to 605470 while the positivity rate came down to 2.64 per cent.

According to the health bulletin, which details information about the fresh cases registered in the last 24 hours, 73413 tests (32578 RT-PCR, CBNAAT and True NAAT tests figures; 40835- Rapid Antigen). The number of containment zones stood at 6451.

As per the bulletin released by the Delhi government, 578116 patients have recovered, been discharged or migrated so far, while number of active cases stood at 17373, it said.

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain said that the third wave of covid in Delhi is on the wane and urged everyone to continue following the precautions to effectively combat the virus.

"November 7 was the peak of the third wave in Delhi. The positivity rate was 15.26 per cent on that day, which has been on the perpetual decline ever since. For the past 10 days, the positivity rate has been below five per cent. I can say



that the third wave is on the wane. More than 70,000 tests however are still being carried out," the health minister had said on Friday.

"The situation is very much under control, but still, I will request you all to wear a mask, follow social distancing. Wearing a mask will help us in eradicating the virus from the city. I applaud the citizens for their continued support, as well as the healthcare workers who have been working tirelessly," he added.

As per the bulletin, 94 beds in COVID care centres are occupied by persons under quarantine, including travellers who have returned by Vande Bharat Mission and bubble flights, it said.

₹2,500 cr fund waiver by North Corporation

AAP demands CBI enquiry

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday demanded a CBI enquiry in the matter of allegedly waiving Rs 2500 crores by the North Corporation which was payable by South Delhi Municipal Corporation.

AAP MLA and senior leader Atishi said that the councilors and MLAs of AAP will visit the Lieutenant Governor and Home Minister on Sunday to demand CBI inquiry into the matter and wait outside their residences till they do not issue orders for inquiry into the loss of public exchequer of Rs. 2500 crores.

"The Delhi Police allowed BJP councilors to sit outside Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence. I am sure they will allow us to sit outside the LG's and Home Minister's residence at 11 AM tomorrow," she added.

Addressing the media, she said, "On one hand, BJP-led North MCD constantly claims that they do not have money and are incapable of paying salaries to the doctors, nurses, sanitation workers and other staff, but on the other hand, they can waive off Rs. 2500 crore which was payable by South Delhi MCD."



The AAP leader further said, "If you check the accounts of South MCD of the last many years, they clearly state that Rs. 2500 crore was the payable rent for the SDMC office at Civic Center. But in this year's budget, the rent payable is shown as zero. The question that now arises is where are these Rs. 2500 crores? Where has this money been appropriated? Which North MCD BJP leader and South MCD BJP leader received money to turn these Rs. 2500 crores into zero? These Rs 2500 crores which were to come to the North MCD have reduced to a loss to the public exchequer. Who is responsible for this loss, this corruption?"

Replying to a question, Atishi said, "The sit-in protest by the BJP mayor and its councilors for the last few days, demanding an outstanding amount of Rs. 13000 crores is baseless. The Delhi government does not owe anything to the MCD."

Experts discuss ways to treat, manage spinal injury

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Thawar Chand Gehlot on Saturday inaugurated the 20th International Spine and Spinal Injuries Conference (ISSICON 2020: Virtual), where medical experts from all over the world gathered to discuss the challenges of treating and managing spinal injury patients and way ahead in the aftermath of global Covid-19 pandemic.

With increasing spinal injuries due to road accidents and its changing pattern in the developing world, surgeons and experts attending ISSICON 2020 virtually deliberated on various

ways to cushion the impact of COVID-19 pandemic among the spinal cord injury (SCI) patients and their reintegration in workforce for economic self-reliance. The five-day conference is being organised by the Indian Spinal Injuries Centre (ISIC), New Delhi in collaboration with the Spinal Cord Society.

"According to estimates, India records about 20,000 new cases of spinal cord injury. It is important to treat them comprehensively and manage their condition. But at the same time, it is important that they do not remain dependent on others. At a time when the world has moved inside and working from their homes, spinal injury

patients should not be left behind or out. I am happy to know that the best professionals have gathered here to deliberate on this," said Gehlot.

"The mission of ISSICON 2020 is spreading awareness and prevention of spinal injury, provide education and training, as well as social inclusion and community outreach for people with spinal injury, especially in this extraordinary situation. The whole world has changed in past 12 months. I hope that the vaccine will be available throughout the world and not just in wealthy countries," says Dr Ruth Marshal, president of International Spinal Cord Society.

Dr H S Chhabra, president - Association of Spine Surgeons of India, Secretary - Spinal Cord Society and Chief of Spine Service and Medical Director of Indian Spinal Injuries Centre said "Spine problems in developing countries are increasing at a rapid pace - road traffic injury deaths have increased by six times during the last 5 years. Besides, with better socio-economic conditions, the pattern of spine injury is changing. The conference helped us gather knowledge from the best practices followed around the world for better preventive, surgical as well as rehabilitative care and comprehensive treatment", he added.

Work at Naraina's Loha Mandi to be completed within 3 months: Min

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Am Aadmi Party MLA from Rajinder Nagar Raghav Chadha on Saturday inaugurated the development work of gates and inner roads at Naraina's Loha Mandi.

"The inner roads at Loha Mandi required serious redevelopment. In fact, for the last 25 years, this area in Loha Mandi was in shambles. I am happy that this will be resolved in three months and the residents will no longer face road-related problems now. In addition, the entry and exit gates are clear demarcations, which will add to the beautification of the area", Chadha said.

"The work related to the inner roads and the gates at the

Loha Mandi, Naraina will be completed within three months. All I ask for is three more months, and the issues that residents of Loha Mandi have been facing with respect to the condition of the roads will cease to exist," he said.

Addressing the residents, Chadha said, "While on the one hand, state governments are facing severe financial constraints across the country and funds for MLAs are being withheld. I want to assure every resident of my constituency that no development work will be stopped or halted here due to paucity of funds. It is my responsibility to raise necessary funds for the development of Rajinder Nagar and I will continue to do so."

DU girl student dupes neighbour of ₹2.38L, held

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi University (DU) Bachelor of Arts (BA) student had been arrested by the Delhi Police for allegedly duping a neighbour to the tune of Rs 2.38 lakhs in National Capital. The 20-year-old girl is a resident of Nehru Vihar area and she is a student of Bachelor of Arts (BA) from School of Open Learning in DU.

According to Anto Alphonse, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), North district, a complaint was received in which the complainant alleged that during lockdown when he checked his mother's savings bank account there was zero balance.

"Following this, he contacted the Bank at Mukherjee Nagar and found out that Rs 2,38,000 were deducted from his mother's account between November, 2019 to March, 2020. The complainant also checked messages for deduction in her mother mobile number but was not able to find any such message. The complainant made a complaint in Bank regarding unauthorised transaction, where he came to know that transactions were OTP secured, which were

sent to registered mobile number in bank," said the DCP.

"A case under section 379/420 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) at Timarpur police station and investigation was taken up. During investigation, it was revealed that the money was transferred from account to PayTM. Notice was also sent to PayTM which provided relevant details following which the beneficiary was identified as Swati (name changed), who is also a neighbour of the victim," said the Deputy Commissioner of Police.

"Bank Account Statement of Swati was also collected and it was found that money was transferred from PayTM to her bank account. Subsequently she was apprehended," said the Deputy Commissioner of Police.

"During interrogation, the accused confessed to her crime and told police that after helping the victim to activate her new debit card, she also added the card in her PayTM account. She after transferring the money deleted OTP messages from the victim's mobile phone. She spent the money on buying clothes, household items, food and recharge," said the Deputy Commissioner of Police.

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Two arrested for cheating firm of ₹3 cr

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police has arrested two men for allegedly cheating a finance company to the tune of Rs three crore.

The accused have been identified as Essa Ismail Merchant (47) and Amrendra Shashkant Totade (55), both residents of Mumbai.

According to Dr O P Mishra, the Joint Commissioner of Police, EOW, a loan (Equipment Finance) was applied by the accused persons with CLIX Finance India Private Limited through their company Advanced Computers and Mobiles India to purchase Machinery for packing, wrap-

ping and sealing and of mobiles devices.

"The loan was sanctioned and as per sanction letter, accused persons were to remit 25 per cent of equipment cost to the vendor as margin money. The accused persons remitted Rs one Crore to the vendor in Dubai. The proof of remittance was provided to the NBFC, which released the loan amount to the bank account of the alleged borrower company," said the Joint CP.

"The loan thus received was not remitted to the vendor and it was misappropriated by the Directors of the company in repayment of their other outstanding. A case under relevant sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered at EOW police station and investigation was taken up," said

the Joint CP.

"During investigation, it also emerged that the alleged company remitted the margin money to the Vendor and got the loan disbursed. Thereafter the loan amount was misappropriated in repayment of an LC already availed by the alleged Company from YES Bank," said the Joint CP.

"After a few months, the margin money was also received back by the alleged company from the vendor at Dubai. It was further revealed during investigation that the accused persons have availed loans amounting to Rs 150 Crores from different institutions and all of these loans have been defaulted," said the Joint CP.

City sees light rain, air quality 'very poor'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi witnessed light rain in certain parts of Delhi-NCR and with cold winds the air quality deteriorated on Saturday as AQI registered 348 on the National Ambient Air Quality Index (NAAQI) and thus bringing the air quality under 'very poor category'.

According to Kuldeep Srivastava, Head of Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), Regional Weather Forecasting Centre, said that

with a western disturbance impacting the entire region, pollution levels are not expected to worsen much over the weekend. Winds are likely to pick up during the day and settle the pollution levels, he said.

According to MeT, the wind speed reduced to 6kmph and the direction also changed from north-westerly to easterly on Friday.

While some areas in Haryana have received rainfall on Friday afternoon.

"The average wind speed

in Delhi is likely to remain around 8-10kmph on Saturday and Sunday, which means that the air quality is likely to remain in the poor till Monday."

"The western disturbance will pass on Saturday and the wind direction will change back to north-westerly," Srivastava said.

According to System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR), the pollution monitoring agency, overall air qual-

ity has improved to Poor category from Very Poor.

Under the influence of fresh Western Disturbance (WD), isolated to scattered rainfall was seen.

"Surface-level winds are calm but picked up during the day. AQI improved during the day to the lower end of the Very Poor category in case of sufficient rain." However, as an aftermath of WD, high moisture availability with higher air holding capacity, dense fog formation is expected (mainly during early morning hours). This triggered heterogeneous aqueous reactions to form secondary aerosols and lead to deterioration of AQI."

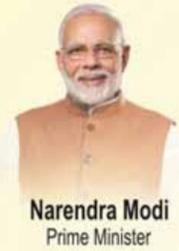
"AQI is likely to deteriorate to the higher end of Very Poor by late December 13th," it said in its short range weather forecast.

Meanwhile, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data shows that the overall AQI of Delhi was 295, in the poor category. The values of Suspended Particulate Matters (SPMs) PM 10 and 2.5 were 306 and 177 µgm-3.

On Thursday, the AQI settled at 284, also in the same category.



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NADDA'S CONVOY ATTACK

Not accountable to Home Min: TMC hits out on summons

Kolkata: Senior Trinamool Congress lawmaker Kalyan Banerjee wrote to Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla on Saturday, saying that West Bengal's chief secretary and director-general of police were summoned to Delhi over the attack on BJP chief J.P. Nadda's convoy with "political motive", asserting that law and order is a state subject.

Banerjee, the chief whip of the TMC in the Lok Sabha, alleged that the Centre was resorting to coercive means to intimidate the state administration, and the top officials were summoned at the instance of the Union Home Minister.

BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya, however, said that everyone saw how Nadda's convoy was attacked by alleged TMC workers on December 10 and Banerjee's letter to Bhalla has

"little merit". "We want to inform you that law and order is within the domain of the state under 7th Schedule of the State list... How in respect of the law and order situation you can call both the officers for any sorts of discussion?" the TMC MP said in the letter.

"It appears that with a political motive and at the instance of your minister, who is a political person belonging to Bharatiya Janata Party, you have issued the said letter. You are trying to coerce the officers of West Bengal with political vindictiveness. It appears you are interfering with the federal structure," Banerjee added.

He said that in respect of law and order, the state government is accountable to the legislative assembly "but not to you or to your home minister".

The TMC leader also

claimed that a person, who is a convict in a case and named in 59 other criminal cases, was in the convoy of Nadda on December 10 and "made provocative gestures" to the TMC supporters standing on the roadside.

"Laws have been thrown out in river by your action at the instance of Shri Amit Shah, BJP leader and Union Home Minister," the lawmaker said, adding that indirect attempts were being made to impose emergency in West Bengal.

Banerjee said that with Parliament not in session, he was voicing strong opposition to the move by the Centre through the letter on behalf of his party. In response to the letter, Vijayvargiya said, "Everyone saw what happened on December 10, how the convoy was attacked by TMC men." PTI

Rajini's entry into politics will not have any impact: TN Minister

Madurai: Actor Rajinikanth's proposed party would not have any impact on Tamil Nadu politics and not everyone can be as successful as AIADMK founder M G Ramachandran or late J Jayalalitha, Minister for Cooperation Sellur K Raju said on Saturday.

Chief Minister K Palaniswami's wave was sweeping through Tamil Nadu and people knew who should rule in the Centre and the state, he told reporters here.

Referring to Rajinikanth's decision to float a political party in January 2021 and face the assembly polls, he said, "Actors who were confined to their house until yesterday have come to the public domain today."

"Tamil Nadu politics will not see anything new with the entry of Rajinikanth," he claimed. The Minister further said the voters would teach a good lesson to the new entrants.

"No one can enter politics and be successful like late MGR or Jayalalitha... Only those who toil for the people would emerge successful in the state," he added. PTI

Article 370 allowed rampant corruption in J&K: Union Min

PTI SAMBA

Union Minister Jitendra Singh Saturday said the now-scrapped Article 370 had paved the way for rampant corruption in Jammu and Kashmir as successive state governments used it to make their own anti-graft laws, customised allegedly for convenience.

He said the setting up of the District Development Councils (DDC) will bring further accountability, transparency and outcome-oriented approach in the working of the administration in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The Article 370 had paved the way for rampant corruption in Jammu and Kashmir because it gave the successive governments in the state the right to enact their own anti-graft laws which were inadequate and tailor-made for convenience," he told an election rally in support of BJP candidates in the DDC polls. At the same time, Article 370 also

gave the state rulers the prerogative not to allow the Centre's Prevention of Corruption Act to be implemented in Jammu and Kashmir like the rest of the country, he said.

Singh, the Union Minister for the Prime Minister's Office, said the Prevention of Corruption Act was implemented in Jammu and Kashmir only after the abrogation of Article 370 and the state having turned into a Union Territory.

The Article 370 was abrogated on August 5, 2019, and subsequently the erstwhile state was divided into two UTs -- Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Singh, who hails from Jammu and Kashmir, said there was no effective curb on corruption in the past because the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir had its own anti-corruption law and probes into corruption cases carried on indefinitely, allowing the officials concerned to get superannuated, or making too late to bring them to

book. "As a result, corruption in Jammu and Kashmir, both in lower as well as in higher offices, became a norm rather than an exception and the common impression was that anybody who was smart enough to get away with it, could also manage to go scot-free," he said.

With the implementation of the Prevention of Corruption Act in Jammu and Kashmir now, the minister said, now there are timelines fixed to dispose corruption cases and at the same time, not only the bribe-taker but also the bribe-giver is held guilty.

Singh said that in the last one year, there is a visible change in governance and the good governance practices followed by the Centre are also being gradually implemented in Jammu and Kashmir, one after the other.

"This has also led to a conspicuous change in the work culture in the government setup which was grossly lacking in the past," he said.

7-yr-old gang-raped in Muzaffarnagar

PTI MUZAFFARNAGAR (UP)

A seven-year-old girl was allegedly raped by two men in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district, police said on Saturday.

The minor had gone missing for some hours, after which her family started searching for her. She was found unconscious and bleeding on the roof of a nearby house in the village under Budhana police station limits on Friday evening, they said.

A case has been registered against the two men under

Indian Penal Code Section 376D (gang rape) and the provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, Circle Officer (CO) Girija Shanker Tripathi told PTI.

The two accused were arrested, the CO said.

In his police complaint, the minor's father alleged that the accused took her to a nearby house and raped her. He said they left her on the roof of the house in an unconscious state. The family members rushed her to hospital, the girl's father stated.

UP court sentences man to 7 years' rigorous imprisonment for raping minor girl

Mainpuri: A local court here has sentenced a person to seven years' rigorous imprisonment in connection with the rape of a minor girl in 2012 and also slapped a fine of Rs 11,000 on him.

The court passed the order on Friday, assistant district government counsel Pushpendra Singh Chauhan said here on Saturday. He said Pradip Kumar, a resident of Udhan village of the district, had on January 16, 2012 kidnapped a minor girl aged 13. After a search by the minor's mother and her family members yielded no results, a complaint was lodged against Kumar at the local police station the next day, Chauhan said. PTI

TN: 4 dead, 10 hurt as truck rams into several vehicles

Chennai: Four persons died while 10 others were injured after a truck laden with cement bags rammed into as many as 10 vehicles, on the Thoppur road in Dharmapuri district, the police said on Saturday.

According to the police, the brakes of the cement bag-laden truck failed and it dashed against 10 cars and a small van, killing four and injuring 10 others.

The injured have been admitted to the hospital. The damaged cars, vans and the trucks were removed by a crane so that traffic on the stretch could resume.

Such accidents are common in this stretch owing to bad road design, locals said. IANS



Workers pluck flowers from an orchard in Nadia district on Saturday

Mystery illness hits vegetable sales in Eluru

IANS ELURU (ANDHRA PRADESH)

Leafy vegetable vendors in Eluru, the headquarters of West Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh, have been witnessing a dip in their business due to the outbreak of the recent mystery illness.

"Since 4-5 days, leafy vegetables are not moving. People are not coming to buy vegetables. We are just sitting with them, without any business," said a vendor.

Following the illness outbreak, which is yet to be conclusively identified, many people are exercising caution. Experts from several reputed organisations have already taken samples of items which the victims have used for cooking for investigation. The samples include vegetables, rice,

As many as 14 expert agencies have asked for more time to properly investigate the samples

fish, meat and soil, among others. Mohan, the Superintendent of West Godavari district hospital, said that people in Eluru have been advised to wash the vegetables thoroughly before use. The doctors too advised washing vegetables with salt water to be safe. As many as 14 expert agencies have asked for more time to properly investigate the samples.

Symptoms of the mysterious illness include three to five minutes of epileptic fits without repetition, forgetfulness, anxiety, vomiting, headache and back pain.

Will ensure MSP for farmers, says...

From Page 1

In a related development a group of 29 farmers met Tomar and extended their support to the new bills, threatening to stage a protest if those are repealed. The delegation, led by Bharatiya Kisan Union's (Mann) Haryana State leader Guni Prakash, submitted a "letter of support" to Tomar on the farm laws passed by Parliament in September and demanded the Government to continue with these legislations.

Chahtala, who's Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) counts farmers as an important constituency and has faced prickly questions about his alliance with the BJP amid the mounting pressure to withdraw from the BJP-led Government in the State, had earlier said he will resign if the MSP system is threatened.

The Haryana Government could topple if key ally JJP pulls back support from the BJP-led Government in the State.

The BJP holds power in Haryana with its 40 seats out of the 90-seat Haryana Assembly and the support of 10 JJP MLAs and five Independent MLAs. The Congress, on the other hand, has 31 seats. Farmer unions, particularly in Punjab and Haryana, said the new laws will lead to the dismantling of the MSP system under which Government agencies buy their crop at an assured price.

After the meeting, Chahtala said the crop procurement at the Government-decided MSP (minimum support price) would be ensured for each farmer till the time he was part of the State Government.

India being tested in LAC stand-off...

From Page 1

This includes adequate number of prefabricated heated huts for troops and winter clothing. At present, more than one lakh troops from both the sides are stationed at the LAC in the standoffs and prepared for long haul. They have made preparations for staying put in the harsh winter months when temperatures dip to minus 30 degrees.

'My fight is an expression of...

From Page 1

In fact, Haryana and Punjab are predominantly agrarian society and almost all the elite of the non-farming communities, whether artists or other professionals, come from farming backgrounds, or have close symbiotic relations with the landed farming community --- the farm workers are mostly from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and some from the grim underbelly of Punjab-Haryana's rural areas which are remnants of a caste-ridden feudal system.

A farm transporter, one of the elderly among the protesters, claims the new farm laws will affect the ecosystem in Haryana and Punjab whose agriculture survives on State subsidies in the form of high MSP (minimum support price) and well-established Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC) mandis.

38 new cases of corona in Pondy, tally rises to 37,444

PTI PUDUCHERRY

Puducherry posted 38 fresh COVID-19 cases on Saturday, taking the total number of those infected by the virus to 37,444.

The toll remained 619 as no related deaths were reported in the union territory in the last 24 hours ending 10 am on Saturday.

Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said in a release that Puducherry region registered 17 new cases of infection out of the total 38 cases followed by Karaikal (six) and Mahe (15).

Yanam region did not report any fresh case of infection.

The Director said 59 patients were discharged during last 24 hours.

Agri laws will better ...

From Page 1

In the last few years, we've made reforms to break all such hurdles. The agriculture sector is one such example. Today, farmers of India can sell their produce both at the mandis, as well as outside. Farmers can also sell their produce on digital platforms. We are taking all these initiatives to increase the farmers' income and make them more prosperous," said Modi while virtually addressing 93rd annual convention of FICCI.

"If the farmers of the country become prosperous, the country becomes prosperous," said the PM.

The PM's comment in support of new laws came soon after two senior Central Ministers Ravi Shankar Prasad and Piyush Goyal alleged "infiltration" of "tukde-tukde-gang" and that of "ultra-left" elements into the agitation.

Stating that obstacles are being removed between the agriculture and it's closely related processes, Modi said the cold storage infrastructure will be modernised and would result in more investments in the agriculture sector. Farmers will be benefitted the most from it, he said.

"The farmers have options to sell their crops in mandis as well as to outside parties," he said assuring that the 'Mandi System' would continue. Protesting farmers, particularly those from Punjab and Haryana, are apprehensive that with the coming of corporate traders (new laws allows contract farming between outside investors and the farmers), the "mandi system" with middlemen (adhatis) in operation could be abolished as also the system of Minimum Support Price (MSP).

Interestingly, trading of farm produce is already in practice in the country, including Punjab, and only six per cent of agriculture produce is purchased under the MSP system (operating mostly in Punjab and Haryana).

As the agitation has entered its third-week (17th day), Opposition parties are backing the farmers while the Centre is saying "no" to the roll-back of the farm laws though not unwilling to amend them and guaranteeing the MSP.

The PM's comments in support of farm laws have come close to the BJP launching its own big awareness campaign with farmers across more than 700 districts in the country. As the slugfest between the sides continues, Government has allowed doors of negotiations open asking farmers to walk the middle ground.

Farmers brace for long haul

From Page 1

"Measures were taken to ensure commuters do not face inconvenience at places where protest are being staged," said police.

The Delhi Traffic Police has deployed its personnel across important border points to ensure commuters do not face difficulties and is constantly updating people about open and closed roads on its Twitter handle.

In series of tweets, the traffic police on Saturday informed commuters about the closure of the Singhu, Auchandi, Piau Maniyari and Mangesh borders.

Since these borders are closed, it suggested that motorists take alternative routes via Lampur,

Safiabad, Saboli and Singhu School toll tax borders.

Traffic has been diverted from Mukarba and GTK Road. So, commuters have been advised to avoid Outer Ring Road, GTK Road and National Highway-44, the traffic police said.

Due to the ongoing farmers' protests, it said both the Chilla and the Ghazipur borders are also closed for traffic from Noida and Ghaziabad.

"The Chilla & Ghazipur borders are closed for traffic from Noida & Ghaziabad to Delhi due to farmers' protests. People are advised to take alternate route for coming to Delhi via Anad Vihar, DND, Apsara & bhopra borders," it tweeted.

The Tikri and the Dhansa

borders are also closed for traffic movement but the Jhatikara border is open only for two wheelers and pedestrian movement, the traffic police said in a tweet.

Those going towards Haryana, can take Jharoda (only single carriageway), Daurala, Kapashera, Badusara, Rajokri NH 8, Bijwasan/Bajghera, Palam Vihar and Dundahera borders as they are open, the traffic police said.

Meanwhile, the Sonapat district administration has offered coronavirus testing facility to protesting farmers but most of them are unwilling to get tested, fearing they would be isolated if found positive and this would weaken their agitation.

Lalu's kidney ...

From Page 1

"The rate at which his disease is getting worse and since he has diabetes for the last 20 years, his end organ is damaging in an escalating manner. So, the situation is alarming for the patient's health. The higher authorities of Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) have been informed in writing about Yadav's health that emergency situation can arise at any time," he added.

Dr Prasad also said, in his opinion, there is no need to transfer Lalu Yadav to any other medical facility as organ damage due to diabetes is irreversible and no medicine can cure it.

"The court or the government has to decide on whether he needs to be taken somewhere else for treatment. In my opinion,

there will not be any major impact on his health if he is taken outside for treatment. This is because the damage in body organs due to diabetes is irreversible. There is no medicine which will make the kidney function at 100 per cent from 25 per cent. Otherwise, there will be no need for dialysis or kidney transplant," he said.

"We have taken a decision that we will consult the resident nephrologist and decide on the further course of treatment of Lalu Prasad Yadav," he added.

On Friday, the Jharkhand High Court deferred Lalu Yadav's bail plea hearing in the fodder scam case to January 22, 2021 after considering a request made by his lawyer.

The RJD leader was admitted to RIMS on August 30, 2018, after he surrendered at Birsu Munda Central Jail on

Jharkhand court's orders in the fodder scam.

Mr Yadav had in October secured bail in connection with the Chaibaasa treasury case related to the fodder scam. However, he is yet to secure bail in the Dumka treasury case.

Mr Yadav, who had been in prison since December 2017, was sentenced to seven years imprisonment in 2018 under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and seven years under the Prevention of Corruption Act in connection with the fodder scam case. Both the sentences are being served consecutively.

The case pertains to the fraudulent withdrawal of ? 3.5 crores from the Dumka treasury by Animal Husbandry Department officials between 1991 and 1996 when Mr Yadav served as the State's Chief Minister.

MHA calls back 3 IPS officers responsible...

From Page 1

Terming it a "political move" by the Centre, senior Trinamool Congress lawmaker Kalyan Banerjee wrote to Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, saying that law and order is a State subject. Banerjee alleged that the Centre was resorting to coercive means to intimidate the State administration, and the top officials were summoned at the instance of the Home Minister Amit Shah. On Friday, Bengal Chief Secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay and Director General of Police Virendra refused to heed the orders of the Union Home Ministry asking their presence in the North Block after serious security lapses occurred during Nadda's visit to Diamond Harbour.

His convoy was attacked by miscreants on Thursday damaging a number of vehicles and causing injury to party men including senior BJP leaders. The Home Ministry promptly made an unprecedented move directing the top Bengal officials to appear before it and explain the security lapses. Incidentally Home Minister Amit Shah who is personally monitoring the Central probe into attack on Nadda's convoy is likely to visit Bengal on December 19 and will stay here for two days, sources said.

In response to the Home Ministry's letter the Chief Secretary wrote back saying his and DGP's presence in Delhi was avoidable as the matter was "already being examined" by the State Government.

PUBLIC NOTICE

A notice of intended marriage has been received from Mr. Anas Shakil S/o Mr. Shakil Ahmed R/o A-49, AWHO Colony, Tyagi Vihar, Lucknow (U.P.) and Ms. Jasleen Kaur Sandhu D/o Brig. T.S. Sandhu R/o Prateek Laurel, Sector-120, Noida Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.) in the office of the undersigned, any person interested therein, may file objections to it on any day upto 23-12-2020 in the office of the undersigned. Manager Office Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.)

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform to the public at large that Ms. Deepika Muskuudi D/o Mr. Krishna Prasad Muskuudi who is purchasing the 4th floor with roof rights, (LHS), built on Property bearing no. F-79-a, area measuring 100 sq. Yards, out of khata no.170, situated at Block-F, Khanpur Extension, Tehsil-Hauz Khas (Meerut) New Delhi from Mr. Anil Kumar Bansal S/o Mr. J.C. Bansal owner vide of Nolarized General Power of Attorney dated 02.07.2010 executed by Mr. Subhash Chand Sharma S/o Late Mr. Khazan Singh along with SPA, ATS, Will and same to be financed & mortgage by Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd. If any person having any type of claim/right/title/interest over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc. Lucene Legal LLP 289, Rama House, Ground Floor, Masjid Moth, Opp. Uday Park, South Ex.111, New Delhi-49, Contact: #011-40046363

Seized gold went missing from accused's safe: CBI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

While the CBI has set up an "internal inquiry" after 103 kg gold worth Rs 43 crore, seized and sealed by it eight years ago, went missing, it clarified on Saturday that the missing gold in Tamil Nadu was not kept in its "malkhana" (vault) and was inventoried and kept in the safe of accused firm Surana Corporation.

"It is clarified that CBI searched the building of Surana Corporation Limited, NSC Bose Road, Chennai and prepared a search list. The search list mentioned that 400.47 kg gold has been inventoried and was kept in safe and vaults of Surana, sealed in presence of independent witnesses and the MD of Surana corporation and its officials," the CBI said in a statement.

As per the directions of the Madras High Court, the vaults were opened in the presence of

official liquidator, officials belonging to six Banks and independent witnesses inspected from February 27, 2020, to February 29, 2020, to hand over the gold to the lender banks of Surana Corporation, it said.

"The seals affixed on the vaults were found intact. However, gold weighed only 296.66 kgs. As the discrepancy between the quantity mentioned in search memo and as per the weight came to notice, CBI promptly ordered an internal inquiry by a senior officer to look into the role of its officials, if any," the agency said.

"It is clarified that the inventoried gold was not kept in Malkhana of CBI. Rather it was in premises of Surana only under the seal. While the enquiry was on, the petition was filed in High Court and accordingly High Court passed an order dated 11.12.2020," it said.

CBI's internal enquiry continues and if any adverse role



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of any CBI officials surfaces, strict action will be taken against them, it further said, adding, the Madras High Court has observed that CBI under the DSPE Act does not have authority to register a theft case which falls within the domain of local police.

The theft case will be registered by the CB-CID of Tamil Nadu and investigation will be conducted by an officer of the rank of SP in CB-CID, it added.

The gold is part of 400.47 kg bullion and ornaments confiscated by the CBI when it carried out searches at the office

of Surana Corporation Ltd in Chennai in 2012 in a case pertaining to alleged favours extended by officials of Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation of India (MMTC) to the firm in import of gold and silver.

During the hearing on the

matter in the Madras high court, the agency's lawyer submitted that "an internal inquiry is being conducted by the CBI in this regard".

"When this Court expressed its opinion, as to why no FIR was registered for theft, the learned Special Public Prosecutor submitted that an internal enquiry is being conducted by the CBI in this regard. He requested this Court to give a direction to the CBI to register an FIR for theft and conduct investigation. He even suggested that this Court could direct the CBI of the neighbouring State or the National Investigating Agency to conduct the investigation," the high court bench said.

A regular FIR for theft should have been registered in the jurisdictional police station and the police investigation under Chapter XII of CrPC should have been conducted," the high court noted.

India pledges \$2 billion to strengthen care for women, kids, adolescents

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Friday pledged a commitment of USD 2 billion at the World Health Organisation's "Lives in the Balance" summit to provide essential services to women, newborns, young children and adolescents across the world.

The summit organised by WHO's The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH), a global alliance of more than 1,000 organisations, registered a total commitment of USD 20.6 billion from a group of high income, low and middle-income countries and charitable foundations across the world.

"USD 6.6 billion (32 per cent) of the total pledge is from money committed by low and middle-income countries themselves, including Afghanistan, India, Kenya, Liberia, and Nigeria. An additional USD 14 billion (68 per cent) is from official development assistance and grants given by Germany, Canada, Sweden, UK, USA and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation," the PMNCH said in a statement.

India's commitment of USD 2 billion will be used to strengthen all levels of care in response to the pandemic and to ensure essential public health functions during the year 20-21. "As important as this USD 20.6 billion is, it only will partially solve the problem of providing basic essential services for women, newborns, young children and adolescents," Rajesh Bhushan, Union Health Secretary said.

"Comprehensive efforts and collective advocacy are needed to ensure availability of substantially enhanced finan-

cial resources for this noble cause," he said.

The recent WHO data from 105 countries shows that 90 per cent of countries have experienced disruptions to health services, with low-and middle-income countries reporting the greatest difficulties.

According to early estimates of the indirect impact of Covid-19 on child and maternal mortality, more than 2 million additional deaths are estimated over 12 months (2020-2021) above the pre-pandemic level because of disruptions to essential health and nutrition services.

"The health and well-being of women, children and adolescents are now at great risk, with inequities compounded by narrowing access to essential health services such as antenatal care, skilled assistance at child birth, postnatal care, immunizations and family planning. Our concern is that resources — insufficient to begin with — are being diverted away to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic," Helen Clark, Chair of PMNCH and former Prime Minister of New Zealand, said.

As of November 2020, 2.8 million children and adolescents have contracted Covid-19 in 87 countries, according to UNESCO. It said that in April, 1.5 billion students were affected by educational institutions closures in 195 countries this year, leading to loss of school meals and critical impacts on child nutrition. "This funding will ensure women, children and adolescents can access health services and priority social protections throughout the Covid-19 crisis and recovery periods," Clark said.



CTA polls: US, China play intelligence game

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The US and China both are engaged in a fox game of Intelligence to outsmart each other ahead of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) elections early next year in Dharamshala in their bid to gain dominance in Tibetan politics even as the challenge for the Indian administration is to install a leadership amenable to its security interests.

Through this game, both the US and China-based organisations are ostensibly also seeking to size up the stature of the Dalai Lama by pumping money in the run up to the CTA polls and install leadership inclined to them, sources said.

While two Trusts were created in the US three years back to transfer donations to the Dharamshala-based Social and Resources Development Fund (SARD), a non-profit organization established in 1997 by the CTA.

Instead of distributing the



donations from the US to the community, the SARD offered loans to the Tibetans based in Dharamshala for various purposes including business and reconstruction, they said.

The chairmen of both the US-based trusts are contesting the CTA elections in early 2021 in what is a direct American agenda of influencing the Tibetan elections, they further said.

The US-based trusts have funded SARD to the tune of several crores which was ultimately distributed as loans and even as relief to fight Covid-19.

In addition to this, the American Christian missionaries have also funded SARD

significantly in a clear signal that even religion is negotiable for the US-based Tibetans in fray for the CTA polls next year, they said.

Likewise, China is also seeking to influence the CTA polls in order to garner support from Dharamshala for backing the Dalai Lama it aims to foist and get recognition for the tallest spiritual leader of the Tibetans.

China, the sources said, adopted a trick different than the US and used arrested Chinese national Luo Sang alias Charlie Peng to funnel money in the CTA elections. Sang, nabbed in a money laundering case worth over Rs

1,000 crore, transferred money through hawala to the Tibetan leadership in Dharamshala.

"The Tibetan cause has gained a bigger proportion globally and both the US and Chinese intelligence agencies are seeking to influence the CTA polls despite the fact that India has single handedly contributed the most in taking care of Tibetan refugees. The security establishment here is grappled with the challenge of pushing candidates close to Dalai Lama, a known supporter of New Delhi or those considered close and loyal to India," an official familiar with the developments in Dharamshala said.



Sushil Kumar Modi from Bihar signs after taking oath as a member of the Rajya Sabha, in New Delhi, on Saturday

CLIMATE AMBITION SUMMIT 2020

India doing beyond expectations, says PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is not only on track to achieve its Paris Agreement targets but to exceed them beyond expectations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday at the Climate Ambition Summit 2020 through video conference.

"Today as we are looking to set our sight even higher, we must also not lose sight of the past. We must not only revise our ambitions but also review our achievements against targets already set. Only then can our voices be credible for future generations," he said at the summit on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the landmark Paris Climate Agreement.

Sharing details on the achievements achieved by India under the pact, Modi said that "We have reduced our emission intensity by 21 per cent over 2005 levels. Our solar capacity has grown from 2.63



GigaWatts in 2014 to 36 GigaWatts in 2020. Our renewable energy capacity is the fourth largest in the world.

"It will reach 175 GigaWatts before 2022. And, we have an even more ambitious target now — 450 GigaWatts of renewable energy capacity by 2030," he pointed out.

We have also succeeded in expanding our forest cover and safeguarding our biodiversity, said the Prime Minister

who asserted that "on the world stage, India has pioneered two major initiatives ie the International Solar Alliance, and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure to cut down climate change.

Asserting that India is committed to walk on green path, the Prime Minister, addressing the global leaders at the summit, said that in 2047, as India will celebrate 100 years as a modern, independent

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NARENDRA MODI



nation, it will not only meet its own targets, but will also exceed your expectations.

The Summit provides a platform for leaders to announce ambitious new commitments under the Paris Agreement.

This agreement is a landmark deal in the multilateral climate change process.

For the first time, a binding agreement brought all

nations into a common cause to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects.

It is a legally binding international treaty on climate change which was adopted by 196 Parties at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) in Paris, on the 12th of December 2015 and came into force on the 4th of November 2016.

India, Iran and Uzbekistan to hold talks tomorrow on joint use of Chabahar port

New Delhi: For the first time, India, Iran and Uzbekistan will hold a trilateral dialogue on Monday on joint use of the strategically located Chabahar port which is being increasingly seen as a fulcrum of connectivity to Central Asia.

The announcement of the meeting was made by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). "The first trilateral working group meeting between

India, Iran and Uzbekistan on joint use of Chabahar Port will be held virtually on December 14," the MEA said.

The port is being developed by India, Iran and Afghanistan to boost trade ties among the three countries in the wake of Pakistan denying transit access to New Delhi. Located in the Sistan-Balochistan province on the energy-rich Iran's southern

coast, the port can be easily accessed from India's western coast, bypassing Pakistan. It is considered to be a major transit point to connect with several Central Asian countries.

The trilateral meeting is taking place in the backdrop of India pitching for participation of Uzbekistan in the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) project.



Ministry of Health & Family Welfare Secretary Rajesh Bhushan and MoHFW Joint Secretary Lav Agarwal call on Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu in New Delhi on Saturday

Despite PM's push for Divyangs, this doc at receiving end

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

At a time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been emphasising on empowering the divyangs and showing sensitivity towards their needs, the BJP-run civic body, North Municipal Corporation of Delhi (North MCD), has chosen to turn a blind eye to ensuring even the basic rights of Dr Sumit Anand, a Medical Officer with locomotor disability.

Not only has he been denied his due salary increment for the last four years since he joined the medical cadre, the young doctor, at an urban health centre at Karol Bagh, has also not been paid his salary since June, this year.

As if this unlawful denial is not enough, His application for disability rights and privileges, enshrined under the guidelines issued by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DPwD), Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, is

gathering dust in his department for the last two years.

In another instance of the civic body's stark insensitivity towards the needs of the persons with disabilities, the young officer has also not been provided with a disabled-friendly chair to help him carry out his day-to-day official activities.

Dr Anand, however, has not let this indifference hinder his performance. During the lockdown period due to Covid-19, Dr Anand reported daily for duty, for which he was recognised with Corona Warrior certificates, first by the then Deputy Commissioner, Central Delhi Arav Gopi Krishna and then Balram Meena, SDM, Karol Bagh.

"When I complained about non-payment of salary to the department, the officials are pressurising me to sign a faulty salary pay-bill without increments and disability-related benefits," he said adding the apathy has left him and his old parents, who are dependent on him, mentally and financially



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drained out.

Having failed to get justice from the civic body, the Lieutenant Governor, New Delhi, the Union Health Ministry, the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Dr Anand is now pinning hopes on the National

Human Rights Commission (NHRC), which has registered his case for further action.

Talking about his disability, Dr Anand said, his was a case of medical negligence when treatment for an enlarged lymph node led to the gradual paralysis of a nerve leading to his right shoulder when he was doing his MD. He had to give up his dreams of doing specialisation and joined the North MCD in the medical cadre.

"It is very disappointing that bright people like Anand, who cleared MBBS and then UPSC in the first attempt have to go through such discrimination only because they are physically disabled.

"Instead of honouring their commitment and boosting their morale, the North MCD is finding new ways to harass such Corona warriors. This must stop and he should be delivered his dues immediately to send a positive message among the community," said Dr Satendra Singh, an activist for people with disabilities.

Lack of awareness still deterrent for providing jobs to PwDs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mindsets, attitudinal barriers, and lack of awareness are still a deterrent for providing jobs to Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), experts here lamented at an event held recently.

"One area that all companies should look at is to find ways in which the abilities of persons with disabilities can get utilized. If we use persons with disabilities as wallflowers, it becomes a lose-lose situation, for the company and the employee," said Arundhati Bhattacharya Chairperson and CEO Salesforce (India).

He was speaking at a discussion at the NCPEDP-Mindtree Helen Keller Awards 2020 event where 11 persons were felicitated virtually as a recognition of their exemplary work towards furthering employment opportu-

nities for PwDs.

Saurabh Chandra, Trustee NCPEDP said, "The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwDs Act) is one of the strongest disability legislations in the world, however problem lies in its implementation because of lack of understanding, awareness, or maybe because of a belief that providing jobs to PwDs comes at a high cost. This mindset needs to be changed."

Som Mittal, industry doyen and Chairman NCPEDP, talked about the myriad of challenges—the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on PwDs like access to facilities, transport and livelihood.

He said, leaving no one behind is the key to a resilient and sustainable society. Thus, actions must be prioritised as per the most marginalised."

Arman Ali, Executive



Director, NCPEDP said by felicitating Helen Keller Awards, we celebrate the leadership of people with disabilities and equal opportunity employers. They are showing everyone the way by including disability into businesses and beyond their call of duty. In this new normal, it's all about diversity and of the winners and is no longer limited to big cities". Awardees included, among

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others, Ajay Minocha, the first visually impaired person from India to receive CFA Charter from CFA Institute, USA, and Kartik Sawhney, the first-ever visually impaired student to study science in India who made news when he was refused admission to IIT on account of his disability but excelled at Stanford University and today works as an AI Scientist at Microsoft.

Min: J&K will get back 17K hectares grabbed under Roshni Scheme

Srinagar: Union Minister Anurag Thakur on Saturday expressed confidence that J&K will get back 17,000 hectares of land that was grabbed through the Roshni Scheme, and action will be taken against corrupts.

"Roshni Act has been struck down by High Court and (it) termed the Act illegal and unconstitutional. It clearly defined why this Act had been brought in...Just to help a few big names," Thakur, who is the BJP's election in-charge for Jammu and Kashmir, told reporters here.

Thakur said he was glad that the court had taken an initiative and there has been a fair inquiry into it.

"I am sure that 3.42 lakh kanal (17,000 hectares) of land will be returned to state of Jammu and Kashmir. There will be action against who were involved in the corrupt practice," he added.

The Jammu and Kashmir government has filed a review petition in the high court seeking to distinguish between landless cultivators and wealthy land grabbers who had benefited from the law which has been struck down. The petition will come up for hearing on December 16.

Commenting on the ongoing District Development Council elections in Jammu and Kashmir, Thakur said the people will decide which part wins or loses.

"However, the response to the five phases of elections so far means that people have already ensured the victory of democracy. The important thing is that these polls have been free, fair and fear-free," he said.

The union minister said there were attempts the scare the people ahead of the elections "but they (voters) were not scared."

Central Govt should accept demands of farmers without further delay: Ashok Gehlot

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said on Saturday the Centre should accept the farmers' demand of repealing the three agri laws "without delay", as the protesters announced further intensification of their ongoing stir against the legislations.

Farmer leader Kanwalpreet Singh Pannu, at a press conference at the Singhu border of Delhi, has said thousands of farmers will start their 'Delhi Chalo' march from Rajasthan's Shahjahanpur through the Jaipur-Delhi Highway at 11 am on Sunday.

He said that farmers from other parts of the country were also on their way to join the protesters at the Delhi border and they will take the agitation to the next level in the coming days.

In a tweet, the Rajasthan chief minister said, "I am happy that till now the farmer movement has been very peaceful. Violence has no place in democracy. Even on the Delhi-Jaipur highway, farmers should put their demands democratically in front of the centre and maintain peace."

"The Central government should accept the demands of the farmers without further delay," he wrote on the microblogging site.

The Centre on Friday asked the protesting farmers to be vigilant against their platform being misused, saying some "anti-social" as well as "Leftist and Maoist" elements were conspiring to spoil the atmosphere of the agitation which has been going on for over two weeks now.

Fresh spells of snowfall in J&K

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Ahead of the sixth phase of District Development Council elections, parts of Kashmir valley witnessed fresh spells of snowfall in plain areas of Srinagar and higher reaches of tourist resorts of Gulmarg, Pahalgam and North Kashmir districts of Baramulla and Kupwara.

In Jammu region, famous tourist resorts of Patnitop, Bhaderwah, Bani, Trikuta hills where the cave shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi is located also witnessed fresh snowfall. Due to inclement weather conditions movement of smooth traffic was also halted on the 300 km long Jammu Srinagar National Highway.

Several interior roads in snowbound areas also remained covered with thick

blankets of snow.

On the other hand, two civilians were injured in a grenade attack on a police post in Sopore area of Baramulla district.

This is the third grenade attack in Kashmir valley in the last 48 hours, official sources said.

In Jammu region, Pakistan army violated ceasefire agreement by resorting to mortar shelling in Balakote sector of Poonch. According to a Jammu based Defence Spokesman, Lt-Col Devender Anand around 6.00 p.m Pakistan army resorted to unprovoked ceasefire violation by using small arms firing and mortar shelling in the Balakote sector of Poonch. In response the Indian army retaliated strongly, spokesman added.

Meanwhile, State Election Commissioner (SEC), KK

Sharma on Saturday evening said in the sixth phase a total of 31 DDC constituencies will go to polls including 14 seats from Kashmir division and 17 from Jammu division.

Giving further details, the SEC said that against the 14 DDC constituencies of Kashmir division going to poll tomorrow, there are 124 candidates in fray including 47 females. In Jammu division, there are 121 candidates in fray for the 17 DDC constituencies in this phase, including 53 females.

748301 electors (390432 male and 357869 female voters) are going to elect their representatives in all 31 DDC constituencies, he said and added that a total of 2071 polling stations have been designated with 1208 in Kashmir division and 863 in Jammu division.

Suicide by actresses raises safety concerns in South Indian film industry

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI/KOCHI

The alleged suicide of popular TV and film actress VJ Chitra on Wednesday in Chennai has given rise to a question about the safety and security of female artists in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam films. The death of Chitra, who was staying in a hotel in Chennai's Poonamallee Road shocked her friends and associates alike as they claim that there was no reason for the artist to resort to the extreme step.

The list of young actresses who were found dead under mysterious situations is long and a matter of concern, according to veteran film journalist P K Srinivasan who has been associated with South India's dream factories for the last two decades.

"I'll not rule out the possibilities of foul play but it is for the investigators to prove that. This was an unfortunate incident and further proves that all is not gold that glitters," said Srinivasan, author of well known book Kodambakkam Diary.

Film buffs still remember the mysterious death of Vijayasree in 1974 when she was hardly 21. Popularly known as the Marilyn Monroe of south India, the actress took her life when she was the reigning diva of Malayalam and Tamil films. "She was the highest paid artist those days and producers were sanding in queue outside her Chennai residence to get her date. But

she had dispute with one of the Malayalam film producers, a power person those days, who in one of his films, had shot her nude," reminiscences Srinivasan.

Sreelatha Nambodiri, a colleague of Vijayasree, had told in a TV interview later that the artist was not the kind who resorts to extreme step. "She had a love affair those days and she was planning everything in advance. I still do not believe Vijayasree committed suicide," said Sreelatha.

There were many like Vijayasree and Chitra who made it big in film industry only to end their lives by themselves.

Shobha, who won the National award for the best actress in the 1978 film Pasi (The Hunger) was hardly 18 when she was found dead in the house where she was staying with Balu Benjamin Mahendra, the Sri Lanka born movie director, who was 24 years older than her.

Jayalalshi Reddy, shot into national fame with the Tamil movie Aval Oru Thudarkathai directed by the legendary K Balachander. Why Jayalalshmi opted for a suicide is still unknown though people close to her say the death of her father took a heavy toll on her.

The list does not end with Jayalalshmi. Silk Smitha, who entered the Tamil film industry as a item girl and shot up to one of the leading artists in the country too was found dead when she was at the peak of her career.

New agri laws brought in to loot farmers; withdraw them: Akhilesh

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday asked the BJP government to stop "atrocities" against farmers and withdraw the three agriculture laws brought in for "looting" them. In a release issued by the party headquarters here, Yadav said the farmers of the country have understood that the BJP government is "adopting different tactics to snatch their land and harvest".

He accused the BJP government of becoming a "puppet in the hands of capitalists".

According to the release, the Kisan Yatra is being taken out on the call of the SP president continued for the sixth day on Saturday. **PTI**

Farmers' stir: Strategic waiver at Gabbhana, Madarak toll plaza

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

The toll-free movement of farmers started today in protest of the three farm laws. To make the movement successful, the officials of the organization made certain strategies based on which today they made free Gabbhana and Madarak toll plazas falling in the border of the district from 10 a.m to 5 p.m.

Here, a team of workers of the Indian Farmers Union Harpal Gut participated in the Palwal-Delhi border jam of Shiv Kumar Kakka, president of the National Farmers Labor Federation, with 5 tractors. While the other team has jammed the Madarak toll plaza. Here, a large number of police forces have been deployed at both the tolls since Friday for the farmer's protest. The SDM Kol and Joint Magistrate inspected the Madarak toll plaza and reviewed the security arrangements.

Gabbhana toll plaza was made free by the workers under the leadership of Gabbhana President Krishna Thakur and that of Madarak, under the leadership of District President Bablu Pradhan.

Provincial-level officials also visited both places. National General Secretary Prem Pal Singh also joined the workers on the Madarak toll. Here, Bharatiya Kisan Union Kisan Sena officials made Gabbhana toll plaza free under the leadership of state secretary Mohammad Shami, while Mandal president Jitendra Yadav is protesting at Madarak toll plaza. If the government does not agree even after this agitation, the toll plazas of the entire country will be closed on 14 December. Here, National President of Bhartiya Kisan Union Harpal Group Harpal Singh said that the Madarak toll was made toll free under the leadership of Sasni president Shripal Singh.

UP: Ticket scam in roadways

PNS ■ ALIGARH

The function of the department is under scanner after the case of ticket being issued from illegal machine in the roadway bus of Atrauli depot. If we look at the figure of last November, then the enforcement team caught 227 detainees during the checking. Also 2200 packets of illegal luggage were caught. In these cases, the enforcement team has registered Rs 99, 698 in the corporation's account, charging 10 times the fine against the rent.

ARM Finance UP Singh of Aligarh Region said that 7805 buses were checked in the month of November. 36 passengers were found without ticket in the buses of the Buddha Vihar depot. 200 illegal luggage cases were caught. After this, the case of the maximum number of 30 passengers without ticket in Etah depot buses came into light. 16 cases were reported in Kasganj depot buses, 11 in Atrauli depot bus, 10 in Narora depot, 10 in Hathras depot, 19 in Aligarh depot. The regional manager's team caught 95 passengers without ticket during surprise enforcement action.

Campaign on mandatory wearing of face masks launched

Chennai: A campaign to promote mandatory Wearing of face masks at places where people gather in large numbers, to help reduce COVID-19 positivity, was launched in the metro on Saturday by Tamil Nadu health secretary Dr J Radhakrishnan.

Accompanied by a team of officials, he visited Royapuram Shaik Maistry Street and distributed masks to residents and street vendors.

The civic authorities in all zones of Greater Chennai Corporation have been asked to advise residents to wear masks and help the administration reduce COVID-19 positivity, which at present stands at two per cent in Chennai. **PTI**

Kerala's Covid count rises to 6.64 lakh with nearly 6,000 fresh cases

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala recorded 5,949 New COVID-19 cases and 32 deaths on Saturday, taking the tally to 6.64 lakh and the toll to 2,594, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said.

The day also saw 5,268 people getting cured as the total recoveries rose to 6, 01,861 while the active cases stood at 60,029, he told reporters in Kannur.

The total COVID-19 cases in the state touched 6,64,632. Vijayan urged people to exercise extreme caution against the spread of the disease, saying otherwise the situation in the state would worsen further.

A total of 59,690 samples were tested in the last 24 hours and the test positivity rate was 9.97 per cent. So far, 69,21,597 samples have been sent for testing.

In all 32 recent deaths have been confirmed due to covid, taking the toll to 2,594, the Chief Minister said.

Of the latest positive cases, as many as 47 were health workers, 83 had come from outside the state, 5,173 infected through contact and the source of infection of 646 people was not known.

A total of 3,15,167 people were under observation in various districts with 13,334 of them in hospitals.

Malappuram recorded the highest number of cases at 765, followed by Kozhikode 763 and Ernakulam 732.

Kasaragod accounted for the lowest number of 60 cases on Saturday. There are 437 hotspots in the state with the addition of Manarkkad in Palakkad and removal of four localities. **PTI**

Woman thrashed for not bringing in dowry succumbs in Safdarjung hosp

PNS ■ ALIGARH

The woman who was admitted to Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital on Thursday after her in-laws have beaten her mercilessly due to failure to meet the demand of Rs 5 lakh in dowry has died.

The family member of the victim has accused her in-laws of dowry killing, but the case has not yet been registered. Razia Begum wife of Khizar Mohammad, a resident of Maulana Azad Nagar police station area, said that she had married her daughter Hina Parveen with Fayeem, a resident of Angwal village in Khurja Bulandshahr, about 1.5 years ago. Hina's husband Fayeem and his family were not satisfied with the dowry in Nikah. They used to abuse and beat Hina for demanding an additional five lakh rupees.

About three months ago, Hina gave birth to a daughter.

Even after becoming a mother, he continued to misbehave with Hina. The in-laws were fueled by the birth of a daughter. On November 22, when the demand for money was not met, Hina was beaten and her in-laws fled leaving her in the maternal house. The injured Hina was undergoing treatment at a private hospital in the city. She was admitted to Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi after her condition deteriorated, where she died leaving behind an innocent daughter who is crying for her mother.

SSI Chanchal Sirohi said that complaint has not yet been received from any side. Inspector Chhotel Lal informed that action will be taken on getting a complaint.

K'taka transport corporation employees' stir enters third day

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The employees of the state owned Transport corporations continued their strike for the third consecutive day on Saturday, leaving commuters stranded across the state.

Employees of the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation, Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation, North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation and North Eastern Karnataka Road Transport Corporation have been on strike since Thursday demanding salaries on par with state government staff among others. Very few buses of the BMTC and the state transport corporations operated as the transport employees did not join duty and staged protests across the state at important bus terminus in the district and Taluk headquarters.

A KSRTC officer said 87 buses operated in Mangaluru, three in Shivamogga, two in Davangere and one in Chitradurga till 8 am. In other divisions, zero buses operated including Bengaluru. The BMTC public relation officer said 94 city buses operated against the strength of over 6,500 buses.

Though the protests were peaceful, sporadic incidents of stone pelting on buses ferrying passengers were reported. There were also incidents where bus drivers and conductors were abused for joining duty and going against the interests of the agitating staff. In Bengaluru, the police took a few agitators in their custody at Majestic, which is the Central Bus stand of the KSRTC and the BMTC.

Goa's Covid tally nears 50,000, over 47,400 have recovered

PTI ■ PANAJI

Goa's coronavirus caseload went up by 70 and reached 49,305 on Saturday, while two deaths took the toll to 705, an official said. He said 47,489 people have been discharged so far, including 144 on Saturday, leaving the state with 1,111 active cases.

The official said 2,069 samples were tested for the infection during the day. Goa's COVID-19 figures are as follows: Positive cases 49,305, new cases 70, death toll 705, discharged 47,489, active cases 1,111, samples tested till date 3,69,887.

Karnataka adds 1,203 fresh corona cases, overall tally breaches 9 lakh mark

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka's COVID-19 tally Breached the nine lakh mark on Saturday with 1,203 fresh COVID-19 infections while 11 fatalities took the death toll to 11,939, the Health department said.

The total infections of 9,00,214 comprised 8,70,002 discharges cumulatively including 1,531 on Saturday and 18,254 total active cases including 244 in ICUs, a bulletin issued by the department said.

Half of the cases and fatalities of the day in the state was contributed by Bengaluru Urban district which reported 606 infections and six deaths.

Cumulatively, the city has reported 3,77,857 infections, 4,230 deaths, 3,60,724 discharges, including 923 on Saturday, and 12,902 active cases.

बिहार सरकार

जल संसाधन विभाग
कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
जल निस्सरण प्रमंडल, मोतिहारी

अत्यकालीन निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या - 01 एस0बी0डी0/2020-21
(केवल ई-टेंडर पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

1. कार्य का विवरण -

क्र.सं.	कार्य का नाम	प्राक्कलित राशि (लाख ₹ में)	अग्रधन की राशि (लाख ₹ में)	परिमाण-विपत्र का मूल्य (अप्रत्यर्पणीय) (केवल ऑन लाईन मोड में मुगतेय) ₹ में	बेल्डॉन को देय बिड प्रोसेसिंग फी (केवल ऑन लाईन मोड में मुगतेय) ₹ में	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि / तिथि
1	लालबकेया नदी के दायीं बाँध के 10.00 कि०मी० से 12.50 कि०मी० के बीच (ग्राम-सपही) में कटाव निरोधक कार्य	217.92000	4.35900	10000.00	5900.00	15.05.2021

2. निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना निर्गत करने की तिथि : दिनांक: 08.12.2020

3. निविदा कागजात डाउनलोड करने की अवधि : दिनांक: 18.12.2020 से दिनांक: 21.12.2020 के 15.00 बजे तक (सिर्फ वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

4. प्री-बिड मीटिंग का समय, स्थान एवं तिथि : दिनांक: 19.12.2020, 15.00 बजे में, कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय, जल निस्सरण प्रमंडल, मोतिहारी (सिर्फ वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

5. निविदा अपलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय : दिनांक: 22.12.2020 समय 15.00 बजे तक। (सिर्फ वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

6. तकनीकी बिड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय : दिनांक: 24.12.2020 समय 15.30 बजे। (सिर्फ वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

7. वित्तीय बिड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय : सक्षम पदाधिकारी द्वारा बाद में घोषित की जायेगी (सिर्फ वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

8. निविदा खोलने का स्थान : www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर

9. निविदा की वैधता अवधि (निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि से) : 120 दिन

10. शिक्षापनदाता का पदनाम एवं पता : कार्यपालक अभियंता, जल निस्सरण प्रमंडल, मोतिहारी

11. विशेष जानकारी प्राप्त करने हेतु वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in एवं वेबसाइट state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar पर देखा जा सकता है

कार्यपालक अभियंता, जल निस्सरण, मोतिहारी।

PR- 09431 (W R D) 2020-21

नौबत कोरोना के संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी एवं सहयोग हेतु Toll Free No.: **104** पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।

संचालनालय, आयुर्वेद योग एवं प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा, यूनानी सिद्ध एवं होम्योपैथी, (आयुष) छत्तीसगढ़

डी.के.एस. परिसर, रायपुर 492001.
फोन नं. (0771)2221640, फॅक्स-2221641, ईमेल - cgayush@gmail.com

क्रमांक / 1/स्था./राज./महा./प्रवेश/2020/ रायपुर, दिनांक

बी.ए.एम.एस./बी.एच.एम.एम./बी.यू.एम.एस. पाठ्यक्रम सत्र 2020-21 में राज्य के निजी आयुष महाविद्यालयों की अखिल भारतीय कोटा (All India Quota) की सीटों पर प्रवेश हेतु ऑनलाईन रजिस्ट्रेशन सूचना:-

शैक्षणिक सत्र 2020-21 के लिए निजी आयुष महाविद्यालयों की अखिल भारतीय कोटा (All India Quota) की सीटों पर आयुष स्नातक पाठ्यक्रमों में प्रवेश के इच्छुक, राष्ट्रीय पात्रता सह प्रवेश परीक्षा NEET (UG) 2020 की प्राप्तिपत्रा सूची के पात्र एवं भारतीय चिकित्सा केन्द्रीय परिषद (भारतीय चिकित्सा में शिक्षा के स्नातक मानक) संशोधन विनियम 2018 की कडिका 2 एवं होम्योपैथी (डिग्री पाठ्यक्रम) संशोधन विनियम, 2018 की कडिका 2 में निर्दिष्ट प्रवेश हेतु योग्यता रखने वाले भारत के निवासी अर्थात् दिनांक 08.12.2020 से 17.12.2020 तक निम्नानुसार [cghealth portal](http://cghealthportal) में आयुष के वेबसाइट एवं आयुर्वेदिक कॉलेज के वेबसाइट पर आनलाईन रजिस्ट्रेशन कर सकते हैं:-

1. www.cghealth.nic.in/ehealth/dishm/councellinginfo.html
2. www.gacraipurcg.in
3. www.gac.bilaspur.gov.in

रजिस्ट्रेशन फॉर्म में त्रुटि सुधार दिनांक 17.12.2020 को मध्य रात्रि 11:59 बजे तक किया जा सकता है। विस्तृत जानकारी उपरोक्त वेबसाइट पर देखी जा सकती है। जन्त पाठ्यक्रमों में प्रवेश हेतु प्रथम चरण का सीट आवंटन दिनांक 21.12.2020 एवं द्वितीय चरण का सीट आवंटन दिनांक 07.01.2021 को किया जाना है।

पंजीयन/सीट आवंटन एवं प्रवेश से संबंधित अन्य निर्देश/सूचना की अद्यतन जानकारी हेतु नियमित रूप से उक्त वेबसाइट का अवलोकन करते रहें।

नोट:- सभी निजी आयुष महाविद्यालयों के आयुष स्नातक पाठ्यक्रमों की सभी सीटों का आवंटन संचालनालय आयुष रायपुर द्वारा गठित समिति द्वारा किया जायेगा। अतः किसी व्यक्ति/संस्था/एजेंसी के प्रलोभन में न फसे।

हं / -
संचालक

R.O. No:- 85563/4
R.O. Dated:- 11/12/2020

आयुर्वेद, योग एवं प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा, यूनानी, सिद्ध एवं होम्योपैथी (आयुष) छत्तीसगढ़

BID TO OVERTURN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULT

SC rejects Trump-backed lawsuit

Washington: The US Supreme Court has rejected a lawsuit seeking to overturn the results of the presidential election in several key battleground states won by Joe Biden, effectively ending President Donald Trump's bid to challenge the outcome of the November 3 polls.

The Supreme Court on Friday rejected a bid from Texas' attorney general and backed by President Trump to block the ballots of millions of voters in battleground states of Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin that went in favour of President-elect Biden.

Supreme Court Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas said they believed the court was required to hear the case but expressed no position on Texas' claim. As many as 126 Republican Congressmen had also backed the lawsuit.

"Texas has not demonstrated a judicially cognisable interest in the manner in which another State conducts its elections. All other pending motions are dismissed as moot," the Supreme Court said in a brief unsigned order on Thursday, delivering a devastating blow to the efforts of the Republican president to challenge and overturn the election results decisively won by Biden,



a Democrat.

Biden not only bagged the most popular votes in the presidential electoral history of the United States, his tally in the electoral college was 306, more than the 270 votes required for winning the race to the White House. Trump received 232 electoral votes. The election results are scheduled to be formally certified next week by the 538-member Electoral College.

Reacting to the verdict, an angry Trump tweeted, "The Supreme Court really let us down. No Wisdom, No Courage!"

He also said the verdict was a "legal disgrace" and "an embarrassment to the USA."

Trump and his campaign team have been making unsub-



stantiated allegations of massive voter fraud and electoral malpractice in the election. State election officials and mainstream media say they have not found any such evidence.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton in his lawsuit alleged that four battleground states -- Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin -- had violated their own state laws, and thus the US Constitution. The lawsuit urged the court to bar these four states from casting their electoral votes for Biden and as such shift the selection of electors to the states' legislatures.

Trump had said he expected to prevail in the Supreme Court.

Pennsylvania, in its

response to the lawsuit, alleged that Texas wanted the justices to disregard the Constitution, not interpret it. It said Texas' filings attempted to construct a surreal alternate reality.

"Texas' effort to get this Court to pick the next President has no basis in law or fact. The Court should not abide this seditious abuse of the judicial process, and should send a clear and unmistakable signal

that such abuse must never be replicated," said the response filed by the State of Pennsylvania.

Reacting to the development, Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, said, "The Court has rightly dismissed out of hand the extreme, unlawful and undemocratic GOP lawsuit to overturn the will of millions of American voters." PTI

Trump loyalists converging again on Washington over election

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Supporters of President Donald Trump are returning to Washington for a pair of rallies to back his desperate efforts to subvert the election that he lost.

The rallies Saturday came a month after a pro-Trump demonstration that drew at least 10,000 people to the capital. That day began with Trump thrilling supporters when his motorcade passed by and ended with scattered clashes between his loyalists and local activists near Black Lives Matter Plaza near the White House.

Saturday's rallies are meant as a show of force just two days

before the Electoral College meets to formally elect Democrat Joe Biden as the next president. Trump refuses to concede the election, citing baseless claims of fraud.

The Supreme Court on Friday rejected a lawsuit to overturn Biden's election victory, ending an attempt to get legal issues rejected by state and federal judges before the nation's highest court.

Trump planned to leave the White House around midday to attend the Army-Navy football game in West Point, New York. One of the rallies will be at Freedom Plaza downtown and the other nearby on the National Mall.

'Cuomo among contenders for attorney general pick'

Washington: New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo is one of several contenders under consideration by President-elect Joe Biden for the role of attorney general, a person with knowledge of the search process said on Friday.

The other three contenders at the moment include former Alabama Sen. Doug Jones, federal appeals court judge Merrick Garland and former Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates, said the person, who cautioned that no decision had

been reached and no announcement was expected imminently.

The person was not authorized to discuss the search process by name and spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press.

The Associated Press reported earlier in the week that Jones, who lost his Senate seat last month, and Garland, who was spurned by Republicans four years ago for a spot on the Supreme Court, had emerged as the two front-

runners in the search process.

Spokespeople for Cuomo did not immediately return emails seeking comment on Friday.

It was not clear to what extent the disclosure this week that federal prosecutors were investigating the finances of Biden's son, Hunter, might have scrambled the attorney general search process given that the person who has picked would inherit the probe assuming it remains active next month. AP



Jimmy Lai, centre, who founded the Apple Daily tabloid, is escorted by Correctional Services officers to get on a prison van before appearing in a court in Hong Kong on Saturday

HONG KONG

Jimmy Lai denied bail as Pompeo tweets support

Hong Kong: Jimmy Lai, the 73-year-old Hong Kong media tycoon and advocate for democracy, was denied bail on Saturday after being charged the previous day under the semi-autonomous Chinese territory's new national security law.

Lai faces a charge of collusion with foreign elements to endanger national security, apparently for tweets he made and interviews or commentaries he did with foreign media.

The Apple Daily, a feisty pro-democracy tabloid owned by Lai, said he is accused of asking a foreign country, organization or individual to impose sanctions or engage in other hostile activities against Hong Kong or China.

His case was adjourned to April 16 at the request of prosecutors, who said police needed time to review more than 1,000 tweets and comments made on his Twitter account, the Apple Daily reported.

The newspaper said his

charge sheet listed several foreign politicians who followed Lai on Twitter and cited commentaries he wrote and interviews he did with foreign media.

Lai, who was already being held on other fraud charges after police raided his media company, could be seen handcuffed to a chain around his waist as guards led him to a van to go from prison to court. He wore a navy blazer and an open-neck shirt.

Beijing imposed the national security law on Hong Kong earlier this year after stormy protests in 2019 that started over an extradition bill and expanded to include demands for greater democracy in the former British colony.

The new law outlaws secession, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces to intervene in Hong Kong's affairs. It has constricted free speech in the city, and democracy activists see it as a way to suppress dissent. AP

Relatives make plea for info on Hong Kong detainees in China

Hong Kong: Relatives of a dozen Hong Kong residents who have been detained in mainland China for more than 3 1/2 months made a plea Saturday to be informed of the timing of any trials and whether they can attend.

The request underscored the sharp contrast between the relatively open legal system in Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous Chinese territory, and that of the mainland, where often little information is divulged until a trial is over.

"I miss my son so much," the mother of Wong Wai-yin, one of the detainees, said, choking up. "I want to visit him so badly. I haven't seen my son in a very long time — it's almost four months. Please tell me (about the trial). I'm just an ordinary mother." The 12 were arrested at sea in August while they were apparently making a bid to flee to Taiwan after a tough national security law took effect in Hong Kong earlier this year.

They were picked up after entering mainland waters for crossing the maritime border without permission. AP

Chemical weapons watchdog criticises Syria over 19 issues

United Nations: The global chemical weapons watchdog criticised Syria for failing to declare a chemical weapons production facility and respond to 18 other issues, while Russia accused the watchdog of conducting a "political crusade" against its close ally, the Syrian Government.

The clash on Friday came at the UN Security Council's monthly meeting on Syria's chemical weapons, where the director-general of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Fernando Arias, briefed members for the first time since May and was pummeled with questions from Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia.

Arias said seven years after Syria joined the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2013, its initial chemical declaration has unresolved "gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies" and "still cannot be considered accurate and complete."

He told the virtual meeting

that one of the 19 outstanding issues is a chemical weapons production facility that President Bashar Assad's government said was never used to produce weapons, but where the OPCW gathered material and samples indicating "that production and/or weaponisation of chemical warfare nerve agents took place."

Arias said the OPCW had requested Syria to declare the exact types and quantities of chemical agents at the site, but got no response.

Britain's new UN ambassador, Barbara Woodward, said another unresolved issue in Syria's declaration is the thousands of munitions and hundreds of tons of chemical agents that Syria has not accounted for.

A joint UN-OPCW investigative mechanism accused Syria of using chlorine and the nerve agent sarin during its civil war, while the Islamic State group was accused of using mustard gas twice in 2015 and 2016. AP

Iran executes journalist who encouraged 2017 protests

Tehran: Authorities say Iran has executed a once-celebrated journalist over his online work that helped inspire nationwide economic protests in 2017.

Iranian state television and the state-run IRNA news agency said that Ruhollah Zam was hanged early Saturday morning.

In June, a court sentenced Zam to death, saying he had been convicted of "corruption on Earth," a charge often used



in cases involving espionage or attempts to overthrow Iran's government.

Zam's website and a channel he created on the popular

messaging app Telegram had spread the timings of the protests and embarrassing information about officials that directly challenged Iran's Shiite theocracy.

Those demonstrations, which began at the end of 2017, represented the biggest challenge to Iran since the 2009 Green Movement protests and set the stage for similar mass unrest in November of last year. AP



An Afghan boy holds the remains of a vehicle which was carrying and shooting the rockets in Kabul on Saturday

Turkey summons Iranian envoy over Azeri poem tensions

AP ■ ISTANBUL

Turkey on Saturday summoned the Iranian ambassador to Ankara over Iran's "aggressive" reaction to the Turkish president's recitation of a poem on a visit to Azerbaijan, which Tehran deemed to support a secession of Azeri ethnic parts of Iran.

The diplomatic spat between neighbors Iran and Turkey began earlier this week when Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who strongly backs Azerbaijan, read parts of a poem during a parade in the Caucasian country's capital of Baku.

The verses that Erdogan read included lines about how a border tore apart ancient Azeri, or Azerbaijani, lands "by force."

In a statement Saturday, Turkey's communications director Fahrettin Altun said Iranians had distorted the meaning of the poem "to fuel senseless tensions."

Shadowy Ethiopian massacre could be 'tip of the iceberg'

Umm Rakouba (Sudan): The only thing the survivors can agree on is that hundreds of people were slaughtered in a single Ethiopian town.

Witnesses say security forces and their allies attacked civilians in Mai-Kadra with machetes and knives or strangled them with ropes. The stench of bodies lingered for days during the early chaos of the Ethiopian government's offensive in the defiant Tigray region last month. Several mass graves have been reported.

What happened beginning November 9 in the agricultural town near the Sudanese border has become the most visible atrocity in a war largely conducted in the shadows. But even

here, much remains unclear, including who killed whom.

Witnesses in Mai-Kadra told the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and Amnesty International that ethnic Tigrayan forces and allies attacked Amhara — one of Ethiopia's largest ethnic groups but a minority in Tigray. In Sudan, where nearly 50,000 people have fled, one ethnic Amhara refugee gave The Associated Press a similar account.

But more than a dozen Tigrayan refugees told the AP it was the other way around: In strikingly similar stories, they said they and others were targeted by Ethiopian federal forces and allied Amhara

regional troops.

It's possible that civilians from both ethnicities were targeted in Mai-Kadra, Amnesty now says.

"Anyone they found, they would kill," Tesfaalem Germay, an ethnic Tigrayan who fled to Sudan with his family, said of Ethiopian and Amhara forces. He said he saw hundreds of bodies, making a slicing gesture at his neck and head as he remembered the gashes.

But another refugee, Abebetefe Refe, told the AP that many ethnic Amhara like him who stayed behind were massacred by Tigrayan forces. "Even the government doesn't think we're alive, they thought we all died," he said. AP

Fear of contracting Covid-19 led to Lanka prison riot: Probe panel

PTI ■ COLOMBO

A Sri Lankan probe panel investigating the last month's prison riot in which 11 inmates were killed has concluded that the prisoners staged the protest in fear of contracting the deadly coronavirus, an official said on Saturday.

The five-member probe committee's interim report said that the riot at the Mahara prison on November 29 and 30 was caused by the protest staged to receive a quick solution to the COVID-19 issue.

Eleven inmates were killed in the protest. The government appointed the probe panel after pressure from the Opposition

and the victims' relatives.

"What was a protest had later developed into a major riot," the committee said, adding that the divisions among inmates had also aggravated the clash due to deep running personal hatred as they belonged to different cliques and criminal gangs.

The committee observed that the inmates had violently involved in fistfights among them by using knives, clubs and swords found from within the prison premises. But none of the inmates had access to any fire arms.

Only the prison officials had guns and they used them, the probe committee said.

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General Public is hereby informed that an one lady was found in illness condition in the area of P.S. Timarpur, Delhi dated 30.11.2020. She was admitted in BJRM Hospital after treatment declared dead by doctor dated 30.11.2020. In this regard a vide DD No. 42A, dated 30.11.2020, has been registered at P.S. Timarpur, Delhi. The description of the dead body is given as under Name: Gulabo, W/o: Rama Nand, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 60-65 years, Height: 5'1", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Built: Thin, Wearing: Red colour sweater and red colour saree. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the dead lady but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this dead lady please inform undersigned.



SHO P.S. Timarpur, Delhi Ph.: 011-23812734, 23814421

DP/785/N/2020

WESTERN RAILWAY MANUFACTURE AND SUPPLY WORK

Advertised Tender Notice No. : 191/E-Tender/P.way/2020, Dated: 10.12.2020, for tender on E-Procurement mode only for and on behalf of the President of India are invited by Chief Administrative Officer (Construction), 1st floor, Station Building, Churchgate, Mumbai: 400020 for supply of the following items:

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Short Description	Tender Value (approximately)
1.	WTR/S&C/17/2020/8194	Manufacture and supply of PSC T/ou and special sleeper for GRSP: (a) 1 in 8.5, T-4865 (with horns Drg. No. T-8293, 8294 & 8295 = 118 Sets. (b) Trap, T-6068 = 54 Sets. (c) 1 in 16, T-5691 = 18 Sets. (d) SEJ, T-4159 = 2556 Nos.	Rs. 32,84,000/-
2.	WTR/S&C/17/2020/7107	Manufacture and supply of Fish Bolt with Nut 60 Kg. T-1899=42110 Nos.	Rs. 32,90,000/-
3.	WTR/S&C/17/2020/7108	Manufacture and supply of Fish Plate 60 Kg. 1 meter long: T-5916=9986 Nos.	Rs. 4,22,35,000/-
4.	WTR/S&C/17/2020/7109	Manufacture and supply of various types of Joggled Fish plate with associate fittings (a) T-5849=1500 Sets, (b) T-4016=100 Sets	Rs. 1,19,51,000/-
5.	WTR/S&C/17/2020/7106	Manufacture and supply of various types galvanised plate screw and Rail screw (a) T-3911=12718 Nos., (b) T-3912=219562 Nos., (c) T-3913= 107600 Nos., (d) T-3915=20372 Nos., (e) T-4153= 69970 Nos.	Rs. 2,14,29,000/-

The EMD for above tenders is NIL. Date of opening : for all tenders is 30.12.2020. Time of opening : Sl. No. 1: 11.00 hrs., Sl. No. 2: 11.30 hrs., Sl. No. 3: 12.00 hrs., Sl. No. 4: 15.00 hrs. & Sl. No. 5: 16.00 hrs. www.ireps.gov.in and wr.indianrailways.gov.in 0493 Like us on : facebook.com/WesternRly | Follow us on : twitter.com/WesternRly

National Yuva Cooperative Society Ltd

Regd Office : 209, 2nd Floor, A2/B, Vardhman Janak Market Janakpuri, New Delhi - 110058, Phone: 011-25531063 E-mail: regdoffice.nycslimited@gmail.com, Website: www.nycsindia.com

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that 19th Annual Representative General Body Meeting (RGB) of National Yuva Cooperative Society Ltd. will be held on 29th December 2020 at 3:00 pm at NYCS, B3/97, Basement, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi - 110029. All the Members of the RGB and Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies, are requested to participate in the meeting. Detailed Agenda of the meeting can be viewed in the website: www.nycsindia.com

Date : 13th December 2020 Place : New Delhi Dr. Umesh Londhe Chief Executive Officer

DELHI JAL BOARD: DELHI SARKAR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SOUTH)-II JAL SADAN: LAJPAT NAGAR: NEW DELHI-110024

"STOP CORONA; Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"

NIT No. 33/S-II/2020-21 Press Tender

S. No.	Name of Work	Reserve price	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Last date and time for download & RTGS through e-procurement solution
1.	Improvement of sewerage system by replacement of old damaged peripheral sewer line by using pipe bursting technology in front of D-Block Jangpura Extension along Railway line under EE(S) II (AC-42 Kasturba Nagar)	Item rate	2020_DJB_197374_3 10.12.2020	24.12.2020 upto 2.00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in ISSUED BY P.O (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 252/2020-21 (S.Ghuam Sajjad) EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SOUTH)-II

Eco indicators show encouraging signs

Govt committed to minimum governance to boost investment: PM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Economic indicators have shown encouraging signs of recovery of the Indian economy post-pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday as he vowed to keep government controls to a bare minimum and encourage private capital.

In this time of pandemic, he said, the government has accorded highest priority to saving lives of Indians and the way India has handled the crisis through concerted effort has surprised the world.

Compared to February when the pandemic started, things have changed in December, he said, adding, there is a road map to deal with

this now.

“Even the economic indicators are encouraging,” he added. Various measures taken by the government in the last six years has instilled confidence among global investors, he said.

As a result, he said, “India has seen record Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Foreign Portfolio Investment inflows during the pandemic.”

Addressing the FICCI Annual Convention, he said, a decisive government always strives to remove obstacles for others and always tries to contribute towards the society and the nation.

Recalling the time when government was in all the sectors, he said, a visionary and decisive government, on the other hand, encourages all the stakeholders to realise their potential.

Modi pointed out that in the last six years, the government has encouraged stakeholders in all sectors and this is reflected in the all-round

reforms in sectors ranging from manufacturing to MSME; agriculture to infrastructure; from tech industry to taxation and from real estate to regulatory easing.

Talking about various reforms undertaken by the government in the last six years, he said changes have been brought in manufacturing, MSMEs, agriculture, infrastructure and regulatory easing.

As a result of taxation reform, he said, India has got competitive advantage in corporate tax rate and initiated faceless assessment and faceless appeal leaving behind the scar of tax terrorism and Inspector Raj.

Pointing out that the old policies protected inefficiencies while ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan’ is guided to promote efficiency in all the sectors, he said the government has introduced Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme to promote sunrise sectors and technology based industries.

Finance Min OK’s ₹9,879 cr capital exp proposal of 27 States

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Saturday said it has approved ₹9,879.61 crore worth capital expenditure proposals of 27 states.

Of this, ₹4,939.81 crore has been released as the first instalment.

In a statement, the ministry said all states, except Tamil Nadu, have availed benefits of the newly announced scheme for ‘Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure’, which was announced on October 12 as part of Aatmanirbhar Bharat package.

“So far capital expenditure proposals of ₹9,879.61 crore of 27 states have been approved by the Ministry of Finance.

An amount of ₹4,939.81 crore has already been released to the states as the first instalment under the scheme,” it said.

The ministry said the scheme is aimed at boosting capital expenditure by the state governments who are facing

difficult financial environment this year due to the shortfall in tax revenue arising from the COVID 19 pandemic.

“Capital Expenditure has a higher multiplier effect, enhancing the future productive capacity of the economy, and results in a higher rate of economy growth.

Therefore, despite the adverse financial position of the Central Government, it was decided to extend a special assistance to the state governments in respect of capital expenditure, in financial year 2020-21,” it added.

The capital expenditure projects have been approved in diverse sectors like, health, rural development, water supply, irrigation, power, transport, education, urban development.

As part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Package, the government had announced that the Centre will offer Rs 12,000 crore special interest-free 50-year loan to states, exclusively for capital expenditure.

‘5% growth amid de-globalisation to be significant achievement for India’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Morgan Stanley Chief Global Strategist Ruchir Sharma on Saturday said if the Indian economy grows at 5 per cent in the era of deglobalisation, then it will be a significant achievement.

Addressing the FICCI Annual Convention, Sharma further said India has to be realistic...If we can grow at more than 5 per cent in a year,

that is a significant achievement,” he said.

Sharma also noted that it is no longer feasible in the world of deglobalisation to grow at 7 per cent as exports cannot grow at 20 per cent or 30 per cent in a year, which was good in an era of globalisation.

“So, for an economy like India’s, growth rate of 5 per cent will be pretty credible even in this era where I think emerging economies in general will make some sort of a comeback,” he added.

Sharma pointed out that

there were about 100 economies that were growing at 7 per cent or more in 2007.

“That has never happened in the history of the global economy. In the last decade, only 10 economies in the world have grown 7 per cent or more in any year,” he said.

Sharma also argued that if the population growth of a country is slowing, then that country can’t grow at the same pace as it did in the past.

According to the RBI, Indian economy is likely to contract by 7.5 per cent, in 2020-21.

Hopeful about next round of talks between Centre, protesting farmers soon: Chautala

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As a deadlock continues between the central government and protesting farmers on three new farm laws, Haryana Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala on Saturday said he is hopeful the next round of talks between the Centre and the unions will take place in the next 24-40 hours.

After meeting Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar here, Chautala said the crop procurement at the government-decided MSP (minimum support price) would be ensured for each farmer till the time he was part of the state government.

Chautala, who also met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Food, Railways and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal earlier in the day, also said the Haryana government is stable as of now and his party has a strong position on the MSP issue. Chautala, who has been facing pressure from the opposition and some Haryana farmers to withdraw from the BJP-led government in the state, had earlier said he will resign if the MSP system is threatened.

SBI will prefer co-origination models of lending to MSMEs: Chairman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State Bank of India (SBI) will prefer the co-origination model to cater to the financing needs of MSMEs and collaboration with fintechs is a good idea as it helps in assessing the risk profile of the borrower in a better manner, its chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara said on Saturday.

Pointing out that the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are constrained today in terms of cash flows, time gap in realising receivables, among others and also the level of lenders’ confidence in funding them, Khara said collaborating is a better model than lending directly to MSMEs.

“The fact of the matter is that today not many NBFCs have come in this space. And of late, when it comes to finding solutions, we feel that apart from lending directly to the MSMEs, there is a way forward in terms of collaborating with these NBFCs along with the

biggest fintechs who have the ability to process the structured and unstructured (financial) data to have a better sense in terms of assessment of risk,” Khara said.

Based on that assessment, he said, bankers feel very comfortable in lending to the MSMEs.

He was speaking at a webinar on financing the unfunded organised by the Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship (GAME).

There could also be another option of financing based on the cash flow and not on the basis of balance sheet because very often it is observed that the balance sheet and the financial statement are not available in a form which is expected by any banker, he added.

Also, there is a broad spectrum of MSMEs in the country which work in a host of areas and often the kind of financial information coming from them is not very organised, Khara explained.

Now Oracle to move Silicon Valley headquarters to Texas

IAN S ■ SAN FRANCISCO

Cloud major Oracle has announced to move its California-based headquarters to Austin, Texas and cited flexibility of employee work as the key reason behind the decision.

The decision came a day after the company posted revenues of \$9.8 billion in its fiscal second quarter, a growth of two per cent (on-year) and Cloud services and licence support revenues were up four per cent to \$7.1 billion. Oracle is implementing a more flexible employee work location policy and has changed its Corporate Headquarters from Redwood City, California to

Austin, Texas. We believe these moves best position Oracle for growth and provide our personnel with more flexibility about where and how they work,” a company spokesperson told CNBC on Friday. “In addition, we will continue to support major hubs for Oracle around the world, including those in the United States such as Redwood City, Austin, Santa Monica, Seattle, Denver, Orlando and Burlington, among others, and we expect to add other locations over time,” Oracle said. Founded in Santa Clara in 1977, the Larry Ellison-led Oracle is one of Silicon Valley’s older success stories.

Tech key to exploring new frontiers of economic recovery: Nadella

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Microsoft’s Chief Executive Officer Satya Nadella on Saturday said that despite the constraint caused by the pandemic, digital technology is being adopted to scale core resilience, not only for future transformation but for business continuity.

Addressing the AI and the New Digital World Ahead’ session at industry body Ficci’s 93rd Annual General Meeting (AGM), Nadella said: “The ability to use the digital tools and our built-in infrastructure and capability around the

digital track is going to create resilience and transformation.”

Asserting further on the future during a fireside chat with Ficci President Sangita Reddy, Nadella said that broad paradigms are re-shaping the expectations especially the exponential changes and the exponential change is technology. The innovation in India around digital infrastructure in every field, from financial services, healthcare to retail is tremendous due to the ubiquity of computing fabric that is available through every Indian business and every Indian citizen,” he said.

Britain to end state support for fossil fuel sector exports

London: Britain said Friday that it is ending state support for fossil fuel industry exports, and shifting government assistance to low-carbon and renewable energy projects abroad.

The announcement by Prime Minister Boris Johnson comes a day before he co-hosts a virtual summit with more than 70 world leaders to mark the 75th anniversary of the Paris climate accord. Britain already declared earlier this month that it plans to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 68% by 2030.



कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
बाढ़ नियंत्रण प्रमंडल, गोपालगंज
पत्रांक- 1664 / गोपालगंज
अल्पकालीन राष्ट्रीय स्पर्धा निविदा आमंत्रण
(केवल ई-टेंडर पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना सं-01-SBD/2020-21

क्र. / घुप सं.	कार्य का नाम	प्रकृतितक राशि (लाख रु.)	अंश (लाख रु.)							
1.	बेतिया-गोपालगंज ब्रिज के खंडन स्ट्रीम में कटाव निरोध कार्य, पहाड़ा छरकी के कि०मी० 1.705 से 3.00 कि०मी० तक तथा कि०मी० 1.830 से 4.750 कि०मी० तक कटाव निरोध कार्य।	1230.49	22.31	10,000/-	5900.00	15.05.2021				
2.	सागरा तटबंध के कि०मी० 124.70 से 126.50 कि०मी० तक उच्चिकरण, सुदुंदीकरण एवं सुखात्मक कार्य।	1484.48	24.85	10,000/-	5900.00	15.05.2021				
3.	मंसाही घुंरना छरकी के कि०मी० 0.340 से 3.070 कि०मी० तक उच्चिकरण, सुदुंदीकरण एवं सुखात्मक कार्य।	1426.94	24.27	10,000/-	5900.00	15.05.2021				
4.	सल्लेपुर-टंडरपुर छरकी के कि०मी० 5.00 से 10.50 कि०मी० तक, दिपक छरकी के कि०मी० 0.00 से 1.11 कि०मी० तक एवं हलानपुर छरकी के कि०मी० 0.00 से 2.30 कि०मी० तक कटाव निरोध कार्य।	1034.78	20.35	10,000/-	5900.00	15.05.2021				
5.	सागरा तटबंध के कि०मी० 80.00 से 100.00 कि०मी० तक कटाव निरोध कार्य।	2483.03	34.84	10,000/-	5900.00	15.05.2021				
6.	सलेमानपुर छरकी के कि०मी० 0.00 से 9.60 कि०मी० तक कटाव निरोध कार्य।	2030.97	30.31	10,000/-	5900.00	15.05.2021				
7.	बी.एस.ए.ए. जमींदारी बांध के कि०मी० 0.00 से 8.25 कि०मी० तक कटाव निरोध कार्य।	2850.20	38.51	10,000/-	5900.00	15.05.2021				
8.	सागरा तटबंध के कि०मी० 122.380 से 123.180 कि०मी० तक उच्चिकरण, सुदुंदीकरण एवं सुखात्मक कार्य।	232.22	4.65	10,000/-	3540.00	15.05.2021				
9.	गोमिया छरकी के कि०मी० 0.00 से 5.120 कि०मी० तक उच्चिकरण, सुदुंदीकरण एवं सुखात्मक कार्य।	700.00	14.00	10,000/-	5900.00	15.05.2021				
10.	सल्लेपुर-टंडरपुर छरकी के कि०मी० 0.00 से 5.00 कि०मी० तक कटाव निरोध कार्य।	834.75	16.70	10,000/-	5900.00	15.05.2021				
11.	मटियाही रिग बांध के कि०मी० 0.00 से 1.00 कि०मी० तक कटाव निरोध कार्य एवं मटियाही रिग बांध के कि०मी० 0.50 से 0.80 कि०मी० तक कटाव निरोध कार्य।	891.27	17.83	10,000/-	5900.00	15.05.2021				
12.	सागरा तटबंध के कि०मी० 83.70 पर कटाव निरोध कार्य एवं महालानी छरकी के कि०मी० 0.00 से 4.90 कि०मी० तक सुखात्मक कार्य।	834.10	16.69	10,000/-	5900.00	15.05.2021				
13.	कैलाशपुर रिटायर लाइन के कि०मी० 0.00 से 7.00 कि०मी० तक सुखात्मक कार्य एवं कैलाशपुर रिटायर लाइन के कि०मी० 7.00 से 12.40 कि०मी० तक सुखात्मक कार्य।	812.54	16.26	10,000/-	5900.00	15.05.2021				
14.	मंगुलवा छरकी के कि०मी० 0.00 से 3.30 कि०मी० तक उच्चिकरण, सुदुंदीकरण एवं सुखात्मक कार्य।	486.33	9.73	10,000/-	5900.00	15.05.2021				
15.	होरागकर छरकी के कि०मी० 0.00 से 1.20 कि०मी० तक उच्चिकरण, सुदुंदीकरण एवं सुखात्मक कार्य।	247.39	4.95	10,000/-	3540.00	15.05.2021				

2. निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना निर्गत करने की तिथि : दिनांक 07.12.2020

3. निविदा कागजात डाउनलोड एवं अपलोड करने की तिथि : दिनांक 17.12.2020 से दिनांक 23.12.2020 के 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक (सिर्फ वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

4. प्री-बिड मीटिंग का समय, स्थान एवं तिथि : दिनांक 18.12.2020 को 11:00 बजे पूर्वान्वेदन में मुख्य अभियंता, बाढ़ नियंत्रण एवं जल निस्सारण, जल संसाधन विभाग, गोपालगंज के कार्यालय में।

5. तननीकी बीड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय : दिनांक 26.12.2020 समय 3:30 बजे अपराह्न (सिर्फ वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

6. वित्तीय बीड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय : सक्षम पदाधिकारी द्वारा बाद में वेबसाइट पर घोषित की जायेगी। (सिर्फ वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

7. निविदा खोलने का स्थान : सिर्फ वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर

8. निविदा की वेबसाइट की अवधि : निविदा प्रारंभिक के 120 दिन बाद तक

9. विज्ञानदाता का पदनाम एवं पता : कार्यपालक अभियंता, बाढ़ नियंत्रण प्रमंडल, गोपालगंज

10. विशेष जानकारी प्राप्त करने हेतु वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in एवं www.wrd.bih.nic.in पर या वेबसाइट State.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar पर देखा जा सकता है।

कार्यपालक अभियंता
बाढ़ नियंत्रण प्रमंडल, गोपालगंज

PR. No. 009351 (WRD) 2020-21

नोबल कोटोना के संघ में विस्तृत जानकारी एवं सहाय्य हेतु Toll Free No. **104** पर संचर्क कर सकते हैं।

बाढ़ समीचीन-संबंधी किसी तरह की जानकारी अथवा सुझाव हेतु दूरभाष संख्या 0612-2217636 पर सम्पर्क किया जा सकता है।

Digitalisation is redefining the manufacturing industry, says Debjani Ghose

New Delhi: “Digitalisation is redefining the manufacturing industry and the NASSCOM CoE is strongly focused on driving thought leadership and co-innovation with startups to help manufacturing companies innovate in the new normal. The overwhelming interest in the ‘Manufacturing Innovation Challenge’ brings to the fore the innovative capabilities of the start-up ecosystem and the opportunity for the country to build a vibrant and digitally-led manufacturing industry. NASSCOM CoE is committed to accelerate these opportunities through showcasing industry-specific use cases and coupling them with start-up capabilities,” said Ms Debjani Ghosh, President, NASSCOM, while speaking at the second edition of Fusion 4.0’s Manufacturing Innovation Challenge 2020 (MIC2020) organized by NASSCOM Centre of Excellence IoT& AI.

Gadkari calls upon industry to find Swadeshi alternatives to imports

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Asserting that India was importing “a lot of things” from China, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Saturday urged the domestic industry to come up with Swadeshi alternatives to the imports from various nations without compromising with their quality and cost. Addressing the annual meeting of Ficci virtually, the MSME and road transport minister highlighted the need to reduce imports and increase exports. He said this can help enhance economic growth and boost the contribution of domestic manufacturing to the GDP to up to 30 per cent. Citing the example of magnets used in electric vehicles, he asked industry experts to study which parts are being imported by India. “Now the magnet, there are a lot of things we are importing from China. I am not a businessman or a business expert but I am seeing a huge potential for electric cars, e-bikes, electric auto-rickshaws and even electric trucks,” said the Minister.

Gujarat Govt to compensate farmers for damage to crops

IAN S ■ GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani on Saturday said the government will soon carry out a survey on the damage to crops in the state due to the unseasonal rain in the last couple of days.

Rupani said, “We will carry out a survey wherever unseasonal rains and crop damage are reported and will disburse compensation to the affected farmers accordingly. But that will be after a couple of days, as there is still rainy weather continuing in the state.”

A spell of untimely rain in various parts of Gujarat has caused major damage to the standing crops. Groundnuts, cumin and cotton have been significantly affected, according to sources.

All States except Tamil Nadu availed special capital expenditure scheme: Centre

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday said that all states except Tamil Nadu have availed benefits of ‘Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure’.

The scheme is aimed at boosting capital expenditure by the state governments, who are facing a difficult financial environment this year due to the shortfall in tax revenue arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to the Ministry of Finance, capital expenditure has a higher multiplier effect, enhancing the future productive capacity of the economy, and results in a higher rate of economy growth.

Therefore, despite the adverse financial position of the central government, it was decided to extend a special assistance to the state governments in respect of capital expenditure, in financial year 2020-21.

“The scheme has got very warm response from the state governments. So far capital expenditure proposals of Rs 9,879.61 crore of 27 States have been approved by the Ministry of Finance.”

As per the statement, an amount of Rs 4,939.81 crore has already been released to the states as the first instalment under the scheme.

Indian railways to fill up the bulk vacancies through railway recruitment boards

Kolkata: Dr Anand Singh Khatri, Director General (HR) in charge of recruitment in Railways has announced through a virtual press briefing today i.e. on 11.12.2020 that Indian Railways is going to fill up 1.4 lakh vacancies of posts of Stenographers, Teachers, Translators, Station Masters, Guards, Office Clerks, Commercial Clerks, Track Maintainers, Pointsman and various Level-I employees through Railway Recruitment Boards. Total 2.44 crores candidates have applied for these posts. For this, three following employment notifications have been issued:

- CEN 01/2019 (NTPC categories)
 - CEN 03/2019 (Isolated and Ministerial categories)
 - RRC -01/2019 (Level-1 categories)
- Railway Recruitment Boards (RRB) are going to conduct Computer Based Test

Proclamation requiring the appearance of accused persons

Whereas complaint has been made before me that (1) **Mujaffar Hussain S/o Nur Hassain**, (2) **Ebene Ali Miya S/o Abed Ali Miya Both R/o Village Haribanga, PS Kotwali, Cooch Bihar, West Bengal** and (3) **Pankaj Barman S/o Pranavbar Barman R/o Singmari, PO Nutan Bosh, PS Sitari, Cooch Bihar, West Bengal** have committed (or are suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 194/20 Date 02.07.2020 u/s 20/25/29 NDPS Act, P.S. Subzi Mandi, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused persons (1) **Mujaffar Hussain** (2) **Ebene Ali Miya** (3) **Pankaj Barman** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused persons (1) **Mujaffar Hussain** (2) **Ebene Ali Miya** (3) **Pankaj Barman** have absconded (or are concealing themselves to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused persons (1) **Mujaffar Hussain** (2) **Ebene Ali Miya** (3) **Pankaj Barman** of **FIR No. 194/20 Date 02.07.2020 u/s 20/25/29 NDPS Act, P.S. Subzi Mandi, Delhi** are required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **28.01.2021 at 10:00 AM.**

By Order,
Ms. Neelofar Abida Parveen
Special Judge-2 NDPS Act (Central)
Room No. 222, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

DP/753/N/2020

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General Public is hereby informed that an one male person was found in unconscious condition in the area of P.S. Hauz Khas, New Delhi dated 27.10.2020. He was admitted MLC No. 8575/2020 in AIIMS Hospital after treatment declared dead by doctor dated 28.10.2020. In this regard a vide DD No. 120A, dated 27.10.2020, has been registered at P.S. Hauz Khas, New Delhi. The description of the dead body is given as under Name: Ram, S/o: Rapi Singh Khushawa, R/o: Balarampur (U.P.), Age: About 30 years, Height: 57", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Built: Thin, Wearing : White Shirt & Dark Blue Pant and bare footed. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the dead person but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this dead person please inform undersigned.

SHO
P.S. Hauz Khas, New Delhi
Ph.: 011-26536716, 8750870821

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male namely **Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown was found at 27.11.2020 on service road, near shop no.09, Mahavir Mandir Road, Indra Nagar, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi.** In this regard DD No. 54A dated 27.11.2020 has been lodged at Police Station, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi. Best and sincere efforts were made to get establish the identity of the body but in vain. The dead body has been preserved in mortuary BJRM Hospital Jahangirpuri, Delhi. Identification of unidentified dead body of male is as under: Name: **Unknown, Age: About 40-45 Years, Height: Approx. 5'5", Face: Round, Built: Normal, Complexion: Wheatish, Hair: Black, Wearing: Blue Color Jacket and light green color lower** If anyone have any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly be inform undersigned.

SHO
Police Station, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi
Ph.: 011-27674452, 8750870229

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSONS

(See Section 82 Cr.Pc)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that (1) **Mujaffar Hussain S/o Nur Hassain**, (2) **Ebene Ali Miya S/o Abed Ali Miya Both R/o Village Haribanga, PS Kotwali, Cooch Bihar, West Bengal** and (3) **Pankaj Barman S/o Pranavbar Barman R/o Singmari, PO Nutan Bosh, PS Sitari, Cooch Bihar, West Bengal** have committed (or are suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 194/20 Date 02.07.2020 u/s 20/25/29 NDPS Act, P.S. Subzi Mandi, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused persons (1) **Mujaffar Hussain** (2) **Ebene Ali Miya** (3) **Pankaj Barman** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused persons (1) **Mujaffar Hussain** (2) **Ebene Ali Miya** (3) **Pankaj Barman** have absconded (or are concealing themselves to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made



MAKING STUBBLE CHANGES

Every year, between October and November, Delhi gets choked due to stubble burning in States of Punjab and Haryana and citizens struggle with breathing. Stakeholders tell SHALINI SAKSENA that there are several alternatives available for the farmers if only they would change their mindset

It was a bumper harvest in Punjab and Haryana this year, which meant that there was so much more residue to burn. Stubble burning is not a new problem. Each year, Delhiites struggle to breathe during the months of October and November. Each year, there is a hue and cry on how one can prevent these fires but to no avail.

According to data released by the Punjab Remote Sensing Centre, the State recorded 73,883 incidents of stubble burning between September 21 and November 14, 2020 which is the highest since 2016.

Punjab reported 51,048 cases of stubble burning in the corresponding period last year and 46,559 such incidents in 2018. The number of farm fires was 43,149 in the State during the same period in 2017.

According to the Ministry of Earth Sciences' air quality monitor, SAFAR, the share of stubble burning in NCR pollution peaked to 42 per cent on November 5, when 4,135 farm fires were recorded in the region.

What if there was an alternative for the farmers? What if they had an option to not burn the stubble? What if instead of burning, one could use it to make manure, or even make idols or disposable crockery or even the much needed silica fertiliser? Believe it or not, there are many stakeholders in this sector who are doing their bit to ensure that farmers don't resort to paddy straw burning.

Suvrat Khanna, CEO-Co-founder, Verve Renewables tells you that every year over 30 million tonnes of paddy stubble are burnt in Punjab and Haryana alone. "The idea of pledging to collect 1.5 lakh metric tonne of agricultural waste for power generation in Haryana was initiated with the sole intention of finding a problem of stubble burning which is a serious issue across Northern India," Khanna says.

Using agricultural waste as a source for energy production benefits farmers, bio-energy producers and the environment. Their aim is to collect one million tonnes of agro stubble by 2024 to generate approximately 2,50,000 MW of power.

Studies by Indian Agricultural Research Institute show that crop residue (mainly paddy straw) burning released 149.24 million tonnes of CO₂; over nine million tonnes of carbon monoxide (CO), 0.25 million tonnes of oxides of SO_x, 1.28 million tonnes of particulate matter and 0.07 million tonnes of black carbon. All of these contributed to hazardous levels of air pollution in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, and UP.

He tells you that an average paddy field generates two tonnes of paddy straw each season. Khanna, who is in his second year of operations, uses a three-pronged approach.

He looks at compensating farmers to dispose of agricultural waste like paddy straw in a sustainable manner; collects and delivers boiler ready biomass resources that could be used for generation of power by co-generation power plants attached to



THE CENTRE HAS GIVEN A GO AHEAD TO PROMOTE 5,000 BIOGAS PLANTS IN PUNJAB, HARYANA AND UTTAR PRADESH AND PURCHASING THE GAS AT ₹46 PER KG. THIS IS A HUGE SUPPORT. WE TOO ARE SUPPLYING TO THE POWER GRID. IF OPERATIONAL AT FULL CAPACITY, I WOULD BE ABLE TO SUPPLY 1MW WHICH CAN ELECTRIFY FOUR-FIVE VILLAGES

— SANJEEV NAGPAL, SAMPURN AGRI VENTURES PVT LTD



sugar mills and with this looks at alternative uses of stubble for energy production providing an ecological solution to air pollution.

"When we started in 2018, we wanted to tackle the issue of stubble burning, but at that time, didn't know how to go about it. Fortunately, we came across a sugar mill which was willing. We knew that electricity could be generated from paddy straw. We requested if we could provide them with it as an alternative. They agreed. They were extremely forthcoming and made changes to their boiler," Khanna tells you who decided to pursue this since he is from Amritsar and stubble burning is a yearly issue and from a business point of view, it all starts from finding a solution.

"We saw a problem and decided to solve it. We are a bridge between the farmer and the mills. We go into villages and tell them that they don't have to burn, instead once they harvest, we will come and collect residue. We try to involve entire villages since it increases bale collection by the machine," Khanna tells you.

The onus of making the bales rest with the farmers. They are encouraged to buy machines or an entrepreneur steps in. There are two kinds of balers; one that costs between ₹20-₹25 lakh. This makes bales of 20-25 kg. The bigger one that makes bales of 250-300 kg and is priced at ₹35-₹40 lakh upwards. The small machine can work in 20 acres of land a day and the big one 40 acres a day.

"For now, the farmers are not being paid, but there are plans for the same once the system becomes cost-effective. They don't pay us, we don't pay them. But we bear the cost of picking bales up; a win-win for all concerned. Convincing the farmer is not very tough since an individual farmer gets a 40 per cent subsidy to buy this machine; for custom hiring companies, there is a subsidy of up to 80 per cent. We assure the farmer with long-term association. This instills confidence in them," Khanna tells

you. Sanjeev Nagpal, founder, Sampurn Agri Ventures Pvt Ltd, a Punjab-based company, has gone a step forward. Besides setting up a bio-gas plant utilising only paddy straw as the sole feed, he is converting the same into fertiliser. Unfortunately, his endeavours to mass market paddy fertilisers have run into roadblocks — agriculture policies — he tells you, for now doesn't allow sale of silica fertiliser, a first of its kind. But he tells you that this silica is extremely important for plants. For now, individuals can buy the same for their kitchen garden and that he uses the same in his 300 acres of farmland.

"We are in the process of creating a farmers' group and using this fertiliser, grow high quality foods and market it," Nagpal says.

To develop the technology to convert paddy straw, Nagpal has collaborated with IIT Delhi. "We have developed this technology to process paddy straw, in collaboration with IIT Delhi. We are fermenting paddy straw to produce biogas and manure. We started this project back in 2015. We then had to get approval from Agriculture University for agriculture use in 2017. This is a silica fertiliser and agriculture policies framed in the 1960s, at the time of Green Revolution, doesn't recognise this as a fertiliser. The Food Agriculture Organization has accepted that silica fertiliser is required by plants for sustainable agriculture. Major diseases like cancer, Diabetes are all linked to absence of silica in the human body since they are absent in the food chain," Nagpal tells you.

In fact, this entrepreneur-farmer has already grown *kinnow* using this fertiliser. "The pre-booking response to this has been phenomenal. For now, we will only be supplying to nearby areas like Chandigarh but next year, we plan to increase our reach and supply to the rest of the country, we just need to have the logistics in place," Nagpal explains.



He tells you that instead of creating roadblocks and looking at paddy straw as a burden; to look at it as an asset, if utilised properly. India can develop huge agri-exports if it recognises this.

"One can look at exports. But why not use the same for ourselves to produce high quality food and export the same? For now, I have used 50,000 tonnes of paddy straw over the period of five years. But I am utilising my plant at minimum capacity due to the hassles involved. At full capacity, I will require 12,000 tonnes of paddy straw per year," Nagpal says.

He tells you that the Government has given a go ahead to promote 5,000 biogas plants in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and purchase the gas at ₹46 per kg. "This is a huge support by the Centre. We too are supplying to the grid. If operational at full capacity I would be able to supply 1MW — supplying electricity to four-five villages. For now, I am supplying 3,000 units a day," he says.

Setting up one huge biogas plant is not logistically possible. What is needed is a smaller one per five-six villages. "This will open up employment opportunities as well," Nagpal explains.

Elsewhere in Andhra Pradesh, Singuru Rajesh, assistant Professor Raghu

Engineering College, Visakhapatnam and head of Green Gears, is busy collecting paddy straw as well preventing the farmers in his area to burn the same.

It all started because Singuru has breathing problems. "I have asthma; I knew that I had to look for alternatives, at least in my area. I was inspired from the age-old practices of utilising tamarind and paper to make plates. The farmers in my area are extremely cooperative. We not only use paddy straw, we also use every kind of agriculture waste to make idols, crockery and even panel insulation. The good part is that once the crockery is used one can put it into the soil it turns into manure for plants," Rajesh tells you.

The residue is taken and cooked, pulp is extracted and the same can be used to make a variety of things depending on the mould available. For now, Rajesh is testing the products by giving it to family and friends to use it. But the COVID-19 put on hold his efforts to go for production and supply.

"It will take us a couple of years, before we can supply it across the country. I started this project in 2018. In 2019, I got Nav Bharat Nirman Award and Young Scientist Conference-2018 Award for this work. Once we have commercial viability, we will start paying the farmer as well for the residue. At full capacity, we will end up using a tonne of agriculture waste," Rajesh says.

The problem of stubble stems from the fact that farms use machines which cuts the length leaving a portion in the land. Pulling it by hand is next to impossible. "Traditionally, the field would be ploughed mixing the stubble in the ground adding the nutrients in the soil. But because of the harvester and thresher now being used which leaves stubble and the urgency to sow another crop, the easiest option it to burn the same. But we are now telling farmers there are other options; you can give it to us," Rajesh says.

'Need to completely change agriculture practices'

Living in the Capital comes with many riders — some good some bad. Delhiites know that come October-November and they will find it difficult to breathe — it is time when the farmers in Punjab and Haryana get to burning stubble and get their fields ready for the next cropping cycle. Paddy straw burning is not new.

For the last 60 years, since the push to make the country self-sufficient in food grains, farmers in Punjab and Haryana have been growing paddy. With only 1.5 per cent land, Punjab is producing 50 per cent food-grain for the country. More strange, that the State grows paddy when it is a wheat-eating State.

Umendra Dutt, founder-member and executive director of Kheti Virasat Mission, Punjab paints a dismal picture and tells you that in order to prevent stubble burning there is need to do two things.

The first is to completely change the agriculture system; not overhauling. Overhauling would mean that one has made a few changes here and there. What we need is a completely new model of cropping pattern. In a bid to make India sufficient in food grains, what we have done is totally changed the cropping pattern in the region. This means that the region known for wheat is now growing rice. Can you mean the

damage that this has done here? It is something that can't be changed overnight. While in the last few years, there are people who are coming out with alternatives to stubble burning, there are many roadblocks to these solutions," Dutt says.

He tells you that what is needed is instead of linking cropping patterns with sustainability, what has been done is to link it with production.

"You have pushed the farmer towards mono-culture. Stubble burning is a fall-out of it. The cropping followed today, doesn't suit the eco-system. We followed it for 50 years, but it is not possible to do so anymore. The crop cycle



followed earlier used to provide the much needed nutrients. But then you changed the pattern. You pushed him to produce more; he had to shift to using fertilisers so much so that nobody looked at the long-term issues. Stubble burning is one of the side effects of changing the cropping pattern. There is no holistic approach to farming today. Farmers only saw money and not the fallout," Dutt says.

One is told that because the farmer is in a hurry to sow the next crop — wheat — the easiest thing for him is to burn the stubble in the field. "It also means that the farmer is burning the much needed micro-nutrients in the soil

increasing his dependence on fertilisers. It has become a vicious cycle," Dutt explains.

Paddy straw is a product of mechanised agriculture. Shortage of labour and lack of time means that rice is harvested by a harvester and thresher. This leaves behind stubble. This prevents other machines from sowing wheat. With only a couple of weeks between the rice-harvesting season and the wheat-sowing, farmers burn the stubble.

"The only people who are not burning stubble are those who think that a holistic approach is the key to sustainability, those who are not dependent on subsidy or are into organic farming," Dutt says.

The solution lies in mulching. The Government instead of spending crores on giving machines, should spend money to change the mindset of the farmers.

"Farmers should be encouraged to follow organic farming. He should be shown alternatives. It's not an issue of technology, it is about human psychology, attitude, behaviour and environment. If you change farmer's attitude and are associated with him long-term, he will not burn stubble. Instead of technology intervention, show the farmer environmental psychology intervention. Show him that soil has life as well and it will take care of stubble burning," Dutt says.

India in the pink

Explosive Pant, composed Hanuma and stylish Gill stake claim as Indian batters dominate in their final tune-up innings before Test series

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australia A vs India
Live from 9:00am IST
SONY SIX NETWORK

Rishabh Pant and Hanuma Vihari put themselves in the reckoning for next week's first Test with contrasting hundreds as India thoroughly dominated Australia A in the pink ball warm-up match here at Sydney Cricket Ground on Saturday.

Needing 19 runs to reach his century when Jack Wildermuth commenced the second evening's final over, Pant clobbered him for 4, 4, 6, 4, 4, to remain unbeaten on a blistering 103 off only 73 balls. Overall, he hit nine fours and six sixes.

At the other end, Vihari laboured his way to a fine 104-run knock off 194 balls.

Also staking a claim for selection is young Shubman Gill, with an elegant 65 off 78 balls and 10 sweetly-timed boundaries. In the final session of play, Pant's aggressive approach paid dividends as he smashed the Australia A bowlers to all corners of the SCG, the southpaw making a strong case for himself for the wicketkeeper's job in Adelaide ahead of Test specialist Wriddhiman Saha.

To cite an example of his power-hitting, Pant swept one over the cow corner for a six, leaving Nic Maddinson to search for the ball among the rows of chairs at the SCG.

At the close of play, India

were strongly placed at 386 for four for an overall lead by 472 runs, having bundled out the home team out for a paltry 108 in their first innings on Friday.

In their first innings, India were all out for 194, which would have been far less if not for pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah's maiden first-class fifty, but the visitors staged a strong comeback with both bat and ball.

While Gill may have booked himself one of the opening slots with his dazzling strokes, Hanuma's effort might force the Indian team to play an additional batsman in the series opener.

Coming out to bat again in the beginning of the day's play, India lost Prithvi Shaw in the second over as the young right-hander drove the ball at cover-point without any great foot movement. It was a bit of a soft dismissal.

If Shaw missed out on an opportunity to make a big score in good batting conditions, his contemporary Gill grabbed it with both hands on the way to reaching his half-century off 49 balls.

During his stay in the middle, Gill played some elegant drives and looked assured while going on to the backfoot, which seems to be



Indian wicketkeeper batsman Rishabh Pant raises his bat after completing his hundred against Australia A

BCCI/Twitter

his forte.

However, the 21-year-old got out in an unfortunate manner to leg-spinner Michell Swepson.

Swepson bowled a faster one and Gill, shaping up to flick it, missed, prompting the bowler to appeal for an lbw even as the ball headed towards the first slip where a diving Sean Abbott held on to it.

TV replays were inconclusive and the absence of DRS and Snickometer in the practice game, a disappointed Gill had no option but to walk back to the dressing room as umpire's decision could not be challenged.

That ended a 104-run partnership for the second wicket between Gill and Agarwal, who was joined in by Vihari for another half-century stand.

Thereafter, the duo of Vihari and skipper Ajinkya Rahane was involved in a partnership of 78 runs for the fourth wicket as the Australian bowlers toiled hard for wickets.

There was a brief rain interruption after Pant walked in at the fall of Rahane's wicket. But he straightaway played his shots to further unsettle the Australian bowlers.

Even as Vihari showed great composure and patience in collecting his runs, Pant was quite at ease while clearing the fence, reaching his fifty with a cracking square cut in just 43 balls.

Pant continued in same vein till the end of the day's play and hurtled towards his century with a flurry of big hits. While Vihari, in all, struck 13 boundaries.

Call on playing last 2 Tests against Oz after reassessment: BCCI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BCCI on Saturday declared senior batsman Rohit Sharma "clinically fit" to join the Indian team in Australia but said a call on his participation in the last two matches of the Test series there will be taken after a reassessment by the squad's medical

Rohit fit to join Team India

team.

"He has been given a detailed programme to follow for the duration of the two weeks he will be quarantined for. He will be reassessed by the Team India medical team post his quarantine to establish his fitness status and a call on his participation in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy will be taken accordingly," the BCCI said in

a statement.

Rohit on Friday cleared an eagerly-watched fitness test at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru and will leave for Australia on December 14, three days before the start of the marquee Test series.

"... Rohit Sharma has completed his rehabilitation process at the NCA in Bengaluru and is now clinically fit," the state-

ment said.

The BCCI said the NCA medical team is satisfied with Rohit's fitness but added that he will need to work on his endurance. "The NCA medical Team was satisfied with the physical fitness of Mr Sharma after assessing him on different metrics, however, he will be required to continue work on his endurance," the BCCI said.

Jamieson swings Kiwis to top

New Zealand vs Windies
Live from 3:30am IST
FANCODE APP

AFP ■ WELLINGTON

Kyle Jamieson bagged five wickets in a masterclass of swing bowling as New Zealand struck hard and fast to have the West Indies on the ropes on day two of the second Test in Wellington on Saturday.

The tourists ended the day on the brink of another follow on as they struggled to 124/8, still 336 behind New Zealand's 460.

Only Jermaine Blackwood provided any serious resistance but he fell late in the day for 69 as Jamieson and Tim Southee wreaked havoc.

Jamieson, the rising star in the Black Caps, got 5/34 for his second five-wicket haul in only his fourth Test.

The Basin Reserve strip continued to provide all the ingredients on a fast bowler's wish list — pace, bounce and movement — and New Zealand exploited this perfectly.

"The way the ball's moving we knew if we got it in good enough areas then things would happen," said the 2.08 metre Jamieson.

"It was just a matter of doing it for long enough and if you do that you tend to get rewarded."

Unlike the West Indies batsmen, Nicholls and Neil Wagner were able to plunder runs when the New Zealand innings resumed on Saturday morning. Both scored personal bests, untroubled whether the West Indies bowled full or short, as Nicholls advanced from his overnight 117 to 174 while Wagner finished unbeaten on 66.

The New Zealand pace quartet — Southee, Trent Boult, Neil Wagner and Jamieson — immediately extracted life from the wicket.

They moved the ball in and away and it took the tourists four overs to get their first runs on the board, by which stage Southee had already dismissed Kraigg Brathwaite caught at first slip by Ross Taylor.

After Southee caught and bowled Darren Bravo for seven, Jamieson stepped up with the back-to-back wickets of John Campbell 14 and Roston Chase to have the West Indies at 29/4. It was familiar territory for



Kiwipacer Kyle Jamieson prepares to bowl during day 2 of 2nd Test against Windies

Harris added to Aus squad, Pucovski out

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Victoria's Marcus Harris was on Saturday added to an injury-plagued Australia squad for next week's first Test against India after Will Pucovski was ruled out of the series opener alongside David Warner.

The four-match series begins with the day-night Test at Adelaide from December 17.

Harris was drafted into the squad for the seasoned Warner, who suffered a groin injury during the second one-day international against India, while Pucovski sustained a concussion while batting for Australia A in a tour match against the visitors at Drummoyne Oval in Sydney.

Cricket Australia said both batsmen will target a return ahead of the Boxing Day Test, scheduled to be held in Melbourne from December 26-30.

"Given the spate of injuries in recent weeks, we're fortunate to be able to bring a player of Marcus' calibre into the Test squad," Australia's national selector Trevor Hohns was quoted as saying by



Marcus Harris shake hands with Will Pucovski during Sheffield Shield match

cricket.com.au.

"Marcus has been in outstanding form for Victoria this season and has had the benefit of facing India's bowlers in both three-day tour matches at Drummoyne and under lights at the SCG."

He added, "At the same time, we are disappointed for David and Will that they will not be available for the first Vodafone Test.

"We have taken a conservative approach in managing

Will since he sustained the concussion and hope he and David will be back to full health ahead of the Boxing Day Test."

Harris played nine Tests for Australia and was a member of the squad which retained the Ashes in England last year.

He has smashed 355 runs at a fantastic average of 118.33 in two Sheffield Shield domestic first-class matches for Victoria this season, with a knock of 239 against South Australia being the highlight.

Labuschagne willing to open in Oz interest

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Australia batsman Marnus Labuschagne on Saturday said there has not been any talk about him opening the batting in the first Test against India but he is ready to bat at that slot if the team management asks him to do so.

With both David Warner and Will Pucovski ruled out of the first Test, and Joe Burns short of runs, Labuschagne is an opening option for the home side in the day/night match starting at Adelaide Oval on December 17.

"No, there has not been (any talk on batting position) ... Currently I think number three. But I am just preparing to bat, if that's No 1 or No 3, it doesn't matter. I am ready to face the ball, no matter what the circumstances are," he said during a virtual press conference.

"Look, I finished last summer at three, so hopefully at three. But my job is to face the ball that is coming down to me wherever I am batting," said the 26-year-old, who has played 14 Tests so far.

He said he is ready to do whatever is the best for the team. "If the team needs me to open, that's what I will do. It's a team sport, it's about winning games. We'll have to wait and see how things pan out with a few other moving parts currently."

Labuschagne said he's prepared to face the Indian attack under lights and since the players know who they are up against, it's just about being focused.

"We're obviously prepared. We played (Jasprit) Bumrah in one-dayers and in the last ODI he

ramped it up and bowled very well. For us, we know who we are coming up against.

"So, it's just making sure we are really focussed and understand what bowlers are doing. We know which bowlers we are playing (against) and we make sure that we prepare accordingly," he said.

The right-handed batsman said facing the likes of Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood in the nets makes the Australians better batsmen.

"One thing that makes our batters that good is that we're facing the best bowling attack in and out during training. The likes of Cummins, Hazlewood, Starc and (James) Pattinson, they are unbelievable bowlers. Facing them every training session ensures we prepare as good as we possibly can be at Test level."

Labuschagne, who can also bowl leg-spin, is also ready to bowl if the team needs him.

"I have been the fifth bowling option for the last five series, so it is no different than any other Test match that I have played. I am making sure that I am always ready to bowl and I like the opportunity when I do get to bowl," he added.

He also said that there has been no change in the perspective of Australian players as far as the preparations for the day-night match is concerned.

"We are just trying to hit a lot of balls, get used to conditions and trying to make sure (to be) ready Thursday," he quipped.

Looking forward to face Indian pacers: Harris

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Added to an injury-plagued Australia squad for the first Test against India, batsman Marcus Harris says he is "pretty ready" to take on the visitors' quality pacers, having faced them in both the tour games.

"There's obviously been a bit of stuff going on with everything in the last couple of weeks, so it's been good to have a hit against the Indian boys and another hit today," Harris told Fox Cricket.

"It feels like I'm in the right place at the right time, but it feels like I've been playing really well as well. It's been good, not to be the one that's spoken about too much."

"I knew coming here that if I went okay I'd put myself in a position to maybe play, the way that things have been going," said the 28-year-old right-handed batsman.

"I obviously wasn't in the Test side last summer so I didn't have that distraction coming into this summer and I've just been focused on what I need to do, so that's been good," he said.

"Now I've found myself where I am, and I feel pretty ready to go and I'm looking forward to it."

Harris played nine Tests for Australia and was a member of the squad which retained the Ashes in England last year.

With Warner and Pucovski ruled out, Harris appears set to play his 10th Test and first since the final Test of the 2019 Ashes.

The opener averages 25.06 with two half-centuries since debuting against India at the Adelaide Oval two summers ago.

Against the touring Indians this summer, Harris has put together scores of 35, 25 and 26 in three innings for Australia A.

Taylor dropped for Pak T20s

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Veteran batsman Ross Taylor was on Saturday dropped from an 18-man New Zealand squad named for the T20I series against Pakistan while Kane Williamson will return from his paternity leave to lead the side in the second and third matches.

Besides the 36-year-old Taylor's absence, fast bowler Lockie Ferguson, who suffered a bone stress injury in his back, was also left out from the squad for the three-match series starting next Friday in Auckland.

Trent Boult, who was rested for the T20Is against the West Indies, will also be available only for the second and third games

of the series along with Tim Southee, Kyle Jamieson and Daryl Mitchell.

Seamer Blair Tickner, batsman Mark Chapman and all-rounder Doug Bracewell will only be part of the first T20I.

According to selector Gavin Larsen, Taylor, who made 38 and nine against the West Indies in his last T20Is, missed out because of the "quality and form" of the rest of the squad. Taylor has scored 1909 runs from 102 matches at an average of 26.15.

Mitchell Santner will once again lead the T20I side in the series opener at Eden Park, having done so in the rain-hit third T20I against West Indies in Williamson's absence.

Blackwood whose century in the second innings of the first Test started with Windies at 27/4.

He survived Jamieson's hat-trick ball, and the one after, which both slammed into the pads but vociferous appeals were turned down and replays showed the deliveries swinging away down the leg side.

Southee tied up Shamarh Brooks at the other end and the West Indies faced 27 dot balls before Blackwood broke the drought with a single. The pair put on 68 for the

fifth wicket before falling in quick succession.

Brooks faced 92 deliveries for a stubborn 14 before he shouldered arms to a good length Jamieson ball that jagged back into the stumps.

Southee then accounted for Blackwood with a sharply rising delivery that was fended to Latham in the slips, Jamieson closed the day with the wickets of Jason Holder for nine and Alzarri Joseph without scoring.

Along with Jamieson's five, Southee has taken 3/29.

Yuvi hopes for swift resolution to farmers' issues

NEW DELHI: Former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh on Saturday turned 39 but instead of celebrating his birthday this year, the 2011 World Cup hero hoped for a "swift resolution" to the ongoing farmers' issues through dialogue.

"Birthdays are an opportunity to fulfil a wish or desire and this birthday rather than celebrating I only wish and pray for a swift resolution of the ongoing talks between our farmers and our government," Yuvraj said in a Twitter post.

"Undoubtedly, farmers are the lifeblood of the nation and I truly believe that there is no problem which cannot be resolved through peaceful dialogue," he added.

The 2011 World Cup-winning star also distanced himself from his father Yograj Singh's unsavoury comments made earlier this week during a protest rally.

"As a proud Indian, I am indeed saddened and upset by the statements made by Mr Yograj Singh. I wish to clarify that his remarks have been made in an individual capacity and my ideologies are not the same in any manner," Yuvraj said and ended the post with *Jai Jawan! Jai Kisan! Jai Hind!*

Things were better before VAR: Klopp

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said he has changed his mind over the need for VAR in football and believes the change to using technology to determine the finest of margins has made the game less enjoyable.

The Reds were involved in three lengthy stoppages during a 1-1 draw away to Midtjylland in the Champions League on Wednesday for VAR to check a penalty awarded to the Danish champions and rule out a goal for either side.

"We stop celebrating goals, we wait constantly, we have less than millimetre offside decisions. A lot of things are not like they were before, that's the truth," said Klopp in his pre-match press conference ahead of Sunday's trip to Fulham.

"I said when the idea of VAR first came up I was in favour of it because I thought the right decisions would be nice, if we could have rights decisions.

"I'm not sure we all thought it through properly and how long will it take to get the right decision, how much will it take away from a game we all loved before."



Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp

against us, it's in general. A few things are not like they were before and they were better before. If you change something there should be just improvement and that is for sure not the case and that's it."

Fulham vs Liverpool
Live from 10:00 pm IST
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

MOURINHO WARNS SPURS
Jose Mourinho has warned his Tottenham players they face a searching test of their Premier League title credentials over the gruelling Christmas period.

Spurs, top of the table on goal difference, are about to embark on a run of seven fixtures in 21 days, which could have a huge say in whether they will remain as contenders.

They start at Crystal Palace on Sunday before games against Liverpool, Leicester, Wolves, Fulham and Leeds, with a League Cup quarter-final at Stoke sandwiched in between.

Mourinho has been used to juggling his squad as they have been in Europa League action and will do so again, but says his star men such as Harry Kane and Son Heung-min will have to play most of the matches.

"It is impossible for a player to play all these matches in a short period of time," he said. "Of course we need to do it (rotate) and we have to do it but at the same time there are players that are really, really unique."

Humiliation at home

Dortmund concede five against Stuttgart in shock defeat

AFP ■ GERMANY

Borussia Dortmund coach Lucien Favre admitted his side suffered a "disaster" in the Bundesliga title race on Saturday after being routed 5-1 by VfB Stuttgart to suffer their heaviest home defeat in over a decade.

Stuttgart's Congo winger Silas Wamangituka netted twice in the romp which piled the pressure on Favre with fifth-placed Dortmund now five points behind leaders RB Leipzig.

"Things went mercilessly wrong," admitted Dortmund defender Mats Hummels.

"We shot ourselves in the foot every few minutes."

Dortmund have taken just a point in their two league games since star striker Erling Braut Haaland was ruled out until January with a hip injury.

Stuttgart's relentless pressing and sloppy Dortmund defending resulted in the visitors scoring four unanswered second-half goals.

"We are not a team that can defend well, that has to be said quite clearly," fumed Dortmund captain Marco Reus, while Favre admitted it was "a disaster".

Wamangituka converted a penalty midway through the first half after Dortmund's Emre Can brought down Mateo Klimowicz.

Dortmund equalised just before the break when a superb



Raphael Guerreiro long ball picked out Giovanni Reyna, who deftly chipped home.



with a Stuttgart goal. Guerreiro lost control of the ball on the edge of his penalty area and Wamangituka claimed his second goal eight minutes after the

in for suspended Stuttgart captain Gonzalo Castro, scored with a perfectly timed run into the area with an hour played.

Jude Bellingham's stray pass was then snapped up by Wamangituka and moved to striker Tanguy Coulibaly, who fired home on 63 minutes.



The VAR ruled out a second Reyna goal late on before a mistake by Dortmund's Nico Schulz saw Nicolas Gonzalez claim Stuttgart's fifth goal.

The debacle is Dortmund's heaviest home defeat since being humbled 5-1 at home to Bayern Munich in 2009.

LEIPZIG GO TOP

Fresh from knocking Manchester United out of the Champions League in midweek, RB Leipzig saw off Werder Bremen 2-0 to leapfrog Bayern into top spot in the table.

Leipzig captain Marcel Sabitzer converted a penalty and Dani Olmo, who shone in the attacking midfield role, grabbed a first-half goal for the hosts.

The victory left Leipzig a point clear of defending champions Bayern, who can regain first place at FC Union later in Berlin.

The home win capped a good week for Leipzig, who knocked United out of Europe on Tuesday with a 3-2 victory to reach the last 16 of the Champions League.

Arsenal loanee Matteo Guendouzi scored his first goal for Hertha Berlin in their 1-1 draw at Borussia Muenchengladbach.

Guendouzi scored just after the break when Gladbach's Denis Zakaria lost possession on the edge of his area.

Gladbach, who also reached the last 16 of the Champions League in midweek, fought their way back and equalised through Brel Embolo on 70 minutes.

Freiburg ended their nine-match winless run with a 2-0 win over Arminia Bielefeld.

Nils Petersen hit the woodwork twice before Vincenzo Grifo converted a late penalty.

Then South Korean midfielder Jeong Woo-yeong, on loan from Bayern Munich, scored in added time.

Cologne stay just above the relegation places after their 1-0 win at second-from-bottom Mainz.

Leipzig moved top on 24 points with Bayern, who play Union Berlin later on Saturday.

We have achieved our primary target of improving fitness level: Marijne

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Indian women's hockey head coach Sjoerd Marijne on Saturday said that the team has achieved its primary target of improving fitness level of the players as they were left with practically no competition this season due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The team did not play any competition since February when it had travelled to New Zealand. Since then it has been camping at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) Centre here. The camp ends on Saturday.

"One of our goals was improving fitness and that worked out very well. In the past few weeks, we also worked with the junior men's team in a few sessions to test our speed and handling skills and I am happy with the progress we have made as a group," Marijne said.

He believes the core group had worked hard towards a good build-up to the Olympic Games next year.

"We have done well so far in utilising this time and our primary focus is the Olympics."

"We are hopeful of playing good matches early next year that will show where we stand and we can plan the months leading up to the Games keeping in mind the areas that require improvement basis our performance in these tours," the head coach explained.

Marijne said the break the players are getting will help them recover from the mental fatigue.

"The players have worked hard these past four and half months and they have done it without complaining about anything — be it living in a bio bubble with zero outside interaction or living away from their families for so long."

"I am extremely happy with the attitude they have showed these past four months and I understand that the training camp was physically and mentally quite challenging. This break will be especially good to recover from the mental fatigue."

Verstappen puts Red Bull on pole

AFP ■ YAS MARINA

Red Bull driver Max Verstappen produced a stunning last lap and beat both Mercedes cars to take pole position for the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix on Saturday.

He was .025 seconds ahead of Valtteri Bottas and .086 clear of world champion Lewis Hamilton for his first pole of the season and third of his career.

"Mega, mega lap!" Red Bull's team principal Christian Horner yelled over the radio when Verstappen crossed the line under floodlights at the Yas Marina circuit.

"It's a long season for everyone and this was a great final qualifying for the whole team," Verstappen said. "We are all very happy and it's great to finally get there after being close many times in 2020."

Bottas led Verstappen and Hamilton after their first attempts in Q3, the final section



Abu Dhabi Grand Prix
Live from 6:40 pm IST
STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

of qualifying, and Hamilton then appeared on course for a record-extending 99th career pole as he led the split times on their second and final attempts.

But Verstappen showed why he is touted as a future world champion, and Bottas found some extra speed to score a rare victory over his illustrious teammate.

Hamilton went well wide in Q1 and went over the curb, while Verstappen complained over the radio that his hand had got stuck inside the cockpit.

Wolves pay big price for late penalty

AFP ■ WOLVERHAMPTON

Anwar El Ghazi's last-gasp penalty fired 10-man Aston Villa to a dramatic 1-0 win against Wolves on Saturday.

In the first of the day's Premier League games, Dutch winger El Ghazi struck from the spot in stoppage-time to lift Villa into eighth place.

Villa had Douglas Luiz sent off in the final minutes for two bookings after the Brazilian midfielder caught Daniel Podence with an elbow.

But Nelson Semedo's foul on John McGinn triggered El Ghazi's penalty before Wolves midfielder Joao Moutinho was dismissed for a second yellow card just moments from full-time in a fractious local derby.

After two successive defeats, Villa will hope they are back on track with just their second win in six games.

Villa have won four of their five away league matches this season, while mid-table Wolves have only one win in their last five games.



With Raul Jimenez out after surgery on the fractured skull he suffered against Arsenal, Wolves handed a first Premier League

start to 18-year-old striker Fabio Silva — a club record £35 million (\$46 million) signing from Porto in the close-season.

It was two weeks since Villa last played after the Newcastle match was postponed due to their opponents' coronavirus

outbreak and they took a while to get going as a result.

Villa appealed for a penalty when the ball glanced off Romain Saiss' shoulder as he stooped to head clear, but VAR ignored their protests.

UNITED DECLINE

Wolves finished the first half strongly, with Daniel Podence forcing Emiliano Martinez to save his low drive.

Martinez kept out Leander Dendoncker's stinging strike and Silva nearly broke the deadlock when his glancing header drifted narrowly wide.

Silva was inches away from a first Premier League goal when he took Podence's pass and rifled his first-time shot past Martinez, only to see the ball cannon back off the post.

Luiz's stray elbow earned him a red card from Mike Dean in the 85th minute, but El Ghazi won it from the penalty spot after McGinn's burst was halted by Semedo.

On Friday night at Ellan Road stadium, West Ham boss David Moyes labelled the use of VAR as "rubbish" after his side had to come from behind to beat Leeds 2-1 and move up to fifth.

The Hammers could not have had a worse start as Mateusz Klich opened the scoring at the second attempt from the penalty spot after Lukasz Fabianski was penalised for coming off his line in saving his Polish international teammate's first spot-kick.

Moyes was left exasperated with the decision based on the smallest of margins, while the retake was allowed to stand despite encroaching by Leeds players.

"Until we get the VAR sorted I don't think I'll be happy," said Moyes.

"It's a really good result but we had another setback after 30 seconds. There are some terrible decisions that are happening at the moment."

Angulo's strike win for Goa



PTI ■ BAMBOLIM

Igor Angulo struck at the injury time of the first half to hand FC Goa a 1-0 win over Odisha FC, their second successive win in the Hero Indian Super League here on Saturday.

The win propelled FC Goa to the fourth spot in the standings. Angulo (45+1st minute) netted the winner to help Juan Ferrando's side register another victory.

Odisha but their inefficiency upfront meant Stuart Baxter's side remained winless in the competition.

Vinit Rai was handed his first start of the season as Odisha made four changes to their line-up. Ferrando rang in just one change as Alberto Noguera replaced Edu Bedia.

Goa outplayed their opponents in the first half and headed into the break with a one-goal lead. The Gaurs dominated pro-

ceedings from the start while Odisha decided to stay compact and absorb the pressure.

Jorge Ortiz Mendoza, a constant threat on the left flank, had an opportunity to give Goa the lead during the 16th minute. Brandon Fernandes won the ball and laid down a pass for Ortiz on the left. The forward cut inside into acres of space but dragged his shot wide.

However, despite dominating possession, the Gaurs failed to penetrate the Odisha defence, who kept things tight at the back.

Odisha, too applied pressure on Goa's backline towards the end of the first half, mainly through Diego Mauricio but the home team's backline did well to thwart the dangers.

Goa's perseverance finally paid off towards the end of the first half with Angulo getting himself on the scoresheet again. Romario beat his marker on the left and found the Spaniard in the box, who created space to fool Jacob Tratt before drilling his shot into the bottom left-handed corner.

The second half got off to an interesting start with both sides showing intent.

Odisha pushed hard for an equaliser and nearly came close just before the hour mark. After a counter-attack, the ball fell to Cole Alexander at the edge of the box, but midfielder fired his shot wide.

Chennaiyin brace up for NEUFC challenge

PTI ■ VASCO

Former champions Chennaiyin FC face a tough task when they take on NorthEast United FC in an Indian Super League match here on Sunday.

CFC are up against one of three unbeaten sides so far this season, and need to raise the level of play to secure a positive result.

Despite not getting the results and points their performances have merited, CFC have been arguably one of the most attractive sides to watch, creating a flurry of chances in every game they have played so far.

They had the advantage against Mumbai City FC in their previous encounter but succumbed to a 1-2 defeat as a result of some questionable refereeing decisions and indecisive defending from set-pieces.

CFC head coach Csaba Laszlo will be hopeful his side's intent and vigour will translate into goals and wins, following two disheartening losses to Bengaluru FC and MCFC.

Prior to that, Chennaiyin drew 0-0 against Kerala Blasters, having won their opening encounter 2-1 against



NEUFC vs Chennaiyin
Live from 5:00 pm IST
STAR SPORTS 2, 3 & 1 HINDI

Jamshedpur FC. A return to the Tilak Maidan may be a good omen for Laszlo's men as it was at this ground they beat JFC.

Laszlo said the trio of midfielder Anirudh Thapa, defender Enes Sipovic and attacker Isma Goncalves are expected to return to action much sooner than he had earlier expected.

Chennaiyin were unbeaten against NEUFC last season enroute the ISL final, beating them 2-0 at home followed by a 2-2 draw in Guwahati.

Like CFC, NorthEast are also a different outfit from last season, now under a young head coach in the form of Spaniard Gerard Nus.

They will be aiming to extend their unbeaten streak. The Highlanders, placed third in the standings with nine points, have been among the early pacesetters this season, with two wins and three draws.

NorthEast United are the joint-highest scorers so far this season with Mumbai City FC (with 8 goals each) and in defence, they have also made it difficult for opponents to break them down, keeping two clean sheets.

The Gaurs fashioned two clear-cut opportunities during the 64th minute but Arshdeep produced stunning double save to keep his side in the game. The Odisha custodian first

blocked a shot from Angulo with his leg. The ball was eventually cleared and fell to Princeton Rebello. The substitute found Mendoza outside the box but the latter was denied as

Arshdeep dived full stretch. The Odisha FC keeper produced another double save during the dying minutes of the game, denying both Mendoza and Len Doungel.



Kerala look to arrest slide against BFC

PTI ■ MARGAO

BFC vs Kerala
Live from 7:30 pm IST
STAR SPORTS 2, 3 & 1 HINDI

Former champions Bengaluru FC would look to shrug off an unexpected struggling start to the Indian Super League and notch up a win against Kerala Blasters here on Sunday.

It has not been an ideal start for Bengaluru with three draws and just one win in four matches. But, head coach Carles Cuadrat is aiming to get his side back on track and is eyeing full points against Kerala Blasters at the Fatorda Stadium.

Bengaluru have a great track record against BFC. In six games, they have prevailed on four occasions and lost just once. But that is the past and Cuadrat's side aren't in the best of form. Their last game against NorthEast United ended in a 2-2 draw. Bengaluru started the

campaign with a 3-4-3 formation, which wasn't conducive to their style, forcing Cuadrat to deploy a four-man defence. The change in plan has helped Bengaluru bring out best from Dimas Delgado and Udanta Singh, making them look more threatening.

The former ISL champions have netted 80 per cent of their goals (4) from set-pieces this season and this could pose a threat to Kerala whose defence has been the most vulnerable in the league.

They are yet to keep a clean sheet against BFC.

This season, Kerala Blasters have conceded six goals (second-most), despite facing just 13 shots on target. Coach Kibu Vicuna addressed that concern.



'No alternative to hard work & honesty'

How did you partner with CharityBuzz.com to raise funds for Magic Bus India Foundation?

I am very happy that we can leverage a huge platform like this for a great organisation like Magic Bus. I am proud to be doing this for an organisation that has transformed the lives of one million children and young people and has ensured that children on their programme to complete secondary education, have delayed their marriage and go on to get jobs in the organised sector. I urge my fans and supporters to join us in this great cause and make a bid.

What made you auction an hour of your time?

No one could have imagined an event of this magnitude. The country as a whole has been affected, people without jobs, there is scarcity of food, people migrating to their villages and unfortunately children and young people

have faced the consequences too with an interruption in their education and halt in their hunt for jobs. Thankfully organisations like Magic Bus are doing some tremendous work in helping affected families and it is our duty to help in whatever way we can. This organisation is doing great work with its COVID-19 recovery plan to revive incomes and get back on their feet by connecting them to employment opportunities. As an actor if my interaction can ensure that no children drops out from school, I am happy to give my time.

Most Indians don't do much for charity. How important is it for us to give back to society in some form or the other?

First of all, I don't agree that Indians don't do charity. Not everyone wants to publicise what they do. Many people do the same quietly. I think people in India, over the last few years have become more conscious about giving back and it has become stronger after COVID-19. They are making a difference and contributing and changing the landscape of giving in India. If we all contribute, we will be able to send at least one more child to school, give one more young person a stable job and bring one more family out of poverty. The task

seems mammoth, but if we work together, we can see that change coming.

Would you agree that films are a medium that can change the mindset of the society?

Films are a reflection of our society so they can change. But the message can't be that obvious so it is important for people to take out that message. Otherwise, films are there to entertain and out of entertainment there lies a message, people are smart enough to take it.

A lesson that life has taught you thus far?

That there is no alternative to hard work and honesty.

You are a public figure and what you say carries weight. Does it bother you when it gets misconstrued or people troll what you have said?

As long as I am honest with what I have said and am truthful it doesn't bother me because my grandfather used to say that when you are telling the truth you don't have to remember it so stick to it. I don't really get bothered by trolls, sometimes you give them attention, sometimes you ignore them.

You have been part of Bollywood and Hollywood. Are they different?

They are different from a language point of view; they are different from a professional point of view. But both the industries are of story-tellers. Sometimes you tell great stories, sometimes you tell stories that don't connect with people.

From an actor to an author to a teacher to a motivational speaker. What role do you love the most?

It is difficult to choose. Sometimes when I am acting, I am very happy, when I am writing a book, it is the author, when I am at public functions and speaking, I love the role of a motivational speaker. I love to make a difference in people's lives, I am a people's person and love connecting with them and if my conversation and eternal optimism can help, I am a happy man.

What are your upcoming projects?

I have already completed a film — *The Last Show* with Satish Kaushik. I am also the producer here. Then there is my podcast *Anupam Cares* on iHeartRadio on Spotify and Apple. Then there is my book *Your Best Day Is Today*, it is about my experiences of the pandemic and lockdown.

Talktime

ANUPAM KHER

He is an award-winning actor and best-selling author and has appeared in over 500 Bollywood and Hollywood movies like *Silver Linings Playbook*. The actor speaks with Shalini Saxena about his recently released book on the pandemic and lockdown and why he chose to auction an hour of his time for

FOR THOSE PRIVATE LETTERS

SHALINI SAKSENA chats up 26-year-old IIT Guwahati student, SUNIT NANDI, the man behind Letter, an email hosting provider, about how the idea hit him, the safety and privacy that it has to offer and the subscription plans available

It goes without saying that there is no bound to our young talent. A case in point is the 26-year-old IIT Guwahati student Sunit Nandi, who realised the need for a secure work email provider. He merge his expertise and experience to launch Letter, a powerful email hosting provider packed with an array of advanced features.

It offers an intuitive user interface, impressive performance and global standard security which boasts on sharing strongest data privacy and encrypted storage for emails.

"I have often suffered due to the lack of business email solutions that properly implements the basics such as email deliverability, contact sync, calendars, search and also respects user privacy and right to their data," Nandi says.

Devising a solution to these issues, Nandi self-hosted his work emails for several years before finally launching Letter. "I was so frustrated with the state of email hosting that I self-hosted my own work emails for several years, and spent countless days improving the security and optimising email deliverability. I spent almost three years on the infrastructure. I was optimising on three things security, usability and availability. As for security, whatever data and conversations you have stays on the server in an encrypted form. It is not accessible by anyone outside of the server. It is safe from any cyber attacks as well," Nandi, who is also a serial entrepreneur and started when he was 18, explains.

He adds that the email hosting provider doesn't restrict the usage to any particular client. "One can use it with his choice of clients. Take for example BlueMail or even KMail," he says.

If one wants to try this Made In



India email provider, all one has to do is to visit Letter.is and choose the preferred plan and check out. "We will then call the customer to give him an administrative account. You can add your domains to it and then add your mail boxes to it. It works just like any of the regular email providers," he tells you.

The most basic plan that is on offer right now is a 4GB yearly one for ₹1,320. This 4GB storage can be split into four different domains and one can add as many different emails in each of them.

"The highest plan that we have right now is ₹3,520 plan which offer 50GB of storage. It follows the same

strategy as the basic plan and one can split it into 50 different domains. We also offer customised big plans for organisations," he tells you.

Given the rise in cyber crimes and how technology is misused worldwide, Nandi says, anything can be misused and that his product is not an exception. "When you think

about weakening privacy, you need to take some data out of the user. If any privacy solution has a back door, it does not remain private anymore. But with that being said, if a few people are trying to misuse something it doesn't mean that the rest of the world shouldn't benefit from it. One either have bullet proof security or nothing at all," he says.

Before launching it commercially a month ago, the service saw at least 20 people who practiced during the private beta version. "After the launch, we have about 46 customers using this service," Nandi, who have been operating the beta phase since October, says.

The service, he says, is witnessing a couple of new signups every day. "I hope in the coming few years we will become a significant player in this market," he opines. He adds that the service has at least 15 international users.

To make sure the server meets the growing demands, he says, that they have their inbuilt cloud where all the data gets backed up and will also make sure the servers never get down. "The data is backed up at least four times a day on our system. But this doesn't mean the data can leak out of the system. Your password is the key and as long as we don't know your password we don't know how to access your mails or data. Also, when the data is updated on our system, it gets converted into a gibberish form and only when the third party logs in with the password, the data gets converted into its original form. So if by any chance the data gets leaked then also it will require a lot of efforts to get it in the form of plain text," Nandi, who for the next one year wants to solely focus on Letter before opting for a new venture, tells you.



A still of Sahil Vaid in a driver's costume from *Coolie No 1* which is slated to release on Amazon Prime Video on December 25

'I was starstruck at the sets'

SAHIL VAID, who is currently busy shooting for *Satyameva Jayate 2* in Lucknow, tells MUSBA HASHMI about his role in *Coolie No 1*, which is all set to release on Amazon Prime Video, and how he is not at all a nervous actor

What is your role in Coolie No 1?

Without revealing a lot, I am playing Deepak, Varun's friend again. This time I play a very different kind of friend. I go through a lot to help him get the girl. As a prize, in this film, for a change I get a girl as well. That's the difference between the other friends' roles that I have done with Varun and this one. This also marks a performance where I get to play a different type of role. There's a lot of lying happening in the film. Sometimes I become his driver, sometime a mechanic and what not.

With every character that you play, there's always a lesson that you learn. What was it here?

With every film I do and every character that I play, I always learn something. One thing that I took back home from the sets of this film was something that I have learnt from my father years ago. He used to tell me *jhoot ke paer nahin hote hain*. You tell a lie and then cover it up with another one and the cycle goes on. The other amazing thing I learnt one was that in our country specifically there's a lot of pressure on the boy to be successful and rich. There's a lot of expectations from him and many people believe if the boy is well off, their daughter will live a happy life. I want to tell it to everyone that women now are capable of anything and everything. The time is different, hence one should leave it to the boy and girl to make their own choice. This is something that Jeffery Rozario (played by Paresh Rawal) who is Sara and Shikha Talsania's father in the film, learns the hard way. He looks for rich guys, but ends up getting poor ones for his daughters, who are good actually. This is something that I will remember for a lifetime.

How was the experience to share sets with such a varied cast?

We were shooting in Bangkok and there was a frame where we had Mr Jaaved Jaferi, Rajpal Yadav, Paresh Rawal and Bharatiiji. I was standing around and looked at everyone and thought what did I do to deserve this where I am standing with such amazing actors. This is nothing less than an award. There's Johnny Lever too, I have grown up watching him. It felt so surreal. My teacher Naseeruddin Shah always say that Johnny Lever is by far the best actor in the industry. One, I was overwhelmed. Two, I was starstruck. Then, there was David Dhawan directing. I was like 'Sahil Vaid, what have you done to deserve this'. It was a beautiful experience. There was something always happening on the set. It was very old school yet a modern one because there was both of Varun and David Dhawan to bring you an experience of yesterday and today.

Did the surreal experience, as you call it, made you nervous?

If you end up doing theatre with Naseeruddin Shah, you don't get nervous while acting. I am still nervous when I go and rehearse for a new play with him. He is blatantly honest. He would tell it to your face how bad you were. With David Dhawan it is different. His favourite line to me during shooting was, 'Sahil maza nahin aa raha'. And when someone says that to you as an actor you are blank. He then explained to me how he want a scene to go. Also it was surprising for me to know that David Dhawan and Naseeruddin Shah are close friends. They both respect each other. I remember David sir telling me once, '*Kya ho gaya, hero wali acting kar na. Naseer ne sikhaya nahin tujhey*'. It is difficult to put these feelings into words.

You once said that to act just means to do. Has the definition changed for you now?

It will never. That's my basic. Even here at the sets of *Satyameva Jayate 2*, that I am shooting for right now in Lucknow, I follow this rule. Naseer sir told me that you will get all kinds of roles and genres Sahil and an actor's job is never to say I don't think my character would do this. If a director has a vision, you just do it.

What is there in the pipeline?

There's a film *Silence* with Manoj Bajpai, Prachi Desai and Vaqar Sheikh, that I just started shooting for. I play a police officer in it. Then there's *Swagatam Khushamdeed* that I am shooting later this month that have Pulkit Samrat and Isabelle Kaif.

'Rap has so much more to offer'

Rapper-lyricist Ankit Singh Patyal aka IKKA, who made his Bollywood debut with *In Da Club*, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about his latest track, collaborating with Divine and how he became a rapper



What is your new debut album 'I' about?

The album is titled 'I' because this is my story — all about my journey. There are nine tracks here and all of them are about my life, my experiences and journey till now. Some of the tracks are dark and some are about what I have achieved. Those who want to know about me, should definitely listen to this.

How did you get your name Ikka?

Actually, my name is Ankit. I told my father when I was young why he had to keep a name that is so common; when I was in school there were six kids in my class by the same name. I told my father why not Shah Rukh or Hrithik? He told me that this was the name I would have to live with in this life, at least. But he shortened it to Akki and from there, when you look at it, backwards, it reads Ikka.

You have also released a new track Aangaar. Tell us about that?

The track is about how we have struggled so much and there is so much talent in us — that we have achieved things ad we have grown and improved as artists. The uniqueness is that it features Raftaar and music given by Sez on *The Beat*. Raftaar and I have known each other for sometime but we lost touch due to a misunderstanding but that got cleared and 10 years later, now, did this track.

How did you end up collaborating with Divine?

It was during the lockdown. And Divine and I would keep with each other regularly over Insta. Over one such chat, he asked me to share a vibe if I had any and why not do it together. I was doing an album at that time and agreed. I had two-three songs ready and told him to choose whichever one he liked and get back. He loved *Level Up* and he sent his verse in five days and the song was ready.

How did you get interested in music?

I had no interest in music; I was more interested in playing video games and reading comics. I loved to draw and was creative. One day, a friend got a cassette of Eminem — *Lose Yourself*. While I didn't understand most of it, I loved it. The song has a vibe to it. I explored hip-hop and listened to many artists and loved this style, dress sense and music. I was totally enamoured with it and my love for music took root.

How did you end up being a rapper?

I just fell into it. I started with listening to hip-hop and just went with the flow. My friends were those who rapped. It became my life as well. I watched documentaries about the history of rap and lives of rappers all over the world. It felt so real to me and I get influenced by things that are real. Hip-hop was so different for me.

You are a singer-songwriter, rapper, lyricist, composer and producer. How do you do all this?

I have had the opportunity to work with some of the best artists — Guru Randhawa, Diljit Dosanjh, Yo Yo Honey Singh — right at the beginning of my career. These people are the best in what they do. Some gave me a sense of music, another taught me production, yet another taught me how to write. I like to observe things and learn and things fell into place.

Has the rap scene saturated in India?

Not at all. People have just started to listen to rap. Labels have started promoting it now. More and more people are drawn to hip-hop. I see great things for this genre since there is still better things to come.

What next?

I am working on my next album. I have a few collaborations and Bollywood projects as well.

the pioneer agenda

Why is it so difficult to have films seeing the world from women's perspective like 'Thelma and Louise?'
— Son Ye-jin



FROM THE INSIDE

The last mile

The country needs to ensure that the choice & the correct information for the Covid-19 vaccine reaches the most disadvantaged

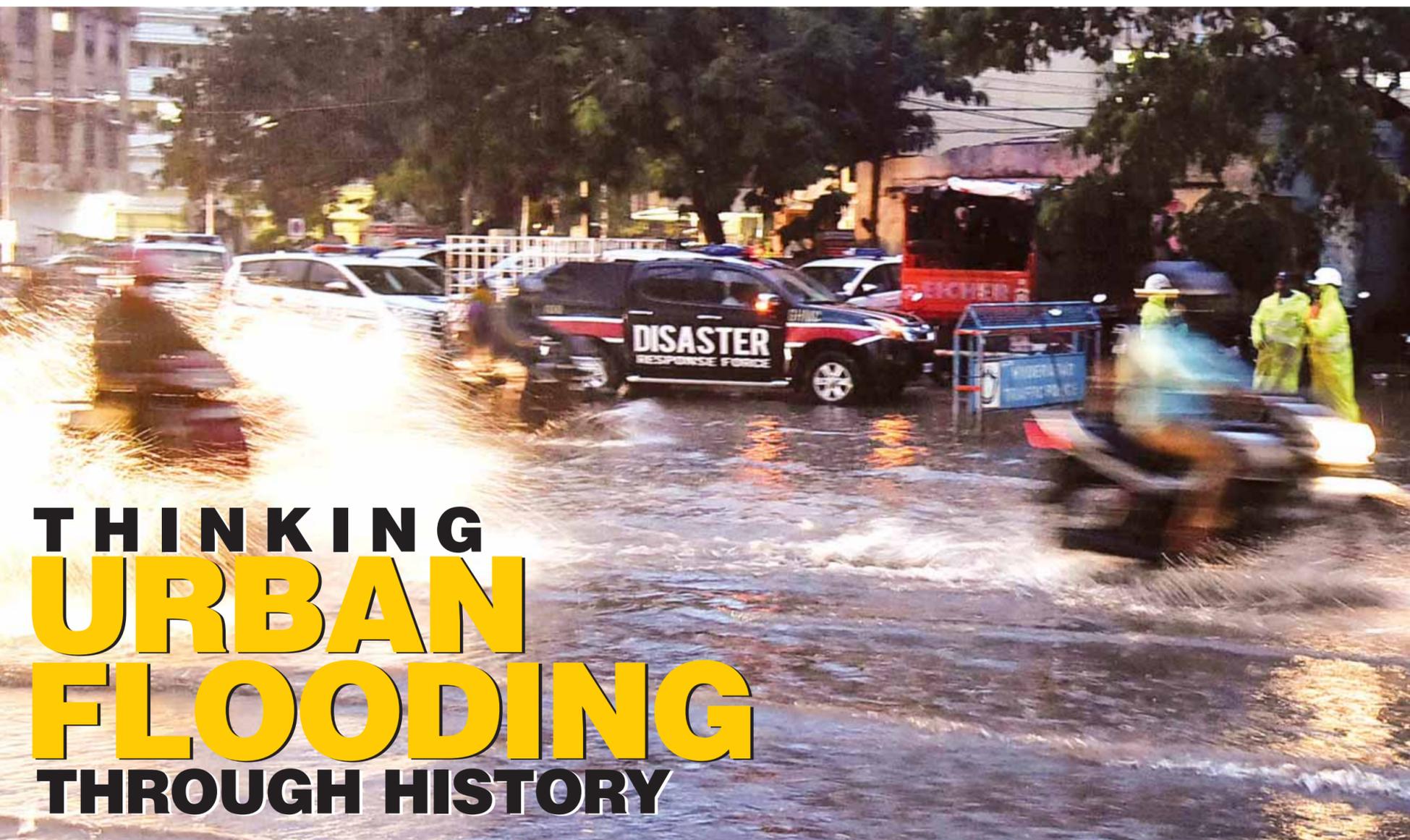
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4

Fix your habits early in life

The root of inherent habit tendencies lie in the thought seeds that are firmly embedded in the inner realms of the mind



THINKING URBAN FLOODING THROUGH HISTORY

Indian cities' inability in solving drainage-related problems have economic rather than engineering roots, writes VISWANATHAN VENKATARAMAN as he shares the historical dimensions of this issue

The recent episodes of destructive flooding in cities such as Hyderabad and Bengaluru have once again turned the spotlight on the drainage problems facing urban India.

According to a recent report by the New Delhi based Centre for Science and Environment titled *Why Urban India Floods*, flooding is one of the most predominant hazards facing urban India at present. Experts and commentators who have studied this issue have identified a number of vital causal dimensions to this problem ranging from unplanned urban development, which has led to the encroachment of the natural drainage channels of urban water bodies, to shortcomings in drainage infrastructures which have led to the intensification of the problem.

Missing in much of these discussions, however, are the historical dimensions of this issue. A perusal of these dimensions indicates two things: firstly, urban flooding and the inability of Indian cities to upgrade drainage infrastructures were, in a similar vein to contemporary times, features of urban life even in the British period; secondly, Indian cities' inability in solving these problems in this period had economic rather than engineering roots. Even when comprehensive engineering solutions to these problems were available, at that time they were only haltingly implemented due to the inability of local municipal governments to finance such elaborate schemes on their own. Given that this weakness and institutional structure continues to largely endure in Indian cities, there is a need to provide secure financial backing to local governments for building robust urban infrastructure in the future.

THE INTRODUCTION OF MODERN URBAN DRAINAGE SYSTEMS IN BRITISH INDIA

Modern drainage systems were introduced in the major cities of the world from around 1850 onward as a response to emergent epidemic diseases such as Cholera. Indian cities were no exceptions to this trend as Calcutta, Bombay and Madras city (now Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai) — the three biggest cities in British India — were among the first to introduce these systems there. Kolkata (then Calcutta) introduced its system in 1858, while Mumbai (then Bombay) and Chennai (then Madras) introduced their systems in the late 1870s with the key responsibilities for financing, building, operating and maintaining

these systems lay with the local municipal bodies.

The precise engineering arrangements for draining the cities varied from case to case and was shaped largely by local conditions. Design choice in this period revolved around two modes of drainage — the 'combined' and the 'separate' system of drainage. The 'combined' system transported both stormwater (surface run-off of rainwater) and sewage in a single underground sewer, while the 'separate' system collected and disposed storm water and sewage separately via separate pipes. While Kolkata opted for a 'combined' system due to its topography, Mumbai and Chennai city opted for the 'separate' system guided by the annual rainfall patterns in the city. Since rainfall in the latter two cities were restricted only to a few months in a year, it was felt that stormwater can be separately managed more efficiently. On a similar note, while Kolkata opted to drain its stormwater into a nearby tidal creek by the name *Bidyadhari*, Chennai and Mumbai opted to drain their stormwater into the sea via open drains and channels.

DRAINAGE SYSTEMS IN PRACTICE

Following their introduction, these drainage systems certainly did not have a smooth career and began to develop a number of problems not so different from the drainage problems afflicting contemporary Indian cities. The nature of the problems in each case was strongly conditioned by its design choices. For instance, the cities that adopted the 'separate' system developed practical difficulties in keeping sewage from entering storm water drains and vice versa. This manifested in Mumbai in 1901 when parts of the city's storm water drains had become a public health hazard when a slower uptake of household sewer connections led to the dumping of sewage into these drains. In Chennai city, in the late 1920s, the reverse was the problem as storm water found its way into sewage pipes thereby stretching the sewage disposal arrangements of the system.

While Kolkata's 'combined' system could steer clear of the aforementioned difficulties, it still had to search for new disposal arrangements for its storm water due to the silting up and rise in the bed level of the *Bidyadhari* river by the mid-1910s thereby causing stagnation within the drains.

Furthermore, the carrying capacity of the stormwater drains in all of these cities were

beginning to be overwhelmed resulting in monsoon floods through the 1920s and 1930s. For instance, a national newspaper report from August 1923 complained about Kolkata (then Calcutta) that 'Floods are of daily occurrence, and it is doubtful if this will ever be a thing of the past', while a report on flooding in Mumbai in 1937 noted that 'Flooded Bombay (now Mumbai) streets, are a common sight...' during monsoons. In both these cases, the inadequate capacity of its drainage infrastructure to respond to the rainfall patterns in the city were identified as the most important cause, thus providing us interesting parallels from the past on monsoon flooding in urban India.

HALTING SOLUTIONS

The city governments of that era were certainly not silent spectators as these problems started unraveling from of them. They were, as a matter of fact, quite alive to the need to upgrade their respective drainage systems. For instance, Mumbai city's corporation had planned for a project costing nearly ₹1.36 crore to give a comprehensive overhaul of the city's storm water drainage system in 1924, while Kolkata had finalised a scheme to shift its outfall works from *Bidyadhari* river to the river *Kulti* by 1930. But financial stringency facing the local governments in this period meant these schemes were either delayed or suspended or only partially implemented.

While the implementation of Calcutta's (now Kolkata) scheme could eventually commence only in 1935, Bombay's (now Mumbai) scheme for stormwater drainage was not implemented even by 1933. Under the tight financial constraints, the municipal bodies could not go beyond tinkering with the existing system to prevent flooding. In Mumbai, the municipal corporation began to allow storm water to drain off through sewage pipes during periods of monsoon in a bid to reduce flooding of city streets in the 1930s.

This position of financial weakness of municipal bodies is succinctly captured by the following quote from O.J. Wilkinson, who served as the drainage engineer of Kolkata in the mid 1920. He noted that: 'In Calcutta (now Kolkata) we have ... terrific rainstorms to contend with, a drainage problem of unparalleled complexity, a vast conservancy question..Yet the income per head of the population is but a fraction of London or other great European cities. Whereas in London, the rateable value is such that enormous schemes to

meet the growing needs of the community can be financed without much difficulty from municipal funds, in Calcutta (now Kolkata), it is quite impossible for obvious reasons. The drainage question alone is of such decisive importance and so great in extent that the cost of remedial measures may be quite beyond the means of the corporation.'

If this was the case in Kolkata, one of the then richest municipal bodies in the country, then it would certainly not be difficult to fathom what the state of drainage systems in other poorer yet populous cities such as Lucknow and Banaras might have been. Indeed, as of 1937 only 3% of the 517 municipalities across the five provinces of Bengal, Mumbai, Chennai, UP and Punjab had modern sewage disposal systems installed even though the engineering practices behind them had become fairly well rooted in India. Thus, it was not for want of engineering solutions that drainage systems remained inadequate; it was mainly the dire economic conditions that these local bodies found themselves in that prevented the emergence of a functional and satisfactory system of urban drainage in India.

It's now nearly 90 years since the aforementioned incidents took shape. While there are important qualitative differences between the challenges that contemporary urban India faces and what its colonial predecessor did, this article has alluded to some important enduring elements. Chief among this is the economic inability of India's local bodies to build robust public infrastructure for delivering vital services — be it water, sanitation or drainage.

A recent report of the research organisation ICRIER titled *Finances of Municipal Corporation in Metropolitan India* alerts us that the dire financial position of these bodies continues to remain a major stumbling block for upgrading urban infrastructure. While it is difficult to come up with a clear recipe on how to improve urban living conditions in India not the least on the basis of historical work, one starting point certainly could be ensuring greater intervention of central and state governments in providing secure financial backing for these local bodies to build vital public services in our cities.

The author is an engineer turned PhD student with the Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine (CHoSTM) at King's College, London, researching the history of sanitary infrastructures in late colonial Madras city

“WHILE IT IS DIFFICULT TO COME UP WITH A CLEAR RECIPE ON HOW TO IMPROVE URBAN LIVING CONDITIONS IN INDIA NOT THE LEAST ON THE BASIS OF HISTORICAL WORK, ONE STARTING POINT CERTAINLY COULD BE ENSURING GREATER INTERVENTION OF CENTRAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS IN PROVIDING SECURE FINANCIAL BACKING FOR THESE LOCAL BODIES TO BUILD VITAL PUBLIC SERVICES IN OUR CITIES”





WE MAKE THE FUTURE SUSTAINABLE WHEN WE INVEST IN THE POOR, NOT WHEN WE INSIST ON THEIR SUFFERING —BILL GATES

STILETTOS



MINIYA CHATTERJI

THE LAST MILE

For this one time, the country needs to step up its game and ensure that the choice and the correct information for the Covid-19 vaccine reaches the most disadvantaged end of income groups in India

The year 2021 will be the year of the Covid-19 vaccine. It will be the topic of our greatest relief and utmost anxiety. Which vaccine? How to avail it? Will it work? What are the side effects? We will not know the answers to all these questions at once, not even at the time regulatory approval is given for each vaccine.

Choosing the vaccine to use in India's vaccination programme will therefore certainly not be easy as they will each be based on very different technologies, with differing degrees of efficacy and side effects that will likely be revealed with time. Many millions will be vaccinated every week, and perhaps an effective tracking system could help us identify problems with particular vaccines which were not caught in the pre-approval tests.

Procuring the vaccine would indeed be initially difficult but I don't anticipate it to be our greatest challenge in the long run either. India has a large vaccine production capacity. The Serum Institute of India is the largest vaccine manufacturer in the world and it is producing the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine and will also produce the Novavax vaccine. It is expanding capacity to 1.2 billion doses per year, and half of this could be available for India. There are other Indian manufacturers engaged in clinical trials to produce a vaccine, such as Zydus Cadila, Bharat BioTech, Dr Reddy's Laboratories and Biological E. There will undoubtedly be difficulties in this unprecedented situation.

However, funding the programme will be a major challenge and a heavily debated one too. Should the vaccine be free for all beneficiaries or only for some? Will the government pay for vaccines for all? India has a vast spectrum of social and economic inequalities. We have some of the world's richest and the world's poorest, with health care distribution that also mirrors this enormous gap. Without free vaccines provided by the government at least to some extent, we can not ensure that the last mile in rural India are offered the vaccine. We can not ensure that the population left out in vaccinating 70% of India and hoping for herd immunity for the rest, are not the poorest.

We can anticipate two other major hurdles in vaccinating India for which,



I believe, the private sector must step in to help.

First, how will we distribute the vaccine to the last mile? Our existing systems for distributing medicines to the *anganwadis* and rural medical centres are fraught with pilferage. Already we see a black market for vaccines preparing to suck out the vaccines from the system to offer it to those with greater buying power who might want the vaccine at the soonest. How can we then ensure that the vaccine is offered to all individuals in an equitable manner? Some have suggested a lottery system for offering vaccines, but even then how can the lottery winners belonging to economically weaker segments be sure of receiving their vaccine?

Here, the network of the local *kirana* stores and freelance entrepreneurs in small towns and villages who are already

being mobilised by the government for distributing Covid testing kits and masks could be tapped upon. They are the government of India's best last mile connect. This network has been leveraged by the government already and so it can be leveraged for vaccine distribution as well, to be then picked up by the government healthcare workers in villages, slums, small towns. Large companies could include their supply chain and distributors within that network for vaccine delivery. The supply chain of large companies such as Hindustan Unilever Ltd. and others will thus bolster this existing network further — if a Lifebuoy can be delivered to the furthest hut in a village so can the Covid vaccine. Indeed thereafter, the government healthcare workers would be best suited for door-to-door vaccinating. In our experience of

WE CAN NOT AFFORD TO LOSE THE BATTLE TO COVID, ESPECIALLY ONCE AN EFFECTIVE BASKET OF VACCINES ARRIVE. THE DISTRIBUTION OF ANYTHING TO THE LAST MILE IN INDIA IS A CHALLENGE

setting up 11 Covid hospitals and recovery facilities over six months, we leveraged public private partnerships to set up these hospitals and facilities in urban pockets that lacked healthcare facilities, bringing in government healthcare workers to operate them. A similar PPP model can be put in place for vaccine distribution and vaccine administration in rural India.

Second, how do we overcome India's biggest malaise — corruption — in this regard? The black market is picking up already, making *'bandobast'* to get the vaccines out to people with resources as soon as possible. There are even travel companies such as Gem Tours offering Mumbai-New York-Mumbai tickets, 3 night/4 day packages with breakfast and one vaccine dose. Further, even if the *kirana* stores in villages and slum zones

are looped in to distribute the vaccines, there might be cases where they instead sell off the vaccines at high prices. In the case of the latter, the government can not entirely check the corruption and the private sector might be silenced by the fear of losing the supply chain for their own products.

What are ways in which we can preempt this corruption? Communication might be key here. An intensive anti-corruption campaign for vaccine distribution can be planned in order to remind the public of being ethical during the worst global pandemic in history that has ravaged the lives of millions. The public involved in vaccine distribution can be encouraged and named as 'heroes', much as the frontline warriors were referred to as 'Covid Warriors'. The communication on vaccines must cover factual information about the various vaccines, removing rumours and baseless fears. The vaccine cannot be made mandatory, which makes the dispersion of effective and accurate communication all the more important.

In India, since the past three months or so the private sector has already stepped in to assist the government in articulating and dispersing the message around Covid precautions. At times the government pays companies for spreading the message while in some cases companies and even some advertising agencies have stepped up to do so on a pro-bono basis. This trend can be further strengthened towards an anti-corruption campaign for vaccine distribution.

We can not afford to lose the battle to Covid, especially once an effective basket of vaccines arrive. The distribution of anything to the last mile in India is a challenge. This is at least once when the country needs to step up its game and ensure that the choice and the correct information for the Covid vaccine reaches the most disadvantaged end of income groups in India. They can not be left to gain 'herd immunity' while the top 1% get their choice of vaccines. This is the challenge that the government, private sector, me and you need to win in 2021.

The writer is CEO of Sustain Labs and Adjunct Professor at SciencesPo Paris. She is also a columnist and author of the 2019 bestseller *Indian Instincts* — essays on freedom and equality in India

Unpacking climate geoengineering

If it works well, it might be able to protect climate-vulnerable regions by keeping temperatures below 1.5 C while the world is decarbonising, write VINAYAK NAMBIAR, SIJO ABRAHAM & MOHAMMED MOFIZUR RAHMAN

Climate change, or more aptly, climate chaos, is arguably one of the major challenges of the 21st century, and is often considered an existential threat to humanity. It leaves no aspect of life untouched, including the economy, environment, health and livelihoods, regardless of which part of the world you reside. The global community has awoken to the risks involved, and there has been a ramp-up of efforts to mitigate the release of greenhouse gases, including the main culprit carbon dioxide, through a plethora of initiatives such as focusing on renewable energy, creating a circular economy, and even re-inventing what would drive future growth, with 'green' deals being considered by various influential governments worldwide.

However, recent research suggests that no matter how ambitious our efforts are, current emission trends indicate that it is unlikely we will be able to limit the temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. This is the warming limit that is supported by the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, with warming above this point leaving us open to more extreme weather events, biodiversity loss on a scale previously unimaginable, agricultural depletion and unprecedented forced migration. The Global South, including the Indian subcontinent, will be particularly hard hit. Climate geoengineering is increasingly touted as a promising solution for this, a blanket term that contains quite a few radical, often controversial and potentially challenging to implement proposals.

Before we continue, we would like to point out that we are neither advocates nor opponents of geoengineering. We believe it is important to have a broader public discussion on a wider spectrum of possible climate options, and our goal in this article is to shed some light on one often-neglected outside scientific circles, and lay out the unknowns, opportunities and obstacles involved, especially from a South Asian perspective. That being said, let's start with a few definitions.

Under climate geoengineering, there are two major groups of proposed approaches; Solar Radiation Management (SRM) and Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR). SRM proposals aim to limit or reverse the temperature rise produced by higher greenhouse gas concentrations, by reflecting inbound sunlight back into space. The approach that has received most research attention would involve spraying tiny reflective particles into the upper atmosphere to reflect away some sunlight. The effects of SRM would be experienced rapidly, in the order of months after implementation, and this is why it is being researched — it's the only known way to quickly stop or reverse the rise in global temperatures.

However, it is important to note that these effects would last only as long as the programme is maintained. SRM does not reduce the concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and there is the potential for disastrously abrupt warming of the global climate with sudden and permanent cessation of a high level of SRM cooling. As it is largely based on computer simulations, there is also signifi-

cant uncertainty on what the actual impacts may be, including predicting the change in rainfall patterns and growth of plant life.

CDR on the other hand, involves removing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from the atmosphere by various means, ranging from reforestation/afforestation, restoration of wetlands, burning biomass to capture carbon and permanently storing it, fertilizing oceans to absorb more CO₂ or even direct capture of CO₂ from ambient air. Generally, CDR techniques are comparatively slow-acting and expensive to implement, but are less contentious and have been included in many models for achieving effective climate change mitigation.

What we find worrying is that climate geoengineering research as a whole has predominantly been conducted by Western academia, and in reality, countries in the Global South are often poorly represented in debates about these approaches, even though in many of the cases, those are the same countries that would be the most impacted.

This question of moral hazard surrounding geoengineering has been intensely argued, though again mostly in developed economies. A range of people, from policy makers to activists, have expressed concerns that CDR and SRM might be seen as "get out of jail" free cards that reduce the incentives for countries to move towards a net-zero carbon pathway. This becomes all the more serious when coupled with what is essentially limited research about the benefits and drawbacks of these methods.



Encouraging SRM or CDR may significantly reduce allocation of resources to inclusive and reliable climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, or even lead to total near-term disregard for them, leaving developing countries to suffer the consequences. For example, Global South countries have expressed their concern regarding the uncertainty of Bio-

Energy and Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS) methods, which is a CDR technique. These projects may require large land areas, thereby competing with agricultural lands. Additionally, as previously stated, research has shown that SRM would involve tinkering with a complex system and it might have nasty side effects, with countries like India bearing the

brunt if it goes wrong. It may in fact not be in the best interests of northern, developed countries like Norway or Canada too, who may prefer increased temperatures for agricultural productivity and other land uses.

Another cause for apprehension is the lack of an international agreement overseeing climate geoengineering. Currently these

methods can be rolled out by any country independently, especially economically strong ones.

This would certainly cause an imbalance of power in global politics, as such a country would potentially have control over the global thermostat, with negative repercussions in certain parts of the world. We first have to understand exactly what the effects of various geoengineering measures would be on a regional basis, and ensure that the needs of all nations are met when and if they are executed. This is an issue with global ramifications, and cannot be treated locally. It is therefore absolutely vital that there is a cohesive strategy that is transnational in nature, with defining principles for governance, research, development and possible implementation of these novel technologies. We urge India and other developing nations to take the lead to ensure justice, and ascertain that any and all measures need to consider the wishes of all stakeholders within these vulnerable regions.

As it stands, climate geoengineering could prove to be a complement to other climate solutions and not a silver bullet. If it works well, it might be able to protect climate-vulnerable regions by keeping temperatures below 1.5°C while the world is decarbonising. But the uncertainty and unpredictability around these techniques may have counterproductive implications worldwide, especially in the Global South. The global nature of these methods mandate a strong need for transparency within all the dimensions of these techniques, safeguarding equity as the central theme. However, it is absolutely clear that climate geoengineering is not a substitute for reducing carbon emissions and our focus must continue to be on weaning our economies off carbon, advocating sustainable behavioural practices and building strong resilience to climate change. By prioritising these pathways, we will hopefully never be pressed to use climate geoengineering to protect our planet.

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Rohingyas' repatriation amid hope & despair

Today the Rohingya Muslims are nowhere. More than one million of them left their homeland of Rakhine Province, Myanmar, in 2017 after their ethnic cleansing at the hands of Myanmar Army.

Most of them descended in the neighbouring Bangladesh and stayed in makeshift camps in the Cox Bazar, a coastal town located near the Bangladesh-Myanmar border area of the country all these years.

Many of them have crossed the turbulent sea to get into other South East Asian nations such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.

Their future hangs on international intervention from nations concerned and human rights agencies. Despite an urgent urge from the UN and the case being heard in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague (Netherlands), they continue to languish in the ill-managed refugee camps in Bangladesh. But recently Dhaka took a decision to shift a large number of the Rohingya refugees to an island named Bhasan Char, in a phased manner. However, the spread of the news in the beginning of this month among the distraught Rohingyas evoked mixed feelings — many of them are quite excited to go to their new abode, thinking this could be a better place, while others are worried about their permanent dislocation from the current camps.

To unearth the root cause of the Rohingya exodus in 2017 from Rakhine to Bangladesh, we need to focus on the recent political happenings in Myanmar. The UN says the Myanmar Army demonstrated "genocidal intent" while conducting operations against the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) in 2017.

According to the authorities, this operation targeted to flush out the Islamists and to bring back law and order in the Rakhine Province. But the central issue is that Myanmar does not want to recognise the Rohingyas as citizens and it sees them as illegal migrants from Bangladesh. That is why the Burmans, the major ethnic group of the country, consisting of the Army, the rest of administrative ranks and the leadership, simply do not want the Rohingyas to stay in the country.

Much before 2017, the



Rohingya Muslims, who fled Myanmar into Bangladesh, wait in queues to receive aid at Kutupalong refugee camp in Ukhiya, Bangladesh on November 15, 2017

AP/File

clashes used to break out between the majority Burmans and the local Rohingyas. But in that year, the ARSA killed nearly 20 police officers and security forces of the Myanmar Army. And on August 25, the ARSA, previously known as the Harakah al-Yakin, immediately provoked a counter-insurgency operation from the federal Army of Myanmar in Rakhine Province. The Government says the ARSA is a terrorist organisation. Its leader Ata Ullah was born in Pakistan and raised mostly in Saudi Arabia. The group also released a report in 2016 according to which it is led by Rohingyas living in Saudi Arabia.

However, the concern is that striking at the ARSA is not going to solve the core issue i.e. denying citizenship to the Rohingyas. For decades, the Rohingyas have been residing

in Arakan known as the Rakhine Province. Interestingly, earlier, they were given the right to vote. But with the coming of the Tatmadaw to power, gradually the basic political rights and freedoms of the Rohingyas were curtailed. Thus, the Rohingya anger has grown against the Myanmar State fully controlled by the majority Burmans.

Many security experts opine that the ARSA may have received backing from jihadists who have fought in battlegrounds of Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, etc. The main purpose of the ARSA is to defend, salvage and protect the Rohingyas from the State repression in the line with the principle of self-defence. But the official view from Naypyidaw is that the Army operation in the province was against the terrorists, and to restore law and order in that area. Even the locals and vari-

ous newspapers in the regions emphasise more on the terror attacks and the plight of the others who had to flee the area because of the clash between the Army and the Rohingyas.

It is very clear that the majority Burmans have a long-held prejudice against the Rohingya Muslims, who are not regarded as the citizens of the country. These Rohingyas are called as "Bengalis". And most of the nationalist groups view them as a threat to their country. This is the background of the harrowing conditions of the Rohingyas that has sparked a bitter debate between Bangladesh and Myanmar, but without any credible outcome.

And anytime in future, the global jihadi groups such as the Islamic State and al-Qaeda might plant their agents to sponsor full-time Islamic terror movements in Myanmar. The

Tatmadaw must be ready to face such an onslaught from these global monsters and accordingly should keep a close watch on the activities of the ARSA in the region.

The root of the plight behind the current Rohingya crisis lies in Myanmar itself. It can well be regarded as a systematic and forced migration of these people from their home province. And it is the Tatmadaw i.e. the Myanmar Army that has led a vicious and brutal campaign against the hapless Rohingyas over the years. It all started in 1978 when then Burmese Army carried out an operation called "Operation Ngamin" to drive out the Rohingyas from Rakhine.

Again, in 1982, a new law was passed by Myanmar to deny citizenship right to the Rohingya Muslims. And finally, they were excluded from the

list of the country's 135 ethnic groups. For years, Myanmar has pursued institutionalised discrimination policies like these and cornered the poor and minority Muslim Rohingyas to a point of no return to the mainstream of country.

The role of Nobel laureate and the present State Counsellor of Myanmar is highly questionable on the question of the repatriation of the Rohingyas. The suffering of the Rohingya itself is a tragedy. But the way it was carried out by the Tatmadaw had crossed all civilisational limits. Suu Kyi does not control the military and even if she wants she can't do so. Also the military does not trust her at all.

It's very simple because all her life she has fought against the repressive military and demanded to restore basic freedoms in the country. But today

she has almost forgotten the very core of the basic freedoms for which she once bravely fought. It's painful and sad. This time her party National League for Democracy won more seats than what they had won in the elections of 2015. But even if she could have condemned the actions of the Tatmadaw, it would not have gone to this extent.

The world knows very well what Suu Kyi said in the International Court of Justice at the Hague in December 2019. She bravely defended her country's military against the allegations of genocide. These all have rightly signalled that she is a true politician and no mere a votary of democratic rights.

The recently concluded parliamentary election has once again excluded the Rohingyas from the much awaited political process in the country. Further, because of the fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army, the November Parliamentary Election had to be cancelled in the Rakhine Province.

The saddest part of the Rohingya crisis is that no one is focusing on the repatriation of the Rohingyas to Myanmar. Why the whole world is mum over this matter? Why are we all putting pressure on Bangladesh to resettle these refugees in an unsafe and vulnerable island? It seems Bangladesh has accepted the responsibility of relocating the Rohingyas and looking for their future settlement.

Precisely, they all must be sent back to Myanmar i.e. Rakhine Province, as early as possible.

The UN, the UNHRC and various other global humanitarian agencies must build up enough pressure on Naypyidaw to take back all the Rohingyas. Now a new Joe Biden administration must devise a strategy to convince the Tatmadaw for the same. Else, the Generals back home in Myanmar will take it for granted that such heinous crimes could easily avoid international attention. Though Bangladesh is assuring the repatriation of the Rohingyas in the Bhasan Char, the international community must be aware that it is a very vulnerable area to shift millions of these refugees in the days to come.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)

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MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

New challenges to education during pandemic

Besides debate on whether online teaching can make up for the loss of classroom teaching, the major challenge is how to develop mechanism to overcome the rigmarole of regulations to take effective decisions



SUDHIR HINDWAN

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic the education system in India has been witnessing challenges with significant impact on higher education.

To deal with the situation, experts have talked about what should be the course of direction with regard to the pattern of completion of course work, methodology of teaching and examination.

The Higher Education Information System's recent attempt to ensure high level of partnership among institutions through equity and access to all shows the level of insight in empowering and motivating students and faculty members.

Besides, the pursuit of the National Education Policy (NEP) to cover school, adult, higher education and efforts towards promotion of Indian languages and online education exhibit tremendous effort towards enhancement of overall educational scenario.

Indian universities are being encouraged to improve their performances by making a push towards a more merit based peer reviewed research and the chimera of fulfilling the aim of 6 per cent of GDP expenditure on education.

A few experts are of the views that we have at least got an opportunity to analyse and address the multidimensional issues in the education sector.

Whereas for some it is a welcome sign that we would draw a framework for key demands of the higher education while maintaining a synergy between various actors and stakeholders, there has been a section which strongly feels that the idea of online teaching can never replace the existing system of classrooms teaching. For many others, it is not clear that segregation of the practical and theory papers, particularly for MBA courses, can be a feasible option if the future trends compel us to follow the undesirable.

Ensuring proper monitoring of education sector on day to day basis as done by the authorities can ensure growth in changing circumstances.

In the midst of argumentation and generation of dis-course it is imperative to look at the process from neutral stand. But at times different point of views creates insights about the way in which the ideas and emotions get translated into effective decision-making process.

The Union Ministry of Education has opened up conceptual and scholastic discussions which may result in the creation of exquisite thoughts and a new vision for the growth of a stupendous education system even during the crisis of unprecedented magnitude. It is



high time we realised the gravity of challenges encountered by the higher education.

The importance of education for the physical, intellectual and moral will always be on high pedestal because education frees a person from the clutches of darkness and bigotry.

But many a times the questions and desires of competition, comparison and person-

al greed leads to the problem of manipulation and taking recourse in shortcuts. The Right to Freedom of Expression in democratic societies has been debated many times. Recent developments in academic world have posed new challenges about the changing nature of problem and the huge competition quagmire that still lurks.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has shown serious concern over the increasing number of predatory, cloned and substandard publications and emergence of a number of web opinion sites coupled with arrangement of predatory conferences. In a highly proactive step, the UGC has issued strict directions and created high quality list of jour-

nals to be considered the only valid publication category.

As a result of the long quest for excellence the UGC established Consortium for Academic Research and Ethics (CARE) to ensure and promote pious academic integrity and quality research and teaching.

This would help in broadening the ethical horizon and enhancing the decision making

capabilities but also letting new generation know what is ethically and morally correct.

When it comes to ethics it means going beyond the set clichés and moving from paradigm to paradigm shift. We ought to try our level best to kindle the flame by ensuring the sensitisation of students and faculty members in this direction. It is difficult to change the direction of the wind, but we can do our bit in adjusting ethical sail towards the path of development of ethos.

The major challenge will be its dealing with professional institutes. How to develop mechanism to sensitise the stakeholders of these institutes to overcome the rigmarole of regulations, and take decision.

It is daunting task to deal with the emerging challenges due to mushrooming of a number of private educational institutes. There is a strong need to identify new ways to judge the qualitative competence of candidates by laying a lot of importance on improving analytical and observatory qualities of the candidates through cognitive discourse and seeking multiple options and viewpoints in order to help in forming an integrated texts and questionnaire.

(The author is a professor and expert on strategic affairs)



FAITH IS THE BIRD THAT FEELS THE LIGHT WHEN THE DAWN IS STILL DARK —RABINDRANATH TAGORE

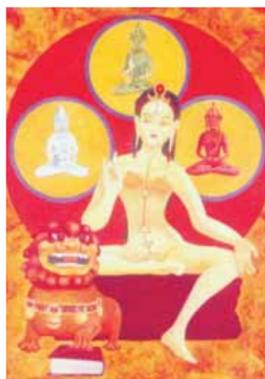


YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19
This week good news is in store for you. For those facing health challenges, a positive attitude would work wonders. If you suspect something is wrong with your physical being, make sure to get medical support. It would help you. Trust your instincts. On the work front, there are happiness and celebration. You are about to see some results for your hard work and efforts. Those looking for a position, will find something that is better than they hoped for. Your efforts are valued and appreciated at work. On the relationship front, your spouse's attitude may be irritating, and you feel depressed and lonely. A feeling of being left out may take over you. Broaden your horizons and try hard to think positively.
Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Wednesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22
Your health and vitality is strong and robust this week. This is a great time to correct all bad habits, in order to stay in good health. Start with small goals. A daily walk could very well lead you to a healthier and stronger self. Spend time to bring balance in body, mind, and spirit. On the work front, there may be financial loss in business or situation of unemployment. Your fears, addictions, and other harmful impulses may create a negative environment around you. You feel despair and have a pessimistic view of life. Be positive, this is the time to learn from mistakes. On the personal front, your situation is good, especially for an existing romance. Your relationship will move into a lighter and more balanced phase, with treating each other as equals.
Lucky number 17
Lucky colour Magenta
Lucky day Friday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21
This week health needs attention and follow up exercises for those who have serious ailments. You may finally find it within yourself to stop certain bad habits that you may be cultivating. Take good care of yourself, only then would you truly be able to care of the others. On the work front, a good news would bring happiness to you this week. You may get a call letter for job with better perspective, perks and facilities. Those awaiting posting may get the desired destination. For those in business, financial gains are indicated. On the relationship front, things are not as good as you think them to be. You have to make an effort. Put your ideas and views across to your near and dear ones in such a way that those could easily be accepted. Else, you may face rejection.
Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Tuesday



TAURUS April 20-May 20
This week you will feel light and happy on the health front. You should be full of vitality, hopeful and optimistic about the future. Pay attention to your line of thought. Remember that your mindset affects your health. Maintain a positive outlook. You are in a position now to mentor others and share spiritual insights. On the career front, you are nearing the point where work success and recognition are well within your grasp. Do your best to be organised and productive. This will pay you off. This is not a time to gamble or take risks. On the personal front, good luck will follow you in the matters of heart. If you are already in a relationship, it may deepen and become better and sweeter. You feel emotional contentment.
Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Pastel Blue
Lucky day Thursday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22
This week, despite the workload and stress, you remain cool and poised. You have abundance of energy and stamina, that is your support system. You need to use your energy in a creative direction. Health remains good and you have control on your sensory delights too. On the career front, your determination and will power would help you achieve your targets, as there are many hurdles and delays in your work. Your tough decisions will give you the strength to move on and plan well in the moments of crisis. Follow the advice of a senior who is close to you and knows your limitations. On the personal front, you may face opposition of your near and dear ones. Rift and conflicts in the family are likely. Be a little softer and compassionate.
Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Mauve
Lucky day Monday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19
This week, you would find yourself restricted on a health matter. Fear, anxiety and negative thoughts are not allowing you to lead a normal life. You need to bring about balance in body, mind and spirit. Health is affected when thinking is negative or filled with anxiety. Meditate and listen to your body. Half of the problems will get solved by themselves. On the work front, there may be an unexpected fall or injustice in your case. The position which that you have been aspiring for may be given to another candidate with equal calibre. Difficulty to choose whether to remain in the existing one or join the new one will prevail. On the relationship front, ensure that you take out time and effort to stay connected with your partner to keep the spark alive.
Lucky number 22
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Friday



GEMINI May 21-June 20
This week challenges on health front will come to an end. You will realise that health is very important and needs care and attention. Prevention is better than cure. You will attend classes and seminars on healing therapies and apply them to your life. On the professional front, you need to come out of self-made restrictions, which are hampering your career growth. In some matters, you are required to be fluent and quick-witted, but your confusion and duality in mind keeps interrupting you. Curb your expenditure. Keep your eyes and ears open to be aware of the opportunities coming your way. On the personal front, promises are not made to be broken. If you are doing so, you may have to pay in terms of relationships.
Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Off-white
Lucky day Monday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22
This week you may feel depressed and gloomy, as things are not going your way. Some health issues may crop up out of the blue. Do not worry; this is a temporary phase. Your medical tests will come out fine. Stress is a bigger ailment. The professional life would see a rise and so would you. There will be money, prestige and honour in what you are currently pursuing. Those in business could earn good money. Take time out for healing and go for massage therapy. On the emotional front, this is fairly a good week. A new love/romance is on the cards. Married couples must have a concern and try to understand the feelings of the other. Possibly there is a communication gap that must be sorted out. This probably is the root cause of distance and is what is making them isolated.
Lucky number 31
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Wednesday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18
Your health situation looks good this week. You will be filled with energy and enthusiasm. But be careful when exercising, there can be minor sprain or injuries. It is important to start a new health regime if you have been laid back and casual in the recent past. On the work front, you may encounter a person of influence and leadership skills, who would like to mentor you. You need his presence to guide you in the right direction. If you have been facing some challenges at work or in business, then this is the time for you to get hold/control of the situation. You will be goal-oriented and very visionary. On the relationship front, this week will be a magical one. This is a time to trust your instincts.
Lucky number 1
Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Friday



CANCER June 21-July 22
Your tension will reflect in your work. Follow your intuition, when it comes to your health. If a diagnosis doesn't feel right, do not hesitate to get a second opinion. For those who consume alcohol or drugs, this is the time to avoid and take a break from any kind of intoxication. On the work front, you need to be a more giving and generous. People will look to you for help. A friend or colleague may ask for financial help. This is the time to invest in long term projects. Your generosity and kindness will earn you a good name. On the relationship front, there is agony and pain. For a relationship to survive, both parties must be willing to work on it and talk about it. Keep your communication channels open. This is the time to meditate and introspect.
Lucky number 9
Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Saturday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21
This week your health will be good if you pay attention. The week starts with the creative energy and you will feel active, agile, and enthusiastic. But as the week progresses, some health issues may crop up. There is a cure for everything. Be positive, everything will go well. On the professional front, if you are not dedicated to your work, you might have to pay for it. People are watching you and giving minute to minute details to the higher authorities. You might be questioned for your irregularities in duties and finances. On the relationship front, this is a highly emotional time. Things can quickly become heated and uncomfortable. Take a break if you need to. Pick your battles and be sure to treat your lover like a friend.
Lucky number 3
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Saturday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20
On the health front, this week may be tough on you. Panicking at this point in time will only make things worse. After every crisis, there is a promise of a good time. However, it depends on what you do about it. Be positive about your situation and reach out to the others for help. Practising meditation will be a great booster. On the career front, things may not be that great. It may be that you are close to completing a project or task, but are faced with yet another challenge or task at your workplace. You need to be resilient and not be intimidated by others pulling you down. On the personal front, you will find yourself in conflict with others. You need to understand that open communication with your partner can help resolve all the differences.
Lucky number 14
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Thursday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Fix your habits early in life

Habits die hard. You may strive to get over them, but you won't be able to hold it for long unless you make corrections at the base level. Remember, the root of inherent habit tendencies lie in the thought seeds that are firmly embedded in the inner realms of the mind. As and when they get a congenial ground, they spring into action. Something like a wheat seed, which if kept on a table, remains inert. If it somehow reaches the earth mass, it will sprout into a plant when it has access to water. Someone holding a coveted position in an international organisation fearing loss of job came asking three years back: "My performance at works is commendable, and is duly acknowledged by my superiors. Yet, why do I come under such threat?" "Will I be able to retain my position?" Well, the reason lies in your self-undoing acts. You are primarily an escapist. Whenever you come under negative bind for whatever reasons, your inherent sense of fear and insecurity overtakes your thought plane. To forget that, your get into self-indulgences, which you take to extremes. You, thus, invite your own problem. But given pre-

sent astrological directions, as of now your job is secure." I observed. "Agreed sir. But how could you pinpoint my problem with such clarity?" He asked. "A horoscope speaks of the basic fabric of one's making that throws light on your virtues and attributes; as well as habits and attitudes. Coming as they may as Karmic carryover from the past, they are imprinted in the inner realms of your mind as thought-seeds. Given a congenial trigger, they come into play." I replied. Assured of his job security, he asked: "Suggest me some remedial measures — stone or a puja — that may help me avoid such situations in future." He was given a process, which involved self-reflecting on his thought patterns so as to resolve them through relevant educative inputs that may help get over the past hangups. Also, to train the mind living mindfully in the present. "Why put me under such process? I promise you to overcome my self-indulgences. I am strong enough to hold on to my promise," he then said. "Well, that will not suffice. You need to resolve them from the root level, otherwise, it will erupt in future also." I observed. He did not pay attention to my counsel. No



wonder, he came under similar spell twice in between. Let us now look at his astrological pointers. He is born in Aquarius *lagna*, a fixed sign, which makes him a stubborn character. The *lagna* lord Saturn conjunct the Sun brings in a sense of fear and insecurity having a hardened attitude. Moon placed adverse to Saturn brings in a negative mind-set. Given an adverse situation, he may become self-pitying. The Sun placed adverse to mischievous Neptune makes him habitually an escapist, who remains stuck to his self-delusionary perceptions. He may not acknowledge truth on its first appearance and will rather prefer pursuing his own self-beliefs till pushed to the wall. Moon is ill-disposed off to Venus identified with sensuous pleasure, which is conjunct *Rahu*. Venus is also involved in exchange with Mars, a planet identified with animalistic instincts. This combination, in the first place, brings in self-indulgent tendencies. Second, he remains vulnerable to unpredictable mood swings. Third, he is too much touchy and sensitive, whereby he gets over-exercised even on trivial issues, over which he keeps mulling for long.

Intelligence signifying Mercury is ill-disposed of to Mars, which makes him restless, irritable and bad tempered. He, thus, given an adverse situation, loses his sense of alert, vital to mindful living. Mercury placed adverse to Jupiter accounts for his insensible reasoning and judgment. What further compounds his problem is his inflated ego, coming as it may with Mars placed adverse to Jupiter. That binds him to his self-defined beliefs and perceptions, not open to look beyond for a reality check. He is averse to listening or counsel. He can't digest anything that is not in line with his perception. If all that would not be enough Moon posited in Sagittarius sign and also adverse to Saturn implies that he will not be able to keep up the promises he makes. With exalted Jupiter and Moon over the head, the positives in him are strong enough to make him a good professional. But his overpowering negatives would not allow him a free run, unless he resolves them from the root level. The result is there to see. The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-9818037273/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com