

**OPINION 6**  
 UNITY IN DIVERSITY

**WORLD 8**  
 OLI DEFENDS MOVE TO DISSOLVE PARLIAMENT

**SPORT 12**  
 INJURED BABAR, IMAM OUT OF 1ST NZ TEST

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY DECEMBER 22, 2020; PAGES 12-13

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## India stops flight of UK virus

Govt on alert, suspends flights to/from UK from Dec 23 to Dec 31

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid fears over the spread of a mutated strain of coronavirus — reportedly 70 per cent more infectious than the one that caused the Covid-19 — India has joined over two dozen countries in suspending all flights from and to the United Kingdom from December 23 to December 31.

Union Health Minister Dr Harshvardhan said the authorities are keeping a close watch and there is no need to panic as the Government is alert on the issue.

The ban will start from Wednesday and passengers arriving from the UK in flights that will land in India by 11.59 pm on Tuesday will undergo mandatory RT-PCR test at the airports concerned. Those who test positive will be sent to institutional quarantine while the rest will be asked to home-isolate for seven days.

Several major European countries including France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Ireland, Bulgaria, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, in addition to countries like Canada, Kuwait, Colombia, Morocco, Iran, Israel, Turkey were among those that shut off travel ties after Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned that a highly infectious new strain of the virus was a danger to the country. Saudi Arabia, notably, has suspended all international flights over the fear of the new strain of coronavirus.

According to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Government has decided that all flights originating from the UK to India will be suspended from 11.59 pm on December 22 till 11.59 pm on December 31. Consequently, flights from India to the UK will also stand suspended during the period.

Bears were back on the Dalal Street with renewed ferocity and left a trail of bloodbath that eroded the investors' wealth by ₹6.59 lakh crore on Monday as equities tanked after the UK reported a new strain of the Covid-19 virus. The new strain of the coronavirus was up to 70 per cent more contagious.

The market gave no corner to hide as the 30-share BSE Sensex plunged 1,406.73 points or 3 per cent to close at 45,553.96 after hitting an all-time high of 47,055.69 during the session. There was a sense of déjà vu as the equities saw the same free fall as was witnessed in March

"As a measure of abundant precaution, passengers arriving from the UK in all transit flights (flights that have taken off or flights which are reaching India before December 22 at 23.59 hrs) should be subject to mandatory RT-PCR test on arrival at the airports concerned," the Ministry said.

Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Twitter that those passengers who are found Covid positive would be sent for institutional quarantine set up by the States or Union Territories (UTs). "Those found negative should be advised to isolate at home for 7 days and will be medically monitored by the States/UTs," Puri added.

Till date, the rules stated that if an international passenger had a Covid negative certificate from a test done 72 hours prior to the journey, s/he need not undergo Covid-19 test again on arrival at the Indian airport.

The decision followed an expert meeting of the Health Ministry's joint monitoring group (JMG) on Covid-19 which reasoned for abundant caution as the new strain is under review.

The JMG met on Monday to study evidence from the UK which said the bee strain was out of the country and was 70 per cent more infectious than the original.

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## Maha Govt imposes 14-day-long night curfew from Dec 22

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In what will put a virtual stop to the Christmas and New Year-eve celebrations in Mumbai and other major cities in the State, the Maharashtra Government on Monday announced the imposition of 14-day-long night curfew from

**Covid-19 IN INDIA**

**TOTAL CASES: 1,00,75,079**

**DEATHS: 1,46,134**

**RECOVERED: 96,35,071**

**ACTIVE: 2,91,188**

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	18,99,352	48,801	17,89,958
Karnataka	9,10,241	12,016	8,84,205
Andhra Pradesh	8,78,937	7,078	8,67,867
Tamil Nadu	8,07,962	11,995	7,86,472
Kerala	7,05,870	2,817	6,41,285
Delhi	6,17,808	10,304	5,98,249
Uttar Pradesh	5,74,631	8,196	5,49,190
West Bengal	5,38,343	9,401	5,12,039
Odisha	3,26,596	1,892	3,21,647
Rajasthan	2,99,909	2,626	2,85,322
Telangana	2,81,730	1,515	2,73,625
Chhattisgarh	2,68,477	3,199	2,49,218
Haryana	2,58,197	2,832	2,49,840
Bihar	2,47,531	1,358	2,41,358
Gujarat	2,36,259	4,241	2,20,493
Madhya Pradesh	2,32,319	3,490	2,17,775



## OK vaccine emergency use after trials on big sample: House Panel

Govt must keep check on pvt hospitals and black marketing of medicines

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Parliamentary panel on Monday recommended the Government that any vaccine against Covid-19 should be granted emergency use authorisation only after proper con-

sideration and conducting trials on a sufficient sample size.

In a report submitted to Rajya Sabha chairman and Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs chaired by senior Congress leader Anand Sharma said there is a need for a comprehensive public health law to keep tabs on private hospitals and check black-marketing of medicines.

The report comes even as the Government considers applications of at least three firms seeking emergency approval to roll out their vaccines against the coronavirus in India.

The Centre on last Tuesday said the applications — by

Bharat Biotech, Serum Institute of India and Pfizer — filed with the Drugs Controller General of India are being examined by the Covid-19 subject expert committee of Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).

The Parliamentary committee report noted that the CDSCO has given no emergency use authorisation in the past, and suggested that all necessary and mandatory requirements must be duly fulfilled and all trial phases completed. "Trials on small animals, human trials should be mandatorily undertaken on a sufficient sample size population...if at all emergency authorisation would be given, it should be given by Government with proper consideration and caution and this provision should be used in rarest of the rare cases," the report reads.

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## Nothing new in Govt's proposal, rue farmers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Farmers sitting on Delhi's borders with Haryana and Uttar Pradesh began their day-long "relay" hunger strike at all protest sites on chilling Monday.

Meanwhile, the farmer leaders on Monday claimed that there is nothing new in the Centre's latest letter to them seeking a date for the next round of talks and said they are ready for talks with the Government, if there is a clear solution.

Scores of farmers from Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Haryana continued to join the farmers protest sites at Singhu, Chilla, Tikri and Ghazipur borders across the national Capital.

The farmers started a day-long relay hunger strike on Monday morning at all sites of protest against the new agri laws and at Singhu border, which has become the epicentre site of the protest, a team of

## Union leaders say they are ready for talks if concrete plan is submitted, start day-long relay hunger strike along Delhi's borders

11 members sat on hunger strike in the first batch. Another batch of 11 members will sit on a hunger strike at 11 am on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, several farmers also contributed to the hunger strike and stayed without food for the entire day.

Reacting on the letter by Agriculture Ministry Joint Secretary Vivek Aggarwal, the farmers' leaders said there is nothing new in the letter and the farmers have already rejected the Government's proposal to amend the new farm laws.

"In its letter, the Government has asked us to discuss its proposal and convey a date to it for another round of talks. Don't they know our demand? We just want a complete repeal of the new agriculture laws," said Abhimanyu Kohar, the farmer leader.

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## FB restores farmers' stir page after social media outrage

New Delhi: A day after Facebook temporarily shut down a page on the ongoing farmers agitation against the Centre's new farm laws, the protestors on Monday said social media was crucial for their movement as it allowed them to tell the "truth in their own words". The social media giant had Sunday evening shut down the page of 'Kisan Ekta Morcha' that shares "official updates" on the agitation, only to restore it three hours later following social media outrage.

The Kisan Ekta Morcha's Instagram page was also temporarily suspended.



Farmers during their protest against the Centre's new farm laws at Ghazipur border in New Delhi on Monday  
 Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

## UK virus strain wipes off Indian investors' ₹6.59 L cr

Sensex sinks 1,407 pts to close at 45,553.96

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



As it is the market was looking for an excuse to correct since the Indian equities have outperformed global markets by a wide margin in recent months. All BSE sectoral indices also closed lower, with metal, oil and gas, utilities, realty, basic materials, industrials, power and bankex falling as much as 6.05 per cent. At the BSE, 2,433 companies declined, while 592 advanced and 167 remained unchanged.

The brutal bloodbath came after the UK reported a new coronavirus strain on Sunday. The Dala street took a further cue from the European markets in the afternoon amid fear of fresh traveling lockdown restrictions across countries. The UK imposed a fresh lockdown in London and southeast England, warning that the potent new strain of the Covid-19 virus was "out of control".

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## Shah lies about Bengal progress, will beat his 'biggest' rally: Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah staged the "biggest roadshow in Bengal", Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has promised to repeat the feat by the end of this year leading a counter rally at Bolpur along the same route. The rally is likely to be held on December 29, party leaders said.

Hitting out at the BJP leadership (read Shah) for delivering "a garbage of lies," on Bengal's development, the Chief Minister said, "Some people are coming from Delhi and discharging a garbage of lies in Bengal," countering Shah's claim that the State was lagging far behind in economic development, industrial growth and employment gen-

eration index. "Contrary to what they said Bengal is number one in many fields," she said speaking about the Kanyashree, Sabuj Saathi and other projects for which the State had won international recognition.

Shah had on Sunday attacked the TMC Government for taking Bengal backwards in every respect.

"Why are they telling lies to the people of the State, what gain they will make by telling lies," Mamata said adding her party was committed to unity and that it would not let people be divided for narrow political gains.

Saying the BJP was a "party of cheating baz (cheats)" Mamata said, "There is a nefarious design to spread communal hatred in Bengal to win elections which is not the culture of

this State. We have always remained united and will continue to do so in future."

The Chief Minister earlier thanked her counterparts and Opposition leaders from other States saying how "the Central Government is interfering with my Government by transferring three IPS officers."

Thanking the Chief Minister of Punjab, Delhi, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan for voicing solidarity with Bengal, Mamata said federal ideas were under attack in the present situation and needed to be preserved. She also thanked Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) president MK Stalin who described the "unilateral transfer" of senior Bengal cops by the Centre as "autocratic and anti-federal."

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## CAPSULE

**'FRAME CHARGES AGAINST ANDRABI'**  
 New Delhi: A Delhi court on Monday ordered framing of charges against Kashmiri separatist Aasiya Andrabi and her two aides for allegedly waging war against India, sedition and conspiracy to commit acts of terror in the country.

**WORLD'S OLDEST GIANT PANDA DIES**  
 Beijing: Xinxing, the world's oldest giant panda in captivity, has died of multiple organ failure at the age of 38 years and four months, a Chinese zoo announced on Monday.

**GORAKHPUR 2007 SERIAL BLAST CONVICT GETS LIFE**  
 Gorakhpur: An Azamgarh resident, convicted for his involvement in the 2007 serial terror blasts in Gorakhpur, was on Monday sentenced to life imprisonment by a court here.

## S-400 deal intact despite US sanctions threat: Russia

Air defence deal with India moving on its schedule, says Russian envoy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The six billion dollar deal for S-400 air defence systems between India and Russia is moving as per schedule despite the USA threat of sanctions. This assertion from the Russian Ambassador to India on Monday came days after the USA imposed sanctions against Turkey for going ahead with a deal for S-400 missile system manufactured by Russia. China has already bought more than six such systems from Russia.

dollars. These air defence systems will enable India to detect and destroy incoming missiles and aircraft after picking up their flight path more than 400 km away. The systems will start coming to India by 2021 and entire five systems will be inducted in a five-year schedule.

Brushing aside the USA caution to India over the past two years about the possibility of sanctions for procuring weapons from Russia, Ambassador Nikolay Kudashev said ongoing deals with India for military hardware are advancing well.

"There can be good progress if decisions related to the procurement of Ka-226 helicopters and production of AK-203 assault rifles are expedited, and Russia is prepared to share the most advanced technologies with India in line



with the "Make in India" and "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" initiatives, Kudashev said. Elaborating upon the progress of the defence deals with India, the Russian envoy said, "As far as current deals [are] concerned, we are advancing well, including with S-400 supplies. If relevant decisions to start works related to Ka-226 helicopters and AK-203 rifles production are expedited, soon we will see good progress, which is especially important due to deep interests expressed by the Indian armed forces." On the USA threat of sanctions against India, Kudashev said Russia like India, does not recognise sanctions other than those imposed by the UN Security Council.

Roman Babushkin, chargé

d'affaires at the Russian Embassy, described the USA secondary sanctions on arms purchases from Russia as "illegal tools of unfair competition and pressure".

Maintaining that India and Russia are disciplined members of the international arms control regimes, Kudashev also said their bilateral defence ties will not pose "any threat to the regional balance".

"As far as sanctions are concerned, it's hard to predict and let the Biden Administration first announce publicly its plans and foreign policy vision. We do not recognise or welcome unilateral sanctions as a tool...of interstate or international relations, sanctions other than those applied by the UN Security Council, this is also the case of Turkey," he said.

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## Congress veteran Motilal dies day after celebrating his 93rd birthday

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran Congress leader Motilal Vora passed on Monday, a day after he celebrated his 93rd birthday. Vora, who had recovered from Covid-19 in October, was admitted to Delhi's Escorts Hospital after he complained of breathlessness on December 19.

Having held one of the most important organisational posts of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) treasurer for nearly two decades, Vora was appointed as the general secretary in charge of administration in 2018. Vora's successor Ahmed Patel held the post till his death on November 25 this year. He died of post-Covid complications in a Gurugram



MOTILAL VORA  
 Dec 20, 1927 — Dec 21, 2020

hospital. A former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and a former Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Vora, a Gandhi family loyalist, was known for his relations across political spectrum. In a party reshuffle carried out by Congress president Sonia Gandhi in September

this year, Vora was not given any party responsibility in view of his advancing age. A journalist by profession, he worked with Navbharat Times as its correspondent in Bombay (now Mumbai), then served with Navbharat in Nagpur and Raipur and later with Nagpur Times in Nagpur.

# Google launches new site to help travel industry gauge demand

**New Delhi:** As the pandemic-hit Indian travel industry hopes for a quick recovery, Google on Monday launched a new website that provides demand trends from search data to sector participants.

Called 'Travel Insights with Google', the new website will help better understand pent-up travel demand and leverage insights from these tools for

businesses to position themselves for recovery, the company said.

"The pandemic has had a direct, immediate and continuing impact on the travel industry. But it is also one of the industries that has been at the forefront of digitisation," Roma Datta Chobey, Director - Travel, Google India, said in a statement. "Our Travel Insights with

Google tool recognises that, and amidst this volatility, provides players real-time, actionable analysis of travel intention and sentiment, domestically and from overseas, for better and more agile decision making."

Based on user search data, the Travel Insights with Google tool can point to two kinds of time-specific trends -- Destination Insights and Hotel

Insights.

The Destination Insights tool will give a clear picture of the top sources of demand for a destination, and the destinations within countries that travellers are most interested in visiting -- helping the industry map out a possible resumption of travel on specific routes and make choices about where to communicate with potential

future travellers.

Hotel Insights is designed to help properties of all sizes, especially small and independent hotels, understand where travel demand for their geography may be coming from, and get tools, advice and tips for making their businesses stand out online.

For instance, in the month of November, growth in search

interest for domestic travel to cities such as Shirdi, Chandigarh, and Bagdogra was strong.

In this same period, travellers in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, and Gujarat top the searches for accommodation options.

The tool also provides granular insights into travel demand for single geographies

split by air travel demand and demand for accommodation.

During the same period, the tool shows that the top demand for outbound travel from India by air came from Male, Bangkok and Dubai, while the top growing cities by search interest were Male, Genoa and Boston.

In addition, the website also hosts the Travel Analytics

Center.

Available to Google's commercial partners in the travel sector, this will enable these organisations to combine their own Google account data with broader Google demand data and insights to give a clearer picture of how to manage their operations and find opportunities to reach potential visitors.

IANS

## Panel to protect Yamuna floodplains on cards

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to conserve, protect and restoration of the Yamuna floodplains in the national Capital, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has proposed setting up a 16-member committee that will formulate policies, norms and guidelines to protect the floodplain ecosystem from the adverse impact of development.

According to a draft submitted by the DDA to the National Green Tribunal-appointed Yamuna Monitoring Committee, the committee will formulate policies, norms and guidelines to protect the floodplain ecosystem from the adverse impact of development.

Its tasks will include protecting the floodplains from "encroachments and illegal activities and overseeing reclamation of land on the river floodplains".

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) had last year directed the land-owning agency to constitute a special purpose vehicle for the rejuvenation of the Yamuna in Delhi, hoping that it could be a model



for 351 polluted river stretches in the country. The "River Yamuna Management Committee" will be chaired by the lieutenant governor.

The principal commissioner (Horticulture and Landscape), DDA, will be its member secretary. Members will include the Delhi chief secretary, DDA vice chairman, commissioners of Delhi Police and municipal corporations, Delhi Jal Board CEO and a senior official of the environment department.

The committee will coordinate with DDA, Delhi Jal Board, municipal corporations, Delhi Police, Uttar Pradesh Irrigation Department, NGOs, experts and other stakeholders

to achieve its aims and objectives.

According to the draft, it will supervise the functioning of all departments which affect the river and its floodplains.

The panel will also oversee setting up, upgradation and functioning of sewage treatment plants and effluent treatment plants to ensure that public places and drains are clean.

It can also co-opt experts in the fields of water management, solid waste management, environmental engineering, environmental impact assessment, ecology, botany, biodiversity, hydrology, landscape architecture or any other relevant field.

## Vehicle snatched at gunpoint on Dwarka E-way

**Gurugram:** Two unidentified miscreants snatched a Hyundai Creta car belonging to a Rohtak-based contractor at gunpoint near Dhankot village on the Dwarka Expressway here on Sunday night, the police said on Monday.

The victim has been identified as Naveen Kumar, a native of Rohtak currently residing in Sector-15 in Gurugram.

In his complaint, the victim said that two men snatched his car at gunpoint near Dhankot village on Sunday when he was on his way back to Gurugram from Rohtak and had stopped on Dwarka Expressway for some work.

A team from Rajendra Park police station reached the spot after the victim informed the police and initiated an investigation. Gurugram Police spokesperson Subhash Bokan said, "A case has been registered at Rajendra Park police station under relevant sections of the IPC against unknown people. The investigation team has received some inputs about the absconding criminals. A team of Crime Branch is also investigating the matter."

IANS

## COVID DEATHS CROSS 11K-MARK IN MUMBAI

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Covid-19 deaths in Mumbai crossed 11,000 mark and the total infections in Maharashtra inched closer to 19 lakh on Monday, even as the state recorded 55 new deaths and relatively low 2834 fresh infections.

Mumbai, which was once the most Covid-19 affected city in the country and where both the number of deaths and infections have come down markedly during the recent weeks, recorded 12 deaths and 463 new infections. With the new deaths, the total number of deaths went up from 10,996 to 11,008, while the total infections climbed from 286,850 to 287,313.

A day after Maharashtra logged 98 Covid-19 deaths and 3811 new infections, the daily deaths dropped to 55 and the infections slid to 2,834 in the state. With 55 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Maharashtra climbed from 48,746 to 48,801. Similarly, with 2834 fresh infections, the total infections climbed from 18,96,518 to 18,99,352.

As 6052 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 17,89,958. The recovery rate in the state dropped marginally from cent from 94.06 per cent to 94.25 per cent.

Meanwhile, the number of "active cases" total cases in the state dropped from 62,743 to 59,469. The fatality rate in the state stood at 2.57 per cent.

Pune district, which continued to be the worst-affected city-district in Maharashtra, saw the total number of cases increase from 366,957 to

3,67,319 while the total number of deaths in Pune increased from 7682 to 7687.

Thane district remained in the third spot -- after Pune and Mumbai -- after the total number of infections rose from 2,50,285 to 2,50,606 while the total deaths climbed from 5495 to 5503.

Of the 1,21, 57,953 samples sent to laboratories, 18,99,352 have tested positive (15.62 per cent) for COVID-19 until Monday.

Currently, 5,04,938 people are in home quarantine while 3,579 people are in institutional quarantine.

## S-400 deal intact...

**From Page 1**

"As far as India is concerned, we share the same platform. India's position is crystal clear - no sanctions are acknowledged other than those applied by the UN Security Council. Whatever the future is, we believe that our ties will stand the coming challenges," he added.

On the time-tested defence ties between India and Russia for the past six decades, the Ambassador said the unparalleled defence cooperation is based on the real exchange of technologies and joint ventures to help India advance local production and expand its military export potential.

About two decades back India shifted its position from buyer of weapons to joint production in the country.

The envoy said the two sides are working on co-development and co-production of equipment, components, and spare parts, improving the after sales service system and deepening localisation programmes.

Russia is also looking forward to participating in Aero-India 2021, where it will showcase the Su-57, Su-35, and MiG-35 combat jets, Ka-52, Ka-226, Mi-17B-5 and Mi-26 helicopters, and the S-400 missile system.

## UP Govt alerts people in wake of mutated strand of corona in UK

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Government has alerted the people of the State in the wake of the rapid spread of a mutated strand of novel coronavirus in the United Kingdom.

Talking to media persons in Lucknow on Monday, Additional Chief Secretary (Information) Navneet Sehgal said that the government was

closely monitoring the situation after reports of a new mutated strand of novel coronavirus in the UK.

"As a precautionary measure, the Union government has already stopped all flights from the UK, while the UP government is also monitoring the situation. I urge the people

not to let their guard down against the viral infection at this juncture," Sehgal said.

Meanwhile, the number of active COVID-19 cases further dipped in the state and on Sunday. With 1,018 new cases, the tally of positive cases in Uttar Pradesh went up to 5.74 lakh on Monday evening.



"There are 16,822 active cases out of which 7,192 are in home isolation, 1,792 in private hospitals while the rest are undergoing treatment at government-run Covid hospitals. The recovery rate has also gone up to 95.65 per cent with 1,397 people recovering during the past 24 hours," said

Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Amit Mohan Prasad.

He said that labs across the state tested 1.25 Covid samples on Sunday. On the surveillance front, around 4.91 lakh teams visited 1.76 lakh areas and covered 3.05 crore houses to check the health of over 14.92 crore people.

## UK virus...

**From Page 1**

All 30 Sensex companies closed the day with losses, with ONGC tanking the most by 9.15 per cent, followed by Indusind Bank, M&M, SBI, NTPC and ITC which shed up to 6.98 per cent.

**RAJASTHAN HOUSING BOARD**  
No. ACE-I/RHB/UPR/2020-21/593 Date :- 14.12.2020  
**NIB: ACE-I/2020-21/20**  
Bids for (1). Engineering Procurement Construction, Erection, Commissioning, Trial Run with tertiary treatment of 2 MLD STP on turnkey basis based on SBR technology with PLC, SCADA System, Allied works and O&M for 5 years for City Park, Mansarovar, Jaipur (2). Construction of Commercial Block in Coaching Hub at Sector-16, Pratap Nagar, Jaipur are invited from interested bidders from 22.12.2020 to 11.01.2021 upto 6.00 PM. Other particular of bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.raj.nic.in>) of the state & <http://urban.rajasthan.gov.in/rhb> department website.  
**UBN : RHB2021WLB000257, RHB2021WLB000260**  
Samwdc/C8011/2020-21 Addl. Chief Engineer-I, Jaipur

**E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE FOR INVITATION OF QUOTATIONS**  
01/EE/RD/NHP/2020-21, DATED, 17-12-2020  
Separate sealed quotations are invited on behalf of the "GOVERNOR OF TRIPURA" for the bonafied Manufacturers/authorised dealers up to 3.00 PM on 06/01/2021 for the supply :-  
"Current meters with accessories under NHP for Tripura, State"  
For Details Please Visit website:- [tripuratenders.gov.in](http://tripuratenders.gov.in)  
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Website : [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com)  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com) & <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these website for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.  
**A) (1) 16/DSM(JAL)/AO/SM(G.JAL)/2020-21**, Strengthening of G. Jal (Providing and Laying 400 mm dia D.I. G.Jal line from 80 Cusec Gangajali Existing Line Near Hyde Park Sector-78 to Jal Division UGR/OHT Sector-78) Noida. Cost Rs. 94.69 Lacs.  
The above tenders can be uploaded by date 04.01.2021 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 05.01.2021 at 11.00 AM.  
Office (A.K. VARUN) Sector-5 SENIOR MANAGER (G.JAL), NOIDA  
**CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA**

## India stops flight... OK vaccine...

**From Page 1**

India and the UK were connected by several airlines including Air India, Vistara, British Airways, Virgin Atlantic connecting London to Indian airports like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Amritsar. While regular scheduled international flights are still not allowed by authorities here, India and the UK had entered an air bubble arrangement. Four airlines - Air India, Vistara, Virgin Atlantic and British Airways - operate over 40 weekly flights between India and the UK.

On December 19, the British Government had alerted the World Health Organisation about a new variant of the coronavirus that the Prime Minister said maybe "up to 70 per cent" more transmissible than earlier strains. The new strain - now officially named VUI-202012/01 - showed a "substantial increase in transmissibility". British Health Secretary Matt Hancock says "the new variant is out of control". The United Kingdom announced a surprise lockdown in London and other parts of the country amid the surge in cases due to the new strain of the virus. Europe has been walloped this fall by soaring new infections and deaths due to a resurgence of the virus, and many nations have reimposed a series of restrictions to reign in their outbreaks.

**From Page 1**

The report also noted that Government hospitals bore the largest share of the burden of extending comprehensive healthcare during the pandemic, as private hospitals were either inaccessible or not affordable to everyone.

Therefore, more funds should be allocated to public hospitals to strengthen the public health infrastructure so that they can equip themselves appropriately to handle such pandemics in the future, the committee suggested in the report.

It also recommended that learning from the experience of the pandemic, there is a need for a comprehensive public health act preferably at the national level with suitable legal provisions to support the Government in keeping checks and controls over the private hospitals "as there have been reports about the selling of hospital beds by them".

"And also keep a check on the black marketing of medicines and product standardisation." At the same time, the panel said it is also necessary to make people aware through campaigns on cheaper and effective repurposed medicines to prevent them from panicking and spending a huge amount of money on expensive drugs.

"The committee recommends that good quality and affordable medicines be provided to everyone, especially at a cheaper or subsidised rate to the marginalised sections of the society especially at the time of Pandemic like Covid-19," the report said.

## Shah lies about...

**From Page 1**

The three IPS officers --- an ADG, a DIG and an SP who were responsible for the security of BJP national president JP Nadda whose convoy was on December 10 attacked by alleged Trinamool Congress men were transferred on deputation to Central services. The matter has been taken by the State Government to the Supreme Court.

Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhanekar once again attacked the State Government for disregarding public interests in its bid to oppose Central schemes and politicising the police administration.

He said, "While the rest of India was moving in one direction and Bengal in the other" questioning the reason behind the State Government's decision to block the Central schemes providing monetary benefits to the farmers.

"It is difficult to understand why the Central schemes for farmers were blocked by the State Government," he said

adding "clashes between constitutional authorities are not desirable when the matter relates to public interests."

Ruing the "politicisation of police administration," he said that he had been a witness to the appointment of two dozen police officers that brazenly testified his claims.

On the conduct of elections he said, "I am not concerned with who win the elections but I am concerned with how the elections are conducted," reminding the state of affairs at Diamond Harbour area --- where Nadda's convoy was attacked by alleged TMC men.

Charging the District Magistrate for violating the protocol associated with a Governor's visit during his trip to Diamond Harbour, he said, "Diamond Harbour is not a personal fief of anyone... it belongs to the people of the country and Bengal," wondering how the Indian citizens could be regarded as outsiders in the State. He would not however name local MP and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mrs. Priti Gupta is the owner of Property No. C-51, area measuring 325 sq. yds., VIVEK Vihar, Phase-I, Delhi. The said property, by virtue of Sale Deed dated 04.05.2018, Registration No. 3703, executed by Mrs. Sarawati Devi Jain & Mrs. Madhu Jain, All persons are hereby informed that aforesaid owner want to take Home loan against this property from ICICI Bank Ltd. if anybody has any objection/s upon the said property and its ownership / Title / Mortgage, and any kind of objections, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.  
Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants) 200, 1st Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Mohi Nagar, N. Delhi-15 Ph: 011-41112527-29, surasaraswatiadvocates@gmail.com

**LOST & FOUND**  
Inform that All original Allotment letter dtd. 17/12/87, possession letter by Noida in fvr of M/s. Aristo, lease deed dtd 11/8/88, GPA dtd 24/7/93, ATS executed by Aristo in fvr of Ashok Kr. will executed by Aristo in fvr of Ashok K. regd property C-81, Sec. 23 Noida U.P. area 389 MTR have been lost. FIR LR NO. 902561/2015 dtd. 01/09/2015 by Rishi Kapoor s/o K.M. Kapoor. Finder may contact Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. CIN: L65110MH1985PLC038137, 7th Floor, Plot No.7, Sector - 125 Noida, Uttar Pradesh - 201313. Phone: 0120-6173761

**THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS**

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, CHHAVINDER KUMAR SHARMA S/o. SHRI MATADIN SHARMA R/o. M-1, G.S. Apartment, Sector-13, Rohini, Delhi-110085 have changed my name CHHAVINDER KUMAR SHARMA for all future purposes. PD(8842)C  
I Vishakha Jain Resident Rampuri Ghaziabad declare that Vishakha Goyal or Vishakha Jain Goyal or Vishakha Goyal Jain are the names of the same person that is myself. For all future purposes I should be known as Vishakha Jain PD(8843)A

# Farmers from UP, TN, Kerala join protest on 26th day

**STAFF REPORTER ■ GHAZIABAD**  
On the 26th day of farmers protest at Ghaziapur (UP gate) several farmers joined at the protest site. Theatre artist from Punjab also performed a nukkad natak at the protest site. Farmers from states, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala reached the site of the agitation on Monday. Addressing the farmers, the National Organizer, he Tamil Nadu Farmer Conservation Association, advocate Ishan said that the movement is not only for UP Punjab but also for farmers from all over India which is evident as farmers from Tamil Nadu and Kerala have arrived here to mark their protest against the centre new farm laws. He alleged that in Tamil

Nadu, the government imposes electric towers on the farmers' land and no compensation is paid to the farmers. Advocate Rajneesh Sharma, National Convener of Tower Line Association Awareness Forum from Himachal Pradesh, said that Anil Ambani's company and 10 other companies have installed high voltage power towers on farmers' land all over Himachal Pradesh. "The farmers have not received any compensation till date. The BJP had promised during the election that if our government comes, we will completely eliminate the problem of farmers but so far no action has been taken," he said. At the protest site, on Sunday night ragani was sang by singers, theatre artists from Punjab staged a play on the attitude of the farmers.



## Bidhuri takes out Kisan Kalyan Samarthan Yatra

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**  
Member of Parliament (MMP) from South Delhi Lok Sabha constituency, Ramesh Bidhuri took out the Kisan Kalyan Samarthan Yatra in Kalkaji, Sangam Vihar and Deoli Legislative Assembly on Monday. Bidhuri interacted the farmers and inform them about new farm laws. The Yatra started from ISKCON temple, passed through Kalkaji, Nehru Place, Govindpuri, Tughlakabad Extension and Sangam Vihar on Monday. Bidhuri addressed a public meeting in Govindpuri during the visit and said that, some political parties are engaged in finding their political land in the name of Kisan protest. Targeting Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the BJP leader said Kejriwal misled the people of Delhi and the country about the Farm Acts. "In the Delhi Legislative Assembly, he acted against the Constitution by tearing up copies of the Farm Laws. How can a Chief Minister tear a law

## Sanjeev Jha appointed Bihar AAP in-charge

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**  
Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Monday appointed senior leader and Burari MLA Sanjeev Jha as the State in-charge of Bihar and in-charge of AAP Delhi Purvanchal Organisation. Delhi Chief Minister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal congratulated Jha for his appointment. Jha said that he will work round the clock to ensure the work of the party in Bihar and strengthen the party in the state. "Congratulations and best wishes to u Sanjeev," tweeted Kejriwal. On the appointment, Jha said, "I want to thank Delhi Chief Minister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal for giving me this responsibility as the in-charge of Bihar. I will work round the clock to ensure the work of the party in Bihar and strengthen the party in the state." Jha was born on 01 August 1979 to a Hindu family in Sunderpur Bithhi Village, Madhubani district, Bihar State. In the February 2015 Delhi Assembly election, which resulted in a landslide victory for AAP, he was again elected from Burari. With over 67,950 votes. Later he appointed as Spokesperson and Prabhari of State Bihar and Jharkhand by Aam Aadmi Party. In 2016 Delhi Govt. Appoints him Parliamentary Secretary of Transport.

## Capital reports 1,091 fresh Covid cases

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**  
The national Capital reported 1,091 fresh cases on Monday and the daily positivity rate reached to 1.29 per cent. The COVID-19 situation in the national capital has improved in the last several days. According to the latest health bulletin the death toll rose to 10,304 with 27 new fatalities. The number of cases and

the single-day fatality count now indicate a marked improvement in the situation since the third wave of the pandemic had hit the city in November. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said that the national capital has now overcome the third wave of Covid-19 infections. The highest number of daily coronavirus tests is being conducted in the country, which is

even more than the US, Kejriwal said, adding that when New York reached its peak the patients were lying on the streets and corridors of hospitals, almost 7000 beds were lying vacant when the highest number of corona cases was reported in a day in Delhi. The highest single-day spike 8,593 cases till date was reported on November 11. On November 18, 7,486 COVID-19 cases were recorded

with 133 new fatalities, the highest single-day death count till date. However, on December 13 only 33 fatalities were recorded, the lowest since September 21, when it stood at 32. Soon after the third wave of the pandemic hit the national capital, daily cases had surged and containment zones count also kept mounting. The positivity rate which had stood at 8.23 per cent on

October 26 had spiralled to 15.26 per cent on November 8. However, since first week of November, the positivity rate has gradually fallen and the figure stood at 1.31 per cent on December 20, according to official data. The number of containment zones in Delhi has shown intermittent rise and fall in the last several days, with the figure standing at 5,843 on Monday.

## CM to Centre: Ban all flights from UK immediately

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**  
Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday urged the Union Government to ban flights from the United Kingdom where a new, infectious strain of the virus has been detected. New mutation of corona virus has emerged in UK, which is a super-spreader. I urge Central Govt to ban all flights from UK immediately," tweeted Kejriwal. Kejriwal's reaction came after Britain's health minister warned that a strict lockdown imposed on London and southeast England may last for months because the new strain was out of control.

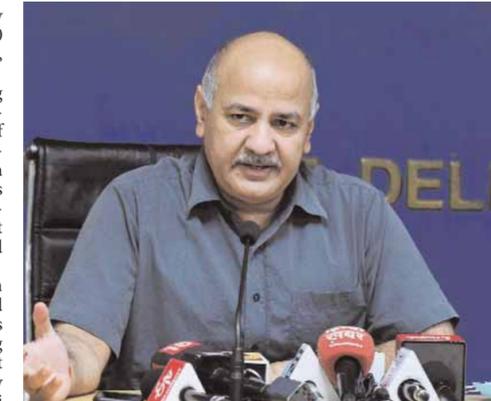


UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson also had announced on Saturday that millions must cancel Christmas plans and stay at home from Sunday. Pertinently, the new strain of the virus which has already accounted for one-third of the current cases in London is believed to be 70 percent infectious than the other strains in circulation.

## Sisodia lauds education team for good work during Covid

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**  
Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia lauded the education team in Delhi for carrying out good work during the Covid-19 crisis and extended his congratulations to the teachers and principals of Government Sarvodaya co-ed Vidyalaya, Sector 8 Rohini during his visit. Sisodia said, "This world is full of good people. This morning is a witness to that as we celebrate that goodness." The deputy chief minister said through the efforts of the school's Principal Awadhesh Kumar Jha and Vice Principal Bharti Kalra, 230 smartphones were collected for the students in need, with the help of the civil society. The smartphones were distributed to the students from class nine to class 12. Out of the 230 phones, 108 phones were

brought in by project Empathy run by Avika Diwan, a class 10 student of Shri Ram School, Aravalli (Gurugram). Sisodia while distributing the smartphones to the students said this was a symbol of the collective goodness of people coming together in such dire times. "The pandemic has had the worst impact on education. Schools had to be shut down, and classes were shifted online." Sisodia said, "Though nobody thought studies could be shifted online, our teachers stepped up despite not being trained for it. Our Government school teachers have not only made us proud but also Delhi proud by taking on the responsibility of carrying out these online classes well." Sisodia said that for a lot of students, not having a smartphone made it difficult for them to access their online



classes. With different organisations, volunteers, and citizens having stepped forward to mobilise getting phones to help the students, such contributions reflect the goodness of people. "Recently, one of our

team members on his grandfather's birthday also gifted 100 smartphones," he added. While praising the student Avika Diwan for her Project Empathy, Sisodia said, "The people of Delhi are proud of you, we are proud of you today." During his interaction with the students, Sisodia said that though each one of them would have a different career in their life, their goal should be one - to be a good person.

## Five arrested for running fake call centre

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**  
The Delhi Police has arrested five persons, including a woman for allegedly running a fake call center and duping people in northwest Delhi's Keshav Puram area. The accused have been identified as Mani Kartik (32), a resident of Keshav Puram and the kingpin of the racket, N Marimuttu (37), K Rahul (18), C Shiva (28), residents of Shakurpur, and Prachi Arora (20), a resident of Burari. According to Vijayanta Arya, the Deputy

Commissioner of Police (DCP), Northwest district, a complaint was received where the complainant alleged that he got calls from the unknown numbers where persons impersonated themselves as executives of online shopping websites. "The callers informed the complainant that he has been selected as lucky customer and won a car on the basis of his previous shopping. They offered him option to receive the car or cash. When he agreed to receive cash instead of car, they asked him for processing fee. The complainant deposited Rs 6,000 in the alleged account, but later he found it was suspicious and lodged the complaint," said the DCP. "During enquiry, the alleged bank account was found opened in the name of Arora. The call detail records of the alleged numbers were analyzed and a fake call center which was being operated at Keshav Puram came to notice. Thereafter, a raid was conducted and five persons were arrested," said the DCP. "Police recovered eight

mobile phones, eight ATM cards and 10 SIM cards from their possession. During investigation, it was also learnt that the alleged account was opened on October 21, 2020 and total transaction amount within a period of one month was found Rs 27 lakh," said the DCP. Explaining their modus operandi the DCP said that the accused persons called any data provider and asked them for providing data of the customers who recently purchased from online shopping portals. "Data is easily available from data providers for Rs 2 to

10 per mobile number. Thereafter, the accused used to call the victims impersonating themselves as executives of online shopping portals, the DCP said. "They induced victims with their lucrative schemes. The accused used to tell the victims that on the basis of their last shopping, they have been selected as lucky customers who won iron, LED TV, laptop, car etc. When the victim got influenced with their offers, the accused persons asked them to deposit processing fee," said the DCP.

## Min temp may rise in city

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**  
Due to western disturbances over Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh, the minimum temperature may increase in Delhi, the weatherman has predicted. According to SAFAR, the increased moisture in the air may increase the pollutants levels. The overall Air Quality Index (AQI) settled 329 at the National Ambient Air Quality Index (NAAQI) on Monday. According to SAFAR's short range forecast, the over-

all air quality recorded at the lower end of the Very Poor category. Surface-level winds measured low and South-westerly. "A gradual rise in minimum and maximum temperature likely in the Delhi region, however surface winds are likely to slow down and surface inversion likely to form. A sharp deterioration ventilation condition is forecasted for the next two days. Hence, AQI will be at the higher end of the Very Poor category on December 22nd likely to stay in the high end of Very Poor," it said. According to Central

Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data shows that at 7am on Monday, the hourly average air quality index (AQI) reading was 324, in the very poor zone. The overall air quality index (AQI) reading on Sunday was 321, categorised as very poor. On Saturday the air quality index (AQI) reading was 290, in the poor zone.

## SDMC announces Swachhhta ranking for its schools

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**  
In order to improve Swachhhta Survekshan Ranking-2021, South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) on Monday announced Swachhhta ranking for its schools. The nodal officer of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan Rajiv Jain said that the corporation is making all out effort to improve the ranking for next year hence decided to include SDMC schools. "The Corporation has surveyed a total of 112 primary schools in which parameters were cleanliness in class rooms, green area inside the school premises, use of blue and green dustbins, cleanliness of toilets, and awareness among teachers regarding sanitation, etc. After going through the survey, primary school of Vikaspuri and Tilak Nagar jointly topped the list," he said.

## 33 fresh dengue cases reported last week

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**  
With 33 fresh cases reported last week, the number of people infected with dengue has reached 1,259 this year. One new case of malaria and three cases of chikungunya were also reported in Delhi last week taking the total number to 319 and 126 respectively till December 12. According to the latest report released by all three Municipal Corporation, mosquito-breeding has been reported in at least 109447 households and 84625 legal notices have been issued this year. The dengue breeding checkers have checked 22734561 houses and also issued challans to 10364 numbers of office and residential premises. A senior SDMC official said that all the preventive steps have been taken to reduce the cases. "The key to prevention of Dengue is ensuring there is no clean stagnant water in homes and around, which does not allow the Aedes mosquitoes to breed, and therefore dengue cannot spread," he said. Dengue mosquito larvae breed in clear, standing water while those of malaria mosquito thrive even in dirty water. Doctors have advised people to take pre-

cautions and ensure that there is no breeding of mosquito larvae around them. They have urged people to wear full-sleeves clothes and use mosquito nets. Delhi Government had started an anti-dengue campaign this year and sought participation from the Resident Welfare Association (RWAs) of Delhi to contain the vector borne diseases in the National Capital. This year, the Delhi government has also launched a telephonic helpline - 01123300012 and WhatsApp helpline - 8595920530 to assist the general public with dengue.



## E-office system will be started in all Govt offices in G'gram

**STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM**  
E-office system will soon be implemented in all Government offices in Gurugram. Regarding this, the city magistrate Brahm Prakash said in a review meeting with the officials of the departments concerned and gave them necessary guidelines. During the meeting the city magistrate said that it is the priority of the state government to introduce an e-office system in government offices. With the introduction of this system, there will be transparency in government work, while the disposal of files will also be done in a relatively short time. Also, the files will not be lost. The magistrate directed the officers of all departments to prepare government e-mail IDs of their employees to deal with the files of their offices. The official said that in order to do the work of his office on the e-platform, it is necessary that all the offices have IDs on the National Informatics Centre (NIC), so that the e-office plat-

## BJP misusing public money, giving ads in newspapers: AAP

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**  
Senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and MCD in-charge SDurgesh Pathak on Monday said if the BJP-ruled Municipal Corporation has no money to pay the salary of the employees then from where do they get money to give advertisements in the newspapers justifying the Rs 2500 crore scam. The AAP leader said that the BJP is giving advertisements in newspapers by misusing public money received by Municipal Corporation as tax to avoid CBI investigation. Pathak said that today MCD employees have no food to eat and no money to pay the school fees of their children. He further said that the BJP has tried unsuccessfully to hide their corruption by installing hoarding-posters all over Delhi, salaries could have been given to employees by using these crores of rupees properly. The response came after Bharatiya Janata party allegedly gave advertisements to various newspapers clarifying stand on the Rs 2500 crore alleged scam of the BJP ruled MCD. "At one side the BJP claims that they do not have money to pay the employees of the BJP ruled MCD but on the other hand they are giving advertisement of crores of rupees to the newspapers. Where is this money coming from?"

form can be used while logging in from anywhere. During the meeting the magistrate said e-office is a management system built on a virtual platform. The officials of all departments should ensure that new noting or file is sent to the officers only through e-office. In case of any difficulty in coming to the office live, the officer concerned should contact NIC and implement this system in his office as soon as possible. A major advantage of digitisation is that approvals or observations from the officials for any work can be done at any time and files won't remain pending even if the concerned official is on leave," the City Magistrate said. "The use of an e-office system will save time while all the work can be completed in a paperless manner. The E-office system has been started in the Deputy Commissioner Office, City Magistrate Office, and SDM Office and the offices of the Revenue Department will start functioning on the e-platform," he added.

# Sharma lauds Modi Govt for boosting infra



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi reached out to dissenters within the party, senior party leader and former Commerce Minister Anand Sharma on Monday praised the Modi Government saying India had increased its infrastructure in recent years and congratulated the Centre and State Governments for working together towards it.

"India has increased its infrastructure and I congratulate central and state governments for it as they worked together for it. The country stood in the face of this crisis," Sharma said.

India made a comeback in the second quarter after the first quarter was the worst for the economy as the GDP was adversely hit, he said. "We

hope that in the remaining two quarters as well, the balance of recovery will be maintained," he added.

Sharma was a part of the group of 23 dissenters who wrote to party president Sonia Gandhi seeking a complete overhaul of the organisation within Congress. On Saturday, Sonia Gandhi held a meeting of all dissenters, including Sharma, with an aim to end the ongoing crisis.

Congress leaders including Rahul Gandhi have taken frequent jibes at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the state of the economy.

Last month, Sharma had to issue a clarification and amend his tweet when it was construed as praise for PM Narendra Modi.

"Prime minister Shri Narendra Modi visit to Serum Institute, Bharat Biotech and Zydus Cadilla was a recognition of Indian scientists and their work to produce the vaccine for COVID-19. That alone will lift morale of frontline warriors and reassure the nation," Sharma had tweeted after the PM's visit to vaccine centres.

# Vietnam an important pillar of India's Act East policy: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and Vietnam on Monday reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations as Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that Vietnam was an important pillar of India's Act East policy and significance of this partnership will increase next year when both the countries will be members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Addressing the India-Vietnam Virtual Summit, Modi said Vietnam is a vital partner of its Indo-Pacific Vision.

"Next year both of us will be members of the UN Security Council. So the significance of our cooperation in the global context will increase. We will implement a Joint Vision Document 2021-23 which is a plan of action for bilateral engagement," Prime Minister said as he held a virtual meeting with his Vietnam counterpart Nguyen Xuan Phuc on to discuss the strategic partnership between the two countries.

Both the leaders held discussions on defence, energy, healthcare, development partnership and economic revival plan post-covid19.

India's development and capacity building assistance to Vietnam through initiatives such as Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), ITEC and e-ITEC initiatives, PhD fellowships, as well as projects in water resource management in Vietnam's Mekong Delta region, SDGs, digital connectivity, and heritage conservation is also understood to have been discussed.

The two leaders reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations, discussions on regional and global issues of mutual interest.

In his opening remarks, Modi said, Vietnam is an important pillar of India's Act East Policy and vital partner of our Indo-Pacific Vision.

He said, the relation between India and Vietnam are growing rapidly and spreading to new areas. The Prime Minister said, India looks at the ties with Vietnam with long-term and strategic perspective. He said,



Indo-Vietnam cooperation can contribute to maintaining peace and stability in the region.

Modi said, peace, stability and prosperity in Indo-Pacific region is a common aim of both the nations.

Prime Minister expressed condolences on the loss of lives and property in central Vietnam due to floods and landslides, and expressed hope that the aid sent by India will be helpful. He said India and Vietnam have signed seven new agreements on areas such as defence, scientific research, nuclear and renewable energy, petrochemicals and other diverse.

Earlier in February, Vietnam vice president Dang Thi Ngoc Thinh visited India on an official visit while Modi and Phuc had a telephone exchange in April to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Battle intensifies between Mamata, Modi Govt on PM-KISAN scheme

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With the Assembly elections knocking at the door, the political battle between Mamata Banerjee Government and the Modi Government further intensified on the issue of PM-KISAN scheme.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written to the Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar seeking transfer of funds to the State administration for the implementation of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme. Banerjee wants the funds to be routed to farmers through her government. According to Banerjee, more than 73 lakh farmers are to be benefitted under the scheme.

"After disbursement of funds, a list of beneficiaries will be sent to you (centre) for your information," said Banerjee in her letter.

The centre had already rejected West Bengal's request to not pay farmers directly under the PM-Kisan scheme but routing it through the state government saying the scheme is based on idea of direct benefit transfer to farmers' account and "routing money through state government would be against the spirit of the scheme".

Under this scheme, a total income support of ₹6,000 per year is provided in three equal instalments to farmers. In the

beginning the families of only the small and marginal farmers (those having a combined land holding/ownership of up to 2 hectares) were eligible. Later, from June 2019, the scheme was extended to all farmers irrespective of the size of their landholding. The scheme, however, is yet to be implemented in West Bengal.

In a letter to Tomar, Banerjee emphasised that the decision of the central government on implementation of the scheme in West Bengal and transferring the requisite fund to the state government for onward disbursement to the farmers through the state government machinery is "still awaited".

The letter further states, "Decision of the central government on implementation of the scheme in West Bengal and transferring the requisite fund to the State Government for onward disbursement to the farmers through the State Government machinery is still awaited. The State Government is already implementing a scheme of direct fund transfer to the farmers including the sharecroppers with death benefit scheme as had been enumerated in my letter under reference".

Banerjee has urged the Government to arrange transfer the requisite fund to the State Government for onward disbursement with full responsibility to the farmer beneficiaries

of the State through state government machinery. Banerjee further requested Tomar to "kindly recall" the letter written by her on September 9, 2020 regarding PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme in which, the TMC supremo had said that the scheme will be implemented in West Bengal "if the funds are routed through the state government".

On September 9, the chief minister had written to the Union agriculture minister expressing her desire to be an intermediary for the farmers as a condition to join the PM-KISAN. In West Bengal, 96 per cent of these farmers fall under the small and marginal categories, much worse than the national average of 86.2 per cent according to the 10th agriculture census of 2015-16.

The Centre earlier appealed to her on a number of occasions, including one when the Union agriculture minister, on February 24, 2020, made a public request to join the scheme on its first anniversary.

PM-KISAN was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 24, 2019, when Rs 2021 crore was transferred to bank accounts of more than 10 million beneficiaries. The Government so far has disbursed ₹93,000 crore to farmers since launch of the scheme in February 2019.

# Political leaders condole death of Motilal Vora



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Political leaders cutting across party lines condole the death of veteran Congress leader Motoilal Vora who passed away on Monday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was saddened by his death and remembered him as a leader with vast administrative and organisational experience.

"Shri Motilal Vora Ji was among the senior-most Congress leaders, who had vast administrative and organisational experience in a political career that spanned decades. Saddened by his demise. Condolences to his family and well-wishers. Om Shanti," the PM tweeted.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra termed Vora a true Congressman and a wonderful human being. "Vora ji was a true congressman and a wonderful human being. We will miss him very much. My love & condolences to his family and friends," Rahul tweet-

ed. Deputy Chairperson Rajya Sabha and several union Ministers and Chief Ministers across the country recalled their memories with Vora who spent more than six decades of political journey.

A former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh and a former governor of Uttar Pradesh, Vora, a Gandhi family loyalist, was known for his relations across political spectrum.

In a party reshuffle carried out by Congress president Sonia Gandhi in September this year, Vora was not given any party responsibility in view of his advancing age.

A journalist by profession, he worked with Navbharat Times as its correspondent in Bombay (now Mumbai), then served with Navbharat in Nagpur and Raipur and later with Nagpur Times in Nagpur.

A two-term Madhya Pradesh chief minister - first from 1985 to 1988 and later in 1989, Vora also served as the union health minister in the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's cabinet in 1988-89. He retired as a Rajya Sabha member from Chhattisgarh in April this year.

During his four terms in the Rajya Sabha, Vora was appreciated for his attendance and participation.

Congress leaders would often quote Vora's tips for discretion which made him ideal

for the AICC treasurer's post. As AICC treasurer, Vora apart from managing the finances of the grand old party would also decide on allocating the rooms at the party headquarters at Delhi's 24, Akbar Road.

It was well-known in party circles that Vora kept a strict vigil on the party functionaries at the Congress office.

Former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Mayawati made it a point to greet the veteran Congress leader whenever she saw him in the Rajya Sabha. It was Vora who had recommended removal of Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav from the chief minister's post on June 3, 1995, a day after the infamous "Guest House" episode.

Armed SP leaders and workers tried to assault Mayawati who locked herself in a room in a bid to escape the attack.

On the same day, Mayawati took oath as the chief minister with the outside support of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Janata Dal.

Vora would often recall his "bumpy" car journey that led to greater familiarity with former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee while on a tour from Lucknow to a remote village in the state during his term as the Uttar Pradesh Governor from 1993-19

# CBI books Gujarat-based Siddhi Vinayak Logistics Ltd for cheating Union Bank

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has booked Gujarat-based Siddhi Vinayak Logistics Ltd and its promoters in a bank fraud case for defrauding Union Bank to the tune of over ₹100 crore.

The CBI registered the case following a complaint from the Union Bank of India dated December 17 under Indian Penal Code Sections relating to cheating, forgery and presenting forged documents as genuine among others besides provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Besides the firm, those named in the FIR are Roopchand Baid, Laxmidevi Baid, Rajkumar Baid, Deepak Kumar Baid, unknown public servants and unknown persons.

"Siddhi Vinayak Logistics Ltd. And other accused persons during the period from September 2012 to October 2015 were party to a criminal conspiracy to cheat the Union Bank of India and in pursuance to the criminal conspiracy, the accused directors/guarantors of the firm induced Union Bank of India to sanction term loans to SVLL and disburse aggregate loan amount of ₹102 crore for purchase of 337 commercial vehicles," the reads the FIR.

The loan account of the

# Min releases revised CBI Crime Manual

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh on Monday released revised CBI Crime Manual in an official event. The event was attended by CBI Director Rishi Kumar Shukla and others including senior officers of the agency.

Singh congratulated the CBI for bringing out the updated CBI Crime Manual after fifteen years by keeping sight of latest developments in law, investigation techniques and procedures.

company became stressed due to non-payment interest and instalments during June 2014.

The period crime mentioned in the FIR is September 2012 to October 2015 and loan accounts were subsequently declared as Non-Performing Assets.

# Modi to deliver inaugural address at IISF today



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver the inaugural address at the India International Science Festival (IISF) 2020 on December 22 via video conferencing. The Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Earth Sciences in association with Vijnana Bharati (VIBHA) conceptualized the mega science event to promote scientific temper in society.

"In the pandemic when a lot of excitement seems to have come to a halt, it is science and technology that is keeping the spirits high. One such live example is IISF 2020 where science can be experienced virtually.

"We have events where students can go for virtual tours, 3D exhibitions, virtual events, panel discussions, lectures and many more. There are 41 events and everyone is welcome in the event," said Dr Ranjana Aggarwal, Director, CSIR-National Institute of Science, Technology and

Development Studies (NISTADS), New Delhi.

She was addressing at J C Bose University of Science and Technology, YMCA during the curtain raiser of the event recently.

Dr Aggarwal elaborated on the various events and their scopes and briefed about how students can be benefitted with the programs at the ease of sitting at their homes but without missing the real science.

"When the pandemic happened, we thought it will get over in few months and we will be able to conduct the program like we did last year. But by September it became clear that it won't be possible for us to conduct it physically, then we thought of conducting it at virtual platforms" said Jayant Sahasrabudhe, National Organizing Secretary, VIBHA.

He explained that IISF is involving global and overseas Indian researchers and academics, beyond the barriers of time and borders. He said that despite the corona out-

break the number of events has been increased and there is a plan to increase it in the consecutive festivals.

Information on various activities related to the Science Festival and registration of partners is available on the IISF website www.scienceindiafest.org, said an official from the Science and Technology Ministry.

Launched in 2015, the IISF is a celebration to promote science and technology. It aims to engage the public with science, celebrate the joy of science and show how Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) can provide solutions to improve lives, he said.

The goal of the IISF 2020 is to help youth develop 21st-century skills, with a focus on scientific knowledge, creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork. A long-term objective is to encourage students to study and work in scientific fields, the official added.

# NIA arrests 17 SDPI, PFI activists in KG Halli Police Station riot case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday arrested 17 SDPI/PFI leaders/activists for their involvement in the violent attack and large scale rioting at KG Halli Police Station, Bengaluru on August 11 after a controversial Facebook post by the nephew of Congress MLA of Pulakeshi Nagar, Bengaluru.

The case was originally registered as FIR No .229/2020, PS KG Halli, dated August 12 and was re-registered as RC-35/2020/NIA/DLI on September 21 by NIA.

"Investigation so far has revealed that the SDPI (Social Democratic Party of India) leaders, namely, Md. Shariq, President, Bengaluru District, SDPI, Imran Ahmed, President, KG Halli Ward, along with other senior leaders like Rubah Waqas, Shabbar Khan and Shaik Ajmal had conducted meetings at Thanissandra and KG Halli wards in Bengaluru in the evening of 11.8.2020 wherein they conspired,

mobilised and led the crowd gathered at KG Halli Police station to attack the police personnel, causing huge damage to the public and police station vehicles," the NIA said in a statement.

Likewise, accused Abbas, SDPI President of Nagwara ward had also mobilised large crowds at the KG Halli police station through his associates Azil Pasha, Irfan Khan and Akbar Khan, the agency said.

Investigation also revealed the use of social media channels like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp to spread terror among people and mobilised people from far away places to gather at KG Halli Police Station. Accused Saddam, Sayed Sohel, Kaleemulla alias Shahrulkh Khan were active social media users who participated in riots as well as instigated others to gather at the police station, it said.

Till so far, as many as 187 accused persons have been arrested in connection with the case. Further investigation is continuing in the case, it added.

# Population of leopards in India rises to 12,852: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The population of leopards in India has increased from 7,910 to 12,852, up by 60 per cent in four years since 2014, according to a report 'Status of Leopard in India 2018', released by Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar on Monday.

"India now has 12,852 leopards as compared to the previous estimate of 7,910 conducted in 2014. The States of Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra recorded the highest leopard estimates at 3,421, 1,783 and 1,690 respectively," Javadekar said as he remarked that monitoring of the tiger in India has clearly shown its umbrella role in the ecosystem, which has shed light on other charismatic species like the leopard.

"India's world record tiger survey also estimated the population of leopards and the tiger range was found the home to 12,852 (12,172-13,535) leopards. They occur in prey rich protected areas as well as multi-use forests.

"A total of 5,240 adult individual leopards were identified



in a total of 51,337 leopard photographs using pattern recognition software. The statistical analysis estimates the leopard population at -12,800 leopards within the tiger's range," said a statement issued by the Union Environment Ministry later.

The ministry claimed that the tiger has not only served as an umbrella species but even its monitoring has helped evaluate the status of other species, like the leopard which are among the most adaptable carnivores, and are known to exist very close to human habitations.

A study earlier this year had found four distinct sub-populations of leopards in India with high genetic variations - leopards of the Western Ghats, the Deccan Plateau semi-arid region, the Shivalik mountains, and the Terai region in North India.

ation, the highest number of 8,071 leopards were found in central India and eastern ghats, which include the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

In the western ghat region, which comprises Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Goa and Kerala, there are 3,387 leopards while there are 1,253 leopards in Shivalik and Gangetic Plains which includes Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Bihar. In the northeast hills, there are just 141 leopards.

"The leopard was estimated across forested habitats in tiger range areas of the country but other leopard occupied areas such as non-forested habitats (coffee and tea plantations and other land uses from where leopards are known to occur), higher elevations in the Himalayas, arid landscapes and a majority of North East landscape were not sampled and, therefore, the population estimation should be considered as the minimum number of leopards in each of the landscapes," the Ministry said.

# 'Meri Sangh Yatra' by Sangh worker Om Prakash Garg released

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A book 'Meri Sangh Yatra' by Sangh Worker Om Prakash Garg was released by Sah Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosbale and Akhil Bharatiya Sah Sampark Pramukh Ramlal of RSS. Director General of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi was also present.

On the occasion, Dattatreya Hosbale said that several books in different languages have been published about the Sangh but every book has its own importance. When a Sangh worker writes a book, that book not only encloses his experiences but also his feelings.

He said that this book is a document of Sangh for future generations.

While Ramlal said that RSS cannot be understood merely by listening about it but by observing it, the author Om Prakash Garg, said that this book is not an autobiography but is a compilation of the inspiration to work, which he got by joining the Sangh and the society.

# PIL in SC to establish special anti-corruption Courts in every district

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

APIL seeking to establish special anti-corruption courts in every district to decide cases related to various economic offences like money laundering and tax evasion within one year has been filed in the Supreme Court.

The PIL filed by BJP leader and advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay has also sought directions to high courts to take appropriate steps to decide cases related economic offences.

The petition has made the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Law and Justice, and various states and Union territories parties in the case.

The PIL, filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey, contended that due to long pendency and ineffective anti-corruption laws, India has never been ranked among the top 50 in the Corruption Perception Index. The Centre and state governments have also not taken appropriate steps in this regard, the petition said.



None of the welfare schemes and government departments are corruption-free, it said.

"Due to long pendency and ineffective anti-corruption laws, even after 73 years of independence and 70 years after becoming a socialist secular democratic republic, none of our districts are free from cases related to black money, benami property, disproportionate assets, bribery, money laundering, tax evasion and similar other economic offences," the petition said.

India's anti-corruption laws are very weak and ineffective and fail to control corruption, and even the Benami Transactions Act, passed in 1988, is gathering dust without action, it said.

# After wife joins TMC, BJP MP threatens to divorce her

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The weird poaching contest between the Bharatiya Janata Party and Trinamool Congress has reached the bedrooms of politicians with Bishnupur BJP MP Soumitra Khan on Monday threatening to divorce his wife Sujata Mondal Khan for joining the Bengal ruling outfit barely two days after dozens of TMC leaders led by ace Mamata Banerjee aide and former Minister Suvendu Adhikari joining the saffron fold.

Sujata who was instrumental in her husband's win from Bishnupur constituency earlier joined the TMC in presence of senior leader Sougato Roy and Kunal Ghosh explained her volte face saying despite the hard work she did for her party there was no recognition coming her way. Besides she expressed her dislike for a situation where BJP

could put up no Chief Minister candidate. She said, "it is difficult for me to work for a party which has six probable names for the CM post and 13 others for that of deputy CM... You cannot talk about Narendra Modi all the time because he is your Prime Minister and cannot come to Bengal to work as the Chief Minister."

She had singlehandedly crafted the victory of her husband a former TMC MP who had then freshly joined the BJP. As his entry was barred in Bishnupur for various reasons it was Sujata who logged it out ensuring him get more than 6 lakh votes. Minutes after wife she joined the TMC her husband said "she is doing a big mistake" and asked her to change her decision or else he would send her a divorce notice.

Khan, also State BJP youth wing president, said, "I concede

that you had worked hard to ensure my victory but asking for posts in lieu of that is not acceptable as the BJP does not believe in kinship politics" reminding her how the TMC had victimized her by taking her job and through other means when she was campaigning for him.

"This is my appeal to you to remove my surname 'Khan' from your name," he said saying how "when you lost your job due to Mamata Banerjee or Abhishek Banerjee I transferred 50% of my salary to your account every month... so that you don't have to ask for it... Now you have joined hands with those who had harmed you in past." Almost bursting into tears the MP said "every family has its fights. But, you have chosen politics over family to feed your high ambitions... and in doing so they have trapped you making you to do a big mistake.

# NCB again grills Arjun Rampal in Bollywood-drug mafia link case

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Actor Arjun Rampal was on Monday grilled for the second time in five weeks in connection with the ongoing investigations into the Bollywood-drug mafia nexus case.

Rampal, who had been questioned for eight-long hours earlier by the NCB on November 13, was grilled once again by the investigating agency, this time around over the doctor's prescription for psychiatric medicines submitted by him to the investigating agency.

The NCB is examining if the doctor's prescription for psychiatric medicines produced by the actor is genuine or fake. Unconfirmed reports said that the actor had obtained the doctor's prescription through a friend from a New Delhi-based doctor. The investigating agency had found some psychiatric medicines during the raids it had conducted on Rampal's Bandra residence in north-west Mumbai on November 9.

The NCB had earlier summoned Rampal for questioning on December 16. However, the actor had sought a week's time from the NCB to appear before it for questioning. Rampal arrived at the NCB's office for questioning on Monday morning. The actor may be arrested, if the agency finds evidence to suggest the doctor's prescription submitted by him is fake.

Among other things, 47-year-old Rampal is being investigated for his links with South African national Agisialos Demetriades, the brother of actor's live-in friend Gabriella Demetriades and Australian-architect friend Paul Bartel, both of whom were arrested earlier with the Bollywood-drug mafia nexus case.

Agisialos was arrested by the NCB from Lonavala near Pune on October 19. Agisialos is alleged to be a part of a larger drug syndicate operating in Bollywood, which is being

investigated after the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. Bartel, an architect by profession who resides at Bandra in north-west Mumbai, was arrested on November 13. The actor has known Bartel for a long time. He used to be a regular touch with Agisialos Demetriades, the brother of actor's live-in friend Gabriella Demetriades.

The NCB's investigations have revealed that Agisialos is in touch with Omega Godwin, a Nigerian national who had earlier been arrested for supply of cocaine in Mumbai. During his custodial interrogation, Godwin had named Agisialos. Earlier, ex-

Dharma Productions employee Kshitij Prasad had earlier been arrested by the NCB in connection with the Sushant Singh Rajput's death-related drug case and expanded Bollywood-drug nexus case.

Sushant, it may be recalled, was found hanging from a ceiling fan in his closed room of his duplex flat at Mont Blanc building at Bandra's Carter Road in north-west Mumbai on June 14.

Incidentally, the raid on Rampal's residence came a day after the NCB officials carried out searches at film producer Firoz A. Nadiadwala's residence along Gulmohar Cross Road at Juhu Vile Parle Development (JVPD) Scheme in north-west Mumbai. During the searches, the NCB sleuths seized a total of 717.1 gm of Ganja, 74.1 gm charas and 95.1 gm MD (Commercial Quantity) along with Rs 3,58,610. They also seized 10 gm of Ganja from another accused Wahid Abdul kadir Sheikh @ Sultan.

After the seizure of drugs and cash, the NCB officials arrested five persons, including Firoz A. Nadiadwala's wife Shabana Saeed.

More than 25 persons —including Sushant's girlfriend Rhea Chakrabarty and her brother Showik— have been arrested and a large number of persons have been questioned in connection with a case registered by the NCB on August 28, two days after it registered a case suo moto. Subsequently, Rhea was granted conditional bail by the Bombay High Court in the Sushant death-related drug case on October 7, 2020.

As part of the investigations, the NCB had earlier questioned Bollywood's prominent actresses Deepika Padukone, Sara Ali Khan, Shraddha Kapoor and Rakul Preet Singh.

The agency had also arrested television comedian Bharti Singh and her husband Harsh Limbachiya. It has also issued summons to film-maker Karan Johar.

# Mission-200 our goal in Assembly polls, says DMK

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The constituents of the DMK-led alliance in Tamil Nadu are upset and shocked over the declaration made by M K Stalin, president, DMK, that his party would not be content with even one seat less than 200 in the upcoming Assembly election.

"Our goal is Mission-200. Through we can form the government by winning 117 of the 234 seats in the Assembly, we are contesting not to secure just 117 seats. We cannot content with even one seat less than 200. Our aim is to win 200 seats on our own and that's why we have this Mission-200 programme," declared while addressing the party workers across the State on Sunday.

Stalin reminded the party workers that the DMK-led alliance had won 38 out of the 39 seats from the State in the 2019 Lok Sabha election and the party workers should repeat the performance in the assembly election too.

Political commentator Kolahala Srenivasan told The Pioneer that Stalin may find the Mission-2000 tough. "Since 1996 Assembly election, the DMK has never crossed the three-digit mark. It is going to be a tough task for him to realize this dream," said Srenivasan.

If Stalin is serious about Mission-200 in the 2021 elec-

tion, his alliance partners that include the Congress, CPI(M), CPI, VCK, MDMK, MMK and other fringe groups may have to content with the remaining 34 seats. There are reports that the DMK is in talks with the Vanniyar dominated PMK which is right now with the AIADMK-led front.

In the last Assembly election the DMK had contested 178 seats leaving 40 seats to the Congress, five seats to the Muslim League and nine seats to fringe groups. Since then, the CPI(M), CPI, VCK and MDMK, have joined the DMK camp and this would make it difficult for the Dravidian major to contest even 178 seats which it had set apart for itself

in the last assembly election, points out a senior Congress leader. He said the Congress would not settle for anything less than 40 seats.

The DMK is launching the 2021 election campaign on Wednesday. Party's ordinary workers will undertake villages in their areas with the slogan "We reject the AIADMK". Stalin himself would hit the campaign trail from January onwards. The DMK chief is upset over the possibility of matinee idol Rajinikanth playing spoilsport in the assembly election as he reportedly told party workers that the entry of film stars into politics was only with the objective of ensuring that the DMK does

not win the election.

This was in contrast to what the DMK's second in command M K Kanimozhi, (Stalin's step-sister and former chief minister Karunanidhi's lone daughter by his third wife Rajathi) had told last week in Coimbatore. "The DMK is not at all ruffled.

The actor has announced the launch of his party for January 2021. I can say that it will not impact the DMK's victory and you can be sure that Stalin will be the next chief minister," Kanimozhi had told the media during her campaign in Coimbatore on December 6. The volte-face by the party leadership within a fortnight is interesting.

address, special attention is being given to avoid the internet, screen and any other interference. During the program, a large number of police will be deployed in the AMU campus and its surroundings, including PAC and RAF. Police will also do patrolling in the city. The intelligence department has been activated and input is being collected for expected protest. Those who create disturbances will be strictly dealt with.

The centenary program will start on December 22 at 10 am. Its link has been released on the virtual card from AMU. PNS

# AMU campus readies for centenary celebrations

Aligarh: The police administration has started their preparations for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's virtual address at AMU on centenary celebration. Stringent arrangements are being made by coordinating with the AMU Administration. Close monitoring will also be done on the AMU campus and sensitive places in the city to avoid interference during the address. SP City Kuldeep Singh Gunawat told that the meeting is going on with the AMU administration regarding the program. Systems are being finalized after discussing every point. During PM Modi's

# AKTC faculty of AMU welcomes PM's participation

Aligarh: We welcome the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi Ji to be a part of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) centenary celebrations, and sincerely hope that his presence will help in the quantum jump in the overall progress and development of AKTC and the Faculty of Unani Medicine. "The Prime Minister has laid special emphasis on traditional medicine and we are sure that his participation in the centenary programme as the Chief Guest will go a long way in the further improvement of facilities and infrastructure of the Tibbia College," said Prof Saud Ali Khan (Principal, AKTC).

Across the State, 2,80,375 people were under observation in various places

With coronavirus case numbers on Monday seeing a lower trend as fewer samples get tested on a Sunday, Kerala registered 3,423 new infections from 34,847 samples. In a statement issued here, state Health Minister K.K.Shailaja also said that the day saw 4,494 people turn negative, taking the number of cured to 6,45,779, while there were 60,504 active cases. A total of 27 deaths were reported taking the death toll to 2,843. Across the state, 2,80,375 people were under observation in various places which included 13,610 people in hospitals. The state had 457 hotspots. IANS

# HC gives bail to man who offered namaaz in temple in Mathura

IANS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Allahabad High Court has granted bail to Faisal Khan, who was arrested for offering namaaz on the premises of the Nand Baba temple in Mathura district.

The court however, directed Khan not to use the social media till the conclusion of the trial.

Justice Siddharth allowed the bail application observing that "having considered the material on record, larger mandate of the Article 21 (Protection of life and personal liberty) of the Constitution of India and the dictum of apex court in the case of Dataram Singh Vs. State of Uttar Pradesh and another, reported in (2018) 3 SCC 22 and without expressing any opinion on the merits of the case, applicant can be released on bail".

In Dataram Singh's case, the Supreme Court had held that "grant of bail is a general rule and putting a person in jail or in a prison or in correction home during trial is an exception and presumption of innocence, i.e. person is believed to be innocent until found guilty, is fundamental postulate of criminal jurisprudence. It is not necessary to go into the correctness or otherwise of the allegations made against the accused as this is a subject matter to be dealt with by the trial judge".

# Maha imposes night curfew in Mumbai, other cities till Jan 5

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In what will put a virtual stop to the Christmas and New Year-eve celebrations in Mumbai and other major cities in the state, the Maharashtra Government on Monday announced the imposition of 14-day-long night curfew from December 22 in the metropolitan and other Municipal Corporation areas in the state, following the detection of a new strain of the SARS-CoV-2 in the United Kingdom.

Amid news reports that a distinct phylogenetic cluster of SARS-CoV-2 that causes Covid-19 has been detected and it is spreading rapidly in the United Kingdom, Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray reviewed the pandemic situation in the state and announced night curfew between 11 pm to 6 am, from December 22 to January 5, 2021.

At a high-level meeting chaired by the chief minister and attended among others by state chief secretary Sanjay Kumar, Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh and other top officials, the Maharashtra government also decided to quarantine compulsorily all passengers arriving in Maharashtra, particularly Mumbai, from UK, Europe and Middle East, as a precaution.

"In view of the detection of a new deadly virus in the UK,

we will have to be extremely vigilant over the next 15 days. Accordingly, we have imposed night curfew in all municipal corporation areas till January 5," Uddhav said.

"The new strain of Covid-19 detected in Britain is spreading rapidly. Its severity will be known in the coming days. Therefore, Beginning today, we are taking extra-precautions. There will be a thorough check-up of passengers arriving in the state from international flights," the chief minister said.

Uddhav said that the passengers who have either arrived or will arrive from all European countries and Central-East Countries will be quarantined at various institutions for 14-days. These passengers will undergo an RT-PCR test on the 5th or 7th day. They will be allowed to go home after their 14-day period gets over.

The Chief Minister directed the municipal commissioners across the state to make arrangements of hotels and Independent hospitals where the international flights arrive in municipal jurisdiction.

"Passengers arriving from non-European countries will be stamped on their hand and home quarantined. All the workers who will undertake check-up of passengers arriving from European countries and Central-East countries will be provided PPE kits at the airports," Uddhav said.

# Preparations going on to welcome Christmas

Aligarh: There is great enthusiasm from elders to children to celebrate the birth of Lord Jesus. Christmas is celebrated every year on 25 December all over the world. The tune of Jingle Bell - Jingle Bell has started in the gift galleries of the markets with different kinds of decorative items including Christmas trees decorations are also being purchased here. Santa Claus dresses are also the center of attraction. The bells will start ringing at 12 night on 24th December on the birth of Lord Jesus. People will greet each other after cutting the cake. The next day prayers will be held in the churches at 10 am. PNS

# Hathras victim's family wants to move to Delhi

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ HATHRAS

The girl's relatives, who have been saying not to leave Boolgadhi, now want to leave Hathras. The family members have felt that the accused will get severe punishment after filing a chargesheet in the Special Court under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act of Hathras by the CBI.

The father of the deceased said that CBI has found out the truth. Now the accused will be punished severely, but seeing the atmosphere of the village, they want to leave Hathras and go to Delhi. They also want the transfer of the case from here to Delhi. They said that people

# 30 cities of Bihar to get tap water in 3 next three months

Patna: The Urban and Housing Development Ministry of Bihar has claimed that it will provide tap water to every household in 30 cities in the next three months. Providing tap water to every household is an ambitious project of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and it has also been included in the 'Saat Nishchay Programme' of the state government. A senior official from the ministry, on condition of

# Kerala records 3,423 new Covid cases, 27 deaths

around the village were accusing them of killing their daughter. The CBI found out the truth by interrogating relatives other than the family. The exercise began to get a copy of the charge sheet filed by the CBI. Lawyers of both sides were preparing for this. They want to know what charges have been mentioned in the charge sheet and what evidences have been given. The CBI has filed a charge sheet of murder and gang rape against Sandeep, Ramu, Ravi and Lavkush of the famous Bulgadhi case. All the four accused are in Aligarh Jail. The charge sheet has been prepared based on the victim's last statement.

was very difficult to replace the old pipelines with the new ones in some cities like Patna, Muzaffarpur, Gaya as they are ancient and developed in an unplanned way, the official added. Citing the problem in Muzaffarpur, the official said that earlier the proposal was to complete the project in Rs 98 crore but the amount was not adequate so the authority has released more funds now. IANS

**WESTERN RAILWAY**  
**INTERLOCKING OF LC & TRACK WORKS**  
 Executive: DEN (Central) BCT. Tender Notice No. 1.BCT/20-21/289 dtd. 21-12-2020. Work and location: Udhna-Jalgaon section : Interlocking of LC No. 21 between Gandadhara-Bardoli. Approx. cost of work: ₹32, 81,611.57. EMD: ₹65,600/-. Date & Time of submission: On 19.01.2021 at 15:00 hrs. Date & Time of opening: On 19.01.2021 at 15:30 hrs. Executive: DEN (East) BCT. Tender Notice No. 2. BCT/20-21/290 dtd. 21-12-2020. Work and location: Udhna-Jalgaon section : TBR Plain track, P&C, T.FTR, CTR, CRR and TTR under ADEN-Nandurbar jurisdiction in connection of sanctioned track works for year 2020-21. Approx. cost of work: ₹15,72,63,162.96. EMD: ₹9,36,300/-. Date & Time of submission: On 27.01.2021 at 15:00 hrs. Date & Time of opening: On 27.01.2021 at 15:30 hrs. Regarding detailed nature of work, containing copy of tender document (Non-Refundable), EMD, eligibility criteria, similar nature of work, detailed tender conditions please visit [www.irreps.gov.in](http://www.irreps.gov.in). Manual offer will not be considered. 0515  
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**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECH. CITY DRAINAGE DIVISION SRINAGAR**  
 Email address: [exenmcdsmcsgn@gmail.com](mailto:exenmcdsmcsgn@gmail.com), Contact No. 0194-2503097

**CORRIDGIUM**  
 Subject:- Procurement of vehicle mounted manhole desilting machine.  
 Ref:- This office N.I.T.NO:CDM\_E\_07\_OF\_2020-21, DATED:- 03-12-2020.  
 Please read as under in respect of above mentioned NIT.

Reference	Instead of	Read as
<b>Annexure "A" Technical Specifications:-</b>	i. Four wheeled Vehicle TATA ACE Gold (BS-VI). The Vehicle shall be as per Indian Motor Vehicle Act. And as per company standard, complete in all respects.	i. Four wheeled Vehicle diesel version, TATAACE Gold (BS-VI). The Vehicle shall be as per Indian Motor Vehicle Act. And as per company standard, complete in all respects.
<b>A) Vehicle:-</b>		
<b>Annexure "A" Technical Specifications:-</b>	iv. The hydraulic pump of the hydraulic system shall be Dowty Vickers/ IPH (Iltay) make and control valve of Bucher V-Tech/IPH (Iltay) make.	iv. The hydraulic pump of the hydraulic system shall be Dowty Vickers/ IPH (Iltay) make and control valve of Bucher V-Tech/IPH (Iltay)/Walvoil make.
<b>B) Hydraulically operated desilting equipment:-</b>		

**All other terms and condition shall remain same as laid down in the main N.I.T.**  
 NO. CDM/1328 Dated: 19.12.2020  
 No. DIPK- 10745/20 Dated:-21.12.2020

**EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECH. CITY DRAINAGE DIVISION SGR.**

**Govt. of Bihar**  
**Bihar State Electronics Development Corporation Ltd.**  
 (A Government of Bihar Undertaking)  
 Beltron Bhawan, Shastri Nagar, Patna-800023  
 Telephone No. 0612-2281242 Tele Fax No. 0612-2281857  
 CIN No. - U31900BR19785GC001317  
 Email: [mdbeltron@bihar.gov.in](mailto:mdbeltron@bihar.gov.in)  
 Notice No. - BSEDC/7655/2020  
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BSEDC Limited, also known as BELTRON, a State Designated Agency for IT & e-Governance Projects, proposes to fill up one post of General Manager (Projects) on deputation basis from suitable officers working in other Central/State Government Departments/PSUs or on contractual basis from suitable retired officers not below the rank of Deputy Secretary from Central/State Government Departments/PSUs.

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**PR. No. 009905 (Ni.Ni) 2020-21**

**Managing Director**

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 चाय सम्मूही - सर्वोत्तम किस्मि तराक की जानकारी अथवा सुझाव हेतु दूरभाष संख्या 0612-2217636 पर सम्पर्क किया जा सकता है।

Date : 22-12-2020, Place : Delhi

Sd/-, Authorized Officer, Axis Bank Ltd.

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 Expressway, Jaypee Greens Wishtown, Noida (U.P.)-201301. Corporate Office: 'Axis House', Block-B, Bombay Dyeing Mills Compound, Pandurang Budhkar Marg, Worli, Mumbai-400025  
 Registered Office: 'Trishul', 3rd floor, opposite Samartheswar Temple, Law Garden, Ellisbridge, Ahmedabad-380006

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Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Axis Bank Ltd. under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notice upon the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagee(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 90 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagee(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagee(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates.

The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagee(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Axis Bank Ltd. The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagee(s) attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of Borrower / Co-borrower	Description of Property	1. Date of Demand Notice	2. Date of Possession	3. Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)
1. M/S GLEAM FABMAT LIMITED Regd. Office at 5504/15, Basti Harphool Singh, Sadar Bazar Delhi-110006 2. Mrs. Pushpa Gupta W/O Shri Anil Kumar Gupta Director, Guarantor & Mortgagee M/S GLEAM FABMAT LIMITED, Regd. Office at 5504/15, Basti Harphool Singh, Sadar Bazar Delhi-110006 W/O Shri Anil Kumar Gupta, LUV-306, 3rd Floor, Agarsen Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd. Agarsen Awas Plot No. 66, I P Extension, Shakarpur East Delhi-110092 3. Mr. Arun Gupta S/O Shri Anil Kumar Gupta Director & Guarantor M/S GLEAM FABMAT LIMITED, Regd. Office at 5504/15, Basti Harphool Singh, Sadar Bazar Delhi-110006 4. Mr. Anil Kumar Gupta S/O Shri Jagdish Prasad Gupta Director & Guarantor M/S GLEAM FABMAT LIMITED, Regd. Office at 5504/15, Basti Harphool Singh, Sadar Bazar Delhi-110006 5. Mr. Arun Gupta S/O Shri Anil Kumar Gupta Director & Guarantor LUV-306, 3rd Floor, Agarsen Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd. Agarsen Awas Plot No. 66, I P Extension, Shakarpur East Delhi-110092 6. Mr. Arun Gupta S/O Shri Anil Kumar Gupta Director & Guarantor LUV-306, 3rd Floor, Agarsen Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd. Agarsen Awas Plot No. 66, I P Extension, Shakarpur East Delhi-110092 7. Mr. Arun Gupta S/O Shri Anil Kumar Gupta 24/43, Second Floor Shakti Nagar, Malangarh Delhi-1100	1. Equitable Mortgage of Commercial One Shop located at Ground Floor facing Eastern Side in Property bearing No. 5434,5503 to 5505 constructed on Part of Plot No. 15 South, Ward No. XIV, situated at Basti Harphool Singh Sadar Thana Road, Delhi - 110006 along with the right of the land measuring about 28.31 Sq Yards owned Smt Pushpa Gupta W/o Sh. Anil Kumar Gupta.	17-Aug-20 21-Dec-20 3 Rs.2,06,18,528/-		

The above-mentioned Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagee(s) are hereby given a 30 days' Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days' from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

## Nepal on the boil

As Oli dissolves House, losing the majority to challengers, it's time for India to manoeuvre the crisis to its advantage



For some time now, Nepalese Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has been co-opted by China which has turned the Himalayan frontier State against India, challenging us on redrawing borders and questioning our shared civilisational heritage. And now that he is facing a rebellion in his Nepal Communist Party (NCP), with rival contenders Pushp Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Madhav Nepal now claiming majority support — both nurtured by India for a while — he has done the unthinkable. Cornered and desperate, Oli has dissolved the 275-member House of Representatives — the Lower House of the country's Parliament. Not only that, he got the

President to issue a communiqué on elections in April-May with his Government holding forth in the interim. The move is unconstitutional as the Pratinidhi Sabha has a five-year term and cannot be dissolved earlier. There is no provision that allows the Prime Minister to dissolve it unilaterally. Logically, he would have to face a trust vote by his own party, which would suggest the contender, in this case Prachanda, as Prime Minister for the remaining term. Of course, the matter is pending before Nepal's Supreme Court. An adverse verdict would mean he will have to resign. If not, he would continue until the summer elections. The dissension in the NCP is not new, with India trying to neutralise a hostile Oli by propping up the other two. But every time China has stepped in to broker a deal and keep Oli in the chair, simply because it wants to step up its offensive against India and keep the borders hot. In fact, China couldn't have asked for a more servile leader than Oli, who got into a map war with us at its behest to further its expansionist agenda. Beijing has been investing heavily in the infrastructure of the Himalayan nation, making it impossible for even the rival faction to ignore its geo-strategic heft. India has been trying to keep Oli in check and rework bilateral ties on more equitable terms with the Army chief, Gen MM Naravane, visiting in November, followed by Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla. Oli thought that by grandstanding against India, he would have inspired a nationalist tide that would make him an indispensable leader of his party. But not all in his party or the Opposition want to burn bridges with India. Besides, the rival faction is looking for its own political legitimacy. When the NCP was formed in May 2018 by merging the Oli-led Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and the Prachanda-led Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre), both leaders had agreed to a power-sharing deal under which both would be Prime Minister for two-and-a-half years. But the deal never got ratified and Oli avoided taking it up with the combined general council, relegating it to a no-priority list and heightening anti-India rhetoric. But Prachanda is restless to realise his political ambition than sacrifice it to a manipulated threat perception from India. This could be an opportunity like no other for India to play upon Prachanda's anxieties and rebuild its relevance in the ensuing power play. Besides, there has also been a resurgence of pro-royalists, who want a return to monarchy, an aspiration that India could smartly play into, using the sentiment for a Hindu kingdom to strengthen ties with the Narendra Modi Government. Not that Nepal's monarchy was anti-China but at the moment a swell of opinion in its favour could give India a certain comfort level and help it bargain with both Oli and Prachanda.

Having been a Hindu kingdom and given its contiguity to India, Nepal has had a commonality of interests, which has been one of the reasons for the open borders between both countries. But Oli has been putting up cultural barriers, and is determined to delink any interdependent association with India. He is decidedly hawkish about China, willing to be its vassal State. In fact, China has upped its cultural diplomacy, too, in Nepal, helping it rebuild old temple complexes and shrines that were damaged in the earthquake of 2015. Oli's latest tirade against India questions Indian claims around the Lipulekh Pass based on varied interpretations of the British-era maps. Though there is a long history of both nations making claims and counterclaims over this area, according to a 1954 treaty signed between them and China, Lipulekh Pass is very much an Indian gateway. Although the new road near it, built by New Delhi to facilitate pilgrim traffic to Kailash Mansarovar, is now one of the quickest links between Delhi and the Tibetan plateau, China, too, has not objected to it. In fact, it recognised India's sovereignty by agreeing to expand trade through the Pass. India's over-dependence on historical, spiritual and geographical connect as a leitmotif of diplomacy is being tested severely. And though we are investing in bilateral relations on more favourable terms and pushing COVID-19 aid, we can't beat the Chinese, who make up 90 per cent of Nepal's Foreign Direct Investment.

## Unanswered virulence

The festival season's spirit has been marred by a new virulent strain of COVID-19 in the United Kingdom



The British Government claims that a new strain of the Coronavirus is spreading like wildfire across the island nation which has led to several curious questions. When the books about the Coronavirus pandemic are written, several politicians will find themselves remembered poorly by historians, at least by those who have the ability to write freely. One of them who is almost certain to be pilloried is Boris Johnson, the man in 10 Downing Street in London. Not only was Johnson one of the first world leaders to get a bad case of the virus, the way the British Government has handled the virus with impossibly complicated tiered lockdowns and protocols that have been duly disobeyed by the public, now it emerges that there is a new virulent strain of COVID-19 doing the rounds in the British Isles just as the nation heads for its strictest lockdown yet just ahead of Christmas. It is claimed that this new strain is allegedly 70 per cent more virulent than the regular virus, albeit, we are assured, no less fatal. But that is a moot point, even with systems in place, the harsh winter across Europe and North America has made cases alongside fatalities spike and that has led to hospital systems being overwhelmed. However, with the suggested lockdown to keep the virus in check coming just ahead of Christmas, a particularly festive time in the United Kingdom, many on either side of the political aisle believe that this is a conspiracy theory. It has been said that this is a ploy to ensure everyone gets vaccinated, this at a time where prominent celebrities like Eric Clapton have come out publicly against wearing face masks and believe that the virus is a ploy to take away freedoms, sounding little different from some of Donald Trump's more hyper supporters. Others have claimed that this is a way for the British Government to justify its decision to clamp a lockdown and ensure that people stay home.

But it takes a lot of courage to shut the borders down, and ruin the most critical shopping season of the year. Even in India despite numbers spiking, governments across the board ensured that there were no lockdowns during the festive season. Indeed, a few kilometres beyond the Delhi borders you would not know that there is an ongoing pandemic with mask compliance almost non-existent and large social gatherings carrying on merrily. If the British Government is indeed telling the truth, it is imperative that India also closes her borders to all, including Indian citizens coming from the United Kingdom. There are currently nine non-stop flights a day from four Indian cities to London, an estimated 2,000 passengers daily. At least at the Government's level we must believe that Boris Johnson and his Cabinet are not lying. Hopefully, the Brits will be able to get control of this strain before it spreads although it already appears to be too late. The Indian Government and State Governments should be prepared for the worst case scenario.

# Unity in diversity

Disregarding respective political ideologies and affiliations, the Union and State Governments joined hands with healthcare professionals to beat the virus



A SURYA PRAKASH

With COVID cases in India falling from a peak of 98,000 new cases per day last September to below the 25,000 mark, it can now be said that the collective efforts of the Union Government, the State Governments, health administrators and the entire healthcare sector over the last eight months is finally yielding the results.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been leading from the front and has taken 10 meetings of Chief Ministers devoted wholly to the tackling of this pandemic. His hands-on approach, constant State-wise monitoring of the spread of the virus, interaction with Chief Ministers of the worst-hit States, visits to pharmaceutical companies to get an update on the manufacture of the vaccine have all contributed in a substantial way not only in controlling the disease but in keeping the morale high among doctors, nurses, paramedical staff and administrators and researchers in the field of medicine.

Apart from the Prime Minister, many Chief Ministers have put politics aside and worked tirelessly alongside the Union Government to control COVID-19 in their respective States. At last count, there are over 40 political parties governing this country at the national and State level. This includes members of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) at the Centre, regional parties with huge majorities in States like the Biju Janata Dal in Odisha, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi, the All India Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, the YSR Congress in Andhra Pradesh and the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) in Telangana. There are also several States like Kerala, led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Bihar where the Janata Dal (United) at the helm, which are run by coalition Governments. Apart from these parties, we have the national parties — the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress party (INC) — running several big States like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab and Chhattisgarh, to name a few.

This is indeed a mind-boggling kaleidoscope of political parties governing 1,400 million people and this does not include several dozen more sub-regional political entities in positions of power at the zila parishad and



municipal corporation levels. Yet, despite the fractious nature of our politics and high-decibel political battles that have been fought between the BJP-led Centre and States run by other parties in the recent years, they have by and large put aside their political differences and come together to fight the pandemic. This is the spirit of co-operative federalism that Modi was keen to usher in and it goes to the credit of all the players that they have displayed a unity of purpose to fight COVID-19 which is in contrast to the intense political battles that are fought on the ground in normal times.

A good example of keeping politics out and putting in a joint effort can be seen in the initiatives taken by Union Home Minister Amit Shah to reach out to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and to find ways to improve Delhi's infrastructure to tackle COVID-19. Shah had more than a couple of meetings with the Chief Minister and his officials when the COVID situation in the Capital began to cause concern. He was joined by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, who has been working vigorously over the last 10 months to confront and contain the biggest challenge to public health in this country.

The meetings in November resulted in Delhi getting more ICU beds and equipment. After this meeting, the Delhi Chief Minister thanked Union Home Minister and said he had the assurance that all Central and State Government agencies would work together to

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tackle COVID-19.

This is also the moment to acknowledge the work of our doctors, nurses and paramedical staff, especially in the Government sector, who have been working relentlessly against huge odds to treat COVID-19 patients. On testing COVID positive, this writer was treated at the Trauma Centre at AIIMS, which has been converted to a COVID Centre. Several doctors and

nurses working there had themselves contracted COVID in the course of duty. Yet, they were back at work after recovery. There are many such reports from other hospitals as well. But the one disturbing factor is the incapacity of some private hospitals and reports of them charging mind-boggling sums just to provide a room for COVID patients. The Government has a responsibility to identify these institutions, investigate their practices and penalise them once the pandemic is under control.

Meanwhile, Modi has reviewed India's vaccination strategy, the current status of the research and the distribution of the vaccine when it is available. Here again, consultations with the States is already on.

This brings us to the lessons that we have learnt over the last 10 months. If one reflects over the situation when the crisis first hit us and the Union Government announced a lockdown and decided its extension, there was a nation-wide debate on the efficacy of the lockdown itself. Thereafter, many Chief Ministers were highly critical of the Centre and the latter had a lot of complaints about the non-response of States like West Bengal to the directions issued by the Centre. It took some time for all the stakeholders to realise that the Union Government's directives regarding the lockdown, social distancing, wearing of masks, closure of businesses, entertainment industry, educational institutions and so on flowed from the powers vested

in it by the Constitution to deal with national emergencies and disasters. The States also realised that in the absence of unity of action, all States would be doomed because the virus respects no geographical boundaries separating States.

Those who breathe negativity are unable to see all this. They are the doomsayers, hoping that this diverse nation will collapse like a house of cards. But all indicators show that this country's political leadership, both at the national level and in the States, is capable of rising over petty politics to offer a united challenge to this pandemic and to win the battle. Just look at the situation in the US and you will realise how blessed we are. Unfortunately, America has been unable to show a unity of purpose and the confidence to deal with the pandemic and this has resulted in COVID-19 spiralling out of control in that country.

Hopefully, the new year should see COVID-19 cases decline in India to the barest minimum, followed by a credible, reliable vaccine. That day, we must wholeheartedly acknowledge the integration that the political leadership brought about and the heroic fight that our doctors, nurses and everyone in the healthcare sector put up against COVID-19 which enabled us to overcome the deadliest health crisis this country has faced in the recent times.

(The writer is an author specialising in democracy studies. The views expressed are personal.)

## SOUNDBITE

Prashant Kishor has said that he would quit Twitter if the BJP performs well in the Bengal elections. (Then) The country would lose an election strategist.

BJP general secretary —Kailash Vijayvargiya



The developments that took place yesterday may seem unpredictable and abrupt, but this situation has been created by some inconsistent and distorted leaders of the party.

Nepal's Prime Minister —KP Sharma Oli



I want to play characters that challenge me. I constantly tell myself to choose films and characters that help me tap into a different side of me. Comfort is boring.

Actor —Amit Sadh



The shorter the format, the more exciting the game becomes. I can't wait to play at the Zayed Cricket Stadium again. Watch out Abu Dhabi, a Gayle storm is coming.

Cricketer —Chris Gayle



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Local sports get attention

Sir — It is truly delightful that the Sports Ministry has approved the inclusion of four indigenous Indian sports which are very popular and hail from different regions — Gatka (Punjab), Kalaripayattu (Kerala), Thang-Ta (Manipur) and Mallakhamba (Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra) — in the forthcoming Khelo India Youth Games 2021, scheduled in Haryana.

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has rightly said that India has a rich heritage of indigenous sports and it is a priority for the Sports Ministry to preserve, promote and popularise these games.

The Khelo India Games is definitely an excellent platform where athletes of these games can compete and showcase their talent not only in these sports but also bring national and global attention to these sports which are very popular since the ancient times.

Rijiju stated that these four disciplines, along with yogasana, will get due attention among the sports enthusiasts and the youth. The Sports Ministry is planning to include more indigenous sports in Khelo India Games.

M Pradyu Kannur

### India becoming centre for global wellness

That, after the "Pharmacy of the world", India could also get to be recognised as the centre for global wellness is no longer something in the realm of imagination but a declared truth. And this declaration of India being chosen as the global centre for traditional medicines came from none other than Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO's Director General, when he sent his message through the video on the occasion of the 5th Ayurveda Day, in which Narendra Modi inaugurated through video conferencing the two future ayurveda institutions to come up in Jaipur and Jamnagar. In comparison to last year, this year in September the export of ayurveda products increased to 45 per cent which is enough to understand as to which extent the world showed its trust in ayurveda. And this is the only reason that WHO's response came into such form.

India accounts for more than half of the herbs produced in the world. But attention in the real sense toward this was paid for the first time when in 2000 a national policy was drafted under the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led Government for the Indian medical therapies. Under this policy, unprecedented work of bringing ayurveda and unani therapy under the category of Harit Udyog (green organic industry) was



done. And then only the National Medicinal Plant Board grew conscious about chalking out a specific policy for the conservation and breeding of *aamla*, *chandana* (sandalwood), *ashwagandha* and such other herbs and plants.

In this time of Corona, ayurveda brought a new hope to those facing extreme distress. So much so that having crossed the nation's boundary, it has even begun to gain the limelight in foreign lands.

E Rajesh Pathak Bhopal

### Dharma not the answer

Sir — This refers to the report 'Government plans breakthrough in kisan talks' (December 21). Farmers have put themselves in great inconvenience by staging protests in cold weather conditions. They are putting their lives in danger and, at the same time, unable to find a common meeting

ground with the Government in talks that have been held so far. One can understand the issues raised by the farmers with the Government but to put up such a massive congregation at the borders of the Capital is perhaps not the best way to resolve the impasse.

The farmers' concern is that the new farm laws initiated by the Government would facilitate the

involvement of corporates who might later control the fortunes of the agriculture market, thereby putting farmers in the background.

But the laws do farmers a favour by eliminating the commission agents. So one does not know as to where things are headed with regards to the talks.

Devendra Khurana Bhopal

### Rahul has task cut out

Sir — This refers to the editorial 'Congress deal for Rahul?' (December 21). Since the Gandhian and young Congress leader quit as the party chief, taking moral responsibility for his party's embarrassing drubbing at the BJP hands in the last parliamentary election, the grand old party has been at the receiving end of one after another body blow as several dissenting leaders from both the new and the old guard have deserted the Congress with several heavyweights even joining the ruling BJP's juggernaut, either after sulking over having no say with the party leadership or for the sake of seeking greener pastures on the other side of the fence.

I subscribe to the editorial view that this rapprochement between the Gandhian first family and the dissenters is driven with the dual purposes of keeping the Congress's flock together and paving the way for Rahul's comeback at the helm simultaneously by convincing the dissenters over the redressal of their grievances.

Azhar A Khan Rampur

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

## FIRST COLUMN

## The unfruitful spring

The problem resides in the Arab world, where the political climate has only two seasons: Brief springs and very long winters



GWYNNE DYER

Ten years ago in the middle of December, Mohamed Bouazizi, a street vendor in Tunisia, set himself alight in front of a Government building in rage at the corrupt dictatorship that had ruined his young life. His sacrifice awakened hope in millions of others — but then half a million of them also died, although not at their own hands and the rest went quiet. It was called the Arab Spring.

It should have worked. Non-violent democratic revolutions had overthrown around two dozen other tyrannies in the previous 20 years. So when people in half a dozen Arab dictatorships, galvanised by Bouazizi's action went out into the streets to demand democracy in late 2010 and 2011, most onlookers expected them to win.

In fact they all lost, except in Tunisia. In Egypt the protesters forced the old dictator to quit but the army was back in power in less than two years. In Syria, Yemen and Libya, the protests morphed into savage civil wars that continue even today. Smaller protests in Lebanon and Bahrain were shut down by force.

This is a stunningly unimpressive record and it's not because the whole non-violent technique is falling out of favour. There are non-violent attempts to remove dictators underway right now in Thailand and Belarus, both with a reasonable chance of success.

So what's wrong with the Arab world, where only four out of 22 countries are classed as "free" or "partly free" by Freedom House? No other region of the world scores this badly. Don't say "meddling imperialists" or the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or give some other alibi involving foreigners, because three-quarters of the world's countries could use that excuse if they wanted. Most don't, because they don't need excuses.

There have been lots of attempts at democratic revolutions in the Arab world too, but the good guys keep losing. What is so different there? Here's one possible answer. Everywhere else, the political choice is binary: Tyranny or democracy. In most of the Arab countries there are three choices: The dreadful *status quo*, democracy or Islam. In every Arab country, out in the open or operating underground, there is also an Islamist opposition promising that, "Islam is the answer."

The right answer depends on what the question was and as a non-Arab and non-Muslim I am not the one setting the questions. I just observe that in the Arab world, unlike elsewhere, two alternative routes out from the existing oppression are on offer to the public. Both have considerable popular appeal but they are mutually exclusive.

Equality and its political expression, democracy, are human values. However, for historical reasons it is easy for Islamists to portray political democracy as an alien, Western value. Equality just for the true believers is a viable rival doctrine for revolutionaries in countries where most people are Muslim — and that is the fault line that the dictators exploited.

That's why the first thing Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad did when the pro-democracy protests began was to free several thousand Islamist activists from his prisons. Rival sets of enemies out in the streets is far better than a united opposition. It led to a ten-year civil war that has driven half the population into exile but Assad is still in power today.

The Egyptian army was more subtle. It let its old, discredited leader go under, knowing that a free election would bring the Islamists to power because most voters were rural and socially very conservative. The military calculated that the urban young who made the revolution would be dismayed and seek the army's help when the Islamists began forcing their values on the country. That's exactly what happened and the new dictator, General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, then closed the door on the whole episode by massing about 4,000 Islamists on the streets of Cairo. Variants of this scenario played out in other Arab countries with more or less violence and only Tunisia managed to create a lasting (so far) democracy.

This is not uniquely an Arab problem, of course. Iran has been an Islamist theocracy for 40 years and Turkey's once lively democracy has been slowly strangled during Recep Tayyip Erdogan's 17 years in power. But as the distance from the Arab heartland grows, so do the prospects for democracy.

Pakistan manages to be a (quite corrupt) democracy about half the time, Bangladesh and Malaysia are quasi-democratic all the time. And Indonesia is a fully fledged, full-service democracy. These four countries account for almost half the world's Muslims — and African Muslims don't seem to have particular problems with democracy either.

The problem resides in the Arab world, where the political climate has only two seasons: Brief springs and very long winters. It may not be an insoluble problem but there's certainly no solution in sight, at least in the near future.

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

DIDI IS MAKING DESPERATE ATTEMPTS TO MAKE HER NEPHEW ABHISHEK BANERJEE THE NEXT CHIEF MINISTER OF BENGAL.

—UNION HOME MINISTER  
AMIT SHAH

## POINTCOUNTERPOINT



I WOULD LIKE TO CLARIFY THAT NO ONE IN MAMATA'S FAMILY IS EAGER TO BECOME THE NEXT CHIEF MINISTER OF BENGAL. THE BJP IS LYING.

—TMC MP  
KALYAN BANERJEE

## No power in these reforms

Just as the UDAY scheme was meant to extinguish the liabilities of discoms, the proposed electricity distribution reform programme, too, seeks to give them the money on a platter



UTTAM GUPTA

The Government is expected to announce a ₹3,00,000 crore electricity distribution reform programme to reduce losses and improve the efficiency of power distribution companies or discoms. Christened 'Reforms-Linked, Result-Based Scheme for Distribution', the move is aimed at helping discoms trim their electricity losses to 12-15 per cent from the present level and gradually narrow the deficit between the cost of electricity and the price at which it is supplied, to 'zero' by March 2025. This is quite similar to the Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY) launched in 2015, wherein the targets were missed by a huge margin. The Centre's planned electricity distribution reform programme will also meet the same fate as the real intent is not reform but to give money to the beleaguered discoms so that they can clear dues to power generators and other suppliers.

Meanwhile, amid the cacophony of farmers' protest over the enactment of the three farm laws by the Narendra Modi Government, a demand that went unnoticed relates to doing away with an amendment to the Electricity Act (2003) that requires farmers to pay tariff for electricity supply at the un-subsidised rate even as the State concerned provides Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of subsidy to their bank account. Reportedly, the Centre has accepted this demand.

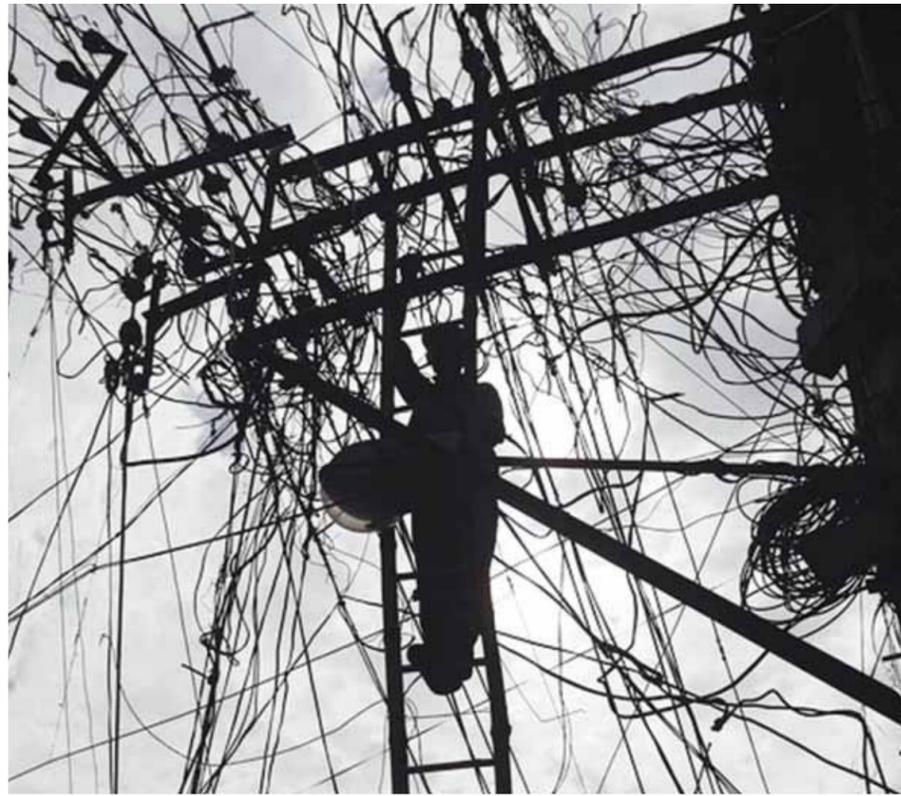
What it means is that the Centre will continue with the existing dispensation of supplying power at subsidised rates to farmers (in some States it is even free of charge). If it is done for farmers then logically, other beneficiaries of subsidised power, such as poor households should continue under the subsidising arrangement, too. You can't have two different methods of delivering subsidy to different albeit vulnerable sections of society.

Do we then take it that the Government has junked its plan on DBT? A cursory glance at a spate of announcements coming from the top may help us in unraveling the truth in regard to the DBT or for that matter, fate of other reforms in this crucial sector. Under the special economic and comprehensive package for the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' announced in May, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had provided for a special loan of ₹90,000 crore from the Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) and the Power Finance Corporation (PFC) to discoms. This was done to enable them to clear their dues to independent power producers (IPPs) and generators in the public sector, such as the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC). But, this was conditional upon the discoms implementing reforms such as DBT of power subsidy, "open access" i.e. allowing consumer to draw power from a supplier of his/her choice and so on.

Sitharaman had linked the hike in the borrowing limit of States to the extent of 0.25 per cent of the State Gross Domestic Product (SGDP) (out of an overall increase of two per cent allowed to them) to power sector reforms. Of this, 0.05 per cent is predicated on the State reducing aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses (a sophisticated nomenclature for theft) of its discoms, another 0.05 per cent to their reducing the gap between the average cost of supply and average revenue realisation (ACS-ARR gap) from the sale of electricity and the remaining 0.15 per cent to DBT.

Each State was required to formulate a scheme to roll out DBT to farmers in lieu of free electricity from 2021-22. The scheme has to be implemented in at least one of its districts by December 31. Based on the progress on the above three parameters, the Power Ministry was required to recommend (to the Expenditure Department under the Finance Ministry) the release of 0.25 per cent by January 31, 2021. Even prior to this, power sector reforms have

“HOWEVER, THE DBT'S LAUNCH IS A PIPE DREAM AS ALL POLITICAL PARTIES, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR IDEOLOGICAL MOORINGS — WHETHER IN THE OPPOSITION — WANT THEMSELVES TO BE SEEN AS SUPPLYING ELECTRICITY TO FARMERS FREE OF CHARGE. HENCE THEY HAVE A VESTED INTEREST IN CONTINUING WITH THE STATUS QUO. TILL THERE IS NO POLITICAL WILL TO END THIS, THERE CAN BE NO REAL POWER REFORMS IN INDIA”



been on top of the Central Government's agenda. In November 2015, it launched the UDAY. The prime objective of the scheme which ran for nearly four years was to cut the losses of discoms by reducing AT&C losses and the ACS-ARR gap. These losses were a result of the increase in the cost of power purchase on one hand and supply to farmers at heavily subsidised rates on the other. They were required to reduce AT&C losses from 20.7 per cent during 2015-16 to 15 per cent by 2018-19. Further, they were asked to reduce the ACS-ARR gap from ₹0.59 per unit during 2015-16 to 'zero' by 2018-19.

Simultaneously, the Government gave them a financial restructuring package (FRP). Put simply, this was nothing but condoning their debt of about ₹4,00,000 crore (while 75 per cent of this was taken over by the States, for the balance, discoms were allowed to issue bonds at a preferential interest rate). The stated rationale behind giving FRP was to enable them start on a clean slate. In return, discoms were expected to set their house in order by achieving the milestones as specified above. But, they did not deliver.

During 2019-20, AT&C losses of discoms were 18.9 per cent against the target of 15 per cent for 2018-19. As regards the ACS-ARR gap during 2019-20, it stood at ₹0.42 per unit against target of 'zero'. This would mean that after initial reduction from ₹52,000 crore during 2015-16 to ₹17,000 crore during 2017-18, the discoms' loss increased to over ₹30,000 crore during 2019-20. In turn, this has led to a piling up of their dues to IPP/PSUs in excess of ₹1,30,000 crore.

Faced with the same predicament as in 2015, the Government is working on a ₹3,00,000 crore electricity distribution reform programme, which may be announced in the ensuing Union Budget. It was approved by the Public Investment Board (PIB) early this month.

The reforms are also aimed at improving the reliability and quality of power supply. It may also have a compulsory pre-paid and smart metering component to be implemented across the power supply chain, including in about 250 million households.

The Government is expected to contribute around ₹60,000 crore to the scheme's corpus and the rest may be raised from multilateral funding agencies such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB). The Centre's contribution will be met through the previous commitment of the ongoing schemes viz. the Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS) and the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojna (DDUGJY). The funds will be released subject to their meeting reform-related milestones.

The proposed electricity distribution reform programme is more or less similar to UDAY but for the change of name and insertion of some catchy phrases such as Reforms-Linked, Result-Based and so on. One sees the typical syndrome of "old wine in a new bottle." Just as the real purpose of the UDAY scheme was to extinguish the liabilities of discoms, the proposed electricity distribution reform programme, too, seeks to give them the money on a platter. This will help them clear their dues to power generators and keep some cushion to take care of future losses.

The talk of trimming AT&C losses or lowering the ACS-ARR gap to zero is laughable when seen in the backdrop of similar target having been missed in the past. Under UDAY, discoms were required to reduce AT&C loss to 15 per cent in 2018-19; now the reformers want this figure to be reached in March 2025. Similarly, the zero gap for ACS-ARR was targeted for 2018-19; under the new scheme, this gets shifted to 2025.

That the Government is not serious about the reforms agenda in the power sector, it has further vindicated by promising farmers that DBT of power subsidy won't be implemented. DBT is a transformative reform. Under it, subsidy is given directly to the beneficiaries even as tariff is cost-based or market-determined. The discoms will set tariff in a manner as to fully recover their cost of purchase, wheeling and distribution thereby avoiding loss. They won't also be saddled with pending subsidy dues from the State as then, the latter will be dealing directly with beneficiaries for subsidy transfer.

Under the DBT dispensation, discoms also need not charge more from industries and businesses which they have to do under the present regime to offset the loss suffered on subsidised sale to farmers and poor households. This in turn, will help the latter reduce their cost of operations and stay competitive. The new regime will also empower consumers as then, it will be easier to implement the "open access" policy thereby enabling them to source power directly from a supplier who offers the lowest tariff.

In short, DBT will be a win-win for all stakeholders viz. agriculture, industry, businesses, exchequer (both Centre and States) even as farmers have nothing to lose (as only the method of delivering subsidy changes).

However, the DBT's launch is a pipe dream as all political parties irrespective of their ideological moorings — whether in the Government or in the Opposition — want themselves to be seen as supplying electricity to farmers free of charge. Hence they have a vested interest in continuing with the *status quo*. Till there is no political will to end this, there can be no real power reforms in India.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst. The views expressed are personal)

## Yet another bid at Opposition unity

State leaders believe that they must emerge as an alternative to the Congress and the ruling BJP for democracy to thrive in the country



KALYANI SHANKAR

In the early '80s, buoyed by his big victory against the Congress the then Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister NT Rama Rao (NTR) talked about the formation of a Front for regional satraps called the Bharat Desam. But, this did not materialise for many years as NTR's vision was ahead of his time. Finally, in 1989 the National Front was born, of which NTR became the chairman. The National Front came to power and VP Singh of the Janata Dal became the Prime Minister defeating the Congress Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

However, it wasted away soon, yielding space to another Front called the United Front in 1996, of which Deve Gowda became the Prime Minister, followed by I.K. Gujral. This alliance too, was short-lived.

The next Front was the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by AB Vajpayee in 1998 and 2004. Soon after, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi formed the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), which ruled for ten years. The year 2014 saw the grand return of the BJP-led NDA and its winning streak is still continuing. As the late Congress leader Ahmed Patel used to point out, the UPA was not a Front after the 2014 elections. The Congress' slide has made it easier for the regional satraps, who are growing in number, to come together. Several of them, with a strong base in their respective States, are now thinking of forming a non-BJP and pro-Congress alliance. This is necessary because of the vacuum created by a weak Congress on the one

side and the ambitious regional satraps who are dreaming of national leadership, on the other.

The question is, can this alliance, when it is formed, survive? The answer to this can only come with time. But there is no doubt that the regional leaders view this as an opportune time to strengthen their positions further and work towards an alliance. They are quietly sounding out the other regional strongmen and mobilising their support. They realise that the Congress Party has lost its sheen and there is also a leadership crisis in the Grand Old Party. Moreover, in the last six years, the Congress has failed to lead the Opposition, despite repeated attempts to do so.

The purpose behind the bid to form a new alliance is to stall the BJP's juggernaut. They want to float it now so that they will not be caught napping in the next Lok Sabha polls. One might recall the Telangana Rashttra Samithi (TRS) chief Chandrashekhara Rao

announcing on the eve of the recent Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections that he plans to visit Delhi soon to discuss a non-BJP alliance.

Second, leaders like the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) chief Naveen Patnaik, Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo Mamata Banerjee, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) head Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray are really worried about the way the BJP is growing in their backyard and they have been unable to check its growth. Even neutral leaders like Rao and Patnaik are considering joining this Front, as they were hesitant to part of any group in which the Congress was a partner.

Third, they are concerned about the aggressive campaigning by the BJP for even municipal polls, like it did in the recent GHMC elections. The BJP has jumped from two seats to 48 — just a few less than the TRS — which was ruling the roost for the last six

years. Fourth, the regional leaders do not mind taking issue-based help from the Congress, both in Parliament and outside, as the alliance would be opposed to the BJP in their respective States and also at the national level. The regional bigwigs are miffed with the Centre as they feel that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is not adhering to the dharma of federal cooperation on many issues, including the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the money due to them for dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak.

Fifth, many senior leaders in the regional parties are reluctant to work under the leadership of former Congress president Rahul Gandhi. They would not mind, for instance working under the leadership of Sharad Pawar because, being a senior both in terms of age and political experience, he is more acceptable to the other stalwarts. Last but not the least, the satraps think that the BJP does not have any leader of stature in most

States. They hope that this powerful alliance against the BJP would work in their favour. There is no doubt that for any democracy to function properly, there is a need for a powerful and effective Opposition. It is also clear that the splintered Opposition in the country has not been effective, even with a majority in the Rajya Sabha. The ruling NDA has been able to get many controversial Bills passed in the House of Elders because of the disunity in the Opposition ranks.

Hence, State leaders believe that they must emerge as an alternative to the Congress and the ruling BJP for democracy to thrive in the country. Earlier efforts to form a Third Front were all short-lived because of the ego problems among them. From the Janata Party days to the present times, every decade the idea of a Third Front surfaces. The present move is one of them.

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal)



## FOREIGN EYE



## THE PEOPLE STRUGGLE ON

Over this year, goodwill has not only been drained by the lockdown but squandered by official incompetence and the discovery that while millions are struggling economically, in the UK "chumocracy" has prospered from Government handouts dished out with little scrutiny. That people still want to do the right thing is despite, not because of, the Government.

(The Guardian editorial)

# Countries begin to seal off UK amid new covid variant surge

**London:** France became the latest European country to close all its borders with the UK after Germany, Italy, Belgium, Denmark, Bulgaria, the Irish Republic, Turkey and Canada suspended flights amid growing concerns of an "out of control" new variant of coronavirus spreading at a much faster pace in parts of England.

India, so far, remains in the travel bubble with the UK, with strict testing and self-isolation rules in place. But with most of Britain now in the strictest Tier 4 lockdown, all non-essential travel remains banned for the majority.

Other countries and territories to announce restrictions on UK travel include Hong Kong, Israel, Iran, Croatia, Argentina, Chile, Morocco and Kuwait.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson will chair a meeting of the government's emergency committee on Monday to take stock of the situation as a huge backlog build up on the border with France after even trucks and ferries were blocked entry



A police officer directs traffic at the entrance to the closed ferry terminal in Dover, England on Monday AP

at the ports. European Union (EU) member states are also due for a meeting in Brussels to discuss a more coordinated response as the number of coronavirus infections in the UK jumped to 35,928 on Sunday, down to the much faster spreading new

mutation of the novel coronavirus, with the country's death toll rising by 326 to hit 67,401.

"Everybody, particularly people in Tier 4 areas, needs to behave as if they might well have the virus - that is the only way we are going to get it under control," UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock said, adding that the situation is "deadly serious" as the government tries to contain the rapid strain of an "out of control" virus.

"This is a deadly disease, we need to keep it under control, and it has been made more difficult by this new variant," he said. The new variant is said to be 70 per cent more transmissible, though health experts say there is no evidence that it is more deadly or would react differently to vaccines.

"It is really too early to tell... but from what we see so far it is growing very quickly, it is growing faster than [a previous variant] ever grew, but it is important to keep an eye on this," said Dr Erik Volz from Imperial College London.

"The amount of evidence in the public domain is woefully inadequate to draw strong or firm opinions on whether the virus has truly increased transmission," added Professor Jonathan Ball, a virologist at the University of Nottingham.

It is thought the variant either emerged in a patient in the UK or has been imported from a country with a lower ability to monitor coronavirus mutations. The variant can be found across the UK, except Northern Ireland, but it is heavily concentrated in London, the South East and eastern England. Cases elsewhere in the country do not seem to have shot up in a similar way so far.

The government's New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (Nervtag) estimates the variant could increase the R number - or rate of infection - by between 0.4 and 0.9. The R number is how many other people one person will infect on average and an epidemic is in effect if it rises above one. **PTT**

## EU regulator meets to discuss approval of Covid-19 vaccine

**Amsterdam:** The European Medicines Agency is meeting to consider approving a coronavirus vaccine developed by BioNTech and Pfizer that would be the first to be authorised for use in the European Union.

The closed-doors meeting comes weeks after the shot was granted permission under emergency provisions by regulators in Britain and the United States.

If EMA scientists conclude that the vaccine is safe, officials at the Amsterdam-based agency are expected to give conditional approval for it to be used across the 27-nation bloc. The European Commission must still rubber-stamp the decision before the vaccine can be rolled out, a process German officials say could begin Dec. 27. The pharmaceutical companies will also need to submit follow-up

data on their vaccine for the next year. The European regulator came under heavy pressure last week from countries calling for the vaccine to be granted approval for use as quickly as possible. EMA had originally set Dec. 29 as the date for its evaluation of the vaccine made by Germany-based BioNTech, but moved the meeting forward after calls from Berlin and others to move quicker.

The vaccine has already been given some form of regulatory OK in more than a dozen countries.

Britain, Canada and the US authorised the vaccine to be used according to emergency provisions, meaning the shot is an unlicensed product whose temporary use is justified by the pandemic that has killed almost 1.7 million people worldwide to date, according to Johns Hopkins University. **AP**

## Congress seals agreement on Covid relief, Govt funding

**Washington:** Top Capitol Hill negotiators sealed a deal Sunday on an almost \$1 trillion Covid-19 economic relief package, finally delivering long-overdue help to businesses and individuals and providing money to deliver vaccines to a nation eager for them.

The agreement, announced by Senate leaders, would establish a temporary \$300 per week supplemental jobless benefits and \$600 direct stimulus payments to most Americans, along with a new round of subsidies for hard-hit businesses and money for schools, health care providers and renters facing eviction.

The House was expected to vote on the legislation very late

Sunday or Monday and Senate action would follow. Lawmakers are eager to leave Washington and close out a tumultuous year.

A breakthrough came late Saturday in a fight over Federal Reserve emergency powers that was resolved by the Senate's top Democrat, Chuck Schumer of New York, and conservative Republican Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania. That led to a final round of negotiations.

The final agreement is the largest spending measure yet. It combines Covid-19 relief with a \$1.4 trillion Government-wide funding plan and lots of other unrelated measures on taxes, health, infrastructure and education. **AP**

## Oli defends move to dissolve Parliament

### Blames own party leaders for his decision

**Kathmandu:** Nepal's embattled Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Monday defended his move to abruptly dissolve Parliament, saying he was forced to seek a fresh mandate through elections as the rift within the ruling Nepal Communist Party severely affected his Government's functioning.

Oli on Sunday sprang a surprise on his rivals and got the President to dissolve Parliament, a controversial move amidst a prolonged tussle for power between him

and former premier Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' within the ruling dispensation.

In a special address to the nation, Prime Minister Oli said that he was forced to dissolve Parliament and announce mid-term elections after he learnt about a plan to move a vote of no-confidence against him.

"I was forced to seek a fresh mandate through elections as attempts were made against my government, not to allow it to function properly," the prime minister said while defending his decision to dissolve Parliament and announce dates for mid-term elections.

Oli, who is also one of the two chairmen of the ruling party, said that the intra-party rift in the ruling Nepal Communist Party severely

affected the government's functioning.

"The elected government was pushed to a corner and picketed against and was not allowed to work so I decided to dissolve the house," he said.

"Against the people's mandate and their will, national politics was dragged into an endless and goalless direction by creating controversy, making Parliament meaningless as the elected government could not receive its support but always faced opposition and dragged into the controversy," Oli said. He accused some of his own party leaders of being responsible for forcing him to take this step.

"When the prime minister of the majority government was not allowed to work, I did not

want to indulge in unfair practices behind closed doors and reach a compromise with them," Oli said, adding that giving a chance to the people for a fresh mandate is "the best democratic alternative."

"This move could be seen as an abrupt step for now, but some of my party leaders should be held responsible for creating this situation who did not cooperate with my Government," Oli said.

Prime Minister Oli also insisted that his government had done well in terms of safeguarding the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

"I was victimised for enhancing national pride by publishing a map with the inclusion of Kalapani and Lipulekh," Oli said. **PTT**

## Report: Gov't spyware targets phones of Al-Jazeera reporters

**Dubai:** Dozens of journalists at Al-Jazeera, the Qatari state-owned media company, have been targeted by advanced spyware in an attack likely linked to the Governments of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, a cybersecurity watchdog has said.

Citizen Lab at the University of Toronto said on Sunday it traced malware that infected the personal phones of 36 journalists, producers, anchors and executives at Al-Jazeera back to the Israel-based NSO Group, which has been widely condemned for selling

spyware to repressive governments.

Most unnerving to the investigators was that iMessages were infecting targeted cell-phones without the users taking any action - what's known as a zero-click vulnerability.

Through push notifications alone, the malware instructed the phones to upload their content to servers linked to the NSO Group, Citizen Lab said, turning journalists' iPhones into powerful surveillance tools without even luring users to click on suspicious links or threatening texts. **AP**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The General public is informed that Green Land Nursery having its principal place of business at Kh. No. 20, Village Chhawla, New Delhi-110071 working as a proprietorship firm in the field of agriculture produce mainly nursery plants is changing its firm name to Green Aura Nursery w.e.f. 15.12.2020. Anyone who has any objection regarding this can raise the objection within 15 days from the date of advertisement.

Annu Sharma, Proprietor

**POLICE HEADQUARTERS JAMMU & KASHMIR**

Phone/Fax No.: 0194-2443031/2443032 (Sgr), 0191-2459029/2459255 (Jmu)

Website :- www.jkpolice.gov.in, E-mail :- phqjk@nic.in

**TENDER CANCELLATION NOTICE**

Due to various technical/procedural reasons, **NIIT no. 77 of 2019 dated 05.10.2019** floated by this Hqrs for hiring of Helicopter Services for J&K Police/CAPF is hereby Cancelled. Fresh e-tender is being floated for the purpose on J&K State e-Procurement Portal [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in).

No: DIP/J-8889/20  
Dated: 21.12.2020

Sd/- Ravees Mohammad Bhat (IPS)  
AIG (Provision & TRANSPORT),  
For Director General of Police, J&K Jammu.

**छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल**

पर्यावास भवन, सेक्टर - 19,  
नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, जिला - रायपुर (छ.ग.)

// सर्व संबंधित को सूचना //

भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय द्वारा जारी ई.आई.ए. नोटिफिकेशन, 2006 (यथा - संशोधित) के तहत सर्व संबंधित को सूचित किया जाता है कि मेसर्स बरबसपुर फ्लेम स्टीन माईन, (श्री राजेन्द्र गुप्ता), ग्राम-बरबसपुर, तहसील व जिला महासमुंद (छ.ग.) स्थित खसरा क्रमांक 203, कुल लीज क्षेत्र -1.0 हेक्टेयर में प्रस्तावित फ्लेम स्टीन माईन (गोण खनिज) क्षमता-5,103 टन प्रतिवर्ष के पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति बावत लोक सुनवाई दिनांक 23/01/2021 को अपराह्न 12:00 बजे से ग्राम-पंचायत भवन बरबसपुर, तहसील व जिला-महासमुंद में नियत की गई है। यह भी सूचित हो कि :

- लोक सुनवाई के दौरान सम्मिलित होने वाले व्यक्तियों को फिजिकल/ सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग का पालन करना अनिवार्य होगा।
- लोक सुनवाई में सम्मिलित होने वाले व्यक्तियों द्वारा मारक का उपयोग किया जावेगा तथा समय-समय पर सेनेटाइजर का उपयोग किया जाना अनिवार्य होगा।
- लोक सुनवाई स्थल पर सम्मिलित होने वाले व्यक्तियों की बैठक व्यवस्था कम से कम 02 मीटर की दूरी रखना अनिवार्य होगा।
- कोरोना वायरस के नियंत्रण एवं रोकथाम हेतु केन्द्र सरकार तथा राज्य शासन द्वारा जारी समस्त दिशा- निर्देशों का अक्षरशः पालन किया जाना अनिवार्य होगा।

ई.आई.ए. नोटिफिकेशन, 14 सितम्बर, 2006 (यथा-संशोधित) के अनुसार संबंधित व्यक्तियों के अवलोकन/पहन हेतु ड्राफ्ट ई.आई.ए. रिपोर्ट, कार्यपालक सार हिन्दी एवं अंग्रेजी भाषा तथा सी वी (साफ्ट कॉपी) डायरेक्टर, भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, जोर बाग रोड़ नई दिल्ली, क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय (डब्ल्यू.सी.जेड) पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय भारत सरकार, ग्राउण्ड फ्लोर, ईस्ट विंग, न्यू सेक्रेटारिएट बिल्डिंग, सिविल लाईन, नागपुर (महाराष्ट्र) कार्यालय कलेक्टर महासमुंद, जिला व्यापार एवं उद्योग केन्द्र जिला महासमुंद, कार्यालय सरपंच, ग्राम पंचायत बरबसपुर, तहसील व जिला-महासमुंद, क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, व्यवसायिक परिसर, कबीर नगर, रायपुर, जिला-रायपुर एवं मुख्यालय, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, पर्यावास भवन, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, रायपुर-में रखी गई है।

हस्ता/-  
सदस्य सचिव

क्रमांक:- 3354 शैका/तक/छ.प.सं.मं/2020 छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल  
दिनांक:- 21/12/2020 नवा रायपुर अटल नगर रायपुर (छ.ग.)

## China criticises Trump suggestion it is behind cyber spying

**Beijing:** China's Government on Monday criticised President Donald Trump's suggestion that Chinese hackers, not Russia, might be behind a cyber espionage campaign against the United States.

Trump on Saturday scoffed at assertions by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and other officials that the Kremlin was behind attempts to spy on federal agencies. Trump, without offering evidence, said "it may" be China. The Foreign Ministry said China opposes cyber spying and has crackdown on cyber crime. **AP**

## Thai actress aiding protests charged with insulting monarchy

**Bangkok:** A well-known actress who is one of the most high-profile supporters of Thailand's pro-democracy protest movement answered a police summons on Monday charging her with violating the country's harsh law against defaming the monarchy, even though she is not known to have spoken publicly about the royal institution.

Inthira "Sai" Charoenpura, who is also a singer, has drawn both praise and criticism for giving material support and raising funds for the student-led movement. Along with seven protest

leaders, she presented herself at a police station in Bangkok to hear charges that they had violated the country's lese majeste law, which calls for a prison term of three to 15 years for defaming the king or members of his immediate family.

The law, known as Article 112, has long drawn criticism for its harshness and terms that let anyone file a complaint, allowing its use for partisan political purposes.

Its use against Inthira appeared to be unprecedented since she was not directly tied to any comments about the

monarchy. She has helped provide food, protective gear and other equipment for the protest rallies over several months that have attracted thousands of people.

Charging Inthira "sets a very disturbing precedent," said Sunai Phasuk, a researcher for New York-based Human Rights Watch, adding that it now seems that being an accessory to any actions that Thai authorities consider to be offensive to the monarchy are punishable. "So now the net is being cast very wide, much wider than ever before," he said. **AP**

## EU warns Bosnia of 'alarming' migrant state, urges action

**Brussels:** The European Union on Monday warned Bosnia that thousands of migrants face a winter without shelter, and it urged the country's bickering political authorities to set aside their differences and take action.

"The migration situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is alarming," the EU commissioners responsible for foreign policy, migration and enlargement said in a joint statement.

Bosnia has been widely criticized in recent years for mishandling the arrival of thousands of people, many fleeing war and poverty. **AP**

## Around the Globe

**Cairo:** Local authorities in rural Egypt have declared a state of emergency after detecting two outbreaks of bird flu.

**Berlin:** Countries trying to keep alive the 2015 deal on Iran's nuclear program agreed Monday to "positively address" the possibility of a US return to the accord under the Biden administration.

**Cape Canaveral (US):** Jupiter and Saturn will merge in the night sky Monday, appearing closer to one another than they have since Galileo's time in the 17th century. Astronomers say so-called conjunctions between the two largest planets in our solar system aren't particularly rare.

**SEARCH FOR MISSING**

General Public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Sanjira**, D/o Jalif Nadaf, R/o House of Litu, Jhatpat Colony, Bhorgarh, Delhi, **Age:** 22 years, **Height:** 5', **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Built:** Strong, **Face:** Oval, **Wearing:** White and Black Colour Suit & Orange Colour Pajami has been missing from her home since **29.11.2020 at 1.30 pm**. In this regard a wide **DD No. 39A, dated 30.11.2020** has been registered at **P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Distt. Outer North Delhi**.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing girl but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this girl please inform undersigned.

E-mail : [cic@cbi.gov.nic.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.nic.in) **SHO**  
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641 **P.S. Narela Industrial Area,**  
Fax : 011-24368639 **Distt. Outer North Delhi**  
**DP/647/ON/2020 Ph. : 011-27787592/93/7065036324**

**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**

General public is hereby informed that an Unidentified person **Namely:** Unknown S/o Unknown R/o Unknown, **Age :** about 60 years, **Height :** 5'6", **Complexion:** Shallow, **Built :** Thin, **Face:** Wrinkled, **Wearing:** Brown colour Jacket, White & magenta colour check shirt, sky blue colour pants and blue colour slippers in feet has been found dead at near gate no. 1, TPT Center, Punjabi Bagh, Delhi on 13.12.2020. In this regard a case wide **DD No. 27A** dated 13.12.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Punjabi Bagh, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this dead found person may kindly inform to the following:- **SHO**  
**P.S. Punjabi Bagh, Delhi**  
**West Distt., Delhi**  
**Ph. No. 011-25224162, 25225616, 8750871124**

**DP/293/WD/2020**

**Appeal for Identification**

General public is hereby informed that one person **Name:** Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** 25-30 Years, **Height:** 5'6", **Sex:** Male, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Wearing:** Black Jacket, Red Colour T-Shirt & Blue Colour Checkdar Lower and Black Colour Hawai Chappal in Feet, **Place of Recovery:** Found dead on 19.12.2020 at Underpass subway to P.F No. 2-3, Gate No. 2, Metro Station side, Shahdara Railway Station, Delhi.

In this regard **DD No. 23A, Dated 19.12.2020** has been lodged at **Police Station, Old Delhi Railway Station, Delhi**. Any clue come to notice please inform undersigned.

**SHO**  
**P.S. Old Delhi Railway Station, Delhi**  
**Ph. : 011-23961522 & 9311350017**

**DP/25/RLY/2020**

**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**

General public is here by informed that an unidentified Female (depicted in the photo) **name:** unknown S/o unknown residence is unknown about 60 years of age was found in unconscious condition by MTS worker near gate no. 6 LHMC waiting area and she was Declared Brought Dead by Doctor vide MLC No. 1386/20. Latter on, Deceased Name and Address revealed as per her Aadhar Card Pammi W/o Baldev Singh R/o Aman Biradari Shelter Meena Bazar Road Near Jama Masjid Gate No. 2, Urdu Park North Delhi. In this regard a **FIR No. 13-A, dated 15.12.2020 U/s 174 Cr. P.C** has been registered at **Police Station Mandir Marg, New Delhi**. Dead Body of the Unknown has been preserved in LHMC Hospital Mortuary for 72 Hrs for Identification.

His physical description is as under:-  
**Sex:** Female, **Age:** 60 years, **Height:** 4'11" ft., **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Built:** Normal, **White Hair Wearing:** Pink Colour Suit and Salwar, Bare Footed.

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. Mandir Marg, Delhi**  
**Ph. No. : 011-23366730, 23341680**  
**Mob. No: 8750870522**  
**DP/177/INDD/2020**

**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED**

General Public is hereby informed that one girl **Namely:** Ritu, D/o: Gagan Sada, R/o: B1/13, Swam Jayanti Vihar, Village Tikri, Khurd, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since **30.11.2020 at 10:00 am** from her house, from the area of P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Delhi. In this regard a case vide **FIR No. 629/20 U/s** Narela Industrial Area, Delhi. In this regard a case vide **FIR No. 629/20 U/s** Narela Industrial Area, Delhi. The description of the missing/kidnapped girl are as under: **Age:** 15 years, **Sex:** Female, **Height:** 5'1", **Face:** Round, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Black colour suit and pink colour lagging. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following. **Website:** <http://cbi.nic.in>  
**E-mail Id - [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)**  
**Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641** **SHO**  
**Fax No. 011-24368639** **P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Delhi**  
**DP/652/ON/2020 Ph.: 011- 27787592, 7065036324**

**SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSON**

General public is hereby informed that this person namely Sachin S/o Mukesh R/o A2/38, G-7, Pocket-4, Narela, Delhi **Age :** 19 years, **Height :** 6', **Face :** Long, **Complexion :** Fair, **Built :** Thin, wearing blue colour pant-shirt, jacket and black colour slipper in feet, has been missing since 18.11.2020 at about 08:30 P.M. from his house. In this regard **DD No. 24-A** dated 01.12.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing person may kindly inform to the following. **E-mail:** [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) **SHO: P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Delhi**  
**Website:** <http://cbi.nic.in> **Ph.: 011-27787592, 27787593**  
**Fax: 24368639, Tel.: 24368638/24368641**

**DP/177/INDD/2020**

# Global shares weaker as virus fears overshadow US stimulus

**New York:** Global shares retreated Monday as worsening coronavirus outbreaks overshadowed news that US lawmakers finally set a deal on more support for American families and businesses.

Markets fell in Paris, London, Frankfurt and Tokyo but rose in Shanghai. U.S. Futures were lower.

Concern about the coronavirus outbreak grew, as several European Union nations banned flights from the UK and others considered similar precautions aimed at preventing a new strain of the virus from gaining a strong foothold on the continent.

That overshadowed the expected passage by the U.S. Congress of the nearly \$1 trillion COVID-19 economic relief package later Monday.

Most investors had already factored in expectations for the fresh stimulus, Jingyi Pan of IG said in a commentary.

"The tentative accord on the approximate \$900 billion coronavirus stimulus deal, having been the talk of the town for weeks, brought forth little fresh enthusiasm for markets," Pan said. Germany's DAX and the CAC 40 in Paris fell 3.1%. In Britain, the FTSE 100 gave up 2.5% to 6,436.30.

US futures also weakened, with the contract for the S&P 500 down 1.7%. The futures for the Dow industrials dropped 1.6%.

The British pound, sometimes called the pound sterling, fell 1.8% against the dollar, to \$1.3274, down from \$1.3522 late Friday. "Combined with European border closures and

the UK Health Secretary using phrases such as 'out of control' to describe the new strain, Sterling is, unsurprisingly, under pressure today," Jeffrey Halley of Oanda said in a commentary.

In Asia, flaring COVID-19 outbreaks have led authorities to impose lockdowns or other restrictions in Australia and Thailand.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index lost 0.2%, regaining some of its earlier losses after the Cabinet approved a record annual budget of 106.6 trillion yen (\$1.03 trillion) for the coming fiscal year, which begins April 1.

In Hong Kong the Hang Seng declined 0.7% and South Korea's Kospi recovered from early losses, gaining 0.2%. The Shanghai Composite index gained 0.8%.

The US stimulus agreement includes temporary \$300 per week supplemental jobless benefits and \$600 direct stimulus payments to most Americans, along with a fresh round of subsidies for hard-hit businesses and funding for schools, health care providers, and renters facing eviction.

The final agreement was reached after a breakthrough over Federal Reserve emergency powers was resolved by the Senate's top Democrat and a senior conservative Republican. Wall Street retreated on Friday, with the S&P 500 losing 0.4% a day after it and other major indexes breached record highs.

The pandemic's chokehold on the economy has worsened, with reports showing growing numbers of workers

applying for jobless benefits and weaker than expected sales for retailers. Wall Street's hope is that the stimulus for the economy might help carry it through a tough winter, until the widespread rollout of COVID-19 vaccines might bring relief.

But it will be months before most people can get the shots, and the pandemic is likely to do even more damage in the interim. In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury slipped to 0.91% from 0.94% late Friday.

US benchmark crude oil lost \$2.01, or 4.1% to \$47.23 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, the international standard, declined \$1.80 to \$50.46 per barrel.

# Most Indians consider buying 5G ready phones, Oppo, Samsung preferred brands: CMR

**New Delhi:** Around 83 per cent people in a survey in India shared that 5G is one of the factors they consider while buying a new phone and nearly three in every five existing premium smartphone users are looking to upgrade their device to the next generation technology, according to a report released by Cybermedia Research.

According to the survey, 81 per cent respondents prefer Oppo for 5G smartphone and 79 per cent opted for Samsung.

The global survey conducted in India, China and West Europe found that 5G users, where the service is available, have experienced better video calls, faster downloads and ability to stream ultra high definition videos

and satisfaction level from 5G services is around 80 per cent.

The technology is pushing growth of video content creation in markets where it is available and the same is expected to follow in India as well, according to the report.

"In global markets, 5G smartphones are fuelling video content creation and consumption, video calling, as well as use cases such as mobile gaming, among others. I believe that when 5G becomes available in India within the next two years, it will give a considerable thrust to the increasing trend of short-form video creation and sharing, amongst millennials," CMR industry intelligence group head Prabhu Ram said in a statement.

The survey conducted in November covered 5,000 consumers in the age groups of 18 to 35, spread across India (3,000), China (1,000) and Western Europe (1,000).

The survey found that 5G in smartphones is a key purchase consideration everywhere.

"In China, Huawei is the most preferred 5G smartphone brand (91 per cent), followed by Apple (58 per cent) that is gaining ground.

Samsung scores the highest in Western Europe (88 per cent), followed by Huawei (65 per cent). In India, amongst early 5G smartphone adopters and tech intenders, OPPO scores the highest (81 per cent), followed by Samsung (79 per cent)," the report said. **PTI**

## IN BRIEF

### COAL SECY REVIEWS PROGRESS OF NUPPL



Secretary (Coal) reviews the progress of NUPPL, Power Project at UPSHri Anil Kumar Jain, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Coal, G.O. paid a visit to review the progress of Joint venture Power Project of NUPPL on 18.12.2020. Shri A K Tiwari, Additional Secretary to Govt of India, Ministry of Coal, Shri Rakesh Kumar, CMD, Shri Senthil Pandian, IAS, MD, UPRVUNL, Shri Shaji John, Director and CEO, Shri Mohan Reddy were present on this occasion. Hon'ble Member of Parliament Shri Devendra Singh Bhole, Hon'ble MLA, Ghatampur Shri Upendra Nath Paswan, Shri Alok Tiwari, DM, Kanpur Nagar, IAS and Shri Arunkumar, IAS, SDM also joined and interacted with the top management and apprised him about the local issues pertaining to the project. Neyveli Utdar Pradesh Power Ltd (NUPPL) a joint venture of NLC India Ltd (Navarathna Govt. of India Enterprise) and Uttar Pradesh Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd (Government of Uttar Pradesh) is setting up a Coal based Supercritical Thermal Power Plant with a capacity of 1980 MW (3X 660 MW) at Ghatampur Tehsil in Kanpur Nagar District, Uttar Pradesh with 51:49 equity participation.

### MOCK DRILL CONDUCTED INSIDE METRO TUNNEL

**Kolkata:** Metro Railway always gives top priority to the safety and security of the commuters. In order to check the preparedness of Metro staff specially Motormen, to tackle any fire emergency inside the Metro tunnel, a passenger evacuation mock drill was conducted between Belgachia and Shyambazar stations on 20.12.2020 inside the Down tunnel. Motormen were imparted training on how to take immediate action to extinguish fire and rescue passengers in case of fire or smoke inside the tunnels and coaches. The objective of this mock drill was to upgrade the fire extinguishing and evacuation skills of the Motormen during such emergencies. A total of 84 staff of different departments attended this drill.

### TYRE CAREWALA TO RE-SKILL TYRE MECHANICS

**Mumbai:** Rubber Skill Development Council (RSDC) has launched a CSR project of Bridgestone India titled Tyre Carewala to skill and re-skill commercial tyre mechanics in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. The aim of the project is to provide skill development training to 1,000 individuals. RSDC COO Shevani Nagpal said, "Having already skilled thousands of tyre fitters under our project SAAMARTH, we are now delighted to be associated with Bridgestone for the skilling and re-skilling of more tyre fitters in India."

## Suspension of UK flights may not have much impact on tourist traffic: Industry players

**New Delhi:** The government's decision to suspend all flights from and to the UK from December 23 to December 31, in view of the emergence of a new COVID-19 strain, is not likely to have much impact on the tourist traffic, and the companies are monitoring the situation, travel industry players said on Monday.

"The impact of the current flight suspension to the UK and from there will have a negligible impact on tourist traffic. Due to the current environment of COVID-19 and the quarantine rules and off season, tourism to the UK in any case had not picked up," EaseMyTrip co-founder and CEO Nishant Pitti told PTI.

This will lead to a faster growth and demand for domestic tourism, especially when the international option is limited. Travellers are aspir-

### Govt aims to double farm mechanisation in next 10 years

**New Delhi:** Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Monday said the government is focusing on farm mechanisation and asked the industry to provide small machines and equipment to farmers with less land-holding to boost their income.

The minister was speaking at the annual general meeting of Tractor and Mechanization Association on Monday.

Tomar talked about the government's target to double farm mechanization per hectare in 10 years and said it was only possible with the support from industry, CII said in a statement.

The government's emphasis is on providing large advanced agricultural equipment to farmers for their field, the minister said. He urged the members of the association to provide small utility machines to small acreage farmers, so that 86 per cent of these farmers can acquire machines easily and their income can increase. **PTI**

### Fin Min releases weekly instalment of ₹6,000 cr to states to meet GST compensation shortfall

**New Delhi:** The Finance Ministry on Monday released the eighth weekly instalment of Rs 6,000 crore to the states to meet the GST compensation shortfall, taking the total amount released so far under this window to Rs 48,000 crore.

"The Ministry of Finance has released the 8th weekly instalment of Rs 6,000 crore to the States to meet the GST compensation shortfall. Out of this, an amount of Rs 5,516.60 crore has been released to 23 states and an amount of Rs 483.40 crore has been released to the 3 Union Territories (UT) with Legislative Assembly (Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir & Puducherry)," it said in a statement.

The remaining five states -- Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim -- do not have a gap in revenue on account of GST implement-

## SAT issues notice to Sebi on appeal filed against order in STP services matter: 63 Moons

**New Delhi:** 63 Moons Technologies on Monday said the Securities Appellate Tribunal has issued a notice to Sebi on an appeal filed by the company against the order related to providing Straight Through Processing (STP) services.

On December 3, Sebi said that 63 Moons has been offering STP services without its approval and allowed the company to provide such services for three months to clients in order to avoid any possible disruptions for securities market participants.

Generally, financial firms use STP to pass information electronically in order to optimise the speed at which they process transactions. This eliminates the need for a hands-on entry of data that has already been completed at the source.

The watchdog's directions were part of an order wherein it rejected 63 Moons' application seeking renewal of approval to provide STP services on the basis of 'fit and proper' criteria. **PTI**

### ADB, Northern Arc sign USD 40 mn loan to support microfinance borrowers, MSMEs

**New Delhi:** The Asian Development Bank on Monday said it has signed a USD 40 million loan to Northern Arc Capital Limited (NACL) to support the livelihoods of microfinance borrowers and MSMEs in India.

The loan is disbursed to NACL as part of ADB's ongoing COVID-19 response.

NACL will on-lend the loan proceeds and provide guarantees to financial institutions and individual borrowers.

NACL will also on-lend to affordable housing finance companies, ADB said in a statement.

"The pandemic has had a deep impact on the country's informal economy, especially among microfinance borrowers and MSMEs," said ADB's Private Sector Operations Department Director Christine Engstrom. **PTI**

## Ensuiring tariff hikes to fuel revenue growth, better debt metrics for telcos in FY2022: ICRA

**New Delhi:** Telecom service providers could undertake the next round of tariff hikes over the next one or two quarters, which is expected to fuel revenue growth in fiscal 2022, ICRA said on Monday.

The industry topline is expected to grow by 11-13 per cent over the next two years, with operating margins improving to about 38 per cent for the financial year 2022 on the back of improved cash flows, moderate capex and limited borrowings, it said.

"Next round of tariff hikes are expected soon as the industry debt continues to remain elevated, likely to be at Rs 4.7 lakh crore as on March 31, 2022," ICRA said in a release.

Given the higher funding needs arising from sizeable pay-outs towards statutory liabilities, spectrum purchase, regular revenue share with the government and auction instalments. **PTI**

**MODI INDUSTRIES LIMITED**  
Registered Office: MODINAGAR (U.P.) 201204  
CIN NO.: L15429UP1932PPLC000469 | Phone: 01232-243115, 9084786566  
e-mail: modindustrieslimited@gmail.com  
Website: www.modindustries.net

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to all the 12.5% Debenture holders of M/s Modi Industries Limited (MIL) having its registered office at Modinagar - 201204, Uttar Pradesh ("Company") for full and final settlement of the 12.5% Non-convertible part of Debentures of Rs.200/- each. The Company had issued 2,27,960 12.5% partially convertible debentures of Rs. 250/- each pursuant to Board Meeting held on 24.05.1986. The convertible part of Rs. 50/- of the fully paid-up debentures was duly converted into 5 equity shares of Rs. 10/- each as per the terms of the issue and non-convertible part of Debentures of Rs. 200/- each continued with MIL.

"As per terms of issue of these debentures Non-convertible part of Rs. 200 of each Debenture shall be redeemed at par in three annual instalments of Rs. 65/-, Rs. 65/- and Rs. 70/- at the end of 7, 8 and 9 years respectively from the date of allotment. The interest on the Debentures shall cease to accrue and shall cease to be payable from the dates of their redemption."

After the expiry of the said period as stated in the Debenture Document, the Debentures could not have been transferred to anybody else. The interest as contemplated was to be paid only up to the date of the redemption period as defined in the Debenture Document i.e. the 7th, 8th & 9th year from the date of the allotment.

Now, Company (MIL) hereby offers for full and final payment of above debentures in tune with the payments already made to the other secured creditors i.e. Principal amount + 112% of the principal amount towards interest in full and final settlement of their dues. Accordingly, 12.5% debenture holders of MIL are advised to send their consent for settlement of their debenture dues and surrender Debenture Certificates, duly discharged at the back of Debenture Certificates along with self attested copies of their PAN and Addhar Card to enable the Company (MIL) to release their full and final payment of debentures dues.

For MODI INDUSTRIES LIMITED  
Sd/-  
(Shobit Nehra)  
Company Secretary  
ACS-31863

Place: Modinagar  
Date: 21/12/2020

### Origo Commodities India Private Limited

Un-audited Financial Results for the year ended 30th September, 2020  
(Regulation 52 (B), read with Regulation 52 (4), of the SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015)  
In Lacs

Sl. No.	Particulars	Half year ending / Current Year Ended 30th September 2020	'Corresponding half year ended in the previous year 30th September 2019 (Applicable only in case of half yearly results)	Previous year ended 31st March 2020
1.	Total Income from Operations	15330.73	14317.37	31778.39
2.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	172.71	236.60	479.65
3.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	172.71	236.60	479.65
4.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	75.30	176.97	354.97
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	71.68	173.43	347.89
6.	Paid up Equity Share Capital	5448.90	-	5448.90
7.	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	10880.47	-	10802.95
8.	Net worth	16329.37	-	16251.85
9.	Paid up Debt Capital/Outstanding Debt	12610.25	-	9879.16
10.	Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares*	0.48	-	0.48
11.	Debt Equity Ratio *	0.77	-	1.05
12.	Earnings Per Share (of Rs.10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) -			
1.	Basic:	0.14	-	0.65
2.	Diluted:	0.13	-	0.60
13.	Capital Redemption Reserve *	-	-	-
14.	Debtenture Redemption Reserve *	-	-	-
15.	Debt Service Coverage Ratio *	0.21	-	0.35
16.	Interest Service Coverage Ratio *	1.36	-	1.61

**Note:**

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of half yearly/annual financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 52 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the half yearly/annual financial results are available on the websites of the Stock Exchange(s) i.e. BSE Limited and the listed entity, investor@origoindia.com & https://www.bseindia.com/stock-share-price/origo-commodities-india-pvt-ld/13180c122/959073/corp-announcements.
- For the items referred to sub-clauses (a), (b), (d) and (e) of the Regulation 52 (4) of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the pertinent disclosures have been made to the Stock Exchange(s) (specify names of Stock Exchanges) and can be accessed on the URL investor@origoindia.com & https://www.bseindia.com/stock-share-price/origo-commodities-india-pvt-ld/13180c122/959073/corp-announcements.
- The impact on net profit/loss, total comprehensive income or any other relevant financial item(s) due to change(s) in accounting policies shall be disclosed by means of a footnote.
- # - Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items adjusted in the Statement of Profit and Loss in accordance with Ind AS Rules / AS Rules, whichever is applicable.
- The above standalone and consolidated results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors in their respective meetings held on November 24, 2020 and have been reviewed by the Statutory Auditors of the Company in accordance with the requirement of regulation 52 of SEBI (Listing Obligations & Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 (Listing Regulations).
- Segment Information as per Ind-AS 108, "Operating Segments" is disclosed in Segment reporting.
- The figures for the half year ended 31st March, 2020 are balancing figures between the audited figures for the full financial year and the unaudited figures up to the six months ended 30th September, 2019.
- The figures for the half year ended 30th September, 2019 are balancing figures between the audited figures for the full financial year and the unaudited figures for the period 1st October 2019 to 31st March, 2020.
- During the period, the Company issued and allotted 65 Rated Unsubordinated Secured Transferable Redeemable Non-Convertible Debentures of face value of Rs. 10,00,000/- (Rupees Ten Lakh only) each (aggregated nominal value Rs. 6.50 Crores) on private placement basis to Axis Trustee Services Limited/IFMR Fimcap Long Term Multi Asset Class Fund.

For Origo Commodities India Private Limited  
Name: Mayank Dhanuka  
Whole Time Director  
Date: 24th November, 2020  
Place: Gurgaon  
Corporate Office: Plot No 37, 1st Floor, Sec-18, Institutional Area, Gurgaon 122002, Haryana  
Registered Office: Fk-06, First Floor, Somdat Chamber-1,5, Bhikai Cama Place, New Delhi-110068  
CIN:U51103DL2011PT0213352. Visit us at: www.origoindia.com. Email: info@origoindia.com

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Public at large is hereby informed that Late Sh. Devendra Kumar Maltare S/o Sh. Hari Narayan Maltare R/o P-1-B-018, Princeton Estate Dif 5, Gurgaon, Haryana-122001 was having commercial property in joint ownership along with his Wife Mrs. Urmil Maltare in our project Vatika Mindscape B. Flat no 259/ admeasuring 500 sq.ft which his/her legal heirs (Mrs. Urmil Maltare, Mr. Sameer Maltare) requested the company to be transfer to his Son Mrs. Sameer Maltare Any person having any objection on this please may contact the company officer details as under within 15 days after which No Claim would be accepted.

Vatika Limited  
Vatika Triangle, 4th Floor,  
Sushant Lok I, Block A, MG Road, Gurgaon, Haryana  
Contact : 09555930930

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Public at large is hereby informed that Late Sh. Devendra Kumar Maltare S/o Sh. Hari Narayan Maltare R/o P-1-B-018, Princeton Estate Dif 5, Gurgaon, Haryana-122001 was having commercial property in joint ownership along with his Wife Mrs. Urmil Maltare in our project Vatika Inxt City Centre C, Flat no 122 admeasuring 500 sq.ft which his/her legal heirs (Mrs. Urmil Maltare, Mr. Sameer Maltare) requested the company to be transfer to his Son Mrs. Sameer Maltare Any person having any objection on this please may contact the company officer details as under within 15 days after which No Claim would be accepted.

Vatika Limited  
Vatika Triangle, 4th Floor,  
Sushant Lok I, Block A, MG Road, Gurgaon, Haryana  
Contact : 09555930930

### SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that a lady namely **Sapna** along with son **Krishna-Age 3 yrs, W/o Sonu Kumar, R/o E-5/61, Nand Nagri, Delhi, Age: 26 years, Height: 5'5", Face: Round, Complexion: Wheatish, Build: Medium, Wearing: Black Suit, Black Pajami and Brown Colour Ladies Sandal in her feet, Krishna - Black T-Shirt, Blue Colour Nikkar and sandal in his feet has been missing from her home since **16.10.2020**. In this regard a **PS. Nand Nagri, Delhi**, dated **19.11.2020** has been registered at **P.S. Nand Nagri, Delhi**.**

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing lady alongwith son but no clue has come to light so far. if any one having any information about this alongwith son please inform undersigned.

E-mail : cbc@cbi.gov.nic.in  
Ph : 011-24368638,24368641  
Fax : 011-24368639  
SHO  
PS Nand Nagri, Delhi  
Ph. : 011-22137761, 875087033  
DP/441/NE/2020

## At USD 8.1 bn in Nov, FPI inflows highest in 12 years: Report

**Mumbai:** Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs), which own more than 24 per cent of the domestic market, pumped in a record USD 8.1 billion last month, highest in 12 years, and at USD 5 billion to date, December also looks to get record inflows, says a foreign brokerage report.

At USD 8.1 billion, India has received the highest FPI inflows among the emerging market peers in November, as Brazil got only USD 6.2 billion, South Korea (USD 5.2 billion), Taiwan (USD 4.5 billion) and Thailand at USD 1.1 billion.

This inflow had the valuation premium of India to other emerging markets in the MSCI Index shooting up by 5 percentage point to 46 per cent and is 5 per cent above the long-term average, says Bank of America Securities in a report on Monday.

Meanwhile, with over USD 2 billion pullout, the domestic funds turned negative on the market in November.

At over USD 8.1 billion, FPIs inflows are the highest in 12 years in November, while with over USD 2 billion redemptions, domestic funds were net sellers in the month.

The fund inflows were driven by active funds, BoFA Securities said. **PTI**

## Tata Motors to increase commercial vehicle prices from January

**Mumbai:** Tata Motors on Monday said its commercial vehicle prices will be revised upward from January next year.

The steady rise in material and other input costs, impact of forex and transition to BS-VI norms, have cumulatively increased the cost of manufacturing vehicles, necessitating a price revision to partially offset the impact, the company said in a statement.

"There will be a price increase across Tata Motors commercial vehicle range, effective January 01, 2021," the company said in the statement. It said the actual change in price will depend on individual model, variant and fuel type.

The company had thus far been absorbing the addition in costs but with their steady rise in line with market trend, it has become imperative to pass at least some portion of the cost increase to customers via appropriate price revisions, it added.

The price increase is expected across the portfolio of medium and heavy commercial vehicles, intermediate and light commercial vehicles, small commercial vehicles as well as buses, Tata Motors said. **PTI**

# HEALTH

## HospitalSay

Reduced hospital visits for urgent heart problems during the initial phase of the Covid-19 pandemic may have contributed to hundreds of avoidable deaths, new research has found. In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, a marked decline in patient visits to emergency departments was observed in England and the US, including for people with heart problems



## YOGA TO THE RESCUE



Yoga is a formidable natural immunity booster for long life. JAYANT BOKADIA shares poses that one can opt for

It's time we must be on guard to prevent ourselves from falling sick. The winter season is known to bring along cold, cough and fever and aggravate respiratory and cardiac issues. People with low immunity are at a higher risk of falling ill. If you face high stress, frequent occurrence of infections, tiredness, stomach disorders, it implies that you need to work on your immunity levels. The rapid transmission of the COVID-19 pandemic also underscores the need to strengthen our immune system. The advent of globalisation, changing lifestyle and food habits warrants the need for a sound immune system to keep pathogens at bay.

Yoga is a formidable natural immunity booster for long life. Its key advantage is its simplicity of asanas, diversity of asanas to suit all age-groups and a time-tested natural way of boosting immunity. It is a holistic and simple regime, and if followed correctly, can yield good results. Here are a few asanas that you must perform if you are looking to boost immunity.

**Pranayam:** The word 'prana' refers to the universal energy that sustains our life. This technique refers to the art of controlling breath and regulating it in sync with various asanas. This body of knowledge believes that a high prana level indicates a continuous flow of energy and a calm mind. However, lack of knowledge and inadequate attention to breath can block *nadis* and *chakras*, leading to tension, worries, fear and conflict. *Bhramari pranayama* refers to bee breathing to give a break to your hectic schedule and an occupied mind. It is immensely beneficial for hypertension patients.

**Vrikshasan:** This *asana* denotes the steady yet graceful pose of a tree. Unlike other *asanas*, this *asana* is performed with eyes open to balance the body. *Vrikshasan* is best performed on an empty stomach with at least four to six intervals between meals and the *asana*. One must avoid putting the sole of the lifted foot beside the knee as it builds pressure on the latter. This *asana* helps in achieving concentration and mindfulness.

**Surya Namaskar:** This *asana* denotes the salutation to the Sun and involves 12 poses. It involves stretching of almost all parts of the body and serves as an excellent cardiovascular workout. It stimulates the nervous and cardiovascular system, strengthens the immune system and enhances cognitive abilities.

**Vajrasan:** This *asana* is also known as the thunderbolt, involves sitting straight on the knees with feet flat on the ground with soles pointing upwards. It focuses on breathing and holding the posture for at least 30 seconds. It is the only *asana* that is performed on a full stomach after having a meal. It relieves constipation and serves as an exercise for the liver, stomach and uterus. The resting of feet over hips stretches and flexes quadriceps.

**Anjaneyasan:** This *asana* involves bending a knee on the floor right above the hips. The arms are extended upwards with palms facing each other. The lower back is extended, and hips are aligned in such a way that it stretches the frontal region of the leg and hip flexors. Those with hypertension or knee injury should avoid this *asana*.

The writer is CEO, Nimba Nature Cure



# A COLD ISSUE

Winter, indoor and outdoor pollution, allergies and the common cold can trigger sinusitis. DR SANJIV DANG tells you the symptoms to look out for and shares ways to keep it under control

**D**o you encounter problems like nasal congestion? Is that nagging cold giving you a tough time by not allowing you to do your real-world activities with ease? To top it all, do you encounter breathing issues constantly? Then, you will have to consult a doctor as it could be sinusitis. Sinusitis, also known as sinus, affects people of all age groups. Winter, indoor and outdoor pollution, allergies, and the common cold can trigger this condition, and give you a tough time. One may encounter a sinusitis problem because of the inflammation of the tiny air pockets that are located around the bones of one's nose. Normally, the sinus, or the pocket, is filled with air, and then one will be shocked to know that the area gets filled with germs or fluids that can invite infection. One with sinusitis may feel that he/she is getting cold. Seasonal allergies and pollen can trigger this condition, and the symptoms worsen during winter.

Know why winter can be harsh on people with sinusitis. Winter season leads to a change in the air pressure. Moreover, it is the time you get cozy in those blankets. But, make sure that it doesn't carry dust as this can aggravate your sinusitis pain. Moreover, carpets and rugs at home that are filled with dust can also be problematic. During winter, one also tends to opt for indoor heating. You will be shocked to know that the air will dry out owing to electric heaters and air conditioners causing irritation to your nasal passage. Furthermore, opting

for foods like alcohol, sugar, or even dairy can lead to nasal congestion and lead to inflammation in the body.

The symptoms can be a headache, runny nose, and swelling of the sinuses, nasal congestion, nasal discharge, and breathing problems. Furthermore, people having chronic sinusitis experience facial, upper jaw, and tooth pain. Postnasal drip, sore throat, loss of taste because of the congestion, and fatigue are some of the classic symptoms of this condition. You will have to take antibiotics to manage pain and inflammation. Remember to recognise the sinusitis problem on time, and take the expert's advice.

Here are a few tips to tackle sinusitis:

- In order to generate more oxygen, it is advisable to keep oxygen plants at home.
- Do not eat cold stuff and try to drink a lot of warm water.
- Taking steam on a daily basis will help you clean your nasal passage. The excess mucus will be cleared and you will be able to breathe freely. So, just inhaling the steam for merely 20 minutes can do the trick.
- Stay hydrated all the time. Drink a lot of water which will thin the mucus and help manage sinusitis. Not only will this, drinking enough water to ensure that your lungs are lubricated.
- Do not sit in a humid environment. Avoid opting for a humidifier as it could lead to dry air and cause inflammation of the sinuses.

THE SYMPTOMS OF SINUSITIS CAN BE A HEADACHE, RUNNY NOSE, SWELLING OF THE SINUSES, NASAL DISCHARGE AND BREATHING PROBLEMS. FURTHERMORE, PEOPLE HAVING CHRONIC SINUSITIS EXPERIENCE FACIAL, UPPER JAW AND TOOTH PAIN

- Do not rub your nose too hard as it can lead to bleeding.
- Elevate your head while sleeping as it can help you manage your congestion.
- Breathing exercises can help you clear your nasal passages. Also, take the medication prescribed by the doctor on time.
- Getting a flu shot in winter can help prevent sinusitis.
- Eat a well-balanced diet loaded with fresh fruits, vegetables, and legumes. Do not go overboard on antibiotics and wash your hands frequently to keep germs and bacteria at bay, and avoid getting cold or allergies. Say no to smoking as it may irritate your sinusitis.
- Keep your windows closed and prevent dust from entering the house. Also, clean your bedding, carpets, and rugs from time to time. Also, avoid swimming during those chilly days to keep sinusitis at bay.
- Change your air filters regularly. This will help get rid of dust, pet dander, and even pollen.
- Wear jackets and sweaters during those chilly days to avoid getting sick as this can aggravate sinusitis.
- Avoid exercising in the cold weather. If you go out for morning walks during those chilly days then you are doing it all wrong. The cold weather can wreck havoc on your health. So, be careful! Do not step out during winter.

The writer is ENT specialist, Apollo Cradle

## DadiKaKehna

With the cold wave gripping most parts of the country, having a sore throat is common. ROSHANI DEVI shares easy home remedies that can help relieve it



**G**etting a sore throat is horrifying, especially during the current time. However, it is not only COVID-19 that causes it, there are other factors too. Here are a few remedies that will help you.

Gargle with salt and lukewarm water. Take a cup of lukewarm water, add half tsp of salt and gargle twice a day. Drink hot water. While it doesn't taste too great, but it is advisable to have hot water at regular intervals. It will help calm down your throat. Honey can help. Mixed in tea or taken on its own,

honey is commonly used in relieving a sore throat. Use peppermint. Peppermint contains menthol, which helps thin mucus and calm sore throats and coughs. Peppermint also has anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and antiviral properties, which may encourage healing. Baking soda gargle. While the saltwater gargle is more commonly used, gargling baking soda mixed with salt water can help relieve a sore throat as well. It can kill bacteria and prevent the growth of yeast and fungi.



## It's on your fingertips

Taking care of hands is just as important as the rest of the body. KOUSHIK SREEDHAR shares tips that can help do the job

**T**he perfect season of warm cuddles and hot chocolate has arrived along with the chilly air that can wreak havoc on your skin — making it dry, itchy, and irritated. For all the seasonal highs that winter brings and comforts of heaters, blowers and hot water, there is also an unpleasant side that manifests in the form of dull and dry skin making it lack lustre and glow. And as health and hygiene takes precedence with the constant washing and sanitising of our hands, it's essential to take the right amount of care to ensure our hands stay healthy, hydrated and soft.

Here are five easy tips to take care of your hands this winter season:

**Too hot to handle:** While we all switch the hot water on to escape the cold weather outside, make sure we don't use steaming hot water as it can strip away the moisture of your skin. Use lukewarm water instead to wash your hands before and after eating or com-

ing from outside. Don't forget to tap your hands dry with a soft towel/napkin and not with a rough cloth to avoid rashes. **Cover it up:** Our hands can be the first to indicate dry skin. With more family members at home especially with WFH becoming a norm, it also increases the amount of clothes and dishes to be washed. Hence, invest in a good waterproof pair of gloves to save your hands from being exposed to water a lot. Moreover, as the temperature drops especially in regions like North India, it is advised to wear gloves; however, woolen fabric tends to be irritating on the skin and leaves rashes. Hence, you should always apply a moisturising hand cream to keep your hands soft under the gloves.

**Nailing the look:** An important yet unspoken factor about hand care is also nail care as nails are an extension of the skin and hence require the same tender loving care. Hence, give them some extra attention

by soaking them into lukewarm water, cleansing and applying a good hand moisturiser to keep them clean, strong and healthy. **The moisturiser mantra:** Always consider a moisture cream that not only works in sync with your skin but also with your daily routine. While there are various types of skins with different needs, it is essential to have some ingredients that are vital to keep it soft and supple. Hence, look out for a dermatologically-approved good intensive hand cream enriched with Jojoba oil and Vitamin E that is anti-greasy and can quickly absorb and refresh the skin. You can also apply it regularly after your cleansing ritual for smooth, soft and supple hands.

And so, as we settle into the new normal, keep these simple steps in mind for the perfect hand care winter remedy at the first sign of chill and enjoy this season to the fullest!

The writer is Beiersdorf R&D Director, India Hub

## IN BRIEF

**T**he Himalaya Drug Company, India's leading wellness brand, shared the results of the clinical study they commissioned to evaluate the role of their well-known herbal products (Tab Septilin and Tab Bresol in combination) as an adjuvant treatment in mildly symptomatic and asymptomatic COVID-19-positive patients. The clinical trial was conducted under the supervision of Dr CR Jayanthi (MBBS, MD), Dean and Director of the prestigious Victoria Hospital (BMCRI — Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute), Bangalore.

Septilin is a well-known proprietary Ayurvedic formulation with time-tested ingredients such as Guggulu, Yashtimadhu, and Guduchi, and possesses strong immunomodulatory property. The safety and efficacy of Septilin has been extensively evaluated in multiple clinical and preclinical studies.

The study was conducted with a strong rationale that both Septilin and Bresol have been proven, in preclinical and clinical studies, to provide support and have a positive, multifaceted influence on immunity and respiratory functions. These adhere to stringent quality parameters, which makes them ideal to be tested against COVID-19 without any concern whatsoever.

## DOCYARD

DR PAVAN YADAV

Consultant, Interventional Pulmonology

ASTER RV HOSPITAL



## Whistle of wheezing



**T**he winter time can be a dreaded season for asthmatics as during the colder seasons it is common for them to witness an increase in asthma attacks. This is mainly because of two reasons, one is that people are more frequently exposed to certain indoor allergens during the winter and another is the cold temperature itself. The dry wintry air can irritate the inner lining of the throat. During the colder season, the heart also works doubly hard in order to keep the body warm and in asthmatics the lungs may find it difficult to keep up with any extra or strenuous activity. However, with careful self-observation and with the right tools on hand, the winter season can be enjoyable too! The following are some helpful tips on managing your asthma during the colder season:

**Identify triggers and try to eliminate them**  
Since we're all spending most of our time indoors, identify certain allergens that trigger your asthma. Dust mites, pet hair, pollution or construction site dust, mould, pollen etc can all contribute towards increasing asthma attacks. Indoor dust is one of the most common triggers, so make sure you keep your floors and fans clean! Change your bed sheets often, fluff your pillow and remove dust from your blankets by shaking vigorously on a daily basis. Do this in an open area so as to not trigger another attack.

**Keep your immunity high**  
During the winter season you are at a greater risk of developing coughs, colds, flu or other chest infections which can worsen asthma. Take extra care to avoid unwanted exposure to viruses, focus on immunity boosting foods such as green leafy vegetables, fruits, whole grains and protein. Smoking and drinking are a big no. Channel your energy in more productive ways by exercising or find some other creative outlet to keep your mind healthy. Consider getting a flu vaccine if required.

**Take extra care to avoid unwanted exposure to viruses, focus on immunity boosting foods such as green leafy vegetables, whole grains and protein. Consider getting a flu vaccine if required**  
**Keep warm**  
Get ample Vitamin D whenever you can catch some sunlight, and go out and stand on the balcony for 15-20 minutes daily even when the sun isn't directly visible. Wear woolen clothes or thermals to help your body maintain a stable temperature. Consider investing in an indoor heater and humidifier if you stay in very cold regions. Keep a flask of warm water handy and preferably drink warm liquids throughout the day. Hot water bags could also be used when you sleep at night to help keep the body warm and ease congestion inside the lungs. Avoid too much caffeine.

**Keep your medicines handy**  
If there is a change in asthma severity particularly during winters or if you experience asthma only during the winters, your doctor may prescribe a different medicine for you apart from the standard inhaler. This can be a different strength or type of inhaler or allergy control medications such as antihistamines, nasal sprays or eye drops. The doctor may also suggest nasal irrigation or a saline rinse depending on the severity of your attacks and the condition of your airways.

The crux of preventing an asthmatic attack depends on successfully identifying and eliminating or finding the best ways to cope with a reaction. Exercise may trigger an attack in some people whereas in others it may be less obvious things such as insects, fragrances, smoke from fire, etc. Speak to your doctor for more detailed advice on coping measures that are designed for your particular health background and you will understand if you require a vaccination, and if so what kinds, and the best type of medication suited for you.

## WARMFOODS

**BROWN RICE:** Brown rice is rich in proteins, thiamine, calcium, magnesium, fiber, and potassium. For those trying to lose weight or those suffering from Diabetes, it can prove a healthy staple given its low glycemic rating which helps reduce insulin spikes. It is also rich in selenium which reduces the risk of the developing common illnesses such as cancer, heart disease and arthritis. One cup of it provides 80 percent of our daily manganese requirements. Manganese helps the body synthesize fats. It also benefits our nervous and reproductive systems. The naturally occurring oils are beneficial for the body as these healthful fats help normalise cholesterol levels. The fiber content of brown rice keeps bowel function at its peak since it makes digestion that much easier. It is the perfect addition to the daily diet for those seeking bowel regularity. In addition, it also makes the tummy feel full which translates to smaller meal portions and thereby aiding in weight loss.



# EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY!

Considering the year we have had, it is wise and suitable to keep the celebrations low-key. But with the holiday season in full swing, some things never change. So let's find out how various cafes and restaurants are safely celebrating Christmas this year. By TEAM VIVA

decor including Christmas trees, starry decorations and accessories that fit and get along the merry making vibe. We are giving away amazing packages for people to celebrate the eve with us."

They are set to celebrate the power of women with DJ Akanksha Popli and DJ Gouri. The menu has varied offerings where you can entice your taste buds with different varieties of salads and soups. Lets spread the festive joy with enjoying the live counters of pasta, pizza and roasted turkey. Cold cuts like pepperoni, salami and sliced grilled chicken are just too perfect to resist. So, if you are looking to enjoy Christmas in the perfect way, Friction, The Drinkery awaits you.

Carols, bells, lights, decorations, chilly winters and rum cake — the season of joy is here! People are set to welcome Christmas and New Year with open arms. Considering the year we have had, it is only wise and suitable for us to keep the celebrations low-key. But with the holiday season in full swing, some things never change. So let's find out how various cafes and restaurants are safely celebrating Christmas this year.

**KAMPAI**

A special menu, a live saxophonist and food tapping music along with the festive decor will make it an unforgettable Christmas experience. They always believe that festivals should give one a lot of memories to cherish later. Hence, they have carefully crafted their menu and offerings keeping in mind the taste and preferences of the clients.

Avantika Sinha Bahl at Kampai says, "One has to move on and accept the new normal while taking all the necessary precautions. We are making sure that we and our team adhere to social distancing norms and follow hygiene protocols to stay safe. But we will also make sure to give you merrier times. People are gradually stepping out and all they need is the assurance of safety. With proper precautions in place, we are sure people will want to step out."

The chefs have curated the menu where people can choose between the variety of soups, salads and dimsums. The appetizers available are — Tori no Kkarage, Yaki buta baraniku, Rock shrimp tempura and more. Sushi rolls like Aburi salmon roll, spicy tuna roll, Ebi tempura roll, crunchy vegetable roll are on the offer. The main course where the chef has some of his star dishes includes Tori no teriyaki, Yasai teppan, Teppanyaki fried rice, Yaki soba noodles, Lamb bulgogi and much more. To end the meal on a sweet note, the chef has made a special plum cake.

Right from *Kampai Irish coffee*, *Myth of Monarch to The Auld alliance*, there are some best concoctions to make your day. The exclusive Christmas packages are priced at ₹2,999 and ₹3,999 plus taxes.

**MOLECULE**

Christmas at Molecule will be a hearty affair. Manish Sharma, founder of Molecule, says, "Those festivals at Molecule are complete fun, food and frolic as we are always up for extravagant and magnificent affairs, and this year is no different. Starting with the performance of celebrity DJ ATIS on December 24, we are all prepped up. We have done successful bashes post-COVID lockdown already and we are lucky that we are getting love from our people, who are very well aware of our conscious efforts to fight the pandemic. We will continue to act safely and with this, we are sure people will step out of their homes."

Molecule will be dressed up in the theme of *Money Heist*. One can expect servers dressed up as Dali with live bands, rooftop brunch, winter cocktails and more. The ambience will be decked up with fresh flower arrangements. Right from flea stalls, face paintings to DIY cocktail corners and edible flower ice cubes in your drinks — one can find the little things which will make you happier and merrier. Along with these elements, one can enjoy the specially curated chef delights such as sushi, dimsums, sal-



ads, air breads, pizzas, pastas and more. Not only this, melange of different artists at different time slots will be performing to make sure each music lover gets to hear their favorite. The packages start at ₹1,800 plus taxes.

**PLUM BY BENTCHAIR**  
Restaurateur Priyank Sukhija says that the merry spirit of the holiday season is all set to arrive at Plum By Bent Chair. Witness the charm of eccentricity and the quirk of colorful hues as you dwell in the season of festivity with Santa and Plum over Pan Asian delicacies. After all that you've been through this year, they specially crafted exotic cocktail, inspired from the magic of Christmas, to turn your night #Plumazing. Priyank says, "Food and drinks are the

most exciting part of the festival along with bright decorations and fares. Holiday meals have a special feel when paired with great drinks. Plum by Bent Chair is coming up with exciting handcrafted cocktails that one can sip on during the festival." The packages start at ₹2,000.

**DIABLO**  
Make this Christmas all about magnificent vibes and stellar music as Diablo invites you for a groovy night with Danza in the city. What makes it even more special is that Techpanda X Kenzani will be showcasing their album on Christmas eve. While you sway, they make sure you feel welcomed with their modern Middle Eastern delicacies. The true flavour of Mediterranean cuisine paired with handcrafted artisanal

cocktails adds to the overall experience and is a perfect way to make your Christmas merrier.

**L'OPERA**

Christmas and New Year are the most important celebrations of the year in France and many other European countries. Their day is specially dedicated to family, unity and friendship. It's a time for solidarity and, of course, a time to savour succulent, festively baked and decorated desserts.

"I have many great memories of my childhood during Christmas," remembers Laurent Samandari, co-founder and MD of L'Opera. "I particularly remember how much I used to love the warm smell of baking of alpine nut cake. It used to be nice and comforting. I wish to offer the same feeling to L'Opera guests and patrons. We are bringing back its classic selection of products encompassing buches (Yule log), chocolates, panettone, Christmas pudding, biscuits, plum cake, alpine nut cake, galette des rois as well as a signature toffee sauce to relish with the Christmas pudding. Bûche (Yule log) is a traditional dessert served during pre-Christmas dinners and luncheons in France and in other neighbouring countries. It is made of a delicate sponge cake to resemble a miniature actual Yule log. A bark-like texture is often produced by dragging a fork through the icing and powdered sugar sprinkled to resemble snow. Other cake decorations may include actual tree branches,

fresh berries and mushrooms made of meringue or marzipan. They are offering it in four variants: The traditional coffee buche, much-loved black forest, the indispensable passion fruit and chocolate and the youthful red velvet variant.

Their Christmas pudding and plum cake are among the most sought-after Christmas specialities, which are widely anticipated during the whole year. Christmas and New-Year celebrations are also an occasion for them to remember

those in the society who are less fortunate. Says Kazem Samandari, Laurent's father and executive chairman of the brand, "This year, we have decided to dedicate five per cent of the revenue generated from our hamper sales to Main Tendue, the charity which supports 10 Indian NGOs."

**CAFÉ DELHI HEIGHTS**

Cafe Delhi Heights is celebrating the festival with the famous 'Fondue menu'. Fondue is melted cheese served in a ceramic pot over

a little stove with various breads or veggies to dip. While keeping the tradition alive, CDH has added an Indian twist in the menu. One can enjoy different varieties of it such as chocolate fondue, cheese fondue and spinach fondue, a north Indian winter delight.

**FRICION, THE DRINKERY**

Tarun Hassija, owner of the cafe, shares, "Christmas is celebrated like any other big festival in India now. We are getting ready with the right

PROFIT & LOSS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2020				PROFIT AND LOSS APPROPRIATION ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2020		
(Amount in Rs.)				(Amount in Rs.)		
PARTICULARS	SCHEDULE	31.03.2020	31.03.2019	Current Year 31.03.2020	Previous Year 31.03.2019	
Income						
Interest earned	13	2,39,02,919	3,54,38,217	(35,71,038.00)	4,91,22,719.00	
Other Income	14	26,89,913	52,78,581			
NPA Excess Provision Written Back			4,28,11,318	(35,71,038.00)	4,91,22,719.00	
<b>Total (A)</b>		<b>2,65,92,832</b>	<b>8,35,78,116</b>			
EXPENDITURE						
Interest Expended	15	1,74,11,009	1,56,66,270	0.00	0.00	
Other Operating Expenses	16	1,30,01,481	1,19,00,695	0.00	30,03,045.00	
Provision	17	3,04,12,480	2,75,86,965	0.00	0.00	
<b>Total (B)</b>		<b>4,88,24,970</b>	<b>3,51,53,930</b>			
Net Profit / (Loss) before Tax (A-B)		(8,19,658)	5,60,11,151	(35,71,038.00)	4,60,69,674.00	
Less: Provision for Tax		(2,48,620)	68,88,432		(3,71,10,540.00)	
<b>Profit / (Loss) after Tax</b>		<b>(5,71,038)</b>	<b>4,91,22,719</b>	<b>(35,71,038.00)</b>	<b>89,59,134.00</b>	

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2020				BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2020			
(Amount in INR)				(Amount in INR)			
CAPITAL AND LIABILITIES	SCHEDULE	CURRENT YEAR 31.03.2020	PREVIOUS YEAR 31.03.2019	PROPERTY & ASSETS	SCHEDULE	CURRENT YEAR 31.03.2020	PREVIOUS YEAR 31.03.2019
Capital	1	1,31,85,800	1,32,61,300	Cash in Hand		38,55,144	30,09,894
Reserve Fund & Other Reserves	2	2,98,34,295	2,82,42,207	Balance with Other Banks	6	1,92,26,192	2,36,63,596
Deposits & Other Accounts	3	27,62,31,470	27,95,34,827	Fixed Deposits with Other Banks	7	3,25,00,000	2,25,13,461
Other Liabilities & Provisions	4	11,83,508	19,08,451	Investments	8	21,88,55,940	21,93,50,160
Profit & Loss Account	5	53,88,096	89,58,134	Loans & Advances	9	3,82,81,700	5,29,34,061
<b>Total</b>		<b>32,56,23,170</b>	<b>33,87,05,989</b>	Interest Receivable	10	70,58,523	43,89,022
				Fixed Assets	11	2,48,228	4,48,378
				Other Assets	12	64,76,443	1,23,86,619
				<b>Total</b>		<b>32,56,23,170</b>	<b>33,87,05,989</b>

**Grover, Lalla & Mehta**  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

To The Members,  
National Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd.  
C-3/84, New Kondli, Mayur Vihar, Phase III,  
Delhi

**Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements**

**Opinion**

1. We have audited the Financial Statements of National Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd. which comprise the Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, the Statement of Profit and Loss for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

2. In our opinion, and to the best of our information and according to the explanations given to us, read with the Memorandum of Changes mentioned in paragraph 7 below, the aforesaid financial statements give a true and fair view in conformity with the accounting principles generally accepted in India of the state of affairs in case of the Balance Sheet of the bank as at March 31, 2020 and true balance of loss for the year ended on that date.

**Basic of Opinion**

3. We conducted our audit in accordance with the Standards on Auditing (SAs) issued by ICAI. Our responsibilities under those standards are further defined in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the bank in accordance with the code of ethics issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India together with ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the code of ethics. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

**Management's Responsibilities for the Financial Statements**

4. The Bank's management is responsible with respect to the preparation of these financial statements that give a true and fair view of the financial position and financial performance of the Bank in accordance with the accounting principles generally accepted in India, including the Accounting Standards issued by ICAI, and provisions of Section 29 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 and circulars and guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) from time to time. This responsibility also includes maintenance of adequate accounting records in accordance with the provisions of the Act for safeguarding of the assets of the Bank and for preventing and detecting frauds and other irregularities; selection and application of appropriate accounting policies; making judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and design, implementation and maintenance of adequate internal financial controls, that were operating effectively for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the accounting records, relevant to the preparation and presentation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view and are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Bank's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Bank or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements**

5. Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with SAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with SAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

We also provide those charged with governance with a statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence, and where applicable, related safeguards.

**Other Matters Paragraph**

6. The following is the summary of the Memorandum of Changes submitted by us to the Bank's Management.

**MEMORANDUM OF CHANGES (SUMMARY)**

Particulars	No.	Increase	Decrease
a. In respect of Income	NIL	NIL	NIL
b. In respect of Expenditure	NIL	NIL	NIL
c. In respect of Assets	NIL	NIL	NIL
d. In respect of Liabilities	NIL	NIL	NIL
e. In respect of Gross NPAs	NIL	NIL	NIL
f. In respect of Provisions on NPAs	NIL	NIL	NIL
g. In respect of Classification of Advances	NIL	NIL	NIL
h. In respect of Risk Weighted Assets	NIL	NIL	NIL
i. Other Items (if any)	NIL	NIL	NIL
j. Contingent Liability	NIL	NIL	NIL

**Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements**

7. The Balance Sheet and the Profit and Loss Account have been drawn up in accordance with Section 29 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949:

a. Subject to the limitations of the Act as indicated above, we report that:

a. We have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purpose of our audit.

b. The transactions of the bank which have come to our notice have been within the powers of the Bank.

c. The returns received from the bank have been found adequate for the purposes of our audit.

We further report that:

a. In our opinion, proper books of account as required by law have been kept by the Bank so far as it appears from our examination of those books.

b. The Balance Sheet, and the Profit and Loss Account dealt with by this report are in agreement with the books of account.

c. In our opinion, the Balance Sheet, and the Profit and Loss Account comply with the applicable accounting standards, to the extent they are not inconsistent with the accounting policies prescribed by RBI.

For Grover, Lalla & Mehta  
Chartered Accountants  
Firm Reg. No. 002830N

Sd/-  
Manoj Kumar Garg  
(Partner)  
M. No. 539942

Place: New Delhi  
Date: 13.07.2020  
UDIN: 20539942AAAAAC3386

**National Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd.**  
C-3/84, New Kondli, Mayur Vihar, Phase-III, Delhi-110096  
Accounting Policies and Notes to Accounts

**Accounting Policies**

- General**  
The financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting.
- Fixed Assets & Depreciation**  
Fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. The rate of depreciation is as follows as provided by the Board's Resolution.  
Computer Hardware 33.33% SLM  
Electrical Appliances 33.33% SLM  
Furniture & Fixtures 5.00% SLM  
Software 33.33% SLM
- Revenue Recognition**  
All the income & expenses are recognized on accrual basis.
- Investments**  
Investments are stated at cost

**Notes to Accounts**

- In the opinion of the Board of Directors the value of advances after making adequate provisions and other assets is not less than the value at which they are stated in the Balance Sheet.
- Previous year's figures have been regrouped and rearranged wherever deemed necessary.
- Overdue Interest Reserve has not been capitalized.
- RBI has imposed SARF Instruction in 2018 and on April 01, 2019 restraining Bank from financing purchase of Capital Assets upto Rs. 10,000/- p.a. Enforce an Escalation / Loan against FDR which have been lifted by RBI on 15.04.2020.
- Loss / Appropriation of Profits are subject to approval of AGM.
- Additional information is being furnished as under:
 

ii) Capital to Risk Asset Ratio: 96.97%	31.03.2020	31.03.2019
	96.97%	60.18%
- Investments
 

iii) Investments	Book Value Rs. 2189.58 Lacs
a) Govt. Securities	Face Value Rs. 2211.20 Lacs
- In Non SLD Securities
 

iv) Advances against Real Estate, Construction Business, housing	Outstanding Rs. 80.28 Lacs
v) Advances against Shares & Debentures	(Housing Loan only)
	NIL
- Advance to Directors, their relatives, companies/firms in which they are interested:
 

vi) Advance to Directors	NIL
a) Fund Based	NIL
b) Non Fund Based (Guarantees, LCs etc.)	NIL

These are as per RBI's guidelines. No new advances have been granted and all the loans accounts are regular.

Cost of Deposits: 5.75%

Profitability

viii) Profitability	
a) Interest Income as percentage of working funds	7.61%
b) Non Interest Income as percentage of working funds	0.58%
c) Operating profit as percentage of working funds	1.64%
d) Return on Assets	1.62%
e) Business (Deposit + Advances) per employee	Rs. 210.35 Lacs
f) Provision made towards NPAs (No additional during the year)	Rs. 19.84 Lacs

Provision for 2019-20

ix) Provision towards Depreciation in Investment	NIL
Net Provision provided during the year	NIL

x) Movement of Provisions

	Balance as on 31.03.2020	Balance as on 31.03.2019	Balance as on 31.03.2018
a) Towards NPAs	Rs. 19.84 Lacs	Rs. 19.84 Lacs	Rs. 448.75 Lacs
b) Towards Depreciation on investments	NIL	NIL	NIL
c) Towards Investment/Fractionation Reserve*	Rs. 5.00 Lacs	Rs. 5.00 Lacs	Rs. 5.00 Lacs
d) Towards Standard Asset	Rs. 2.46 Lacs	Rs. 2.46 Lacs	Rs. 2.46 Lacs

\* Govt./Specified Securities under AFS Category are earning Profits.

x) Movement of NPA

	Balance as on 31.03.2020	Balance as on 31.03.2019
Gross NPA	Rs. 18.85 Lacs	Rs. 19.38 Lacs
Net NPA	NIL	NIL
% of Total Advances	4.79%	3.86%
Gross Nonperforming Assets Ratio (%)	0.57	0.57
Net Non performing Assets Ratio (%)	NIL	NIL

For Grover, Lalla & Mehta  
Chartered Accountants  
Firm Reg. No. 002830N

Sd/-  
Manoj Kumar Garg  
(Partner)  
M. No. 539942

Place: New Delhi  
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## Comfort is boring: Amit Sadh



Actor Amit Sadh finds comfort boring, and says he constantly wants to experiment with new genres and characters. "I want to play characters that challenge me. I constantly tell myself to choose films and characters that help me tap into a different side of me," said Amit, who has featured in the OTT-released films *Yaara* and *Shakuntala Devi* this year, besides the web series *Avrodi: The Siege Within* and *Breathe: Into The Shadows*. He is now gearing up for the release of the web series *Zidd*.

"There are actually several things, I call it the magic box. They start with five boxes, which are halved in 10 to 20 boxes depending on how complex and

perplexed the character is. Comfort is boring. I want to try my hand at new genres and characters that are completely different from what I have done in the past. I want to be part of films that shape me both as a human being and as an actor. I want to do characters with a never-dying human spirit. Stories of the underdog also fascinate me. But I don't want to bore the audience with my method," he added.

Amit found his role in *Shakuntala Devi* particularly interesting, as Ajay Abhay Kumar, who is married to Sanya Malhotra's character Anupama, daughter of the titular protagonist played by Vidya Balan. Ajay becomes a pivot

as well as a victim in the mother-daughter tension played out in the story.

"Seldom is there a nice story of a mother and a daughter, and when they are Shankuntala Devi and Anu it becomes more special. I am always fascinated with real cinema. I was fascinated to be on the sets with so many supremely talented women, including my director, my DOP, and the actors. When this film came out, my fans made this outing even more special for me and gave it their love. Also, Vidya Balan was in the film and so I was happy to be a part of it," he said about the film that will air on Sony MAX soon.

—IANS

# Boxing Day Test will decide series fate: Burns

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

If opener Joe Burns' views are any indication, another onerous task awaits an embattled Indian team, as Australia are entering the second Test believing that a favourable result for them in Melbourne could "decide the fate" of the four-match series.

Trailing 0-1 in the series after the batting debacle in Adelaide and with Virat Kohli going back to India for the birth of his first child, India will be led by Ajinkya Rahane in the remainder of the of the series.

"We have got some scars as well, we just have to prepare well, start well and carry on the momentum from the last game," Burns said during a virtual press conference on Monday.

"We know that Indians are going to bounce back in the next Test, which is going to play a crucial role in (deciding the) fate of the series."

The absence of Kohli and Mohammed Shami will be "big losses" but Burns is expecting a strong comeback by the visitors.

"I think Shami and Virat are obviously big losses for India. In saying that the Indian team does have very good depth as well. So, they are still going to be very challenging," Burns said.

"It is always hard to replace world class players like that, but when we look (at the guys) that they got to come in, we are going to prepare well for the next game. We know that Indians are going to bounce back strongly," the opener added.

**'BEST TEAM IN THE WORLD'**  
Woefully out of form in the run-up to the series opener, Burns got his mojo back with a half-century in his team's second innings at Adelaide Oval.

Burns said that a pull shot he played off pacer Umesh Yadav changed the momentum for him.

"It is funny how in this game how often one shot can get you everything that you are searching for as batters. Probably, the first pull shot I hit off Umesh Yadav, I was on four and felt amazing," said the opener, who has 1438 Test runs.

The 31-year-old top-scored



Australian opener Joe Burns shake hands with Captain Tim Paine after win in 1st Test AP

in Australia's second innings and he said it felt nice to be back among the runs.

"It is obviously nice to make some runs myself again. In the lead up to the game I was short of few runs but more than anything it just was nice get back the rhythm."

"I felt fantastic out there and looked to get the job done, (it was) an amazing day for Australian cricket to back up their bowlers and finish the job really quickly."

Pacers Josh Hazlewood (5-8) and Pat Cummins (4-21) demolished India with the pink ball as the hosts won by eight wickets to take a 1-0 lead in the four Test series.

"We are the best team in the

world, very confident against everyone in every venue. Our bowlers are unbelievable, so I think they bowled well in the first innings and didn't get the rewards; in the second innings, they (Indians) just nicked everything."

"Our bowlers have done for a long time, so we know that game in and game out they are going to be doing that, putting pressure on the opposition, it is a great luxury that our team has," he added.

Burns took a blow on his elbow off a Jasprit Bumrah delivery in Adelaide but the opener has been cleared for MCG after scans.

The batsman has his sights set on the remaining three Tests,

## Rohit quarantining in Sydney

**Adelaide:** Senior batsman Rohit Sharma can start training from January 3 ahead of the Sydney Test. He is currently locked in a hard quarantine in a two-room apartment in Sydney.

Crickets Australia has already flown David Warner and Sean Abbott from Sydney to Melbourne due to restrictions imposed by the New South Wales state Government in the wake of another surge of Covid-19 cases.

The BCCI, at the moment, can't shift Rohit in the middle of quarantine.

The other aspect is that CA is still confident of hosting the third Test in Sydney from January 7 as per schedule and in that case, there is no need to shift the senior player to Melbourne as in any case he is not playing the second game.

In case the situation changes and the third Test match is shifted, the BCCI will discuss with CA and take necessary steps. PTI

saying his goal was to get match-winning hundreds.

"We have got three more Test matches to go, it is going to be very tough and my job and my goal is to go and get big match-winning hundreds in those games," he signed off.

## If fit, Jadeja likely to replace Vihari in playing XI

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

The Indian team management will be keenly monitoring Ravindra Jadeja's progress leading up to the Boxing Day Test against Australia this weekend as, if fit, the all-rounder could walk into the playing XI in place of Hanuma Vihari.

Jadeja, who suffered a concussion during the first T20I, also sustained a hamstring injury which ruled him out of the first Test.

However, over the past few days when India were playing the Test match, Jadeja has slowly returned to the nets.

It has been learnt that the senior all-rounder is recovering well but it can't be said with certainty that he will be 100 per cent fit for the second Test in Melbourne starting on December 26.

But if fit, the axe will fall on Andhra Pradesh batsman Vihari, not because of his low scores in the Adelaide Test but purely based on the best combination that Ajinkya Rahane and Ravi Shastri can put on the field.

"If Jadeja gets fit to bowl

long spells, then there is no debate at all. Jadeja replaces Vihari on the basis of his all-round skills. Also it gives us an option to play five bowlers at the MCG," a senior BCCI source told PTI.

Jadeja has 1869 runs in 49 Tests at an average of 35 plus which includes a hundred and 14 fifties. He has struck half centuries in both England Australia on previous tours.

On the other hand, Vihari, in his 10 Tests, has scored 576 runs with a hundred against West Indies and four half-centuries at an average of 33 plus.

There is a school of thought that if pure batting skills are taken into account, then there is not much of a difference between "specialist Vihari" and "all-rounder Jadeja".

With Mohammed Shami already ruled out of the series because of a wrist fracture, India might just be tempted to go in with five specialist bowlers instead of the usual four, which has been their template for years.

### PRACTICE CANCELLED

The Indian team had a scheduled practice session at the Adelaide Oval on Monday but due to steady rain, it had to be cancelled.



## Gavaskar wants KL to open in 2nd Test

**New Delhi:** Legendary Indian batsman Sunil Gavaskar wants KL Rahul to open in place of an out-of-form Prithvi Shaw and the promising Shubman Gill to play in middle order during the second Test against Australia at the MCG from December 26.

"India will look at making 2 changes. Firstly, maybe KL Rahul should replace Prithvi Shaw as an opener. At No 5 or No 6, Shubman Gill should come in. His form has been good. Things can change if we start well,"

Gavaskar told *Sports Tak* on possible changes in the line-up.

He did caution that if India can't stay positive, a 0-4 drubbing might just be on cards. "India have to believe that they can come back in the remainder of the Test series. If India don't find the positivity, then 4-0 series loss can happen. But if they have positivity, why not? It can happen (comeback)," Gavaskar said, sounding hopeful.

"India should start the Melbourne Test well, it's necessary for them to step onto the ground

with a lot of positivity. Australia's weak point is their batting," he said.

Gavaskar also rued the missed catches which also reduced the lead to a mere 53. "Had we held on to our catches well and had good field placements, there might not have been any problem, Tim Paine and Marnus Labuschagne would have gotten out early." "We could have got a lead of 120 runs. Australia got ahead in the Tests because of those dropped catches, they got the lead down to 50 runs," Gavaskar added. PTI

## India's best chance to win was in Adelaide: Haddin

**Melbourne:** Former Australia wicketkeeper Brad Haddin reckons the opening day/night Test was India's best shot at winning in the ongoing series as it will be very difficult for the visitors to script a turnaround after demoralizing eight-wicket loss in Adelaide.

India were bundled out for their lowest-ever Test score of 36 in their second innings as Australia claimed an eight-wicket win in the pink-ball Test to take a 1-0 lead in the Border-Gavaskar trophy.

"I don't think they will (recover from the loss)," Haddin told *SEN Radio*.

The 43-year-old, who featured in 66 Tests for Australia, feels the conditions at the Adelaide Oval were conducive to the Indian bowling attack.

"I thought their only opportunity to win a Test match was the first Test at Adelaide. "I thought the conditions suited their bowling and I thought they'd get enough runs. But I don't think they'll be able to turn it around. "You've got one Test up at Brisbane where no one beats Australia. These next two wickets will be suited to Indian cricket, but I don't think they'll be able to turn it around," Haddin added.



India created history by registering their maiden series win Down Under in 2018-19 on the back of a lethal pace-bowling attack.

However, the visitor's are without the experienced Ishant Sharma and Shami, who suffered a fracture after being hit on the elbow during India's second innings on Saturday.

"They had a great bowling attack the last time they come out here, and now with Shami out with a broken arm they don't have enough depth to cover that," Haddin said.

Reflecting on the Indian batting collapse Haddin said "I think it's really concerning." "Yes India were driving the game and we were talking at the

start of day three about how Australia would get back into it, but the collapse they had has to leave some marks."

With skipper Virat Kohli returning home for the birth of his child, India are faced with selection dilemmas.

"There were a few performances from the Indian batsmen that will come under scrutiny over the next week.

"Do they go in with (Wriddhiman) Saha? Who goes to the top order for Prithvi Shaw? Rohit Sharma comes out of quarantine, does he come back into the side? "They have a lot of things they're going to have to tackle over this next week leading into this next Test," Haddin added. PTI

## Injured Babar, Imam out of 1st NZ Test

PTI ■ NAPIER

Pakistan captain Babar Azam and opener Imam-ul-Haq were on Monday ruled out of the upcoming first Test against New Zealand with thumb injuries, prompting the tour selection committee to include rookie Imran Butt in the 17-member squad.

The Boxing Day Test is scheduled to be played in Mount Maunganui from December 26-30.

While Babar has fractured his right thumb, Imam has injured his left thumb during training sessions in Queenstown last week.

According to a statement issued by the Pakistan Cricket Board, both the batsmen are yet to return to the nets and the team's medical staff was closely monitoring their progress.

"Decision on their participation in the second Test, which commences in Christchurch on 3 January, will be made closer to the time," the PCB said. In Babar's absence, wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan will lead Pakistan in the first Test and will become his country's 33rd Test captain.

Also returning to the Pakistan Test side are Abid Ali, Azhar Ali, Fawad Alam, Haris Sohail, Mohammad Abbas, Naseem Shah, Shan Masood, Sohail Khan and Yasir Shah.

They will replace Abdullah Shafiq, Haider Ali, Haris Rauf, Hussain Talat, Iftikhar Ahmed, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Haseeb, Musa Khan, Usman Qadir and Wahab Riaz, who will now join Pakistan Shaheens (A team) for five T20 matches against the local and New Zealand XI sides.

The PCB further said that Imad Wasim and Mohammad Hafeez will no longer be seen in action on the New Zealand tour. While Imad will travel to Australia to join Melbourne Renegades in the BBL, Hafeez will return to Pakistan.

## Saina, Sindhu headline 8-member India squad for Thai tourneys

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's top shuttlers PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal will be seen in action for the first time since the coronavirus-forced break when they compete in three upcoming tournaments in Bangkok, including the prestigious BWF World Tour Finals.

With Olympic qualifications in mind, the Badminton Association of India (BAI) on Monday announced a strong eight-member squad to participate in the three upcoming tournaments, scheduled in January. The team, consisting of Olympic-bound shuttlers Saina, Saina, B Sai

Praneeth, Kidambi Srikanth, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Chirag Shetty, Ashwini Ponappa and N Sikki Reddy, will begin their campaign with Yonex Thailand Open from January 12-17.

That will be followed by Toyota Thailand Open (January 19-24) and the prestigious HSBC BWF World Tour Finals which is rescheduled for January 27-31.

After the coronavirus outbreak in March disrupted the sporting world resulting in cancellation or postponement of a number of tournaments, this will be the first time that top Indian players, apart

from Srikanth, will feature in any international tournament.

Srikanth had made a comeback when he played the Denmark Open in October.

"We are very happy to see badminton finally getting back on the court. It gives us hope that tournaments can eventually make a steady comeback in near future. Most of our players

haven't played tournaments in the last 7-8 months," Ajay Singhania said. "However, they have been training to the best of their abilities at the camp. The purpose of sending a full-strength team in these tournaments so that players can get the much-needed tournament practice ahead of the Olympic qualifiers," he added.

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PTI

## Kallis appointed England batting consultant for SL tour

**London:** South African legend Jacques Kallis was on Monday appointed as the batting consultant of the England team for next month's two-match Test tour of Sri Lanka.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said in a statement that the team will depart for Sri Lanka on January 2.

"Seven coaches will join the squad for the two-Test tour, with the tour party departing on 2 January," the ECB said.

"Former South Africa all-rounder Jacques Kallis joins the England setup for the first time as batting coaching consultant," it added.

The 45-year-old Kallis worked in a similar

role with the Proteas last year in the Test series against England.

It is not yet known if Kallis' appointment will extend to the marquee tour of India beginning February next year.

Former England batsman Paul Collingwood will be assistant to head coach Chris Silverwood in Sri Lanka, while Jon Lewis will be the bowling coach. Jeetan Patel will be the spin bowling consultant and Carl Hopkinson will serve as the fielding coach. James Foster will be the wicketkeeper coaching consultant.

Both the Tests will be played at Galle from January 14-18 and January 22-26. PTI

## Afghanistan gets land for new cricket stadium



PTI ■ KABUL

Afghanistan Cricket Board chief Farhan Yusefzai is confident of bringing international matches to the country in the near future after securing land for a new stadium in Kabul, having played most of their 'home' games in India so far. Afghanistan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani on Sunday allocated more than two acres of land in Alokhal area of Kabul for the construction of a state-of-the-art stadium.

"Kabul will be home to a standard state-of-the-art international cricket stadium. I

express my special thanks to Mr President who has always supported the development of cricket and encouraged our players.

"After initial formalities, the construction of the stadium will also commence and we will ensure it is done with best quality," he said.

According to the report, the stadium will include "a five-star guest house, a standard swimming pool, indoor and outdoor academies, canopies for crowd, health clinic, mosque, car parking, administrative block and other such facilities".

The stadium will have a capacity to accommodate 35,000 spectators.

Since getting full membership from the ICC a few years ago, Afghanistan has hosted all its 'home' matches at neutral venue India, mostly in Dehradun and Greater Noida.

## SINGLES

**CA TO HONOUR INDIGENOUS PIONEER**  
**MELBOURNE:** The player of the match in the upcoming Boxing Day Test between India and Australia will be awarded the Johnny Mullagh Medal as a tribute to honour the captain of Australia's first sporting team to tour internationally. Mullagh was the leader of the 1868 Aboriginal tour to the United Kingdom. "The best player in the Boxing Day Test will be awarded the Mullagh Medal, named after the legendary Johnny Mullagh, captain of the 1868 cricket team who became the first Australian sporting team to tour internationally! #AUSVIND," CA posted on its Twitter handle.

**INDIAN MEN IN 4TH SPOT IN FIH RANKINGS**  
**LAUSANNE:** The Indian men and women hockey teams will finish 2020 in fourth and ninth positions, respectively, after a major part of the year was disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The International Hockey Federation (FIH) on Monday confirmed that the Belgium men's team and the Netherlands' women will finish the year at the top of the world rankings. In January, the FIH moved away from the previous tournament-based rankings system to a dynamic, match-based method where opposing teams exchange points in official, FIH sanctioned games. The number of points exchanged depends on the result of the match, the relative ranking of the teams and the importance of the match.

**LILLE RECLAIM TOP SPOT WITH PSG DRAW**  
**LILLE:** Lille moved back top of Ligue 1 on Sunday after holding PSG to an uninspiring goalless draw which failed to live up to its pre-match billing. Lille take first place in the French top flight from Lyon on goal difference after a match which saw just a handful of shots on target and very little in the way of incident. PSG are a point back in third after failing to create anything from their territorial dominance, shorn of attacking inspiration without Neymar and Mauro Icardi, among others, while Kylian Mbappe started on the bench as he reportedly struggles with a thigh knock.

**HAMILTON WINS BBC'S TOP SPORTS PRIZE**  
**LONDON:** Seven-time Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton capped another successful year by claiming the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year prize. The 35-year-old driver, who last month equaled Michael Schumacher's record of seven F1 titles, overcame Jordan Henderson and Hollie Doyle to win the British broadcaster's prestigious prize in a public vote.

**GENOA FIRE MARAN AFTER SLOW START**  
**GENOA:** Italian club Genoa fired coach Rolando Maran on Monday as the team remained stuck in the relegation zone following a 2-0 loss to Benevento. Genoa has just one victory in 13 games this season in Serie A and was in 19th place as it prepared to play at Spezia on Wednesday. In a brief statement, the team said the 57-year-old Italian coach had been fired. "The club thanks the coach and his staff for their commitment," it said.

**GAYLE, AFRIDI TO PLAY IN ABU DHABI T10**  
**ABU DHABI:** Some of the world's most renowned cricketers like Chris Gayle, Shahid Afridi and Dwayne Bravo will be seen in action in the fourth edition of Abu Dhabi T10 tournament, to be played from January 28 to February 6. The entire tourney will be played at the Zayed Cricket Stadium. While Gayle is part of Team Abu Dhabi, Afridi will be the icon player for Qalandars. Bravo for Delhi Bulls, Russell for Northern Warriors. Agencies

### SPECIAL TRAINS-2020

In order to clear extra rush of passengers, Railways have decided to run the following additional Special Trains as per the schedule given below :-

02440/02439 Sri Ganganagar - H. Sahib Nanded - 12	
Sri Ganganagar Superfast Special Train (Weekly) Trips	

TRAIN NO. 02440		STATIONS		TRAIN NO. 02439	
ARR.	DEP.			ARR.	DEP.
---	13:25	Sri Ganganagar		20:15	---
23:00	23:15	New Delhi		10:10	10:25
21:40	---	Hazur Sahib Nanded		---	11:05

**Days of Run :** 02440 from Sri Ganganagar on every Friday from 25.12.2020 to 29.01.2021 and 02439 from H. Sahib Nanded on every Sunday from 27.12.2020 to 31.01.2021

**Accommodation :** AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & 2nd Seating (Reserved)

**Stoppages :** Hanumangarh Jn., Sangaria, Mandi Dabwali, Bathinda Jn., Rampura Phul, Barnala, Dhuri Jn., Sangrur, Jakhhal Jn., Jind, Rohtak Jn., Mathura Jn., Agra Cantt., Gwalior, Jhansi, Bina, Bhopal Jn., Itarsi Jn., Khandwa, Malkapur, Akola Jn., Washim, Hingoli Deccan and Purna Jn. stations.

02486/02485 Sri Ganganagar - H. Sahib Nanded - 24	
Sri Ganganagar Superfast Special Train (Bi-Weekly) Trips	

TRAIN NO. 02486		STATIONS		TRAIN NO. 02485	
ARR.	DEP.			ARR.	DEP.
---	14:30	Sri Ganganagar		19:30	---
23:00	23:15	New Delhi		10:10	10:25
21:40	---	Hazur Sahib Nanded		---	11:05

**Days of Run :** 02486 from Sri Ganganagar on every Tuesday & Saturday from 22.12.20 to 30.01.21 and 02485 from H. Sahib Nanded on every Monday & Thursday from 24.12.20 to 01.02.21

**Accommodation :** AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & 2nd Seating (Reserved)

**Stoppages :** Abohar, Malout, Giddarbaha, Bathinda Jn., Rampura Phul, Barnala, Dhuri Jn., Sangrur, Jakhhal Jn., Jind, Rohtak Jn., Mathura Jn., Agra Cantt., Gwalior, Jhansi, Bina, Bhopal Jn., Itarsi Jn., Khandwa, Malkapur, Akola Jn., Washim, Hingoli Deccan and Purna Jn. stations.

Note : The above Special Trains will have the reserved accommodation only.

For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Railways website [www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in](http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in) or NTES App.

Integrated Helpline No. 139 | Security Helpline No. 182