

OPINION 6

PAKISTAN'S
DARKEST DAY

WORLD 8

PRACHANDA PICKED AS
PARLIAMENTARY LEADER

SPORT 12

MESSI BREAKS
PELE'S RECORD

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Talks only solution: Govt to kisan

Farmers can add or remove points to/from Govt proposal, stresses Agriculture Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to break the deadlock with protesting farmers, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Wednesday invited them for talks saying any agitation could be resolved only through dialogue. He urged them to fix a date and time for the next round of talks.

Tomar said farmers should tell them what they want to add or remove from the proposal given by the Government.

"I'm hopeful that farmers' unions will discuss our request. Whatever they want to add & subtract from the Government's proposal, they should tell us. We're ready for a discussion at the time & date of their convenience. I'm hopeful of a solution," Tomar said while talking to reporters.

Stressing that a solution can be reached only through dialogue, Tomar said, "History is witness to this fact. How old and strong the protest is, the end and the solution to a protest are reached through dialogue only."

Farmers' unions should discuss the Government's draft proposal and inform them if they want to add or delete anything, he added.

The Minister said there were recommendations for reforms in the farm sector in

the past also by experts, unions and State Chief Ministers, but the previous Government might have faced difficulties in converting the recommendations into laws. Tomar further said the Government will continue with reforms in the farm sector as they are still due in many areas.

The Union Agriculture Minister was referring to a proposal sent by the Centre to the farmers' unions on Sunday, in which it offered to hold the sixth round of talks at a date and time of the unions' choosing.

He added, "I would also like to thank banks, as they brought more than 1 crore farmers under Kisan Credit Card cover during the pandemic and gave farmers ₹1 lakh crore in last 8 months. We've undertaken some reforms and will bring more in future."

Total five rounds of talks, including one each on December 1, 3 and 5, have failed to break the deadlock between the two sides. While the Centre is firm that the laws won't be scrapped and has instead proposed amendments, the unions are adamant on a total repeal. The Government has worked the back channels to bring farmer groups back to the negotiating table.

Continued on Page 2



Tents installed for farmers at Ghaziabad border during their protest against the new farm laws on Wednesday

PTI

Attempt to break movement, farmers' unity, allege unions

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The United Farmers Front, on Wednesday wrote a letter to the Central Government urging the Government not to repeat those "meaningless" amendments which have been rejected by the farmers' unions. Meanwhile, farmers also urged people to skip one meal on "Kisan Diwas" on Wednesday, the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh in support of their stir.

Addressing a Press conference on Wednesday at Singhu Border, the epicentre of the farmers' protests across the National Capital's borders, the farmers unions said United Farmers Front on Wednesday has written a letter to the Government.

"It states that the Government shouldn't question the letter written by the United Farmers' Front previously as it was a unanimous decision. Government's new letter is a fresh attempt to

defame farmers' association," said Yogendra Yadav of Swaraj India.

While reading the letter in Hindi, Yadav said the Government is constantly holding talks with so-called farmers' leaders and organisations, who're not associated with our movement at all. "This is an attempt to break our movement. The Government is dealing with protesting farmers, the way it deals with its Opposition," said Yadav.

Continued on Page 2

Covid vaccine to immunise against new strain: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Even as the Government is yet to disclose if the Covid-19 positive flyers from UK carry the new variant of the virus that originated in Britain, experts here said that the upcoming vaccination can tackle the strain.

Six more passengers arriving in two flights from the United Kingdom, which landed at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) late on Tuesday night, have tested positive for Covid-19 and 50 passengers have been advised for institutional quarantine.

With this, the number of passengers from the UK who have tested positive at the IGIA has soared to 11. Five tested

6 more fliers from UK test +ve at IGIA, samples sent for genome sequencing

positive for the Covid-19 virus after arrival from the UK on Tuesday.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan on Wednesday took stock of the status of passengers coming from the UK to India and found that passengers were positive in ten States where the flights from UK to India land. Samples have been sent for genome sequencing. These States are Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Goa, Punjab, Gujarat, Kerala and Telangana. The Government has identified the labs for genome sequencing.

Continued on Page 2

Govt starts contest for strengthening digital network for vaccine distribution

New Delhi: The Government on Wednesday launched a technology contest to invite solutions from IT companies and start-ups to strengthen digital platform CoWIN, which will be used for rolling out and scaling up Covid vaccine distribution across the country.

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	19,02,458	48,876	17,94,080
Karnataka	9,12,340	12,038	8,86,547
Andhra Pradesh	8,79,718	7,085	8,68,769
Tamil Nadu	8,10,080	12,024	7,88,742
Kerala	7,21,511	2,893	6,55,644
Delhi	6,19,618	10,347	6,01,268
Uttar Pradesh	5,76,824	8,224	5,51,917
West Bengal	5,41,624	9,473	5,16,462
Odisha	3,27,279	1,899	3,22,344
Rajasthan	3,01,708	2,642	2,87,418
Telangana	2,82,982	1,522	2,74,833
Chhattisgarh	2,69,857	3,212	2,50,766
Haryana	2,59,226	2,847	2,51,149
Bihar	2,48,668	1,367	2,42,244
Gujarat	2,38,205	4,254	2,23,011
Madhya Pradesh	2,34,331	3,514	2,20,051

Covid-19 IN INDIA
TOTAL
CASES: 1,01,17,210
DEATHS: 1,46,641
RECOVERED: 96,81,349
ACTIVE: 2,86,477



DTH licence for 20 years now; all film divisions to merge into NFDC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved revision in guidelines for providing Direct to Home (DTH) services in the country under which licences would be issued for 20 years. The Cabinet also approved the merger of all films related divisions into National Film Development Corporation (NFDC).

Addressing media, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said the new DTH licensing guidelines will streamline and provide an equal platform in the industry. He said the change in guidelines would also allow 100 per cent FDI in the DTH sector. Till now, the FDI was limited to 49 per cent, he said.

Films Division, Directorate of Film. Festivals, National Film Archives of India, and Children's Film Society, India will be merged with the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC). Minister said no one will be retrenched in this process.

Related report on P9

J&K picked BJP as 'largest' party, beat separatists: Shah

'DDC election results manifestation of faith in democracy'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the BJP on Wednesday hailed the outcome of Jammu & Kashmir's maiden District Development Council (DDC) elections, saying it was the manifestation of people's faith in democracy and a slap in the face of separatists.

Shah also "heartily thanked" the people for voting the BJP as the single-largest party in the polls.

"I heartily thank our sisters and brothers of J&K for voting the BJP as the single largest party in the District Development Council elections. The BJP under the leadership of PM @narendramodi ji will continue to work relentlessly towards the prosperity and development of the J&K region," Shah tweeted.

"Congratulations to the people of J&K for such great turnout in DDC polls. I applaud the efforts of our security forces & local administration for successfully conducting these multi-phased elections. This will further boost the morale and trust of people of J&K in democracy," he added.



BJP candidate Suresh Kumar celebrates after his victory in DDC election results in Jammu

PTI

Earlier, stating that people of Jammu & Kashmir are "making a new beginning", Union Minister for Law Ravi Shankar Prasad said the BJP has emerged as a "the single largest party in the poll and gained more votes than the National Conference, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Congress put together."

Prasad said it is the BJP with 75 seats in the DDC and as the single largest party that has won the people's mandate and not the "opportunistic Gupkar alliance".

Prasad said of the 49 independents winning in the elections, "several are backed by the BJP". Independents have won more seats than the PDP, he said.

Continued on Page 2

Gupkar Alliance members celebrate win separately

Say outcome of DDC polls is rejection of abrogation of Art 370

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Leaders of People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) separately asserted on Wednesday that the outcome of the DDC poll was a rejection of the abrogation of Article 370, but even after winning 112 seats the PAGD constituents shied away from coming together on one platform to "unitedly" celebrate their victory.

The top brass of the National Conference organised a function at its own headquarters in Nawa-e-Subah, while PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti addressed a separate press conference at her Gupkar residence, with no party leader sitting by her side.

PAGD Spokesman Sajad Lone remained conspicuous even on social media.

No official statement was issued by the PAGD in connection with the poll results either.

Meanwhile, upbeat Omar Abdullah while addressing the party workers said the people have made clear their view by supporting the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) in the District Development Council polls.



Omar also observed he did not foresee Assembly elections in the Union Territory anytime soon because of the poll results.

"If you really say that democracy has won, then you will have to listen to the voices of the people, and the people of Jammu & Kashmir have said it with a huge majority that they do not accept (the decisions of) August 5, 2019," Omar said.

The Centre abrogated Article 370 — which gave special status to Jammu & Kashmir — and bifurcated the erstwhile State into two Union Territories on August 5 last year.

Omar said the results of the DDC elections have proved that the BJP will not be able to "bury" the NC.

Continued on Page 2

Khalistani ultra Nijjar hiding in Cyprus held on arrival in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested absconding Khalistani terrorist Gurjeet Singh Nijjar, who was hiding in Cyprus (Europe), upon his arrival at the airport here late on Tuesday night.

The NIA had registered a case on January 10, 2019 against accused Harpal Singh under various Sections of the Arms Act, 1959, Maharashtra Police Act, 1951 and provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

"Investigation has revealed that absconding accused Gurjeet Singh Nijjar was the main conspirator of this case. Accused Gurjeet Singh Nijjar, Harpal Singh and Moin Khan were active on social media platforms and hatched a criminal conspiracy to revive Sikh militancy for ultimate aim of formation of a separate state of Khalistan," the NIA said in a statement.

During investigation it was revealed that Nijjar of Pandori village in Amritsar left India on October 19, 2017 for Cyprus.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

NSCN-K ANNOUNCES CEASEFIRE, PEACE TALKS

Kohima: Naga insurgent group NSCN-K, led by dreaded militant Niki Sumi, on Wednesday announced a ceasefire and said that it has contacted the Centre for initiating peace dialogue.

'AYODHYA MOSQUE AGAINST WAQF ACT'

Ayodhya: AIMPLB member Zafaryab Jilani said on Wednesday the mosque which is planned to come up in Ayodhya following last year's Supreme Court verdict is against the Waqf Act and "illegal" under the Shariat laws.

CBI CHARGESHEETS PRINCIPAL OF NDA

New Delhi: The CBI has charge sheeted the Principal of the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla, Om Prakash Shukla for making false claims about his teaching experience to the UPSC 12 years ago.

DELHI PRINCIPALS WANT NURSERY ADMISSIONS

New Delhi: Principals of schools in Delhi are not in favour of scrapping nursery admissions for next year in view of the Covid-19 pandemic even as the Government maintains that no final decision has been taken yet in this regard.

Central ordinance protects Delhi's illegal colonies

3 years reprieve for JJ clusters, structures on agriculture land against demolition

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved an ordinance extending protection from punitive action to unauthorised colonies, JJ clusters and constructions in Delhi's rural areas built on agriculture land for another three years, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said.

Since the law re-enacted in 2017 was ending soon and there was no Winter Session of Parliament, an ordinance was

approved to extend the protection for another three years (till December 2023), Javadekar told reporters after the Cabinet meeting.

The NCT of Delhi (Special Provisions) Amendment Ordinance 2020 is an extension of a similar law first passed in 2011. When the 2011 law had expired, the Government had in 2014 enacted the law again to grant a fresh extension.

The Minister said Delhi's unauthorised colonies, JJ (jhuggi jhopri) clusters and structures in rural areas built on agriculture land would get protection from the ordinance.

The ordinance has to be signed by the President before it comes into force, the Minister pointed out.

Govt OK's ₹59K cr scholarship for SC students to pursue post-matric studies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a big push for education of students belonging to the Scheduled Caste, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday okayed ₹59,000 crore for post-matric scholarship for five years.

The Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi estimated that this mega scholarship scheme will benefit more than four crore students for continuing their education from Class XI. The Central Government will spend 60 per cent of the programme. The rest will be provided by the State Government.

"This replaces the existing 'committed liability' system and brings greater involvement of the Central Govt in this crucial scheme," the Union Cabinet said in a statement.

Detailed report on P4

Priest, nun get life for Sister Abhaya's murder

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Father Thomas Kottoor and Sister Sephy, the first and third accused in the Sister Abhaya murder case, were on Wednesday sentenced to life imprisonment and fines of ₹6.5 lakh and ₹5.5 lakh respectively by K Sanal Kumar, judge of the Thiruvananthapuram CBI Special Court.

Though Fr Kottoor was slapped with double life imprisonment (on charges of murder and trespass) the punishment would run concurrently and hence he need to serve only one sentence. He has to pay a fine of ₹5 lakh on charges of murder, ₹1 lakh for trespass and ₹50,000 for destroying evidence.

The nun Sr Sephy was awarded life imprisonment and ₹5 lakh for charges under murder, seven years rigorous imprisonment and ₹50,000 for destroying evidence.

Though the accused told

the judge that they should be freed of all charges considering their advanced age and ailments, they did not get any concessions. The judge had made it clear to the prosecution that since it was not a pre-planned murder, the accused would not be slapped with death sentence.

Father Kottoor was sent to Central Jail at Poojappura, a Thiruvananthapuram suburb and Sister Sephy to the Women's Jail in another suburb where she would have the company of Swapna Suresh, the kingpin of the gold smuggling case that rocked Kerala politics.

Expressing happiness over the judgement, Sister Abhaya Action Council convener Jomon Puthenpurackal said he would not rest until the appeals to be filed by the convicts are rejected by the higher courts.

The Kottayam Archdiocese to which the accused belong issued a media release about the incident for the first time

since Sister Abhaya was murdered on March 27, 1992. "The Archdiocese is of the view that the death of Sister Abhaya is unfortunate and painful. Though the charges against Father Thomas Kottoor and Sister Sephy who are members of the Archdiocese are unbelievable we respect the court verdict. The accused have the rights for appeal against the verdict and prove their innocence," said the release.

According to prosecution, Kottoor and Poothrikkayil were having an illicit relationship with Sephy, also an inmate of the convent. On the night of March 27, 1992, Abhaya (21) — a second year student of the BCM college, Kottayam, was staying at St Pius convent — saw Kottoor and Sephy in a compromising position, following which the three accused hacked her with an axe and threw her into the well, the CBI had said in its charge sheet.

Varghese P Thomas, the



Father Thomas Kottoor being brought out of the court in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday

PTI



Sister Sephy (Left)

PTI

Delhi school heads against scrapping of nursery admissions for next yr

New Delhi: Principals of schools in the national Capital are not in favour of scrapping nursery admissions for next year in view of the Covid-19 pandemic even as the Government maintains that no final decision has been taken yet in this regard.

Usually, the process to enter children in nursery in around 1,700 schools in Delhi begins in last week of November.

The Directorate of Education (DoE) releases guidelines and schools are asked to furnish required information following which the application process is rolled out usually in December.

However, there has been no development on it this year.

According to a senior Delhi government official, since the

schools have been closed since nine months due to COVID-19 and will remain closed till a vaccine is available, a whole year of online learning for small children seems unviable.

"The government has decided that schools will not reopen in Delhi till a vaccine is available. Even if they reopen, pre-primary students will be the last ones to start going to school. So, its unviable to enrol them for an year of online learning," the official said.

"However, no final decision has been taken in this regard and any move will be planned in consultation with schools only," the official added.

Reacting to the proposed idea, Alka Kapur, Principal, Modern School, Shalimar Bagh said, "I don't think it would be too prudent to cancel nursery



admissions in the coming year. By getting their children enrolled in schools, the parents can, at the very least, introduce them to formal education. Even if they cannot attend the schools physically, they will have the option to learn online".

"The pandemic has made it

quite evident that we will be relying on technology for disseminating education in the future, and the sooner children are introduced to this hybrid way of teaching, the better they will fare in the long run."

"Also, with the vaccine, things may begin to improve

soon. Imagine if the pandemic begins subsiding by the June-July 2021, the entire year would go a waste if the nursery admissions are cancelled," she said.

According to Sumedha Goel, Director, The Shri Ram Wonder Years, Rohini, scrapping the nursery admissions may not be a great step.

"The growth of the children can suffer. Giving a halt to their growth for a year can be a setback to their holistic development. E-learning has emerged as the powerful tool to impact education even during this pandemic. Our teachers have various platforms and methods now to impart knowledge virtually. As per the response of the parents, the online methods have so far been successful," Goel said.

"Therefore, the decision to not make the children of nursery come to school will be better than scrapping the admissions of nursery," Goel said.

Seema Kaur, Principal, Pacific World School, said, "It is not an advisable decision as doing away with schooling completely at a foundation level might only lead to an increase in the learning gap as school provides an environment for children to explore, gain a sense of self, interact and play with peers and build self confidence. Also, it is a known fact that 90 per cent of the child's brain develops during this age group".

"Students who are eligible to take admission in Nursery in 2021-22 have never been to a play school and considering the pandemic it is quite likely that

they have not developed the social and emotional skills that a child of grade nursery has."

"Hence, it will be extremely challenging for students to adapt to the school environment when schools open physically by July, effective online classes will bridge the learning gap and will help the students of Nursery to be ready for school," she said.

Manit Jain, Co-founder of The Heritage Schools, believes it will be extremely traumatic for the families who have children going to nursery next year as they will have to rely on pre schools or take the decision of providing no education to their children for the a year.

"A gap in the child's education is not recommended at this stage, as it is absolutely

essential for the children's cognitive development and will lead to substantial gaps. Secondly, it will be challenging for the parents to make arrangements at this time or to seek education from preschools with teachers and staff who may not have the expertise to provide the children the support and resources that they need at this stage," he said.

"Thirdly, for the schools, it will add additional financial stress. What will the teachers for these grade levels do? This is in addition to an already difficult situation where the government has not approved fee increases in the last 3-4 years," added Jain who is also Chairman of FICCI ARISE, a collegium of stakeholders aimed at promoting quality education. **PTI**

Infosys chair exhorts Delhi students to be positive

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Philanthropist and chairperson of Infosys Foundation, Sudha Murthy gave a pep talk to the students of Delhi Government schools during a Live Entrepreneurship Interaction (LEI) session organised as part of the Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum (EMC) on Wednesday.

While interacting with the students, Murthy said, "True inspiration comes from within. You just need to find it in you first to become a better version of yourself." She also advised the students to always have a positive attitude in life, and encouraged them to work hard with passion in order to achieve their dreams.

Murthy said, "Be patient towards your goal and learn

from it instead of being afraid of failure. My advice to you children today is to work on becoming good human beings and to respect your elders."

During the interactive session, she shared many interesting anecdotes from her life with the students who also got the opportunity to ask her their questions.

During the session, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister and Education Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said that Murthy has led an extremely inspiring life.

"Infosys is a big 'dream' name for those working in the IT sector and social entrepreneurship. Because of Sudha Murthy, talented young minds are joining the social sector and serving the country. She's the inspiration behind an entire generation of social entrepreneurs," he added.

Maha to check all arriving from UK since Nov 25 for new Covid strain symptoms

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Government on Wednesday announced that all those people who have returned to the state from the United Kingdom during the past one month would be examined medically to detect if they had symptoms of the new strain of Covid-19 virus.

Talking to media persons here, Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said that the state government would conduct a special survey of incoming passengers who arrived from the UK by flights at the international airports in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur, between November 25 and December 23.

"We have already received a list of the passengers who landed in Mumbai from the UK from the airport health authorities. We have sent the names of passengers to all districts and municipal corporations for further action," Tope said.

Tope said that the officials concerned in district and civic bodies would check the passengers who had arrived in Maharashtra since November 25 for symptoms and subject them to the RT-PCR Covid tests on them.

He said that the samples of those detected positive or infected, would be sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, for genetic testing and ascertaining if it matched the new Covid-19 virus strain detected in the UK.

J&K picked BJP as 'largest' party, beat...

From Page 1

The Law Minister said the BJP (4,23,364 votes) received more votes in the DDC polls than the NC (2,22,514), PDP (56,000) and the Congress(1,49,382) together.

"Kashmir ghati main 'kamal' apne vajood par khila

hai", said the Law Minister pointing to three success of the party in the Kashmir Valley, including in Srinagar where Congress State president's son lost his election.

The senior BJP leader said elections are the victory of people of Kashmir who have rendered a resounding slap in the face of extremists, terrorists, separatists and their sympathisers". Prasad pointed out the success of elections in the "hotbeds of terrorists" like Shopian (with 17 per cent voting), Pulwama (7.4 per cent), Bandipura (51 per cent) and

Gandharbal (43.4 per cent).

Prasad said NC chief Farooq Abdullah was elected to the Lok Sabha with only 7 per cent voting in his LS constituency.

"People have voted for the development...the change has been effected following the abrogation of the Article 370 and Prime Minister Modi saying 'let us go to the people'", said the Law Minister.

"This is a new beginning that has started with the elections of sarpanchs and now that of DDC... Kashmir is turning a new page", he claimed.

Gupkar...

From Page 1

"We also accept it (that democracy has won). When did we say that we do not trust democracy? It is another thing that you do not trust us. We have been saying this from day one that we will fight for our rights but not unlawfully or unconstitutionally. We are not for disturbing the atmosphere in this State, but to make it better," Omar said.

Omar said the results of the DDC elections have proved that the BJP will not be able to "bury" the NC.

"The next elections in J&K are very far because of the defeat of the BJP in this election. I do not think they will have the Assembly elections here anytime sooner. If they believed in democracy, they would have sounded the bugle of the Assembly elections," he said.

Emotionally surcharged National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah in his brief address to the party workers said he will not bow before anyone. Farooq is currently facing an ED probe in connection with the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) money-laundering case. Last week,

the Enforcement Directorate (ED) attached assets worth Rs 11.86 crore of Farooq in connection with the JKCA scam.

In Jammu, BJP's DDC polls in-charge Anurag Thakur said the election results are a befitting reply to Mehbooba Mufti who had refused to unfurl the Tricolour. "Independent candidates have polled more votes than the Congress and the PDP. The same Mehbooba Mufti who'd refused to unfurl the Tricolour has got a befitting reply today," Anurag Thakur said.

In Srinagar, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti accused the Government of India and BJP of "terrorising her family" in the name of investigations stating that BJP must fight her politically and not involve her family, friends and party colleagues in the "battle".

Addressing a press conference at her Gupkar residence, Mehbooba said that today's press conference may be her last one given the BJP's approach and the way agencies like "CBI, NIA and ED are being used against her".

"Irony is that these agencies that are supposed to probe cases of sensitive order are probing where from PDP got money for Late Mufti Muhammad Sayeed's grave-

yard at Anantnag. Not just this, they are investigating my mother's bank accounts and have sought property details of my sister, who is a doctor by profession", the PDP chief said.

In an obvious reference to the BJP, she said that GoI should fight her politically. "The BJP won't gain anything by using agencies against me. If they want to face me, they should fight me politically," she said, adding the poll result has shown that people have rejected the abrogation of Article 370.

Talks only solution...

The Minister also received six boxes of letters with signatures of 3,13,363 lakh farmers from 20 States, including Punjab through NGO NCRI in support of the farm laws. Of these, 12,895 farmers from Punjab have signed in favour of the laws, while 1.27 lakh such farmers are from Haryana. Minister of State for Agriculture Kailash Chaudhary and Agriculture Secretary Sanjay Aggarwal were also present in the meet.

Following the declaration of the new strain, India on December 21 had suspended flights from UK from December 25 while tightening the RT-PCR norms. The new variant is said to be 70 per cent more transmissible than earlier versions of the coronavirus, as has also been pointed out by the latest Standard Operating Procedure issued by the Union Health Ministry. On Tuesday itself, 22 people -- including six from Delhi -- tested positive for the virus, and their samples were sent for genome sequencing.

Dr Anurag Agarwal, director of the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), one of the CSIR labs sequencing Sars-CoV-2 genomes said though the virus has found to be more transmissible, what

सार्वजनिक सूचना

विषय:- मण्गोलोउपरान्त वसीयत पंजीकृत कराने के बारे में।

इन्द्रजीत सिंह पुत्र स्वो सरदार हीरा सिंह निवासी मकान नं० एफ-नं-1, एनआईटी फरीदाबाद ने इस कार्यालय में हाजिर होकर एक प्रार्थना पत्र दिया है व बयान किया है कि उसकी माताजी श्रीमति सुरजीत कौर धर्मपत्नी स्वो सरदार हीरा सिंह ने एक वसीयतनामा दिनांक 30-03-2016 को अपनी चल अचल सम्पत्ति की बाबत अपने सुपुत्र श्री इन्द्रजीत सिंह के हक में की है तथा श्रीमति सुरजीत कौर का दिनांक 28-06-2020 को देहान्त हो चुका है। इस वसीयतनामा के अनुसार इन्द्रजीत सिंह मूलका श्रीमति सुरजीत कौर की तमाम चल-अचल सम्पत्ति का मालिक होगा। यह वसीयतनामा गवाहन की श्री लखा सिंह पुत्र मित सिंह निवासी मकान नं० एफ-629 एनजीएम नगर एनआईटी फरीदाबाद एवं मुद्रणीत सिंह पुत्र श्री गुरुचरण सिंह निवासी मकान नं० 5डी-69, एनआईटी फरीदाबाद के सम्पन्न विधवा गयी श्री जिन्होंने इस वसीयत पत्र बतौर गवाह अपने-2 हस्ताक्षर किये है प्रार्थी ने अनुरोध किया है कि वसीयतनामा दिनांक 30-03-2016 को मण्गोलोउपरान्त पंजीकृत किया जाये।

अतः सर्व साधारण को इस नोटिस द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि यदि किसी को इस वसीयत के पंजीकृत में कोई ऐतराज है तो वह अपना ऐतराज असालतन या वकालतन इस कार्यालय में इस नोटिस के प्रकाशित होने के 30 दिन के अन्दर दे सकता है अन्यथा इस वसीयतनामा को बिना वृत्ति के सही मानकर पंजीकृत करा दिया जाएगा। आज दिनांक 22.12.2020 को मेरे हस्ताक्षर एवं मोहर सहित जारी किया गया।

No 716 RC श्री इन्द्रजीत सिंह
Date 22.11.2020 कानूनी वारिसान

• THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS •

• CHANGE OF NAME •

I NIDHIWALA Asthana, W/O Late Rakesh Asthana, R/O Flat No-263, pocket-1 sector-19, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075 have changed my minor son name. Wrong Name- Kunal Asthana, Correct Name- Siddharth Asthana. For all future purpose

PD(8844)A

The Executive Engineer, Amarpur Division, PWD(R&B), Amarpur, Gomati Tripura invites e-tender against press NIT No. 16/NIT/EE/PWD/AMP/2020-21 Dated: 19-12-2020.

For

Construction of "TERTIARY WASTE composting center" under Amarpur NP during the year 2020-21.

With

Estimated cost: ₹. 1,49,35,793.61

Earnest Money: ₹. 1,49,358.00

Time of Completion - 09 (Nine) months.

Last Date of bidding for bids - 20-01-2021 upto 15.00Hrs.

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

Note:

NO NEGOTIATION WILL BE CONDUCTED WITH THE LOWEST BIDDER

Sd/-

(Er. S. Chakma)

Executive Engineer

Amarpur Division, PWD(R&B)

Amarpur, Gomati Tripura.

ICA/C-2542/2020-21

Attempt to...

From Page 1

"Farmers urge the Government not to repeat those meaningless amendments which we have rejected but come up with a concrete proposal in writing so that it can be made an agenda, and the process of negotiation can be started as soon as possible," stated the letter.

Shiv Kumar Kakka, the national president, Rashtriya Kisan Mazdoor Mahasangh, said farmers urge the Government to create a conducive atmosphere for a fruitful dialogue as the Supreme Court had also said that suspend implementation of farm laws.

Several farmers on Wednesday also visited Kisan Ghat to pay tributes to Chaudhary Charan Singh on his birth anniversary while a havan was also performed at Ghazipur border protest site. Meanwhile, farmers continued their relay hunger strike on

Wednesday against the new farm laws.

Sheoraj Singh, president of Bharatiya Kisan Union (Lok Shakti), camping at the Dalit Prerna Sthal in Noida, on Wednesday wrote a letter in blood to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, demanding the repeal of the three new farm laws that have stoked protests by farmers' unions in north India.

"Take back the agriculture bill, make law to ensure guarantee on minimum support price (MSP) and form a kisan aayog (farmers commission)," he wrote in the letter.

Traffic remained disrupted in bordering areas of the national Capital as protest by farmers entered 28th day.

The Delhi Traffic Police said the Chilla and Ghazipur borders are closed for traffic coming from Noida and Ghaziabad to Delhi. It advised people to take alternative route for coming to Delhi via Anad Vihar, DND, Apsara and Bhopra borders.

Singhu, Auchandi, Piau Maniyari, and Mangesh borders are also closed and commuters have been advised to take routes through the Lampur, Safiabad and Saboli toll tax borders.


Police said as traffic has been diverted from Mukarba

and the GTK road, people are suggested to avoid Outer Ring Road, the GTK road and National Highway (NH) 44.

Those travelling to Haryana can go through the Jharoda (only single carriage-way), Daurala, Kapashera, Badusarai, Rajokri NH-8,


Bijwasan-Bajghera, Palam Vihar and Dundaheera borders.

According to the traffic police, Tikri, Dhansa and Ghazipur borders are also closed for traffic but the Jhatikara border was open only for two-wheelers and pedestrians.



OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION BHOPAL

Water Works Department



NOTICE INVITING TENDER

No. 31/store/W.W.D./BMC/2020-21

Bhopal Dated: 21.12.2020

Online digitally sealed tenders in 2 envelope system (A & C) are hereby invited from **Manufacturer** on behalf of Municipal Corporation Bhopal for the following works on **Form 'B'** Item rate tender and same will be received online at <https://www.mptenders.gov.in> as per key dates.

Corrigendum for this NIT shall not be issued separately in newspapers. Corrigendum regarding correction can be seen on the website. Detailed NIT and other information can be seen on the website- <https://mptenders.gov.in>

S. No.	System NIT No.	Details of Work	Estimated Cost In Rupees
1.	2020_UAD_119213_1	Supply of 2200 MT ISI Mark Ferric Alum Grade-4 in loose slabs as per IS 299/2012 with up to date amendment Including all duties and Taxes, loading, unloading, stacking and transportation up to different filter plants of Water Works, Municipal Corporation Bhopal.	Rs. 1,53,40,600.00

City Engineer (H)

Municipal Corporation, Bhopal

T.N.1470/020/021

Kejriwal directs officials to distribute health cards

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday reviewed the ambitious Health Information Management System (HIMS) project and directed the officials to ensure that the distribution of the health cards is started at the earliest so that the citizens can take benefits of the healthcare delivery process.

“The HIMS will be implemented by August 2021 in all the Delhi Government hospitals. The system seeks to target the healthcare delivery process. All the patient care services, hospital administration, budgeting and planning, supply chain management, and back-end services and processes will be brought under the system. As far as the deployment model is concerned, the entire system

will be on the cloud and digitized,” a senior Government official said.

“The move will enable the citizens to avail information on one platform, which will help them in emergency cases. With this, Delhi will become the only state to have a cloud-based health management system. This facility will also be extended to private hospitals in the future,” the official said.

The meeting was also attended by Health and Family Welfare Minister Satyendar Jain and other health departmental officials to discuss the progress of HIMS project, e-health card, and health helpline. Apprising the CM regarding the progress of the project, the department officials said that the work is being done as per schedule. The vendor will be selected by February



2021 and the system will be implemented by August 2021.

The CM directed the concerned authorities to ensure that the project is finalized by the middle of next year (2021). Health Minister Satyendar Jain also expressed satisfaction over the speedy work done by the health department on HIMS, e-

health card, and health helpline and instructed the department to complete the same within the time frame.

The health officials gave a presentation for the implementation of HIMS and issuing of the e-health cards. Under HIMS, various features such as a web portal, mobile app, etc

will be launched to store a database of the health information of the residents of Delhi.

A health department official said, “Around 46 companies participated in the pre-bid conference of HIMS, while 37 companies showed interest in the conference. “At the same time, 25 companies have procured RFP while some more companies are in the process. About 1239 questions were received from 27 companies till 4 PM on 8th December 2020. Three companies submitted their questions after the expiry of the deadline, while 916 questions came from six companies. NIT/RFP was issued on 11th November for selection of managed service provider for bid process management under Delhi HIMS project.”

“The pre-bid meeting took place on 21st December, the

last date for submission of bids and bid evaluation is 19th January 2021, while the vendor selection process is 20th February 2021. The selected service provider company will maintain HIMS till January 2026,” he added.

The Delhi government will also be issuing an e-health card to the people, which will be a QR based card to identify and track demographic and basic clinical details of every patient. Through the card, the residents of Delhi will be mapped for all eligible schemes and programs.

All family members will be mapped through e-health card for health plans and programs. Integration with HIMS will be done for seamless information exchange. Physical cards with QR codes will be distributed to each person after phys-

ical verification. Also, a provision will be made for issuing modified or duplicate cards at the request of the people.

A centralized centre will be set up at two levels to implement the scheme. In the first level, the centre operator will receive people's calls and messages. The CRM will be able to assess the tax case and resolve it and tell the concerned available healthcare staff, he said.

“The operator will give the relevant information to the

caller and finally the report will be made. In the second level, the Delhi government doctors and an expert will give the patients an appointment to meet after receiving the message. If the case is an emergency, they will immediately accept the calls of the patients, to resolve their issues. If required, they will contact specialized doctors for any disease. It will then update the patient on the CRM by giving information,” he added.

Govt to launch start-up policy

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government is launching a start-up policy to help students who have excellent ideas and want to start their own businesses, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday.

Addressing the convocation ceremony of Ambedkar University, the Chief Minister wished the students luck for a bright future ahead.

Kejriwal informed the students about the various policies of the Government to aid students in various fields.

“Everybody should have the target of being a job provider. It is important to get a job for the initial few years to gain experience but you should think about creating jobs for the people and youth of the country,” he said.

Addressing the students and the faculty of the AUD, Kejriwal said, “Being awarded with a degree is a very significant event in a person's life. It is when a person transitions from one phase to another from a student's life to somebody who is more responsible, who will look for a job earn well to support their families

and have a family of his own. “This is a very important transition. In the coming times, the students passing out of this university and other colleges and universities have to bear the responsibility of the nation in different fields. I am sure out of the students passing out today, those who wish to go for higher studies can avail the scheme of the Delhi government, where the government offers loans to the students who have financial difficulty,” he said.

Kejriwal said, “The students who would want to get into business now or after few months, I would want to tell them that we are bringing a start up policy to aid you all. I know many students who want to do business, they have excellent business ideas, but they do not now how to take the first step, who to take advice from and how to arrange for finances and loans.

“We are bringing a comprehensive startup policy for such students. We will provide legal and technical guidance and aid the students in getting loans and subsidies to help them implement a business idea,” said the CM.

AAP will support farmers who approach court against BJP's anti-farmer remarks: Raghav

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national spokesperson Raghav Chadha on Wednesday said that the AAP will extend support to those farmers who have decided to approach the court against BJP leaders following “obscene” remarks and relentless “abuses” against farmers.

under immense pressure to follow through with this, but he put his foot down, and did not convert any stadium into jails.”

“The AAP takes a pledge to provide all aid, help, assistance to aggrieved farmers who want to move court against BJP leaders for their libelous, slanderous and defamatory remarks against protesting farmers,” he said.

Chadha then went on to name over 20 leaders associated with the Bharatiya Janata Party, who've allegedly used unparliamentary language and hurled filthy abuses at the farmers.

For instance, he said "Union Minister Piyush Goyal had said that the farmers movement was no longer that of the farmers but of the Left and Maoists. The Union Minister had also alleged that anti-national activities were happening at the protest site, with demands to release certain people from jail.

“BJP MP Giriraj Singh had alleged that foreign forces had entered the farmers' movement and posters of Khalistan were being put up at the movement site,” he said.

“Ramesh Bhiduri had alleged that the farmers' movement was being funded by Canada and Pakistan. BJP MP Manoj Tiwari had said that the 'tukde-tukde gang was turning the farmers' movement into another Shaheen Bagh. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar had alleged that they have reports of 'Khalistani presence in the farmers' protest,' he said.

Explaining it further, Chadha said “Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had alleged that the ‘Tukde-Tukde gang is behind the farmers' protest. Anil Sharma, Uttar Pradesh Environment Minister, had allegedly used the term 'goondas' for protesting farmers in UP.”

“I would urge BJP leaders to take a long hard look at the faces of each farmer. The wrinkles on their face will tell you how hard they work, sowing their land with blood and sweat; their bent shoulders will show you how hard he ploughs their land. It is because of their hard work that food reaches your plates,” he said.

“The powers that be treated our farmers as an enemy of the state; they hurled tear gas at our farmers, they used water cannons, farmers were even lathi-charged, trenches were built too, but our brave farmers reached Singhu, they reached Tikri, and continued with their peaceful movement,” he said.

Talking about the farmers rights and how all they ask from the Centre is to lend a sympathetic ear, to show some empathy, he said “The farmers have been requesting the Modi government to listen to them, but in turn were abused. BJP ministers, elected representatives, leaders have used only filthy and foul language to describe the farmers,

“The BJP leaders further said the farmers are agents of China and Pakistan; they said the farmers' movement is being funded by Canada and Pakistan, they said our farmers are terrorists, goondas, they even called our farmers 'dalaal'. It is evident that the entire BJP is categorically and strategically working to destroy and discredit the farmer movement with their relentless abuse,” he added.

Elaborating upon how the AAP has always stood for the farmers and their movement, the senior leader said, “The AAP refused to convert nine stadiums into temporary jails. CM Arvind Kejriwalji was put

Covid positivity rate lowest in 8 months: Jain

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Minister of Health and Family Welfare Satyendar Jain said that the positivity rate in Delhi has been the lowest in the last eight months and more than 80,000 samples are being tested every day for the Covid-19.

Jain said that Delhi has seen less than 1000 cases in the last three days and 80000 tests are being conducted daily and the bed occupancy has reduced. “Delhi has the lowest positivity rate in the entire country. Around 82000 tests were conducted on Tuesday, December 22, and only 2800 beds are occupied whereas 50 per cent of ICU beds are available,” he said.

The health minister said that the Delhiites have diligently followed all precautions, which is why Delhi has been able to get the virus under control. Jain further said that while the strain is contagious the only way to protect oneself from any infection is by wearing a mask



and taking all proper precautions.

Jain said that there were 939 positive cases in Delhi on Tuesday and the positivity rate was at 1.14 per cent. Positivity rate has been continuously declining and is the lowest in eight months. Around 82000 tests were conducted on Tuesday, December 22, and only 2800 beds are occupied whereas 50 per cent of ICU beds are available, he said.

About the preparedness of Delhi to roll out the vaccine, he

said that all necessary requirements are being met, and that the Delhi government is only waiting for the vaccine. “In the first phase of the roll-out, healthcare and frontline workers, people aged above 50 years and people with medical complications under 50 years of age will get vaccinated,” he said.

The aim is to eradicate the virus; hence it is being rolled out to the vulnerable sections first. Commenting on the new strain of the virus in the UK, he said, adding that the Delhi government is aware and is tracing and testing all those who travelled to Delhi from the UK in the past two weeks.

Jain said, “Delhi Government is aware and all the people who have travelled from the UK to Delhi in the past two weeks will be traced, tested and advised quarantine.”

“Delhi is all prepared for the roll-out of the vaccine. Training of the medical staff, storage is all being done. All we are waiting for is the vaccine to

be handed over. In the first phase, health workers, frontline workers, people above the age of 50 years and those who are under 50 but have some medical complication will be vaccinated,” he said.

The aim of the vaccine is not protecting the one individual who has been vaccinated. The aim is to eradicate the virus. If we roll it out to the vulnerable sections, there is a possibility that we might be able to achieve that,” said Jain when enquired about the preparedness of Delhi and the roll-out process.

Commenting on the new strain and guidelines to be issued, he said, “The strain is contagious according to scientists. However the scientists, ICMR are still working on finding out the intricacies. I would like to explain that coronavirus mutates with time. It is my request to the people to be careful. No matter the strain, the only way to protect oneself is by wearing the mask when stepping out.”

Woman accuses tenant of rape, forcing her to change religion after marriage

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has registered a First Information Report (FIR) in the southeast Delhi's Sarita Vihar Police Station after a woman lodged a complaint against a man who was her tenant. The woman said that her tenant allegedly pressurised to marry her without revealing his actual identity and later ended up raping her.

The woman in her complaint alleged that, a man named Sahib Ali (20), who was staying as a tenant in her house made physical relation with the victim against her wishes.

She in her complaint stated that the accused did not reveal his real identity and introduced himself as Rahul and proposed her for marriage after the duo became friends.

“The accused married her and later forced her to convert into his religion. She further alleged that Hazisunnala, the father of Sahib Ali alias Rahul also touched her inappropriately and attempted sexual assault on her,” as per her complaint.

“On December 21, one woman, a resident of Sangam Vihar came to the police station and handed over her complaint to Sarita Vihar Police Station,” said a senior police official.

“It is alleged that one person namely Sahib Ali alias Rahul was staying as a tenant in her house. Both developed friendship. One day he took her to Ali Vihar where she met his father, mother, brother, sister and brother in law. A few days later, she was taken to his parents' house where he made physical relation with her against her wishes,” he said, adding that the woman's medical examination has been conducted.

“Based on the woman's complaint, an FIR was registered at Sarita Vihar Police Station under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 376 (rape), 366 (kidnapping, abducting or inducing woman to compel her marriage), 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 406 (Punishment for criminal breach of trust) and 34 (common intention),” said the senior police official.

Crime rate in '20 dropped by 37% in G'gram

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Despite the lockdown in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Gurugram police have recorded a reduction in crime of only around 37 per cent till December 23, 2020.

This was by official crime data released by the city police on Wednesday.

This year 3,889 cases of murder, dacoity, house theft, simple theft, fighting/snatching and vehicle theft were registered as against 6,161 cases reported in 2019, as per the police data.

The figure of the cases of crime against women and children yet to be released by the city police.

As per the data this year around 84 cases of murder was registered at different police stations in Gurugram of which 64 cases have been solved. Last year around 103 murder cases were reported.

Similarly, 11 cases of

dacoity were reported in 2020 and the cops claimed that all of these have been sorted out. In the previous year, around 17 cases of such crime were reported in Gurugram.

Also, this year the police have registered 322 cases of house theft. Out of these cases 121 have been solved. Last year 569 cases of house theft were registered in the city.

Moreover, in the present year around 787 instances of simple theft were reported in Gurugram. Out of these 249 cases have been solved, claimed the Gurugram police. Last year the figure for such cases was 1,252.

Likewise, 41 cases of snatching were reported in the current year and 29 have been disposed off by the cops.

In 2019, around 136 cases of snatching were registered in the city.

Meanwhile, this year 2,658 instances of vehicle theft were reported in Gurugram of which 537 have been resolved. In the

previous year around 4,048 such crimes were registered in Gurugram, the police said.

Besides this, the city police have busted around 62 gangs involved in several organised crimes according to an official.

Officials said that these gangs were specialized in murder, vehicle lifting, robbery, snatching, ATM theft and theft. The cops have also made recoveries of around Rs 1, 80, 96,649 from their possession.

The police have arrested 159 members of various gangs and have solved around 293 cases. Out of these 62 gangs, 20 gangs were involved in vehicle theft and the police have recovered more than Rs 46 lakh from their possessions, the police said.

Apart from this, the district police have also nabbed 34 wanted criminals on which a bounty of Rs 5,000 to 2 lakh was fixed on their arrest by the Haryana police.

Also, this year the Gurugram police had nabbed


10 criminals who were involved in heinous cases after an encounter. Along with this the cops have also arrested 368 proclaimed offenders, 93 bail jumpers and 1 parole jumper this year so far.

From the beginning of the year the crime branch units of the Gurugram police started to keep vigil on these gangs and with joint efforts of the police station teams and crime branch units these gangs were arrested.

The cracking of so many gangs will surely help in curbing crime volume in the city. This is a routine process and teams of crime branch will keep on tracking the bursting of such gangs,” said KK Rao, commissioner of Gurugram police.

The commissioner further said that the crime branch units have also managed to arrest more than ten members of the city's most wanted criminal Sube gang after an encounter this year so far.”

DO YOU WANT TO PREPARE FOR UPSC EXAM AFTER SCHOOL?



OPPORTUNITY FOR UPSC ASPIRANTS FROM DELHI SCHOOLS TO HAVE CONVERSATION WITH YOUNG IAS / IPS OFFICERS

FIRST SESSION:

Thursday, December 24, 2020 at 2 pm onwards


Guest: Shri Udit Prakash (IAS – 2007), B.E (Electronics Engg.)
Director Education, Government of NCT of Delhi

Delhi government is initiating a program for UPSC aspirants from Delhi schools to give them better insights about UPSC exam preparation. Under this program, every month young IAS/IPS officers will interact with students and share their experiences and strategies for exam preparation.

For registration, interested students may send their name, class and full name of their school over WhatsApp to

8130266666

Directorate of Education, Government of NCT of Delhi



DIP/Shabdarth/D/0091/20-21

₹59K cr scholarship for SC to pursue post-matric studies



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a big push for education of students belonging to Scheduled Caste, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved ₹59,000 crore post matric scholarship for next five years.

The Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi estimated that this mega scholarship scheme will benefit more than four crore students for continuing their education from class 11. The Central Government will spend 60% of the programme which is estimated at ₹35,534 crore. The rest will be provided by the State Government.

“This replaces the existing ‘committed liability’ system and brings greater involvement of the Central Govt in this crucial scheme,” the Union Cabinet said in a statement.

Detailing the scheme, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawarchand Gehlot said that as per the estimates, around 1.36 crore poor students from SC community could not continue their education beyond class 10 due to poverty.

“The Post Matric Scholarship scheme for Scheduled Caste students allows students to pursue any post-matric course starting from class 11 and onwards, with the Government providing the cost of education. The focus of the scheme would be on enrolling the poorest students, timely payments, comprehensive accountability, continuous monitoring and total

transparency,” said Gehlot.

“A campaign will be launched to enroll the students, from the poorest households passing the 10th standard, in the higher education courses of their choice. It is estimated that 1.36 crore such poorest students, who are currently not continuing their education beyond 10th standards would be brought into the higher education system in the next 5 years.

The scheme will be run on an online platform with robust cyber security measures that would assure transparency, accountability, efficiency, and timely delivery of the assistance without any delays,” said the Minister.

The States will verify the eligibility, caste status, Aadhar identification and bank account details of the applicants on the online portal. Transfer of financial assistance to the students under the scheme shall be on DBT mode, and preferably using the Aadhar enabled payment system, said Government in a statement detailing the mega scheme. Starting from 2021-22, the central share (60%) in the scheme would be released on DBT mode directly into the bank accounts of the students as per fixed time schedule, after ensuring that the concerned State Government has released their share.

The monitoring mechanism will be further strengthened through the conduct of social audits, annual third party evaluation, and half-yearly self-audited reports from each institution said the statement.

PM to release ₹18K cr as next part of PM-KISAN direct cash-transfer scheme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid farmers protest over the farm laws which enters 29 days, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will release the next tranche of PM-KISAN the direct cash-transfer scheme ,making payments worth ₹18,000 crore to more than 9 crore farmers.

The PM will also virtually interact with some farmers drawn from six different States on Christmas Day, which is also the birth anniversary of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

According to Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, over two crore farmers have registered themselves for this online event in which PM Modi will be chief guest.

“PM Narendra Modi will release the next installment of financial benefit under PM KISAN Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) on December 25 via video conferencing. PM will

enable the transfer of more than ₹18,000 crores to more than 9 crores beneficiary farmer families,” the PMO said.

The PM’s outreach comes even as farmer unions urged the Centre to “abandon its stubbornness” and take the discussion forward with an “open mind and neat intention”.

According to officials, the Prime Minister will most likely ask farmers impromptu questions on how they have benefited from the scheme and “take a briefing from them on what they are growing and what else they want to see done for them ahead of the budget”, the official said. “The farmers will share their experiences with PM-KISAN and also on various other initiatives taken by the Government for the welfare of farmers. Union Agriculture Minister will also be present on the occasion”, an official said.

According to Tomar, the Government had earlier expected to enroll 14 crore farmers

under the scheme but only 11.4 crore listed so far. He thanks banks for bringing more farmers under the Kisan Credit Card scheme coverage during the coronavirus pandemic. “I would also like to thank banks, as they brought more than 1 crore farmers under Kisan Credit Card cover during the pandemic and gave farmers Rs 1 lakh crores in the last 8 months,” Tomar stated.

“Through various schemes, we will fill all gaps in the agriculture sector, which will benefit farmers and ensure they get the right price...Even during COVID-19 pandemic, we saw that work related to farming and agriculture wasn’t affected,” he added.

Under PM-Kisan, the Government provides income support of ₹6,000 a year to farmers with a valid enrolment, paid in three equal cash transfers of ₹2,000 — one every four months. It was launched on February 24, 2019.

NCDC ties up with Bangaluru-based S-VYASA varsity to set up yoga centres across country

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) has joined hands with Bangaluru-based Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana (S-VYASA) university to inculcate habit of yoga among people by helping cooperatives to set up yoga wellness centres and naturopathy facilities across the country.

The move comes two months after the NCDC under the Union Agriculture Minister launched Ayushman Sahakar, a scheme aiming to involve cooperatives in creating healthcare infrastructure that include wellness centres, Ayush, homoeopathy, drug manufacturing, drug testing, Ayurveda massage centres, and drug stores besides medical education initiatives.

While S-VYASA will provide technical help, the NCDC will make available working capital and margin money to meet operational requirements to the interested cooperatives for setting yoga wellness centres.



Speaking on the occasion after the pact was inked online, Union Minister for AYUSH, Shripad Yesso Nayak said that the initiative would benefit people in the rural areas. He observed that his Ministry supports such initiatives aimed at strengthening efforts in Indian health systems, including yoga, a global movement.

Parshottam Rupala, Union Minister of State for Agriculture felt that a new dimension has been added by NCDC to expand the welfare programmes for farmers under the NCDC Ayushman Sahakar scheme. He hoped that yoga wellness centres would make a good business model for cooperatives to strengthen the healthcare delivery system in rural areas.

Sundeep Nayak, MD of NCDC said that the

Ayushman Sahakar scheme with an outlay of Rs.10,000 crore aims at extending financial support to cooperatives. “The scheme has a comprehensive and holistic approach to finance healthcare infrastructure and services. It covers hospitals, healthcare infrastructure, medical education, nursing education, paramedical education, drugs manufacturing, digital health, laboratory services, health insurance and Indian traditional medical systems like Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy.”

Guruji Nagendra, Chancellor of S-VYASA said that a new dimension would be explored through cooperatives across the country.

The MoU also aims to promote skilling of students or alumni of S-VYASA through internship opportunities offered by NCDC under its scheme Sahakar Mitra, Nayak added. The NCDC set up under the Ministry of Agriculture has, till date since it was set up in 1963, financed various cooperative initiatives aggregating ₹1.57-lakh crore.

Army chief visits LAC forward areas to review op readiness



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the impasse persists at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, Army Chief General M M Naravane on Wednesday toured forward areas there to review operational preparedness. He also took stock of the ground situation as more than one lakh troops from India and China are in a stand-off for the last nine months.

With several rounds of military and diplomatic level talks so far having failed to end the tension, the Indian army has made preparations for long haul during the winter months. Not willing to take any chances, additional troops trained in mountain warfare are also positioned at strategic locations all along the 1,700 km long LAC in Ladakh sector.

In this backdrop, the Army chief visited forward areas and reviewed the ground situation along the South bank of Pangong Tso where Indian Army had dominated several unoccupied peaks on the Indian side of the LAC in the end of August.

“Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited forward areas of Fire and Fury Corps including Rechin La and undertook a first-hand assessment of the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC),” the Army said. Naravane also undertook on the spot inspection of the state of habitat of troops on the forward line of defences at Rechin La.

The Army has ensured that enough prefabricated and heated huts are supplied to the forward areas in Ladakh to

During the one day visit to the Leh based 14 Corps, Naravane also visited forward base Tara and interacted with the local commanders and troops. He was briefed on the operational situation by the 14 Corps Commander, Lt General PGK Menon

enable the troops to withstand the harsh winters. Mercury has already dipped to minus ten and will plunge to minus 20 to 25 in the coming weeks.

In addition, sufficient stocks of winter clothing are in the stores at Leh and other key locations to provide comfortable and functional special clothes to the troops.

During the one day visit to the Leh based 14 Corps, Naravane also visited forward base Tara and interacted with the local commanders and troops. He was briefed on the operational situation by the 14 Corps Commander, Lt General PGK Menon.

Incidentally, the Army chief’s visit came days after the sixth round of diplomatic level talks between India and China last week. There was no breakthrough but both the sides agreed to continue dialogue for speedy disengagement of troops from the LAC.

The two delegations also agreed to soon hold the ninth round of Corps Commander level talks between the two armies. The last round was held on November 6. However, those talks also did not yield positive results.

Sources said the Army Chief reached Ladakh at 8:30 am on a day-long visit with an aim to review the ground sit-

uation in the region that is experiencing harsh winter.

The army said Naravane interacted with the troops deployed in forward areas and exhorted them to continue working with the same “zeal and enthusiasm”. He also distributed sweets and cakes ahead of Christmas.

Around three-and-half months ago, Indian troops had occupied a number of strategic heights in the Mukhpari, Rechin La and Magar hill areas around the southern bank of the Pangong lake in eastern Ladakh after the Chinese People’s Liberation Army attempted to intimidate them in the area on the intervening night of August 29 and 30.

“General MM Naravane #COAS undertook on the spot inspection of the state of #habitat of troops on the forward line of defences at #RechinLa. He appreciated the efforts made by the formation to make troops comfortable along the #LAC,” the Army said in another tweet.

The military face-off erupted on May 5 following violent clashes between the Indian army and the PLA in the Pangong lake area. The clashes were followed by a similar incident in North Sikkim on May 9.

Illegal wildlife trade on the rise despite Covid curbs



ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Despite Covid-19 restrictions and the risk of animal to human disease transmission, illegal wildlife trade on social media networks continue to flourish, researchers noted after analyzing around 20,000 posts on Facebook on wild pet trade.

Ringed alarm bells, the researchers from Oxford Brookes University and the University of Western Australia have called for increased vigilance on social media sites in order to curb potential extinctions and reduce the risk of pandemics.

The researchers had examined advertisements on Facebook in Brazil and Indonesia. They found thousands of posts advertising wild animals, with a potential audience of over 200,000 people. “Indeed, only 0.44 per cent of over 20,000 online wildlife trade advertisements had any Covid-19-related content,” said the researchers in the study published in journal of Environmental Research.

Co-author Anna Nekaris, Professor of Primate Conservation at Oxford Brookes

University said: “We anticipated that we would see many posts mentioning Covid-19 regarding the potential dangers of wildlife trade or using it as a reason for a temporary cessation of sales. Instead, advertisements mentioning Covid-19 often stimulated wildlife trade, suggesting the pandemic was a great time to buy an exotic pet for companionship, for example.”

Strikingly, they found that no traders or consumers discussed the role of wildlife trade in spreading diseases. Instead, discounts were given, home delivery services were provided, and customers encouraged to spend larger amounts of time due to lockdown with the animals.

Co-author Thais Morcatty, at Oxford Brookes University, said, “clandestine markets often expand to supply the demand that still exists and in that case, not only does wildlife trade continue, monitoring it becomes nearly impossible.”

In India too, the situation is not very encouraging as has been found by a study conducted by TRAFFIC, a wildlife trade monitoring network. It found a significant increase in reported poaching of wild ani-

mals in India during the lockdown period. “Species are being systematically wiped out by organised trade networks, with new poaching techniques and trade routes emerging faster than we can respond to them. The pandemic, which is an important example of the negative repercussions of this exploitative trade, hasn’t deterred wildlife traders and this is only exacerbated by the increased demand for Traditional Chinese Medicines (TMC).”

“Many of the highest trafficked species are reptiles and amphibians like the tokay gecko, spiny-tailed lizard, tortoises and freshwater turtles, with data on this trade yet to be quantified,” said Trisha Ghose, project director, The Habitats Trust, an NGO working for protection and conservation of habitats and their indigenous species.

In fact, in the midst of pandemic, in June the Union Environment Ministry issued an advisory saying people importing “exotic live species” will have to make a voluntary disclosure following global concern about illegal wildlife trade and zoonotic diseases.

NSCN-K announces ceasefire, proposes Centre for peace talks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI / KOHIMA

Naga insurgent group NSCN-K, led by militant Niki Sumi, on Wednesday announced a ceasefire and said that it has contacted the central Government for initiating peace dialogue. The NSCN-K had signed a ceasefire with the Centre in 2001 but unilaterally abrogated it in 2015 when the then ‘chairman’ of the group, S S Khaplang, was alive. Sumi is the prime accused in the killing of 18 Indian Army soldiers in Manipur in 2015 and the National Investigation Agency had announced a reward of ₹10 lakh for his head.

In a statement, Sumi said the NSCN-K has been striving all these years to achieve an honourable and acceptable political solution to the Naga issue and the group is also conscious of the overwhelming sentiments among the Naga people for an early solution to this long standing matter. It said that the NSCN-K is aware of the “sincere and genuine efforts” made by the central govern-

ment in the recent past to find a final and lasting solution to the Naga issue with the involvement of all the stakeholders.

“Therefore NSCN has resolved to strengthen and support the peace process at this crucial juncture. Our leaders have established contact with the officials of Government of India in this connection. To facilitate the process and keeping in view the desire of the Naga people particularly Naga civil society organisations and NGOs, the NSCN has further decided to revive the ceasefire with immediate effect by revoking the earlier decision of unilateral abrogation of the ceasefire in 2015,” the statement said.

The other dominant group - the NSCN-IM - had entered into a ceasefire agreement with the central government in 1997 and since then engaged in peace negotiations. The NSCN-IM had signed a Framework Agreement on August 3, 2015 in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to find a permanent solution.

CBI files chargesheet against NDA Khadakwasla for fake appointments

PNS ■ NEW DELHI


The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed a charge sheet against Principal, National Defence Academy (NDA), Khadakwasla, Pune (Maharashtra) before the Competent Court at Pune on the allegations of fraudulent appointments in the institution.

A case was registered on May 8, 2018, against Principal, of Dr Om Prakash Shukla and others on the allegations of fraudulent appointments to various posts of civilian facul-

ties at defence academy on the basis of false and exaggerated claims in respect of teaching/research experience and exaggerated API scores, the CBI said in a statement.

Searches were conducted on June 6, 2018, at the premises of the accused which led to the recovery of incriminating documents.

It was further alleged that during the period 2007-08, the accused fraudulently, secured an appointment as Professor in Economics at National Defence Academy (NDA), Khadakwasla, Pune.



New Okhla Industrial Development Authority

Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida-201301 (U.P.)

Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with 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 & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

S.No.	Job No. / Work Name	Amount
1.	137/D(H)/DD(H)-I/2020-21, M/O Park (R/o Boundary wall railing main gate Z gate and exiting footpath) in Sector-63	Cost Rs. 34.22 Lacs
2.	142/D(H)/DD(H)-I/2020-21, D/o RSP 30 Mtr. wide rode to Sector-122 & rsp Sector-122 Raghav Global School to Prateek Lorial Charaha with two Year Maintenance.	Cost Rs. 37.67 Lacs
3.	25/D(H)/DD(H)-I/2020-21, D/o Park, (Sh: P/F Open gym) Sector-62 C-58 with Five Year Maintenance.	Cost Rs. 30.91 Lacs
4.	187/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, M/o Green Belt (C/o boundary wall and other civil work parallel to drain in Sector-107) Noida.	Cost Rs. 31.85 Lacs
5.	188/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, M/o Park (R/o boundary wall in E-Block park Sector-52 and Trifala park Sector-61 and R/o of foot path near Sai mandir sector-40) Noida.	Cost Rs. 37.52 Lacs
6.	190/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, M/o Green belt (R/o boundary wall near village Sorkha Green Belt in Sector-116) Noida.	Cost Rs. 48.60 Lacs
7.	191/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, M/o Green Belt (Removing illegal writing on outer boundary wall in Sector-33, 39, 36, 41, 44, 49, 61 and repair & painting work of grill from MP3 road to Mahamaya flyover) Noida.	Cost Rs. 41.13 Lacs
8.	207/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, M/o Park (R/o boundary wall and other civil work in A-57 Sector-50) Noida.	Cost Rs. 47.63 Lacs
9.	210/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, M/o Green Belt (R/o outer boundary wall and fencing concertina near Neo Hospital parallel to nala Sector-50) Noida.	Cost Rs. 48.68 Lacs
10.	211/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, M/o Green Belt (R/o boundary wall painting work of grill & gate and fencing barbed wire in green belt of Sector-31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39 and 40) Noida.	Cost Rs. 48.24 Lacs
11.	141/D(H)/DD(H)-III/20-21, D/o Park Sector- 82, Pocket - 12 (Sh: Open Gym with five year maintenance.)	Cost Rs. 30.96 Lacs
12.	142/D(H)/DD(H)-III/20-21, D/o Park Sector- 80, B-57 Park (Sh: Open Gym with five year maintenance.)	Cost Rs. 30.96 Lacs
13.	143/D(H)/DD(H)-III/20-21, D/o Village Nagli wazidpur, Barat Ghar Park (Sh: Open Gym with five year maintenance.)	Cost Rs. 30.96 Lacs
14.	144/D(H)/DD(H)-III/20-21, D/o Park Sector-93, Sharmik Kunj, 1st (Sh: Open Gym with five year maintenance.)	Cost Rs. 30.96 Lacs
15.	145/D(H)/DD(H)-III/20-21, D/o Park Sector-80, 81, 83, 85, 88, 91, 92, 93, 93B & 110 (Sh: Jhuley)	Cost Rs. 48.39 Lacs
16.	146/D(H)/DD(H)-III/20-21, 132 Loop, 135 HIG Flat, 136, 137, 138 Elahabans School, 142, 143B & 151	Cost Rs. 35.76 Lacs
17.	147/D(H)/DD(H)-III/20-21, D/o Park Sector- 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, P-2, 88, 91, 92, 93, 93A & 93B, 132, 135, 136, 137, 142, 143B & 151B (Sh: Dustbin & Garden Bench)	Cost Rs. 33.40 Lacs
18.	139/D(H)/DD(H)-III/2020-21, Annual Maintenance of Park (Boundary wall, gate, M.S. Grill of different Location in Udyan- III, Noida).	Cost Rs. 39.02 Lacs

Which can be uploaded by date **06.01.2021** upto **5.00 PM**. Pre-qualification shall be opened/ downloaded on date **07.01.2021** at **11.00 AM**.

Director (Hort.)
Noida

Office: Sector-39

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DDCPOLLS

BJP EMERGES SINGLE LARGEST PARTY

Garners 25% vote share

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

By winning 75 seats, three for the first time from Kashmir valley and 72 from across its strong bastion of Jammu region, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has emerged as the single largest party garnering around 25 per cent total vote share of the total votes polled in the District Development Council polls.

On the other hand, the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) may have won 112 seats but it fell way behind BJP, securing around 22 per cent total vote share.

Indian National Congress, which won 26 seats, seven from Kashmir valley and 17 from Jammu, garnered over 13 per cent total vote share while securing 3,94,575 votes in the DDC polls.

Significantly, the biggest chunk of 32 per cent votes was polled in favour of the Independent candidates across Jammu & Kashmir.

Out of 20 District Development councils, these candidates are going to play the role of 'kingmakers in the five district development councils of Rajouri, Poonch, Ramban, Kishtwar and Srinagar. A total number of 50 independents have won these polls, 20 from



BJP's DDC polls incharge Anurag Thakur along with BJP Mahila Morcha members after the party candidates' performance in the elections, at party office in Jammu on Wednesday

Jammu and 30 from Kashmir region.

According to the vote percentage data shared by the State Election Commission after the declaration of the poll results, the BJP has topped the chart. It garnered 708,714 votes (24.82 per cent) of the total votes polled. According to the State Election Commission, a total number of 28,55,509 votes were polled in the DDC polls.

Out of 75 seats, BJP won 72 from Jammu region and opened its account for the first time in Kashmir by winning three seats, one each from Srinagar, Pulwama and Bandipur districts.

On the other hand, Jammu and Kashmir National Conference party won 67 seats,

25 from Jammu and 42 from Kashmir region. The total vote share garnered by the party was 16.46 per cent. The party candidates secured 4,70,099 votes across Jammu & Kashmir.

The National Conference had contested around 60 seats in Kashmir, while PDP contested 45, Peoples Conference 13, JKPM 6, CPI(M), Awami National Conference 5.

Another important constituent of the PAGD, JKDPDP polled 1,13,175 votes which is 3.96 per cent of the total votes polled.

The Jammu and Kashmir APNI party, won 12 seats, three from Jammu region and 9 from Kashmir valley, secured 5.30 percent votes and garnered 1,51,331 total votes.

Kerala CM tussles with Governor over spl Assembly session

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The denial of permission by Governor Arif Mohammed Khan to the Government of Kerala to hold a special session of the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday to lambast the Centre and pass a resolution condemning the Agriculture Bills led to the staging of a demonstration by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and members of his council of ministers at the capital city.

Vijayan issued a severe warning to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whom the former accused of following a divide and rule policy in India. "Public resentment against the Farm Bills would blow the BJP out of power in coming days and it would be better for the Centre to withdraw the legislations," warned the Chief Minister.

He said the impact of the Farm Bills would be felt more in Kerala because of the food crisis being faced by the State. "We are dependent on other States for our food requirement because the production of food grains have come down drastically in the State because of the anti-people policies pursued by the Centre," said Vijayan.

The exchange of letters between the Governor and Chief Minister continued on Wednesday also. Replying to



Vijayan's letter to Raj Bhavan on Tuesday in which he alleged that the Governor's action to deny permission for Wednesday's special session of the Legislative Assembly, Governor Arif Mohammed Khan explained to him in a letter sent on Wednesday the precedence and rules in the Constitution relating to the convening of such meetings.

Meanwhile the Congress-led UDF demanded the Chief Minister to convene a special session of the MLAs outside the Legislative House and pass a resolution against the Prime Minister and the Centre. "The chief minister and the LDF Government are afraid of Governor and the Centre for reasons known to them only," said Oommen Chandi, former CM while speaking to reporters.

AMU faculty receives best paper award

PNS ■ ALIGARH

Professor Imtiaz Ashraf (Department of Electrical Engineering, Zakir Husain College of Engineering and Technology, Aligarh Muslim University), along with his researchers' team got the Best Paper Award at the International Conference on "Smart Technologies for Energy, Environment & Sustainable Development (ICSTESD 2020)", organised by GH Raisoni College of Engineering, Nagpur.

The team presented a research paper on double stage voltage lift switched capacitor converter for high voltage applications in DC microgrids. This novel DC-DC converter topology can be used for high voltage applications having the characteristics of low switch count, low voltage stress across semiconductor devices, giving the highest gain factor.

Professor Ashraf also delivered a lecture at QIS College of Engineering and Technology, Vijaywada, Andhra Pradesh describing in detail various aspects of recent R&D and importance of electric vehicles in India at an AICTE-sponsored six-day short term training programme on "Advanced Power Electronic Converters for Electric Vehicle Powertrain and Smart-Grid Phase-II".

103 bird species found in first of kind avian count in Kamala bird sanctuary near Mumbai

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In the first of its kind bird count jointly undertaken by a citizens' body and the State forest department, as many as 103 bird species — including those like Alpine Swift, Indian Scops Owl, Indian Eagle Owl and Indian Pitta — were sighted at the Kamala Bird Sanctuary (KBS) located near Mumbai.

Located within the Mumbai metropolitan region (MMR), the KBS is the first and one of the oldest bird sanctuaries in the country. It was declared a bird sanctuary way back in 1966.

Spread over 12.48 sq km in Panvel tehsil in the adjoining Raigad district, this bird sanctuary is a nearly two hour drive from downtown Mumbai. It is very popular among nature lovers, trekkers, fort and heritage enthusiasts.

In all, 27 bird enthusiasts participated in the day-night survey — called the Kamala Bird Count. The participants were divided into 9 teams that covered all types of habitats in the sanctuary. Each team com-



prised bird experts, photographers, ebird users, GWT members and forest guards.

This bird count was conducted jointly by the Maharashtra Forest Department (MFD) and Green Works Trust (GWT) on December 19-20, 2020.

"This was the first-of-its kind of a scientific survey in the Kamala Bird Sanctuary. This was also the first of its kind of

night bird count in Maharashtra. Through this survey, we wanted to document bird population and avifaunal diversity in this sanctuary. During the survey, we sighted a total of 103 species of birds," GWT's founder Nikhil Bhopale said.

According to Bhopale, the survey followed two types of bird count sampling methods viz. Line Transect and Point Counts. There were 9 line



transacts and 5 point counts were done to cover the sprawling sanctuary area.

Some of the bird species sighted during the survey were Alpine Swift, Indian Scops Owl, Indian Eagle Owl, Indian Pitta, Common Hawk Cuckoo and Peregrine Falcon feeding on Parakeet. The bird count was inaugurated by Sunil Limaye, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife) heading the West zone.

Dr Bhanudas Pingle, Deputy Conservator of Forest (Wildlife), Thane; Nandakumar Kupte, Assistant Commissioner of Forest, Phansad and Pradip Chavhan, Range Forest Officer, Kamala Bird Sanctuary were among those present for the event.

IMPACT OF NIGHT CURFEW

Hotels, restaurants in Maha to welcome NY 'Thailand time' TO WELCOME YEAR 2021 ONE-AND-A-HALF HOURS EARLY

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The "night curfew" declared by the Maharashtra Government has prompted the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) to exhort its member-hotels and restaurants in Mumbai and other major cities across the State to gear up for early New Year's eve celebrations coinciding with "Thailand Time".

The hotels and restaurants in Mumbai and Municipal Corporation areas in Maharashtra — as per the advice by HRAWI — will ring in the New Year as early as at 10.30 pm on December 31 which is 12 midnight as per "Thailand Time". In effect, the hotels and restaurants will usher in the year 2021 one-half hour early.

The HRAWI's directive to its member hotels and restaurants comes in the wake of the Maharashtra Government's decision to enforce night curfew in Mumbai and other municipal corporations of Maharashtra, between 11 pm and 6 am from December 22 to January 5, in view of new strain of the SARS-CoV-2 detected in the United Kingdom.

In a statement issued here, the HRAWI said that ending the



Mumbai streets wear a deserted look during night curfew on Wednesday

year earlier was a fitting tribute to the hospitality industry's "never say die attitude" and that it would welcome the New Year filled with hope and promise.

The HRAWI said that while the curfew would disrupt hospitality industry's plans, it appreciated the Maharashtra Government's pre-emptive measures to allay any threat of the Covid-19 pandemic's second wave.

"Like every year, Mumbai will have its celebrations this year too, albeit a little earlier. The Government is doing its

best to help keep its citizens safe and we see the intent behind the decision. But if it's celebrations that Mumbaiers want, we will give it to them while ensuring that all norms and safety measures are adhered to. This is probably even better as people will get to be at their homes at midnight to bring in the New Year with their families," HRAWI's President Sherry Bhatia said.

The HRAWI member establishments are planning to "align celebrations with Thailand" and may even host



Police officers stop commuters at Girgaum Chowpatty during night curfew in Mumbai on Wednesday

virtual celebrations synchronised with them.

"The Hospitality industry wants to put the last eight months behind and instead look forward to the remaining eight days left in the year. We have braved the storm and have decidedly put the worst behind us. Nothing is going to dampen our spirits and we will emerge stronger than before. We welcome Mumbaiers to come join us in the last celebrations of the season, to bid farewell to 2020 and to usher in 2021 with lots of optimism, faith and hope," HRAWI's senior Vice President Pradeep Shetty said.

Maha issues safety guidelines for X'mas celebrations

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

As a precautionary measure against the spread of Coronavirus in the coming days, the Maharashtra Government on Wednesday came out with health safety guidelines for this year's Christmas celebrations across the State. In a notification issued, the State Home department appealed to the Christian community to celebrate this year's Christmas celebrations in a simple manner in view of the fact that the State continued to be in the grip of Covid-19 crisis.

"This year, all communities and religions celebrated various festivities in a simple manner in view of the health threat posed by Coronavirus. We expect the Christian community to celebrate this year's Christmas in a simple manner," the State Home department said, as it released 13-point safety guidelines for Christmas celebrations.

Significantly enough, the State Government has asked the Christian community to hold "Thanks Giving Mass" at or before 7 pm of December 31 instead holding them at 12 midnight. Among other things, State Government has mandated that there should be not be more than 50 people at church for the prayer meeting held on the occasion of Christmas, that there be systematic and exit arrangements at the Church, that the social distancing norms be followed strictly, that the Church be sanitised before mass and that the use Mask and Sanitiser is compulsory in Church.

KANGANA BUNGALOW DEMOLITION

Maha human rights body summons BMC chief

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Less than a month after the

Bombay High Court quashed the demolition notice issued to Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut and dubbed the subsequent demolition of portions of her bungalow as "a clear malice in law", the Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission (MSHRC) on Wednesday summoned Mumbai Municipal Commissioner Iqbal Chahal to appear before on January 20, 2021 in connection with the much-discussed demolition.

Hearing a petition filed by Advocate Aditya Mishra against the demolition of a portion of Kanga's Bandra Bungalow saying it as an act of "human violation", the MSHRC admitted the petition and ordered issuance of summons

to Chahal to appear on January 20 to depose before it connection with the petition.

The petitioner has relied on the order of the Bombay High Court which had on November 27 quashed the demolition notice issued by the BMC to the Bollywood actress in September this year, terming both the notice and the subsequent demolition of a portion of her Bandra Bungalow were "acted by malafides" and they involved "a clear malice in law" and ordered compensation for her.

In his petition filed before the MSHRC, Mishra cited a Supreme Court ruling that declared the right to private property to be a human right. Quoting the apex court's order, the petitioner said that if any act by the state or its agencies pertaining to someone's private

property was found to be illegal, then it was a violation of human rights.

"When the act of BMC is found to be illegal by the Bombay High Court, then it's a crystal clear case of violation of human rights, which warrants the intervention of the commission," the petitioner said.

It may be recalled that on September 9, the demolition squad of the BMC pulled down a portion of Kangana Raut's bungalow at Bandra in north-west Mumbai, which housed the office of her film production company, Manikarnika Films Pvt Ltd.

In their order passed, a HC division bench of Justices SJ Kathawalla and RI Chagla ruled: "As we have come to a clear conclusion that the impugned notice under section

354A of the Act and the action of demolition following it, are actuated by malafides, in any event, involve a clear malice in law, causing a substantial injury to the Petitioner."

"We would be perfectly justified on the basis of the law stated by the Supreme Court in the case of Sunbeam Hightech Developers (supra), to order compensation against responsible Respondents," the judges had noted, adding that the quantum of compensation would be decided only after the preparation of an estimate by the approved valuer.

On the compensation, the judges had ruled: "Both parties, i.e. the Petitioner and the MCGM (as the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation is also known) shall be heard by the valuer whilst making his report of valuation."

Laity declare Abhaya as Saint

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Usually it is for Vatican (read The Pope) to canonize any persons by declaring him/her as Saint and that too years after the concerned individual leave this world. The last Indians to be canonized were Father Kuriakose Elias Chavara and Mother Euphrasia (November 2014) and Joseph Vaz of Goa in 2015.

Catholic activists in the social media did not wait for any communication from Vatican or any papal order before uploading the 2021 calendar featuring the picture of

Catholic activists in social media did not wait for any communication from Vatican or any papal order before uploading the 2021 calendar featuring the picture of Sister Abhaya and they themselves canonized her by designating her as Saint Abhaya

Sister Abhaya and they themselves canonized her by designating her as Saint Abhaya

The calendar has a prayer to Sister Abhaya who was

found murdered in the Convent in Kottayam where she was a novitiate trainee on March 27, 1992. "Please pray to God Almighty for the world to be saved from all kinds of injustice, violence, economic and sexual exploitations and murders," said the prayer printed along with the calendar.

The Catholic community believes in praying through the Saints who, they believe, have direct access with the Almighty. The Canonization is a long drawn out process and it takes decades, if not centuries, for the Pope to declare the person as Saint.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
NOTICE INVITING TENDER	
Name of work and its location:-	30-Elect-16-T-R2-20-21-E3 Removing and commissioning of submersible pumps over Delhi Division.
Approx cost of the works in:-	Rs. 31.58 lacs
Address of the office:-	Sr. Divl Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
Earnest Money:-	Rs. 63200.00
Date & time of submission of tender:-	21.01.2021, 12.00 Hrs.
Opening of tender:-	21.01.2021, 12.00 Hrs.
Website & notice board:-	www.ireps.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
2860/2020	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
TENDER NOTICE	
Invitation of Tender through E- Tendering (E-Procurement System)	
1 Name of Work with its Location	Strengthening of rail and cross girders, providing screen over web of cross girder on Br. No. 176A UP DL-I-UMB section under AXEN/Br/SP/TKJ
2 Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 26,14,403.75
3 Earnest Money	Rs. 52300.00
4 Completion period of the work	(02) Two Months
5 Cost of Tender form	Rs. 3000/- Note: -Cost of EMD & Tender Form should be in the form of net banking or payment gateway only. FDR will not be accepted as cost of tender invited on IREPS as per Railway Boards letter no 2015/CE-I/CT/5/1 dated 31.08.2016).
6 Date & time for submission of tender & opening of tender	Upto 15.00 hrs on 04.01.2021 Opening of tender after 15.00 hrs on same day
7 Website particulars where complete details of Tender can be seen & downloaded	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in
Tender Notice No: 32-W-BR-176A-UP -DLI, 14.12.2020	
2866/20	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

Notice Inviting e-Tender

No.SSA/Spl.Trang/Procurement/04/333/2020/3562 Date: 22.12.2020

Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites tender through e-Tendering process from reputed Manufacturer/Authorized Dealer of Manufacturer of green board for supply of green board.

To participate in the tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender processing fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/Scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

Sd/-Executive Director, SSA, Assam Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Janasanyog No. CF/3481/20

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED GIRLS

MEENA

General public is hereby informed that these girls namely **1. Meena** D/o Ass Mohammad R/o H.No. R-5/22, Near Noori Masjid, Mohan Garden, Delhi **Age** : 17 years **11 Months, Complexion** : Fair, **Height** : 5', **Face** : Round, wearing white colour top and black colour jeans and **2. Khusboo** D/o Ram Khiladi R/o H.No. 151, Gali No. 6, Sainik Vihar, Mohan Garden, Delhi **Age** : 17 years, **Complexion** : Fair, **Height** : 5', **Face** : Round, wearing blue colour jacket, white colour jeans and black colour sandal in feet, have been missing/ kidnapped since 22.11.2020 from the area of P.S. Ranhola, Delhi. In this regard FIR No. 982/20 dated 24.11.2020 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Ranhola, Delhi.

KHUSBOO

Any person having any information or clue about this missing/kidnapped girls may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> SHO : P.S. Ranhola, Delhi, Ph. : 011-23363001, 23363002, 23363003

Fax: 24368639, Tel.: 24368638/24368641

FIRST COLUMN

Quell over-the-top quarrels please

India must put in place a set of guidelines for content creators to follow when it comes to the depiction of military insignia



As 2020 draws to a close, it is quite clear that this was the year of over-the-top (OTT) entertainment platforms. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns forced people to stay indoors and stream content on their phones, tablets and smart televisions (TVs). But, as is normal, such dizzying success was accompanied by hurdles, too. One of the objections was over the depiction of military insignia and personnel on OTT shows. While the Armed Forces have often been depicted in Indian films and on TV shows, in recent times some of these portrayals have led to a backlash from a few quarters. This month, the Indian Air Force (IAF) objected to the trailer of a *Netflix* film. Though the movie itself is unrelated to the security forces, the promotion material included a clip of veteran Bollywood actor Anil Kapoor, dressed in an IAF uniform, using a string of expletives. The IAF's official Twitter handle pointed out that the uniform was "inaccurately donned" and that "the language used is inappropriate."

Earlier in June, *ALTBalaji* was panned for an episode of its show 'XXX' where an Army officer's wife is shown to be having an extra-marital affair, with her lover donning her husband's uniform in a steamy scene. A YouTuber filed a police complaint and hashtags like *#AltBalajiInsultsArmy* did the rounds on social media, while several veterans expressed their objection to the show. Perhaps it was this popular sentiment that prompted the Ministry of Defence to declare that web series and film content based on the Indian Armed Forces should be released only after a No Objection Certificate (NOC) is obtained from the Government. It is understandable why the Armed Forces and some retired personnel would be incensed by such content. In their eyes, it damages the public perception of the institution, which is something that most of them take great pride in. However, the bigger question this controversy has thrown up is this: Should the precious time and energy of the Defence Ministry and the Armed Forces, entrusted with the daunting task of protecting the country, be spent on relatively minor issues like these? Instead, isn't it time that India put in place a set of guidelines for content creators to follow when it comes to the depiction of military insignia?

Such a move would be beneficial on three counts. First, content creators would become more sensitive to the need to uphold the honour and prestige of the military and calibrate their artistic freedom accordingly. Often, mistakes in portrayal are not products of malice but simple ignorance of established protocol such as ranks, uniforms and so on. Second, the Army, the Navy and the IAF will not have to expend their energies on comparatively minor issues when India's international borders require their urgent attention. Finally, it will insulate the military from the pressures of populist sentiment.

Worldwide, countries have put in place guidelines on how military insignia can be depicted on screen. Clause 772F of the Title 10 US Code, says that, "While portraying a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or the Marine Corps, an actor in a theatrical or motion picture production may wear the uniform of that armed force if the portrayal does not tend to discredit that armed forces." In Germany, displaying symbols of Nazi rule such as the swastika and the runic insignia of the Schutzstaffel, a paramilitary organisation, is a crime that comes with a three-year prison term. However, Section 86 of the German Criminal Code does allow these to be used to "promote the arts or science, research or teaching, reporting about current or historical events or similar purposes."

A feature common to both, the German and American guidelines is their broad character. Neither of them list precise rules that content creators have to follow nor do they prescribe things they can or cannot show on screen. As a result, these guidelines allow creators to push the boundaries of artistic expression while, at the same time, being sensitive to public sentiment. It is important to balance between institutional pride and constitutional rights that allow free expression within the bounds of the Constitution.

In India, the lack of similar guidelines or protocols means that the Armed Forces and content creators have no common standard to evaluate content by, leading to unpredictability where creators cannot be certain where their creative freedom ends. This is by no means uniquely a product of the OTT era either. Back in 2006, the IAF had objected to certain scenes in the coming-of-age movie '*Rang De Basanti*', despite the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) clearing it for release. A prolonged deadlock ensued during which both sides stuck to their demands and the film's release was delayed. The impasse broke only after Pranab Mukherjee, the then Defence Minister, saw the film. '*Rang De Basanti*' went on to become a major hit, an iconic film for the Indian youth and the incident is long forgotten. However, the moral of that story is still relevant: The Government of India and the Armed Forces are meant to defend the country and not to involve themselves in the business of content creation. Broad guidelines that balance artistic freedom and the sentiments of the military will ensure just that.

(The writer is an Associate at Koan Advisory, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)

WEST BENGAL HAS SLIPPED IN MANY DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS AND BECOME NUMBER ONE IN CORRUPTION, EXTORTION AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE.

—UNION HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH



ACCORDING TO THE NCRB DATA, POLITICAL KILLINGS, OTHER CRIMES AND RAPES HAVE DECREASED DURING THE TMC'S RULE.

—WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE

The future of work

The Work From Home culture and the gig economy that the socio-economic impact of the outbreak has necessitated, are here to stay. Even the Govt is facilitating this transition



The Work From Home (WFH) culture that has become the new normal due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the gig economy that the socio-economic impact of the outbreak has necessitated, are here to stay. Even the Government is facilitating this transition in the workplace. However, this is not the first time that the world is seeing a paradigm shift in work ethics and culture. The intensification of the industrial revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries brought about profound changes. People started leaving their homes and toiling in an outside work environment. This transformation gave birth to a new movement of skilled workers and was the beginning of the 9 AM to 5 PM work schedule in the office. This meant working in an inflexible and regimented environment with tools or equipment provided by an employer.

Despite the advent of work opportunities outside the house, some people still continued to work from their residences. The development of public transportation brought further changes in the office culture as it enabled workers to travel easily. Consequently, the 20th century workforce turned into a commuting one, leading to a rise in employment opportunities in offices and factories engaged in manufacturing and the service economy. In this setting, companies largely controlled the means of production, manufacturing, office equipment and other work staples which were expensive or not portable enough to be utilised by individuals working from their homes.

The nature of office work further changed in the early 20th century with the advent of the telephone, telegraph and typewriter, which were considered as precursors to remote work. Though by the early 1960s a majority of the workforce was a commuting one, the beginning of the '70s saw several key changes that pushed remote work to the forefront. Especially after the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC's) oil embargo and the clean air Act in the US. In view of the high oil prices and shortages, the rise of the information economy, environmental concerns and gridlock commutes, companies began their experiment to formalise remote work for employees.

In fact, *The Washington Post* published an article and suggested that remote work could have eased the gas crisis. The adoption of WFH increased manifold in the late 20th and early 21st century with the emergence of information and communication technologies such as personal computers, the internet, email, broadband connectivity, laptops, smartphones, cloud computing and videotelephony. Remote work is not new in India too. For about two decades it has been in trend in the information technology (IT) industry in the country.

COVID-19 and WFH: Now, when the world is grappling with the COVID-19 outbreak, resilience is being displayed by many employers. They are exploring new ways to ensure seamless ways to continue their business even as the contagion shows no signs of abating. The pandemic has compelled industrialists to think of innovative work solutions in order to get the best out of their employees while keeping them safe. Even though the crisis raises questions on the current work practices, thanks to digital platforms, employees from all over the world have smartly managed their operations remotely.

“THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT HAS ANNOUNCED SIMPLIFIED GUIDELINES FOR OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS LIKE BPOs, KNOWLEDGE PROCESS OUTSOURCING AND ITES AMONG OTHERS TO REDUCE THE COMPLIANCE BURDEN FOR THE INDUSTRY AND FACILITATE WFH AND 'WORK FROM ANYWHERE'. THE GOVERNMENT HAS REMOVED SEVERAL REPORTING AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCES FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS SUCH AS DEPOSIT OF BANK GUARANTEES, REQUIREMENT FOR A STATIC INTERNET PROTOCOL ADDRESS, PUBLICATION OF NETWORK DIAGRAM AND PENAL PROVISIONS”



This can be seen as both, a return to the pre-industrial revolution work routines and advancement towards the future of work. According to the International Labour Organisation, around 68 per cent of the world's total workforce, including 81 per cent employers, are currently living in countries with recommended or required workplace closures.

According to the job search site Indeed, since the outbreak, searches for remote work have increased by over 261 per cent. Similarly on LinkedIn, remote job posting nearly tripled since March, ranging from 1.5 times in Canada to 4.9 times in Brazil. Another global research report by Lenovo revealed that 72 per cent of the respondents globally agreed that they would WFH more than they did before the health emergency hit. HFS Research reports that the global IT industry showed a remarkable shift in the way it operated by enabling over 75 per cent of the workforce to WFH. It ranges from 62 per cent in the Philippines, 72 per cent in the UK, 77 per cent in India to 93 per cent in China.

Similarly, as per the Lenovo survey, 81 per cent of the respondents from India agreed to shift to WFH after the pandemic abates. An Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) report reveals that 74 per cent of regular workers would like to continue with some form of a WFH arrangement in a post-Corona world. The survey results show that around half of the remote workers in the country are from the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and the Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) sector followed by IT-software, education, e-commerce, publishing, banking, financial services and

the insurance sectors. Since the beginning of the lockdown in March, almost 90 per cent of the 4.3 million IT/BPO/ITES sector workforce moved to the WFH model in India.

Advantages: Remote working and the virtual way of life have benefited employees, employers and all stakeholders, allowing them to pause, think, and balance their work, social, physical, mental and digital wellness. The employers' benefit is in the reduction or elimination of real estate costs. They can hire and use talent globally while mitigating immigration issues. Firms reap productivity gains while workers are enjoying geographical flexibility which eliminates commutes, giving them a better work-life balance.

In particular, flexible workspaces allow women to restore a work-life balance. A study published in the *Lancet* found that WFH not only benefits public health but also helps with sustainable travel. It helps cities lower their carbon footprint and reduces traffic congestions that lead to air pollution. As a result, employees and employers are spared many of the hidden costs associated with going to the workplace.

Disadvantages: However, as in all things, there is a flip side of the coin too. WFH poses the unique challenges of social and professional isolation, technological issues, monitoring and evaluation of work, the quality of virtual interactions, feedback from clients and colleagues. The people working from home are vulnerable to longer working hours, frequent interruptions, cyber security challenges, lack of peer support, lack of motivation for team work and in some cases even greater stress. Lack of a proper work space at home too has created problems for some, while inappropriate working conditions

led to health issues for others. Face-to-face interaction vital to nurturing relationships and facilitating collaboration, has been absent, leading to reduced mental well-being. It is harder in industries that require physical location or presence for manufacturing activities. WFH is least suitable for drivers, construction workers, shop sales professionals and domestic helpers, as their occupations requires high human proximity.

The way forward: The Indian Government has announced simplified guidelines for other service providers like BPOs, Knowledge Process Outsourcing and ITES among others to reduce the compliance burden for the industry and facilitate WFH and 'Work from Anywhere'.

The Government has removed several reporting and regulatory compliances for service providers such as deposit of bank guarantees, requirement for a static Internet Protocol address, publication of the network diagram and penal provisions.

According to the Labour Secretary, the Ministry proposes to frame guidelines for workers employed in the services sector, such as work flexibility and an explicit WFH provision for companies. These steps are important for the future of work, not only in the IT sector but for other service sectors, too. This would help to promote a new work culture and provide the much-needed boost to the emerging gig economy, which has a huge potential to generate new employment opportunities for the unemployed men and women in India.

(Balwant is Senior Faculty at the IHD and Nidhi is Director at The Vision, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

Justice delayed is justice denied

What prevents our courts from speeding up the litigation process and coming to a conclusion within months of a case being filed?



With the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Special Court Judge K Sanal Kumar pronouncing the verdict in the Sister Abhaya murder case in Thiruvananthapuram, sentencing Sephy and Thomas Kottoor to life imprisonment, an important chapter in this sensational murder case has been closed. However, this is just temporary as the accused are likely to appeal against the verdict in the Kerala High Court and then in the Supreme Court.

It was a drawn out case because Sister Abhaya, a novitiate in the Saint

Pius X Convent at Kottayam in Kerala, was found dead under mysterious circumstances in a well on the convent premises on the morning of March 27, 1992. The Kerala Police which probed the case initially, concluded that it was a clear case of suicide. To substantiate their findings, police officials alleged that Abhaya was from a family which was prone to mental distress and which had a history of suicides. Though it has been more than 28 years since Abhaya was found dead, no journalist could substantiate the claims of the Kerala Police. Apart from pronouncing the death as suicide, the local police as well as the Crime Branch unit were competing with each other to destroy the evidence. A local photographer who was hired by the police to take the pictures of Abhaya's body destroyed irrevocably most of the photographs which showed nail marks on her neck.

A murder which took place in 1992 has come to a conclusion after nearly three decades thanks to the

perseverance of two individuals, Joemon Puthenpurackal, a social activist, and Raju, a petty thief who witnessed the entire drama live while hiding in a tree in the convent.

A lot could be written about Abhaya's murder but the issue before us should not be confined to this case alone. There is a dictum "justice delayed is justice denied." If we follow this principle, Abhaya has been denied justice. Not only Abhaya, there are thousands of people in India who have been denied justice. What prevents our courts from speeding up the litigation process and coming to a conclusion within months of a case being filed?

The first time I heard a speech by Narendra Modi was in January 2009 when he flew down to Chennai to deliver a keynote address at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. Modi, who was the Chief Minister of Gujarat at that time, centred his speech more on the development initiatives his Government was taking. He had said that his mission was to ensure a

"zero backlog" of cases in all courts in the State by 2010. It is hard to tell what the current situation in Gujarat courts is. But if instances like the Abhaya murder case are any indication, India is light years away from reaching a zero backlog. This has had a detrimental impact on the lives of many.

A prime example of this is the case of the late MKK Nair. The senior bureaucrat, who belonged to the first batch of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers in the country, had his wonderful career cut short by fake cases slapped against him by a CBI officer in Kerala.

Eventually, the trial court found that all charges against Nair were trumped-up but the damage had been done by then. Nair should have retired as a Cabinet Secretary in 1977; instead, he was suspended from service in 1973. It took more than a decade for the court to acquit him of all charges. It cannot be said that he got justice. Plus, the country lost the

services of a visionary who was the architect of Udyogmandal in Kerala that contributed a lot to the Green Revolution.

Similarly, AIADMK candidate Manoj Pandian, a legal luminary who contested the Assembly election from Cheranmahadevi constituency in 2006, was defeated by P Veldurai of the Indian National Congress. Pandian challenged the election in the court and it took five years for the apex court to declare Veldurai's election as illegal, null and void. The verdict came on the day when the people of Tamil Nadu were on their way to elect the new Assembly!

In the 2009 election, P Chidambaram, the Congress candidate from the Sivaganga Lok Sabha constituency, was declared defeated initially. But the counting was stopped for a few hours and then it was announced by the Returning Officer that he had won the election, defeating his nearest rival Raja Kannappan by 3,000 votes. Though Kannappan challenged the result in the Madras

High Court immediately after the poll, the Madras High Court is yet to pronounce the verdict, though the country witnessed two Lok Sabha elections (2014 and 2019) since then.

However, it is not just cases related to elections that get delayed in the courts. What happened to the 2G Spectrum Scam which was broken by *The Pioneer* in 2007? The Coalgate scam? *The National Herald* case initiated by Subramanian Swamy or the illegal telephone exchange case? Why are we plagued by this inordinate delay in our courts? It is no wonder that kangaroo courts are flourishing in Tamil Nadu and even people who have reached the age of superannuation have enrolled as students in law colleges in and around Chennai. It is a sad state of affairs that justice keeps on getting delayed and hence denied in the country. Hopefully, the new year will bring a renewed effort to clear the backlog of court cases in India.

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



A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

The High Court was correct to halt a disturbing trend among clinicians in the UK to assume those as young as 10 were fit to make life-altering decisions about gender identity. Children are not pawns to be deployed in adult debates about identity. Keira Bell's bravery has paved the way for a verdict that gives children the protection they deserve.

(Observer editorial)

Prachanda picked as parliamentary leader

Kathmandu: Nepal Communist Party's executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' was on Wednesday elected as the ruling party's new parliamentary leader, replacing Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.

The 66-year-old leader's nomination was proposed by senior leader Madhav Kumar Nepal, who was earlier named as one of the two chairmen of the party, at a parliamentary party meeting of the Prachanda-led faction at the Parliament Building in New Baneshwar, My Republica reported.

Oli, 68, was removed from the post of party's chairman on Tuesday by a central committee meeting of the Prachanda-led faction, which also decided to take disciplinary action against him for dissolving the House of Representatives



unconstitutionally. Prachanda said that his first priority would be to restore the dissolved House of Representatives and form a new government. "I will unify all the democratic forces and political parties to keep the hard-won political system and parliament lively and functioning," he said. He thanked lawmakers for electing him as the parliamentary leader and said that he has been handed over a huge responsibility during this chal-

Nepal's apex court forwards petitions against Parl dissolution to Constitutional bench

Kathmandu: Nepal's Supreme Court on Wednesday forwarded all writ petitions challenging Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's move to abruptly dissolve the Parliament to a Constitutional bench, amid intensified struggle between the two warring factions of the Nepal Communist Party to wrest control of the ruling party.

Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana's single bench passed the order after a preliminary hearing on the 12 different writ petitions filed against the dissolution of the House of Representatives, according to court sources.

The Constitutional bench will start the hearing on Friday. The bench is led by Chief Justice Rana and will have four

other justices who will be picked by him. During the preliminary hearings on Wednesday, senior lawyers citing Constitutional provisions argued that Prime Minister Oli has no right to dissolve the House so long as there is a possibility of forming an alternative government. It was a coup against the Constitution itself, said senior advocate Dinesh Tripathi, one of the petitioners. As per the Constitution, if the majority government is dissolved, there is a provision to form an alternative government by two or more political parties and a minority government could also be formed before going to the people for fresh mandate, he pointed out. **PTI**

Silent protest held in Lanka over cremation of Muslim victims of coronavirus

Colombo: A silent protest was held in Sri Lanka's capital Colombo against the government's policy of cremating the bodies of Muslim victims of COVID-19 pandemic despite the World Health Organisation (WHO) approving burials. Sajith Premadasa, the main Opposition leader, led the protest, which was also attended by civil society groups. Muslim groups allege their community's coronavirus victims were being forcefully cremated against their religious belief. They say some of them have been buried secretly. The process of cremation is forbidden within Islam and Judaism, which require members of the faiths to be buried. The authorities claim that burials may lead to further spread of the pandemic. The Government has appointed an experts' panel to make recommendations on the issue of burials, but it has yet to come up with any recommendations even after 9 months, the Muslim civil society groups say. **PTI**



Smoke rises from a fire at Lipa migrant camp in Bosnia on Wednesday **AP**

UK mulls even tighter curbs as Covid infections hit record figure

London: More parts of the UK could be placed under the strictest level of lockdown as ministers hold talks on Wednesday after the country registered 36,804 positive coronavirus cases, the largest daily number of infections recorded at any time during the pandemic. UK Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick said the new mutation of coronavirus is behind the spike to a large extent but it remains "very concentrated" in London and the south-east of England, where Tier 4 stay-at-home lockdown measures are already in place. "The new variant is much less prevalent elsewhere, but there is rising evidence that you can find it in a range of other parts of the country. So the question is, whether we should take action to try to head that off," he explained. "The tiered system was designed before we knew the full ferocity of the new variant, and so we do have to make sure it's sufficiently robust to be able to withstand this and to stop cases just rising at the very worrying levels they are now in parts of the country," he said.



A delivery rider cycles down an unusually quiet South Molton Street in London on Wednesday **AP**

It comes as the new variant, named VUI-202012/01 and with much higher transmissibility, led to several countries including India cutting off transport links with the UK in an effort to try and contain its spread outside Britain. The backlog of lorries built up on the UK border with France has now begun to gradually clear up after an agreement was reached. France agreed to lift its ban on UK arrivals on the condition of a negative coronavirus test. However, there have been reports of scuffles on the UK-France border as truckers face days ahead before the nearly

1,500 lorries can start moving towards their destinations. During what is an annual festive and holiday period in the UK with Christmas and New Year, millions in the country have had their plans to meet friends and family scuppered after UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson abandoned a planned five-day "Christmas bubble" as scientists confirmed the new Covid variant was spreading more rapidly. Under the revised rules, only people living in tiers one to three are permitted to socialise in a bubble of three households on December 25 for Christmas Day. **PTI**

Violence a threat ahead of Central African Republic's vote

Bangui (Central African Republic): Violence threatens Central African Republic's presidential and legislative elections on Sunday, and some opposition candidates have pulled out of the race amid growing insecurity. President Faustin Archange Touadera and his party say the vote will go ahead after government forces clashed with rebels in recent days as the United Nations' peacekeeping force tried to prevent a block-ade of Bangui, the capital. Rwanda, which sent in soldiers after its peacekeepers came under threat, and Central African Republic have blamed

the confrontation on former President Francois Bozize, alleging an attempted power grab ahead of a vote from which he is barred from participating. Russian forces also have arrived to help with security. Parties in the Democratic Opposition Coalition known as COD-2020 this week said seven of its candidates will pull out of the election, citing the violence. The parties had wanted the vote to be delayed, alleging poor preparations and an electoral body influenced by the president. A delay would allow more time to work toward a national unity government, the parties said.

Experts warn of a strong chance of further violence if the opposition doesn't accept the election results. "A contested outcome may lead to a post-electoral crisis that armed groups could use to further weaken the state," the International Crisis Group noted. Sixteen candidates are running for president, including three women and Touadera. There are more than 1,500 candidates for 140 seats in the national assembly. More than 1.86 million voters are registered, but more than 598,000 refugees in neighboring countries will not vote, according to the UN. **AP**

200 Chinese nationals moved amid violence in Central African Republic

AP ■ BEIJING still sporadic gunfire. The conflict followed a December 3 court decision to bar former President Francois Bozize from participating presidential and legislative elections on Sunday. Bozize, in response, gathered rebel groups to march on the capital city Bangui. They have been engaged in conflict with government forces in the Yaloke area since December 15, according to the embassy statement.

UAE Islamic body OK's vaccines even with pork

AP ■ DUBAI The United Arab Emirates' highest Islamic authority, the UAE Fatwa Council, has ruled that coronavirus vaccines are permissible for Muslims even if they contain pork gelatin. The ruling follows growing alarm that the use of pork gelatin, a common vaccine ingredient, may hamper vaccination among Muslims who consider the consumption of pork products "haram", or forbidden under Islamic law.

SEARCH FOR MISSING



VEERPAL RAWAT

General public is hereby informed that a person (depicted in the photo), **Namely:** Veerpal Rawat **S/o** Sh. Dhan Singh **R/o** H. No. 1160, Gali No. 40, Kaushik Enclave, Burari Delhi has been missing since 22.11.2020 from his house. In this regard a case vide DD No. 70A dated 11.12.2020 has been lodged at Police Station Burari, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Age: 35 Years, **Height:** 5'6", **Complexion:** Fair, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Strong, **Wearing:** White colour shirt and Black colour pant and black colour shoe in feet.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing person, may inform SHO, Burari, Delhi at E-mail Id - **cic@cbi.gov.in** or Website: **http://cbi.nic.in**

Phone: **SHO**
011-24368638, 24368641 P.S. Burari, Delhi
Fax No. 011-24368639 North Distt., Delhi
Ph. No. 011-27616844, 27616845

DP/797/N/2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED PERSON



Taufik

General public is hereby informed that this person namely Taufik S/o Jahir R/o H.No. 236, Gali No. 13, Kamruddin Nagar, Nangloi, Delhi **Age :** 23 years, **Complexion :** Sallow, **Height :** 5'2", **Face :** Round, wearing white shirt, blue colour pant and hawai chappal in feet, has been missing/ kidnapped since 29.10.2020 from the area of P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 05-A dated 30.10.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing/kidnapped person may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: **cic@cbi.gov.in** **SHO : P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi,**
Website: **http://cbi.nic.in** **Ph. : 011-25946700,**
Fax: **24368639,** **25946710**
Tel.: **24368638/24368641**

DP/558/OD/20

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY



General Public is hereby informed that one person **Namely: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, Address: Unknown,** was found dead on Pavement, near Metro Station Gate No. 3, Asaf Ali Road, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, Delhi, on 13.12.2020 in the area of P.S. Darya Ganj, Delhi. The body has been preserved in Lok Nayak Jay Prakash Hospital's Mortuary, Delhi for 72 hours.

In this regard a case has been lodged vide **FIR No. 40A, U/s 174 Cr.P.C. dated 13.12.2020** at P.S. Darya Ganj, Delhi. The description of the dead person is as under:- **Age:** About 50 years, **Sex:** Male, **Height:** 5'2", **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Oval, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Blue & green colour sweater, cream colour half jacket and brown colour pant. If any one having any information about this dead person please inform undersigned.

SHO
PS. Darya Ganj, Delhi
DP/567/CD/2020 **Ph.: 011-23279331, 8750870421**

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Salim, S/o Yasim, R/o:** D-10, Block-D, Azad Colony, Budh Vihar, Phase-II, New Delhi, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 53/19 u/s 33/58 Delhi Excise Act**, registered at P.S. Alipur, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued (unexecuted), stating that the said **Salim** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Salim** has absconded (or is concealing him self to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proceeding u/s 82 Cr.P.C. has been initiated in this case. Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Salim** accused of **FIR No. 53/19 u/s 33/58 Delhi Excise Act**, P.S. Alipur, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer said complaint on or before **05.02.2021**.

By Order
Sh. Satvir Singh lamba
Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (North),
Room No. 115, First Floor,
Rohini Court, Delhi

DP/666/ON/2020

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male **Namely: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age:** about 55-60 years, **Height:** 5' 6", **Complexion:** Fair, **Face:** Round, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Grey colour pant and jacket, who was found at St. Stephen Footpath Church, CM Road, Fathepuri, Delhi. In this regard a case **DD No. 11A Dated 14.12.2020** has been registered at **P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi**.

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

Sd/- SHO
DP/806/N/2020(UIDB) P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi
Tel.: 011-23953776, 23958234

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Bhawana D/o Rambir Singh R/o** H.No. 28, Gali No. 9, Sainik Enclave, Mohan Garden, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped from the area of PS: Ranhola since 01.10.2020. In this regard, a case **DD No. 157-A dated 05.10.2020** has been registered at **P.S. Ranhola, Delhi**. The description of the missing girl is as under.

Age: 19 years, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Height:** 5' 2", **Built:** Medium, **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** Yellow Top-Pajami and Hawai chapple in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing/kidnapped girl then please inform P.S. Ranhola, Delhi at following Tel No./ e-mail: **cic@cbi.gov.in** and Website: **http://cbi.nic.in**

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 Sd/- S.H.O.
Fax No. 011-24368639 P.S. Ranhola, Delhi
DP/472/OD/2020 **Phone: 011-28363001, 28363002**



BHAWANA

HONG KONG

Jimmy Lai granted bail

Hong Kong: Hong Kong media tycoon Jimmy Lai was granted bail on Wednesday, nearly three weeks after he was remanded in custody over fraud and national security-related charges. Lai, an outspoken advocate for democracy in Hong Kong, was charged with fraud on December 3 for allegedly violating the lease terms for office space for his media company, Next Digital. He was later charged again on December 12 under the national security law, on suspicion of colluding with foreign forces and endangering national security. Lai is among a recent string of pro-democracy activists and supporters arrested by Hong Kong police in recent months, prompting concerns that Hong Kong is cracking down on dissent following Beijing's imposition of a national security law on the semi-autonomous Chinese territory in June. He appeared in court on Wednesday and was released on bail of 10 million Hong Kong dollars (\$1.3 million). He had been kept behind bars since December 3. **AP**

Trump pardons 15, commutes 5 sentences, including GOP allies

Washington: President Donald Trump has pardoned 15 people, including a pair of congressional Republicans who were strong and early supporters, a 2016 campaign official ensnared in the Russia probe and former government contractors convicted in a 2007 massacre in Baghdad. Trump's actions in his final weeks in office show a president who is wielding his executive power to reward loyalists and others who he believes have been wronged by a legal system he sees as biased against him and his allies. On Tuesday, Trump issued the pardons - not an unusual act for an outgoing president - even as he refused to publicly acknowledge his election loss to Democrat Joe Biden, who will be sworn in on Jan. 20. Trump is likely to issue more pardons before then. He and his allies have discussed a range of other possibilities, including members of Trump's family and his personal attorney Rudy Giuliani. **AP**



him and his allies. On Tuesday, Trump issued the pardons - not an unusual act for an outgoing president - even as he refused to publicly acknowledge his election loss to Democrat Joe Biden, who will be sworn in on Jan. 20. Trump is likely to issue more pardons before then. He and his allies have discussed a range of other possibilities, including members of Trump's family and his personal attorney Rudy Giuliani. **AP**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to the general public that my client, **Sh. Mahesh Chand S/o Late Sh. Hari Singh** aged about 70 years **R/o H.No.273, Gagan Vihar, Block-D, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201005**, has disowned his son **Jatin Kumar Arish** and his wife **Kavita** from his moveable and immovable properties and severed his relationship with them as a result of sufferings and harassment due to unsocial, aggressive and inhuman act & behavior of his abovementioned son and his wife. If anybody keeps any relation or deals with them, in any manner whatsoever, he would be doing solely at his own risk and consequences and my client shall not be responsible for the act of **Jatin Kumar Arish** and his wife **Kavita**.

Ashek Thagel (Advocate)
Ch.No.477 (LGF), Civil Wing, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice Is Hereby Given That, **Sanjeev Kumar Goel, S/d/w/o Kanwar Bhan Goel, C8/15 Model Town-iii New Delhi-110009** Have Lost My Original Sale Deed Dt.27/09/1965 By **Sh. Bhagwan Singh S/o S. Sahib Singh In Favour Of Shri Rati Ram S/o Shri Phool Chand. Registration No.11933.addl.book No-I, Volume No-1405 On Pages 60 To 62, property Address C8/15 Model Town-iii New Delhi-11000** If Found Pls Contact - **9810010625**

Notice Inviting e-Tender

No.SSA/IE/Pre-Primary/Ka-sreni/224/2020/3559 Date: 22.12.2020

Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites tender through e-Tendering process from reputed manufacturer of manufacturer of Play materials for supply of Play materials.

To participate in the tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal **https://assamtenders.gov.in** by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website **https://assamtenders.gov.in**, with proof of payment of non refundable tender processing fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/Scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

Sd/-Executive Director, SSA, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Janasanyog No. CF/3484/20

UJVN Limited

H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephone: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2763508
CIN No. U40101UR2001SC022866, Website: **www.ujvn.com**

R.O. No.:845 Tender Notice Date: 23.12.2020

Office of the Executive Engineer (Generation) Chibro Power House, Chibro, invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:-

Tender No. 18/EE(G)/CPH/2020-21 for "Annual maintenance of generator and associated equipment of unit-3 at Chibro Power House. Estimated cost: Rs. 5,67,656/- GST Extra. Date of availability of tender on website: 23-12-2020 from 11:00 Hrs. Last date for submission of tender 15-01-2021 up to 15:00 Hrs. For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website **www.ujvn.com**

EE(G), Chibro

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No-23, Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited 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 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower 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 in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Kanhai Lal/ Varun Gupta LBGUR00003218096	FF-74, First Floor, SS Omnia, SS City, Sec- 86 Gurgaon 122001 Haryana/ December 21, 2020	August 31, 2019 Rs. 1232526/-	Delhi/ Ncr
2.	Yatinder Sharma LBDEL00002982538	Flat No. 2366, 23rd Floor, Mahagunpuram Phase- 2, MIG- 1 Block Kaveri, Village Dasna Mehrauli, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh/ December 22, 2020	June 29, 2019 Rs. 2548244/-	Delhi/ Ncr

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day 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.

Date : 24-12-2020
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

₹50L/m turnover firms to pay 1% GST in cash

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Businesses with monthly turnover of over ₹50 lakh will have to mandatorily pay at least 1 per cent of their GST liability in cash, the Finance Ministry said as it moved to curb evasion by fake invoicing.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has introduced Rule 86B in Goods and Services Tax (GST) rules which restricts use of input tax credit (ITC) for discharging GST liability to 99 per cent.

“... The registered person shall not use the amount available in electronic credit ledger to discharge his liability towards output tax in excess of 99 per cent of tax liability, in cases where the value of taxable supply ... In a month exceeds ₹ 50 lakh,” the CBIC said.

While calculating the turnover threshold, sales from GST exempt goods and zero rates supply would not be

included.

However, this restriction will not apply where the managing director or any partner have paid more than ₹1 lakh as income tax or the registered person has received a refund amount of more than ₹1 lakh in the preceding financial year on account of unutilised input tax credit.

EY Tax Partner Abhishek Jain said the government has put restrictions on seamless input credit utilisation with introduction of Rule 89B, which blocks utilisation of ITC beyond 99 per cent of the output liability, for businesses having taxable turnover of more than Rs 50 lakh per month.

“With the government providing reasonable exceptions to this rule, the idea remains to prevent misutilisation of credit by businesses taking fake credits,” Jain added.

Further, the CBIC has amended GST rules restricting filing of outward supply details

in GSTR-1 for business that have not paid tax for the past periods by filing GSTR 3B.

So far, until now, non-filing of GSTR 3B resulted in blockage of e-way bill but will now result in GSTR 1 blockage as well.

Abhishek Jain, Tax Partner, EY said, “The government has now restricted filing of outward supply details in GSTR 1 return for businesses who have not paid tax for the past periods by filing GSTR 3B.

“The government’s idea here seems to be to curb input tax credit passing by businesses which have otherwise not paid their GST liability,” Jain added.

AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said, “These changes indicate that government is grappling with lower tax collections and high tax evasions, burden of which will again be on honest taxpayers”.

RETRO TAX ARBITRATION

India ordered to pay up to \$1.4 bn to Cairn Energy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has been ordered to return up to USD 1.4 billion to Cairn Energy plc of UK after an international arbitration overturned tax demanded retrospectively - an award the government indicated it may challenge.

The three-member tribunal, which also comprised of a nominee of the Indian government, unanimously ruled that India’s claim of ₹10,247 crore in past taxes over a 2006-07 internal reorganisation of Cairn’s India business was not a valid demand.

India, it said, “failed to accord the Claimants’ (Cairn Energy’s) investments fair and equitable treatment” under the bilateral investment protection pact the nation had with the UK, it said in a 582-page order.

The tribunal ordered the government to desist from seeking such a tax and return

the value of shares it had sold, dividends seized and tax refunds withheld to recover the tax demand.

The government was asked to compensate Cairn “for the total harm suffered” together with interest and cost of arbitration, according to the order. While the order does not contain a provision for challenge or appeal against the award, the government said it will study the arbitration award and “will consider all options and take a decision on the further course of action, including legal remedies before appropriate fora.” Cairn, according to people aware of the matter, can use the arbitration award to approach courts in countries such as the UK to seize any property owned by India has overseas to recover the money if the award is not honoured.

In a statement, Cairn Energy said it had been awarded USD 1.2 billion damages

plus interest and costs.

Sources said including USD 200 million of interest and USD 22 million of arbitration cost, the total amount payable by the Indian government is USD 1.4 billion (about Rs 10,500 crore).

This is the second loss the government has suffered in three months over the retrospective levy of taxes. In September, UK’s Vodafone Group won an international arbitration against the demand of Rs 22,100 crore in taxes.

However, Cairn was the only company against which the government took action to recover retrospective taxes. During the pendency of the arbitration, the government sold Cairn’s near 5 per cent holding in Vedanta Ltd, seized dividends totalling Rs 1,140 crore due to it from those shareholdings and set off a Rs 1,590-crore tax refund against the demand.

Benchmarks extend gains for 2nd day; IT, FMCG stocks sparkle

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex and Nifty defied gravity for the second straight session on Wednesday as investors scooped up IT and FMCG shares amid a firm trend in global markets.

A recovering rupee and global drugmakers’ assertion that their Covid-19 vaccines will work against a new coronavirus strain the UK further shored up investor confidence, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rallied 437.49 points or 0.95 per cent to close at 46,444.18. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty surged 134.80 points or 1 per cent to 13,601.10. HUL was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, spurring 2.67 per cent, followed by Infosys, M&M, SBI, ITC, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints, Bharti Airtel and TCS. Only four index components closed lower -- Titan, PowerGrid, NTPC and HDFC, shedding up to 0.81 per cent.

Global markets were largely positive after drug companies like BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca exuded confidence that their COVID-19 vaccines will be effective

against the new virus strain reported in the UK.

However, gains were capped after US President Donald Trump hinted at vetoing the USD 900 billion economic aid package passed by the Congress due to the “ridiculously low” USD 600 aid for individuals.

₹ snaps 2-day losing streak, closes up by 8 paise at 73.76

Mumbai:The rupee snapped its two-day losing streak to settle higher by 8 paise at 73.76 against the US dollar on Wednesday, tracking strong domestic equities and sustained foreign fund inflows.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 73.89 against the greenback and witnessed an intraday high of 73.73 and a low of 73.90.

RBI Guv asks banks to strengthen lending capacity by raising capital

PTI ■ MUMBAI

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has asked banks to take proactive measures to strengthen their resilience and lending capacity by raising capital, the central bank said in a statement on Wednesday.

During a two-day meeting with heads of banks, including the private sector lenders, the governor emphasised on the need to remain vigilant and make provisions against bad loans proactively.

Das had held similar meetings in May as well. He had also met with representatives of other financial institutions like NBFCs and microfinance lenders.

The RBI, in its statement,

said Das held meetings with the MD & CEOs of public sector banks and select private sector lenders on Tuesday and Wednesday, respectively, through video conferencing.

The meetings were also attended by the RBI’s deputy governors.

During the meetings, Das touched upon the current economic situation and emphasised on the importance of the banking sector in supporting the ongoing revival in economic activities, RBI said.

With specific reference to the financial sector, he highlighted the measures taken by the central bank since the onset of the pandemic to stabilise the economy and ensure financial stability.

Economic recovery, demand revival spark 2021 hopes for steel sector

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Recovering economy, sprouting demand and improving prices raise hopes for the country’s battered steel sector as it steps into the new year after pandemic-induced disruptions turned 2020 into a “disaster” for the industry.

As the sector experiences signs of better times, the apex body of domestic steel makers, ISA, expects good days ahead and surely no more outbreak like that of coronavirus infections. The Indian steel industry grappled with tough times in running their operations as well as witnessed a sharp plunge in demand for steel soon after the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdowns disrupted overall economic activities.

Adverse market conditions forced steelmakers to cut down their operations by up to 50 per cent in April. There was a shortage of manpower as many workers migrated to their native places amid the lockdown as well as limitations on the number of staff working at an office or site after gradual unlocking. The nationwide lockdown came into force in late March and the relaxations began in a phased manner only in June. While terming 2020 as a “catastrophe” for the steel industry, Indian Steel Association (ISA) Deputy Secretary-General Arnab Hazra said there is a revival in demand now which will continue to grow in 2021.

FM wraps up pre-Budget consultations, over 170 take part in 15 virtual meetings

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday concluded pre-budget consultation meetings for budget 2021-22 held in virtual mode.

More than 170 invitees representing 9 stakeholder groups participated in 15 meetings scheduled between December 14 and 23.

The stakeholder groups include financial and capital markets; health, education and rural development; water and sanitation; trade union and

labour organisations; industry, services and trade; infrastructure, energy and climate change sector; agriculture and agro-processing industry; industrialists; and economists.

Union Minister of State for Finance & Corporate Affairs Anurag Singh Thakur, Finance Secretary A.B. Pandey; Secretary, DIPAM, Tuhin Kanta Pandey; Secretary, Expenditure

T.V. Somanathan; Secretary, DEA, Tarun Bajaj; Chief Economic Advisor Krishnamurthy Subramanian

and senior officers from Ministry of Finance and other Ministries also participated in the meetings.

The stakeholder groups made several suggestions on various subjects that included fiscal policy, including taxation; bond markets; insurance; infrastructure spending; health and education budget; social protection; skilling; water harvesting and conservation; sanitation; MGNREGS; public distribution system; ease of doing business; production linked investment scheme, exports.

Piaggio India launches Aprilia SXR 160 at ₹ 1.26L

New Delhi:Piaggio India on Wednesday launched its premium scooter Aprilia SXR 160 priced at ₹1.26 lakh (ex-showroom Pune).The model can be booked for an initial amount of ₹ 5,000 across all dealerships in India and online on apriliaindia.Com, the company said in a statement. The premium scooter is powered by a single-cylinder, 4-stroke engine that produces peak power of 11 PS at 7100 RPM. It comes with a fuel tank capacity of seven litres.

Govt’s decision for 20-year DTH licence to provide certainty to industry: Tata Sky

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Leading direct-to-home (DTH) player Tata Sky on Wednesday said the government’s decision to grant licences to the operators for a longer 20 years would provide certainty to the industry. The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a revision in the guidelines for providing DTH services in the country under which licences would be issued for 20 years.

Currently, the licence is valid for 10 years for DTH players.

“We are grateful to (Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash) Javadekar, for resolving the long-standing impasse on the DTH Licence policy which will provide certainty to the industry,” Tata Sky Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Harit Nagpal told PTI.

However, he also said the DTH industry is looking at a level-playing field with the parity of licence fee with cable TV.

“We look forward to a level-playing field via parity of the licence fee with cable TV, which is also licensed by (the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) and follows the same prices and margins as regulated by Trai’s NTO (new tariff order),” he said.

Changes have also been approved for 100 per cent foreign direct investment limit in the industry. Till now, the FDI was limited to 49 per cent, Javadekar said during a media briefing.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) was consulted in this regard, he added.

While the commerce ministry had spoken of 100 per cent FDI in the DTH industry, the guidelines of the ministry needed to be changed.

According to a report by sectoral regulator Trai, the DTH industry has an active subscriber base of 72.44 million paying customers in the quarter ended March 31.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
Office of the Executive Engineer
Quality Control & Procurement Division,
HMT, Srinagar

TENDER DOCUMENT
e-N.I.T. No.-PHE/QC&PD/ 29/e-Tender Dated: 21-12-2020
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir UT, e-Tenders are invited on item rate basis in two covers (details recorded in tender document) from Registered Original Manufacturers or their sole authorized distributor/dealer as per specifications / details annexed to the e-NIT.
SubjectOf Supply: Supply Of Water Testing Chemicals/Reagents For Establishment Of State Level Water Testing Laboratory Of Kashmir PHE Jal Shakti Department At HMT Zainakote Srinagar from Registered Original Manufacturers or their sole authorized distributor/dealer.
Schedule of Critical Dates/Information.
General
Client Name : Chief Engineer, Kashmir PHE, Jal Shakti Deptt. Srinagar.
Circle : Superintending Engineer, PHE Mechanical, Jal Shakti Department, Circle South, Srinagar.
Division : Quality Control & Procurement Division PHE Jal Shakti Department, HMT Srinagar.
Bidding Type : Open
Amount Details
Estimated Cost : Rs 14.15 Lakhs Approx. (Rupee Forteen Lakhs Fifteen Thousand only)
Bid Document Fee (Non Refundable) : Rs 500.00 in the shape of treasury Challan/ e-transfer to J&K Bank A/c No:0005010100005110 IFSC: JAKA0CHINAR
Bid document fee payable in the shape of treasury Challan/ e-transfer under major Head MH-0215-Rev-Misc to: Executive Engineer QC&PD PHE Jal Shakti HMT Srinagar.
e-mail: xenmandp@gmail.com
Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) : Rs. 28,000/= (Rupee Twenty Eight Thousand only) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG from nationalized banks only having a branch in Srinagar.
Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) in favour of : Chief Accounts Officer, Jal Shakti Kashmir PHE Department, Srinagar.
Tender Dates
Bid Document Downloading Start Date.: 22-12-2020.....09.00 AM
Bid Document Downloading End Date.: 11-01-2021.....04.00 PM
Clarification Start Date : 24-12-2020.....09.00 AM
Clarification End Date : 07-01-2021.....04.00 PM
On Line Bid Submission Start Date : 24-12-2020.....09.00 AM
Bid Submission End Date : 11-01-2021.....06.00 AM
Date of opening of Cover 1st.: 12-01-2021.....02.00 PM
Bid Validity Period : 180 days from opening of the Price Bid.
Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Engineer QC&PD PHE Jal Shakti HMT Srinagar payable at Srinagar.
Bid opening Authority : Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti Kashmir PHE Deptt. Srinagar.
Address : Engineering Complex, Near Silk Factory, Raj Bagh Srinagar Kashmir -190001. (E-mail: kmrphed@gmail.com)
The tenders of qualifying/eligibility criteria, consisting of general and commercial terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in
The bids shall be submitted in electronic format on the website www.jktenders.gov.in. The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time, will be opened on the time and date (given in the critical date schedule), in the office of the **Chief Engineer Jal Shakti Kashmir PHE Deptt. Srinagar** in presence of the bidders who wish to be present. In case offices happen to be closed due to a holiday, or any other reason/s, on the schedule date of opening - the bids will be opened on the next working day at the scheduled time and venue or on any day convenient/feasible to the tender opening committee/authority of the Department.

No. D/PK-10774/20
Dated: 22-12-2020

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Jal Shakti (PHE) QC&PD HMT Srinagar.

GUJARAT WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD.
SECTOR-10/A, GANDHINAGAR

BRIEF SHORT NOTICE INVITING ON LINE TENDER FOR FIX QUANTITY CONTRACT OF PVC PIPE FOR THE YEAR 2021
GWSSB invites online tender through e-tendering of Fix Quantity contract for Manufacture. Supply & Delivery of Ring Fit PVC pipes (63 to 315mm Dia) with ISI Mark 859.40 MT Estimated amt. Rs. 1 149.73 Lacs (with GST), from approved vendors or approved vendors whose validity Expired & had applied for registration of vendors in GWSSB. Interested bidder who wish to participate in above tender may view the detailed tender notice & down load the Tender documents free of cost from web site.
<https://www.nprocure.com>
The last date of submission of online tender is 12-1-2021
NO/INF/VPN/2020/G/1569

hmt

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tender are invited from interested parties for purchase of securities / bonds held by HINDUSTAN MACHINE TOOLS LIMITED PF TRUST, PINJORE. For investment details may please contact Chairperson PF Trust Office at HMT Limited Pinjore. Contact No. 01733-263830 or any Mobile Nos. 9896086502, 9671017345. In future also as per requirement tender may be invited by the trust.
For details visit website tenders on www.eprocure.gov.in

Chairperson PF Trust

APPENDIX IV A
[See proviso to Rule 8(6)]
Sale Notice for sale of immovable property(ies)
E-Auction sale notice for sale of immovable assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property(ies) mortgaged/ charged to CFM Asset Reconstruction Private Ltd. [CIN: U67100GJ2015PTC083994]-(“Secured Creditor”), the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on “as is where is”, “as is what is”, “whatever there is” and “without any recourse” basis on 25.01.2021 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M. (with unlimited automatic extensions of 5 minutes each in terms of the Tender Document),forrecoveryofRs.1,08,69,474/- (RupeesOneCroreEightLakhSixtyNine Thousand Four Hundred Seventy Four only) towards Loan Account No. HLHND000210570, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 07.12.2020 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 08.12.2020 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from MR. GAUTAM BIRENDRA and MRS. ALPANA DEVA.

The Said Loan Account along with its underlying security(ies), including the immovable property(ies), had been assigned to and in favour of the Secured Creditor, acting in its capacity as Trustee of CFMARC Trust-I IHFL, vide Assignment Agreement dated 30.06.2020

The Reserve Price of the immovable Property will be Rs. 95,00,000/- (Rupees Ninety Five Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit (“EMD”) will be Rs. 9,50,000/- (Rupees Nine Lakh Fifty Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price. The EMD shall be paid by DD/ RTGS/ NEFT or through any other proper banking channels in favour of and to the credit CFMARC TRUST-I IHFL, Account No. 00511100013302 with Andhra Bank (IFSC: ANDB00000051), having its branch at Fort Mumbai, (Maharashtra) before submitting the tender in order to participate in the online public auction. The successful bidder shall pay 25% amount of the sale price (less 10% of the Reserve Price paid before submitting the tender) immediately i.e. either on the same day or not later than the next working day and the remaining balance of the Sale Price shall be paid within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY(IES)

THE RESIDENTIAL UNIT NO.21, SECOND FLOOR, TOWER A, HAVING A SUPER AREA OF 2022 SQUARE FEET, IN THE GROUP HOUSING COLONY KNOWN AS “LUMBINI TERRACE HOMES”, SITUATED AT SECTOR 109, GURUGRAM, HARYANA ALONG WITH ONE COVERED CAR PARKING.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.cfmarc.in and www.auctionfocus.in.

Date :22.12.2020
Place : GURUGRAM

Sd/ Authorized Officer
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Anil pens a note in father's memory

Bollywood star **ANIL KAPOOR** has penned a note in memory of his father, late producer **Surinder Kapoor**, on his birth anniversary, saying he continues to live on in his mind and heart.

The actor took to Instagram to share his note along with a black and white picture. "I like to believe that my father lives on in me. In the lessons he taught us, in the love he showered on us, but most importantly in the values I believe in, that I recognise as his loyalty, honesty, humility, empathy," Anil wrote.



‘Other than readings, trials and look tests that will be taking place, my preparation for my character in Made in Heaven 2 mainly involves extensive physical training. So, I am just working on my physical fitness with my trainer Samir Jaura. I am mainly focusing on weight training, but my workout also consists of cardio, functional and HIIT.’

—Arjun Mathur



MANUSHI CHHILLAR is a vocal and conscious citizen. She has been roped in by United Nations Women (The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) for a global initiative called #OrangeTheWorld to raise awareness on gender-based violence.

The annual international campaign calls for the elimination of violence against women and girls. "Women are most susceptible to violence in various forms and they face it almost everywhere. Women across all age groups are at constant risk and it is heart-breaking to feel this as a woman myself," says the young actor.



Arnold talks about daughter's marriage

Hollywood star **ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER** says he never thought his daughter **Katherine**, now married to actor **Chris Pratt**, would walk down the aisle with someone from the same profession.

During an interview, Schwarzenegger spoke about raising his children on film sets. "I never, ever thought that my daughter is going to marry an actor," Schwarzenegger said.

Talking about his son-in-law Pratt, he said he is a "fantastic guy" and so easy to get along with.



BEHIND THE FAME

Actor **RICHA CHADHA** tells **SAKSHI SHARMA** that her new film *Shakeela* explodes myths about the Southern adult film star and delves into her human side

Actor Richa Chadha doesn't seem happy about promotions happening remotely via Zoom and phone calls. Maybe that's because she doesn't like things too easy and casual, contrary to how she essays most of her characters. "Everything is remote, so it's much easier than real promotions," says she.

Richa plays the role of an adult star, Shakeela, in an eponymous biopic based on the life of the actor who ruled the South Indian film industry for over two decades. The actor was a controversial star back then as most of her adult films were perceived as soft porn. The film delves deep to understand her as a person and not only as an adult film star.

Excerpts:

◆What were your initial thoughts when the offer to play Shakeela came your way? Were you aware of her journey before?

I didn't meet her in person before the role was offered. Growing up in Delhi, I had little to no exposure to her and her films. But of course, I had read about her in a national magazine cover in the early 2000s. I remember, as a kid I was intrigued about her because the magazine said a lot of things about her personality — How fierce she was, how she was always on the darker side and an unlikely superstar. So, during the initial stage I was basically trying to understand the phenomenon of Shakeela.

◆How does it feel to portray the person you were intrigued to during your childhood?

Sometimes you get to work with people you had idealised, and honestly, this is a great feeling for any actor. When I worked with Manoj Bajpayee, I recalled seeing him as a kid in *Satya* (1998). And when I played his wife in *Gangs of Wasseyapur* (2012), that was very special and different... I learnt so much from him.

◆What made you say 'yes' to the role?

Shakeela's life was very cinematic, full of ups and downs. There's a lot of betrayal and drama in her journey. When I first heard her story, I was quite surprised that nobody had made a film on this subject till now. So I took it as an opportunity to bring her story out with all the necessary things that had to be shown.

◆When you play a lead in a biopic, the responsibility is huge, especially when it's about a controversial figure. How did you prepare yourself?

I knew I would have to do some homework, apart from the physical preparations of gaining weight and so on. Of course, that feeling of doing justice to the role was there but I wasn't much apprehensive about it because I knew that that is in my control. I knew what I was getting into. I just want her (Shakeela) to be happy with the final product. This is the only thing I am worried about because I haven't seen the final film because of the pandemic. We'll all see it together.

‘Shakeela's life was very cinematic, full of ups and downs. There's a lot of betrayal and drama in her journey. When I first heard her story, I was quite surprised that nobody had made a film on her till now’

I want her to live with dignity after the film releases. I spent a lot of time with Shakeela, trying to understand her point of view... I asked a lot of rough questions. And to her credit, she answered everything really well. Basically, I wanted to observe her and her world which helped me carve myself into the role well. She was very candid, more than how she was in the films or is in public. It was a great time working with Shakeela.

◆Now that you have studied her and know her deeply, do you think she has a side that the world doesn't know yet?

She is somebody with a really good heart. She is not bitter about anything, be it her family, friends or the superstars who tried to ruin her life. So in that sense she is very victorious. No one has managed to break her spirit. I feel that she deserves love and recognition for everything that has happened to her. I always see her as a victim in this scenario, somebody who has been wronged.

◆Why do you think so?

This is because I've heard and known about her story closely with her parents, family and how some stars tried to sabotage her career, which is a big topic in the film too.

◆Even though people have been watching Shakeela's film (mostly adult), they are often slut shamed and labelled by society at large. Do you think this reflects hypocrisy?

Hypocrisy is there in every aspect and not just adult films. The whole

film industry suffers from it. For instance, in Mumbai, it is tough for actors to get a house on rent and at the same time everybody is always watching films. You know what I mean?

This is an issue but I think there are changes in society now and people have become much more accepting. Now, a proper porn star can conduct a film with dignity here. So, we have come a long way.

◆Your characters vary from each other largely. What factors influence your decision while choosing a role?

Sometimes the reason is purely commercial, sometimes I want to explore something as an artist, sometimes it's the relationship with my co-actors and directors. So, the reasons keep changing with the project. But one consistent thing is that I try to take at least one project a year that can challenge me and help me grow as an actor.

◆How has your work helped you evolve as an actor?

Each project gives you something if you work hard on it. If you don't, then it takes a longer time to learn. However, it's good to learn on the job because cinema is a great learning for actors. Although people are always reminding actresses of their marriage or 'what next' in life but the truth is that as you grow old, you become a better performer and learn from your experiences. This, in turn, helps you shape your life and take better decisions.

(The film releases on December 25.)

DECK THE MALLS

As people can't travel to their loved destinations, various malls have tried to recreate an international feel through their decor to keep spirits up for Christmas

One of the most eagerly awaited visual is Christmas displays every year. With December and the year-end approaching, malls across Delhi are slowly getting into the festive spirits despite what a turbulent year it has been. The year-end Christmas shopping this year will witness a glimpse of the dazzling festive decor that has been put up across malls.

Karmic Events has contributed heavily in decking up the malls for the festive season. All the malls mentioned are decorated by this company. Its MD, Gunwant Singh, says, "We bring ideas to create experiences and larger than life innovations in retail spaces. Every year, we bring decor and installations. This year too, we have tried to give some great experiences when people couldn't travel to their most loved destinations. We've tried to bring cities to life from around the globe to imbibe the spirit of festivity and joy in malls this Christmas. During these tough times, it is imperative to spread positivity and cheer and indulge in some remarkable experiences."

HIGHLIGHTS AT DIFFERENT MALLS:

Nexus mall
Nishank Joshi , CMO says, "We have introduced a way to shop that fetches you reward this Christmas and New Year. Known for humongous installations; be it a 20 feet tall polar bear at Elante Mall, Chandigarh, or the

A glimpse of Paris at Airia mall, Gurugram

tallest Christmas Tree in Seawoods Grand Central Mall in Navi Mumbai and not to forget, spreading joy through our Candyland themed decoration at The Pavillion, Pune; we have tried to push the envelope of creativity and out of the box designs to make our patrons go awestruck at their destination of recreation and shopping, keeping in mind the safety and hygiene quotient at the malls."

Pacific mall
Abhishek Bansal, Executive Director, Pacific mall, Tagore garden says, "Christmas is a synonym for festivities, joy and holidays across geographies. Every year we make an attempt to take our patrons around the world

by re-creating one of the seven wonders. This Christmas also, we bring in "Christ the Redeemer" to celebrate the festival in its glory. The installation soars over 34ft in height, as we have tried to capture the larger than life majesty of the actual statue. We welcome our patrons to enjoy and experience the festive decor with us, as they do every year."

Vegas mall
Harsh V Bansal, Director, Vegas mall, Dwarka says, "We give you something to remember. A Santa larger than life, magnanimous Santa that moves and actually sings for you, is definitely a first. Moreover, to enhance your experience this Christmas,

we have added several elements of joy viz a first of its kind Santa Museum, Christmas Flea Market, Santa Parade and so much more to explore. We have pushed the envelope of festivities and celebrations with innovative experiments."

Airia mall
Sanjeev Kumar, Centre Head, Airia mall, Gurugram says, "This Christmas, visit Paris in the heart of Gurgaon! The vibe of Christmas and the spirit of festivities now join hands at our mall. The holiday mood has got an elevation with a 64 feet tall installation of the Eiffel Tower, just a small drive away from the comfort of your home. The hype about Eiffel Tower fits aptly to the European feel of Christmas this year. When you can't travel around to see the architectural wonder, we have brought it right to you. Come visit the joy and warmth of Paris here."

The Elf Town
This Christmas, the Elf Town square welcomes you to the Delhi Airport. The quintessential cuckoo clock has been given a Christmas makeover and the nutcrackers are guarding the beautiful gifts and trees to keep them safe for Christmas. They take the visitors on a tour of the Santa's Toy Factory where all the action takes place. The setup shows Elves at work, moving pulleys, a toy train at the Elf Town station and a giant gift box Christmas tree. Certainly, a treat to the eyes!

Larger than life majesty at Pacific mall, Tagore garden

Celebrate the festival with a Santa that moves and sings at Vegas mall, Dwarka

NAFED AGM TAKES STOCK OF PROFITS

The 63rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED) was held. Welcoming the participants Bijender Singh, chairman of NAFED, thanked the Union Minister of Agriculture, Narendra Singh Tomar, MoS for Agriculture, Parshottam Khodabhai Rupala, Secretary (A&C), Additional Secretary (A&C) and other senior officers in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare for their constant guidance and support to NAFED. He assured the government that NAFED would strive hard to accomplish the tasks assigned by the government to the best of its ability.

The chairman of NAFED informed that with the government's support at all levels and right policy decisions at the level of the Board of Directors, support of the member societies and hard work put in by the Managing Director, officers and employees, the federation is now continuing on the path of progress both financially and in providing better services to the farming community by implementing various schemes of the government of India.

He further informed the general body that NAFED has been generating profits for the last three years accumulating to ₹670 crores, which is a remarkable achievement. It was possible with the support from all concerned and various new initiatives taken by NAFED during these years.

He also announced that the Board of Directors has approved the



highest ever dividend of 20 per cent to the member federations, societies for the first time in the history of NAFED.

Sanjeev Kumar Chadha, Managing Director, tabled a brief of activities carried out by the federation during 2019-20. During the year, it achieved a turnover of ₹16,280.98 crores with a net profit of ₹165.65 crores. The federation continued to be one of the central nodal agencies of the government for procurement of oil seeds and pulses under price support scheme, in addition to maintaining buffers of pulses on its behalf.

During 2019-20, a quantity of 33,03,157 MT of oil seeds and pulses valuing over ₹16,066 crores was procured, which was relatively lower as compared to last year due to lower arrivals at PSS procurement centers



on account of firming up of prices.

Similarly, NAFED procured a quantity of 1,11,697 MT of pulses valuing over ₹648 crores to maintain

buffers on behalf of the government to serve any emergent requirement in the country. NAFED also continued supplying milled pulses to the Army,

Central Para Military Forces and to states under different welfare schemes such as PDS, MDM and ICDS.

The MD of NAFED informed that supplies of various agri-commodities, household items, articles towards humanitarian aid/emergency relief material were also made to countries such as Iran, Namibia, Myanmar and Bangladesh worth over ₹15.50 crores at the behest of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

During 2019-20, NAFED undertook seed business worth over ₹27.44 crores, which was distributed to states across the country under various schemes.

The federation also procured 58,288 MT of onion valuing ₹76 crores for creating a buffer stock under PSF in the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Telangana. During the year, NAFED also stepped in and procured 15,589 MT of apples of different varieties with a value of ₹69.38 crores in Jammu and Kashmir under Market Intervention Scheme (MIS).

He added that NAFED was also made part of the National Animal Disease Control Programme (NADCP) for eradicating the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Brucellosis prevalent in livestock and was appointed as Programme Logistic Agency (PLA).

The Managing Director thanked all concerned, especially the Minister of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare and Secretary, Agriculture, for the valuable guidance and cooperation, which enabled NAFED to achieve new heights.

Rajasthan Housing Board discusses 54 proposals

The Housing Commissioner Pawan Arora discussed 54 proposals in the 244th meeting of the Board of Directors under the chairmanship of Bhaskar A, chairman of Rajasthan Housing Board.

The commissioner said it was decided that a committee would examine the issues related to the procurement of land. After this, his proposal will be sent to the government. The useful land will be given to the Mandal through an agreement.

Arora informed that the



Rajasthan Housing Board Regional Sweep Centre, the Election Commission of India and the Chief Electoral Officer will work to build the office building for Rajasthan. This building will be built in an area of 3,368 sqm in Indira Gandhi Nagar Residential Scheme located in Jaipur. He informed that the approval has been given to implement Rajasthan Building Regulations-2020 in Rajasthan Housing Board.

Now the auction will be done according to the circular of the Urban Development

Department. He informed that the circular has been accepted in the auction cases by the board. According to this circular, the auction of the plot should not be rejected if the bid exceeds the minimum bid. The commissioner said that Rajasthan Housing Board has been struggling with the shortage of personnel of various cadres for a long time. In such a situation, recruitment will be done on 573 posts of different cadres. The proposal in this regard will be sent to the state government.



Telangana State Information Centre organises a workshop

Within a short span of six years of the formation of the state, Telangana has stood first in the country in several matters. The state had made rapid strides in all the sectors, marching towards progress and development," said Arvind Kumar IAS, Principal Secretary to Government (MA&UD) and Commissioner, I&PRD, Government of Telangana.

The Telangana State Information Centre, New Delhi, has organised a one day workshop — *Know Your 29th State of the Country*.

Arvind has addressed the gathering through virtual mode from his office in Hyderabad. He has briefed on the initiatives of Telangana

state government, functioning of the department of Information and PR, welfare schemes for journalists, state government efforts in combating COVID-19.

Dr Gaurav Uppal, IAS, Resident Commissioner, Telangana Bhavan, has introduced the state with its rich history, flagship programmes and functioning of the Telangana Bhavan. He has interacted with the officials with regard to their role in Delhi.

The basic idea of this programme is to unify the public relations professionals working for various state governments in Delhi, to raise professional standards, share knowledge and tackle common problems.

ESIC Hospital to the rescue

Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Labour and Employment, laid the foundation stone of 100 beds at ESIC Hospital, Srinagar. Manoj Sinha, Lt Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, was the chief guest of this function.

While addressing the gathering, Gangwar informed about the various initiatives taken by the government of India to provide better care and services to the workers of our country.

During his address, he also shared about the recently passed three labour codes. He emphasised that with the passage of these bills, more workers will get the benefits of social security. He further informed that these bills will also ensure the ease of doing business.

He said that the ESIC has been working continuously since its inception to provide social security to its insured persons, who are low income workers. Now its reach is going to



increase many folds from present number of approximately 13 crore beneficiaries base, as with passage of social security code, the ESI scheme will be implemented in the entire country.

The Minister informed that ESIC has taken number of measures to provide financial relief and health protection to the insured workers as well as general public during the pandemic. He further intimated that the rate of unemployment relief payable under *Atal Bimit Kalyana Yojna* has been enhanced from 25 per cent to 50 per cent. Also, there has been given relaxation in the qualifying criteria to the insured workers,

who became unemployed due to COVID-19-induced lockdown for a further period of six months i.e. upto June 30, 2021. Further, ESIC is actively contributing in the management of COVID-19. A total of 21 ESIC Hospitals across India functioned as COVID-19 Dedicated Hospitals to exclusively provide COVID medical services to the general public.

Gangwar shared that ESIC has collaborated with PMJAY — Ayushman Bharat for providing medical services in those areas where facilities of ESI Scheme are not available. He also informed that a new scheme *Aatmanirbhar*

Bharat Rojgar Yojana has been launched to incentivise creation of new employment opportunities.

The Lt Governor lauded the efforts being undertaken by Central Government to develop the Union Territory. He further stressed upon the commitment of Central Government to provide quality medical care to the people of J&K. He assured full cooperation of state government in running the forthcoming hospital.

The project is expected to be completed in one and a half year. This hospital will be built in five acres of land with an approximate cost of ₹160 crores.

DoPPW grants annual life certificates

The Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare, in a major relief to all Central Govt Pensioners has extended the date of giving Annual Life Certificate, which is mandatory for continuity of pension, from November 30, 2020 to February 28, 2021.

The department this year roped in the India Posts and Payment Bank (IPPB) under the Department of Posts for Digital Life Certificate. The IPPB is now fulfilling the major initiative of DoPPW, viz. DLC from home by roping in 1,89,000 postmen and *Gramin Dak Sevaks* and obtaining Digital Life Certificate from pensioners' home. DoPPW was also instrumental in roping in an alliance comprising 12 public sector banks which does "Doorstep Banking" for its customers in 100 major cities under Ease of banking reforms.

Earlier DoPPW had started a pilot programme "DLC from home campaign" in 2018 in 7 cities through Pensioners' Associations. The objective of the campaign was to extend support to aged and infirm pensioners in submission of Life certificate digitally from home. In 2019, this project was expanded to cover 24 cities and has con-

tinued in 2021 as well with the help of Registered Pensioners' Associations. The department came to know that some inconvenience was being experienced by the super senior citizens because of their changing biometrics due to age. Accordingly, vide its OMs dated September 11, 2020 November 23, 2020 DoPPW advised all the Pension Disbursing Banks to adopt the Video based Customer Identification Process (V-CIP) as an additional facility. UCO bank has become a pioneer in this area and has already collected video based life certificates for their 6546 pensioners.

The department is now on the verge of a major technological leap by enabling face recognition technology to submit DLC through an android phone (without attaching any biometric device) which has been developed by Meity. As per this facility, the identity of a person will be established through face recognition technique. The UIDAI server will identify the same and DLC shall get generated. Various checks are being incorporated into the system to avoid any malfunctioning. However, as of now trials are on for this digital facility.



A mass promotion-cum-pipping ceremony of CISF personnel was organised at CISF headquarters. Total 3,711 non-gazetted personnel have been promoted all over India. Kumar Rajesh Chandra, Director General of CISF, Sudhir Kumar Saxena, SDG (HQrs), PS Phalnikar, ADG (APS), Prateek Mohanty, IG (Pers) and other senior officers of CISF were present during the ceremony. The ceremony witnessed immense pride and enthusiasm among the promoted personnel. The DG congratulated all the promoted sub-officers and personnel. He said that regular promotions to the personnel go a long way in enhancing our capabilities and also motivates other personnel to improve and aspire for similar promotion.



NTPC DBF-HQ organised a communication workshop for senior executives through Microsoft teams. Inaugurating the workshop, KK Singh, RED (DBF and Hydro) highlighted the importance of rightful communication within the organisation. For better communication skills, he further emphasised that we have to inculcate the habit of listening. Swami Chidrupananda, of Chinmaya Mission, Noida, dwelled upon the art of communication through examples from our ancient scriptures that how it can be applied in our day to day working even today. He further explained that our inability to communicate properly in any situation may lead to a lot of problems both in personal and professional lives.



Celebrating its 57th Anniversary Day, Sashastra Seema Bal displayed a show with impressive demonstration of parade. Following all COVID-19 related guidelines, the campus of 25 Battalion, SSB Ghitorni, New Delhi was jubilant as Director General, SSB, Kumar Rajesh Chandra attended the occasion as chief guest and took salute. In his speech, Rajesh Chandra highlighted the role of SSB in maintaining the sanctity and security of India's international border with Nepal and Bhutan. He laid special emphasis on maintenance of peace, tranquility and security atmosphere in AOR of SSB.

TRIFED signs MoU with MoFPI

TRIFED has been exploring convergences and partnerships with like-minded organisations to create synergies together with the main aim of tribal empowerment. The organisation has aligned with the Minister of Food Processing (MoFPI). MoFPI is implementing the Prime Minister Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PM-FME) scheme, which is a landmark initiative under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan to support micro-level food entrepreneurs, FPOs, SHGs and co-operatives. An important component of this scheme is the tribal sub-plan. A communicate, to define the convergence mechanism in implementation of this scheme, was signed between



Deepak Khandekar, Secretary Minister of Tribal Affairs and Pushpa Subrahmanyam, Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing in the presence of Arjun Munda, Minister of Tribal Affairs, Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister of Agriculture and Food

Processing, Thawar Chand Gehlot, Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Rameswar Teli, MoS, MoFPI and Pravir Krishna, Managing Director, TRIFED.

Other than the communicate, an MoU was also

signed between TRIFED and MoFPI to detail the key areas of the collaboration.

With the necessary funding under the PM-FME scheme of MoFPI, the TriFood range of tribal food products would be developed, branded and packaged by TRIFED. It has also been agreed that the SHGs working under the *Van Dhan Yojana* would be provided support for handholding, training, capital investment and working capital. As a part of capacity building, it has been decided that MoFPI under PM-FME scheme would also provide necessary funds to TRIFED to undertake training, capacity building of tribals engaged in food processing. In addition, funds would be provided to TRIFED for product develop-

ment and improved packaging for tribal food products.

As a part of taking tribal welfare and development to the next logical phase, other convergences with various Ministries, Departments and expert institutions such as Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), DMF, ICAR Ministry of AYUSH are being planned with the aim of improving sustainable livelihoods and income opportunities for these tribals.

With the successful implementation of this collaboration and many more forthcoming convergences, TRIFED hopes to transform the tribal lives and livelihoods across the country.

BHEL EXTENDS SUPPORT TO MSMEs

The Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has spearheading the Make In India movement with a special focus on contributing to the *Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan*. Towards developing self-reliance in manufacturing, BHEL has taken the lead in reaching out to local industries including MSME vendors as potential partners. As a step in this direction, the company has organised a series of interactive workshops, titled *BHEL Samvaad*, under the guidance of the Department of Heavy Industry (DHI).

The workshop aimed at fostering better utilisation of assets for development of technologies and products. The Secretary (HI), in his

keynote address, lauded BHEL's move for developing local suppliers and taking forward the *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* initiative. Expressing concern over the pandemic's impact on economies across the world, Arun Goel, Secretary (HI), said that the lockdown across geographies have resulted in massive supply chain disruptions and this has made many countries rethink on over dependence on imports and the need for being self-sufficient. He said that while BHEL has already been leading the movement for Make In India, *BHEL Samvaad* is a welcome move for initiating discussions with MSMEs and the local industry with an intent to get imported items manufactured in India.

The plenary address by DK Singh, Additional Secretary and Development Commissioner, Ministry of MSME, highlighted the strength of the MSME ecosystem in India. He mentioned that it was heartening to see BHEL come forward with a collaborative approach for the domestic industry — both in terms of sharing and offering many items, and also setting the platform for innovation.

DPIIT which was represented by Rajesh Gupta, Director, DPIIT, shared the highlights of the policies formulated by Government of India to ensure fair and equal opportunities to local industries in their pursuit towards *Aatmanirbhar Bharat*.

Big challenge to keep Pujara quiet: Lyon

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia's "in-depth" planning to subdue Cheteshwar Pujara worked out well in the opening Test but spinner Nathan Lyon says it would be a massive challenge to keep the "world-class" batsman quiet through the remainder of the series. Lyon said the home team has a couple of more surprises lined up for the Pujara, who is considered crucial in the Indian batting line-up for his doggedness. The second Test begins on Saturday in Melbourne. "I can't reveal secrets, to be honest with you. But, obviously Pujara is a world-class batter and he is going to be a big challenge for us for the rest of the series," 33-year-old Lyon said at a virtual press-conference on Wednesday. "We spoke about him (Pujara) in depth before the series started, it was good to see a couple of plans come off in Adelaide, but we have got a couple more things. "So, hopefully if he does get in, we can put into play...It is always fun challenging yourself against the best players in the world and Pujara is definitely one of those guys," added the senior spinner but refused to elaborate on his plans. Lyon had dismissed a well-set Pujara for 43 in the first innings of the Adelaide Test, which Australia won by eight wickets. Lyon also said India have got enough players to fill in the "big hole" left by talismanic skipper Virat Kohli, who has returned to India for the birth of his first child. "...Ajinkya Rahane and (Cheteshwar) Pujara, just to name a couple. But you still got the likes of (KL) Rahul and (Mayank) Agarwal, who have been exceptional as well, so there is (are) enough guys in that squad to fill Virat's shoes," he said. "It is going to be a big challenge for us again and we will start our preparation really well and make sure we are prepared to take on India again on (the) Boxing Day, it is going to be another big challenge for us," added Lyon, who has 391 Test wickets to his credit. Lyon also feels that Indian batsmen will try and attack him once again, a strategy that he is both familiar and comfortable with. "...When you look at the quality



Australia's Matthew Wade, bottom, dives in attempt to catch out India's Cheteshwar Pujara off Nathan Lyon's delivery during 1st Test

AP

Can't compare myself to Ashwin: Lyon

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Ace Australian spinner Nathan Lyon says he and India's R Ashwin are similar yet different type of bowlers, so comparisons should not be made between the two. Lyon spoke highly of Ashwin, who he says stands out with his variations. "Ashwin is a world-class bowler, to be honest. I have watched him a lot especially when I had gone to tour India and the subcontinent to try and learn of him. But he is a very cagey bowler, he has got all the variations," Lyon said on Saturday. "He's very cagey with the way he changes his pace, so he is a very talented bowler. We are similar in a way but we are very different as well, so I can't really compare myself to him. I think his records speak for his own,



so hats off to Ashwin," said the 33-year-old off-spinner. Ashwin has been India's premier off-spinner, who has taken 370 wickets from 72 Tests. Lyon himself is close to touching the milestone of 400 Test wickets. He

has taken 391 wickets from 97 Tests. Asked if he would have any preferable choice for his 400th Test wicket, Lyon said that it doesn't matter to him. "Doesn't worry me, if it's (Mayank) Agarwal or (Jasprit) Bumrah, or whoever, batter or bowler, doesn't worry me whatsoever, just it would be nice feather in the cap to get there," he said. Lyon also dubbed the current Australian attack as the best in the world and said it is a privilege to be part of it. "I have said many times before in my eyes, this is the best bowling attack in the world. We are all, best mates and there is no day goes by when there is not a banter being thrown around in the WhatsApp group," he said about the chemistry among the teammates.

Warner, Abbott to miss MCG Test

Melbourne: Star opener David Warner and pacer Sean Abbott were on Wednesday ruled out of the second Test against India, beginning at MCG from Saturday, because of a mix of injuries and Covid-19 protocols. Both Warner and Abbott were outside the team's bio-secure hub to get treatment for their respective groin and calf injuries. "While neither player has been in a specific 'hotspot' on Sydney's northern beaches as outlined by NSW Health, Cricket Australia's biosecurity protocols do not allow them to rejoin the squad in time for the Boxing Day Test," CA said in a statement. "The pair travelled from Sydney to Melbourne to continue their rehabilitation given the changing public health situation in Sydney at the time." Warner still hasn't recovered fully from the groin injury, sustained during the ODI series, while Abbott has recovered from a calf strain but he is unlikely to break into a playing XI that beat India last week. PTI

of the quick bowlers that we have got here in Australian side, I think it's one of their tactics to come after me which is totally fine," he said. "I am pretty used to having guys come after me...So it's all fun part of playing cricket and especially being a spin bowler," he added. India recorded their lowest Test score of 36/9 in Adelaide but Lyon is confident that the visitors would come out all guns blazing in the second Test. "I don't think it will be that difficult. You look at the quality of players in the Indian side and they have got some absolutely world class players throughout the whole squad. "It is one of the days where nothing went right for them and everything went right for us...We are expecting them to come out firing and not have any scars from the other day. "...We can't go out there expecting we're going to bowl them out for 50 again."



Jasprit Bumrah prepares to bowl as India head coach Ravi Shastri watches him during India's net session at Melbourne Cricket Ground on Wednesday

BCCI/Twitter

India begin preps for Boxing Day Test

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Determined to leave behind the embarrassing defeat in the series-opener, the Indian team, under stand-in skipper Ajinkya Rahane, switched its focus to red-ball cricket on Wednesday with Shubman Gill and others grinding it out during a net session ahead of Boxing Day Test. Gill, who was not considered for the opening Test despite scoring 43 and 65 in the pink-ball warm-up match, looked in good nick as he along with Mayank Agarwal honed his skills at the nets, indicating that the duo could be the opening combination for the second Test. The 21-year-old Gill also opens for Punjab in the Ranji Trophy and could be favoured over struggling Prithvi Shaw, who returned with scores of 0 and 4 in the two innings at Adelaide. KL Rahul, who received the backing from the legendary Sunil Gavaskar for the opening slot, too had a long stint at the nets. Also back at the nets was spin all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, who had missed the first Test due to concussion. Jadeja went for an hour-long spell at the nets during which he bowled to his Saurashtra team-

mate Cheteshwar Pujara. He again returned for a second stint later, an indication that he could be included in the playing XI for the Boxing Day Test. With skipper Virat Kohli returning home for the birth of his first child, Rahane will now have to take the onus of inspiring the team to script a turnaround. The practice session begun with head coach Ravi Shastri giving a pep talk to the team members, who stood in a circle at the MCG. "We are in Melbourne and now as the red-ball Tests start, it is time to regroup. #TeamIndia," BCCI wrote on its Twitter handle. Shastri also had a chat with Rishabh Pant, who came out to bat at the nets ahead of Wriddhiman Saha. With Mohammed Shami ruled out of the remainder of the series with a fractured forearm, Mohammad Siraj and Navdeep Saini were seen bowling to Rahane alongside Shardul Thakur as the trio look to stake claim for the third pacer's slot. Batting coach Vikram Rathour, meanwhile, had a word with young Shaw, who is under tremendous pressure to retain his place in the XI after his below par show in Adelaide.

SINGLES

KARTHIK TO LEAD TN IN MUSHTAQ ALI
CHENNAI: Out-of-favour India player Dinesh Karthik will lead Tamil Nadu in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament, to be held in Kolkata from January 10. All-rounder Vijay Shankar has been named Karthik's deputy. However, the team will be without the services of R Ashwin, Washington Sundar and T Natarajan, who are on national duty. Medium-pacer Aswin Crist returns to the state side after a gap of three years due to injuries while Sandeep Warrier, who has shifted from Kerala, is also a part of the team.

TRIPPIER BANNED FOR 10 WEEKS
LONDON: England and Atletico Madrid defender Kieran Trippier was banned from football for 10 weeks and fined 70,000 pounds on Wednesday for breaching betting rules in a punishment from The English Football Association that applies worldwide. The misconduct denied by Trippier happened in July 2019 — the month he left Spurs for Atletico. The ban takes effect immediately and comes with Atletico top of the La Liga.

ICA NOMINATES PRAGYAN OJHA TO IPL GC
NEW DELHI: The Indian Cricketers Association (ICA) on Wednesday nominated former India spinner Pragyan Ojha as its representative to the IPL governing council, a day before the BCCI's Annual General Meeting. The BCCI will hold its 89th AGM in Ahmedabad on Thursday. The association was earlier represented by former India player Surinder Khanna, as according to the BCCI constitution, the ICA is required to send a member to the IPL governing council every year.

SHADAB OUT OF 1ST TEST DUE TO THIGH INJURY
LAHORE: Pakistan all-rounder Shadab Khan was on Wednesday ruled out of the opening Test against New Zealand due to a thigh injury, which he sustained during the third T20I in Napier. Left-arm spinner Zafar Gohar, who was preparing with the Pakistan Shaheens for Sunday's T20 match against the Northern Knights, was named as his replacement in the squad for the first Test, beginning at Mount Maunganui on Saturday.

UNION BERLIN, HOFFENHEIM OUT OF DFB OKAL
BERLIN: Liverpool loanee Loris Karius endured a miserable competitive debut for Union Berlin on Tuesday as his side crashed out of the German Cup in the second round following a surprise 3-2 home defeat to second-tier Paderborn. Fellow Bundesliga side Hoffenheim were also on the receiving end of an upset, as they lost on penalties to second division outfit Greuther Fuerth.

MOMOTA BACK FROM CAR CRASH WITH A WIN
TOKYO: Japan's badminton world number one Kento Momota shrugged off nerves to make a winning return to competition in Tokyo on Wednesday, nearly a year after suffering serious injuries in a car crash. Momota beat Koshiro Moriguchi 21-12, 21-14 in the first round of the All-Japan championships, marking his return from the accident that left him fearing his career might be over after fracturing an eye socket.

MAN CITY INFLICT MORE MISERY ON ARSENAL
LONDON: Manchester City increased the pressure on Mikel Arteta as the League Cup holders powered into the semi-finals with a 4-1 demolition of troubled Arsenal on Tuesday. City ensured it will be a miserable Christmas for beleaguered Arsenal boss Arteta by condemning his side to a fourth defeat in their last six games in all competitions. Gabriel Jesus took just three minutes to put City ahead at the Emirates Stadium and although Alexandre Lacazette equalized, it was another night of torture for Arteta. Arsenal's reserve keeper, Alex Runarsson, made a horrendous mistake when he allowed Riyad Mahrez's free-kick to squirt into the net. Phil Foden and Aymeric Laporte piled on the pain for Arsenal with further goals to seal the rout. Agencies

Sydney offers to host 2 Tests

Sydney: In a bid to save its New Year fixture between India and Australia, the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust has offered to host the Brisbane Test too, if the Queensland Government refuse to grant exemptions to the teams returning from New South Wales. CA was put on high alert earlier this month after an outbreak of the Covid-19 virus in the northern beaches in Sydney, which is scheduled to host the third Test from January 7. Even though the situation in northern beaches has improved, there are concerns that Queensland may close its

border with NSW, which will mean players and broadcasting crews will not be able to travel from Sydney to Brisbane between the third and fourth Tests. "We can run two Tests if necessary, no problems at all," Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust chairman Tony Shepherd told *The Age*. Under the circumstances, Melbourne, which will be hosting the Boxing Day fixture from December 26, has emerged as the frontrunner to host the third Test as well. However, CA has asserted that the SCG remains its preferred venue for the third Test. PTI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Stand-in skipper Ajinkya Rahane is a "bowler's captain" whose calm demeanour and clear communication with players should help him lead the team well in remainder of the Test series against Australia, says India fast bowler Ishant Sharma. With regular skipper Virat Kohli returning home for the birth of his first child, Rahane will lead India in the remaining three Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Ishant, who missed the Australia tour due to a side strain injury, said Rahane has ability to nicely play the leadership role. "He's very quiet and confident and I must say he's a bowler's cap-

Rahane is bowler's captain: Ishant



tain," Ishant told *ESPNCricinfo*. "Whenever we have played together and Virat has not been around on the field, he'd ask me 'What kind of field you want? When you want to bowl? If you want to go on (bowling)?' "He's a bowler's captain. He's not someone who'd say 'do this or do that ... He is very clear about what he wants from his team." Rahane has led India to victories both the times he had captained the side in absence of Kohli against Australia and Afghanistan. "You can see what kind of person he is in his captaincy. He is very calm and composed. I can't

say he does not have a sense of humor. He jokes around with us," Ishant said. "Jinx (Rahane) spreads calm energy in a pressure situation. There won't be any tension, he'd communicate with the bowlers very well." Talking about Kohli, the 32-year-old pacer said: "If there's a partnership growing and it's a flat phase when fielders are just going through their motions, one player's energy level can change the scenario," he said. "The kind of energy Virat brings to the table ... Not everyone can match that."

Messi breaks Pele's one-club goal record

Leo scores his 644th goal for Barca in 3-0 away win

AFF ■ VALLADOLID

Lionel Messi overtook Pele's record of LoF goals for a single club on Tuesday as Barcelona strolled to a 3-0 La Liga win at Real Valladolid, while Atletico Madrid kept hold of their place at the top of the table. The Argentina forward struck his 644th goal for Barca, one more than Brazil legend Pele scored for Santos, in the 65th minute of a routine win for Ronald Koeman's side, who are fifth in La Liga after the win and eight points behind leaders Atletico. "When I started playing football I never thought I would break any records. And even less the one I achieved today," Messi posted on Instagram shortly after the game. "I can only thank all those who helped me over the years, my teammates, my family, my friends and all those who support me every day." Messi had equalled Pele on Saturday in a 2-2 draw with Valencia. The two men scored at almost an equal rate for their clubs. It was the 33-year-old Argentine's 749th competitive match for Barca, meaning he has scored a goal every 1.16 games. The Brazilian scored 643 goals in 757 matches with Santos, where he played between

1956 and 1974, or one every 1.17 matches. Barca started on the front foot at the Jose Zorrilla Stadium, with Messi flashing a curling wide in the seventh minute and forcing a superb save from Jordi Masip in the 20th minute. Barca took the lead seconds later when Messi clipped over a beautiful cross which France defender Clement Lenglet headed home. Martin Braithwaite gave the away side a deserved second 14 minutes later, Messi slipping through Sergio Dest who rolled over a perfect low cross for the Danish international to tap home. Messi, who has looked out of sorts this season after trying to leave the club in the summer, got the landmark goal his excellent performance deserved with a simple finish after bursting through to collect Pedri's delicate backheeled assist. The easy win puts Barca two points behind Sociedad and fourth-placed Villarreal, who draw 1-1 at home with Athletic Bilbao. **ATLETI STAY TOP** Earlier second-half goals from Mario Hermoso and Marcos Llorente earned Atletico a huge win away at a Sociedad team that started the fixture three points off the lead but are now six back in third after their third straight league defeat.



IMPORTANT NOTICE
For the convenience of passengers, Northern Railway will run following express special trains with revised timings from the dates shown against each. The passenger are advised to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or may refer to NTES App to know about arrival/departure time of the stations enroute :-

04672/04671 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Bandra Terminus - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Swaraj Special Express (4 Days in a Week)					
Train No. 04672		STATIONS		Train No. 04671	
Arr.	Dep.			Arr.	Dep.
-	09:55	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra		17:40	-
21:25	21:40	New Delhi		05:30	05:45
16:00	-	Bandra Terminus		-	11:00

Days of Run: 04672 Ex Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday from 30.12.2020 and 04671 Ex Bandra Terminus on Sunday, Monday, Thursday & Friday from 01.01.2021 to till further advice.

Stoppages: Udhampur, Jammu Tawi, Kathua, Pathankot Cantt., Jalandhar Cant., Phagwara Jn., Ludhiana Jn., Ambala Cant Jn., Panipat Jn., Subzi Mandi, New Delhi, Hazrat Nizamudin (Train No. 04671 only) Mathura Jn., Bharatpur Jn., Sawai Madhopur, Kota Jn., Ramganj Mandi, Shamgarh, Nagda Jn., Ratlam Jn., Meghnagar, Dahod, Godhra Jn., Chhayapuri (Vadodara), Anand Jn., Nadiad Jn., Ahmedabad Jn., Viramgam Jn., Surendranagar, Wankaner Jn. and Rajkot Jn. Stations

Accommodation: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved)

04676/04675 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Gandhidham Jn. - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Sarvodaya Special Express (Weekly)					
Train No. 04676		STATIONS		Train No. 04675	
Arr.	Dep.			Arr.	Dep.
-	09:55	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra		17:40	-
21:25	21:40	New Delhi		05:30	05:45
17:40	-	Gandhidham Jn.		-	09:10

Days of Run: 04676 Ex Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra on Thursday from 31.12.2020 and 04675 Ex Gandhidham Jn. on Saturday from 02.01.2021 to till further advice.

Stoppages: Udhampur, Jammu Tawi, Kathua, Pathankot Cantt., Jalandhar Cant., Ludhiana Jn., Ambala Cant Jn., Panipat Jn., Subzi Mandi, New Delhi, Hazrat Nizamudin (Train No. 04675 only) Mathura Jn., Sawai Madhopur, Kota Jn., Ramganj Mandi, Shamgarh, Vikramgarh Alot, Nagda Jn., Ratlam Jn., Meghnagar, Dahod, Godhra Jn., Chhayapuri (Vadodara), Anand Jn., Nadiad Jn., Ahmedabad Jn., Viramgam Jn. and Samakhiali Jn. stations

Accommodation: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved)

Note: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

04678/04677 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Hapa - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Special Express (Weekly)					
Train No. 04678		STATIONS		Train No. 04677	
Arr.	Dep.			Arr.	Dep.
-	09:55	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra		17:40	-
21:25	21:40	New Delhi		05:30	05:45
18:30	-	Hapa		-	08:30

Days of Run: 04678 Ex Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra on Monday from 04.01.2021 and 04677 Ex Hapa on Tuesday from 05.01.2021 to till further advice.

Stoppages: Udhampur, Jammu Tawi, Kathua, Pathankot Cantt., Jalandhar Cant., Ludhiana Jn., Ambala Cant Jn., Panipat Jn., Subzi Mandi, New Delhi, Hazrat Nizamudin (Train No. 04677 only) Mathura Jn., Bharatpur Jn., Sawai Madhopur, Kota Jn., Ramganj Mandi, Shamgarh, Nagda Jn., Ratlam Jn., Meghnagar, Dahod, Godhra Jn., Chhayapuri (Vadodara), Anand Jn., Nadiad Jn., Ahmedabad Jn., Viramgam Jn., Surendranagar, Wankaner Jn. and Rajkot Jn. Stations

Accommodation: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved)

04680/04679 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Jamnagar - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Special Express (Weekly)					
Train No. 04680		STATIONS		Train No. 04679	
Arr.	Dep.			Arr.	Dep.
-	09:55	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra		17:40	-
21:25	21:40	New Delhi		05:30	05:45
18:45	-	Jamnagar		-	08:15

Days of Run: 04680 Ex Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra on Sunday from 03.01.2021 and 04679 Ex Jamnagar on Wednesday from 06.01.2021 to till further advice.

Stoppages: Udhampur, Jammu Tawi, Kathua, Pathankot Cantt., Jalandhar Cant., Ludhiana Jn., Ambala Cant Jn., Panipat Jn., Subzi Mandi, New Delhi, (Train No. 04679 only), Mathura Jn., Bharatpur Jn., Sawai Madhopur, Kota Jn., Ramganj Mandi, Shamgarh, Vikramgarh Alot, Nagda Jn., Ratlam Jn., Meghnagar, Dahod, Godhra Jn., Chhayapuri (Vadodara), Anand Jn., Nadiad Jn., Ahmedabad Jn., Viramgam Jn., Surendranagar, Wankaner Jn., Rajkot Jn. and Hapa stations

Accommodation: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved)

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