



WE'LL HAVE PLANS
IN PLACE FOR
KOHLI: LANGER
12 SPORT

Kisan will teach Opp lesson: PM

Those spreading canards that farmers will lose land will be defeated, Modi says, assures new laws will benefit kisan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the continuing stand-off between his Government and the protesting farmers, demanding rollback of new farm laws, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday assured farmers that their land is "protected" and expressed confidence that "farmers across the country" would "teach a lesson" to the Opposition parties "misleading" them on the agriculture reforms initiated by the Centre.

"I am confident that when the honest intentions and efforts of Government are blessed by all farmers across the country... (then) the strength of it will defeat those misleading and making use of farmers for their own ends," said the Prime Minister while inaugurating a project in Kutch, Gujarat.

Citing example of highly profitable dairy business in the Kutch region which he said is free from any Government control, the Prime Minister said Government likewise "does not intend to interfere in the agriculture related business."

Modi, thereafter, went on to attack the Opposition which he said is "misleading farmers around Delhi that their land will be taken away by the

traders".

"Does any one take away the buffalo of dairy seller or the land of a fruit seller if you strike a contract (business)?", he asked seeking to dispel "doubts" of the agitating farmers that the traders will seize their lands in new contract system. The Prime Minister assured farmers that their land will remain "protected" and asked why foodgrain producers should not have a freedom that is available to those engaged in animal husbandry?

Modi said farmers have been demanding that foodgrain production should be freed from Government control and in the past Opposition parties too favoured farm reforms when they were in power at the Centre.

"Today same political parties have come together to mislead farmers... 'kisan ke kandhon per bandook chalan rare hain'." I appeal to the farmers that Government is ready to remove all their doubts...," said the Prime Minister saying his Government has been working to increase farmers' agriculture produce and the income.

"Those spreading lies will be defeated by farmers and taught a lesson," said Modi.

After the function, the Prime Minister interacted with a body of Sikh representatives



Farmers at Singhu Border during their sit-in protest against the Centre's farm reform laws in New Delhi on Tuesday
Ranjan Dirimi | Pioneer

is the principal demand of the farmers, resulting in a deadlock and escalation of protests on the outskirts of the Delhi borders.

Farmers harden stance, to block Chilla border today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With talks between farmers and the Union Government failing to resolve the crisis, the protest against the Centre's new farm laws looks set to intensify as farmers hardened stance and said they are determined to win this fight no matter what.

Addressing a Press conference at Singhu border, farmers' leaders said the fight has reached a stage where we are determined to win no matter what. "We are sure that we will make the Government repeal these laws. We are not running away from negotiation, but the Government has to pay heed to our demands and come forward with concrete proposals," said Jagjeet Dallewal, a farmer leader.

Meanwhile, following the protest, the Delhi Traffic Police took it on to Twitter and informed commuters regarding the traffic closed.

Police said Singhu, Achandi, Piai Maniyari, Sabholi and Manges borders were closed, and commuters have been advised to take alternative routes via Lampur, Safiabad and Singhu school toll tax borders while traffic has been diverted from Mukarba and GTK road.

In the first incident, two farmers were killed and four others were injured after a truck hit their tractor-trolley near Taraori flyover in Karnal in the wee hours of Tuesday.

The farmers were returning to Patiala after participating in the protest against the farm laws.

22 protesters die in last 20 days

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Four Punjab farmers returning from protest sites near Delhi borders were killed in two separate road accidents on Tuesday while one died of heart attack. According to Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, at least 22 farmers have died in the last 20 days. Eight of these farmers have died in road accidents while returning to their home while 12 died of heart attack and two succumbed to cold.

In the first incident, two farmers were killed and four others were injured after a truck hit their tractor-trolley near Taraori flyover in Karnal in the wee hours of Tuesday. The farmers were returning to Patiala after participating in the protest against the farm laws.

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It's 'decimation of democracy' when polls, rallies allowed, alleges Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday said the Winter Session of Parliament will not be held this year in view of the Covid-19 pandemic and that it will be appropriate to convene the Budget Session in January.

This has invited sharp reactions from the main Opposition party Congress.

Be poised for vaccine's side effects, States told

Adverse events following immunisation a critical aspect: Ministry to States, UTs



nations take place in a certain way, starting with hospitals and then into the communities.

"But when we deal with adults, certain practical aspects have to be tackled. Secondly, these vaccinations are in multiple new platforms that bring in complexity. If a EUA (emergency use authorisation) is given, it calls for more responsibility," added Dr VK Paul, Niti Aayog member (Health).

Detailed instructions on infection prevention and control practices during vaccination and management of minor, severe, serious (AEFI) have been issued, he said.

Around 29,000 cold chain points, 240 walk-in coolers, 70 walk-in freezers, 45,000 ice-lined refrigerators, 41,000 deep freezers and 300 solar refrigerators will be used to store Covid-19 vaccines.

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'SHOCKING': SC NOTES GUJ GOT ₹90 CR MASK FINES BUT RULES LAX

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday expressed shock after learning the Gujarat Government collected around ₹90 crore in fines for not wearing face masks, yet it was not able to enforce the guidelines on Covid-19-appropriate behaviour.

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	18,86,807	48,339	17,66,010
Karnataka	9,03,425	11,965	8,75,796
Andhra Pradesh	8,76,336	7,064	8,64,612
Tamil Nadu	8,01,161	11,919	7,79,291
Kerala	6,77,256	2,681	6,16,666
Delhi	6,10,447	10,115	5,85,852
Uttar Pradesh	5,66,728	8,083	5,39,727
West Bengal	5,25,918	9,145	4,96,110
Odisha	3,24,389	1,868	3,19,458
Rajasthan	2,93,584	2,568	2,75,506
Telangana	2,78,599	1,499	2,69,828
Chhattisgarh	2,58,635	3,135	2,39,468
Haryana	2,54,207	2,751	2,43,224
Bihar	2,44,245	1,329	2,37,996
Gujarat	2,29,913	4,193	2,12,939
Madhya Pradesh	2,25,709	3,425	2,09,768

Govt calls off Winter Session over Covid



The Opposition questioned the motive behind not calling the Session when elections and huge public rallies were allowed and even schools and colleges have been permitted to be opened.

In a letter to leader of Congress in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahlad Joshi said, "Winter months are very crucial for managing the pandemic because of recent spurt in cases during this period, particularly in Delhi. At present, we are in the middle of December and a Covid vaccine is expected

very soon."

Slamming the Government for its decision to not hold Parliament's Winter Session in view of Covid-19, the Congress said the "decimation of Parliamentary democracy is complete" and asked if election

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

IGIA GEARS UP FOR SAFE FLIGHT OPS DURING FOG



New Delhi: The Delhi international airport is geared up to ensure safe flight operations amid increasing fog in the city, operator DIAL said on Tuesday. The airport utilises an Airport Collaborative Decision Making (ACDM) cell — which has representatives of domestic airlines, air traffic control and the Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) — for better coordination when visibility reduces due to fog, it mentioned.

"We certainly welcome a greater interest and attention that the UK is devoting to Indo-Pacific. We certainly look forward to working with you in different manifestations," Jaishankar said.

Indo-Pacific region comprises the Indian Ocean and the western and central Pacific Ocean, including the South China Sea.

Idea of Indo-Pacific gaining recognition in world: Jaishankar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As China is asserting itself in South China Sea and Indo-Pacific region, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday said it is a matter of satisfaction that there is a "growing recognition and acceptance" for the idea of the Indo-Pacific in the world.

Making this point here after holding extensive talks with British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, Jaishankar said India welcomes greater interest and attention that the United Kingdom (UK) is devoting to the Indo-Pacific region and it looks forward to working with the UK Government.

"India has its own vision of Indo-Pacific. But I will also recognise that other country too. There could be big overlaps and there could be a few nuances. It is a matter of satisfaction that there is today a

growing recognition and acceptance for the idea of Indo-Pacific," he said during the joint news conference after the talks.

"We certainly welcome a greater interest and attention that the UK is devoting to Indo-Pacific. We certainly look forward to working with you in different manifestations," Jaishankar said.

Indo-Pacific region comprises the Indian Ocean and the western and central Pacific Ocean, including the South China Sea.

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JS appointed via lateral entry resigns for MNC job

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■
NEW DELHI

Launched with much fanfare, India on Tuesday did not take part in a high-level bilateral dialogue at the diplomatic-level with Canada claiming that the date was inconvenient. This came days after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau backed the protesting farmers in India.

India had termed the remarks by Trudeau as "unwarranted" and conveyed its displeasure while issuing a demarche after summoning Canadian High Commissioner to New Delhi. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar last week also pulled out of a Canadian-led initiative to fight coronavirus pandemic.

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Pranab's son, daughter lock horns over his memoir

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The late Pranab Mukherjee's son and daughter are at loggerheads with each other over his memoir "The Presidential Years", one saying it should not be published without his consent and the other "requesting" her brother to not create "unnecessary hurdles" in the publication of his last book.

The book, which was in the news recently for Pranab Mukherjee's critical comments on the Congress, including his observation that the party lost

political focus after his elevation as president, is set to be launched next month by Rupa, which published the two earlier volumes of his memoirs.

The late president's son Abhijit Mukherjee, a former Congress MP, said on Twitter he has written to the publishers to not publish the book till his nod. His sister Sharmistha Mukherjee, national spokesperson of the party, shot back saying no one should try and stop it for "cheap publicity" and doing so would be great disservice to the late leader.

"I, the Son of the author of the Memoir 'The Presidential Memoirs' request you to kindly stop the publication of the memoir as well as motivated excerpts which is already floating in certain media platforms without my written consent," Abhijit said on Twitter.

"Since my father is no more, I being his son want to go through the contents of the final copy of the book before its publication as I believe, had my father been alive today, he too would have done the same."

Continued on Page 2

Appointed as a Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce last year, Arun Goel has resigned from Government of India, DoPT sources said.

While sources close to Goel said the private executive-turned bureaucrat left the powerful job after having served for about a year due to much of "bureaucratic grind" in the system, said the Government sources, adding that he chose to go back to private sector for a "fat package".

Continued on Page 2

Cold wave grips Delhi, min drops to 4°C



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital on Tuesday witnessed cold conditions with the icy winds blowing from snow-covered western Himalayas bringing the minimum temperature down to 4.1 degrees Celsius, the lowest in the city this season so far.

The maximum temperature also dipped to 18.5 degrees Celsius, more than four notch-

es below normal, said the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

At 4.1 degrees Celsius, the minimum temperature at Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative data for the city, was five notches below normal on Tuesday morning. At Jatarpur, the mercury dipped to 3.6 degrees Celsius. The Ayanagar and Lodhi Road minimum dropped to 4.2 degrees Celsius.

The maximum temperature also dipped to 18.5 degrees Celsius, more than four notch-

AAP to contest 2022 UP polls: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Am Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday announced that the party will contest Uttar Pradesh Assembly (Vidhan Sabha) elections in 2022.

Kejriwal said the development of the State of Uttar Pradesh (UP) is held back because of the "dirty" politics and "corrupt" leaders in the state and every resident of UP wants an honest government which can only be given by the AAP.

"The people of the state posed their trust and faith in every party and gave them a chance, but they stabbed the people in their backs. Governments entered and left

but every party broke the records of corruption of their predecessors," he said.

The AAP convener said there is only one thing lacking in the politics of UP that is honesty and intent. "We created a party out of Jan Andolan. In these 8 years, the AAP has formed government in Delhi thrice and has emerged as the main Opposition party in Punjab. We proved that the governments lack not money but the intent to work and it is the honesty that AAP has transformed Delhi," Kejriwal added.

Addressing the media, Kejriwal said "Why do the people of UP travel to Delhi for every major and minor facility? If a family living in Kanpur has to send their child to a good



college, they have to send him/her to Delhi. If a person living in Gorakhpur has to get good medical treatment for his/her parents, they have to come to Delhi. Why? Can the biggest state in the country not

turn into the most developed state in the country? If the Sangam Vihar area in Delhi can have a Mohalla Clinic, why cannot the Gomti Nagar area in Uttar Pradesh can have a mohalla clinic?

"If Delhi can have the best government hospitals across the country, why the conditions of the Government hospitals in Uttar Pradesh are so bad? If the people of Delhi can receive a 24-hour power supply, why should people of UP suffer from long hours of a power cut? If the people of Delhi can receive free electricity, why are people of UP receiving huge electricity bills," he asked?

Explaining it further, he said "If the children of Delhi can receive education at par

with private schools in government schools, why is the condition of government schools in UP so bad? If CCTVs can be installed in every mohalla in Delhi for the safety of women, why cannot we ensure the safety of women in UP and why do crimes repeatedly happen there?"

"The people of Delhi want ed their lives to improve, their children to get a good education, their families to get good healthcare services and an honest Government, which is why they chose AAP thrice. It happened because, for the first time, the people could see the work being done in Delhi and they got an honest Government who works for them and with them," he said.

AAP: NMC defying HC by not paying salary to workers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Am Aadmi Party (AAP) on Tuesday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-ruled north Corporation of defying the order of the Delhi High Court by not paying salary of the sanitation workers for the last three months.

"The sanitation workers are now being threatened that their due will not be cleared if they do not join the protest of mayors and BJP councilors outside Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence," said senior AAP leader and chief spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj.

The Mayors of the all three municipal corporations of North, South and East Corporation along with the BJP councillors continued their protest outside Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence for days. Bhardwaj said the BJP has become very nervous because as nobody is paying any attention to their drama this is why they are pressuring the safai karamcharis to join the protest.

"The BJP has become so desperate that now the MCD officials are pulling down the hoardings where the people have asked the question to the BJP ruled corporation regarding the Rs 2,500 crores scam.

City Govt calls for one-day Special Session to discuss misappropriation of ₹2,400cr by BJP-ruled corporations

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government has called a one-day special Session of the Assembly on Thursday to discuss alleged misappropriation of Rs 2,400 crore by the BJP-ruled municipal corporations.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia tweeted on Tuesday, "A special session of Delhi Assembly on misappropriation of Rs 2,400 crore in MCD will be held on Thursday." AAP leaders have sharpened attack on the BJP-ruled municipal corporations of Delhi (MCDs) over the alleged misappropriation of funds ahead of civic polls due in 2022. The BJP has rubbished the allegation and said there is no corruption or manipulation in settling of dues between two Government bodies as reportedly done by North and South Delhi municipal corporations.

3 die after truck hits SUV on Yamuna e-way

Noida: In a tragic incident, two women and a man died after a truck hit their SUV on the Yamuna Expressway in Greater Noida. Police said that the incident took place in the Jawar police station area during the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday.

The deceased have been identified as Rinki (25), Anita Gupta (35) and Pavan Dubey (38), all residents of Siddharthanagar district in Uttar Pradesh (UP). Those injured are identified as Suman (27) and Subhash (55), also from the same district. SR

Pull out all the stops in road redesigning project, CM tells PWD

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday directed the Public Works Department (PWD) officials to remove all obstacles under the road redesigning project to redesign the 540 kms of identified roads of Delhi along the lines of European cities.

The direction came in a review meeting chaired by the chief minister. "The process of designing the roads should be done in a swift manner and the project should be completed within the stipulated deadline," he said.

The PWD officials apprised the chief minister that the process of appointing a consultant for the redesigning of roads has been completed. The consultant is responsible for preparing and submitting a Detailed Project Report (DPR) by February 2021, based on which the tenders will be given and the operations to design the 540 kms of roads will begin by

Sisodia launches new reading portal for kids

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to inculcate the habit of reading stories in children from an early age, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Tuesday launched a new reading portal, Tadaa, as part of their 300 Million Citizens' challenge.

The Delhi Government is working to redesign the 100 feet wide and 540 km long roads of the national capital on the lines of European cities.

Kejriwal has approved the project of redesigning some of the roads falling under the jurisdiction of PWD in November 2019. Under the pilot project, the Delhi Government has decided to redesign 100 feet wide and 500 kilometers on the lines of European cities.

This new e-portal will not just be accessible in India but in all over the world. The children will have access to fun and meaningful stories, especially during the ongoing Covid19 crisis," said Sisodia.

The Deputy Chief Minister said "Our mindset is made up of stories read and heard in childhood. If we speak in computer language, then coding through childhood stories has a big role in our mindset programming. Whenever we read lines, those lines are coded in our minds. Therefore, it is quite an ambitious project to increase children's capacity through stories. We are helping these children become readers, and learners for life."

"Stories and storytelling have taken a new form during Covid19. It is given an opportunity to children to engage even more with their families or find beautiful stories with their families. I know of children who have been hearing stories from their parents' generation and even stories from their grandparents' generation. Despite the pandemic, this has been a blessing in disguise," he said.

He said the UK and India have an invaluable and indispensable partnership, and we look forward to strengthening it in the years ahead. Together we can deliver an Enhanced Trade Partnership next year, combine our cyber security expertise to protect our citizens and join forces to protect global health and promote things like vaccine production.

Idea of Indo-Pacific gaining recognition in world: Jaishankar

From Page 1

Recently, the navies of India, US, Australia and Japan took part in a joint naval exercise off the Indian coasts. China reacted strongly and said the Quad combine was getting militarised and posed a challenge in the Indo-Pacific region.

Jaishankar and Raab held bilateral and delegation-level talks during which they discussed a wide range of issues. They also reviewed the situation in Afghanistan, the evolution of the Indo-Pacific, and developments in the middle

eastern region.

Jaishankar said, "We have had this morning four hours of discussion on a wide range of issues and focus has been on how to take our ties to a higher level. In recent years as you know, there have been very big changes in global politics and we both believe that our interests are better served by working together more effectively." Raab is on a three-day visit to India.

He said the UK and India have an invaluable and indispensable partnership, and we look forward to strengthening it in the years ahead. Together we can deliver an Enhanced Trade Partnership next year,

combine our cyber security expertise to protect our citizens and join forces to protect global health and promote things like vaccine production.

66-yr-old held for siphoning off public money

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Delhi Police has arrested a 66 year-old loan agent for allegedly siphoning off public money.

The accused has been identified as Gayase Ram, a resident of Mukhmail Pur in Delhi and he was loan agent of Delhi Nagrik Sehkar Bank Limited (DNSBL).

According to Dr O P Mishra, the Joint Commissioner of Police, EOW, the complainant Rajiv Gupta of DNSBL alleged that one Rajbir Singh obtained loan of Rs. 4.5 lakh from their Lajpat Nagar branch on the basis of forged

and fabricated documents of the property.

Further the ITR of surety Dinesh Kumar and salary slip of another surety Ishwar Singh were found to be forged.

The accused Gayase Ram being loan agent facilitated other accused persons for obtaining loan from DNSBL by filing forged and fabricated document of property and ITR record with loan application. After getting loan, loan borrower did not repay their loan," alleged the complainant. "A case under relevant sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered and investigation was taken up. During investigation, it was been

revealed that Dinesh Kumar, Ishwar Singh and one Laxman Singh also obtained loan of Rs five lakhs from complainant bank," said the Joint CP.

"On examination of statements of bank accounts, it has been revealed that accused Gayase Ram is beneficiary of Rs. 7.61 lakhs out of total loan of Rs. 19.50 lakhs granted to accused Rajbir Singh, Ishwar Singh, Dinesh Kumar and Laxman Singh. In view of sufficient incriminating evidence on record, loan agent Gayase Ram was arrested. Investigation qua the role of other accused Laxman Singh and bank officers is in progress," said the Joint CP.

Scores of farmers from U'khand, UP join sit-in at UP Gate

STAFF REPORTER ■ GHAZIABAD

Scores of farmers from Uttarakhand and UP joined the protesting farmers at Ghazipur border (UP Gate) against the Centre's new farm laws on Tuesday. Rakesh Tikait, national spokesperson of the Bharatiya Kisan Union, alleged that the Government is forcibly stopping the farmers coming to participate in the movement.

He said if the farmers coming to join the movement were stopped then all the roads would be blocked. Tikait said that farmers have been engaged in the movement for a long time.

"No matter how long the movement is, the farmers will not move away from here, but farmers from other cities are also reaching the movement but the government wants to weaken the movement, so now

farmers are being stopped from reaching the protest. By doing this, the government is working to provoke the farmers, but our clear warning is that if the farmers are prevented from coming to Delhi in this way, then the farmers standing on the Delhi border will protest by blocking all roads," said Tikait.

He added some farmers leaders in Mussoorie, Uttarakhand have been unconditionally stopped by the administration there. After the news of the farmers being stopped in Mussoorie, the farmers became furious and tried to remove the barricades at the UP gate in protest, later the police officers intervened and diffused the situation. On the UP Gate, where the farmers are going on a sit-in demonstration, other rustic artists are encouraging the agitating farmers by singing raginis.

22 protesters die in... From Page 1

As per the farmers, the deceased have been identified as Gurpreet Singh (24) and Labh Singh (65), from Safera village in Patiala district. As per the farmers, Gurpreet died on the spot, while Labh Singh died in Patiala. "Saddened to learn of demise of our 5 farmers. Labh Singh Ji & Gurpreet Singh of Patiala met with an accident in Karnal, Sukhdev Singh & Deep Singh of Fatehgarh Sahib near Mohali, & Makkhan Khan of Moga who died of a heart attack in Delhi," Punjab CM Amarinder Singh tweeted on Tuesday.

Cong workers protest outside BJP headquarters

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Hundreds of Delhi Congress workers staged a demonstration outside the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) headquarters at DDU Marg, demanding to repeat the three farms law

enacted by the Centre.

The Congress workers under the leadership of party Delhi unit president Anil Kumar marched towards BJP office carrying placards and banners

India cancels...

From Page 1

These reactions from India came after Trudeau during a video interaction to mark the 551st birth anniversary of Guru Nanak in Canada described the ongoing protests as "concerning." He also said Canada will always be there to defend the right to peaceful protest.

Taking exception to the Canadian Prime Minister's remarks, India in its demarche said "comments by the Canadian Prime Minister, some Cabinet Ministers and

Members of Parliament on issues relating to Indian farmers constitute an unacceptable interference in our internal affairs."

India also said statements by the Canadian leadership "encouraged gatherings of extremist activities in front of our high commission and consulates in Canada that raise issues of safety and security."

New Delhi said comments by the Canadian leadership could have a "seriously damaging impact" on ties between India and Canada. India also said Trudeau's remarks were "ill informed."

Farmers harden...

From Page 1

The Ghaziabad border also remains closed for traffic coming from Ghaziabad to Delhi due to the protest. Commuters have been advised to take other routes via Anand Vihar, DND, Chilla,apsara and Bhopra borders. Multi-layered cemented barriers, additional police force and barbed wires formed the first layer of security at the Singhu border protest site. The second layer of barricades deployed by the Delhi Police is being guarded by a team of Rapid Action Force along with personnel from the paramilitary forces.

Be poised for...

From Page 1

All necessary resources of vaccination have been delivered to the States," said Bhushan.

States have been asked to identify at least one AEFI management centre in each block, PHCs, CHCs, district hospitals, private health facilities or any other fixed health facility with medical officers and para-medical staff can be identified as AEFI management centres, he said.

Speaking about AEFI, Dr Paul said, apart from the importance being given at Government level on tackling, saving, reporting and taking action in such cases, the vaccine manufacturers conduct a Phase IV Clinical Trial or Post-Marketing Surveillance where they monitor and track the effects of the vaccine systematically after it has been passed.

Replying to a query about AEFI for Covid-19 vaccine, Dr Paul said, "This is an adult vaccine. Our AEFI system was targeted to children and women and those vaccinations take place in a certain way, starting with hospitals and then into the communities.

"But when we deal with adults, certain practical aspects have to be tackled. Secondly, these vaccinations are in multiple new platforms that bring

JS appointed

From Page 1

Goel was Vice President of a global firm when he had applied against the vacancy announced by the Centre following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of senior-level bureaucratic posts in several departments to people who are "talented and motivated" and willing to contribute to nation building.

DoPT sources confirmed that Goel has resigned from the place of his posting at Ministry of Commerce where he was

looking after e-Commerce and cyber security amongst other matters.

"We will send his resignation to the ACC (Appointments Committee of the Cabinet)," said the sources.

Sources also said the decision to leave the Government sector could be that he could have been restless about his insubordination in the Ministry as he had a background of heading a global company.

"He had come to join Government after leaving a handsome package earlier also," added the sources.

UK PM accepts...

From Page 1

Raab held extensive talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on various bilateral and international issues besides firming up Johnson's upcoming visit. Media including The Pioneer had reported about his likely visit in January next year on December two.

This will be Johnson's "first major bilateral visit" since he took charge last year, his office highlighted. "I am absolutely delighted to be visiting India next year at the start of an exciting year for Global Britain, and

look forward to delivering the quantum leap in our bilateral relationship that Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi and I have pledged to achieve," the British Prime Minister said in a statement. He is only the second British Prime Minister since India's independence to attend the Republic Day parade in Delhi as guest of honour after John Major in 1993. Jaishankar said his presence at the annual celebrations "would be in a way symbolic of a new era, and a new phase of India-UK ties." Boris Johnson has also invited Modi to join the G-7 summit next year in Britain, said Raab.

said, contains her father's handwritten notes and comments that have been strictly adhered to. Stating that views expressed by him are his own and no one should try to stop it from being published for any cheap publicity, she said, "That would be the greatest disservice to our departed father."

Btw bro, the title of the book is 'The Presidential Years', not 'The Presidential Memoirs,' she said.

Abhijit Mukherjee corrected the title of the book in another tweet after his sister pointed out the mistake. The former president and long-time Congress leader died on August 31 at the age of 84.

Govt calls off...

From Page 1

UP Empowering Women

I salute the indomitable courage and stellar achievements of women. We renew our pledge to make women an equal and integral part of our development.

Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister



U.P. GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES ENSURE WOMEN SAFETY AND EMPOWERMENT

Never before has a government been committed to the empowerment, self-reliance and security of women like U.P. government of Yogi Adityanath. Over the past 3.5 years, the state has witnessed many progressive schemes for girls and women such as Kanya Sumangla Yojna, Samoohik Vivah Yojna, pension to widows and destitute women, etc. The state has also performed with top ranks in implementation of various schemes of the central government such as PM Awas Yojna, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (construction of toilets), Ujjwala Yojna, PM Matru Vandana Yojna, etc. The government under Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath has also followed zero tolerance policy for crime against women. The Anti-Romeo squad, 181 helpline and the strengthened 1090 have proved to be useful tools in giving a sense of security and pride to the women of the state. The recently launched Mission Shakti Abhiyan is fulfilling the aim to make women self reliant with security and respect in the state.

WOMEN SECURITY TO BE MADE A PUBLIC CAMPAIGN-YOGI ADITYANATH

Conviction in the cases of crime against women is highest in Uttar Pradesh. The state is in top position in taking strict action against people accused of crime against women. The latest crime data and rate of crime across 75 districts of the state shows that the situation of crime against women is better in U.P. than in other states.

The state government following its zero tolerance policy against crime is dealing with full force in cases of crime against women and is ensuring strictest of punishment to offenders. Since 2017, the Yogi government has been successful in controlling crime against women. As compared to 2016, rape cases have declined by 42.24 per cent in 2020 and 39 per cent reduction of abduction cases. The rape cases have declined by 27.32 per cent in 2020 against in the year 2019. People charged under POCSO Act have been effectively perused in the courts and taken to tasks with strict punishments. The Nirbhaya Fund established by the central government has the name of Lucknow also among 8 cities of the country. The women power line 1090 has been strengthened along with the police and is now more active and effective force. The Yogi government has also deployed women police in plain clothes and the anti-romeo squad at sensitive places besides UP 112 India mobile app, Ratri Suraksha Kawach Yojna, women help desks at every police station and pink booths for women.

The state is in top position in taking strict action against people accused of crime against women. The latest crime data and rate of crime across 75 districts of the state shows that the situation of crime



SAFETY AND SECURITY IS JUST A CALL AWAY

PEOPLE SPEAK

SUMAN GETS APPRECIATION BY THE PM

 Suman, a resident of bloc Trivedganj, gram Hasanpur Barabanki received an appreciation from the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his *Mai ki Baat* program.

During the COVID-19 period, Suman bought Khadi cloth from the market and made 60 masks and distributed to the poor and needy people of the village. Her initiative showed the way, she bought a sewing machine and started making masks with her 11 group members. Later more women joined the group and the money received after selling these masks in the market has made them self-reliant. Suman has been able to stop the curse of unemployment amongst women in the village.



Manju Kashyap, Azamgarh
is a graduate who ran a business after her marriage in Mumbai. Her business was shut down and she was forced to return to her hometown. She wished to start her own business of traditional snacks and got associated with a self-help group under NRLM. She got all round support from the local authorities for packaging, marketing and arranging of the FSSAI license. Manju now earns between Rs 5,000 to 7,000 per month. She is now happy and is able to take care of all the needs of her family.



1535

help desks for women at police stations in the state

20%

reservation for women in police force

17 lakh on e-prosecution portal giving it a transparent and effective face,

LIFE IMPRISONMENT IN 22 DAYS

The POCSO court at Hapur has given justice to a 6 year old girl child in a record time by awarding life imprisonment and a fine of Rs 2.5 lakh to the accused within a record 22 working days. In a span of 4 days 3 big decisions have been taken by the court.

WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS FOR TOILETS

The Yogi government has decided to handover the management of toilets being constructed in the rural areas to the women. These toilets will be managed by the self-help groups with thousands of women getting the opportunity of employment. The government will pay Rs 6,000 every month besides providing PPE kits and other facilities. It is a big and revolutionary step by the government where about 59,000 women will get jobs in their villages. About 3-4 women are expected to be employed at such place.



► Women symbolise 'Shakti'.

Women are revered in our Sanatan tradition. It is the need of the hour that the new generation becomes a vehicle to carry forward the Sanatan traditions and values in the changing times and spread the message of women safety, respect and self-reliance.

Yogi Adityanath,
Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

IMPORTANT STEPS FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

- Conviction in cases of crime against women highest in Uttar Pradesh
- Establishment of 88 magisterial courts/session courts and 218 fast track courts
- Kanya Sumangla Yojna for girl child
- Establishment of Women and Child security Organization
- Anti-Romeo Squad
- One stop center for women

181

Women Helpline

1076

Chief Minister Helpline

102

Health Helpline



1090

Women Powerline

1098

Child Helpline

112

Emergency Services

108

Ambulance Helpline

GOVERNMENT EMPOWERS WOMEN THROUGH SELF-HELP GROUPS

Uttar Pradesh Government is empowering the women self-help groups in the state by providing them the required facilities. Rural livelihood mission is working out plans with these women to help them sell their products in the market and on e-platforms.

To economically empower the rural women of the state, the number of self-help groups (SHG) is being increased to 10 lakhs. More than one crore women will be directly added to the livelihood mission's employment schemes on the establishment of these 10 lakh SHG's. Recently the Yogi government also signed a MoU between UPNRLM and UN-WFP (United Nations World Food Program). Women of about 2000 groups will become entrepreneurs with over 240 employment days. Under the programme, 72,000 man days will be created for the women with expected income of Rs 5,000 to Rs 7,000 per month.

RURAL WOMEN SET TO MAKE U.P. SELF-RELIANT

In the festive month of Navratri, Dussehra and Diwali, rural women of Uttar Pradesh are all set to lead and pave the way for a self-reliant state. These women are giving tough fight to the Chinese products in the market by making decorative goods like worship items, diya, statues, light jhalars, etc. The state government is also empowering and facilitating them by providing space in cities and markets free of costs. The Uttar Pradesh rural livelihood mission has worked on a



well-drawn plan with these women and with their products being appreciated by the buyers. These women have been provided electric chaak, machines for making statues and diya etc. The government has also arranged e-platforms for the groups to sell their products.

PRODUCTS

Artificial Lights (Jhalar) — 25 Women SHG's of Deoria, Maharaigarh, Fatehpur, Aligarh and Gorakhpur are working with a target of 50 lakh jhalars.

Clay statues and Diya — 110 Women SHG's of Jalaun, Muzaffarnagar, Jhansi, Lucknow, Barabanki, Pratapgarh, Hardoi, Chitrakoot and Ghaziabad are working to make 10 lakh diyas and 10 lakh

statues of Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Ganesh.

Dhoop Sticks — 1412 Women SHG's of Unnao, Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Firozabad, Badaun, Banda, Bijnor, Sultanpur and Varanasi are working with a target of making 50 lakh dhoop stick packets.

Chunri and Hawan products — 65 women SHG's of Mirzapur, Barabanki, Firozabad, Bijnor, Banda, Gorakhpur and Aligarh are working to make 10 lakh packets which are in high demand.

Decorative Candles — Women SHG's of Kheri, Lucknow, Unnao, Gorakhpur, Badaun, Bijnor, Banda and Ghaziabad are working to make decorative, scented and designer candles.

GOVERNMENT PROMOTES WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

The state government has come up with good news for the half population of Uttar Pradesh. Under the new startup policy women have been given a priority and preference in the same with 50% extra facilities for women. The startups policy will have a facility of incubator. 10 startups in every incubator will get Rs 15,000 every month for a year. In case of a woman, this amount will increase to Rs 22,500. Reservation of 25% is provisioned in the government recognized incubation centres. There are about 500 seats in these centers and preference will be given to women for seat allotment in case of a partnership. Under the scheme, women entrepreneurs will also get benefits for capital investments. The initial starting amount is Rs 5 lakh and in case of women it is fixed to Rs 7.50 lakh. Similar facility will also be given to a person (man) employing 50% women, disabled or third gender in his startup.

50% EXTRA BENEFITS
for women startups

Rs 15,000 EVERY MONTH
to every incubator

Rs 23,000 EVERY MONTH
for every women incubator

PEOPLE SPEAK

Shakuntla Devi, Mirzapur

 Shakuntla Devi of Birji Mukundpur village, Mirzapur started the work of making masks during the COVID-19 period. Her earlier job of stitching came in handy for her to start this new enterprise. Initially due to lack of funds she found it difficult to arrange cloth material for making the masks. The Bhartiya Harit Khadi Gramyodhyog supported her by providing the cloth material. Within a months' time she prepared 9,500 masks and supplied to the needy people. Shakuntla Devi is now having a regular income and has not only been able to attain income for family but also work for a social cause.



Sheela Singh, Unnao
is a resident of Shesphur Nari village, Unnao lives in a joint family. Her husband is a farmer and the income of the family was barely enough to meet their needs. She convinced her husband and took a loan of Rs 5,000 from a group to buy a sewing machine to start a business of making carry bags. She got only 30 paise per bag which was not enough to sustain her expenses. She then got in touch with the local BMM official who helped her with a loan of 1.10 lakh and start a group with 15 women. She got additional loan of Rs 2 lakh and the group expanded to 100 women. Sheela now earns around Rs 20,000 per month.

Covid cases, deaths on the wane in India



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Tuesday said that Covid-19 cases and deaths are declining in India which is "a very reassuring trend", but cautioned the citizens not to let their guard down as an overwhelming proportion of the country's population is still "very very susceptible" to the virus and the situation may escalate unexpectedly.

"While there is a continuous increasing trend in Covid-19 cases and deaths globally, particularly in America and Europe and the situation in the world is becoming worrisome, in contrast the scene in India is satisfying as the cases and deaths are declining," Dr V K Paul, member (health) at NITI Aayog, said at a presser here.

More than 94 lakh patients have recovered from Covid-19 in the country, while presently there are only about 3.4 lakhs active cases and it is declining further.

"Mortality is declining and it is well below 400 per day.

Cases have come down to almost 22,000. This is the kind of number we all experienced in July. So that is very reassuring. As a nation, we seem to be now doing very well.

"We are saving lives. But remember, this cannot be taken for granted. An overwhelming proportion of our population is still very very susceptible to the virus. And the situation can escalate unexpectedly," Paul said while cautioning against any laxity.

He further said the reassuring thing is that people are saying the R0 has come below one which means the pandemic is shrinking. "So we should be happy about that but cautiously happy," he said as he added that "looking at the present global scenario, a second or third peak may occur in India, though it is impossible to do a definite prediction."

Dr Paul specially mentioned that Uttarakhand, Nagaland and Himachal Pradesh have a high proportion of cases that needs to be controlled.

"Mortality is declining and it is well below 400 per day.

Noting that Delhi has made progress, he said, "We congratulate the Delhi Government as also all the other governments who have done so well in contributing towards such a significant control (in cases) in recent times."

Dr Paul, however, expressed concern over the Covid-19 situation in some states like Uttarakhand, Nagaland and Himachal Pradesh and stated all efforts to control the spread are being made in collaboration with these governments.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said that more than 15.55 crore tests have been conducted so far for detection of coronavirus infection in the country, and the cumulative positivity rate has declined to 6.37 while the average daily positivity rate during last week was 3.00 per cent.

India's Case Fatality Rate (CFR) is also among the lowest in the world. At present, India's CFR is 1.45 per cent, whereas globally it is 2.26 per cent, Bhushan said.

ED files chargesheet against Hirak Biotech Ltd under PMLA



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a prosecution complaint (chargesheet) before the Special Court, PMLA, Ahmedabad against Hirak Biotech Ltd and its directors Pratik R Shah and Niketa Baldevbhai Dave under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in a loan default case of Ahmedabad Peoples Cooperative Bank Ltd.

Besides Hirak Biotech Ltd and its directors, Platinum Corporation Ltd. were involved in the siphoning of bank loan availed from Ahmedabad Peoples Cooperative Bank Ltd., the ED said.

On December 8, a provisional attachment order was issued under PMLA on identification of Proceeds of Crime in the form of 16 plots located at village Sachana, Taluka Viramgam in Ahmedabad district worth Rs 10.07 crore. These attached assets were held in the name of Hirak Biotech Ltd, Ahmedabad, the agency said.

ED initiated investigations under PMLA on the basis of a charge sheet filed by CID, Gandhinagar against various

persons for commission of offences Indian Penal Code Sections relating to criminal conspiracy, criminal breach of trust, cheating and forgery among others.

The said charge sheet discloses that Pratik R Shah in conspiracy with other accused fraudulently availed loan/overdraft facility against FDs from the bank and also increased overdraft limit without any resolution and withdrew beyond the overdraft limit without any security. In this manner the accused defaulted the loan sanctioned by APCBL and thereby causing loss of ₹25.25 crore to the bank it said.

Investigation under PMLA revealed that accused Shah and Niketa Baldevbhai Dave, directors of Hirak Biotech Ltd. tried to transfer/dispose off 16 plots held in the name of Hirak Biotech Ltd. Accused Dave, was arrested on October 13 this year and is in judicial custody. Now, after attachment of the Proceeds of Crime to the tune of ₹10.07 crore, Prosecution Complaint has been filed before the Special Judge for confiscation of the attached assets apart from awarding punishment to the accused persons, it added.

Punjab, Haryana, HP, J&K incur loss of ₹3,500 cr/day due to farmers' stir

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a blow to the financial health of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, the farmers protest has resulted in daily loss of ₹3,500 crore. This means these States reported to have incurred over ₹70,000 crore due to the ongoing protest. A traders body in Delhi has estimated over ₹5,000 crore loss while the Northern Railway has incurred losses worth roughly ₹2,000-₹2,400 crores due to the ongoing farmers' protest.

According to top industry and commerce federations, a daily loss of ₹3,000 crore to 3,500 crore is resulting in economies of the region from the value chain and transport disruption because of protests. They said the detours due to blockades of highways are leading to 50 per cent more time and distance for movement of goods that can lead to 8-10 per cent increase in logistics costs, thus leading to rise in prices of daily items and essentials.

"The size of the combined economies of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and J&K is about ₹18 lakh crore. With the ongoing farmers' agitation and blockade of roads, toll plazas and railways, the economic activities have come to a halt," said ASSOCHAM President Niranjan Hiranyandan said on Tuesday. ASSOCHAM urged the Government and farmers' organisations to resolve the impasse over the new agri-laws as the disruption caused by farmers' protests was resulting in huge daily loss.

Though the economies of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh are predominantly based on agriculture and horticulture, several industries like food processing, cotton textiles, automobile, farm machinery, the size of the combined economies of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and J&K is about ₹18 lakh crore. With the ongoing farmers' agitation and blockade of roads, toll plazas and railways, the economic activities have come to a halt," said ASSOCHAM President Niranjan Hiranyandan said on Tuesday. ASSOCHAM urged the Government and farmers' organisations to resolve the impasse over the new agri-laws as the disruption caused by farmers' protests was resulting in huge daily loss.

As per the estimates, the



Uncertainty around the transportation of farm products to the major markets of Delhi-NCR could lead to significant losses to the farm sector in these States

impact of the agitation is more acute for industries in hilly regions of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jammu and Kashmir which are dependent on transport of the goods by road.

There are fears that the uncertainty around the transportation of farm products to the major markets of Delhi-NCR could lead to significant losses to the farm sector in these States.

During winters, tourism sector is a major revenue and livelihood source in these contiguous States. But there is apprehension that the farmers' protest is likely to adversely impact the sector this winter. The period from December to March is critical due to the vacation period and the snowfall in the mountains.

On the other hand, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said in the last 20 days, trade and other activities of about ₹5,000 crore have been affected in Delhi and its surrounding states.

According to an estimate, about 30 to 40 percent of the goods coming to Delhi have been affected by the movement of farmers, which is adversely affecting the trade and other activities of Delhi and neighbouring States, the traders' body stated.

For Govt, crony capitalists 'best friends', protesting farmers Khalistanis: Rahul



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

against the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act.

Enacted in September, the three farm laws have been projected by the Central Government as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove the middlemen and allow farmers to sell anywhere in the country.

However, the protesting farmers have expressed apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of Minimum Support Price and do away with the mandi system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

Senior Congress leader and a former Finance Minister, P Chidambaram, asked the government to repeal the new agri laws, which have sparked protest by farmers, and bring in a fresh bill after reaching an agreement with the agitating peasants. The farmers agitation against the three agriculture laws has reached almost a

month, with many of them sitting in the cold and blocking traffic on the national highways around Delhi.

"Government should climb down from its high horse and reach an agreement with the farmers quickly," Chidambaram said on Twitter.

"The simple way forward is to Repeal the present laws and Re-enact a new law based on the agreement. Repeal and Re-enactment is a well-known legislative tool," he also said.

The former finance minister said it is obvious that any agreement between farmers and the government will necessarily require a new bill to be passed by Parliament.

"It is shocking that after 20 days of farmers' protests in the bitter winter of Delhi, the government continues to stick to the 'no repeal' stand," he also said.

Opposition parties have also appealed to President Ram Nath Kovind to intervene and ensure the laws are withdrawn. The Government has been defending the laws, saying they will open new market avenues for farmers and raise their incomes, besides ushering in new technologies in the sector.

First session of JEE Mains to take place from Feb 22 to 25

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Testing Agency on Tuesday announced that the first session of the Joint Entrance Exam Main (JEE Main) 2021 will take place from February 22 to 25, 2021. As per the NTA notification the registration for JEE Main 2021 started on Tuesday.

NTA has made multiple changes to the engineering entrance exam to ensure its smooth conduct and to facilitate students who have studied under different state boards that may have altered their syllabi due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The JEE Main 2021 will be held in 13 languages -- English, Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Marathi, Malayalam, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. While exams in Hindi, English and Urdu will be held across the country, other regional language papers will be held in the respective

states. NTA has increased the number of attempts in JEE Main 2021. The JEE Main 2021 will be held in February 2021 followed by three sessions in March, April, and May 2021.

This is being done to ensure that the JEE (Main)2021 does not interfere with the Board examinations, which may be held at different times across the States/UTs, NTA said.

The pattern of JEE Main has been changed to accommodate students who may have studied under school boards that changed the syllabus due to the lockdown.

The questions papers will have choices. Candidates will now have 30 questions in each subject, divided into two sections. Section A will have 20 questions and section B will have 10 questions. Out of the 10 questions in Section B, candidates will have to answer any five, the NTA notification said.

Anaemia continues to be major concern among women, children

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Anaemia among women and children continues to be a cause of concern. As per the 5th National Family Health Survey (NFHS 5) data released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare recently, more than half of the children and women are anaemic in 13 of the 22 States/UTs in the country.

Not only this, anaemia among pregnant women too has increased in half of the States/UTs compared to NFHS-4, in spite of substantial increase in the consumption of IFA tablets by pregnant women for 180 days or more. Doctors believe that provision of iron and folic acid supplements in health programmes will not solve the problem of anaemia.

Anemia is a condition that develops when there is iron deficiency or lack of healthy red blood cells or haemoglobin in the blood.

They said that supplementation of only iron and folic acid is inadequate to prevent or correct anaemia among adolescents. Other haemopoietic (blood forming) nutrients are equally important in managing



and pale eyes.

The NFHS latest data pertains to 17 states — including Maharashtra, Bihar, and West Bengal — and five Union Territories (including J&K) and, crucially, captures the state of health in these states before the Covid pandemic, which will cover other states such as Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Madhya Pradesh, was delayed due to the pandemic and its results are expected to be made available in May 2021, said a senior official from the Union Health Ministry.

The data also shows that for both women and men, there is a lot of variation in the high or very high random blood glucose levels across States/UTs.

"Men are more likely to have slightly higher blood glucose levels in the range of high or very high compared to women. The percentage of men with high or very high blood glucose is highest in Kerala (27 per cent) followed by Goa (24 per cent). Prevalence of elevated blood pressure (hypertension) among men, is somewhat higher than in women," as per the data.

it. In addition to iron, there are other nutrients that prevent or reduce anaemia and these include vitamin B6, vitamin B2, vitamin B12, vitamin C, folate and proteins. These nutrients are actively involved in the process of blood formation (haemopoiesis), pointed out various studies.

In fact, a study conducted by Metropolis Healthcare, found that six in 10 women from 36 cities of India have low haemoglobin levels, indicating anaemia.

The incidence of anaemia was reported highest in the age group of 20 to 50. The study was conducted for 17,00,000 girls and women across India, including 11,41,600 girls and women from Mumbai alone, over a period of two years.

The most common signs to watch out for anaemia are lethargy, unexplained fatigue, pale skin

cation and this amount has to be given at the recommendation of the district child protection unit, keeping in mind the financial position of the children's families.

The bench said extra classes are necessary for these children to prepare for the exams in March next year.

The Executive Engineer, Santibazar Division, PWD (R&B), Santibazar, South Tripura invites e-tender against press PNIT No 21/EE/PWD(R&B)/STB/2020-21 dated, 08- 12-2020

For

"Construction of 10 bedded Primary Health Centre (PHC) including 10(ten) Nos. Staff Quarters [Type-I quarter-04 units (one block - twin double storey), Type-II quarter-04 units (one block - twin double storey) and Type-III quarter - 02 units (one block - twin single storey)] at Durpabari under Bagafa Block, South Tripura District/ SH: Building portion including internal water supply and sanitary installation / Balance work(4th Call)."

DNIT No : CE(Buildings)/PWD/DNIT/ACE/Project Unit/ 25/2020-21

With

● Estimated cost: Rs. 3,61,32,758.00

● Earnest Money : Rs. 3,61,328.00

● Time of Completion - 24(Twenty Four) months

● Last Date of bidding for bids -28-12-2020 upto 15.00Hrs.

For more details kindly visit: <https://tripuratenders.gov.in>

Note:

NO NEGOTIATION WILL BE CONDUCTED WITH THE LOWEST BIDDER

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tripura.

Sd/-

(Er. Tapas Marak)

Executive Engineer,

Santibazar Division, PWD(R&B)

Santibazar, South Tripura

ICA/C-2442/2020-21

SC asks States to give ₹2K per month for edu of children restored with families

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Observing that COVID-19 has affected normal life since March and children did not have the opportunity to attend classes, the Supreme Court on Tuesday directed all the States to provide ₹2,000 a month for the education of

each child who was in a child care institution (CCI) and has now been restored to his or her family during the pandemic. The apex court was told that 2,27,518 children were in CCIs when the COVID-19 pandemic started and 1,45,788 have been restored with their families or guardians.

Taking note of the plight of children who are residing in CCIs during pandemic period, the top court stressed on the need to provide them requisite infrastructure for education and said that required number of teachers are made available to teach them.

A bench headed by Justice L Nageswara Rao also said state governments should provide necessary infrastructure, including books and stationery, to CCIs for the online classes of children living there on the basis of recommendation from district child protection units within 30 days.

The top court said that it might be necessary for the states to nominate a teacher for a batch of 20-25 children in CCIs so that they could get education during the pandemic time.

BJP party of dacoits: Didi on IPS officers' recall

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Mid reports that the Ministry of Home Affairs could send a notice to Bengal Chief Secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay seeking clarifications as to why the three IPS officers requisitioned on Central deputation were not released by the State Government, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday called the BJP a party of dacoits and slammed it for subverting federal norms.

The three IPS officers --- an IGP, a DIG and an SP ranked officers --- in question were in charge of BJP national president JP Nadda's security when his convoy was attacked by alleged Trinamool Congress men on December 10 while he was going to attend a meeting at Diamond Harbour.

"The security remains on

high alert whenever there is a VVIP movement ... but one has also to explain why there would 50 vehicles in the VVIP's convoy and why vehicles of criminals including a convicted person should follow him," Banerjee said at a rally in Jalpaiguri in North Bengal.

Wondering as to why the Central Government would interfere in law and order matters which was exclusively a State subject Banerjee said it went against the federal norms. "The question is why should the Central Home Ministry call IPS officers of a State cadre on the BJP a party of dacoits saying they always accuse others of corruption and theft but I must say the BJP is the biggest party of thieves... in fact it is a party of dacoits..."

The Bengal Chief Secretary and Director General of Police had skipped an appearance in the Home Ministry after being

"During their rule employment has shrunk by 40 percent and here they have come with job cards to lure the people. This will not serve any purpose as the people will reject them," she said

summoned by it. This apart the State administration also failed to release the three IPS officers --- in charge of Nadda's security --- called on central deputation.

Raising the pitch of her attack the Chief Minister called the BJP a party of dacoits saying "they always accuse others of corruption and theft but I must say the BJP is the biggest party of thieves... in fact it is a party of dacoits..."

Stopping short of naming leaders like Nadda and his party colleague Kailash Vijayvargiya who have Madhya

Pradesh connections Banerjee said "truth to be told the BJP is a party of Chambal dacoits who have come to loot Bengal and ravage its unity by creating division among the people of this State."

Despite being a party of outsiders the BJP won all seats in North Bengal in the 2019 general elections, Banerjee grudgingly told her audience. "They came from outside and won all the seats in North Bengal while TMC did not win a single seat... I want to ask what was our fault... Are they Ramakrishna Paramahansa or Swami Vivekananda... no they are not... they only spread hatred and divide people," Banerjee said.

Slamming the saffron outfit for giving false employment promises to the people of Bengal, the Chief Minister

asked, "on what surely they are distributing employment cards to the people... my question is what will this job card to... what validity it has," alleging during the BJP's tenure the national employment had shrunk by 40 percent.

"During their rule employment has shrunk by 40 percent and here they have come with job cards to lure the people. This will not serve any purpose as the people will reject them," she said.

On Darjeeling Gorkha issue she said "the BJP has been creating divisions not only among religions but also in the Hills by giving false hope to the Gorkha population about the creation of a new Gorkhaland... but the leaders like Bimal Gurung have seen through their ploy and returned to the Trinamool fold after sitting in their lap for six years."

Suvendu may join BJP on Fri

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Rebel Trinamool Congress leader and former State Minister Suvendu Adhikari is likely to join the BJP in a week's time his close aides said. In fact Adhikari, rated as the most powerful mass leader in the TMC after CM Mamata Banerjee may join the BJP as early as on Friday, sources said.

According to sources Adhikari — who held an apolitical rally at Haldia on Tuesday — would first resign his membership in the State Assembly before flying to Delhi on Thursday. On Friday he was likely to join the BJP in presence of senior leaders like Amit Shah and JP Nadda before flying back to Kolkata the next day with the Union Home Minister.

The two leaders might hold a joint rally at East Midnapore on Saturday. Shah is coming to Bengal in a two-day visit.

Adhikari who addressed a huge rally at Haldia on Tuesday is the son of powerful Trinamool Congress satrap and former Union Minister Sisir Adhikari, also an MP. His younger brother Divyendu is also a TMC MP.

Dropping hints about Suvendu Adhikari's saffron plans his close aide Kanishka Panda who was last week expelled from the party said "Bengal, particularly the western part of the State will see a saffron storm in 2021 Assembly elections."

On Adhikari's joining the saffron outfit he said we have already been with the saffron ideals as this colour stands for sacrifice and there is no other leader in Bengal who has done a bigger sacrifice than him."

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for the first time since Adhikari's rebellion on Tuesday made a circumspect reference of him and many other leaders who had recently

either left the party or had been singing rebellious tunes saying there were people who after profiting from the party for all these years were ditching it.

Apparently referring to Adhikari's differences with her nephew Abhishek Banerjee, she said "The question is not of hierarchy we but of serving the people... will stand by people and fight for them. That is our resolve... After profiting from the party and the Government some people are hobnobbing with other parties."

From Adhikari a number of TMC leaders including his former ministerial colleague Rajiv Banerjee, Asansol Mayor and MLA Jitendra Tewari, other Legislators like Mihir Goswami, Sil Bhadra Dutta etc, Coochbehar MLA, Basunia have openly expressed decent in the party. In fact Goswami has already joined the saffron outfit.

Bengal Govt wants KMC polls in March

Kolkata: In an abrupt move the Trinamool Congress Government has written to the State Election Commission seeking arrangement of Kolkata Municipal Corporation polls in the month of March which will be roughly a month and a half ahead of the Assembly elections likely to be held in the month of April-May.

According to sources the State Government has said that the rectification of electoral rolls were in progress and would be completed soon, where after the polls could be held.

The SEC sources said the proposal would be sent to the Supreme Court for its directives.

The BJP however demanded simultaneous elections not only in Kolkata but all the civic boards which had gone defunct and had been placed under administrators following post-

ponement of polls in pandemic situation.

The TMC Government's sudden move is seen as a four-pronged ploy to understand its base vis a vis the BJP. Besides, the party also wants to rejuvenate its organizational base.

Apart from this the KMC elections would also provide a scope to understand the loyalty lines in the party. This apart the party which has earned a bad name for rigging polls to rampant violence also wants to clean that image by holding peaceful polls.

Meanwhile in a separate development the BJP leadership have approached the central Election Commission seeking early deployment of central forces to dominate the pre-electoral atmosphere in the aftermath of attack on BJP national president JP Nadda, party sources said.

Rajouri: Instructors at Corps battle school decoding circuits for timely defusal of IEDs

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Instructors at the Corps battle school, Sarol in Rajouri are busy decoding Improvised Explosive Device (IED) circuits of a different kind this winter season to ensure smooth movement of army convoys in the hinterland.

Faced with new challenges especially when it comes to use of IED as a potent weapon to target the security convoys in the hinterland across Jammu and Kashmir, the instructors at the school are continuously working on new designs/circuits to timely defuse the IEDs and protect the lives of soldiers.

After the dastardly Pulwama terror strike, Pakistan based terror outfits have attempted to target the security convoys on number of occasions

but failed to do so with the timely detection of IED fitted circuits along their route by the alert security personnel.

Whenever ground troops are faced with a big challenge of neutralising any IED detected on the road side they fall back on the large inventory of counter IED equipment available with the Indian army and utilise it optimally to minimise the damages.

The Corps Battle school, Sarol has a large inventory of IED's in its Model Room. Instructors rely on these IEDs to educate the troops on the types of IEDs being employed by the adversary and the terrorists to target convoy vehicles.

The Corps Battle school also imparts training to jawans and officers inducted in the counter-terrorist grid in the region to hone their

fighting skill set.

The main objective and aim of the instructors at the CBS, Sarol is to minimise the collateral damage especially when they are tackling the threat in any civilian area.

In addition to this, the jawans in the CBS, Sarol also undergo rigorous training during their stay and learn tactical exercises and battle drills. They also do shooting practice in the firing range and get hands on training on neutralising terrorists during an encounter /or neutralising any hostage crisis.

Since its inception, Corps Battle School, Sarol has been training a large number of troops varying from 24,000 to 30,000 annually. At any given point of time, more than 1000 troops receive training ahead of joining regular duties in the forward areas.

Kerala local body results today, both LDF, UDF confident

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Counting of votes in the three-phase election to the local bodies in Kerala would take place on Wednesday as the CPI(M)-led LDF and the Congress-headed UDF exude confidence. The BJP-led NDA too claims that it would make strides in this election though it may not sweep the polls as claimed by the CPI(M) leader Kodiyeri Balakrishnan.

The Congress is confident because as of today, there are no other forces in the State to challenge them. "The situation is voters in the State do not have an alternate other than the LDF or the UDF. If the BJP succeeds in making some dent in some districts, then there is the possibility of a Third Force emerging in the State and that is the need of the hour," said septuagenarian P Rajan, former senior editor, Mathrubhumi, a Malayalam daily.

The CPI(M) candidates for the local body election have deliberately avoided their party symbol (hammer and sickle) and this has surprised many followers of the party. "It is due to fear of losing that they have decided not to contest under party symbol. In some of the municipalities like Aluwa, the entire CPI(M) candidates have opted for symbols like umbrellas and pots," said Jayashankar, political commentator.

The local media has reported that the Pinarayi Vijayan government is likely to quit if the results of the local body polls are not favorable. But there is a unanimity among all political parties in the State that no other governments which had ruled Kerala in the past had faced the number of allegations charges which Pinarayi Vijayan government is facing.

J&K Govt invites Imtiaz Ali to promote art and culture

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU



& Museums, Munir-ul-Islam were also present on the occasion.

translated into best cinematic presentations. He said that the efforts made earlier has not been enough so bringing more themes to fore would be our main focus.

Secretary Culture and Tourism Sarmad Hafeez said that this initiative is one among many to bring J&K back on the top of creativity in the entertainment industry, theatre, culture, art, crafts and literature which it once enjoyed in the past.

He said it would be a greatest confidence booster for our youth who can get carried away towards other socially evil forces in absence of such an environment here. He said that art can bring the best out of them and the platform we propose to give them would be national one.

He proposed that the vast pool of talent found here is diverse and encompassing every sphere of cinematic requirement so it would take us nothing to search here from beginning to climax of the film.

Ali further said that he is fully convinced that the old, traditional folklore offers so many stories that could be

N Railway GM briefs about status of USBRL project, shares Railways vision for J&K

Jammu: Ashutosh Gangal, Northern Railway General Manager, who is on a visit to see the Railways work sites in J&K held a press conference in Jammu on Tuesday. Briefing the media, Gangal said that work at all sites in the remaining Katra-Banihal section of the USBRL National Project has resumed after an interlude.

The two districts of Reasi & Ramban in which the rail section is situated was categorised as Covid Red zones due to which work was hampered. He also said that in spite of the Covid set back unprecedented work has been accomplished in the past months.

He also shared with the media the developmental plans Railways has laid out for providing better and convenient freight and passenger facilities in Jammu & Kashmir. Revamping and remodeling of important stations in both Jammu region as well as Kashmir valley has become imperative as the number of people using this facility has

increased many folds over the past few years. More and more trains are being introduced, thereby traveling to this region from any place in India has become convenient. He added that Railways is aiming to better its freight performance, for this BDUs have been set up at Divisional levels, we are set to create more facilities like goods sheds and increasing loading points for the easy movement of freight in and out of this area.

Answering to the queries of the media persons the General Manager shared that Railways is committed to providing a reliable all weather mass transportation system to this Himalayan region for the convenience of the people and over all development of the union territory.

Sharjeel Imam's bail petition postponed, next hearing on Dec 17

Aligarh: The hearing on the bail petition of JNU student Sharjeel Imam could not be heard. There was a strike in the court regarding the nomination of the bar election.

Due to this, the hearing was postponed again. Now the case will be heard on 17 December.

A protest was held at the AMU on January 16 over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). In this, JNU student Sharjeel Imam gave a statement to divide the country. On 26 January, a case of sedition was filed at the Civil Line police station in Aligarh after its video went viral.

Lawsuits were also filed in Delhi and Assam. Delhi Police arrested Sharjeel Imam from Jehanabad in Bihar on January 28 and sent him to Tihar Jail. Assam police took Sharjeel with him before the lockdown.

3,442 more test positive in Maha



total infections from 2,91,113 to 2,91,634.

Meanwhile, the number of "active cases" total cases in the state dropped from 72,383 to 71,356. The fatality rate in the state stood at 2.56 per cent.

Pune district, which continued to be the worst-affected city-district in Maharashtra, saw the total number of cases increase from 3,62,793 to 3,63,284, while the total number of deaths in Pune increased from 7631 to 7642.

Thane district remained in the third spot --after Pune and Mumbai-- after the total number of infections rose from 2,48,028 to 2,48,371, while the total deaths climbed from 5404 to 5408.

With 3442 fresh infections, the total infections climbed from 18,83,365 to 18,86,807. Similarly, with 70 new deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Maharashtra went up from 48,269 to 48,339.

As 4,395 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March this year rose to 17,66,010. The recovery rate in the state rose marginally from 93.54 per cent to 93.60 per cent.

With seven new deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai went up from 10,984 to 10,991, while the infected cases went up by 521 to trigger a jump in the

10-year-old girl raped by youth in UP's Firozabad, accused absconding

Firozabad (UP): A 10-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a youth in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Firozabad district, police said on Tuesday.

The incident took place on Monday night in Jasran area when the girl was going to her home after attending a party hosted by a former village head.

An FIR was registered on Tuesday based on a complaint by the girl's family members, he said adding that attempts are on to arrest the accused, who is absconding.

AMU will audit Basic Edu Dept in Aligarh

Aligarh: The responsibility of social audit has been given to the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) on the implementation of government schemes at the school, residential school, BSA office, ABSA office, Block Resource Center (BRC) of the Department of Basic Education across the district. The AMU team will evaluate and verify the availability of payment and content made concerning schemes in Kasturba Gandhi Residential Schools, BRC and offices.

AMU faculty gives lecture on National Pension Scheme

Aligarh: The National Pension Scheme gives an opportunity to invest and accumulate savings and get lump sum amount as regular income through annuity plan on retirement, said Prof M Shakeel Ahmed Samdani, Dean, Faculty of Law, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). He was delivering a lecture on 'National Pension Scheme and Government' in the national webinar organised by the Department of Zoology, PG College, Shikohabad, Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh.

The dealers will receive a commission of Rs. 17 per bill for depositing a bill ranging from Rs. 1 to Rs. 10,000. At the same time, if the amount of the bill is more than this, he will get a commission of 0.5% to the total amount. From this week, this plan is ready to be implemented. District supply officer Rakesh

Kumar Soni told that UPPCL and Army Infotech Company has made an agreement for West UP. The Army Infotech Company has prepared an E-Wallet mobile app which will be installed on the dealer's mobile. Its login ID and password will be given to the ration dealers of the district.

The dealers will recharge their E-Wallet, after which he will charge from the public the cash bill for their electricity bill and deposit the bill through his E-Wallet app. For this dealer will get a commission of Rs. 17 per bill ranging from Rs 1 to Rs 10,000 and above it will be given as 0.5 percent of the billed amount.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that this person Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 35 Years (Approx.), Sex: Male, Height: 5'5", Complexion: Shallow, Built: Weak, Face: Long, Identification Mark: Old Cut Mark on Left Cheek, Wearing: Black Printed Shirt and Cream Pant &



Up for sale!

Will Air India finally find someone other than the Government of India to fund it?



Air India for years has been one of India's most glorious examples of a white elephant, not just because the airline operated Boeing-747 Jumbo Jets' painted in white. Much like other Public Sector Enterprises, the airline became a way for politicians and bureaucrats to repay favours with inflated leases and purchases of aircraft and services. And ever since the days of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government, the airline has been on the shop window and up for sale. Crippled by its own debt, Air India has found it impossible to not only turn a profit but also be competitive on a number of counts against domestic rivals such as IndiGo; on international routes

Air India has been hollowed out by massive route rights allotted to Arabian airlines whose growth has been predicated on the Indian passenger. While Air India has played a major role in the repatriation of Indian citizens from foreign countries since the pandemic began (and many other evacuation exercises on occasions even earlier, especially when Sushma Swaraj was the Minister of External Affairs), the airline has made a pretty penny from it. And that will not substitute as a policy once the pandemic begins to wear off and air travel begins in earnest again. But the flag-carrier airline is not competitive domestically and while it might gain on international sectors with the rise of non-stop point-to-point travel, it faces risks from other Indian carriers such as IndiGo and Vistara. However, make no mistake, Air India is a powerful brand and one worth saving especially if the Government of India takes a major hit and absorbs much of the debt associated with the airline. After all, why would any sane person buy an asset where he is crippled by prior debt when it would be cheaper to create an all-new asset. If the undisclosed bidders for Air India give the Government a fair price for the airline and absorb some of the losses and most of the employees, it could well be a win-win for everyone. Sure, writing off thousands of crores of debt might be a hard pill to swallow but it is a lot better than continuing to absorb losses or shutting down the airline completely, losing an iconic Indian brand and thousands of jobs. There already have been in the past decade massive layoffs and many lives ruined largely owing to the failures of airlines like Kingfisher and Jet Airways, and tens of thousands of crores of public money has been lost in these private airlines as public sector banks have borne the brunt of bad loans to the aviation industry.

While the Government of India has not disclosed the identity of those who have expressed interest in bidding for the airline, it has been suspected that a group of employees of the airline along with a private equity firm Interups and Tata Sons are among the suitors. As the Maharastra goes under the hammer, sources in the Government have confirmed that it has received multiple expressions of interest. We still believe that selling Air India piecemeal might be a way for the Government to realise additional value from the airline but those in power believe that such a step will only delay and needlessly complicate the sale. We cannot underestimate the importance of the aviation industry for India and while the Railways have been the lifeblood of the Indian passenger transport system for decades, in a country the size of India, an affordable, reliable as well as a profitable aviation industry is vital not just for connecting people and enabling the economy but most importantly, it is one of strategic importance. A large civilian air fleet — much like a large civilian merchant fleet in centuries past — is a way to move military and other strategic assets quickly. Many have argued that this is why India should retain a public airline but many large nations, particularly the United States, do not have any airline controlled by the Government. In fact, a professionally run Air India which is profitable and not a taxpayer-subsidised operation that competes with true private airlines will lead to a level playing field and the overall growth of the Indian aviation sector. However, as the saying goes, there is often a slip between the cup and the lip and it remains to be seen whether the sale goes ahead.

AAP's ambition

Having established itself in Delhi creditably, the party is now planning to test the waters in UP Assembly elections



The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), after initial hiccups in its ambitions to spread its wings nationwide, learnt the hard way that it had to first establish its political life's longness with proof of its governance skills. This is why it abandoned its pan-India efforts, considering its limited appeal among the civil society, and concentrated on securing Delhi. And now that it is into its third term in the city-State, riding a massive verdict and having managed to stave off the BJP creditably, it is now considering spreading its footprint across the country. Of course, in this effort, it is following a ground-up policy, proving its credentials in local Government polls. Emboldened by the party's maiden win in the Goa zilla panchayat elections, its convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has said that the AAP will contest the Uttar Pradesh (UP) Assembly elections in 2022. The Goa win is significant for the simple reason that although the BJP dominated the results, the Opposition Congress performed poorly and the AAP seemed to be gaining at the latter's expense. Of course, the AAP is playing it big in UP by harping on its comparatively superior performance in citizen-friendly governance. In fact, Kejriwal almost launched a campaign yesterday, asking why people from UP would have to look at Delhi for health services and education in an obvious reference to his successful run with *mohalla* clinics, free electricity, water, education and healthcare facilities. It would enter the contest as an outlier, hoping to encash on the vacuum created by the Congress. But the question is whether it would be open to alliances to push up its tally and relevance. Already Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav has said that his party would form an alliance with smaller parties. His reason: his experience has not been good with the bigger parties. The AAP is now also eyeing Punjab, where it has significant presence with 19 MLAs. It has already won 62 of the 70 seats in Delhi with a vote share of nearly 54 per cent, a few of them on Punjabi-dominated seats. And now it has thrown its lot with the farmers' agitation, dominated as it is by agriculturists from Punjab, and even thrown barbs at Congress Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh for toning down his attack despite the initial fury. Of course, Singh has been at the forefront of the farmers' agitation, passing amendment Bills to the three Central farm Acts in the Assembly, insisting on meeting the President and sending his legislators to Delhi to stage a dharna. He has been one of the leading Congress voices in articulating protests against the farm Acts.

However, the AAP hopes to make gains from the anti-incumbency factor against him and benefit from the erosion of the base of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD). Though the latter has now walked out of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) over the farm laws, it has been too little a move to wrest control in the State. The AAP wants to use this disappointment with the SAD to its advantage. Kejriwal's party, however, still has to work on its base in Punjab. It has to rebuild connect with the Malwa region — the epicentre of agrarian distress — which it has lost since 2014. The AAP has to take care of factionalism in the State unit, which has not been quite at peace with the central leadership. If the party is serious about pushing itself to the forefront, it has to work on consolidating a political base that's different from the existing players who have been seen as championing the interests of the elite. This has alienated much of Punjab's masses from the political class and the AAP wants to spearhead that change. The farmers' protests are just the beginning. The question is can it wrest the alternative space?

Why is the Government running away from the Winter Session and hiding behind a pandemic? They are subverting democracy.

Former Union Minister
—Manish Tewari

It is the clearest demonstration of the will of the American people. In this battle for the soul of America, democracy prevailed.

US President-elect
—Joe Biden

Dhyan Chand is one of the greatest hockey players in the history of our national sport, and it is a matter of pride to direct his biopic. Hoping to announce the lead actor soon.

Film director
—Abhishek Chaubey

I think it (getting hit and suffering concussions) is more to do with the fact that everybody has got their front-press where technically they are moving forward.

Former India captain
—Sunil Gavaskar



SOUND BITE

There's a time to stop

Sir — This refers to the editorial 'Now, hunger strike' (December 15). The protests against the agrarian laws represent a significant movement in mass political mobilisation in India. The Government, on the other hand, believes that the movement has been taken over by "political" elements.

While the movement's strengths are clear, the problem with it is not too much of politics but too little of it. Politics entails different elements and agitation is only one of them. Good politics also involves the ability to negotiate, reconcile the demands of a movement with the possibilities of what can be attained, recognition of the balance of power, and when to declare victory. This element of politics is missing in the movement. Once the protests escalated and the Government had no choice but to engage and offer concessions, good political leadership among the protesters would have meant leveraging the movement.

But no group wants to be seen as "compromising" for fear of being seen as "sold out" to the Government or corporates or has the courage to tell the farmers that the deal on offer is reasonable.

N Sadhasiva Reddy
Bengaluru

Angry farmers deserve a sympathetic ear

This refers to the article 'A swift end to farmers' stir desirable' (December 15) by Kalyani Shankar. Walking down the memory lane on the food crisis in India post-Independence to its self-sufficiency after the Green Revolution, which was brought about during the leadership of former Prime Ministers Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira Gandhi, the writer has touched upon every significant development causing ups and downs in the country's agriculture sector all these decades while her solicitude over the ongoing standoff between the Union Government and 30-odd farmer unions following the promulgation of the new farm laws also stands justified.

This is really a matter of great public concern that many a round of talks between the farmer leaders and the Government and the siege around the national Capital's borders have remained inconclusive even as many national celebrities from various fields have decided to return their State honours in a show of solidarity with the agitating farmers.

Ironically, the Centre's claim that the new farm laws are meant for the amelioration of farmers and the latter negating it underscores a 'misunderstanding' between the

The absence of any such pol-



two that seems to have culminated in the ongoing stir. Hence, the writer's observation that the sooner a swift solution to the protests is found the better holds good and merits attention in the national and public interest.

Farmers have always borne the brunt of natural calamities like floods, drought or marauding animals and they labour endlessly in inclement weather. It's really a pity that these *annadatas* themselves have to sit on roads to get their voices heard.

Azhar A Khan
Rampur

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At least the incentives given for small families should be replaced by disincentives for larger families. All Government facil-

ties — including reservation benefits, freebies, subsidies, Government jobs and service/promotions — may be auto-terminated on the birth of the third child in a family. Such parents should be barred not only from the right to contest elections but also the right to vote.

Subhash Chandra Agrawal
New Delhi

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Le Carré: A master class

Sir — The great English novelist John Le Carré, whose real name was David Cornwell and who passed away recently aged 89, will probably be known as the greatest spy writer of any era, anywhere.

Before him, it was Ian Fleming and his flamboyant spy character James Bond, who ruled the roost. Le Carré was a wholly different story, no bang-bang stuff but provoking reflection. Le Carré's intricate plots came from the Cold War, in which for a time he was himself a participant as a junior British spy. Le Carré shunned literary awards and State honours.

When the Cold War ended, he wrote grippingly, fluently and with understated eloquence, following his deep on-location research about the drug trade, big pharma and torture in the wake of America's questionable interventions in Iraq and its war on terror.

He was among the rare breed of writers whose characters teetered on the fine line between right-wrong and good-bad.

Shovonlal Chakraborty
Kolkata

opinion

06

Repeated failures

The ongoing India-China standoff yet again points to Intelligence lapses amid reports that the Chinese got winter warfare training from Canadian forces



ASHOK K MEHTA



Rebel News, a Canadian far-right news network, has obtained 34 pages of documents called 'China Files' establishing that Canada has been training the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) in cold-weather warfare at its military institution in Kingston, bases in Ontario and at the Canadian Forces College, Toronto. Further, it sent to China flag-rank Canadian officers to teach PLA officers tactics and techniques in high-altitude fighting. Nearly 200 Canadian soldiers participated in the October 2019 World Military Games at Wuhan and Canadian sailors and naval ships celebrated the PLA Navy's 70th Raising Day at Qindao. Defence and security relations between the countries were particularly active during 2018-19 despite the Chinese taking two Canadian civilians hostage. It seems that the Canadian Government under Premier Justin Trudeau was keen to maintain warm relations and not to displease the Chinese overlooking objections raised by the Trump Administration over unintended consequences of transfer of knowledge and information to the Chinese though Canada's Five Eyes partners were not perturbed.

The news network obtained redacted documents, some classified secret and for Canadian eyes only, 19 months after it sought them on a Freedom of Information request but as the documents were not properly redacted, they were legible. When there was resistance to implementing the exchange programmes — the Chief of Defence Staff put on hold one joint section-level exercise in winter warfare in Canada — orders were given that no training was to be suspended without consulting the Chief of Privy Council. These documents, made public last week, clearly tell India that the Chinese had been preparing for high-altitude warfare since 2018-19 — especially in the winter of 2019 — and have received training, expertise and equipment from Canadian Defence Forces during bilateral military exchanges in China and Canada. The Trudeau Government's record of sensitivity towards India's security concerns has at best been lax, given that its Defence Minister and Leader of the Opposition are both Khalistani sympathisers.

These revelations fit in neatly with the US-China Economic,

Security Review Commission report of December 1 which describes the eight-month-long India-China standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) as the most severe border crisis in decades and accuses China of planning the Galwan clash with the blessings of Defence Minister Gen Wong Fei. Two weeks before the clash, *Global Times* warned that India would suffer a devastating blow if it got involved in the US-China rivalry. The report notes that while the "Chinese Government might deem its Ladakh venture to acquire territory a success, it failed to dissuade India from building infrastructure or aligning with the US, where results have been counterproductive". The Indian Government, though, has denied both loss of any territory or alignment with the US. Although no clinching evidence was presented in the report, tell-tale signs were there that China was working to a premeditated grand design of forcibly altering the LAC in Ladakh for which preparations had started in mid-2019, if not earlier, as the 'China Files' indicate. These predate the Mahabalipuram/Chennai summit and are akin to Prime Minister AB Vajpayee's historic Lahore visit coinciding with Gen Musharraf's planning of Kargil.

Lies and deceit are ingrained in the Chinese Communist Party and PLA's

psyche. Foreign Minister S Jaishankar has said that the Chinese have given India five differing explanations for deploying large forces along the LAC. In its latest response to Jaishankar speaking at a virtual session with Sydney-based Lowy Institute where he blamed China for the standoff and breakdown in relations, Beijing Foreign Office repeated its standard response: "The merits of the situation are very clear. India is totally responsible for the situation." The standoff has hit an impasse with no prospect of any thaw this winter; the Chinese and Indian tanks are just 20 metres apart near Kailash range. The Chinese cancelled the joint release of a stamp on the 70th anniversary of bilateral relations. The date for the ninth military dialogue has not been communicated by Beijing and while channels of communication remain in suspended animation, both sides are talking at each other.

Russia, which enjoys the best of relations with both India and China, has entered the fray not in helping to break the logjam but adding fuel to the fire by accusing the West of "anti-China games". Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov set the cat among the pigeons by saying that the western powers were promoting Indo-Pacific Strategy and Quadrilateral Security Dialogue to engage India in anti-China games and also trying to under-

mine Russia's partnership with India. His remarks were directed at the US which has been threatening India with sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) for the purchase of \$5.4 billion S400 air defence system from Russia. This is a direct challenge to India's strategic autonomy and one of the sticking points in the India-US Defence Partnership on which the Trump Administration remained discreetly silent.

Although India is still sitting on the fence in deference to China, it has indicated to Beijing both in words and deeds the options available to it for crossing the Rubicon. US Democratic lawmaker Mark Warner, speaking last week at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit, said: "India should join a 'Coalition of the Willing' with the US and other democracies to confront China's model of State-sponsored authoritarian capitalism." Just as Trudeau wants to be nice to China, India does not wish to offend Beijing as it cannot independently deter Chinese coercion on the Himalayan frontiers due to conspicuous power asymmetry.

Jaishankar's continuing reliance on diplomacy stems from ground reality and realpolitik. When asked by a journalist about India's reaction to Chinese intrusions being diplomatic rather than a pushback, he

rebutted that "there has been an enormous military response in our force deployment", deflecting the initial omissions of any counteractions following delayed detection of intrusions. The Government is making a virtue of necessity in its counter-deployment. In the same interview, he said the standoff could go the Sumdorong Chu way (1986) which took nine years to resolve. But then while the geopolitical context and limited scale of deployment were vastly different, India was tactically in a commanding position having surrounded the PLA intrusion at Wangdung which was beyond the Indian limit of patrolling. Still Wangdung was an intelligence lapse!

The intelligence and operational failures on the LAC this year are compounded by the *Rebel News* revelations of the Chinese getting winter warfare training from the Canadian armed forces in 2018-19. In a similar situation in 1984, India got a tip-off that Pakistan was buying snow clothing in Europe and pre-emptively occupied Siachen. The last GOC Ladakh Sub-Area, Maj Gen Yash Mor who was there at the time of intrusions, lamented this week about "our repeated failures to read Intelligence".

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Azhar A Khan
Rampur

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Subhash Chandra Agrawal
New Delhi

FIRST COLUMN

A wave in favour of choice

Abortion is currently an issue in many countries and in almost every one of them there's a majority in favour of it among the younger population



GWYNNE DYER

Get your rosaries off our ovaries," chanted the women marching in support of the referendum that made abortion legal in Ireland in 2018. Two years later the 2020 election broke the century-long stranglehold on power of the two Centre-Right parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. They got fewer than half the votes even together. Did the 2018 mass mobilisation against the anti-abortion law radicalise Irish politics and trigger that shift? Probably. Another country where the Catholic Church has traditionally dominated politics, Poland, is now seeing a mass mobilisation, too. Abortion on demand was legal in Poland under Communist rule but since democracy came in 1989, the Catholic Church has been steadily pushing back abortion rights.

Soon after the Law and Justice Party won the 2015 election, it tried to push a law through Parliament banning abortions in cases of foetal abnormality but the politicians retreated in the face of mass protests, particularly by women. So the Government tried a different approach. (Americans will recognise this strategy.) The Law and Justice Party packed the constitutional court with party loyalists and last October the court effectively banned almost all abortions. But the country exploded in protest. Suddenly a lot of Poles are openly angry at the Catholic Church, although it is as closely linked with Poland's identity and nationhood as it was with Ireland's.

The late Pope (and Saint) John Paul II is revered as the only Polish Pope and a great national hero, but a statue of him near Warsaw recently had its hands daubed with red paint. Only 35 per cent of Poles now have a positive view of the Catholic Church, and among the young it's down to nine per cent. Will this end up reshaping Polish politics? Probably yes. And in Argentina the Lower House of Congress has just passed a Government-backed Bill to legalise abortion, currently considered a crime in almost all circumstances. Even women who had spontaneous miscarriages have been accused of abortion and jailed for homicide.

But tens of thousands of women came out in Buenos Aires last Friday to greet the passage of the legalisation of abortion: A local news website called it a "tsunami of joy." They will be out again in strength later this month to ensure that the Senate passes the new law (which it probably will) — and that will unleash a wave of demands for similar reforms all over Latin America.

Most countries in Central and South America only allow abortion in cases of rape or risk to the mother's life, thanks to the traditional power of the Catholic Church. Until now, only Cuba and Uruguay have allowed abortion on demand. But for the majority of Latin countries where most people are no longer rural peasants, the writing is now on the wall.

Which brings us, naturally, to the US, where very few people think of themselves as peasants. The landscape is quite similar, with evangelical Christians even more militantly opposed to abortion than Catholics. Yet the abortion rate among Catholic women matches the national average and even among evangelical women it is about half that. Abortions in the US are now at the lowest rate since the key Supreme Court decision that legalised abortion, *Roe vs Wade*, back in 1973 but that's mainly due to better contraception. Nevertheless, almost a quarter of American women (23.7 per cent) will get an abortion at some point in their lives, most when they are in their 20s.

A great many of these women have abortions because of their life circumstances: Three-fifths of them already have at least one child, and half of them are living below the poverty line. All that would happen if abortion were made illegal is that the backstreet abortionists would reappear and lots of women would die or end up maimed in some way.

US President Donald Trump is gone now with the Electoral College putting Joe Biden firmly in the White House. Biden formally won 306 Electoral College votes as electors voted in State capitals around the US either virtually or in person, fulfilling a pro forma responsibility that wouldn't have received so much public attention but for Trump's refusal to acknowledge his defeat. Trump expectedly won 232. However, even though Trump is out, he has packed the US Supreme Court six-three with Conservatives who are thought to be "pro-life." If they decide to re-ban abortion, they will certainly unleash mass protests on a scale that the US has not seen before, just like in Ireland and Poland. The "pro-life" movement is noisy, but 80 per cent of Americans support abortion rights. A ban in the US might even trigger a women's general strike. The right is already radicalised in the US but the rest of the country is ripe for it, too.

Abortion is currently an issue in many countries and in almost every one of them, there's a majority in favour of it among the younger population. What message does this have for Right-wing governments that cling to power by waging "culture wars" to cobble together narrow majorities? Stay away from the abortion issue. It will explode in your faces.

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work.')

A just cause buried in the sand

Palestinians look up to Saudi Arabia as the only remaining ally in their dream of a homeland but the friend seems to be betraying them

namely Bahrain, the UAE and Sudan.

However, one issue that remains unaddressed that can have ubiquitous ramifications for peace and stability in West Asia and the Middle East is the two-State solution. The normalisation agreements have covertly sidelined the issue of the Palestinians.

Transformation of West Asian politics: One thing that is very clear from the normalisation agreements between Israel and the Gulf Arab States is that the politics of West Asia has undergone drastic transformation. It will not be the same anymore. Henry Kissinger in his famous book *'World Order'* wrote that geopolitics and strategic considerations triumph religious issues.

These diplomatic agreements are symptomatic of a Zionist-Sunni alliance against Shia Iran. Iran finding itself isolated is desperately trying to find a way out of this stranglehold because Arab-Zionist bonhomie is clearly in the US' strategic interest.

To undermine the impact of the agreements, Iran stitched a \$400 billion strategic partnership with China in late September. Iran approved China's access to its defence and financial systems so much so that Iran is now a *de jure* part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) much to India's chagrin. The scales appear firmly tilted in Israel's favour however. With the change of regime in the US, it will be very interesting to see what happens with the new Biden Administration.

Should it choose to follow a more reconciliatory policy towards Iran and think about resurrecting the Iran nuclear accord, it would end up alienating Israel and the Sunni Gulf monarchies. If Biden follows a hard line towards Iran, the outcome will be a recalcitrant Iran pursuing a virile policy using its proxies to destabilise the entire Middle East and West Asia. In such a context the old fissures in West Asia will be aggravated.

No justice for Palestinians: The

result of these diplomatic agreements was the Palestinians being left high and dry. For decades they have been fighting for the two-State solution. First, Britain betrayed them through the Balfour Declaration of 1916, then the Sykes-Picot Agreement, followed by the formation of Israel in 1948 with utter disregard for the rights of the Palestinian people. These agreements have not only alienated the Palestinians who are almost facing an existential crisis but also point to a deeper schism within the Muslim world.

The Palestinian cause has been jettisoned by the Gulf monarchies who earlier were the most vocal endorsers of the two-State policy. In fact, the height of irony is the *volte-face* by the Gulf monarchies *vis-à-vis* the Israeli occupation of West Bank. Israel promised to postpone the building of new settlements as a part of the recognition agreement considerations but never said anything about bringing the construction work to a halt. The

international community gave a muted response to all this. However, despite the opprobrium from the UK and Germany, Israel continues to violate Palestinian rights. The United Nations is powerless to act as the West calls the shots at the world body. Perhaps it is pretty clear that Palestinians will face further rights violations in the coming years.

Saudi recognition of Israel a potential death knell? The recent "esoteric" meeting between Israeli and Saudi officials and the subsequent allowance given to Israeli flights to use Saudi airspace generated a new churn in West Asian geopolitics. However, when seen from the prism of the Palestinian cause, it potentially signals its death knell. The primary reason for this is the fact that Saudi Arabia is the core State in the Islamic world despite the emergence of fissures in Muslim unity, following the emergence of a parallel grouping led by Malaysia, Turkey and Pakistan.

The hush-hush Saudi recognition of Israel signals a paradigm policy shift, for it could lead to the creation of new history and may signal a dramatic change in the way the Jewish-Muslim relations evolve. What, however, needs to be remembered is that Palestinians look up to Saudi Arabia as the only remaining ally in their dream of a homeland and their ally seems to be slowly betraying them.

As of now, there appears little hope for the Palestinian cause. The only remedy for them is perhaps an urgent course correction by the international community. The new liberal US leadership under Joe Biden must pressure Israel into halting all settlement building works and ask the Jewish State to respect Palestinian rights. If that fails, the international community should think about imposing sanctions on Israel. One thing is very clear, Palestinians have to dig in and fight for their cause.

(The writer is a columnist)

analysis

07

POINT COUNTER POINT

THE SO-CALLED FARMER AGITATION HARDLY REMAINS A FARMERS' AGITATION. IT HAS GOT INFILTRATED BY LEFTIST AND MAOIST ELEMENTS.
—UNION MINISTER PIYUSH GOYAL



FOR THE MODI GOVERNMENT, DISSENTING STUDENTS ARE ANTI-NATIONALS AND PROTESTING FARMERS ARE KHALISTANIS.
—CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI

Miles travelled, yards to go

Goods and Services Tax rates can come down only when the rate of compliance improves for this grand tax reform

SUBHASH CHANDRA PANDEY

The Narendra Modi-led Union Government is cracking the whip on tax evaders in the country to ramp up Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections. Nationwide raids by the Directorate-General of GST Intelligence unearthed 4,586 fake entities registered under the GST regime. Countrywide 132 people were arrested in 1,430 cases related to illegally availing or passing on of bogus Input Tax Credit Plus, more than six months' default in filing monthly tax returns led to the cancellation of GST registrations of 1,63,042 entities.

Tax evasion in the country is rampant and strong anti-evasion measures are needed as GST collections are way below expectation and potential. This is at a time when the economy of the nation, which was already in the red, has taken a crippling blow due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The Government, which is trying to combat the pandemic, needs all the money that it can garner to keep the anti-COVID momentum going.

The Lok Sabha was informed in March that GST evasion of ₹70,207 crore had been detected between July 2017 and January this year, of which ₹34,591 crore had been recovered. The Directorate-General of Analytics and Risk Management has identified over 12,900 business entities suspected of availing Input Tax Credit since July 2017 through bogus invoices worth over ₹1,00,000 crore till March this year.

Collection from taxes subsumed in the GST was about six per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2016-17. In contrast, the GST collections to GDP ratio was 6.25 per cent in 2018-19 and six per cent in 2019-20. GST collections were about ₹7,40,650 crore in 2017-18, ₹11,77,370 crore in 2018-19 and ₹12,22,131 crore in 2019-20.

GST collections were about ₹32,000 crore and ₹62,000 crore during April and May. The next four months saw an average collection of ₹90,000 crore per month, which improved to ₹1,05,000 crore per month in the last two months, showing a robust recovery.

If the GDP at factor cost (proxy for the total base of indirect taxes) is assumed to be ₹160 lakh crore and 60 per cent of this GDP pays an average GST of 15 per cent, the GST revenue should be ₹1,20,000 crore per month. Obviously, at the moment, the GST revenue is below expectations and its potential.

The Centre and State Governments across the country are taking steps to overcome resistance to formalisation and digitalisation, rationalisation of GST rates and curbing tax evasion through claims of fake or excess Input Tax Credits, misinvoicing or undocumented sales. The GST system includes certain checks on tax evasion like mandatory audits, matching of returns, E-Way Bills, reverse charge mechanism and invoice matching. These are being gradually introduced. To check the practice of setting up shell firms for fraud, the Government has mandated Aadhaar authentication for GST registration. The GST law permits deemed registration 21 days after an application is filed. Authorities will now physically inspect and verify entities obtaining deemed GST registration without Aadhaar.

Ever since the Economic Administration Reforms Commission, chaired by LK Jha in 1984, highlighted how 80 per cent of Excise manpower then guarded gates of low revenue yielding factories, tax administration in India has been moving away from physical controls to self-assessment. However, the truth is that a trust-based tax assessment system is effective only when there is the deterrence of test checks and fear of penal action on detection of breach of faith in test checks.

Otherwise, the tax system will be no different than managing the collection boxes placed in religious places. Since tax inspectors no longer guard

AFTER FULL AUTOMATION IS ADOPTED BY TAXPAYERS, EVEN 'ASSESSMENT' AS UNDERSTOOD IN THE MANUAL SYSTEM MAY NO LONGER BE NECESSARY. THE TAX RETURNS CAN BE GENERATED BY A SYSTEM THAT MATCHES INVOICES. TAX EVASION CAN BE DETECTED BY APPLYING ANALYTICAL TOOLS AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO THE MASSIVE DATA THAT CRORES OF INVOICES GENERATE



gates of factories and godowns the E-Way Bills system was rolled out in April 2018 to track the movement of taxable goods.

This also reduces Income Tax evasion by transporters as they need to get registered. Capturing the vehicle registration numbers into a trackable IT system, the E-Way Bills and the FASTag system help check other malpractices. For instance, in the Bihar fodder scam, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) detected that certain vehicles supposedly used for fodder transport were actually registered two-wheelers, proving fake procurement.

Officials have found lakhs of E-Way Bills being cancelled within a few hours, indicating undocumented delivery to intra-city or nearby destinations or multiple trips being made against a single E-Way Bill to transport excess undeclared goods. To curb misuse, E-Way Bills are now being integrated with the FASTag system being used for electronic collection of tolls on National Highways and the Vahan database, too.

There have been instances where unscrupulous dealers have used fake invoices for inputs not received to claim undue Input Tax Credit. Such invoices don't have any corresponding supply of goods/services or not to the full extent and do not involve actual payment of GST on them. This practice also leads to defrauding of banks by exaggerating turnovers and money laundering.

The July 2019 CAG report on GST, expressed concern over the continuing delay in the full invoice matching system which has made the system prone to Input Tax Credit frauds. The system was intended to be designed based on 100 per cent invoice-matching to ensure system-verified Input Tax Credit, correct settlement of the Integrated Goods and Services Tax and for minimising direct human interface with assesses. After full automation is adopted by taxpayers, even 'assessment' as understood in the manual system may

no longer be necessary. The tax returns can be generated by a system that matches invoices.

Tax evasion can be detected by applying analytical tools and Artificial Intelligence to the massive data that crores of invoices generate. In fact, the GST system should reach the same maturity in terms of providing visibility of Input Tax Credit as is now available for verification and tracing of TDS/TCS credits by Income Tax assesses.

One common problem, especially for small businesses, is that the GST system is not designed to distinguish a sale on full upfront payment and a sale on credit and a sale on Equated Monthly Installments. Why force a seller to pay GST even before he gets paid for the supplies? Even allowing quarterly filing of GST returns with monthly payments does not address this problem.

Small businesses selling to big buyers, including governments and Public Sector Undertakings, routinely face payment delays though some progress has been made recently. It would be desirable if in a GST2.0 upgrade, a receipt-based GST system can be implemented where the GST would be payable to the Treasury only on receipt of full or *pro rata* payment for the supplied goods/services. One theoretical option to implement this, at least for small businesses, could be to allow them to opt for Cash Accounting rather than Accrual Accounting. However, that will create problems when they grow and have to leave the small business tag. A better option will be to introduce payment tracking, whose benefits will go beyond the GST sphere in checking defaults and delinquencies.

It is a creditable achievement that the number of registered businesses under taxes subsumed in the GST has increased from 72 lakh to 1.28 crore, despite significant de-registrations due to increased thresholds for registration and voluntary deregistration by some Central Excise-exempt units located in the Himalayan/North Eastern States whose business became unviable under the destination-based GST. Some 82 lakh registered sellers filed detailed returns for November and over 20 lakh GST taxpayers opting for the Composition Scheme are exempt from filing detailed returns. As a taxpayer facilitation measure, almost 94 lakh small GST taxpayers are now allowed quarterly filing of return with monthly payment.

The GST rate rationalisation is also on course. Almost 99 per cent of all commodities are now taxed with GST at the rate of 18 per cent or lower. Consumers tend to compare GST rates with erstwhile Sales Tax/Value Added Tax (VAT) rate not realising the basic fact that the GST subsumes Central Excise which has been hidden in the price of products on which VAT was applied. When the invisible Central Excise and other taxes are subsumed in the visible GST, it is bound to be seen higher than VAT.

For instance, the pre-GST taxation of goods was a typical standard VAT at the rate of 14.5 per cent, Central Excise at the rate of 12.5 per cent and CST at the rate of four per cent. With the cascading effect of tax on tax, the total levy paid by the end consumer was over 30 per cent. Inclusion of petroleum products in GST, if necessary by adjusting non-GST taxes like Customs duty, allowing Input Tax Credit across full value addition chains, further lowering of rates with continuing strict action against tax frauds can make GST more acceptable and yield more revenues.

Digitalisation and formalisation of businesses poses some short-term costs and hassles, but it is inevitable and it alone holds the promise of giving long-awaited justice to the overtaxed. GST rates can come down when compliance improves for this grand tax reform.

(The writer is former Special Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry)



FOREIGN EYE



THE WORLD IS WATCHING

Beijing believes that the grotesque human rights abuses of the Uighurs in Xinjiang have nothing to do with foreigners. But China's economic might has made its business everyone's business. Though Chinese officials show signs of unease at western pressure, economic means have their limits.

(The Guardian editorial)

PRANAY KUMAR SHOME

ELECTORS CONFIRM WIN

Time to turn the page: Joe Biden

Washington: US President-elect Joe Biden has told election-weary Americans that it is time to "turn the page," after the Electoral College affirmed his triumph over President Donald Trump, who has refused to concede and filed a litany of legal challenges to overturn the poll results.

The 538-member Electoral College on Monday pushed Biden past the 270-vote threshold to win the bitterly-contested race for the White House. It was one of the crucial steps required for the 78-year-old Democrat to take office on January 20 as the 46th US President.

Under the US system, voters actually cast their ballots for electors, who in turn, formally vote for candidates weeks after the presidential election. Biden won the November 3 election with 306 electoral college votes to incumbent Republican President Trump's 232.

The Electoral College votes will now be sent to Congress to be counted formally next month. Though some House Republicans have indicated they will object to the results in key states, they can do little more than delay the process during a joint session of Congress on January 6.



President-elect Joe Biden walks offstage with his wife Jill Biden after the Electoral College formally elected him as President AP

In a speech from his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware after the announcement of his victory in the election, Biden said the US democracy had been "pushed, tested and threatened" and "proved to be resilient, true and strong".

He criticised President Trump's attempts to overturn the result and said the "will of the people prevailed".

"The rule of law, our Constitution and the will of the people prevailed" over Trump's efforts to undo the results of the election, the former US vice president said.

"The flame of democracy

was lit in this nation a long time ago. And we now know nothing, not even a pandemic or an abuse of power, can extinguish that flame," Biden said.

"In this battle for the soul of America, democracy prevailed. We the people voted. Faith in our institutions held.

The integrity of our elections remains intact. And so, now it is time to turn the page. To unite. To heal," he said.

Biden said the election outcome should be celebrated, not attacked, that more than 81 million votes were cast for him and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. PTI

In a first, leading Republicans confirm Biden president-elect

Washington: For the first time, a groundswell of leading Republicans have said that Democrat Joe Biden is the winner of the presidential election, essentially abandoning President Donald Trump's assault on the outcome as the Electoral College certified the vote.

With states affirming the results, the Republicans faced a pivotal choice — to declare Biden the president-elect, as the tally showed, or keep standing silently by as Trump wages a potentially damaging campaign to overturn the election.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., was on the issue Monday. But a number of senators said the

time has come to move on. "At some point you have to face the music," said Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the second-ranking GOP leader.

"Once the Electoral College settles the issue today, it's time for everybody to move on."

Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri, the chairman of the inaugural committee, said the panel will now "deal with Vice President Biden as the president-elect." Just last week, the Republicans on the inauguration committee had declined to publicly do so. He said: "Monday's Electoral College vote "was significant."

Texas GOP Sen. John Cornyn said barring further legal challenges it appears Biden will be president. AP

PUTIN CONGRATULATES BIDEN

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday congratulated Joe Biden on winning the US presidential election after weeks of holding out.

Putin's message to Biden

came a day after the Electoral College confirmed Biden as the nation's next president, ratifying his November victory in an authoritative state-by-state repudiation of President Donald Trump's refusal to concede that he had lost.

US blames Iran for abduction, death of ex-FBI agent Levinson

Washington: The Trump administration for the first time has formally blamed Iran for the presumed death of retired FBI agent Robert Levinson, publicly identifying two Iranian intelligence officers believed responsible for his abduction and imposing sanctions against them.

Levinson disappeared in Iran under mysterious circumstances more than a decade ago, and though US diplomats and investigators have long said they thought he was taken by Iranian government agents,

Monday's announcement in the final weeks of the Trump administration was the most definitive assignment of blame to date.

The announcement is the latest in a series of tough actions the Trump administration has taken toward Iran as it works to cement an aggressive posture that may complicate any efforts by incoming President Joe Biden and his national security team to radically change course once they take office next month.

US officials pre-emptively made clear Monday that no deal with Iran should be finalised without providing for the release of Americans who remain detained there.

Besides calling out two high-ranking intelligence officers by name, US officials also said the Iranian regime sanctioned the plot that led to Levinson's abduction and lied

for years about its involvement in his disappearance through disinformation campaigns aimed at deflecting responsibility and covering up the government's role.

"The abduction of Mr. Levinson in Iran is an outrageous example of the Iranian regime's willingness to commit unjust acts," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement.

The Iranian intelligence officers, Mohammad Baseri and Ahmad Khazai, are alleged to have been involved in Levinson's abduction and probable death. Under the sanctions, any property or assets they hold in the United States would be frozen. AP

Boko Haram claims kidnapping of Nigeria students in north

Lagos (Nigeria): Nigeria's Boko Haram jihadist rebels have claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of hundreds of students in an attack on a boys school in northern Katsina State, a Nigerian online news paper says.

More than 330 students are missing from the Government Science Secondary School in Kankara after gunmen with assault rifles attacked their school Friday night.

The Daily Nigerian said it received an audio message from Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau saying that his group abducted the schoolboys because Western education is against the tenets of Islam.

"What happened in Katsina was done to promote Islam and discourage un-Islamic practices as Western education is not the type of education permitted by Allah and his Holy Prophet," the paper quoted Shekau as saying.

There has been no independent verification of the audio message but Shekau has in the past released video and audio messages on Boko Haram's behalf.

Nigerian presidential spokesman Garba Shehu said in a statement Monday that "the kidnappers had made contact and discussions were already on, pertaining to the safety and return" of the children to their homes. AP

Around the Globe

Nairobi: Somalia's Government says it has severed ties with strategic neighbor Kenya "to safeguard the unity, sovereignty, stability of the country".

Islamabad: Pakistan's national flag carrier cleared 110 pilots out of the 141 whose licences to fly were suspended in the backdrop of the fake degrees controversy, according to a media report on Tuesday. Senior advocate Salman Akram Raja informed the Supreme Court about it on Monday while representing the airlines.

Kabul: A bombing and a shooting attack in Kabul killed at least three people, including a deputy provincial governor, while a deputy provincial council chief was killed in western Afghanistan on Tuesday, officials said.

Brussels: The European Union's anti-fraud body said almost 14,000 liters of dangerous hand sanitiser have been seized across the region.

Maldives considers burying Lanka Muslims dying of Covid

Colombo (Sri Lanka): The Maldives president's office says it is discussing how to provide a "humane response" to a request from neighbouring Sri Lanka to allow burials for Muslims who die of Covid-19.

President spokesman Ibrahim Hood said on Tuesday that President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has received a request from Sri Lanka to look into the possibility of allowing such burials.

"The request has been received. At present we are considering and discussions are ongoing with regard to what would be the appropriate and

humane response," Hood told The Associated Press.

There was no immediate confirmation from Sri Lanka of such a request. Sri Lanka's government in March announced it will cremate the bodies of all people who die of Covid-19, saying the coronavirus could contaminate underground water.

Sri Lankan Muslims have urged the government to allow burials, citing their religious beliefs. They accuse the government of denying Muslims a basic right without scientific grounds, since many countries in the world allow burials.

Sri Lanka's confirmed cases

since March reached 33,477 on Tuesday, including 154 fatalities.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region: — Authorities in Sri Lanka said on Tuesday that more than 3,000 Covid-19 cases have been detected in the country's highly congested prisons, as infections also surge in the capital and its suburbs.

They said that 2,984 inmates and 103 guards have been confirmed to have the disease in seven prisons around the country. Sri Lankan prisons are highly congested, with more than 26,000 inmates crowded in facilities with a capacity of 10,000. AP

US Attorney General William Barr resigns



Washington: US Attorney General William Barr, who of late had publicly differed with President Donald Trump on allegations of voter fraud in the November 3 presidential elections, has resigned.

Trump has appointed his deputy Jeff Rosen as the Acting Attorney General.

"Just had a very nice meeting with Attorney General Bill Barr at the White House. Our relationship has been a very good one, he has done an outstanding job!" Trump said as he tweeted the two-page resignation letter of Barr.

Barr, in his letter, said, "As discussed, I will spend the next week wrapping up a few remaining matters important to the administration, and depart on December 23." PTI

"Deputy Attorney General

Australian PM says China coal ban would breach WTO rules

Canberra (Australia): Australia's prime minister said Tuesday that China would be in breach of World Trade Organization rules as well as a bilateral free trade agreement if it banned Australian coal.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison was responding to a report in the Chinese state-owned Global Times newspaper that the Chinese National Development and Reform Commission had given power plants approval to import coal without restrictions except for Australian coal.

Morrison said he was treating the report as "media speculation" because the Chinese government had yet to clarify its position.

"If that were the case, then that would obviously be in breach of WTO rules," Morrison told reporters.

"It would be obviously in breach of our own free trade

agreement and so we would hope that's certainly not the case." Coal and iron ore are Australia's most lucrative exports. But Australian exports appear to have suffered due to deteriorating bilateral relations since Australia called for an independent inquiry into the coronavirus pandemic.

Trade Minister Simon Birmingham said Australia was close to finalizing a complaint to the World Trade Organization over Chinese tariffs imposed on barley.

"We see these reports and obviously are deeply troubled by them," Birmingham told Australian Broadcasting Corp. Referring to the reported coal import ban.

"They, if true, would indicate discriminatory trade practices being deployed by Chinese authorities and we would urge them to rule that out swiftly," he added. AP

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person (depicted in the photo) name: **unknown**, residence and family is **unknown** about 60/65 years of age, was found dead at PF No. 1, Sahibabad Side Ramp at ANVT, Delhi. In this regard a FIR/DD No. **11A**, dated **12.12.2020** has been registered at Police Station Anand Vihar Railway Station, Delhi. Dead body has been preserved at Mortuary of GTB Hospital for identification.

His physical description is as under:-

Sex: Male, **Age:** 60-65 years, **Height:** 5'5" ft, **Face:** All Most Decomposed, **Complexion:** Black, **Built:** Slim, **Wearing:** Grey Colour Jacket and half body of down undressed.

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or Telephone Numbers.

SHO
P.S. Anand Vihar Rly. Str., Delhi
Ph.: 011-22145601,22145602
Mob.: 8750871314

DP/20/RLY/2020

Place : Delhi

DELHI TRANSCO LIMITED

NOTICE INVITING e-tenders

Delhi Transco Ltd, a Government of NCT of Delhi Undertaking, invites online tenders for following works:
1)Tender No.T20P122321: DTL intends to invite online tenders for software development and maintenance support for Pension Trust Information System.
2)Tender No.T20P122286: Annual rate contract for attending breakdown, shutdown and for transportation at 400 KV sub station Barnauli and 400 KV substation Harsh Vihar under GM(O&M)-II.

Last date for bid submission: (08.01.2021 for SI. No.1) & (07.01.2021 for SI. No. 2) at 01.00 PM. For downloading of tender documents and further details please visit website Delhi Govt website <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>. Tender ID No. No. **2020_DTL_197480_1 & 2020_DTL_197463_1** respectively and DTL website www.dtl.gov.in Unique No. DTL-8006-151220 & DTL-8005-141220 PR/20-21/30

All Corrigendum/Addendum/Amendments/Date of Extension/Clarifications, if any, to the above e-tender would appear only on the above mentioned websites.

Farmers' protest causing loss of ₹3,500 cr a day: Assocham

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Industry body Assocham on Tuesday urged the Centre and farmers' organisations to resolve the impasse over the new agri laws, saying that the protests are inflicting a heavy blow to the economies of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and J&K.

"A daily loss of ₹3,000-3,500 crore is resulting in the economies of the region from the value chain and transport disruption because of the protests," according to a rough estimate by the chamber.

Assocham President Nirjanan Hiranandani said, "The size of the combined economies of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and J&K is about Rs 18 lakh crore. With the ongoing farmers' agitation

and blockade of roads, toll plazas and railways, the economic activities have come to halt."

On Monday, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) had said the farmer agitation has led to supply chain disruptions, which will impact the economy in the coming days and may impinge upon the ongoing recovery from the economic contraction due to COVID-19.

Assocham's Hiranandani observed that industries such as textiles, auto components, bicycles, sports goods which cater significantly to the export markets would not be able to fulfil their orders, ahead of Christmas, harming the industry's goodwill among the global buyers.

Recovering from the harsh COVID-19 blow, the Indian economy needs to double down on growth which is possible only with conducive environment for industrial activities, investment including the Foreign Direct Investment, Assocham stated.

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said in the last 20 days, trade and other activities of about Rs 5,000 crore have been affected in Delhi and its surrounding states.

According to an estimate, about 30 to 40 per cent of the goods coming to Delhi have been affected by the movement of farmers, which is adversely affecting the trade and other activities of Delhi and neighbouring states, the traders' body stated.

S&P Global Ratings on Tuesday raised India's growth projection for the current financial year to (-)7.7 per cent from (-)9 per cent estimated earlier on rising demand and falling Covid-19 rates.

For the next financial year 2021-22, S&P projected growth to rebound to 10 per cent. Its revision in growth forecast for the current fiscal reflects a faster-than-expected recovery in the September quarter.

"Rising demand and falling infection rates have tempered our expectation of COVID-19's hit on the Indian economy. S&P Global Ratings has revised real GDP growth to negative 7.7 per cent for the year ending March 2021, from negative 9 per cent previously,"

S&P said in a statement.

A faster recovery keeps more of the economy's supply side intact and can set India up for more prolonged above-average growth during the recovery phase, it added. India's gross domestic product (GDP) fell 7.5 per cent in the July-September quarter, against a contraction of 23.9 per cent in the April-June quarter.

Earlier this month, Fitch Ratings also revised its growth forecast for India to (-)9.4 per cent, from (-)10.5 per cent, on signs of economic revival, while the Asian Development Bank said the economy is likely to contract 8 per cent as against the earlier forecast of 9 per cent contraction, on faster recovery. Last month, Moody's upped India's growth forecast to (-)10.6 per cent for the current

financial year, from its earlier estimate of (-)11.5 per cent.

In the statement, S&P on Tuesday said India is learning to live with the virus, even though the coronavirus pandemic is far from defeated. However, the reported cases have fallen by more than half from peak levels, to about 40,000 per day. "It is no surprise that India is following the path of most economies across Asia-Pacific in experiencing a faster-than-expected recovery in manufacturing production,"

S&P Global Ratings Asia-Pacific Chief Economist Shaun Roache said. Manufacturing output was about 3.5 per cent higher in October 2020 when compared to the year-ago period, while the output of consumer durables rose by almost 18 per cent.

Benchmarks inch up to fresh highs; HDFC twins sparkle

PTI ■ MUMBAI

among the laggards.

S&P Global Ratings on Tuesday raised India's growth projection for the current fiscal to (-)7.7 per cent from (-)9 per cent estimated earlier on rising demand and falling COVID-19 infection rates.

Meanwhile, retail inflation declined to 6.93 per cent in November on softer food prices, though it remained above the comfort level of the Reserve Bank, official data released after market hours on Monday showed.

₹ skids 8 paise to end at 73.63 against US \$

Mumbai: The Indian rupee depreciated by 8 paise to settle at 73.63 against the US dollar on Tuesday, taking cues from weaker Asian peers against the American currency. Besides, subdued trading in domestic equities also put pressure on the domestic currency, forex traders said. At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit opened at 73.62 against the US dollar and witnessed an intraday high of 73.59 and a low of 73.67. The local unit finally closed at 73.63 against the American currency, registering a fall of 8 paise over its previous close. "The Indian rupee depreciated marginally against the dollar this Tuesday tracking weakness in most regional currencies as risk appetite waned as many countries are imposing fresh COVID-19 restrictions which could derail a global economic recovery," Sriram Iyer, Senior Research Analyst at Reliance Securities, said.

High inflation may make rate cut difficult even in FY22: Report

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank would have limited options for policy easing of interest rates as inflation would continue to remain at elevated levels in the current fiscal, analysts tracking the development have said.

According to a research report by Emkay Global Financial Services, while inflation may have peaked, consistent supply shocks have meant the inflation series is estimated to average around 6.3 per cent in FY21. This is well above the RBI confront zone and would shape easing in FY22 for some policy action to come into play by the RBI.

According to the Emkay report, retail inflation is expected to trend towards 5.8 per cent by the end of March, 2021. However, the report said that favourable base effect, the wide output gap and rebalancing of effective demand-supply dynamics will further help inflation ease to 4.8 per cent by FY22.

The RBI has projected CPI inflation at 6.8 per cent for the third quarter, 5.8 per cent for

the fourth quarter 2020-21; and 5.2 per cent to 4.6 per cent in H1 of 2021-22.

While growth concerns and sub-optimal fiscal response may keep the MPC's stance accommodative and liquidity adequate, the inflation trajectory still remains above four per cent in FY22 and thus, hints at dimming chances of further rate cuts in the coming year, the brokerage report said.

CPI inflation surprised in November 2020 with better-than-expected moderation at 6.93 per cent, driven by sharp easing in sequential food inflation, while core inflation was down marginally. Food inflation dropped to below 10 per cent, helped by easing in vegetables and cereals. The seasonal easing in perishable vegetable inflation is likely to continue as suggested by high-frequency mandi prices, and should add further to the disinflationary momentum in food. However, cost-push factors like demand-supply mismatch, higher operational and labour costs, and higher administrative fuel costs continue to keep core inflation relatively stickier.

Ambani says will provide technology tools for Covid-19 vaccination drive

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India gets ready to roll out one of the largest vaccine programmes, billionaire Mukesh Ambani on Tuesday said his group is working with authorities to provide technology tools and backbone for mass inoculation against Covid-19.

Ambani's telecom venture Jio was rolled out four years back, offering free voice calling and dirt-cheap data.

Today, Jio is India's largest telecom operator with over 400 million users, each connected to the internet.

At a Facebook event, Ambani said the government's digital push kept the country running even during the pandemic and is now helping in the rollout of one of the largest vaccine programs in the first half of 2021.

Technology has also helped deliver health services.

"We are working very closely with all the authorities to make sure that we provide the technology tools and backbone for even vaccination in the coming quarters using technology," he said.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi too had spoken of using mobile technology for mass inoculation against COVID-19.

SIP inflows hit 31-month low at ₹7,302-cr

New Delhi: Investment in mutual funds through systematic investment plans dropped to a 31-month low of Rs 7,302 crore in November amid challenging economic environment. However, investment through the Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) route had risen in October after six months of continuous decline.

The 44-player mutual fund industry witnessed an inflow to the tune of Rs 7,302 crore through SIPs in November as compared to Rs 7,800 crore in the preceding month.

No change in petrol, diesel prices for 8th consecutive day

New Delhi: Oil marketing companies continued to hold back any change in the retail price of petrol and diesel continuing with their wait and watch stance that has kept the prices of two auto fuels static for the past eight days. Accordingly,

there was no change in retail price of auto fuels on Tuesday with price of petrol remaining at Rs 83.71 a litre and diesel Rs 73.87 a litre in Delhi. Across the country as well the price of the two petroleum products remained unchanged. OMCS have gone on a pause mode at a time when news of successful coronavirus and expectations of big pick up in demand had kept crude on the boil with prices breaching \$ 50 a barrel mark.

IANS

Amazon India launches 'Saathi' peer-mentorship programme

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

E-commerce major Amazon India on Tuesday announced the launch of Amazon Saathi, a peer mentorship programme that will help sellers to exchange knowledge and share best practices.

Amazon Saathi enables sellers on Amazon and small and medium businesses (SMBs) across India to get access to a wealth of content presented by experienced sellers on the marketplace, a statement said.

Established Amazon sellers can engage with over 7 lakh sellers to share their learnings and experiences of operating an online business, and help the seller community scale their businesses on Amazon, it

added.

"We remain committed to enable every motivated seller to reach customers across India and the world, and our approach from Day 1 has been centered on what our sellers need. We are launching Amazon Saathi after a lot of research and feedback from sellers on having a platform for knowledge sharing and networking amongst them,"

Amazon India Director MSME and Seller Experience Pranav Bhasin said. Amazon Saathi brings over seven lakh sellers on Amazon. In together as a community, where new and existing sellers can lean on their peers for guidance, and share from their experiences to accelerate their business growth on Amazon, he added.

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Address Unit No. 103, First Floor C8 Square, Sangam Complex, 127, Andheri-Kurla Road, Village Chakala, Andheri (East), Mumbai 400059 | Telephone: +91 22 67875334 | www.sbfcp.com | Corporate Identity Number: U67190MH2008PTC178270
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The Gold Ornaments to be auctioned belong to Loan Accounts of our various Customers who have failed to pay their dues. Our notices of auction have been duly issued to these borrowers.
The Gold Ornaments to be auctioned belong to Overdue Loan Accounts of our various Customers mentioned below with branch name.
Faridabad branch, PRO0674653/GUD138221, Uttam Nagar branch, PRO0673517/GLDS1231459, PRO0658908/GLDS143131,
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KARVY || FINANCE Retail is now SBFC

Willingness to learn is the way forward to upcoming opportunities. Those who continue updating themselves seldom encounter failures, says DEEPSHIKHA KUMAR ANAND

Amidst rising vulnerabilities in the pandemic-hit world economy, atmānirbhāta (self-reliance) is a recovery-cum-growth strategy not only for countries but also for the working professionals. Both businesses and employees are facing tough competition in the market today. In such a turbulent time, entities with advanced and futuristic skills are incredibly exceptional.

Willingness to learn is the way forward to upcoming opportunities. Those who continue updating themselves seldom encounter failures. Today, to counter the ramifications of COVID-19 on the world economy, there is an urgent need to adopt an open talent economy based on intellectual & skill collaborations. The onset of e-learning platforms has enabled companies and human resources to adopt cutting-edge skills from certified coaches and industry experts. The user-generated content on these platforms plays a pivotal role in business learning in the current scenario, especially for businesses interested in digital transformation.

The competency level of a business depends on how competent its employees are. That's why the HR managers of progressive firms always show interest in candidates equipped with advanced professional skills and are willing to up-skill themselves further. As per the latest study by Robert Half, a global staffing firm, 84 per cent HR managers prefer hiring employees whose skills can be honed easily through training. Sometimes, candidates' willingness to learn new skills helps them to secure a desired job despite lacking the exact job qualifications. Here, HR managers believe that a persona proclivity for developing skills matters more than his/her qualifications to accept additional responsibilities.

Digitalisation of businesses has increased the role of technology in various operations to manifolds. From marketing to manufacturing, almost every business activity today is managed by technology. Hence, to make their employees tech proficient, companies are facilitating learning for them. On the other hand, many traditional businesses which have heavily borne the brunt of the current pandemic have no better option than going digital to compete in the market. This is where e-learning programmes for entrepreneurs and managers are ensuring a smooth transition for them. By pursuing these skill-oriented courses, the victims of layoffs are re-entering into the job market.

E-learning training programmes are useful in developing both hard and soft skills among employees. Business skills such pertaining to Data Analysis, Financial Accounting,



Networking, Decision-making, Negotiation, and Leadership Skills, which every successful professional needs can be acquired and polished through bespoke e-learning programmes. They are useful in developing both hard and soft skills among employees.

Detailed and interactive videos by the seasoned trainers can be viewed again and again by an individual to derive maximum from a course module. Besides, s/he has the option to choose more than one online coach or subject matter expert. The content can be further customized to topics of business relevance depending on an organisation's requirements. Moreover, with the unprecedented developments in region-specific virtual training programmes, the industry is receiving immense benefits of localised content in vernacular languages.

It is always difficult for an organisation to

UPSKILLING IS NO MORE AN EXPENSIVE AND STRENUOUS AFFAIR. THANKS TO THE DIGITISATION OF COMMUNICATION THAT HAS MADE LEARNING AND UPSKILLING IMMENSELY AFFORDABLE FOR BOTH COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS

lose its valuable and essential people because their presence is imperative to achieve long-term goals and objectives. But, to keep them engaged and motivated, the employer must ensure their personal and professional growth. Upskilling is no more an expensive and strenuous affair. Thanks to the digitisation of communication that has made learning and upskilling immensely affordable for both companies and individuals. Availability of e-learning content in various formats and in different languages is greatly benefiting them while serving well-informed and sophisticated customers. Also, accessing industry leaders and thought leaders is no longer a luxury for small businesses. Like corporates, small businesses too can empower their employees with the experience and insights of eminent personalities and consultants.

The writer is Founder & CEO of SpeakIn



Dr Anderleen Diana Lazarus-Philimis
Assistant Professor, SRMIST

Ensure your resume is exclusive to attract the best prospects available,

Bring out the author, poet, dancer, lyricist, researcher, and the player in you

You will certainly enjoy the thrill as you fill your heart, soul and mind.

Soon it will be time to bid adieu to your alma mater and move on

The curtain 'The End of College Life' will drop and there'd be no replay,

So be prudent and engage in crafting the supreme version of you.

Serve the society wholeheartedly and do it free as far as possible;

It's a demanding world out there and to have an edge over others,

For to live in the happy memories of people is one great form of victory.

The writer is Assistant Professor, SRM Institute of Science and Technology

QUOTE OF THE DAY

College is the best time of your life. When else are your parents going to spend several thousand dollars a year just for you to go to a strange town and get drunk every night?

— David Wood

For a meaningful college life

The curtain 'The Grand Beginning of College Life' unfolds,

The gladness wave keeps gushing leading to so much delight all around

New campus, new friends, new style of learning and training&lifestyle too,

There will be so much happening around you, in you and through you,

Some of you may be care-free, some overly busy and some make history!

Blended learning, cutting across disciplines is an art for you to explore,

Classes, labs, clubs, fests all of many a kind, competitions and programs galore

Including networking, industrial visiting, camping, representing, winning and losing,

Also learn new languages, skills, art and explore your talents while you are here,

It may keep you occupied, preoccupied too but will aid to career building.

Some under estimate you and some overdo, but never worry about it

You don't have to be the version of their opinions! Your goal to be your priority!

Make good memories, eat well, exercise, learn new things regularly,

Also plant saplings, contribute to animal care and engage in research too

Above all never shy away as participation will endorse a nice learning.

It's a demanding world out there and to have an edge over others,

You need to be the best of yourself! So, explore and experiment ardently,

Let's be online

With time, even eLearning is evolving. Companies are blending newer ways to create an interesting mix of eLearning methods, says PRASOON NIGAM



helping employers train employees, but also in making it interactive and a two-way process. Some companies are also enabling personalised or customised learning and trainings to help employees learn specific skills to graduate to new roles. There has also been a transition to rejig the standard presentation and excel handout content and digitalise it and make it more interesting and interactive.

The pandemic scenario has also brought mental and psychological health in the spotlight. Many com-

panies as a part of their new L&D initiatives are also helping employees to expand their skillset and explore new capabilities online. Whether it is via massive open online course (MOOC), sabbaticals and external coaching — these avenues are enabling employees to stay high-spirited during the challenging times.

With time, even eLearning is evolving. Companies are blending newer ways to create an interesting mix of eLearning methods — to keep the workforce motivated and

enthused. Gamification or Game-based learning is being used to both engage and educate.

Given the uniqueness of eLearning and making any piece of content available, there are no limits to the possibilities and benefits of eLearning. It is not just enriching for employees but for organisations too, by saving operation costs and time investments. It is an opportunity to develop new skills and promote creativity, making the employees feel more empowered in the roles.

However, good eLearning is not just about content curation and delivering it but speaks of the organisation's overall competence development agenda. While organisations have transitioned to eLearning to suit the needs of the present scenario, a solid eLearning strategy is a must to make employees fit for better and higher roles. With the objective to nurture future ready skill sets, it would be key to witness how companies chalk out their eLearning strategies that helps employees harness the eLearning opportunities.

The writer is Prasoon Nigam, CTO & Co-founder, Stratbeans

Decode a secure future

The practice of programming learning and coding is not limited to any age. It is a secure career option in the new world, says SHIVRAM CHOUDHARY

Over the last decade, new technology has transformed almost every aspect of our lives. In every home, each hand, on every desk, transportation to meditation, Artificial intelligence and coding has proved to be humanity's greatest innovation of man and machine partnership. With the progressing world, we know it is never too late for anything. As in the field of coding, well, the doors of new learning are always open.

The practice of programming learning and coding is not limited to any age. It is a secure career option in the new world and develops an appreciation for how things work therefore helps mind growth in a positive direction. Some studies show that the coders develop high cognitive skills and they have lesser chances of having memory loss.

It improves the coders' brain health and lets them think actively. Other studies have revealed that coding uses parts of the brain associated with memory, language processing, attention and logic. It acts as a good brain exercise although many believe that coding is just logic and math but it is much more than that; it involves memory, logic, math, creativity, language and attention.

Few of the points say that coding is essential for the brain and it is a good brain exercise.



Coding helps in shaping your mental models

When choosing the language of coding be it Java, Python, C, Cobol, Fortran, or Basic you have to be careful. Starting with the language can be very hard, but once you start with one language, the coding dictates and helps in thinking about data structures, algorithms, etc. The language helps your mind work in a constant way that one can tell who wrote it just by looking at the anonymised code.

Coding isn't just about Math and Logic

Many believe that coding is all about math and logic but it is not limited to this. The area spans more than this. The coders also need to have better creativity, attention, reasoning, and

language. It involves constant use of brain parts for different functions of coding. As coders also learn other programmers' code, they try to write it again with a new way. So in this way coding also keeps the brain active.

As all these studies prove that coding is good for cognitive development it is essential for the young students to learn it from an early age. Coding keeps the mind active and running all the time. Coders often program while hiking, jogging, biking, or even eating. Also, as you keep on coding your mind gets familiar to the language and you will find it less essential to refer to the guide. This brain exercise lets you be creative and lose your burdened mind.

The writer is Founder, CodeVidhya

Crest Olympiads to rescue

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

When the education scenario has turned digital globally and remote learning is the new norm in students, leading competitive exams Crest Olympiads has made it possible for the school students to be a part of the prestigious Olympiad exams from the comfort of their homes during the unprecedented times of coronavirus pandemic. Through this online platform, the students also have the liberty of choosing the date and time for appearing in the exam according to their convenience.

The Crest Olympiads, considered to be the foundations of exams like JEE, NEET, among others, has been conducting online Olympiads for quite some time in various

subjects even for those students who may not have an option from the school for the same. It conducts exams in Mathematics, Science, English, Logical Reasoning, Cyber, and Spell Bee for students of classes I to 10. There is something for little kids from Prep/KG as well. They can appear for Math, Science and English Olympiads.

Students from more than 4000 schools in over 25 countries participate in the Olympiads conducted by them. Crest Olympiads has helped students to maintain continuity even in the pandemic. The platform enables the students to view the answer keys and, more importantly, allows challenging them. This way, the students can rectify themselves and evaluate where they went wrong.

Diploma in Luxury Brand Management

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The International School of Design launches a Masters Diploma programme in Luxury Brand Management. The course aims to help students learn and adapt the skills essential for understanding the journey of a luxury product and giving it a voice through branding elements. The course duration is 12 months and is starting from mid-January 2021 at the INSD Paschim Vihar Campus.

Speaking on the launch of the course, Harsh Mann, Program

Director, MLMB, said: "The Luxury Brand Management is a new concept for the education industry in India. It is one of the least explored segments as it is considered to be expensive, few colleges able to offer high quality education. There is a lack of qualified individuals with a solid foundation in technical and managerial skills. We at INSD, have turned it as an opportunity for students where we are bringing courses that will help carve a niche for oneself and impart first-hand knowledge regarding the rapidly proliferating Asian and Indian luxury markets."

The course focuses on varied luxury verticals individually and extensively — fashion, hospitality, lifestyle, automobile, and real estate. These courses will offer intricate working of the luxury industry around the world and the psychology behind why it is a coveted thing.

The fee structure is competitive in the market and registration has already started where the students will have to go through a registration process by getting themselves registered on insd.edu.in/luxury-brand-management.

Typeset ties-up with Turnitin

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Typeset, an integrated platform for writing, collaborating, and publishing research papers has joined hands with Turnitin to become a full-service plagiarism checking resource for writers, researchers, educators, and students.

The integration creates an authoring platform for setting up scientific or educational papers, complete with text similarity checks. Typeset made the move to integrate

with Turnitin in order to make the writing process easier.

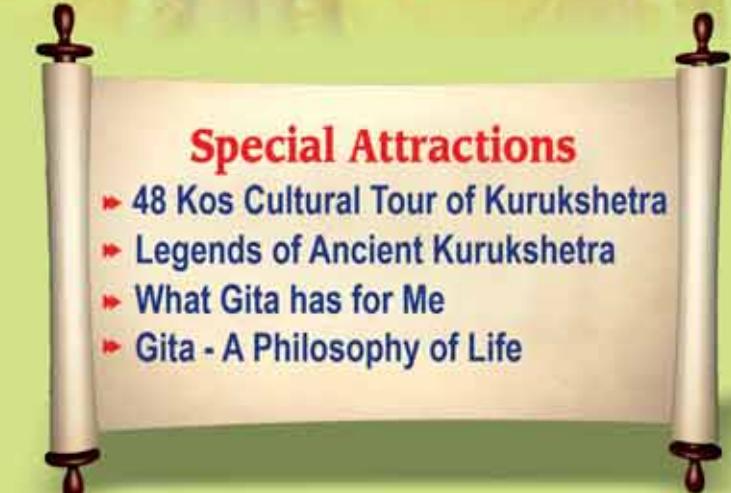
With over 100,000 journal titles, researchers and authors can write papers and articles in the appropriate and expected format — without the need to worry about typesetting and style. "It has been a true pleasure partnering with Turnitin. We are especially thankful for Mark Harnor at Turnitin, who helped us through the integration workflow," said SaiKiran Chandra, Founder and CEO of Typeset.

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि संगं त्यक्त्वा धनंजय।
सिद्ध्य-सिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते॥



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Programme

Gita Maha Aarti
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Aarti Sthal, Purushottampura Bagh,
Brahma Sarovar

Gita Recital, Gita Quiz, Acting-Dance, Seminar,
Declamations & other educational programme
17-25 December
Maharishi Valmiki Sanskrit University, Kaithal

Complete Gita Yajna
21 December, 10:30 AM
Purushottampura Bagh, Brahma Sarovar

Inauguration of International Gita
Webinar
21 December, 11:00 AM
Srimad Bhagavadgita Sadan
Kurukshetra University

International Gita Webinar
22-23 December, 10:00 AM

Complete Bhagavadgita Paath
21-25 December, 10:30 AM
Jyotisar and Sannihit Sarovar

Sant Sammelan
24 December, 02:00 PM
Srimad Bhagavadgita Sadan,
Kurukshetra University

Global Gita Chanting (Online)
25 December, 12:00 Noon
Purushottampura Bagh, Brahma Sarovar

Closing Ceremony - Deepotsav and
Maha Aarti
25 December, 06:00 PM
Brahma Sarovar & 48 Kos Pilgrimages of
Kurukshetra

Competitions based on Gita and Mahabharata for students (Online)
11-19 December, 2020 (District Level)
20-21 December, 2020 (State Level)

Quiz competition based on Gita and Mahabharata for students and general public (Online)
4-21 December, 2020

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Fully fit Bumrah key to India's chances: Border

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Australia captain Allan Border believes a fully fit Jasprit Bumrah will be the key to India's prospects of retaining the four-match Test series Down Under.

Calling himself a big fan of the India pace spearhead, Border said Bumrah has the potential to make a difference between the two sides in the much-anticipated rubber, starting in Adelaide from Thursday.

"Well I am a huge fan of Bumrah. If he keeps himself fit. We are talking of a guy who can win games for you fellows. I worry about him because on our pitches you get a little bit of bounce and sideways movement," said Border.

"For India to win, I am worried about Bumrah. If he fires up like he did last time, get important wickets, ruffle a few feathers with the ball, I reckon he could be the real difference," he added ahead of the series.

Bumrah accounted for 21 wickets in four matches in 2018-19, playing a key role in India's first-ever Test series win in Australia.

"You always think that your batting line-up will get enough runs, you need the 20 wickets to win the Test. If he stays fit, he is the one who is going to be a key," the former Australia skipper added.

From Australia's point of view, Border picked young all-rounder Cameron Green as the player to watch out for in the series.

"For Australia, Cameron Green, he is a really good young cricketer. He is someone to watch. He is a tall lad and his batting is really good, gives the ball good whack and he's got great technique," he said.

Border also said the Indians will feel the absence of Virat Kohli once he returns home after the opening Test to attend to the birth of his first child.

"I agree, there will be a huge gap in that line-up — just his (Kohli's) presence around that team and out on the field. I think the Aussies will really enjoy that they don't have to bowl to him for three of the Test matches."



Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah celebrates after he dismisses Australian batsman Shaun Marsh (lbw) during 3rd Test of 2018-19 Border-Gavaskar trophy series at Melbourne Cricket Ground

AP/File Picture

"So he will want to hit the ground running at Adelaide

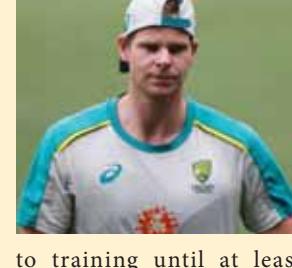
"It's hard to replace anyone like him. So we have to wait and see the impact it has but

pens from there," he said. "It's hard to replace anyone like him. So we have to wait and see the impact it has but

surely the Aussies will be favourites for the games where he is not playing. That is for sure."

Smith leaves practice early due to sore back

Adelaide: Australia's batsman Steve Smith on Tuesday missed a crucial net session due to a sore back as the home team's tumultuous build-up to the four-match Test series experienced another major injury scare.



After having warmed up for 10 minutes with his teammates by doing a few stretching exercises and running drills at the Adelaide Oval, Smith skipped the routine football session and headed straight to the dressing room in some discomfort after tweaking his back while bending down to pick up a ball.

The day-night first Test starts here from Thursday and Smith is not expected to return

to training until at least Wednesday. According to the Australian media, a team spokesman said the 31-year-old is likely to bat at the nets on Wednesday and there is no doubt about his availability for the much-anticipated series opener.

PTI

He is expected to lead in the last three Tests after regular skipper Virat Kohli goes on paternity leave, said during a virtual press conference.

Ishant is recovering from a rib injury sustained during the IPL.

Rahane, however, is confident that despite Ishant's absence, the pace attack comprising Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami will step it

Gavaskar's pick: Pant over Saha as keeper, Gill over Shaw as opener

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The legendary Sunil Gavaskar feels the Indian team management should prefer an aggressive Rishabh Pant over a technically sound Wriddhiman Saha for the wicket-keeper's role in the four-match Test series against Australia, starting Thursday.

Gavaskar said that with a blistering 73-ball 103-run knock in the second warm-up game under his belt, Pant will give India more flexibility in the first Test, the only day-night game, to be played in Adelaide.

"It is going to be a tough one for the tour selection committee because Rishabh played in all the 4 Test matches four years ago. He also got a hundred and seemed he got under the skin of the Australian players with his chirping behind the stumps.

"...When you just came off a hundred few days earlier, he would be the choice of the management I think," Gavaskar said.

Gavaskar said he preferred Pant over a more-accomplished keeper in Saha, as Australian pitches are not so demanding when it comes to keeping wickets.

"When you are playing on pitches where the wicketkeeper has to stand upto the stumps, where the ball turns out a little bit that's when you tend to take your best wicketkeeper, in which case Wriddhiman Saha would be the obvious choice," he explained.

"But here, India will have pacers where you can stand behind and have little more time, my feeling is that they will go for Rishabh," Gavaskar said while previewing the series named after him and Allan Border.

Both Gavaskar and Border batted for Shubman Gill or Prithvi Shaw to open alongside Mayank Agarwal in the series.

"...India is a little bit shaky at the top of the order. They don't know who they are going to go with. Mayank Agarwal is of course a certainty. But who's the other opener — Shubman Gill or Prithvi Shaw?" said



Gavaskar.

"So with uncertainty at the top, they would like to strengthen their batting and so Rishabh Pant will play. I am hoping he (Rishabh) plays at 6 because then that will allow you to pick 5 bowlers to try and get 20 Australian wickets," he added.

In the two warm-up games, Gill's scores — 0, 29, 43, 65 — got better with every knock while Shaw — with scores of 0, 19, 40, 3 — looked out of sorts.

And Border was mighty impressed by

how Gill has shaped up.

"I've been in Sydney the last couple of days, watching the Indian team against Australia A. I was impressed with Gill," said the former Australia captain.

"I really think he's got something about him, his technique. I know he's young so he can play a few rash shots here and there, but he looks a seriously good player, this kid. He would be my pick out of the guys I saw."

"I know you guys (rate) Shaw but it seems to me like he plays a shot-a-ball. Against the new ball, he looks good on flat tracks, but in Australia, you've got to be a little bit more watchful about your shot selection," he added.

Gavaskar agreed with Border and said Shaw needs to get back to the drawing board and work on his weaknesses — inconsistency and poor shot selection.

"I think he's (Shaw) going to spend a little more time assessing his batting. Because as an opening batsman, you've got to give yourself time to see what the pitch is doing, see what the bowlers are doing," he said.

"Trying to bat the way he's batting at the moment is not going to make him a consistent player. Yes, he's going to make runs once in a while but he's got to tighten up his defence."

Gavaskar, however, was pretty sure about other opener, saying Mayank Agarwal is the player to watch out for in the series.

"For me the player to watch out for from India will be Mayank Agarwal. He came to Australia for the last couple of Test matches two years ago and he actually showed the way because till then India had not got any start," the Little Master said.

"He showed how to tackle Nathan Lyon. He has gone from strength to strength. Look at the season he had last year, where he scored a double hundred against South Africa."

"So he's the guy I really am looking forward to in this series," Gavaskar added.

If fit, Green will debut vs India

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Promising all-rounder Cameron Green will make his Test debut against India in the series-opening day-night match here if he clears the concussion protocols, Australian coach Justin Langer said on Tuesday.



While Langer has still not ruled out the woefully out of form Joe Burns, Matthew Wade is shaping as potential opener if Green does not make it.

Green suffered a mild concussion after being hit on the head by a shot from Jasprit Bumrah in the pink ball warm-up match. He was replaced under the sport's concussion rules and has since been monitored by Cricket Australia's medical staff.

"If he's passed fit he'll definitely play," Langer said.

"We are just going through the protocols. He had another test this morning which we got good news on. He's a terrific

young bloke, obviously an excellent talent, he's earned the right for selection through his performances.

Another call that the home team needs to make is whether

to show faith in opener Burns — who has managed a meagre 62 runs in nine innings this season.

"He is a very good player, you don't lose your talent overnight, he also understands that runs are the greatest currency or value to any player.

"He has been a bit lied on, but we will have a look, get eyes on him today, we will see how he is going, have a chat with him today and we will make our decision on who is going to open in the next day or so," said Langer.

The former Australia player also made clear that Marnus Labuschagne would not open the batting.

"Talking about Marnus, he won't be opening, he has done an amazing job at number three. Steve Smith does an amazing job at number four. We'll try and stay as settled as possible while Davy (Warner) is injured. We've got some tough decisions to make."

We'll have our plans in place for Kohli: Langer

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Australia coach Justin Langer on Tuesday asserted that his team will "have plans in place" for Indian talisman Virat Kohli as cricket's heavyweights renew one of the sport's greatest rivalries with the opening day-night Test.

The four-match series opener at Adelaide Oval on Thursday will be the only time Kohli will play Test Down Under this summer as he will return home after the game to attend the birth of his first child.

Langer, however, is determined to stop Kohli from setting the tone for the series.

"He is a great player and an equally great leader. I have got so much respect for him but we are going to be really well planned for him because we

know how important he is for India as a leader and as a batsman. So, we will have our plans in place.

"The next trick is to execute them, hopefully, keep him out of the game with his runs. At the end of the day, that's where he is going to have the biggest impact. We've seen a lot of him now, and he has seen a lot of us too," Langer said.

Langer also made it clear that his team will focus more on the skill part and look for ways to get Kohli out instead of needlessly engaging with him.

"What we talk about is how to get Virat out. He is such a great player, we don't talk about whether we taunt him or not. That's rubbish... We play on the skill, not on emotions, at least we try to."

"There is obviously emotion in the game, no doubt about that, we are going to control our emotions."

SINGLES



New Zealand players Amy Satterthwaite (left), Lea Tahuhu (right) and former all-rounder Richard Hadlee pose alongside the ICC Women's World Cup 2022 Trophy on Tuesday

@cricketworldcup

SCHEDULE ANNOUNCED FOR 2022 WOMEN'S WC

DUBAI: India will open their campaign in the rescheduled Women's ODI World Cup against a qualifier on March 6, 2022 at Tauranga's Bay Oval in New Zealand, according to the 31-match schedule announced by the ICC on Tuesday. India have two more matches against qualifiers on March 12 and March 22 at Seddon park, Hamilton in the eight-team round-robin format event. Among the marquee games, Tauranga will host the rematch of the 2017 Women's World Cup final with India taking on England on March 16. India will then face Australia at Eden Park, Auckland on March 19, before locking horns with South Africa on March 27 at Hagley Oval, Christchurch. The event, which was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic in February-March 2021 with the same six host cities and venues retained, will be held between March 4 and April 3, 2022.

YUVI, SREE IN PROBABLES FOR MUSHTAQ ALI

NEW DELHI: World-cup winning former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh is set to come out of retirement and play domestic cricket again after being named in Punjab's 30-strong list of probables for next month's Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament. Yuvraj had announced his retirement last June but he decided to resume playing for his home state after being approached by PCA secretary. Also, former India pacer Sreesanth moved closer to a return to competitive cricket after being named in a 26-strong probables list by Kerala. The 37-year-old, who was banned by the BCCI over his alleged involvement in spot-fixing in the IPL, will take part in a preparatory camp to be held here from Dec 20 to 30.

KOHLI CLIMBS TO 2ND SPOT IN TEST RANKINGS

DUBAI: India captain Virat Kohli on Tuesday jumped one place to second in the ICC Test ranking for batsmen, which also features Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane at the seventh and 10th positions respectively. Kohli is the leading Indian batsman in the chart with 886 rating points behind Australia's Steve Smith (911 points). Kiwi skipper Kane Williamson dropped a rung to the third spot. He is followed by Marnus Labuschagne, Pakistan's Babar Azam and injured David Warner. Pujara is seventh in the chart with 766 points and India Test vice-captain Rahane (726) to complete the top-10 list. In Test rankings for teams, India is currently placed third after New Zealand jumped to the second spot following its recent 2-0 series win over the Windies. AGENCIES

It's time Smith returns as Oz captain: Mark Waugh

Melbourne: Former batsman Mark Waugh believes Steve Smith has repented enough for his role in the ball-tampering scandal and needs to be handed Australia's Test captaincy after the retirement of incumbent Tim Paine.

Smith was removed from captaincy due to his involvement in the scandal in 2018.

"He's paid his penance there, so he gets back to captain. I think he's a pretty good captain."

However, spin legend Shane Warne believes Smith's time as captain is up and he should just focus on amassing runs for the country.

"I wouldn't (make him captain), I think Steve Smith has had his time. I would go with someone else as captain. Steve Smith we want to bat and bat," Warne said.

Pink ball zips more under lights: Cummins

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Australian pace spearhead Pat Cummins feels the series opener against India will test the tactical acumen of the captains as day-night matches move at a "slightly different pace" with the pink ball zipping around a bit more under lights.

Australia have won each of their four day-night Test matches so far. India, on the other hand, have played just one pink ball Test, winning it convincingly against Bangladesh last year.

Cummins, who played for Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL, said there is always a sense of excitement when they approach a pink ball Test. "... We are just a little bit, won't say nervous but excited, knowing that the game moves at a slightly different pace to a normal Test match.

You can have some sessions under the lights where the balls just zip around," Cummins told kkr.in.

"After dinner, when the light

takes effect, just for whatever reason it seems like the ball zips around a bit more.

"You can have some periods in a Test match a bit like a one-dayer, where the ball doesn't swing, doesn't seam and all of a sudden out of nowhere, it starts zipping around under the lights.

"It's just another dynamic of the game. It's a tactic that the captains have to manage — when to bat and when to bowl," Cummins said.

India had registered their first-ever Test series win on Australian soil in 2018-19. But the home side didn't have two of their top batsmen — David Warner and Steve Smith — in that series as they were serving their ball-tampering bans.

Cummins said with the duo back in the squad, it will hold them in good stead in the series.

"We like to pride ourselves in winning all our home series. So yeah, definitely been looking forward to this one for a couple of years now. India had a better side than us a couple of years ago ... Even though we shared patches I think overall, we were outplayed by them in that series," he said.