

OPINION 6
ARE WE A CIVILISED SOCIETY?

WORLD 8
DANIEL PEARL'S SCAPEGOAT MURDERER RELEASED

SPORT 12
BCCI APPROVES 10-TEAM IPL FROM 2022

Established 1864

Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

*Late City Vol. 30 Issue 358
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY DECEMBER 25, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3

the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



I AM HERE BECAUSE OF FANS: ANIL 10 VIVACITY

UK Covid strain not in India, Govt allays fears

Only genome sequencing at Govt designated labs can confirm it, there is no proof of entry of new Covid strain yet, says Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Thursday allayed fears that new strain of the coronavirus has entered India and said that to be sure of its presence, it is necessary to establish a genome sequencing, which could be done only through designated labs identified by the Government.

"There is no proof that the new variant has entered India, and it is too early to jump to any conclusions," said a statement here by the Ministry even as new Covid positive cases of the UK flyers continue to be reported from various airports in the country.

The Ministry also said that the genome sequencing of passengers from the UK has not been completed yet.

"Genome sequencing has not so far been done in respect of the 15 passengers of the 590 who landed in Mumbai from the UK on December 22. Therefore, it's incorrect to say that the new strain of the coronavirus has entered India until it is established by a designated laboratory," it said.

Notably, as many as 22 passengers flying from the United Kingdom to different cities in India over the past few days have tested positive for coronavirus. As per experts, nearly 50 per cent of these UK travellers could be potential carriers of the new more infectious Covid-19 strain.

Meanwhile, the Health Ministry has reviewed the sta-



A health worker wearing PPE kit collects samples for the Covid-19 test at Sadaiv Atal Samadhi as coronavirus cases surge across the national Capital in New Delhi on Thursday

tus of passengers coming from the UK to India and directed States and Union Territories to send samples of those found coronavirus positive to six laboratories identified for genome sequencing.

"The respective States and Union Territories have been advised to access the details of the passengers from the UK to India from the online portal AIR-SUVIDHA and Bureau of Immigration," said the statement.

The laboratories that have been identified for genome sequencing are, the CSIR-

Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology in New Delhi, the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology in Hyderabad, the DBT-Institute of Life Sciences in Bhubaneswar, DBT-InStem-NCBS in Bengaluru, the DBT-National Institute of Biomedical Genomics in West Bengal and the ICMR-National Institute of Virology in Pune.

This week, NITI Aayog member (health) Dr V K Paul also said that there was no need to panic over the mutated variant of SARS-CoV-2. Paul said the mutated strain detected in

the UK will have no impact on the potential of emerging vaccines.

"As of now, based on our discussions, deep understanding of data available and our deep assessment, there is no need to panic but it is a cause to be more vigilant," he said.

So far at least 20 air passengers from the United Kingdom have tested positive for coronavirus in India. The swab samples of infected patients have been sent to

Pune's National Institute of Virology, in order to check if anyone had been infected from

Bharat Biotech seeks nod for emergency use

New Delhi: The Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech, which is developing the country's indigenous coronavirus vaccine in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), has again applied to the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) for the emergency use authorisation.

Ready to store, give vaccine to 51 lakh in first phase: Kejriwal

New Delhi: The Delhi Government is fully prepared to receive, store and administer Covid-19 vaccine to 51 lakh priority category persons in the city in the first phase of vaccination, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Thursday.

On Wednesday, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan reviewed the status of travellers coming from the UK to India who were found Covid-19 positive before the temporary flight bans came into effect from December 23.

The States for which the detailed review was carried out included Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Goa, Punjab, Gujarat and Kerala.

5 +ve fliers from UK flee isolation wards, 3 nabbed

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Despite the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare issuing detailed standard operating procedures (SOPs) with regard to travellers from the United Kingdom, two passengers who tested positive on arrival from London at the IGI Airport in Delhi went missing from isolation centres and reached their hometowns in Andhra Pradesh and Punjab. According to reports, five passengers went missing after landing from the UK, but three of them were traced by Tuesday night and admitted to Lok

Nayak Hospital in the national Capital. According to officials, a 46-year-old woman, teacher by profession, arrived on Monday and tested positive for Covid in a Rapid Antigen Test at the Delhi airport. Her 22-year-old son tested negative. She was handed over to the Safdarjung Hospital. However, she fled from the hospital and reached Rajahmundry via the AP Special Express in the wee hours on Thursday. Meanwhile, the process to bring back the passenger has started. Railway police and health officials took her straight

from the railway station to the hospital. In the second case, a man who recently flew down from the UK and tested Covid-19 positive escaped from an isolation centre in Delhi and reached Ludhiana where he checked himself into a private hospital. He is from Amritsar's Pandori village. He was sent back to Safdarjung Hospital on Wednesday night. When asked, Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Thursday said the State Government will speak to airport authorities.

Continued on Page 2

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	19,09,951	49,058	18,04,871
Karnataka	9,12,340	12,038	8,86,547
Andhra Pradesh	8,80,075	7,089	8,69,124
Tamil Nadu	8,11,115	12,036	7,89,862
Kerala	7,26,688	2,915	6,60,445
Delhi	6,20,681	10,384	6,02,388
Uttar Pradesh	5,77,642	8,245	5,53,019
West Bengal	5,43,214	9,505	5,18,516
Odisha	3,27,542	1,903	3,22,972
Rajasthan	3,02,709	2,650	2,88,388
Telangana	2,83,556	1,524	2,75,217
Chhattisgarh	2,72,426	3,249	2,54,024
Haryana	2,59,745	2,854	2,51,908
Bihar	2,49,336	1,371	2,42,766
Gujarat	2,39,195	4,262	2,24,192
Madhya Pradesh	2,35,369	3,524	2,21,169

Covid-19 IN INDIA
TOTAL
CASES: 1,01,46,342
DEATHS: 1,47,106
RECOVERED: 97,16,015
ACTIVE: 2,80,452

Modi's virtual meet with 9 cr farmers in mega reach today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day before Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to address farmers across the country, the BJP on Thursday claimed that "nine crore farmers" will listen to the Prime Minister and asserted that "baring a small section" most of the farming community is standing with Modi on the agricultural reforms.

As the stand-off between the agitating farmers and the Government runs into third-week and the confrontation seem to be intensifying, Union Ministers and BJP leaders have accused the Congress and other Opposition parties of "misleading" the farmers and "speaking with a forked tongue" on the farming reforms.

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said, "the Congress is using farmers" and has "always worked against their interests."



"I challenge Rahul for a debate on the issue...Congress gave farmers only ₹53,000 crore and that too through the banks whereas Modi delivered ₹1,20,000 crore directly in farmers bank accounts," said Javadekar.

BJP RS MP and spokesperson Sudhansu Trivedi in another Press briefing said Rahul is telling lies as it is him "who spoke about the need for doing away with the APMC system."

Continued on Page 2

Open to discuss all issues: Centre to kisan

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the farmer unions remained resolute in seeking repeal of farm laws and asked the Government to send a concrete proposal for talks, the Centre on Thursday threw the ball back in the farmers' court and invited them for talks.

The Centre asked them to give the details of issues on which they want to have parleys. The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has asked the farmer unions to give it a date and time for talks saying it is open to discuss all issues.

Joint Secretary of the Ministry and CEO PM-KISAN Vivek Aggarwal had written to 40 farmer leaders on Thursday reiterating the Government's commitment to reach "logical solutions".

He said the Government is ready to discuss whatever the farmer unions want in addition to all the issues which were on table during earlier rounds of talks. The Government has made it clear that it would not be "logical" to include in the agenda any new demand relat-



Farmers raise slogans during their protest against the Centre's new farm laws at Ghazipur border on Thursday

ed to minimum support price (MSP), which is out of the purview of three new farm laws.

In a three-page letter, Aggarwal said, "I again request you that the Government has

been discussing all issues with open heart and good intention to end the protest and will continue to do so. Kindly suggest a date and time (for the next round of talks)."

"The Government has

respectfully and with open mind held several rounds of talks," the letter further stated. "The talks will be held at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi at a ministerial level," Aggarwal said.

The letter comes a day after farmer unions, protesting for nearly a month now, wrote to the Centre, stating they were open to talks, but the Government must offer a concrete proposal first and no negotiations will take place till the Government "draws up a new agenda".

This time the letter was addressed to Samyukt Kisan Morcha, which is an umbrella body of 40 farm unions and not to Darshan Pal like an earlier letter by Aggarwal. The letter also talked about various objections raised by farmers, including the MSP and the points discussed between the two sides in five rounds of meetings thus far, including one each on December 1, 3 and 5.

Continued on Page 2

Agri laws need many changes: Dushyant

Chandigarh: Haryana Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala on Thursday said the new central farm laws need many amendments and urged protesting farmers to give "concrete suggestions".

Cong, Left finally stitch alliance for Bengal polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

Congress and Left Front on Thursday finally stitched an alliance for the upcoming Assembly elections in West Bengal next year.

Today the Congress high command has formally approved the electoral alliance with the Left parties in the impending election of West Bengal. West Bengal Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury took to Twitter to announce the major political development in the State where the BJP has started a high pitched poll battle.

While the CPI(M) central committee had announced in October that it was ready for alliance with the Congress to fight against ruling the

Trinamool Congress and an aggressive BJP, the process was delayed due to Bihar Assembly elections and as the Congress leadership went incommunicado in this regards.

In 2016 Bengal Assembly polls, the Left Front and the Congress together had won 76 out of 294 seats in West Bengal after garnering about 38 per cent vote share. The Left Front received 26 per cent of the votes, while the Congress got only 12 per cent. Despite such a low vote share, the Congress won 44 seats, while the Left Front managed to bag only 32.

In the meeting last month, the State Congress leaders had unanimously argued for the alliance. The Congress high command took special note of the party's decimating vote

share in Bengal, which was down to 6.29 per cent in 2019, while the BJP's was 40 per cent and the TMC was 43 per cent.

CPI(M) central committee had decided in October that the party and the Left front would have an electoral understanding with the Congress to fight against the ruling TMC and an aggressive BJP in West Bengal, where both the CPI(M) and Congress have been facing an existential crisis.

In November, after Rahul Gandhi's online meeting with Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and other State party leaders, sources had said the party would begin seat-sharing talks with the Left Front after Congress president Sonia Gandhi gives the green signal.

Continued on Page 2

India challenges ₹22K cr Vodafone arbitration ruling in Singapore court

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has challenged in a Singapore court a verdict of an international arbitration tribunal that overturned its demand for ₹22,100 crore in back taxes from Vodafone Group Plc, sources said on Thursday.

An international arbitration court had on September 25 rejected tax authorities' demand for ₹22,100 crore in back taxes and penalties relating to the British telecom giant's 2007 acquisition of an Indian operator.

Two sources privy to the development said India had 90 days to file an appeal against the tribunal award, and the same was done in a Singapore

court earlier this week.

This appeal also sets the stage for the Government to challenge the order of a three-member tribunal at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague that asked India to return \$1.4 billion to British oil and gas company Cairn Energy plc.

The Government had used a 2012 law, that gave tax authorities the power to reopen past cases, to seek taxes from Vodafone and Cairn over alleged capital gains made several years ago.

Both Vodafone and Cairn had challenged the tax demands under bilateral investment protection treaties and initiated the arbitration.

Continued on Page 2

Hafiz Saeed gets 15-yr jail for terror financing

PTI ■ LAHORE

Mumbai terror attack mas-termined and banned Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed was on Thursday sentenced to 15 and a half years in jail by an anti-terrorism court in Pakistan in one more terror financing case.

The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) of Lahore also imposed a 200,000 Pakistani rupees (PKR) fine on Saeed.

The 70-year-old radical cleric has already been convicted for 21 years imprisonment in four terror financing cases of late.

"On Thursday an Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) of Lahore sentenced five leaders of Jamat-ud-Dawa, including its chief Hafiz Saeed, in another



terror financing case...For 15 and a half years," a court official told PTI.

Now, Saeed will have to undergo collective imprisonment of over 36 years in five terror financing cases at the Kot Lakhpat Jail in Lahore. His punishment will run concurrently in these cases. There are reports that he is given "VIP protocol" in jail.

Continued on Page 2



CAPSULE

K'TAKA WITHDRAWS NIGHT CURFEW ORDER

Bengaluru: In a U-turn, the Karnataka Government on Thursday withdrew its night curfew order, hours before it was to come into effect. The decision to impose night curfew for nine days from 11 pm to 5 am starting from Thursday was taken on Wednesday in line with the Centre's advice, amid concerns over a new Covid-19 variant spreading in the UK.

CHADHA ACCUSES BJP OF VANDALISING OFFICE

New Delhi: Delhi Jal Board (DJB) vice chairman and AAP MLA Raghav Chadha on Thursday claimed that BJP workers vandalised his office and attacked staff members at the board's headquarters at Jhandewalan here.

UK-EU POST-BREXIT FREE TRADE AGREEMENT OK'D

London: The deal is done, Downing Street in London and European Union (EU) officials in Brussels confirmed on Thursday as both sides managed to thrash out a post-Brexit free trade agreement (FTA) just days before the December 31 deadline. Thousands of pages of legal text accompanies the deal, with details of the agreement set to emerge in the course of the next few days, including the final ratification of the FTA by Parliaments on both sides.

SEC 144 NEAR KOREGAON WAR MEMORIAL

Pune: The Pune district administration has issued orders to invoke Section 144 of CrPc in and around Perne village where the 'Jay Stambh' (Victory Pillar) in the memory of the battle of Koregaon-Bhima stands.

Delhi's air quality turns 'severe'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Air quality in Delhi is recorded in severe category as the Air Quality Index (AQI) settled at 420 µgm-3 at the National Ambient Air Quality Index (NAAQI) on Thursday while the values of Suspended Particulate Matters (SPMs); PM 10 and 2.5 were recorded 450 and 270 µgm-3, many folds higher to their prescribed standards.

According to System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Reserach (SAFAR), Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), "The overall air quality is in the severe category as forecasted. Surface-level winds are calm and forecasted to pick up and AQI may improve."

"Under the calm wind-cold conditions, low ventilation has halted the dispersion of accumulated pollutants. However, better ventilation condition is forecasted for the next two days. Hence, AQI is forecasted to improve to the higher end of the Very Poor category," it said.

On Wednesday, Delhi recorded AQI level of 404, in severe category.

The AQI is in the severe category since Tuesday, with slow wind speed and low temperature allowing accumulation of pollutants.

According to Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the India Meteorological Department's regional forecasting centre, the air quality is likely to remain 'severe' this week as no major improvement is predicted till December 26.



Green corridor helps live heart reach AIIMS from IGI Airport in just 12 min

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Thursday provided a fast-moving green corridor of over 18 kilometers for a live heart from IGI Terminal-2 to All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Hospital in National Capital.

Police said that the heart was flown from Vadodara and took 12 minutes to reach destination from Terminal-2 to AIIMS.

According to a senior police official, police had received an

emergent request from Dr (Professor) Aarti Vij, HOD, ORBO AIIMS wherein it was informed that a human heart under VAD (ventricular assist device) is being flown from Vadodara to Delhi for heart transplant surgery by Indigo flight 6E2512 at 2:30 pm at Terminal-2 on Thursday and that a fast-moving green corridor is required from T-2 to AIIMS Hospital to avoid wastage of time.

"The traffic police swung

into action and immediately deputised officers and a green corridor for the emergency service, viz ambulance carrying 'live heart' was planned," said the senior police official.

"The traffic inspectors piloted the ambulance throughout the route of 18.5 km starting from Terminal-2 to AIIMS. It took 12 minutes for 'heart' to reach its destination, which would otherwise take anything between 35-40 minutes," he said.

Modi's virtual meet with 9 cr...

From Page 1

Union Agricultural Minister Narendra Singh Tomar who met farmers supporting the Government line on farm laws, too charged the Congress of misleading farmers with its alleged "double-faced talk".

With the face-off seeing no early end, the BJP and the Government have intensified its "awareness campaign" on new farming laws passed by the Modi-Government six-month ago.

The Prime Minister's address to the farmers of six-States on Friday is part of BJP's major outreach to the farmers. Modi's virtual meet with "nine crore farmers" is scheduled on December 25 - former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birth anniversary - during which he is expected to clarify the centre's position on the farm laws, and release the next batch of financial aid - Rs 18,000 crore - from the PM-Kisan scheme.

At yet another Press conference, BJP general secretary Arun Singh said farmers will listen to the Prime Minister from 1200 hrs onwards.

He estimated that about 9 crore farmers will listen to Modi's virtual address.

"All the Central Ministers, BJP CMs, State Ministers, MPs, MLAs, corporators & mayors will participate in different awareness programmes across the country..." said Singh.

"Over 19,000 programmes have been organised on the issue...it is like a festival...most of the farmers, barring a very few, are backing the Prime Minister on the farm laws... Farmers trust is with the Prime Minister," Singh claimed.

The meeting will include a conversation with select farmers from six States who "will share their experiences...on initiatives taken by the Government for their welfare", according to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office.

MCDs should collect ₹1,600 cr from Central agencies to release salary: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and MCD in-charge Durgesh Pathak on Thursday said the BJP ruled municipal Corporations should collect around Rs 1600 Crore due to different Central agencies and internal departments of the Corporations and release salary of its employees.

Pathak said that the Income Tax Dept, DDA, parking department, housing department and others owe around Rs 1600 crores to the North MCD which the BJP can

collect within a day as all they are under its purview.

"The employees of the Corporation have not received



their salary for the last several months and are on a day-long strike demanding the immediate release of the salary. The AAP stands beside the protesters in solidarity and extends full support to them," he said.

The AAP leader said, "The BJP ruled East MCD has not paid the salary for the month of November to the sanitation workers and the sanitation workers are planning to go on strike."

"The BJP leaders are trying to distract the attention of people from the issue of the non-payment of salary. They

keep blaming the Delhi Government, demanding an imaginary fund from the government. These claims of due towards corporations are completely orchestrated and to defame the AAP government. In the court orders of November 5 and December 16 it was never noted that the Kejriwal government owes any money to the BJP ruled MCD. More importantly, the standing counsel on the BJP ruled MCD also never mentioned such pending funds during the hearing in the court," he added.

Police search office of lawyers representing Delhi riots accused

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Thursday searched premises of two members of the bar following a case related to alleged use of forged documents as genuine on judicial record in a northeast Delhi riots matter.

According to a senior police official, during the course of a bail matter pertaining to an accused of the northeast Delhi riots, use of a forged notary stamp and creation of allegedly false or manipulated evidence at the hands of certain members of

the bar was noticed.

"The Special Court had observed that the same required thorough investigation. Pursuant to this, a criminal case under appropriate sections of law was registered and investigation was taken up," said the senior police official.

"During investigation, search warrants to look for electronic and other evidence from the premises of two members of the bar were obtained from the court and the same are being executed in a professional manner at one location in Nizamuddin and another at Yamuna Vihar," he said.

5 +ve fliers from UK flee isolation wards, 2 nabbed

From Page 1

Amid mounting concern over a new strain of the virus detected in the UK, the Delhi Government on Tuesday had said people who have arrived here recently from that country, are being traced and tested, while an institutional quarantine facility was being set up separately for positive cases at the LNJ Hospital.

All the passengers travelling from or transiting through airports in the UK and disembarking in India would be subjected to RT-PCR test on arrival. In the case of a positive sample, the SOP recommended spike gene-based RT-PCR test. Passengers testing positive will be isolated in an institutional isolation facility in a separate (isolation) unit, coordinated by the respective State health authorities.

Necessary action to send the samples to the National Institute of Virology, Pune, or any other appropriate lab for genomic sequencing will be initiated at the facility level. If the genomic sequencing indicates the presence of the new variant of SARS-CoV 2 then the patient will be kept in the separate isolation unit and treated as per the clinical protocol.

1,040 poor to get cheap flats in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will hand over flats of 415 square feet area to 1,040 poor urban people at the rate of just ₹ 4.75 lakh.

The total cost of the flat will be ₹ 12.59 lakh and out of this, ₹ 7.83 lakh will be given as a grant by the Central and the State Governments.

The allotment of these flats will be done as per Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) guidelines and through the District Urban Development Authority (DUDA).

As many as 14 states had applied to the Union Housing and Urban Affairs ministry for these EWS houses Under the Global Housing Technology Challenge India (GHTC India).



Main gate of Sacred Heart Cathedral Church closed on the eve of Christmas in New Delhi on Thursday. In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, churches in Delhi will have low key Christmas celebrations this year with limited attendance for the mass and ban on the entry of visitors

Open to discuss all issues...

From Page 1

On MSP, Aggarwal said the farm laws have no connection with the price regime nor would have any impact on the procurement of farm produce at the fixed rates. This has been told to the unions in every discussion and it has also been made clear that the Government is ready to give

written assurance on MSP, he said.

"Any new demand related to MSP, which is out of the ambit of farm laws, is not logical to include in the talks. As informed earlier, the Government is ready to discuss all the issues raised by farmer unions," he noted.

"To listen to all farmer unions of the country is the responsibility of the Government which it cannot run away from. The

Government has been talking with the farmer unions under the Sanyukt Morcha with an open mind and also desires to talk with you in the future as per your convince," added the letter. Aggarwal said it is important to keep all doors open for discussion for the Government. It is the responsibility of the Government to listen to farmer organisations and farmers and the Government cannot deny this, he said.

The previous five rounds of talks between the Government and the unions have failed to break the deadlock with the farmers insisting on repeal of the three laws and camping at various border points of Delhi for nearly a month now.

The Government had earlier written to the farmer unions on Sunday, inviting them for the sixth round of talks as per their convenience.

The anti-farm law protests entered day 29 on Thursday.

UP POLICE TECHNICAL SERVICES HQ, LUCKNOW
 8वाँ तल, टावर-4 पुलिस मुख्यालय, अमर शाहीद पथ, गोमतीनगर विस्तार लखनऊ-226002
 e-mail : tshq@up.nic.in
 Lett.No.:TS-MOD-82/2020
Re-E-Tedner Notice
 Online Shorter Re-E-tender of the following instrument for Forensic Science Laboratory, UP Aggra are invited by Commissioner of Police, Lucknow.

Name of the District	Tender No.	Name of the Instrument	Qty.	EMD (in Rs.)	Tender Cost with 18% GST (in Rs.)	Period of Work
1 Aggra	TS-MOD-82/2020	Genetic Analyzer (8-Capillary)	01	2,20,500.00	29,500.00	According to Conditions

Bid documents are available on the website <http://etender.up.nic.in>, <http://eprocure.gov.in> and <http://uppolice.gov.in> in from 29-12-2020 to 12-01-2021. E-Bids can be uploaded upto 12-01-2020 at 12:00 noon. Technical bids will be opened on 12.01.2021 at 15:00 Hrs.
 All informations regarding Shorter Re-E-Tender are available on website <http://etender.up.nic.in>, <http://eprocure.gov.in> and <http://uppolice.gov.in>.

UP-158102 Dt. 23.12.20
 विज्ञापन वेबसाइट www.upgov.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है।
 (D.K. Thakur)
 Commissioner of Police, Lucknow
 (Chairman-Purchase Committee)

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, MORADABAD CIRCLE P.W.D. MORADABAD
 No. /E-Tender/MBD Circle/20-21 Dated :
E-Procurement Short Terms Notice Inviting Tenders
 1. On behalf of the Governor of UP, tenders for following work are invited by the Superintendent Engineer, Moradabad Circle PWD Moradabad online on website <http://etender.up.nic.in> from the eligible and approved Contractors registered with UP PWD, mentioned in signage category A in UP PWD from 29-12-2020 at 10:00 am to 13-01-2021 at 17:00 Hrs. Amount registered in column no. 5 & 7 shall be deposited by Net Banking only through E-Tender Portal Technical bid / Prequalification of tenders shall be opened on 14-01-2021 at 12:00 Hrs. in office of undersigned by tender committee in presence of authorised representative / bidders who wish to be present. Financial bid of the tenders, who quality in technical bid shall be opened on date and time as specified by a notice in the office of undersigned. In case of Government holiday the required process shall be carried out on next working day.

Sl. No.	District	Name of work	Estimated cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Bid Security (Rs. in Lacs)	Time of completion of the work (Including rainy season)	Cost of tender documents including GST	Category of eligible
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Moradabad	Road Safety works on State Highway/Major District Road & Important other district roads.	70.00	5.50	60 Days	2354.00	"A" Signage category

Rules/conditions & details of the tender are available at website <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Bidder have to login Prharai URL <http://www.upgov.nic.in> and upload their documents as per G.O.No 879(1)/23-7-2020, Dated 25-08-2020 and E-N-C (Vikas) and Head of the department letter no. 4650/4N-LC/2020, Dated 27-08-2020.

Executive Engineer
 Construction Division-1
 PWD, Moradabad
 U.P. 158077, Date : 23.12.2020
 विज्ञापन वेबसाइट www.upgov.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है।
 (Rajiv Govil) Superintendent Engineer
 Moradabad Circle, PWD, Moradabad.
 For and on behalf of Governor of UP
 Mob No. 9532377496
 Mail ID:-cd1pwmdbd@gmail.com

Cong...

From Page 1

Though the seat-sharing talks before the last Assembly polls and the 2019 Lok Sabha elections could not materialise, the Congress reaped the benefits both the times in terms of seats won as it has a high concentration of voters in select constituencies in north Bengal.

The Left Front had failed to win a single seat in 2019 Lok Sabha polls, losing security deposits in 39 constituencies while the Congress bagged just two seats, losing secu-

rity deposits in 38 other constituencies. On the other hand, the BJP won 18 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats, only four behind TMC's 22 seats, announcing itself as a formidable force in the Bengal political arena.

Later in the day speaking at a press conference, Chowdhury took a dig at the BJP and said that the Congress doesn't 'supply' leaders from Delhi. When asked about the party's CM face for Bengal polls, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said decision in this regard will be taken later.

Citing the TMC-BJP alliance in 1999 Lok Sabha polls, Chowdhury

has said that Congress had warned Mamata at that time but she helped the strengthening of BJP in Bengal.

West Bengal Assembly with 294 seats will go to polls in April-May 2021, Trinamool holds 222 seats. However, BJP has made major inroads in the State in the Lok Sabha elections winning 18 seats, and establishing itself as the major Opposition force in the State. Recently the TMC trumped the BJP in all 3 bypolls but the BJP is using its booth-level strategy, has deployed its top leaders including Home Minister Amit Shah and party president JP Nadda in the State for winning the upcoming elections.

The global terror financing watchdog Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is instrumental in pushing Pakistan to take measures against terrorists roaming freely in Pakistan and using its territory to carry out attacks in India.

The FATF had placed Pakistan on the grey list in June 2018 and asked Islamabad to implement a plan of action to curb money laundering and terror financing by the end of 2019 but the deadline was extended later on due to Covid-19 pandemic.

With Pakistan's continuation in the 'grey list', the country may find it difficult to get financial aid from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Hafiz Saeed gets 15-yr jail for terror financing

From Page 1

Saeed, a UN-designated terrorist on whom the US has placed a USD 10 million bounty, was arrested on July 17 last year in the terror financing cases.

He was sentenced to 11 years in jail by an anti-terrorism court in February this year in two terror financing cases.

In November, Saeed was sentenced to another 10 years in jail by an anti-terrorism court in two more terror financing cases.

The other four JuD leaders convicted by the court on Thursday are Hafiz Abdus Salam, Zafar Iqbal, JuD spokesperson Yahya Mujahid and Muhammad Ashraf.

Each convicted person has also been fined a PKR 200,000. The ATC also handed down six-month imprisonment to Saeed's brother-in-law Abdul Rehman Makki in this case and imposed a fine of PKR 200,000 on him, the official said.

"Judge Ijaz Ahmed of ATC Court No 3 heard the case no 32/19 filed by the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in which the verdict has been announced after the statements of witnesses were cross-examined by Saeed and others' counsels -- Naseeruddin Nayyar and Mohammad Imran Fazal Gul Advocate," the official said.

He said that the JuD leaders including Saeed were brought to the court amid high security and

the media was not allowed to cover the proceedings.

A total of 41 cases have been registered by the CTD against the JuD leaders, out of which 28 have been decided while the rest are pending in the ATC courts. Five cases have been decided against Saeed so far.

Saeed-led JuD is the front organisation for the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) which is responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attack that killed 166 people, including six Americans.

The US Department of the Treasury has designated Saeed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist. He was listed under the UN Security Council Resolution 1267 in December 2008.

and the European Union, thus further enhancing problems for the cash-strapped nation.

PUBLIC NOTICE
 Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mr. Radhey Shyam Shukla who is purchasing the Entire Third Floor with its rooftop rights, built on Property Bearing Municipal No.25/139, area measuring 200 sq. Yards, situated at Shakti Nagar, New Delhi-110007 from Mrs. Babita Jain W/o Late Mr. Vinod Kumar Jain who is owner vide Relinquishment Deed dated 21.02.2017 registered vide doc No. 1227, book no. 1, vol no. 6518, pages 47-51, dated 21.02.2017, with SRA-Delhi. That, the Surviving Member Certificate of Late Mr. Vinod Kumar Jain is not available so to comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property is/are hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned within a week at below address.
 Lucem Legal LLP
 269, Rama House, Ground Floor,
 Masjid Moth, Opp. Uday Park, South Extn.,
 New Delhi-49, Contact #011-40046316

Farmers invite all to ask questions

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The farmers, sitting across the border for the last 29 days, continued their protest against the Centre's new farm laws. The farmers on Thursday organised a webinar and invited everyone to join and ask about issues in these laws.

Security remained tight at the Delhi borders with hundreds of personnel deployed at Singhu, Ghazipur and Tikri borders. Due to farmers' protest there is traffic congestion in the city, forcing police to divert

vehicular movement.

The Delhi Traffic Police on Thursday morning alerted commuters about the routes that remained closed owing to farmers' agitation and suggested them to take alternative roads.

Meanwhile, traffic movement from Noida to Delhi was affected on Thursday afternoon as hundreds of farmers, who support the Centre's new agriculture laws, assembled near the Mahamaya Flyover in Noida and demonstrated.

"These farmers, belonging

to various districts of western Uttar Pradesh, have come for the demonstration on the call of farmers' union Kisan Sena and want to go to Delhi to meet Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar," said Thakur Gauri Shankar Singh.

In a series of tweet Delhi Traffic Police tweeted that the Chilla, Ghazipur borders are closed for traffic coming from Noida & Ghaziabad to Delhi because of farmer protests. People are advised to take alternate route for coming to Delhi via Anand Vihar, DND,

Apsara, bhopra & Loni borders. In another tweet, police said Singhu, Auchandi, Piau Maniyari, Saboli and Mangesh borders are closed.

"Pl take alternate routes via Lampur, Safiabad, Palla & Singhu school toll tax borders. Traffic has been diverted from Mukarba & GTK road. Pl avoid Outer Ring Rd, GTK road & NH 44," traffic police tweeted

On Wednesday, the protesting farmers hardened their position and asked the government not to repeat the

proposal of "meaningless" amendments that they have already rejected but come up with a "concrete" offer in writing for the resumption of talks.

Reading out a reply to the government's talks offer during a press conference, Yogendra Yadav said that they are ready for dialogue with an open mind if they get a concrete proposal, but made it clear they will not accept anything less than a complete repeal of the three agriculture laws and legal guarantee for the Minimum Support Price (MSP).

KEJRIWAL REACTS

BJP workers vandalised DJB office: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday came down heavily on the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) over incident of vandalism at Delhi Jal Board (DJB) office.

"The BJP should understand that the Aam Aadmi Party and my Government are fully with the farmers till their last breath. We are not afraid of such cowardly attacks. I appeal to all the workers not to be provoked by such attacks of BJP, and show support to farmers," the AAP chief tweeted in

Hindi. AAP leader Raghav Chadha claimed that the office of DJB was vandalised by workers of the BJP.

Earlier, Chadha had tweeted a video clip purportedly showing broken doors, glass, pots, furniture and blood stains on the floor at the DJB's headquarters at Jhandewalan in New Delhi.

"The BJP workers abused and manhandled the women staff and threatened us asking us to stop supporting the farmers," he said. Chadha said that after

putting Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal under house arrest and vandalising the house of Deputy Chief Minister, they vandalised DJB office now.

"They threatened me saying that if AAP does not stop supporting the farmers then similar attacks will take place against other AAP leaders. BJP workers entered the DJB office and broke the doors, windows, benches, and vandalised the entire office starting from the reception till my chamber. They also destroyed our printers, computers and other important items," he said.

Civil services aspirants to interact with serving officers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Students aspiring to become civil servants will now have interactions with serving officers as the Delhi Government has started an initiative where young officers will share their experiences, strategies and insights about UPSC exam preparation which will help students in developing better understanding of the exam.

In the first instalment, 60 students from Classes 9-12 attended the interaction with Director Education Udit Prakash at VSSKV, Kalkaji. The session was streamed live on YouTube where more than 5,000 students watched it live.

Prakash (IAS, 2007 batch) shared his experiences during the UPSC exam preparation and gave useful tips to the students. He said that he had decided to become an IAS officer right after his 10th class.

He completed his electronics engineering degree from BITS, Pilani and then cleared the UPSC exam.

Interacting with students, he said, "People think that IAS/IPS officers are from different planets as they have cleared a very difficult exam.



Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said that all the young UPSC aspirants should also dream about what they will do once they become an IAS/IPS officer.

"They should set a dream to serve a larger purpose, whether it's about developing rural India or eradicate corruption or remove hatred and violence in the society," added Sisodia, "if students are clear about the larger purpose they want to serve, they can easily overcome the hurdles and they won't be tired or scared in the pursuit of their dreams."

Education minister Sisodia advised the UPSC aspirants that they should develop a study plan right from Class 9 and 10.

He said that Delhi government is committed to help students prepare better for UPSC exam. Deputy CM said that young IAS and IPS officers should interact freely with the students and share strategies about developing the mindset for the exam preparation. They should talk to students about what kind of personality is required of an IAS/IPS officer so that students can gradually prepare themselves to achieve their dreams.

But, it's not like that. I was a normal student like everyone else." Rai shared that students in Delhi government schools are very hardworking and have the potential to excel in civil services exam. The program has been started to develop students' understanding about the exam.

Director Education Udit Rai said that marks don't matter in the civil services exam. This is a standalone exam and students graduating in any subject can appear for the exam.

He mentioned that it's important to have a deeper understanding about the exam. He said that students should choose the subjects in UPSC exam based on their interest and knowledge. This exam is a test of an individual's personality and character.

Towards the end of the interaction session, Deputy

Property dealer shot dead in Gurugram

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

A 40-year-old property dealer identified as Ravinder Kumar was shot dead in his car by unidentified assailants on Wednesday night near Gadoli village in Gurugram.

At the time of the incident, the victim was returning home from his office located in the Kherki Daula area.

According to the police, an unidentified accused waylaid Kumar near Gadoli village and fired a single into his neck, leaving the victim dead on the spot.

The police got to know about the incident on Thursday morning at around 8:00 am when some passersby spotted the body of the victim in the car.

Following a complaint filed by the deceased kin, the police have registered a murder case against an unidentified person at the Sector-10A police station and started probe.

The deceased Ravinder Kumar was a native of Manesar village in Gurugram and was a

property dealer. However, during the preliminary probe police suspect that an old rivalry could be a reason behind the killing.

"The investigation team is collecting more information about the victim's family if the deceased had developed any enmity with someone or had any monetary dispute with anyone. The team also questioned the victim's friends who were present with him on Wednesday night at his office at Kherki Daula," said Subhash Boken, spokesperson of the Gurugram police.

Meanwhile, two teams of the crime branch units along with the Sector-10A police station team are probing the matter from all different angles.

The body has been handed over to the family after an autopsy on Thursday.

"The investigation team are also scanning CCTV footage of the nearby incident spot to get clues about the criminals. We have registered a case and hunts are on to arrest the absconding persons," Boken said.

NMC fines people, offices for pollution, collects ₹25.9 lakh

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NMC) prosecuted people, organisations and offices for various pollution related violations and collected Rs 25.90 lakh.

North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash on Thursday said that the action was taken in the last one month considering the deteriorating air pollution in Delhi. "The Corporation has been conducting checks and penalizing the violators to curb the air pollution," he said.

Giving the breakup of the challans issued, he said that 198 challans issued for illegal dumping of garbage and plastic waste after inspecting 4443 sites and collecting ₹9.8 Lakh. "Two challans amounting to Rs 0.20 lakh were issued for 'Construction and Demolition' (C&D) activities (illegal dumping) after inspecting 508 sites and 136 challans were issued for dust control violations at construction sites after inspect-

ing 1253 sites and collected Rs 15.90 Lakh," he said.

Mayor said that North Corporation has deployed 48 teams to patrol day and night to check violations in respect of biomass burning, C&D waste dumping etc.

Besides, 18 mechanical road sweepers covered 12,668 kilometers of area and water sprinklers covered 5183.65 kilometers of area during the period to suppress the dust. Some of the sensitive areas were even covered twice by sprinkling water where there was more dust. 4640.16 square meter area of road was patched by repairing potholes and 3408.1 sqm of area is proposed to be patched.

To check the polluting industries, 132 teams have been deployed which observed violations at eight places and show-cause notices were issued to 10. In all 183 prosecutions were launched for different violations in the last 23 days and two FIRs were lodged.

Shopping complex coming in SDMC areas not to be sealed: Panel

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) Standing Committee on Thursday passed a resolution ensuring that local shopping complex coming in its areas will not be sealed due to non-payment of their conversion charge. Leader of the House Narendra Chawla said that the Corporation is concerned about the issue faced by owners of such properties hence decided to bring a resolution.

Chawla said that the move will provide a huge relief to the shopkeepers, traders, etc.

Member Standing Committee Shikha Rai, who moved the resolution in Standing Committee meeting said that the issue was brought in the SDMC House meeting in 2019 but the owners of such properties had some confusion.

"The shopkeepers and people engaged in commercial activities are already facing hardships due to Covid, hence the move will help them to carry on activities," she said.



**कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते संगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥**

INTERNATIONAL GITA MAHOTSAV

17-25 December, 2020
Kurukshetra, Haryana

CLOSING CEREMONY
Maha Aarti & Deepotsav
Friday, 25 December, 2020 (5:00 PM)
Purushottampura Bagh, Brahma Sarovar

Chief Guest
Sh. Manohar Lal
Chief Minister, Haryana

"State Haryana a place of rich culture, heritage, and the origin of Bhagavad Gita. The Gita not only inspires people to serve humanity but also guides the mankind to show courage at difficult times. The Gita teaches us to fearlessly face challenges of life and serve the humanity on the path of truth."
- Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana

Keep yourself safe from Novel Coronavirus and Enjoy the Festival at Home

www.internationalgitamahotsav.in
www.kurukshetra.gov.in
www.48koskurukshetra.com

#internationalgitamahotsav2020
/internationalgitamahotsav
/igmkkr2020

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana
www.priharyana.gov.in

Govt. of Haryana

Call Parliament Session to repeal agri laws: RaGa



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hitting out at Centre over its handling of the farmers' protest, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday demanded immediate Parliament session to repeal the controversial farm Bills. Rahul said there is no democracy in India after he met President Ram Nath Kovind as part of Congress delegation with two crore signatures against the farm laws. Rahul Gandhi, senior party leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad and Adhir Chowdhury were allowed to visit the Rashtrapati Bhawan while all others, including Priyanka Gandhi, were detained.

After meeting with the President, Rahul Gandhi said, "I want to tell PM Modi that farmers will not go back home if there's no repeal of the farm laws. The Centre should call a joint session of Parliament and repeal the laws. All opposition parties are with the farmers."

Rahul Gandhi told the President the laws were "anti-farmer" and would make farm-



ers suffer huge losses. He said the Opposition stood with the farmers who have been camping at Delhi's borders for over a month now demanding the repeal of the legislations.

"We took crores of signatures... the voices of farmers. The PM will have to listen to them. The entire country is watching. It is cold, and the farmers are suffering, dying. I am warning you. Nobody can stand against the farmers," the Gandhi scion said.

Rahul Gandhi alleged that only three-four people are running the system and said the Congress is fighting this.

"It is an assault on the idea of India. The government is stopping our MPs from moving out of our office... There is no democracy in India, it is only in imagination, not in reality," said Rahul Gandhi, after coming out of the meet-

ing. Expressing solidarity, the Congress leaders said the Opposition stands with farmers. "The protesting farmers will not stop the protest till the laws are repealed. There is no democracy in India," he said flanked by party leaders.

As the march was stopped, Priyanka Gandhi said, "Any dissent against this government is classified as having elements of terror. We are undertaking this march to voice our support for the farmers."

Priyanka Gandhi also said, "We're living in a democracy and they are elected MPs. They have the right to meet the President and they should be allowed. What is the problem with that? Government is not ready to listen to voices of lakhs of farmers camping at borders."

Bharat Biotech applies for emergency-use nod for Covid vaccine

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech, which is developing the country's indigenous coronavirus vaccine in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), has again applied to the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) for the emergency-use authorisation.

Emergency Use Authorisation is a mechanism to facilitate the availability and use of medical countermeasures, including vaccines, during public health emergencies. Bharat Biotech had first applied for the emergency use authorisation of its vaccine on 7 December and presented its proposal, along with the interim safety and immunogenicity data of Phase 1 and 2 clinical trials.

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation's (CDSCO) expert panel had, however, recommended that the firm should present the safety and efficacy data from the ongoing Phase 3 clinical trial in the country for further consideration, said the sources in the Union Health Ministry.

Bharat Biotech's COVAXIN, an inactivated vaccine candidate, is currently undergoing Phase 3 human clinical trials on

26,000 volunteers over 25 centres across India, after having undergone Phase 1 and 2 trials involving 1,000 volunteers.

Meanwhile, the Serum Institute of India (SII) has also submitted the additional data asked by the DCGI determining safety and immunogenicity of its COVID-19 vaccine candidate, Covishield.

America's Pfizer was the first to apply on 4 December, followed by Pune-based SII and Bharat Biotech who applied on 6 and 7 December, respectively. Pfizer had, however, requested more time to make a presentation before the committee.

India is likely to have a Covid-19 vaccine approved for emergency use before December end as CDSCO's expert panel is set to review the application of SII, Bharat Biotech and Pfizer for emergency use authorisation.

Meanwhile, Aurobindo Pharma Limited and Covaxx, a US-based company, have entered into an exclusive license agreement to develop, commercialize and manufacture UB-612, the first Multitope Peptide-based vaccine to fight Covid-19, for India and the UN Children's Fund (Unicef) agency. COVAXX is currently conducting a Phase 1 clinical trial for the vaccine candidate.

ED attaches ₹1.85 cr fix deposits, cash in Kerala gold smuggling



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached fixed deposits along with the cash recovered from the bank lockers totalling to ₹1.85 crore in Kerala Gold Smuggling Case. Among the attached assets, properties worth ₹1 crore belongs to IAS officer and former Principal Secretary to Chief Minister of Kerala, M Sivasankar.

The ED had initiated investigation under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) on the basis of NIA's FIR filed before the Special Court for NIA cases in Kochi against Sarith P S, Swapna Prabha Suresh, Faisal Fareed

and Sandeep Nair under various sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

The Customs Commissionerate (Preventive), Cochin had seized 30 kg gold worth ₹14.82 crore at Trivandrum International Airport on July 5, 2020.

The seized gold was camouflaged as diplomatic baggage to UAE Consulate, which has immunity from checking at airport as per Vienna convention.

The consignment was to be received by the accused Sarith PS, who worked in UAE Consulate earlier as Public Relations Officer in complicity with Swapna Prabha Suresh, Sandeep Nair and others.

"During the course of investigation under PMLA, it was revealed that the accused persons namely Sarith P S, Swapna Prabha Suresh, Faisal Fareed and Sandeep Nair indulged in illegal smuggling of gold to India and huge amount of Proceeds of Crime (POC) were generated," the ED said in a statement.

Identified POC totalling to ₹1.85 belonging to the accused persons have been provisionally attached under PMLA, it further said.

Accused Sivasankar was arrested by the ED on October 28 and is presently undergoing judicial custody. Earlier a prosecution complaint (chargesheet) was filed in the case.

ED seizes ₹4,109 crore asset under PMLA in Agri Gold Ponzi case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached assets worth ₹4,109 crore under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in Agri Gold Ponzi fraud Case involving fraud of ₹6,380 crore.

The attached assets include 2,809 landed properties, Haaland Amusement Park of Arka Leisure and Entertainment Private Limited in Andhra Pradesh spread over 48 acres, shares of various companies, plants and machinery.

These attached properties are located in Andhra Pradesh's Anantpur, Kurnool, Krishna, Chittoor, Guntur, Kadapa, Vizianagaram, East and West Godavari, Visakhapatnam, Nellore, Prakasam, Srikulam and Kadapa districts.

The properties attached in Karnataka are located in Bengaluru, Kolar, Yadgir and Mandya.

In Odisha, it is in Khurda district. Krishnagiri District of Tamil Nadu.

In Telangana, properties were attached in Mahaboob Nagar, Narayanpet, Khammam, Mahboob Nagar, Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy, Vikarabad, Medchal, Malkajgiri, Nalgonda and Mahabubnagar districts.

The ED had initiated investigation under PMLA based on multiple FIRs lodged in the

States of AP, Telangana and Karnataka.

"The scam was perpetrated by accused Avva Venkata Rama Rao through Agri Gold Group of Companies. Avva Venkata Rama Rao hatched a well planned conspiracy and along with his seven brothers and other associates setting up more than 150 companies and started collecting deposits from general public with a promise of providing developed plots/farm lands or withdrawal at a high rate of return on maturity/pre-term," the ED said in a statement.

Thousands of commission agents were engaged to lure people with various schemes for hefty commission and managed to collect ₹6,380 crore from 32,02,628 investor accounts, it said.

In the end, the gullible investors neither got plots nor could recover their deposits. Investigation under PMLA further revealed that Agri Gold Group companies used to lure the gullible public to join as depositors in their schemes either directly or through their agents under the pretext of real estate deal.

The ED probe further revealed that Avva Venkata Rama Rao and his family went on a siphoning spree and illegally diverted the public deposits and invested in myriad verticals and in private companies which were directly owned by their family.

Air pilots refuse to accept paltry 5% rollback in 'illegal' pay cut



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Air India pilots have refused to accept the paltry 5 per cent rollback in "illegal pay cut" and asked Air India CMD to donate it towards funds for building of the new Parliament building or PM CAREs fund.

In a letter to Rajiv Bansal, Air India Chairman and Managing Director, the two pilot associations — Indian Pilots' Guild and Indian Commercial Pilots' Association — said, "We do not accept this paltry 5 per cent roll back in illegal pay cut and you may advise the concerned to donate this 5 per cent towards funds for building the Parliament or PM CAREs."

The pilots said that they would be forced to resort to 'industrial action'.

They said they have given the management every benefit of doubt as well as ample time

THE LETTER STATED THAT PARLIAMENTARIANS ALSO HAVE ONLY TAKEN 30 PER CENT CUT ON GROSS EMOLUMENTS AND VEHEMENTLY REFUSED TO TAKE A HIGHER CUT

to redress the issue of disproportionate pay cut for Air India pilots and its subsidiaries. "If we do not see a timely substantial reduction in this disproportionate pay cut, we will be forced to seek justice through harsher means including 'Industrial Action'," they added.

The letter stated that parliamentarians also have only taken 30 per cent cut on gross emoluments and vehemently refused to take a higher cut.

"While the parliamentarians themselves have taken a cut of only 30 per cent on gross emoluments and vehemently

refused to take a higher cut, we think it is completely egregious for us pilots to continue tolerating this arbitrary massive pay cut of 55 per cent on our gross emoluments," stated the letter.

"This pittance in the form of a 5 per cent decrease in the current wage cut is an outright insult, its sting magnified in light of our unwavering support and trust in this company. This 'generosity' amounts to a reduction of approximately 3 per cent in the current gross pay cut for pilots," they said.

Pvt detectives offer Govt help to check fake Corona vaccine



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As India prepares for massive roll out of coronavirus vaccine across the country, the Association of Private Detective and Investigators (APDI) has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi offering help in dealing with the problem of counterfeit and fake items.

"During the Corona pandemic we saw the market flooding with fake sanitizers, medicines, health supplements and other critical items. We actively worked with various state governments and helped in seizure of such fake items. Now we have offered our help to government and various agencies who will be in-charge of distribution and administration of vaccine to check counterfeiting and supply of fake vaccines which is a high possibility in a big country like India," said APDI Chairman

Kunwar Vikram Singh at the International Corporate Investigators Summit.

"The Union Government had written to state governments about this crucial issue and later our investigators worked with various state police and local administrations in dealing with the situation. Our direct intervention had laid to seizure of fake items in big quantity," he added.

Singh also said the International Corporate Investigators Summit was first of its kind in the world where leaders from corporate world from India and abroad gathered to discuss the issues and challenges that the corporate world in facing in various sectors. Challenges and problems of sectors like pharma, healthcare, hospitality, tour and travel, services and IT were thoroughly discussed in the Summit.

Cyber security course launched to make Digital India initiative safer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To make the Government's Digital India initiative safer and robust in rural India, the Common Service Centre (CSC), an SPV under the Ministry of Electronics and IT, has launched a cyber security course in collaboration with French institute -- Ecole Supérieure Robert de Sorbon.

"Both the courses will run through our education and vocational training arm - CSC Academy - and these courses will be specially be available to our rural youths across India. Our partnership with Ecole Supérieure Robert de Sorbon, a not-for-profit, prestigious institution of higher education from France, will add more value to our courses which have been designed keeping mind the improve chances of employment and to promote entrepreneurship among our youths in rural areas," said CSC Managing Director Dr Dinesh Tyagi.

The French Institute will support CSC to enable Cyber Security Course at CSC Academies across India. The CSC Academy, an arm of CSC, is a not-for-profit society which is committed to teaching, delivering of specialized courses/ training programmes, leadership, communication skills and promotion of entrepreneurship among the rural masses in India.

"Press Notice Inviting e-Tender No. 33/PNIeT/EE/DWS/BLN/2020-21.

The Executive Engineer, DWS Division Belonia, Belonia, South Tripura invites e-tender against press Nle-T No 33/PNIeT/EE/DWS/BLN/2020-21, dated 18.12.2020 for JJM Scheme/Retrofitting of JJM Scheme/Different Water Supply Scheme under South Tripura District/ SH:- Construction of 15 (Fifteen) Nos. Deep Tube Wells with Contractor's Direct Rotary Normal Power Drilling rig and other machineries, equipments under various programmes including providing of ERW pipes, pea-gravels etc. under South Tripura District of Tripura State during the year 2020-21.(Gr-I) with Estimated cost: ₹2,47,03,284.00, Earnest Money: ₹2,47,033.00, Time of completion - 300 (Three Hundred) days. Last date of bidding for bids 18.01.2021 upto 15.00 hrs

For more details, please visit website www.tripuratenders.gov.in & www.eprocure.gov.in

For details please visit www.tripuratenders.gov.in and for any query please contact: 03823-224-812

Sd/-
(Er. T. Chakma)
Executive Engineer
DWS Division, Belonia,
South Tripura District,
Tripura

ICAC-2518/2020-2021

"Conserve Water and Save Life"

GOVERNMENT OF CHHATTISGARH, WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER MAHANADI GODAWARI BASIN RAIPUR (C.G.)

e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

eProcurement Portal: <https://cproc.egstate.gov.in>

(1st CALL)

System Tender No. : 69941/NIT No. : 24/SAC/2020-21, Durg, Dated : 21.12.2020
Online Tenders are invited for the following works up to 11.01.2021 at 17.30 Hour

Name of work: **REMODELING & C.C. LINING WORK OF MAGARGATTA MINOR FROM R.D. 0 M TO 8190 M WITH CONSTRUCTION OF 10 NOS MASONRY STRUCTURE, SANKARA MINOR NO.1 R.D. 0 M TO R.D. 3390 M WITH CONSTRUCTION OF 3 NOS STRUCTURE, SANKARA MINOR NO.-2 FROM R.D. 0 TO R.D. 2610 M WITH CONSTRUCTION OF 5 NOS MASONRY STRUCTURE, KAPSI MINOR CANAL R.D. 0 TO R.D. 4350 M WITH CONSTRUCTION OF 6 NOS STRUCTURE, GHUGHUWA SUB MINOR R.D. 0 M TO 3490 M WITH CONSTRUCTION OF 07 NOS MASONRY STRUCTURE WITH CONSTRUCTION OF SUB MINOR FROM R.D. 1500 M TO 2400 M 3 NOS STRUCTURE & 44 NOS OUTLET OF SELUD DISTRIBUTORY TANDULA MAIN CANAL IN BLOCK PATAN OF DISTRICT DURG**

Probable Amount of Contract- **Rs. 761.55 Lakhs**

The details can be viewed and downloaded online directly from the Government of Chhattisgarh Integrated e-Procurement Portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) from Date 28.12.2020, at 17.31 Hours.(IST) onwards.

NOTE :- All eligible/intrested contractors/bidders are mandated to get enrolled on the Integrated e-procurement portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) and get approval on specific vendor class from PWD under Centralized Contractor/Supplier Registration in order to download the tender documents and participate in the subsequent bidding process.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Tandula Water Resources Division, Durg (C.G.)
For, Chief Engineer, Mahanadi Godavari Basin Raipur (C.G.)

R.O.No:- 85776/8
R.O.Dated:- 22/12/2020

Rahul laying on '2 crore farmers signed' memo submitted to Prez: Tomar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Thursday lashed out at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, alleging that his claim that the memorandum he submitted to the President was signed by more than 2 crore farmers had no signatures in it from the community.

He also asserted that no one from the Congress party had even met kisan leaders for that. Tomar said that several farmers have denied signing any document sent by the Congress party.

"Whatever Rahul Gandhi says, even Congress doesn't take it seriously. Today when he went to register his protest with the President with signatures, these farmers told me that no one from Congress came to them to get their sig-

BKU (Lok Shakti) moves SC challenging farm laws, seeks impleadment in pending matter

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Kisan Union (Lok Shakti) has moved the Supreme Court challenging the three new farm laws, against which various farmer unions are staging protest at several border points of Delhi, and sought impleadment in the matter pending in the apex court.

In an application seeking impleadment in the pending petition, Bharatiya Kisan Union (Lok Shakti) has claimed that the new farm laws "promote corporate interest" and are not concerned with the "interest of farmers".

The plea, filed through advocate A P Singh, alleged that these acts are "unconstitutional" and anti-farmer as it would "dismantle the Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) system intended to ensure fair prices for farm products".

"The implementation of the acts in its current form will spell disaster for the farming community by opening a parallel market which is unregulated and gives enough place for exploitation of the Indian farmers," the application said.

It claimed that farmers are "very much scared that these acts also lead to corporatisation of the entire agriculture market and the prices can be driven up or down by the corporates".

While hearing the matter related to farmers protest, a bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde had on December 17 said that farmers' agitation should be allowed to continue "without impediment" and the apex court will not interfere with it as the right to protest is a fundamental right.

Several farmer unions, including the BKU, have been impleaded as respondents in the matter pending in the top court.

Didi raps Viswa Bharati for no invite

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

VISWA BHARATI CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

With political temperature in Bengal beginning to soar ahead of next year's Assembly elections Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday hit out at Central Government-controlled Viswa Bharati University for not inviting her in its centenary celebrations in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a virtual speech.

The Prime Minister's speech too wasn't free from factual errors, her Trinamool Congress said. The TMC had earlier slammed the BJP for putting Home Minister Amit Shah's pictures above that of Poet Laureate Rabindranath Tagore during his Bolpur rally.

"Today is the foundation day of the Viswa Bharati but there was no telephone call, no invitation from that side... There was a phone call saying they wanted to meet me... they asked whether I could visit the University any time soon... this is not an invite... still I must congratulate all those who attended the programme," the Chief Minister said.

"I don't mind anything because those who have joined the meeting today are mostly religious bigots... their term is of temporary nature, they are there for very few days... their days are numbered," Banerjee who

announced a huge investment of Rs 15,000 crore in East Midnapore district said.

Slamming her detractors she said "there are people who keep on humiliating me and attacking me every time thinking that this lady does not react because she is sure that ultimately she will win (the elections)... today things have reached such a pass that apart from humiliating me they have started humiliating the icons of Bengal."

However, refuting the charges brought by the Chief Minister, Bengal BJP leader Samik Bhattacharya said "the Chief Minister's absence from the programme was unfortunate... such things should be kept out of politics... today Bengal's honour was lowered before the entire nation."

Earlier State Minister and dramatist Bratya Basu too alleged that the Chief Minister could not join the show as she was not invited. "Mamata Banerjee did not receive any invitation for the centenary meet of Viswa Bharati," he said adding, "even if the invitation, as you suggest, was sent last night, should that be the decorum? After all, she (Ms Banerjee) is the Chief Minister of a State."

On the alleged factual errors in

the Prime Minister's speech he said in his address Modi put down Bengali culture and tradition by confining Tagore to Gujarat.

"Why one should restrict Rabindranath Tagore to Gujarat? He said Satyen Tagore's wife (Rabindranath Tagore's sister-in-law) learnt how to drape sarees in a certain fashion from Gujarati women. The fact is that she learnt it from the Gujaratis as well the Parsis. But the Prime Minister wouldn't mention Parsis," Mr Basu said.

He also said that "Tagore's brother who was in Gujarat was not the eldest sibling. His wife's name was Gyanadanandini and not what Modi said. The story about Gyanadanandini and the sari pallu is a myth, not true," he said.

He also questioned the reason behind the Prime Minister not mentioning Calcutta University while taking the names of Delhi and Lahore Universities in the same breath.

"The PM also spoke about the varieties of Delhi and Lahore during his address, but failed to make a mention of Calcutta University, which played an important part in the country's freedom movement," Basu a noted dramatist said.

Faulting the Prime Minister for his wrong interpretation of the Poet Laureate he said how Tagore's philosophy had gone beyond nationalism to internationalism and humanism. He said "Tagore was of the opinion that nationalism was a divisive idea," adding Tagore's famous novel Gora was not about divisive religion.

Meanwhile in a parallel development, BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari on Thursday iterated the BJP was coming to power in Bengal with a forceful majority.

Addressing a massive rally at his home town Contai in East Midnapore he said "the overwhelming presence of the crowd here only shows that 'Didi is going and a new era of nationalism is coming to Bengal.' The rally was so big that it took three hours to cover a distance of 5 km.

Picking up from where Home Minister Amit Shah left last Sunday at Bolpur Adhikari said promised to win all the 35 seats from East and West Midnapore for the BJP.

"The rule of Bhaipo (nephew) is over, the rule of the coal, cow and stone mafia is over... the people will throw them out because if they return to power they will not turn into a kidney mafia," Adhikari said in an apparent reference to TMC MP and the Chief Minister's nephew Abhishek Banerjee.

Independent Sikh candidate won by 3 votes in J&K's DDC polls

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Asvatar Singh, an Independent Sikh candidate from Dadsara constituency in South Kashmir district of Pulwama won the maiden District Development council polls in Jammu and Kashmir by a slender margin of only three votes.

He is not the only one who managed to score a close victory. Around one dozen other candidates, belonging to the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration, BJP, and few other independents scored less than five hundred votes in these polls yet emerged victorious.

Srinagar, Pulwama and Shopian turned out to be the three districts in Kashmir valley where the winning candidates garnered 6221, 10992 and 10153 votes respectively.

Compared to this 184944 votes were polled by the winning candidates from Jammu district, 105457 from Kathua and 59088 from Samba.

According to the records of the State Election Commission, "several candidates of the Gupkar alliance garnered barely 100 plus votes and were declared winners."

Maharashtra Covid toll crosses 49,000 mark

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra's Covid-19 toll breached 49,000 mark on Thursday, as 89 more people died of the pandemic, while 3,580 others tested positive for coronavirus.

A day after Maharashtra logged 3913 more infections and 93 new deaths, the infections dropped to 3580 and deaths came down to 89.

With 3580 fresh infected cases, the total infections in the state climbed from 19,06,371 to 19,09,951. Similarly, with 89 new deaths, the total toll in the state rose from 48,969 to 49,058.

As 3171 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March this year went up to 18,04,871. The recovery rate in the state dropped marginally from 94.51 per cent to 94.5 per cent.

With 12 new deaths, the total number of deaths went up from 11033 to 11045, while the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March this year went up to 18,04,871.

Meanwhile, the number of "active cases" total cases in the state rose marginally from 54,573 to 54,891. The fatality rate in the state stood at 2.57 per cent. Pune district, which continued to be the worst-affected city-district in Maharashtra, saw the total number of cases increase from 3,68,447 to 3,69,065, while the total number of deaths in Pune increased from 7708 to 7713.

Thane district remained in the third spot -- after Pune and Mumbai -- after the total number of infections rose from 2,51,430 to 2,51,880, while the total deaths climbed from 5516 to 5527.

Governor, Vijayan stand-off to intensify in Kerala

PNS ■ KOCHI

The CPI(M)-led Kerala Government and the Congress-led UDF, the principal Opposition in the State are getting ready for another stand-off with Governor Arif Mohammed Khan over convening the special session of the Legislative Assembly to pass resolutions demanding the scrapping of the Agriculture Laws enacted by the Centre.

Taken aback by the Governor's refusal to convene a special session of the Legislative Assembly which had been scheduled for Thursday, the Government led by Vijayan decided to send another missive to the former seeking to convene a special session of one-hour duration on December 31 to adopt resolutions demanding the Centre to declare the Agriculture Bills null and void.

PNS

First SIHM of UP to be built in Aligarh

Aligarh: Soon Aligarh will get the gift of the first SIHM (State Institute of Hotel Management) of UP. FCI (Food Craft Institute) is being upgraded to SIHM. For this, the state government has transferred 6 acres of land in Rampur village to the tourism department. Now DPR is under preparation at IITM (Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management), Gwalior for its construction. It will cost around 40 crores. The Ministry of Tourism of the Central Government started the Food Craft Institute in Aligarh in 1984.

LDF Govt spreading manipulated news about Covid handling in Kerala, says BJP

KOCHI: A senior BJP leader has charged that the LDF Government in Kerala was projecting "manipulated victory" against its fight against Covid-19 pandemic. "The recent developments in the State prove that the CPI(M)-led LDF Government was hiding real news and spreading manipulated news about its handling of Covid-19. This is a sign that Kerala's health care sector has to improve a lot," said C P Radhakrishnan, BJP leader in charge of Kerala.

He was speaking to reporters at Kochi on Thursday after the core committee meeting of the State unit of the BJP. Radhakrishnan said that his party's focus would be to win power in the State and not to win 'few more seats'.

"The recent Local Body elections in the State proved that we have been accepted by people belonging to all sections of the society. We wrested power in Pandharam Municipality where two Christian brethren won as candidates. Yes, we are against Islamic terrorism but not against Islam. Our objective is to isolate Islamic terrorism and integrate the Muslims with us," said Radhakrishnan.

The BJP leader said that the last five years of CPI(M) rule has ruined Kerala's development in all fields. "Kerala needs to develop its infrastructure, agriculture, industrial sector and health care. What the CPI(M)-led LDF is projecting is manipulated victory against Covid-19. The BJP would be focussing only on Kerala's development as well as to improve the standard of living," said Radhakrishnan, who is no stranger to Kerala.

He also dismissed reports about internal fights in the Kerala unit of the party.

PNS

Delimitation on cards for panchayat polls in Aligarh

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

In the district, there will be a revised delimitation for the three-tier panchayat elections. The government took this decision after declaring Barauli, Jawan, Gabhana and Tappal as the new city panchayat in the district. From the government level, about 17 panchayats have also been added to these new bodies. Now the Panchayati Raj Department will release the proposed delimitation afresh keeping them out of delimitation.

Panchayat elections will be held in 2021 from March to April. There were orders for delimitation of Pradhani for which orders were released for the creation of new panchayats to the population left out of the partial panchayats that joined the urban bodies. In this way, a total of 3 new Nagar Panchayats were formed in the district and the total number of panchayats increased to 881.

One stop shop system brought for convenience of investors in Raj: CM

Jaipur: Chief Minister Shri Ashok Gehlot said that the country and the world in Rajasthan has every ability to attract investors.

All you need is a friendly environment of doing. He said that the immense potential for energy production in solar and wind sector, efficient human resources, wide land bank, favorable geographical location, with better law and order Policies and decisions formulated in the interest of investors are such strong aspects, whose branding is big.

A number of entrepreneurs can be encouraged to invest. He

instructed that these characteristics and merits of Adhikar Rajasthan are given at national and international investment conferences. Show case through other platforms including road shows.

One stop shop system brought for the convenience of investors in Shri Gehlot State, delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) and Industry related topics on Wednesday evening were reviewing. He said that more and more jobs are available to the people of Rajasthan bringing investment to get it done is the priority of the government.

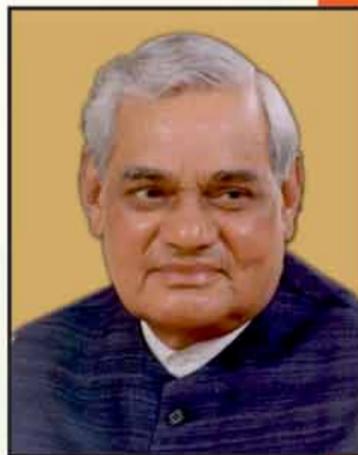


GOOD GOVERNANCE DAY

December 25, 2020



Haryana Remembers
The Great Freedom Fighter
Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya
and
Bharat Ratna & Former Prime Minister
Sh. Atal Bihari Vajpayee
On Their Birth Anniversary



State Level Programme will be organized at Haryana Niwas, Chandigarh

Chief Guest
Sh. Manohar Lal
Chief Minister, Haryana

Programme will be conducted at District, Tehsil & Block level

“The significant aspects of **Good Governance** are development and accountability. Through e-Services, our Government has encouraged accountability in the State so that the benefits of all Government Schemes reach the last person in the queue.”

- Manohar Lal
Chief Minister, Haryana

Information, Public Relations and Languages Department, Haryana

www.prharyana.gov.in @Cmohry @DiprHaryana

Sailors stranded

As China blocks Australian coal vessels in the middle of a trade war, India must intervene to rescue our seamen



A humanitarian crisis is brewing in the middle of a China-Australia trade war, which has left stranded stocks as well as sailors on the high seas, and neither country is claiming responsibility for either the return of the cargo ships or allowing even temporary docking rights. China, which has so far procured coal from Australia, has refused the consignment following growing diplomatic hostilities, what with Australia increasingly showing a pro-West tilt and initiating the global fair probe demand for the Wuhan contagion, implicitly holding China responsible for the spread of the COVID virus. Now 400 sailors and two million tonnes of coal are stuck on ships off China's northeast coast. The shipment is spread across 21 bulk carriers and is valued at around \$200 million, so there is a huge economic cost involved. Reports say that 15 of the ships have been waiting since June, stranding the crew on board, who are not allowed to get off, given the existing maritime COVID protocols. Many of the sailors on the Australian vessels are Indian. China says they can turn the vessel around but the seafarers were prevented from doing so by the owners, who didn't want to readjust a "non-profitable" sailing plan. As the two nations are engaged in diplomatic sabre-rattling, 40 Indian sailors are suffering because travel restrictions in the wake of new pandemic alerts mean that they can't be offloaded on to another ship passing by the waters. Apart from the complete violation of labour codes and human rights, the blockade has also halted the movement of other ships in the maritime corridor, affecting global supply chains.

In no small part, China is using the crisis to arm-twist both Australia and India. Apart from rallying behind the global probe demand on the Wuhan contagion, what has really angered the Chinese is that both the nations have joined the US and Japan in policing its ambitions in the South China Sea as part of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad. This new grouping also formalised its military vigilance and cooperation strategies through a series of recent naval drills. In fact, at one time India was wary of Australia's role, considering its deep dependence on Chinese markets. After all, China continues to be Australia's largest trading partner and accounts for 32.6 per cent of its exports. Besides, China has sourced iron ore, coal and gas from Australia because of its geographical proximity and quality, preferring the latter over Brazil. India had never thought that Australia would do anything to jeopardise this mutually beneficial relationship. Also, both India and Australia, being in the neighbourhood, didn't exactly want to rile up China or risk a hit back by overtly upping the dragon's anxieties. But the Wuhan contagion and Beijing's imperialist aggressiveness in the region changed all that. This is significant geopolitically because four of the biggest democracies with stakes in the region are collectively committed to preserving open waters and holding off China's misadventures to monopolise them. The initiative allows inter-operability among the four partners, which means accessing and using one another's strengths and bases to pursue their common mission. This makes the Quad formidable. The full-fledged military alliance gives a robustness of entity, one which can now embolden Quad plus the US to coalesce together against China. Except for the US, nobody in the group had directly dared to call out China. With a military-level agreement, there should not be trust issues anymore. And if mutual interests and concerns find congruence, it could over time become what the US calls a NATO-like presence in Asia that could contain China's expansionist designs. Most significantly, the military alliance could also be strengthened to being an economic coalition; for example setting up a Quad Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to attract investment and set up an alternative supply chain and management network. This is what riles China, which now sees both India and Australia as US stooges in the region. Earlier, it had imposed an 80 per cent tariff on Australian barley and banned beef imports. Ever since, Australia has been looking for allies to divert its exports. One of the results was the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, to which Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Prime Minister Narendra Modi agreed on June 4. One hopes that Modi can prevail upon Morrison to ensure that some rehabilitative measures can be taken since China is testing the new strategic friendship.

Logistical headache

Delivering the COVID vaccine across India will be a challenge and the Government must be prepared to face a few setbacks



We should be clear about one thing: The COVID-19 outbreak might not be the last such pandemic to scourge mankind. And while pandemics usually occur every few centuries, the next one could be just around the corner. We have in the past nine months developed and deployed protocols, technology and, most importantly, bolstered public health systems. Yet, thousands have died in India and we may not know the accurate death toll for some more time to come. Even going by the Union Health Ministry's data as updated on Thursday, the single-day rise of 24,712 COVID-19 cases and 312 fatalities has pushed India's virus case-load to 1,01,23,778 and the death toll to 1,46,756; and

sceptics don't seem to be too kind on the Government when they proclaim that the establishment is deliberately downplaying the figures to shroud its incompetence and poor handling of the scourge. But as multiple vaccines are developed to combat the virus that has ripped the global economy asunder, we should be pragmatic about how the Government will deliver the vaccine across the country. There will be missteps and some failures, too, from people jumping the queue to the almost certain petty corruption, many of which instances will be played up by those trying to score political points. There is almost certainly going to be an anti-vaccine campaign as well, by some because they don't believe in vaccinations and by others because they will say that the technology rolled out to manage the deployment will be an affront to their right to privacy. There will always be malcontents and those who are dyed-in-the-wool anti-establishment people disguised as libertarians.

Thankfully, as of now, there is widespread support for inoculation among the public in India who have witnessed how the nation eradicated polio and has taken massive strides in public health in the past two decades. There will have to be fairness in how the vaccine is rolled out and we must prioritise frontline healthcare and security staff as well as senior citizens who are among the most susceptible groupings to the risk of contracting the virus. And there should be an active campaign by the Government to curb the inevitable spread of fake information. Many individuals and entities have rightly argued that false information and fake news have been a pox on democracy and fake news and information on healthcare carry the very clear and present danger of death. Several groups on social media sites are already filled with snake-oil solutions such as immunity boosters which actually do nothing to stop the spread of the virus. This is a problem that policymakers on the health front have to deal with as urgently as they are tackling the challenges of deployment. Already, amid mounting concerns over the detection of a mutated and more virulent strain of COVID-19 in the United Kingdom (UK), one State after another is scampering through to trace the UK returnees in the past month, with the Meghalaya Government altogether barring the entry of individuals from the European country into the State with immediate effect. In view of such scary developments, it is, therefore, essential on several fronts that India deals with the pandemic and gets back to work with its full might, intent and purpose.

opinion 06

Are we a civilised society?

India's intellectuals need to ensure that the principle of trusteeship is strictly upheld in the thought and deeds of those who have the reins of authority



JS RAJPUT

Democracy depends upon objective interactions, respectful dialogues and mutual trust. People may differ in their viewpoints but they need not resist combined efforts to find solutions and settle differences, no matter how serious these may be. The year 2020 shall be remembered for the Shaheen Bagh dharna and Kisan Satyagrah. Normally, the word "Satyagrah" reminds one of Gandhiji who had modified the original term "Sadagrah" to "Satyagrah". Democracy allows protests; Gandhiji gave the weapon of Satyagrah not only to India but to the entire world, and its potential was never in doubt. It took roots not only in India but was also used by luminaries like Martin Luther King Jr and Nelson Mandela. As the inheritors of Gandhian legacy, India and Indians have a special responsibility to ensure that it is not converted into 'Asatyagrah'. In unmet agitations organised within India, Satyagrah gets reduced to a mockery.

No one cares for the truth, non-violence invariably becomes a casualty and human lives are wasted without any hesitation or a sense of shame. These days, the "leaders" go on hunger strike — *Upvaas* — for just a few hours! The literal meaning of *Upvaas* is "being near the soul" but most demonstrations and protests are hijacked by politicians. India seriously needs its intellectuals to play their role: Get out of the slumber of callousness and take a strictly objective view of national aspirations, expectations of the young as well as to ensure that the principle of trusteeship is strictly upheld in thought and deeds of those who have the reins of authority. It is their obligation to name and shame all those who have forgotten about human values, social obligations, the responsibility to give dignity to every human being, to be specially concerned and supportive of children, women and those standing last in the line. While the developed and modern countries may be overwhelmed in their materialistic pursuits, India just cannot abandon its eternal responsibility to move ahead in spiritual quest, and thereby place the right path in front of humanity. Indians are inheritors of a civilisation which respects the criticality of the sensitive man-nature relationship and believes in meeting human survival needs from nature; and despises its wanton destruction to meet his greed. India alone could get the humanity out of concerns like environmental destruction, climate changes, water scarcity, air pollution,



soil degradation, melting of glaciers, vanishing of species, flora and fauna, and much more. The ideology of progress has to be redefined in national context, keeping in view the global considerations and treating the world as one family. India must rise and present before the world a working model of "science with humanity" and "knowledge with character". It is time that the contours of civilisation are incisively delineated and the march towards a world of peace is guided by humanism, welfare of all and a practising civil society that cares for everyone. It would require a long-term strategy and it shall have to be implemented through education. There is no other way out.

What is civilisation? This query was once posed by Swami Vivekananda, and his own answer was: "It is the feeling of the divine within." And how does one discover that divinity? Through education that is both secular and spiritual. He gave us that illustrious eternal statement: "Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man." He was convinced that what India needs most is "education, education and more education"! The first duty of the nation is to educate people, extricate them out of ignorance and self-negation: "Educate people and they would be able to solve their own problems." To him, education was of no use if it didn't prepare the masses for the struggles of life. More importantly, it was to bring out the strength of character, spirit of philanthropy and the courage of a lion. India has suffered enough in the way of negative education. Delinking of Indians from India was a deliberate strategy imposed

by the alien rulers and, unfortunately, the model was perpetuated by those who inherited power and authority at the time of Independence. Over the decades, people have realised the gravity of the folly and there are enough indications in the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, that things shall change. The policy formulates: "A holistic and multi-disciplinary education would aim at developing all capacities of human beings — intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional and moral, in an integrated manner." The formulation is further augmented by the emphasis on value-based education "which will include the development of humanistic, ethical, constitutional and universal human values of truth (*satya*), righteous conduct (*dharma*), peace (*shanti*), love (*prem*), non-violence (*ahimsa*) and others". One fervently expects all this to equip every learner to discover the treasure within him. This is the path to a truly civilised world.

There, however, are serious impediments to traverse the newly chalked out pathway. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in the virtual mode, unveiled the statue of Swami Vivekananda on the campus of the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). There was sustained opposition to the very installation of the statue, and it was not a rare occurrence. In this university, the activities, agitations and full-throated support of certain ideologically constrained groups of students and teachers to even the groups and individuals who do not believe in India's unity and integrity as a nation often baffle those who think independently, have the

national welfare uppermost in their mind and retain objectivity even in provocative situations. JNU is a great institution that should be the melting pot for varied thought, ideas and imagination. In a world torn by conflicts, violence, wars and weaponisation, universities have a great role to play in augmenting social cohesion and religious amity. They have to work for the culture of acceptance, far ahead of tolerance. This is the Indian tradition which has to be strengthened.

Universities, including JNU, just cannot afford to ignore the stirring words of Jawaharlal Nehru who considered these as the pace setters of peace and progress at the national level, and from there it must extend to the global scenario: "A university stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the advancement of ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards higher objectives. If the universities discharge adequately, all is well with the people and the nation." Great universities would never relish the tag of being politically or ideologically oriented. The people and the nation expect JNU to become a centre of nourishing civilisation. It could really work seriously on comprehending the culture of acceptance of diversity.

In his 1932 book, *Remakers of Mankind*, Carl Washburne writes that when asked "What is your goal in education when India obtains self-rule", Gandhiji replied: "Character building. I would strive to develop courage, strength, virtue, the ability to forget oneself in working towards the great aims. This is more impor-

tant than literacy; academic learning is only a means to this great end." Character formation was the strength of the traditional Indian system of knowledge quest that included creation, generation, utilisation and transfer of knowledge to the future generations. With all the experiences gained globally in varying contexts and approaches, it is now accepted globally that education in every country must be rooted in culture and committed to progress. Character building just cannot be envisioned in isolation to culture. No culture would flourish in isolation and there can be no barriers erected in the way of children being made aware and conversant with their own culture before being introduced to the others. India painfully suffered as the transplanted system that deliberately kept young educated Indians debarred from getting familiar with the nuances of their own culture; they were systematically indoctrinated in the "superiority of the western culture." This was very comprehensively articulated by Gandhiji in the *Young India* of September 1, 1921: "It is my firm opinion that no culture has treasures so rich as ours. We have not known it; we have even been made to depreciate its value. We have almost ceased to love it."

Let us hope that the proposed educational reforms would prepare the young with credentials and they would look after the masses. Education must lead to human dignity for one and all.

(The author works in education and social cohesion. The views expressed are personal.)

SOUNDBITE

Today, the Congress high command has formally approved the electoral alliance with the Left parties for the impending elections in West Bengal.

Bengal Congress chief
—Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury



There is no possibility of a backdoor or diplomatic dialogue with India in the prevailing situation. It is not possible until Indian atrocities are stopped in Kashmir.

Pakistan Foreign Minister
—Shah Mahmood Qureshi



Happy happy birthday daddy... you're the most positive, kind, liberal human being, and we are blessed to have your values instilled in us. I miss you so much.

Actor
—Sonam K Ahuja



Ajinkya Rahane's calm and composed demeanour shouldn't be mistaken for him being weak and he will be as aggressive as Virat Kohli as the stand-in captain.

Indian cricket legend
—Sachin Tendulkar



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

J&K's vocal verdict

Sir — By no stretch of imagination can the results of the District Development Council (DDC) elections in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) be seen as an endorsement of the Centre's abrogation of Article 370. On the contrary, if anything, it was an unequivocal verdict against the move. The claim of victory by the BJP is belied by actual results. However, it is gratifying to see some semblance of democracy brought about by the DDC polls.

Overall, the constituent parties of the Gupkar Alliance that are opposed to the abrogation of Article 370 and insistent on their demand for regaining what they believe is rightfully theirs, have emerged the clear winner and gained legitimacy as the people's voice. They still occupy much of the political space in the State and remain vibrantly relevant there.

The argument that the Government can unilaterally do whatever it wants on the strength of its parliamentary majority is of dubious legitimacy. The people of any region cannot be mainstreamed or integrated by disempowering them.

G David Milton
Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

Budget should spare a thought for the elderly

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is nowadays holding consultations with various stakeholders regarding the Union Budget for 2021-22. In this document, I would expect special provisions for senior citizens to ease their problems.

The Centre and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) should jointly introduce a special long-term investment scheme with interest payable monthly for senior citizens, replacing the existing Senior Citizens Savings Scheme (SCSS) which is available at public sector banks and post offices, and Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojna (PMVVY) through the LIC of India with the maximum investment limit for both schemes being ₹15 lakh each.

The suggested scheme should have a combined maximum investment limit of ₹50 lakh instead of the current total of ₹30 lakh (₹15 lakh plus ₹15 lakh in the two schemes). This step has been necessitated in view of the fall in interest rates in the Government schemes and fixed deposits (FDs). The interest should be paid per month and the Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) provision must not apply to the savings schemes meant specifically for senior citizens.

CBI at the receiving end

Sir — After being a caged parrot of the powers that be, the inability of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to take probes and prosecution in sensational cases to their logical conclusion is dismaying. That the courts are increasingly questioning the CBI's integrity is a shocking

indictment of the latter.

In this context, a recent verdict of the Madras High Court questioning the competency, expertise and integrity of CBI officers should come as another wake-up call. The CBI "lost" in its custody 103 kg of the 400 kg gold it had seized from a corporate giant in 2012 and which was kept in its vaults. In the absence

of any plausible explanation from the CBI, the High Court told the State CB-CID to probe the matter, a move fiercely opposed by the CBI but to no avail.

Generally, the CBI is entrusted a case after a State's probe agencies fail but, in this case, the reverse happened.

Ganapathi Bhat
Akola



For other citizens, different banks have FD schemes of various durations but the interest rates are causing utter confusion to those desirous of a safe investment as the rates are fixed differently by different banks.

Currently, the lesser known PNB Housing Limited, a subsidiary of the public sector Punjab National Bank, offers the most lucrative interest rate.

Subhash Chandra Agrawal
Delhi

Electoral reforms

Sir — With time, the Indian democracy has become sufficiently mature to enable us to think about evolving political systems that suit the needs, size and population of our nation. Reforming the polling system is one of them.

In this particular sphere, we have been able to develop an election machinery by way of the Election Commission whose robust and efficient system has become an envy of not only the smaller countries but also of the developed ones.

But we must end the situation wherein the nation is continually in election mode, thereby creating an atmosphere of political upheaval. We must also eliminate political corruption in the form of midterm defections and Aaya Rams and Gaya Rams. Also, it will help if the problems of a particular State get sufficient attention in its Assembly elections and not get overshadowed by national issues.

BP Srivastava
Noida

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Many lessons in co-operation

The virus has shifted the axis of power and made the ground ready for an alliance of like-minded geographies with a focus on regional strategic ties



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

As the world lurches towards a new year, the axis of strategic ties among nations for mutual economic and geopolitical benefits seems to be taking a new turn. To begin with, in nearly three decades a British Prime Minister is slated to be the chief guest at the Republic Day function in New Delhi. Almost at the same time, a new President is expected to take charge of the world's oldest and most prosperous democracy, the US. Third, millions around the globe would have been vaccinated with first doses of the Coronavirus vaccine, which is expected to bring the relentless march of the deadly infection to a halt. All these developments, when looked at from an India-specific prism provide significant opportunities and associated trap doors for the projected \$10 trillion economy by 2030.

First, the promised visit of Boris Johnson to a function which marks the celebration of the Indian Constitution is an optical landmark that showcases the warming of many decades of frigid ties riddled with terms like colony and colonisers. Historically, the UK has been seen as a former coloniser wishing to poke its nose in regional issues such as Kashmir and the Afghanistan war, tilting in favour of Pakistan. Slowly, it turned towards defence ties where India chose French fighter planes over the UK's multirole fighter, while it was still miffed with the steady fall in students to the UK due to a scrapping of the work permit policy. In between, a very large British telecom giant and one of the largest Foreign Direct Investment contributors to India had to get into an uneasy relationship with an Indian operator to remain in business.

However, the global pandemic has shifted the axis of power and made the ground ready for an alliance of like-minded geographies with a focus on regional strategic ties. The UK took the first bold step, effectively banning Chinese telecom equipment makers from the fifth generation telecom networks, while making strong statements on Beijing's expansive moves in the South China Sea. It is here that the recent visit of British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab to New Delhi assumes significance as he mentioned upgrading of India-UK ties as well as Free Trade Agreements between the two nations as top priorities. Putting the economy right in the middle of a new era of partnership is a win-win situation for both countries. A post-Brexit UK will need new markets and templates for trade relationships with individual nations such as India. On the other hand India will most likely be able to forge a strategic long-term alliance for its technological, healthcare and financial targets.

On the same page comes a new administration in the US, which is likely to push for a multilateral approach on tricky topics like climate change, digital regulation (digital tax and data flows across international borders). The initial choice of US President-elect Joe Biden's top Cabinet members could reflect a completely new template for New Delhi-Washington engagement. This could mean India may have a better say in issues on multilateral platforms on topics like climate focus, while facing flak on issues related to digital diplomacy and strategy. Also, the Centre may be subjected to a not so sweet discourse on management of human rights and some old regional issues may be occasionally brought up. The high point of this long, largely politically agnostic journey could be optically measured with a town hall or Republic Day appearance by Biden in the next four years. The key aspect of change is expected to be in the manner the two administrations move beyond social media diplomacy to real world, deep impact agreements, which should reflect in increased partnerships, investments and opportunity creations in the two economies.

China would continue to play a significant role in global politics. However, a stronger alliance of like-minded nations moving towards globally accepted, interoperable technology regulations for the 21st century could be steered by India and the US.

Finally, the super news for 2021 would be universal vaccination. It is heartening to see India working with both, the UK and the US, towards urgent and decisive elimination of the virus which has cost thousands of lives and millions of livelihoods across the world. In a couple of months a substantive portion of the population would have been immunised but, the outbreak has taught lessons for the future and led to greater international co-operation.

The virus has been a reminder for nations at different levels of technological advancements to join hands and use the power of technology to eliminate global challenges related to climate change, environmental degradation, access to safe housing and food, sustainable agriculture and good health for all. After all, the wealth of nations lies in the well-being of citizens. If advancements in technology have shrunk boundaries and created wars as well, there lie the seeds for providing greater economic benefits to citizens by using the same technology. The highest laurels for leadership in the 21st century, much like the post-World War planet, would go to those who find technology-aided solutions to increase the well-being of the human race. In more ways than one, this year has been a watershed moment in human development. Now it is for strong leaders to move ahead.

(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal)

THE BJP IS THE SINGLE-LARGEST PARTY TO HAVE WON THE PEOPLE'S MANDATE AND NOT THE OPPORTUNISTIC GUPKAR ALLIANCE.

—UNION LAW MINISTER
RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



THE PEOPLE OF JAMMU & KASHMIR HAVE SAID IT WITH A HUGE MAJORITY THAT THEY DO NOT ACCEPT (THE DECISIONS OF) AUGUST 5, 2019.

—FORMER J&K CHIEF MINISTER
OMAR ABDULLAH

Empower adolescents

Teenagers are thirsting for information about themselves and the changes that puberty brings to their bodies. It is time to pay greater attention to their voices and needs



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

It was late at night when Seema Kumari, an accredited social health activist working in Bihar's Sitamarhi district, heard the news. The 16-year-old daughter-in-law of her neighbour had given birth at home earlier than expected. Despite the late hour, she rushed to their house to see if she could be of any help. Unfortunately, the infant, weak and born prematurely, did not survive. In Sitamarhi, 106 newborn babies die for every 1,000 live births according to the Government's statistics. Early marriage further exacerbates the vulnerability of adolescents. According to the fourth National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), in Sitamarhi, 50.5 per cent of the women aged between 20-24 years had been married off before the age of 18 and 11.7 per cent of girls/women aged 15-19 years were already mothers or pregnant at the time of the survey in 2015-16.

Although she was deeply saddened by their loss, Kumari took the opportunity to convince the mother-in-law that she would not insist on another grandchild until her teenaged daughter-in-law had recovered physically and mentally. In fact, Kumari extracted a promise that they would wait for at least three years before trying for another baby. By this time not only would Pinky turn 19 and be better prepared for motherhood, it would also reduce the risk of infant mortality. Over the next three years, Kumari kept an eye on the family. It meant daily visits, talking to the mother-in-law and constantly reminding her of the promise. She also provided reproductive and sexual health information and aids to Pinky so that she could plan her family and delay motherhood till she was ready for it. In January this year, Kumari's hard work bore fruit when Pinky gave birth to a healthy girl at the local primary health centre.

Women like Kumari are among the many frontline health workers who are making a difference between life and death for mothers and babies. Pinky was fortunate that Kumari was able to persuade her conservative marital family that there was a need to wait before the next pregnancy. The likelihood of girls aged between 10-14 dying during pregnancy and childbirth is five times higher than for women aged between 20-24. An estimated 6,000 adolescent mothers die every year in India. The underlying reasons are early marriage coupled with a lack of sexual and reproductive health information. It was to disrupt the vicious circle of having too many children, too quickly and provide adolescents with appropriate information on reproductive and sexual health that the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) was launched by the Government in 2014.

Although the RKSK prioritised sexual and reproductive health as one of its six strategic areas of adolescent well-being, talking about this sensitive issue remains a taboo. In Bihar, entrenched patriarchy has made RKSK even more critical as adolescents, especially girls, are forced to remain invisible and refrain from being seen or heard. It becomes difficult for them to confide in their parents. Hence, they desperately need someone they can turn to for advice. But there is a shortage of trained, skilled human resource who can be their friend and guide.

Many girls on the brink of puberty know little about menstruation as no one prepares them for it when they reach puberty. In fact, menstruation comes as a shock for many and affects their mental health as they are unable to grapple with

“MANY GIRLS ON THE BRINK OF PUBERTY KNOW LITTLE ABOUT MENSTRUATION AS NO ONE PREPARES THEM FOR IT WHEN THEY REACH PUBERTY. IN FACT, MENSTRUATION COMES AS A SHOCK FOR MANY AND AFFECTS THEIR MENTAL HEALTH AS THEY ARE UNABLE TO GRAPPLE WITH THIS MAJOR CHANGE IN THEIR BODIES. THERE IS ALSO AN ACUTE SHORTAGE OF MEDICAL COUNSELLORS AS WELL AS WOMEN DOCTORS



this major change in their bodies.

There is also an acute shortage of medical counsellors as well as women doctors. Though the biology textbook has a chapter on reproductive health, most teachers in rural areas skip it. This trend was more prevalent in co-educational schools where the teacher was too embarrassed to teach this important chapter to a class full of boys and girls.

Eighteen-year-old Fatima, who travels 20 kilometres daily to a college from Sherghati block of Gaya District, admitted that she wanted to know more about sexual and reproductive health. Fatima said the only information she had gleaned on this subject was from television programmes but that was not enough. Neither was it comprehensive. Under the RKSK, peer educators and Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHCs) are supposed to bridge this information gap. For a population of 1,000 people, there are supposed to be four peer educators, two boys and two girls. The Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), panchayats and local Non-Government Organisations are part of the group to select and train the peer educators or "Sathiyas" as they are called. It is their responsibility to remove all doubts and fears of the adolescents by bringing them to the AFHCs.

Unfortunately, in many villages of rural Bihar, such clinics remain on paper. During a social audit conducted to assess the ground realities, it was found that even where they did exist, the absence of qualified service providers including counsellors mandated under the RKSK, made these clinics mostly non-functional.

One such AFHC is at the Belsand Primary Health Centre in Sitamarhi. The signage on the board outside

mentions the services the clinic offers. The dilapidated board and the faded writing is the first sign of the clinic's present state of health. The clinic doubles up as an Outpatient Department since there is no other room. Adolescents prefer not to come to this clinic primarily because there is an acute shortage of staff and privacy. Apart from a lack of a counsellor dedicated solely for adolescents, the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) was on contract from the sub-centre!

The clinic was supposed to have seven doctors but it had only two. The lack of a woman doctor meant that few abortions were conducted there. According to ANM Rakhee Kumar, the lack of a woman doctor was the reason why very few came to seek abortion services at the clinic. The fact that parents and girls preferred to visit quacks for abortions underlines just how vital functioning AFHCs are for adolescents to access sexual and reproductive information and safe abortion services. Sadly, girls visit trained healthcare workers only when abortions are botched up by the quacks. And sometimes it is too late to help them.

When mothers are well-informed there are better chances that adolescents, both girls and boys, will better understand the changes their bodies are undergoing. In turn, well-informed teenagers are able to help their friends cope with their problems.

The three daughters of Anganwadi Worker (AWW) Anita Devi are different from their friends. They understand the importance of education and the pitfalls of early marriage. They have accurate information on puberty and its related changes. They have taken on the responsibility of sharing this knowledge with their friends.

Adolescents between 10-19 years comprise 22 per cent of Bihar's population. The RKSK strategy was to provide a continuum of care for the health and development of adolescents. Also, envisioned was a convergence model of service delivery by involving ANMs, ASHAs, AWWs and volunteers of the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan.

Several Union Ministries were to provide various components for adolescent development through special programmes like the Integrated Child Development Services. Adolescent health programme managers at the State and district level were to oversee the initiative based on project implementation plans.

Further, at the community level the intervention was to be through peer educators, holding quarterly Adolescent Health Day meetings, providing weekly iron and folic acid supplements and through a Menstrual Hygiene Management scheme. The facility-based intervention was through setting up and strengthening of AFHCs.

Despite such good intentions, the Government has failed in implementation due to the lack of convergence among the various departments and lack of trained service providers and supplies. There is an urgent need to empower frontline health workers like ASHAs, ANMs and AWWs in understanding the voices, aspirations and potential of adolescents and providing accurate information. Adolescents are thirsting for information about themselves and the changes that puberty brings to their bodies and way of thinking. It is time to pay greater attention to their voices and give them the power of information.

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

A vital analytical tool for business decision-making

Financial ratio analysis can be helpful if used in conjunction with proper knowledge of factors affecting a business, and not just mechanically



HIMA BINDU KOTA

Financial ratio analysis is used to convey the fiscal health and performance of an organisation to various stakeholders such as owners, customers, managers, suppliers, vendors, lenders, regulators and competitors. This is done by analysing information available in a firm's financial statements.

This system originally started in banks in the US in the 19th Century to gauge the loan repaying capacity of organisations. It was later extended to investors' decision-making for business purposes using financial ratios. Later, with corpo-

rate organisations emerging, the relevance of ratio analysis was understood even more. After the second World War, with the advent of science and technology and increased market competitiveness, new tools and techniques were added to financial ratio analysis. The series of additions and improvements continued in the 1960s well into the '90s to come to the existing analysis methods.

Over the years, researchers have continually established the utility of financial ratios in investigating various aspects of business like profitability, solvency and efficiency. It provides trends within organisations by analysing fiscal statements over a large number of financial years (FYs). This is extremely useful to understand the direction of growth of an organisation and identify any trends that affect performance. This type of trend analysis is not possible with the data of a single financial year. Ratio analysis is also crucial to benchmark one's perfor-

mance in comparison to industry competitors, identify gaps, assess competitive advantages, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This information can be used by decision-makers to improve the organisation's position in the industry. Ratio analysis is also a tool to discern how efficiently an organisation is using its assets and liabilities and whether the financial resources are over or underutilised. To help managers in their decision-making process, several categories of ratios are used. First, the liquidity quotients like current ratio, quick ratio and cash ratio, measure the ability of an organisation to meet its current liabilities with the use of current assets.

In case an organisation is facing financial trouble in repaying its debt, it is captured in these ratios. Such quotients are used primarily by lenders, bankers and creditors to ascertain an organisation's capacity to honour its financial commitments. Second, solvency ratios mea-

sure the firm's ability to meet any long-term fiscal commitment and the fact that in the long-term, it owns more than it owes. The solvency of firms is measured by the debt-to-equity and debt-to-assets ratios. Profitability ratios are the third category used to measure the capability of an organisation to earn profit when compared to the costs associated with the business.

A higher profitability ratio, compared to itself in the previous year or its competitor, shows an improvement in fiscal strength. Some important profitability ratios that are used in financial analysis are gross profit margin, net profit margin, return on equity, return on assets and return on capital employed.

Fourth, efficiency quotients like the asset turnover ratio, inventory ratio, fixed assets turnover ratio, working capital turnover ratio, payables turnover ratio and receivables turnover ratio measure how effectively an organisation uses its

assets and liabilities to earn revenues and profits. A higher efficiency quotient generally means that the business is more efficient.

Coverage ratios, too, measure an organisation's ability to cover its debt obligations. A higher coverage quotient shows the ease with which it can service borrowings. Some of the frequently used coverage ratios are debt coverage ratio, interest coverage ratio, fixed charge coverage ratio and EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation) coverage ratio. And last but not the least, market ratios help investors to analyse their investments in the organisation and help them predict future stock prices and returns due to dividends. Price-to-earnings, earnings per share, dividend yield and dividend payout ratio are some examples of market ratios.

How is financial ratio analysis changing in the present world order? The trend in today's times is more predictive in nature and the

importance of historical numbers is decreasing by the day. Predictive forecasting models which help in capital budgeting decisions and choices regarding sources of funds and operations have gained more prevalence. The existing business environment is uncertain and volatile with increased focus on people, the planet and sustainability. This is particularly true since the outbreak of the Coronavirus. So, non-pecuniary information that is not reflected in the financial statements is also gaining importance now, which is not replicated in the current ratios used in financial analysis. Globalisation has also increased cross-border transactions, mergers and acquisitions, movement of people and technology transfer, making pecuniary statements more complex than ever. Although financial ratio analysis is important for making decisions, it is not without its limitations. This technique may not give the actual picture when window dressing of

statements occurs against financial and business ethics. Ratio analysis techniques may also not give proper results for comparison when different companies use different valuation techniques for inventory and depreciation. Another aspect which goes against ratio analysis is that it just gives the results in numbers and does not reflect the causation factors, which can make these numbers meaningless. Further research should be done to capture the new-age trends in financial ratio analysis to make them even more relevant.

Financial ratio analysis can be a very important analytical tool for business decision-making if it is used in conjunction with a proper knowledge of factors affecting a business and not just used mechanically. If the limitations are considered, they can be very useful to a savvy business manager.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Amity University, Noida. The views expressed are personal)

AMID POLITICAL CRISIS IN NEPAL

Chinese envoy meets Prachanda

Kathmandu: Chinese ambassador Hou Yanqi on Thursday met Nepal Communist Party's executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', who claims control over the ruling party after removing Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli from the posts of the party's parliamentary leader and chair.

The meeting at Prachanda's residence in Khumaltar - which lasted for about 30 minutes - dwelt on the contemporary political situation after the NCP split. "They discussed the issues of bilateral concern," according to sources close to Prachanda.

Bishnu Rijal, a leader close to the Prachanda-faction, tweeted that "Ambassador of the People's Republic of China Hou Yanqi met Chairman of the Nepal Communist Party Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' this morning. They discussed the issues of bilateral concerns."

Hou's meeting with Prachanda comes two days after she called on President

Bidya Devi Bhandari on Tuesday at the latter's office in Sheelal Niwas.

Hou is said to have discussed the latest political development following the president's move to dissolve the House of Representatives and announce mid-term elections, My Republica reported.

This is not the first time that the Chinese ambassador has intervened in Nepal's internal affairs at a time of crisis.

In May, Hou held separate meetings with President Bhandari, the prime minister and other senior NCP leaders, including Prachanda, when Oli was facing mounting pressure to step down.

In July, she again met a number of top leaders, including the president, prime minister, Prachanda, Madhav Kumar Nepal and Jhala Nath Khanal and Bamdev Gautam to save Oli, who is known for his pro-Beijing leanings.

A number of political party leaders had termed the Chinese

envoy's series of meetings with the ruling party leaders as interference in Nepal's internal political affairs.

Dozens of student activists carrying placards with anti-China slogans had staged a demonstration in front of the Chinese Embassy here to protest against Hou's interference in Nepal's internal affairs.

China's political profile in Nepal has been on the rise in the recent years with billions of dollars of investments under Beijing's multi-billion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), including the building of the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network.

Besides the investments, China's ambassador to Nepal Hou has made open efforts to garner support for Oli.

Meanwhile, the Prachanda-led faction has decided to stage nationwide protests next Tuesday to oppose the dissolution of Parliament.

It was also decided to

organise a rally with the participation of the party's Central Committee members and members of the dissolved House of Representatives from Kathmandu's Maitighar Mandala to the Election Commission office to claim the official party recognition.

Around 315 Central Committee members and nearly 100 members of the House are expected to join the rally.

In a separate meeting of the Central Committee members close to him, Prime Minister Oli announced the removal of Prachanda from the post of the party's Executive Chairman.

The decision comes a day after the Prachanda-led faction of the ruling party elected him as the new parliamentary leader, replacing Prime Minister Oli.

Oli was earlier 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".

The main Opposition Nepali Congress (NC) has also announced to hold a nationwide protest against dissolution of Parliament in all 77 districts including Kathmandu on Monday.

Nepal on Sunday plunged into a political crisis after President Bidya Devi Bhandari dissolved the House of Representatives and announced dates for mid-term elections at the recommendation of Prime Minister Oli, sparking protests from a section of the ruling party and various opposition parties, including Nepali Congress.

The move came after the intra-party feud reached a climax in the ruling party which has been witnessing months-long power tussle between two factions, one led by 68-year-old Oli and another led by 66-year-old Prachanda. **PTI**

UK, EU clinch post-Brexit free trade agreement, hail biggest bilateral deal

London: The deal is done, Downing Street in London and European Union (EU) officials in Brussels confirmed on Thursday as both sides managed to thrash out a post-Brexit free trade agreement (FTA) just days before the December 31 deadline.

Thousands of pages of legal text accompanies the deal, with details of the agreement set to emerge in the course of the next few days, including the final ratification of the FTA by Parliaments on both sides.

"We have got Brexit done and we can now take full advantage of the fantastic opportunities available to us as an independent trading nation, striking trade deals with other partners around the world," Downing Street said in a statement.

"We have signed the first free trade agreement based on zero tariffs and zero quotas that has ever been achieved with the EU. The deal is the biggest bilateral trade deal signed by



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson speaks during a media briefing in Downing Street in London on Thursday **AP**

either side, covering trade worth GBP 668 billion in 2019," it said, adding that the UK has taken back control of its "money, borders, laws, trade and our fishing waters."

"The deal also guarantees that we are no longer in the lunar pull of the EU, we are not bound by EU rules, there is no role for the European Court of

Justice and all of our key red lines about returning sovereignty have been achieved. It means that we will have full political and economic independence on 1st January 2021," Downing Street declared.

On the other side, the EU said it has a good deal to show for the "long and winding road". **PTI**

Daniel Pearl's scapegoat murderer released

Karachi: In a surprise move, a Pakistani court on Thursday ordered the release of British-born al-Qaeda leader Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and his three aides, who were convicted and sentenced in the abduction and murder case of US journalist Daniel Pearl.

A two-judge bench of the Sindh High Court, presided over by Justice KK Agha, directed security agencies not to keep Sheikh and other accused under "any sort of detention" and declared all notifications of the Sindh government related to their detention "null and void".

The court observed that the four men's detention was "illegal".

In April, a two-judge Sindh High Court bench commuted the death sentence of 46-year-old Sheikh to seven years imprisonment. The court also acquitted his three aides who were serving life terms in the case - almost two decades after they were found guilty and jailed.

However, the Sindh government refused to release them and kept them in detention under the Maintenance of Public Order.

Their continuous detention was challenged in the Sindh High Court, which ordered their release. However, it asked to place their names on the no-fly list so that they could not



leave the country. It also directed them to appear before the court whenever summoned.

Pearl, the 38-year-old South Asia bureau chief for The Wall Street Journal, was abducted and beheaded while he was in Pakistan investigating a story in 2002 on the links between the country's powerful spy agency ISI and al-Qaeda.

A three-judge apex court bench headed by Justice Mushir Alam is hearing the appeal by the Sindh government and the family of the slain journalist against the acquittal of Sheikh.

The US has been mounting pressure on Pakistan, demanding justice for Pearl.

Pearl's murder took place three years after Sheikh, along with Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar and Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar, was released by India in 1999 and given safe passage to Afghanistan in exchange for the nearly 150 passengers of hijacked Indian Airlines Flight 814. **PTI**

Africa CDC: New virus variant appears to emerge in Nigeria

Nairobi: Another new variant of the coronavirus appears to have emerged in Nigeria, Africa's top public health official said Thursday, but he added that further investigation was needed.

The discovery could add to new alarm in the pandemic after similar variants were announced in Britain and South Africa, leading to the swift return of international travel restrictions and other measures just as the world enters a major holiday season.

"Its a separate lineage from the UK and South Africa," the head of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, John Nkengasong, told reporters. He said the Nigeria CDC and the African Center of Excellence for Genomics of Infectious Diseases in that country - Africa's most populous - will

be analyzing more samples.

"Give us some time ... It's still very early," he said.

The alert about the apparent new variant was based on two or three genetic sequences, he said, but that and South Africa's alert late last week were enough to prompt an emergency meeting of the Africa CDC this week.

The variant was found in two patient samples collected on Aug. 3 and on Oct. 9 in Nigeria's Osun state, according to a working research paper seen by The Associated Press.

Unlike the variant seen in the UK, "we haven't observed such rapid rise of the lineage in Nigeria and do not have evidence to indicate that the P681H variant is contributing to increased transmission of the virus in Nigeria. However, the relative difference in scale of

genomic surveillance in Nigeria vs the UK may imply a reduced power to detect such changes," the paper says.

The news comes as infections surge again in parts of the African continent.

The new variant in South Africa is now the predominant one there, Nkengasong said, as confirmed infections in the country approach 1 million.

While the variant transmits quickly and viral loads are higher, it is not yet clear whether it leads to a more severe disease, he said.

"We believe this mutation will not have an effect" on the deployment of Covid-19 vaccines to the continent, he said of the South Africa variant.

South Africa's health minister late Wednesday announced an "alarming rate of spread" in that country, with more than 14,000 new cases

confirmed in the past day, including more than 400 deaths. It was the largest single-day increase in cases.

The country has more than 950,000 infections and Covid-19 is "unrelenting," Health Minister Zwelini Mkhize said. **AP**

South Africa reports 14K new cases in single day

Nairobi: South Africa's Health Minister says the country has seen more than 14,000 confirmed new coronavirus cases in the past day, with a positivity rate of 26 per cent, as overall cases edge toward 1 million.

Mkhize says Covid-19 is "unrelenting" and urges South Africans to not be complacent as they enter the holiday season, and he warns that the government will have to review restrictions meant to limit the spread of the virus and "consider further measures." **AP**

Dozens detained in Armenia during anti-Govt protests

Yerevan: Police in the Armenian capital detained dozens of people on Thursday during protests against the country's Prime Minister, who is being pressured to resign over his handling of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Azerbaijan.

Opposition politicians and their supporters have been demanding for weeks that Nikol Pashinyan step down over the Nov. 10 peace deal that saw Azerbaijan reclaim control over large parts of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas. The Russia-brokered agreement ended 44 days of fierce fighting in which the Azerbaijani army routed Armenian forces.

Police detained 77 people following clashes when thousands of protesters converged on center of the capital Yerevan and surrounded the heavily guarded government building. Pashinyan and other cabinet members were able to get into the building despite the unrest.

"Now our goal is that they don't get out until Nikol Pashinyan resigns," Ishkhan Saghatyan, a leading member of the opposition Dashnaksutyun party, was quoted as saying by the Russian state Tass news agency.

Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan but was under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since a separatist war there ended in 1994. **AP**

JAMMU & KASHMIR POLICE HEADQUARTERS
 Phone/Fax No.: 0194-2443031/2443032 (Sgr), 0191-2459029/2459255 (Jmu)
 Website : www.jkpolice.gov.in, E-mail : phqj@jkpolice.gov.in
e-NIT NO: 55 OF 2020
Dated: 17.12.2020

E-tenders are hereby invited from authorized dealers/registered firms dealing with chemical / conventional earthing for supply & execution of earthing at 37 Polnet terminal locations mentioned in Annexure 'A' and as per specification mentioned in annexure 'B' of this e-NIT. The download of NIT shall start on 17.12.2020 at 16:00 hours. Tenders shall be submitted online on J&K e-procurement Portal www.jktenders.gov.in by or before 09.01.2021 up to 18:00 hours.

The tenders (technical bids only) will be opened online on 11.01.2021 at 11:00 hours at Police Headquarters J&K, Jammu. In case of unforeseen circumstances, the date of opening will be next working day or as notified separately. Detailed tender documents with terms and conditions are available on J&K e Procurement Portal www.jktenders.gov.in.

Sd/- (Rayees Mohammad Bhat), IPS
 AIG of Police (Provision/Transport),
 For Director General of Police, J&K Jammu,
 No: DIP/J-9019/20
 Dated: 23.12.2020

UJVN Limited
 H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
 Telephone: 0135-2753808, Fax No.: 0135-2753506
 CIN No. U40101UR2001SC025866, Website: www.ujvn.com

E-TENDER NOTICE Dt. 24-12-2020

The office of Executive Engineer (Maintenance), Maneri Bhali Stage-II, Chinyalisaur (Uttarkashi) invites online bids from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:
Tender No. : NIT-43/EE(M)/MB-II/20-21
Name of Work/Supply/Services : Procurement of Lower bush housings and Flanges for 76 MW Turbines at Dharasu Power House.
Estimated cost : Rs 519120.00 only + GST extra
Date of availability of bid document on website : 26.12.2020
Last date for submission of bids on website : 18.01.2021 upto 16:00 Hrs.
 For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal <http://uktenders.gov.in>.
Executive Engineer (Maintenance)
 "Avoid Wasteful use of Electricity"

INDIAN RAILWAYS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA (Bharat Sarkar)
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (Rail Mantralaya)
RAILWAY BOARD

No. RS(S)/2020/7473 New Delhi, Dated: 22.12.2020
 Sub : E-TENDER NO. 2020IS202 for Procurement of 79,761 MTs Mild/Corten Steel Sheets/Plates/Coils Through e-RA Method

1. On behalf of the President of India, the Executive Director, Railway Stores (S), Railway Board, New Delhi invites e-tender for procurement of 79,761 MT (approx.) of Mild, Corten Steel Sheets, Plates and Coils on Running Contract basis.

2. The interested tenders are advised to visit the website <http://ireps.gov.in> for details of the tender and submission of their e-bids.

3. No manual offers will be accepted against e-tender.

4. Tender will be closed at 15:00 hours on 01.02.2021.

Dy. Director, Railway Stores (S)-I
 Railway Board
 2850/20
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Women's rights activist shot dead in Afghanistan

Kabul: An Afghan women's rights activist was shot and killed by unknown gunmen in northern Kapisa province Thursday, an Interior Ministry official said.

Tariq Arian, a spokesman for the Interior Ministry, said FRESHTA Kohistani was assassinated by unknown gunmen in the Kohistan district of Kapisa. Kohistani's brother was wounded in the attack, he said.

Kohistani, a former provincial council member, organized protests and raised awareness on social media about violence against women in Afghanistan.

The attack was the latest amid relentless violence in Afghanistan even as Taliban and Afghan government negotiators hold talks in Qatar, trying to hammer out a peace deal that could put an end to decades of war. No one imme-

diately claimed responsibility for Thursday's attack, but the Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for multiple attacks in Kabul in recent months, including on educational institutions that killed 50 people, most of them students.

Violence in Afghanistan has spiked even during Taliban and Afghan government peace negotiations, which began in September. The talks, after some recent procedural progress, have been suspended until early January and there is speculation the resumption could be further delayed. At the same time, Taliban militants have waged bitter battles against IS fighters, particularly in eastern Afghanistan, while continuing their insurgency against Government forces and keeping their promise not to attack US and NATO troops. **AP**

Niger votes on Sunday for 1st democratic power transfer

Niamey (Niger): Niger could see its first democratic transition of power since independence in the elections being held on Sunday amid a growing threat from jihadists in the region.

President Mahamadou Issoufou, who has served two terms, is stepping down, paving the way for the first peaceful transfer of power between two elected presidents since independence from France in 1960. Niger has seen four coups.

The transfer would be significant not only in Niger but also in West Africa, where leaders recently have held on for disputed terms in Guinea and Ivory Coast.

More than 7.4 million Nigeriens are registered to vote, and 30 candidates are running for president while 171 seats are being contested in the national assembly.

The next president will have to deal with major problems including extremism, poverty, displacement and corruption.

Attacks by extremists affected local elections two weeks ago as Nigeria-based Boko Haram fighters killed more than 28 people in Toumour in the Diffa region the day before the vote.

Niger also faces increasing attacks from fighters linked to the Islamic State group and al-Qaeda. Thousands of people have been killed and hundreds of thousands have been displaced despite the presence of thousands of regional and international troops. **AP**

Boat capsizes between Uganda and Congo, killing more than 30

Kinshasa (Congo): More than 30 people have died in an overnight capsizing on Lake Albert while trying to return to Congo from Uganda, according to a civil society group.

Most of the victims were trying to return illegally to Congo to avoid coronavirus restrictions, said Vital Aduhanga, president of the Wangongo chieftom in eastern

WESTERN RAILWAY
DEVELOPMENT OF UDHNA NEW GOODS SHED

Notice Inviting Tender: WR-MMCTOCOMM(CGGC)/29/2020- Dated 23.12.2020. Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Ground floor, Mumbai Central, Mumbai-400008. Type of Tender: Open Tender (Single Packet System). Name of the work: Development of Udhna New Goods shed as a Common User facility with maintenance of existing infrastructure and provision of new infrastructure such as Warehouse, open stacking area, truck parking terminal etc. on a PMP model for a period of 05 years. EMD: ₹4,50,800/- Tender Document available: Western Railway's website www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in and at above office. Issuing of Tender Document: On all working days (10.00 hrs. upto 17.00 hrs.). Last date of issue of Corrigendum, if any: Up to 20.01.2021. Date and time of closing of sale of Tender Document: At 17.00 hrs on 27.01.2021. Date and time of receipt of Tender Document: Up to 15.00 hrs on 28.01.2021. Date and time of opening of Tender Document: At 15.30 hrs on 28.01.2021. Place of opening of the Tender: Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Commercial Department, Ground Floor, Mumbai Central, Mumbai - 400 008. 0527
 Like us on: [facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly)

RAJASTHAN STATE GANGANAGAR SUGAR MILLS LIMITED
 Regd. Office: 4th FLOOR, NEHRU SAHAR BHAWAN, BHAWANI SINGH ROAD, JAIPUR-302006
 Tel: 0141-2740841, Fax: 0141-2740676, Email-ID: dgmpurchase.rsgsm@rajasthan.gov.in
NOTICE INVITING BIDS
 e-bids are invited for procurement of below items or Services:-

NIT No.	Particulars	Invited From	Last Date of Submission Of Bids
PUR/35	संस्थान के विभिन्न मरिदरारय एवं उनसे संबंध डिपोज पर लोडिंग व अनलोडिंग कार्य की सेवाओं के उपायन हेतु दर सविदा (UBN:GSM2021GLRC00233)	सेवा प्रदाता व्यक्ति / फर्म / कंपनी।	04.01.2021 Up To 6.00 PM

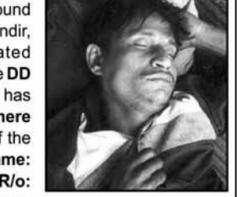
Details may be seen in the Bidding Document which is available on websites rajexcise.gov.in, sppp.rajasthan.gov.in and eproc.rajasthan.gov.in. This bid shall be processed through e-procurement portal <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> of Govt. of Rajasthan. Further updates about the bidding will be available only on <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> therefore interested bidders are advised to visit above website regularly for updates.
 Raj.Samwadd/C20/8180 Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General Public is hereby informed that an one male person was found dead at Parking Hanuman Mandir, Kashmere Gate, Delhi dated 21.12.2020. In this regard a vide DD No. 21A, dated 21.12.2020 has been registered at P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi. The description of the dead body is given as under Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 25 years, Height: 5'5", Complexion: Sallow, Face: Ovel, Built: Strong, Wearing: Black Shirt and Red Nikkar.

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

SHO
 P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi
 DP/810/N/2020 Ph.: 011-23967889, 8750870123



GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT (PURCHASE- Ist.) SHERE-I KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES SOURA, SRINAGAR

Phone NO. Direct : 0194-2403929, (Tele fax:- 0194-2403929)
 (Exchange: 0194-2401013 Ex. 2275), E-mail: ammopurchase1@skims.ac.in

Sub: Rectification of typographical error.
 Ref : This office E-N.I.T. No. SIMS 325 (P 1st) Drugs tender 07 of 2020 Dated:- 12/12/2020.

In continuation to this office corrigendum issued under No. SIMS 325 (P 1st) Drugs Tender 07 of 2020-10159-10165, Dated: 22-12-2020 may read as under :-

► The typographical error occurred to the clause 04 of check list is rectified to the extent: - please read "Scanned copies of Earnest money equivalent of Rs. 1,00,000/- (One Lac) in the shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Director Finance SKIMS Soura Srinagar and tender fee of Rs. 2,000/- (Two Thousand) in the shape of Bank Draft or Pay-in-slip CD-34 J&K Bank SKIMS", in place of Scanned copies of Earnest money equivalent of Rs. 1,00,000/- (One Lac) for each group in the shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Director Finance SKIMS Soura Srinagar and tender fee of Rs. 2,000 /- (Two Thousand) in the shape of Bank Draft or Pay-in-slip CD-34 J&K Bank SKIMS".

No: SIMS 325 (P1st) Drugs Tender 07 of 2020- 10204-210-5844-47.
 Dated: 24.12.2020
 Sd/- Materials Management Officer
 Purchase I, SKIMS

EASTERN RAILWAY
 Tender No. 149-2020-21, dated 24.12.2020. Following e-Tender is invited by Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Howrah from Tenderers having experience of similar nature of work and required financial capabilities including those registered with Irrigation/CPWD/SEB/MES or any public sector undertaking for the following work : Description of Work : Balance work for repair to kutchra drains in Pakur and Kotulpukur for conversion to Puuca covered CC drains in the section of Assistant Engineer/Rampurhat. Approximate Cost : Rs. 68,15,719.50. Earnest Money : Rs. 1,36,300/- Closing Date and Time of tender : 18.01.2021 upto 14.00 hrs. The detail of tender is available at website www.ireps.gov.in
 HWH-168/2020-21
 Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.e.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in

Indian eco recovering fast, says RBI article

GROWTH TO TURN POSITIVE IN Q3

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The economy is coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic's deep abyss faster than most of the predictions, and the growth will enter positive zone in the third quarter of the current financial year, said an article on the 'state of economy' in the RBI Bulletin.

"...More evidence has been turned in to show that the Indian economy is pulling out of COVID-19's deep abyss and is breaking out amidst winter's lengthening shadows towards a place in the sunlight...It is refracting at a pace that beats most prediction," said the article written by the officials of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, the Indian economy dipped by a historic

23.9 per cent in the first quarter of the current financial year. The contraction narrowed down to 7.5 per cent in the second quarter. Quoting reports, the article said, "Real GDP growth is expected to break out into positive territory in Q3 - albeit, to a slender 0.1 per cent." Two important forces are conspiring to bless this turning of the page on the virus, the article said.

"First, India is bending the COVID infection curve: since mid-September, barring localised surges, infections are slanting fashion to support investment and consumption demand," it said.

"The fiscal measures have been sequenced in a designed shift in focus from consumption expenditure in Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGK) to investment expenditure in Atma Nirbhar 2.0 and 3.0," the article added.

Abstracting from the inherent flux in high frequen-

cy indicators, the underlying trend would reveal that the pick-up in momentum of economic activity that commenced with the onset of the second half of 2020-21 is sustained, it noted. "The absence of the dreaded 'second wave' of pandemic in India so far has imparted elevation to this momentum in an environment of supportive macroeconomic policies, spurring a faster unlock and normalisation of the economy," it added.

RBI said the views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the central bank. Authors of the article further said that contractions forecast by various agencies for the year as a whole are already being trimmed, and if the current momentum is maintained, the bounce back expected in the last quarter of the year may be stronger than postulated under baseline assumptions.

India networking market declines 16.4% in Q3: IDC

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

India's networking market which includes ethernet switch, routers, and WLAN (wireless local area network) segments witnessed a 16.4 per cent year-over-year (YoY) decline in the third quarter of this year due to the negative impact of Covid-19, industry tracker International Data Corporation (IDC) said on Thursday.

The decline during the July-September period was majorly characterised by the decline in router revenues.

The routing business in India declined by 40.2 per cent YoY in Q3, IDC said, adding that Cisco leads the router market with a 64.4 per cent share followed by Juniper and Nokia.

The WLAN market in India grew marginally by 3.1 per cent YoY.

The market for Wi-Fi 6 also witnessed significant traction in the Indian market.

While the revenue contribution of Wi-Fi 6 differed by vendors, there was a significant jump in the sales of Wi-Fi 6 access points across all the major vendors in the segment.

With a market share of 29.8 per cent, TP-Link was the market leader in the WLAN segment during Q3, followed by D-Link due to the rapid increase in demand for consumer gateway routers.

The enterprise class WLAN segment was led by Cisco followed by Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE).

"Covid-19 has accelerated the enterprise movement towards cloud which has become the origin of transformation in the networking ecosystem," Sudharsan Raghunathan, Senior Market Analyst, Enterprise Networking, IDC India, said in a statement.

"Many of the networking investments have been around technologies that enable seamless working from anywhere,

enhancing the security framework, extending the corporate network efficiently, easier manageability and troubleshooting, and bringing back employees into the office premises safely."

Switching had a YoY decline of 8.8 per cent in Q3, IDC said, adding that much like the routing segment, the decline in the ethernet switch segment was attributed to the decline in investments from service providers.

Cisco continued to dominate the ethernet switch market with a 59.8 per cent share during Q3, followed by Huawei and Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE), IDC said.

However, according to an IDC India forecast, increased adoption of emerging technologies such as cloud, Internet of Things (IoT), mobility, etc. would drive incremental revenues in the coming years. IDC also expects large investments for 5G rollouts in the next couple of years.

IN BRIEF

N RAIL GM ADDRESSES VENDOR DEVELOPMENT PROG

New Delhi: Ashutosh Gangal, General Manager, Northern Railway addressed a vendor development programme of Indian Railways organised by Confederation of Industry (CI) Chandigarh Chapter today through video conference. In his key note address he said that, Indian Railways is the principal mode of transportation for Passenger as well as Freight segment in India and plays a vital role in development of Industry, as also the larger economy. To provide cost-effective, safe, prompt, and timely services to meet the requirements, key goals of Indian Railways are Safety, augmenting capacity, Modernization of Infrastructure and making the Railways as financially self sustainable.

HOME SALES REVIVE, RISE 20% IN OCT: PROPEQUITY

New Delhi: Housing sales in October increased 20 per cent in October on a month-on-month basis across the top seven cities, to 27,061 units, said a report by ProEquity. In September, a total of 22,469 housing units were sold. Despite the overall growth, the NCR was the only major market where the sales decreased by 3 per cent. Other cities including Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and Pune saw sales going up by 16 per cent, 3 per cent, 24 per cent, 15 per cent, 35 per cent and 13 per cent respectively. The data further showed that new launches rose by 28 per cent during the same period to 18,573 units from 14,567 units as developers launched several projects after the lockdown was lifted.

DCIL CALLS START-UPS TO AUGMENT ITS EFFORTS IN TECHNOLOGY UPLIFT

New Delhi: NASSCOM CoE - IoT & AI Vizag and AP Innovation Society organized 'Re-imagining DCIL at 4.0' webinar to showcase the opportunities present for technology startups at India's premier dredging company Dredging Corporation of India Limited (DCIL), and how a startup can avail of it. Technology Startups from across the spectrum participated and learned about the opportunities present. DCIL listed opportunities for the startups that can help the company serve the ports in a better manner.

DoT asks e-commerce sites to pull down listings of mobile signal boosters

PTI ■ MUMBAI

With mobile network boosters becoming a major reason for poor service quality, the Department of Telecom has asked online sellers to pull down listings of such equipment, an official statement said on Thursday.

The DoT has also carried out raids across multiple locations in South Mumbai over the last two days which led to the removal of 68 illegal boosters (or repeaters), it added.

The action comes amid frequent complaints of poor network quality in various parts of the country.

"Online platforms have also been issued notices to

remove listing of illegal repeaters from their website and such companies have responded positively," Amit Gautam, who is part of DoT's Wireless Monitoring Organisation, was quoted as saying in the statement.

"We started bringing down the illegal repeaters in November. Raids were conducted on December 22 and 23 as well.

Total 68 illegal mobile signal boosters were brought down. We could see they were all China made devices with no safety standard mark..." Gautam said.

He added the department will file FIR against vendors selling these network repeaters.

Sensex soars 529 pts as RIL, HDFC twins shine

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity indices marched higher for the third session on the trot on Thursday, propelled by Reliance Industries and financial stocks, amid a positive trend in global markets on prospects of a Brexit trade deal.

A sharp jump in the rupee and persistent foreign fund inflows added to the momentum here, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex surged 529.36 points or 1.14 per cent to close at 46,973.54. The broader NSE Nifty zoomed 148.15 points or 1.09 per cent to 13,749.25.

Axis Bank topped the Sensex gainers' chart, spurring 3.04 per cent, followed by Sun Pharma, ONGC, Reliance

Industries (RIL), HDFC, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finance and Kotak Bank.

Index heavyweights RIL, HDFC and HDFC Bank accounted for over half of the Sensex's gains. On the other hand, Infosys, Nestle India, IndusInd Bank, Dr Reddy's, HCL Tech and Bajaj Finserv were among the main laggards, dropping up to 1.32 per cent. During the holiday-truncated week, Sensex inched up 12.85 points or 0.02 per cent, while Nifty slipped 11.30 points or 0.08 per cent. Markets will be closed on Friday on account of Christmas. Global equities extended gains as Britain and European Union neared a Brexit deal ahead of the Christmas weekend, cheering participants.

Rupee rallies 21 paise to 73.55 per US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Climbing for the second straight session, the rupee started up 21 paise to end at 73.55 against the US dollar on Thursday amid sustained foreign fund inflows and positive domestic equities.

A weak greenback overseas and expectations of the UK and EU reaching a Brexit deal very soon also enthused participants, traders said.

FASTag to be mandatory for vehicles from Jan 1, says Gadkari

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

FASTags will be mandatory for vehicles from January 1, 2021, Union minister Nitin Gadkari said on Thursday.

FASTags, which facilitate electronic payment of fee at toll plazas, was introduced in 2016. Making the tags compulsory would also help in ensuring that vehicles pass seamlessly through the toll plazas as fee payment would be done electronically.

Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and MSMSE Nitin Gadkari has announced that FASTag is being made mandatory for all vehicles in the country from the new year, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

said in a statement.

Addressing a virtual function on Thursday, he also said that FASTag will be useful for commuters as they will not have to stop at toll plazas for cash payments. Besides, it will also help save time and fuel, he added.

FASTag was launched in 2016 and four banks together issued nearly a lakh of them. By 2017, their numbers went up to seven lakh and more than 34 lakh FASTags were issued in 2018.

In November this year, the ministry issued a notification also making FASTag mandatory from January 1, 2021 for old vehicles or that were sold before December 1, 2017.

RBI to conduct simultaneous purchase and sale of Govt securities next week

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Thursday said it will conduct simultaneous purchase and sale of government securities under open market operations (OMOs) for an aggregate amount of Rs 10,000 crore each next week.

The decision was taken after a review of the current liquidity and financial conditions, RBI said in a statement.

Simultaneous purchase and sale of government securities under OMOs, popularly known as Operation Twist, involves purchasing G-Sec (government securities) of longer maturities and selling equal amount of G-Sec of shorter maturities.

RBI cancels licence of Subhadra Local Area Bank

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The RBI on Thursday said it has cancelled the licence of Subhadra Local Area Bank, Kolhapur, as its affairs were conducted in a "manner detrimental" to the interests of its present and future depositors.

The bank had breached the minimum net worth requirement for two quarters in the financial year 2019-20, the RBI said in a statement. However, Subhadra Local Area Bank has enough liquidity to pay all its depositors, it added.

"Public interest would be adversely affected if it is allowed to continue to do the business in the manner in which it is functioning", the RBI said, adding that the general character of the management is considered prejudicial to the interest of the present and future depositors.

The licence issued to Subhadra Local Area Bank stands cancelled to carry out banking business from the close of business on December 24, 2020.

Consequent to the cancellation of the licence, the bank is prohibited from conducting the business of banking or any additional business envisaged under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 with immediate effect.

Central Bank of India to exit housing finance biz; to sell JV stake for ₹160 cr

New Delhi: State-owned Central Bank of India will exit housing finance joint venture by selling its entire stake of over 64% to Centrum Housing Finance for ₹160 crore. "This is to inform that the bank has entered into a binding agreement to divest its entire equity stake of 64.40% i.e. 1,61,00,000 shares of face value

of ₹10 each in Cent Bank Home Finance Ltd (CBHFL), to Centrum Housing Finance, subject to approvals from regulatory authorities," Central Bank of India said in a BSE filing. According to a separate filing by Centrum Capital, the parent of Centrum Housing, the cost of acquisition is about ₹160 crore on cash basis.

GST collection should be highest in UP: CM Yogi

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh, being the most populous state in the country, should register the highest collection of Goods and Services Tax (GST), Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Thursday and directed officials to make efforts to raise revenue receipts.

He said at a review meeting that strict action should be

taken against those involved in revenue theft.

"UP is the most populous state in the country and has maximum consumers. Therefore, the GST collection should also be the highest here," the chief minister said.

He said accountability of officials concerned should be fixed at all levels keeping in view revenue receipts.

Petrol, diesel prices remain unchanged

New Delhi: Petrol and diesel prices remained unchanged on Thursday as oil marketing companies continued to maintain a wait and watch stance amid a stable global oil market.

Accordingly, the pump price of petrol remained at Rs 83.71 a litre and diesel Rs 73.87 a litre in Delhi on Thursday.

Forging industry seeks ban on steel, iron ore Oexports

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The forging industry on Thursday urged the government to ban steel and iron ore exports, as domestic steel prices shot up 25-30% in the last three months due to increased exports and squeezed supply in the local market. Forging steel manufacturers have hiked prices by 10

per cent over the last six months and now looking for a further 15% increase. The initial increase was impossible to sustain, and the further hike in prices will prove to be disastrous, Association of Indian Forging Industry said in a release. As much as 80% of the ₹34,000 crore domestic forging industry comes from the automobile industry.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that this person Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 35 Years, Sex: Male, Height: 5'2", Built: Thin, Complexion: Shallow, Face: Long, Wearing: White Shirt, Black Jacket & Army Colour Pant, was found dead at Pusta Near Rain Basera Jamna Bazaar, Kashmir Gate, Delhi on 19.12.2020. In this regard a DD No. 12A, U/s 174 Cr.PC dated 19.12.2020 has been registered at PS. Kashmir Gate, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following.

SHO P.S. Kashmir Gate, Delhi DP/813/N/2020(UIDB) Ph.: 011-23967889, 8750870123

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General Public is hereby informed that one girl Namely: Jyoti, D/o: Kirpal, R/o: H.No. B-69, Gram Sabha Colony, Village Nilothi, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since 02.12.2020 from the area of P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 1137/20 U/s 363 IPC dated 06.12.2020 has been registered at PS. Nihal Vihar, Delhi. The description of the missing girl are as under: Age: 17 years, Height: 5', Face: Oval, Complexion: Wheatish, ID Mark: A mole on nose, Wearing: Red colour kurta, blue colour salwar and blue colour slipper in her feet. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.

Website: http://cbi.nic.in E-mail Id - cbc@cbi.gov.in Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641 Fax No. 011-24368639 DP/572/OD/2020 Tel.No. 011-25946710, 7065036129

SHO P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi

BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited for following jobs from all the bidders.		Date: 24.12.2020
NIT No.	Brief Item Description	Due Date & Time of Submission
CMC/BR/2020-21/SV/AR/AN/888	REGISTRATION/REVALIDATION OF INSURANCE BROKER FOR PROVIDING SERVICES RELATED TO INSURANCE IN BRPL	07.01.2021 12:00 HRS

Cost of each Tender Document : ₹ 1180/- (Inclusive GST)
For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submission of tender documents etc, please visit our website www.bsesdelhi.com Head (Contracts & Materials)
Regd. Off.: BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019 | Corporate Identification No.: U40109DL2001PLC111527 Telephone No. : +91 11 4920 9744 | E-mail: brpl.eauction@relianceada.com | Website : www.bsesdelhi.com

Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board

Headquarter, 4, Institutional Area, Jhalana Doongri, Jaipur-302004
Phone : 0141-2716814, 2716832 e-mail : member-secretary@rpcb.nic.in

नीलामी सूचना

मण्डल में अनुपयोगी सामान (कूर्सी, टेबिल, अलमारी, जेडरट कूलर, वाटर कूलर, लोहे की ढंगल, लकड़ी के दरवाजे, एयरकन्डीशनर, छत के पंचे, वाहनों के पुराने पार्ट्स, टायर दूध इत्यादि एवं अन्य अनुपयोगी सामान) की नीलामी की जाती है। नीलामी की तिथि 15.01.2021 समय प्रातः 11:00 बजे निर्धारित है। उपस्थित बोलीदाता/उनके प्रतिनिधि के समक्ष बोली लगाकर, सामान नीलाम किया जावेगा। नीलाम किए जाने वाले सामान का प्रस्ताविक मूल्य राशि रुपये 26,59,607/- है। (रुपये छम्बीस लाख उनसठ हजार छः सौ सात मात्र) है। विस्तृत विवरण राज्य मण्डल की वेब साइट (http://environment.rajasthan.gov.in/rpcb) पर उपलब्ध है।
राज.संवाद/सी/20/8155 सदस्य सचिव

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Sanjay Joshi/ Asha Joshi/ LBDEL00004351455	Flat No. E- 903 At Ninth Floor, Skytech Colours Avenue, Gh-01/C Sector 10, GR, Noida (West)/ December 24, 2020	September 25, 2020/ Rs. 24,39,835/-	Del/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

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

(An Autonomous Trust under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India)
11, Mansingh Road, New Delhi 110 001

Shri Devendra Swaroop Fellowship

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) inviting application for a Fellowship in the memory of Shri Devendra Swaroop to study "Bhartiya Gyan Parampara" (Indian Knowledge Tradition). The Fellowship will be for a period of two years. Further details; like Remuneration, Age limit, Essential Educational Qualifications, Experience, Job Responsibilities are available at our website <http://ignca.gov.in/>. Last date of application is 15 January, 2021 davp 09118/11/0003/2021 HoD (KN)

SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL



General public is hereby informed that one girl namely Farim, D/o Mohd. Salim, R/o House No. WZ-186 Village Khyala, New Delhi. Age 14 yrs., Height 5', Fair complexion, Strong built, Round face, wearing cream colour suit-salwar and red colour hawai chappal in feet is missing since 15.12.2020 at about 1 pm from their house. In this regard a case FIR No. 1029/2020 Dt. 16.12.2020 U/s 363 IPC has been registered at PS Khyala, New Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this missing girl may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in Fax: 011-23011334 Ph.: 011-23014046, 011-23015218 DP/299/W/2020 S.H.O., PS Khyala, New Delhi Ph.: 011-28335686-96

Trend Blazer

'I am here because of fans'

Actor ANIL KAPOOR is happy with the response he is getting for his performance in the new digital film, *AK vs AK*.

"Being loved for what you love doing is the greatest feeling ever! I am here because of the fans and their undying support. Without them we are nothing. And the appreciation *AK vs AK* is getting is so inspiring, I can't even describe it," said he.

The film stars Anurag Kashyap along with Anil and also has cameos of the actor's children, Sonam and Harshvardhan Kapoor, and brother Boney Kapoor. The cast members play themselves, although the film is a work of fiction.



'This Christmas, I would like to urge everyone to find Santa within yourself. One has to

continue to work hard, be patient, resilient and just be ready to face the challenges that life throws at us. Sometimes the external circumstances may not be in our control but the desire to be happy should overpower everything else.'

—Tushar Kapoor

Actor AKSHAY OBEROI has looked back at his debut film *Isi Life Mein...*, which released a decade ago on this day. He says the work he is doing today is largely because of his first film.



"My whole life I had dreamt about being on a film set. I always wanted to act, and there I was doing what I loved. There were a lot of young people and so there was young energy on that film. I have the fondest memories of that time. I found my voice then," said Akshay.

He is now awaiting the streaming of his web series *Inside Edge* Season 3.

Gadot replies to Hrithik Roshan

Actor GAL GADOT has replied to Bollywood actor HRITHIK ROSHAN, who had earlier praised her for essaying *Wonder Woman* perfectly in the new release, *Wonder Woman 1984*. Gadot said she is glad that Hrithik had enjoyed the film.

"Just watched *Wonder Woman*. Exhilarating experience. My childhood crush (WW) and my first love (films) together with the BIG cinema IMAX experience! Doesn't get any better than this. Thank you Gal Gadot for being the perfect *Wonder Woman*. And congratulations to the entire team!" Hrithik had tweeted.

To this, Gadot has replied, "So glad you enjoyed the film Hrithik! Wishing you and yours a happy holiday."

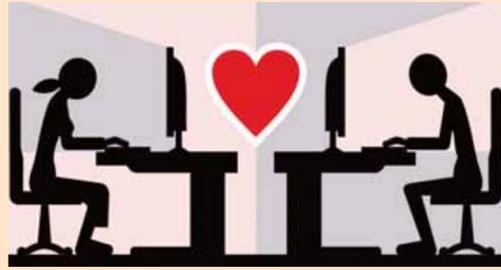


What will be the future of romance?

With 2020 upending just about every aspect of our lives, new and unexpected dating trends have emerged. A dating app reveals that people are feeling a strong desire to build trust online before taking their relationship offline

This year has upended our lives in unexpected ways. Bumble's most recent data reveals that over 40 per cent of daters in India share they are no longer confident that they know how to date successfully. And 70 per cent of singles say that they are not comfortable navigating dating in 2020, while one in two claim they are ready to go on a date in-person. Throughout this turbulent year, meaningful online connections reigned supreme globally, albeit in new and different ways. In 2020, we've seen an increased need for social connections since March when the lockdown and social distancing restrictions began in the country, evidenced by the fact that over 540 million messages have been sent on the dating app.

TRENDING TOPIC
The most popular topic of



conversation in 2020 was 'working from home' as 57 per cent of daters discussed this as their new normal.

MAKING THE FIRST MOVE
People are diving right in to make the first move with their profile prompts. The most popular prompt used in India this year was: Beach or mountains... Other top popular prompts were: Nightclub

or Netflix... After work you can find me... Favourite quality in a person...

EMOJIS OF CHOICE
An emoji says a thousand words. The heart wants what it wants! The most used emoji on profiles was the classic red heart. This goes to show that even during a pandemic, single people looked to find meaningful connections.

WHEN THE STARS ALIGN

Zodiac signs continue to be a hot topic among the users of the dating app. So which of the signs were most likely to find love this year? It was Leo. They had the most matches of any star sign, followed by Scorpio and Libra.

PHOTO MUST HAVES

The more photos you have, the more chances you'll match. Two in three (63 per cent) of the users uploaded photos of them in their everyday lives on their profiles, while selfies (62 per cent) took the second spot.

THE ERA OF SLOW DATING

More than ever, people are feeling a strong desire to build trust online before taking the relationship offline, leading to more virtual communication. More than 40 per cent of the users are slowing down the 'get

to know you phase.' Women are now more likely to focus on the qualities in a partner, ultimately putting less pressure on themselves in dating.

People are having more quality conversations online, known as "pre-dates", averaging roughly 20 minutes.

THE RISE OF NEW DAWN DATERS

One in two, over 46 per cent of people are likely to be the "new dawn daters." The biggest driver of breakups was the inability to see a partner (46.45 per cent). One in three people (29 per cent) also said that the pandemic has precipitated existing issues.

THE COVID CONVERSATION

The pandemic and our health and safety concerns have been a trending topic of conver-

sation for single people everywhere. In this new landscape, people are learning to navigate the new rules of dating and are trying new ways to meet others virtually.

As we look ahead to 2021, there's no doubt the dating landscape will continue to evolve. Here are a few predictions:

◆ Dating in-person is definitely not off the table with one in two people claiming that they are ready to date in-person.

◆ People are increasingly open to virtual dating as well with one in five up for using video chats.

◆ Dating will ramp up in early 2021 as 69 per cent of the users say that they are planning to use dating apps just as much as they do now, if not more through Valentine's Day 2021.



Be your loved one's Santa

Christmas brings joy, lifting the spirits with cheer and hope. With a tough year coming to a close, there's plenty to celebrate. Here's a curated list of goodies to choose from for that perfect gift for your loved one

GIFTS FOR MEN

□ Hidesign's diary: Hidesign's in-house illustrator Shreya Swamy presents quirky sketches and humorous one liners in a beautiful, handcrafted soft-suede leather bound 2021 diary, which is sure a joyful way to pen down your thoughts. Priced at ₹3,395.

□ Diesel: Experiment with these big and bold watches which are the latest addition to your wardrobe. Priced at ₹13,495.

□ Six-part shaving system kit: Bombay Shaving Company has curated a six-part shaving system kit, designed for a comfortable, close and joyous shave. The pack includes a precision safety razor with mild and aggressive clamp, feather blades, pre shave scrub, shaving cream, imitation hair badger brush, post shave balm, razor sheath and shave dab. Priced at ₹3,675.

□ Portronics: A prominent leader in the innovative and portable digital product market launches Harmonics 300 — the newest addition to their existing line of premium wireless headsets in two different colours — Blue and Black. Priced at ₹2,999.

□ MyRun: Even the smallest space can become a never-ending road with MyRun; an infinity run, with no noise to distract you from your goals. Synchronise it with your tablet to make the most of your purchase. All thanks to personalised training programmes, unique workout experiences and feedback on your running in real time.

□ Christmas capsule collection from Numero Uno: Numero Uno launched a new capsule collection for Christmas which features sweaters and sweatshirts in colours of green, white and reds. The Christmas themed red and white stripe pullover is made of 100 per cent knitted



cotton and can be paired with denims for an elegant look. Priced starts at ₹1,599.

□ Prada sunglass: The glasses hit the catwalk at the Fall/Winter 2020 Prada Men's fashion show. The frame's rigorous design is revisited with larger volumes and soft lines. The style stays true to the fine combinations of acetate layers that highlight the lens profiles, creating a distinctive three-dimensional effect. Available in versions of Black, Matte Black with Pink, Crystal Amber with White and Crystal Grey with White.

□ Haircare range by Bare Anatomy: With high quality ingredients ethically sourced from all over the world, Bare Anatomy's complete range is sure to impart instant shine and nourishment to tangled and lifeless locks during winters. Priced at ₹1,800 (for a kit of mask, shampoo and conditioner).

□ Bombay Baking Company: The exquisite and much sought-after patisserie-deli at the JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu cele-

brates the joy of gifting by offering patrons customisable Christmas hampers. Enhance your Christmas cheer as you treat your taste buds to the signature flavour of the festive spirit with the assortment of signature Christmas cakes, desserts and savory goodies handcrafted by our master chefs. The hampers can be customised and guests can select from decadent delicacies such as Christmas plum cake, chocolate walnut fudge, dundee cake, Christmas pudding, chocolate santa, handcrafted bonbons, Christmas cookies, chocolate Yule log, gingerbread house and more. Priced at ₹4,000 plus taxes.

□ Alexa: You can now listen to podcasts available through Spotify and Apple Podcasts on their Echo devices. Customers can enable the podcast providers by linking their accounts in the Alexa app. Once enabled, they can start listening on their device.

□ Time to wine down: The hamper offers an exciting combination of the best paired cheeses and wine to add more delight to every occasion. It is loaded with a fine selection of Happy Milk organic cheeses such as mozzarella, chilli, garlic, cheddar and pepper, and best paired with a bottle of Chianti Classico. Priced at ₹6199.

□ Glenfiddich limited edition pack 2020: Glenfiddich introduces the limited-edition gift pack for 2020 with their iconic 12-year-old expression. Embracing change since 1887 is the genesis of the pack design. The idea emanates from the realisation of change, which is imperative to welcoming the unknown, risk taking and addressing the constant need to forge ahead, an ideal gifting option for Christmas and New Year. Price at ₹6,700 (Mumbai) and ₹3,860 (Delhi).

GIFTS FOR WOMEN

□ Kiko Milano holiday gems diamond dust lipstick: Treat yourself to a look guaranteed to make you feel holiday ready or pick from a range of gifts your friends will be delighted to unwrap and treasure, all packaged in rich emerald green and gold packaging inspired by decorations and ornaments. Price range starts at ₹2,990.

□ Spread the love by The Body Shop: Meet this year's line-up of special edition festive fragrances: New Winter Jasmine, Festive Berry and Warm Vanilla. Priced starts from ₹725.

□ Athleisure by ASICS: With a nip in the air, it's important to keep the love for running alive while bearing the cold. And, ASICS has exactly what you need to keep your running shoes on with their new winter apparel.

□ Ultra facial cream by Kiehl's: Celebrate this holiday season with Kiehl's best-selling face cream. With its unique lightweight texture, it provides lasting 24-hour hydration for softer, smoother and visibly healthier-looking skin.

□ Sparkling edition by Taj Palace, New Delhi: Sparkling edition hamper includes Christmas special traditional dundee cake, traditional plum cake, artisanal homemade cashew and raisin chocolates, assorted french macarons, freshly baked cookies, Christmas candles, luxury accessories and collectibles. All this is elegantly packed in a handcrafted basket. Guests can choose from this exquisite assortment to make their very own customise festive composition. Priced at ₹25,000 plus taxes.

□ Christmas trees and plants by Ferns N Petals: The feeling of festivity is incomplete without the well-decorated Christmas trees that symbolise eternal life

and growth. Gift DIY kit and gemstone wishing trees along with a range of traditional real plants such as red and white poinsettia, Christmas tree, araucaria, cyprus etc. Price ranges from ₹449 till ₹2,299.

□ Elan by Daniel Wellington: The collection was initially inspired by Daniel Wellington's most popular accessories, the classic bracelet and classic ring. After some tweaks and modifications, the selection includes earrings, bracelets, rings and necklaces, available in rose gold or silver. This introduces completely new characteristics to the realm of Daniel Wellington and is a visual embodiment of energy, style and enthusiasm. Price: ₹4,999 onwards.

□ Starbucks tumbler: #CarryTheMerry from the comfort of your homes with an array of festive cups, mugs, tumblers and bottles, inspired by the themes of Christmas. The cosy and festive holiday beverages can be enjoyed with the vibrant holiday merchandise collection.

□ The Rug Republic cushions: Give a touch of colour and charm to your living space while providing great functionality with our versatile 'Tigris' cushion. Hand woven in cotton then screen printed. Price: ₹1,500 to ₹2,500.

□ Panasonic's nanoe™ hairdryer: The innovative product now arrives in India catering to the growing grooming-at-home needs of consumers. Based on nanotechnology, the hair dryer uses nanoe™ to ultrafine water particles that penetrates into hair cuticles to maintain the moisture balance of the hair and scalp. The platinum ions coat the hair surface and tighten the cuticles to make them UV rays resilient for healthy and lustrous hair. Priced at ₹6,990.

—IANS

3 IDIOTS IS MY VISITING CARD: MADHAVAN



Actor R Madhavan says that the 2009 blockbuster *3 Idiots* is and will always be the most important film of his life and career for its relatability and impact on the viewers, especially students.

The actor turned nostalgic as the film will complete 11 years of release date on Christmas Day, and shared how much he is respected even today for being a part of the cast.

"*3 Idiots* will always be the most important film of my career and my life because of the impact it has with the youth world over. The film for me is the visiting card to any industry I go to, they all look at me with reverence and respect because of that one film all over the world, irrespective of whether they understand Hindi or not. I don't think any other film has touched that level of importance in my life," he said.

In the film, Madhavan's character aspires to be a wildlife photographer but studies engineering owing to his father's insistence.

Recalling his character in the film, the actor shared, "The role of Farhan Qureshi and the conversation which he had with his father is the kind of conversation every youngster has had with their parents one time or the other. The

character has become completely synonymous with the struggle of the younger generation to prove their individuality and because of that it'll always be known as Farhan from *3 Idiots*."

Directed by Rajkumar Hirani, the film stars Aamir Khan, Sharman Joshi, Boman Irani, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Omi Vaidya and Mona Singh in key roles, along with Madhavan.

The celebration of Christmas and the Gregorian New Year is a more recent phenomenon in India and are a British legacy. Obviously, the more recent globalisation of our world, the mass media and a much more interconnected world have also played a major role in promoting these two events.

In most Western Christian cultures, the Christmas meal consists of two meals — the dinner of the December 24 evening and the lunch of December 25. Both these meals are traditionally enjoyed in the intimacy of private homes and great care and attention is given to their preparation which can, in some cases, take several days. This includes the selection of the menu, purchasing of the ingredients, the actual cooking, setting a festive table and serving the food.

On Christmas Eve, the meal is followed by attendance at the midnight mass and children cannot wait to go to bed in order to allow time for Santa Claus to bring the presents...

As to the type of food served during Christmas, it is always associated with traditions. Since you come together in family, naturally you look for the tastes and flavours of your childhood, a time when the magic and mysteries of the gifts appearing under the Christmas tree still marvelled you. In most cases there is little appetite for change and innovation. On the contrary, one looks for "old" grandmother recipes hidden in some notebook in the attic or carefully kept in the memory box or the library.

In the Northern Hemisphere, Christmas falls in the wintertime and understandably the weather dictates to a large extent the type of foods which are served during the celebrations. It is not uncommon that the Christmas menus are copious, not highly recommended for calory-conscious individuals or alternatively calling for serious workout and restraint after the celebrations.

In more recent times, with greater professional mobility and the reduction of the size of families it has become more difficult for the extended families to come together for the celebrations and there is an increasing trend to celebrate the two Christmas meals outside one's home in restaurants where you meet with friends. Though still largely a "traditional" meal, nevertheless more innovations are happening in these "out of home" settings.

In European countries, a large variety of meals are served for Christmas. Often, they express not only food but also contain a symbolism. For instance, in Bulgaria, the Christmas meal may consist of seven, nine or 12 courses which represent the seven days of the week, nine months of pregnancy or the 12 months of the year. In South of France, 13 desserts are served which represent the 12 apostles and the Christ. In Hungary, it is not only the food which is festive but also the tablecloth which is of great significance.

In several countries, there are products specially made for the Christmas and New Year celebrations. In Germany and Austria hot wine is an integral part of the Christmas landscape. In Italy, the delicious Panettone and Pandoro announce the arrival of the festive season. In France, the Bûches (Yule Logs) and the incomparable Galette des Rois are deeply associated with the celebrations. And obviously, Christmas Pudding, Plum Cake and the Christmas Biscuits are very popular in English speaking countries.

In my home country France too, there are varieties in terms of Christmas foods, depending on the region where you come



Set your table at home

This year, the size of family gatherings will be drastically reduced, restaurants will see limited dine-ins, home delivery of Christmas meals will play a significant role and we will all have more time to revisit our grandmother's recipe book



'THE FOOD SERVED DURING CHRISTMAS IS ALWAYS ASSOCIATED WITH TRADITIONS. SINCE YOU COME TOGETHER IN FAMILY, NATURALLY, YOU LOOK FOR THE TASTES AND FLAVOURS OF YOUR CHILDHOOD'

from. In some regions fish is the centrepiece of the menu whereas in others meat is what we call the "plat de resistance" or the main dish. There are though, some elements which are common to all regions such as seafood, particularly oysters and foie gras which belong on the table of all those who can afford it. And naturally, one of the all-time favourites all over is the roasted turkey with the secrets of the stuffing which are transmitted from generation to generation.

With changing eating habits, some fundamentally revolutionary such as veganism, many of the traditional Christmas foods are put in question — even though for a small but growing minority — though new lasting creations have yet to emerge.

In India, we observe a microcosm where the different Christmas traditions and foods, mainly originating from Europe find their expression. The increasing commercialisation of the festivities is reinforcing and accelerating this process. Households with affinity to one or the other European country find inspiration in their Christmas food menus as do restaurants which are specialised in serving European or American foods.

Like all other aspects of life, Christmas 2020 and New Year 2021 have been and will be affected by the COVID crisis. This year, the size of family gatherings will be drastically reduced, restaurants will see the number of dine-ins restrained, home delivery of Christmas meals will play a significant role and we will all have more time to revisit that recipe book handed over from our grandmother and try our hands on one of its Christmas secrets.

(The writer Kazem Samandari is Executive Chairman, L'Opéra.)

DIAL TO DINE

A biryani per second and home-cooked meals were the most loved items on a food app this year

As contactless food became the norm in the pandemic-hit year, online delivery platform Swiggy on Tuesday said that some form of biryani was ordered more than once every second while home cooked food was one of the most ferried items in 2020.

its place as India's favourite dish. For every veg biryani, there were six chicken biryani orders. Over three lakh new users made their Swiggy debut by ordering in a chicken biryani, according to the data from fifth edition of Swiggy's annual 'StatEATstics' analysis. "While we delivered five times



as many orders to 'Home' addresses compared to 'Work' addresses between January and March, that number rose to nine times as many home orders versus work orders in April and May," the report mentioned.

Missing office cappuccinos and masala chais while working from home, lakhs of hardworking Swiggy users ordered varieties of tea and coffee. Swiggy also delivered over two lakh pani puri orders post lockdown.

The company launched 'Swiggy HealthHub' in August, a curation of healthy food items. While users in the National Capital Region (NCR) ordered the healthiest meals, Bangaloreans showed a high resolve to get healthy. At 130 per cent, the city saw the highest increase in healthy food

orders on Swiggy HealthHub. People ate an average of 342 calories for dinner. Lunches ranged at under 350 calories, while breakfast, the day's most important meal, saw people consume an average of 427 calories.

Swiggy Instamart, its instant grocery and essentials delivery service, delivered over 75,000 kgs of onion. "Our shortest delivery request came in from someone in Bengaluru and spanned a 600 metres to collect an empty water can from their home and exchange it for a full one at the store. Meanwhile, our longest delivery spanned 39 kms in Kolkata and involved the delivery of a SIM card," Swiggy informed.

—IANIS

R E C I P E S



GINGERBREAD MEN BISCUITS

WHAT YOU NEED

- Flour: 2100 gm
- Baking powder: 60 gm
- Brown sugar: 1020 gm
- Garam masala: 9 gm
- Ginger powder: 5 gm
- Egg: 300 gm
- Honey: 600 gm
- Butter: 600 gm

METHOD

- Take a bowl and mix well butter and brown sugar.
- Add eggs and honey little by little.

- Then add flour, baking powder, garam masala, ginger powder and mix all the ingredients for a minute.
- Put it for rest at a temperature of 4 degree Celcius for 10 hours.
- Pre heat the oven at a temperature of 160 degree celsius.
- Cut the biscuits into a shape.
- Bake the biscuits for 15 minutes.
- Leave the biscuits to cool down for 30 minutes.
- Finish by decorating with royal icing.

Courtesy: L'Opéra Culinary Head, Amit Kumar.

MULLED WINE XMAS SANGRIA

WHAT YOU NEED

- Slow cooked red wine: 150 ml
- Whole spices: 150ml
- Triple Sec: 30 ml
- Cognac/Spiced rum: 30 ml
- Orange peel

To garnish:

- Dehydrated Orange chip/Cinnamon stick and Star anise

METHOD

- Slow boil wine along with triple sec, spiced rum or cognac and all whole spice except bay leaf.

Courtesy: The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel, Delhi.



CREEPY COFFEE

WHAT YOU NEED

- Smirnoff espresso vodka: 60 ml
- Lime juice: 10 ml
- Coke: 150 ml

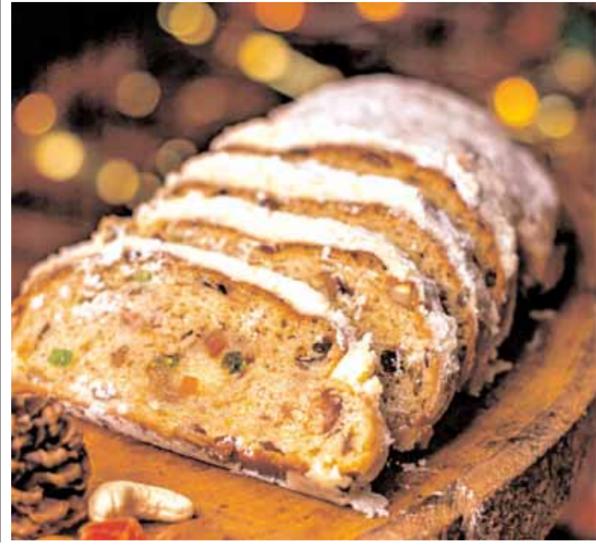
To garnish:

- Orange and lime Wedge

METHOD

- Fill a tall glass with ice cubes.
- Add Smirnoff espresso vodka to the glass and stir.
- Top up with cola and garnish.

Courtesy: Diageo India.



STOLLEN BREAD

WHAT YOU NEED

- Flour: 500 gm
- Milk: 125 gm
- Fresh yeast: 25 gm
- Butter: 250 gm
- Sugar: 50 gm
- Mix spices: 5 gm
- Salt: 8 gm
- Mix fruit: 600 gm
- Lemon zest
- Gluten: 20 gm
- Clarified butter: 250 gm
- Marzipan: 100 gm

METHOD

- Soak all the fruits in a bowl in rum overnight.
- Dissolve the yeast and milk with a pinch of sugar.

- Mix flour, yeast mixture sugar, gluten, mix spices, lemon zest and salt for several minutes. The dough shouldn't be very smooth.
- Add butter and mix until flour and butter completely so that the dough smoothens. Remove from the bowl and let the dough rest for 30 minutes.
- Knead the fruits into the dough. Turn the dough out onto a greased surface, divide it into three pieces, and shape each piece into oval shape.
- Place one piece of marzipan down the longer centre of each oval and fold dough over it lengthwise.
- Leave the top edge of the

dough just shy of the bottom edge. Then press the top edge to seal it to the dough below.

- Place the bread on a baking sheet, cover them and let them rise until puffy.
- Bake the stollen for 30 to 35 minutes, until golden brown in preheated oven at 200 degree Celsius.
- Remove the stollen from the oven and brush them with melted butter and dust with icing sugar.
- Transfer on a rack to cool completely. Wrap airtight and store in chiller.

Courtesy: The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel, Delhi.

Kohli, Shami absence advantage for Oz: Langer

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia chief coach Justin Langer can empathise with the Indian team after the 36-run shocker it endured in Adelaide but he is also "glad" that the visitors are "stressed" during the Christmas weekend ahead of the second Test on December 26.

Having won the first Test within two and half days by dismissing India for their lowest Test score of 36, Langer said his team would look to drive home the advantage in the absence of Virat Kohli by putting relentless pressure on new skipper Ajinkya Rahane.

What would he have done had he been in India coach Ravi Shastri's shoes?

"None of my business. I have had enough with stresses...I empathise with the opposition and I know what it feels like. If India are feeling any stress, I am glad they are and not us over the Christmas weekend," Langer said during a virtual media conference.

He did admit that the absence of Kohli (paternity leave) and Mohammed Shami (wrist fracture) would be an advantage for his team but the focus firmly remains on its own playing.

"Of course, whatever sport you play, if you take out two of your stars, Virat Kohli is an all-time great player I think and Shami is a real glue for the team because he is so miserly and skilful. It surely gives us some advantage," Langer said.

"We need to start strongly on the first day and build pressure on Rahane as he is the new captain of India for this series. So the processes don't change. Whenever you take out best players of any cricket team, it weakens them and that's the reality," he said.

While David Warner is out of the second Test, Langer couldn't say with finality whether the dashing opener will be available for the third Test in Sydney.

"I am very hopeful.As I said for the last three weeks or so, he will be doing everything possible to get back out onto the ground, so fingers crossed," he said.



Indian captain Virat Kohli chats with Mohammed Shami on 2nd day of 1st Test AP

But he does have trouble running?

"He is starting (to get) a bit of trouble running at full speed, when he gets that back and feels confident with it, of course he will come back into our team, so we will just monitor him regularly and fingers crossed that he will be back," Langer said.

Tim Paine's batting has been a topic of discussion as the Australians judge every keeper-

batsman through the Adam Gilchrist prism but the coach has enormous faith in his skipper's abilities and the leadership qualities he has shown in the past two years.

"You think about Adam Gilchrist, I guess, who transformed the game in a sense, and that is why Adam Gilchrist is an all-time great player because he transformed the game. I have got enormous faith in Tim Paine,"

Aussies set for unchanged XI

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia chief coach Justin Langer on Thursday said the home team will be unchanged for the second Test against India beginning on Saturday unless there is any unexpected event in the next two days.

Langer said he'd have to be "pretty courageous" to make any changes to a side that dished out such a dominating performance.

"I'd be a pretty courageous man to change the XI for this Test match after the last one," Langer said during a virtual media conference.

"At this stage, unless something happens over the next few days — and things can happen in the world we live in — we'll go in with the same XI, I'd say,"

Langer said. "...Whether it's his wicket-keeping, his captaincy, his batting, I have said publicly and privately for almost the last year, he is our most important player, because he is a lead wicket-keeper, his leadership on and off the field is incredible," he said.

"...We saw he can play, how well he batted in first innings under pressure in Adelaide, probably changed the game actually with the run-out of Virat Kohli, so he is a great player, great leader and I literally love having him in our team," he said.

BCCI approves 10-team IPL from 2022

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The BCCI's governing body on Thursday ratified the entry of two new franchises in the IPL to make it a 10-team affair from 2022 and also decided to back the ICC's push for cricket's inclusion in the 2028 Olympics, during its Annual General Meeting (AGM) here.

"Two new teams will be introduced in the 2022 IPL," a Board source said.

It is learnt that time at hand is too short for even a nine-team IPL next year as an elaborate tender-floating process, increase of matches and ensuring that all foreign player international calendars are

adjusted, would be prove to be a Herculean task.

In another major development, the Board, in principle, decided to back the ICC's bid for inclusion of cricket, in the T20 format, in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics "after getting some clarifications from the International Olympic Committee".

Also, it was decided that all first-class players, both men and women, will be suitably compensated for the curtailed domestic season due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The BCCI plans to get the domestic season underway, after several months' delay, in January with the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 championship.

Chetan Sharma appointed new chairman of selectors

Kuruville, Mohanty join five-member panel

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Former India pacer Chetan Sharma was on Thursday appointed chairman of the senior national selection panel by the BCCI's Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), which also picked Abbey Kuruville and Debashis Mohanty in the five-member team.

The new panel was formed on the sidelines of the BCCI's 89th Annual General

Meeting (AGM). The selection panel also has former India players Sunil Joshi and Harvinder Singh.

Sharma is a former player who represented India in 23 Tests and 65 ODIs during an 11-year-old international career, the highlight of which was his hat-trick in the 1987 World Cup.

As per the BCCI constitution, the candidate with the most Test caps becomes the chief selector.

Cool but aggressive Rahane will be able stand-in captain: Sachin

ANS ■ NEW DELHI

India's batting mainstay Ajinkya Rahane's calm and composed demeanour shouldn't be mistaken for him being weak and he will be as aggressive as Virat Kohli, now on paternity leave, as the Mumbai batsman steps in as a stand-in captain in the remainder of the ongoing four-Test series against Australia, says Sachin Tendulkar.

Rahane has captained India twice in Tests and has a 100 per cent win record, with one of those wins coming against Australia in 2017.

"Ajinkya has led India earlier also, and his calmness doesn't mean he is not aggressive. Each person has his way of showing aggression. Someone who doesn't show aggression doesn't mean he's not aggressive. (Cheteshwar) Pujara, for example, is very calm and composed; his body language is into the game, focussed. But that doesn't mean that Pujara is trying any less than anyone else," Tendulkar said.

Tendulkar pointed out that Rahane's strategy as captain may be different from Kohli's but he and his team would have a common goal, i.e. to win matches.

"Each person has his own way of reacting and responding to situations, but I can assure you everyone's destination is one; they've different routes to get there — and that is how they can



make India win. So, Ajinkya's would be a different style, different strategies. That is up to the team management — how they plan, how the pitch plays, and what our batting and bowling line-ups would be," he said.

"All those things come into play. They will do everything to try and win. Absence of seniors does affect the balance of a team, but that gives opportunities to someone else. Overall, it is about Team India and not about individuals. Individuals can get injured and be ruled out of the series, but Team India will always be there," added Tendulkar.

Melbourne standby venue for Sydney Test

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Cricket Australia on Thursday said Melbourne has been placed on standby to host the third Test between India and Australia if Sydney's Covid-19 situation renders it "untenable" despite efforts being made to continue with the original schedule.

The fate of the third Test has been shrouded in uncertainty

since earlier this month after a fresh Covid-19 outbreak in the northern beaches in Sydney, which is scheduled to host the third Test from January 7.

"CA has reaffirmed its commitment to giving it the best chance to play the third Vodafone Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground and the fourth Vodafone Test at the Gabba as per the original schedule," CA said in a statement.

"Should the public health situation in NSW render playing in Sydney untenable, CA's preferred contingency plan is to work with the Victorian Government to play the third Vodafone Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground followed by the fourth Vodafone Test at the Gabba," it added.

A final decision on the third Test venue would be made during the Boxing Day Test.

MUSICAL MELANGE

SAPTAK CHATTERJEE combines his background in Hindustani Classical with western music to offer an interesting mix



Isn't it strange that schools still describe music and activities like theatre and even debating as extra-curricular activities? Saptak Chatterjee asks. "I mean, these are co-curricular activities which help you grow into a better person and discover skills that you never knew you might have." That said, Chatterjee always knew that he wanted to be a singer. After all, he is following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather who were both Hindustani Classical vocalists. "To be fair, my father always gave me a choice and pursuing music was never a compulsion. Even if I chose to become a singer, Hindustani classic was never forced upon me."

Indeed, a few weeks before the Common Aptitude Test for the Indian Institutes of Management some years ago, he threw up his hands and decided enough was enough. Today, Chatterjee finds himself on the verge of releasing his second album and working on the musical



TO BE FAIR, MY FATHER ALWAYS GAVE ME A CHOICE AND PURSUING MUSIC WAS NEVER A COMPULSION. EVEN IF I CHOSE TO BECOME A SINGER, HINDUSTANI CLASSICAL WAS NEVER FORCED UPON ME

scores and background music for a few streaming television shows. "I've been writing my own music for a while now and released my first studio album in 2018," he says before adding that working with a band, writing his own music and mixing music with an engineer was a great experience.

"I have come a long way since I started. Last year I played at the NH7 Weekender which is the largest music festival this side of the continent," Chatterjee says. And working on his second studio album during the pandemic has also been a great learning experience for him. "Musicians have had to rediscover the way they talk about their music, the way they write and promote it. I'm really looking forward to the second album and hopefully we can hear a couple of tunes today," he says.

As we listen to one of the first tracks called *Paheli*, that Chatterjee released from his second album *Aina*, which thanks to his distribution company is available on all major streaming services such as Apple Music, Amazon Music, Jio Saavn and YouTube Music and can be played through the smartphone interface available on the Kia Sonet that Chatterjee is driving. He talks about the song, explaining its writing process. "In most love songs you can almost visualise the two people. Right? But in this one it is unclear who the singer is talking about, he is romanticising the concept of 'another,'" he explains and adds, "The song leaves the listener thinking, 'who could this song be about?'"

As to how this track came about, Chatterjee credits his bandmates, "I was sitting around on my keyboard, messing around with chords and speaking to my bandmates when someone suggested that I take the 'hardcore' commercial route and write a love song." That set off a spark in his head. "Why can't a love

song be with just one person, and that is where it started and it is open to the listeners' interpretation." As to how rewarding song writing is, he just says that once you hear it back, "it feels great." About melting the lines between Hindustani Classical and western music, he frankly says, "I have never looked at it like that. It is just a bunch of musicians trying to come up with something new."

While Chatterjee credits his father as being his primary musical inspiration, he says that it is A R Rahman who is another great inspiration. "I have grown up listening to his music and I have been a part of shows which paid tribute to him. His music is not mainstream even though mainstream audience loves it because it does not have that mainstream approach. This is the reason why it really appeals to creators who are trying something different."

Chatterjee is really impressed by the Intelligent Manual Transmission (IMT) technology on-board the Kia Sonet Tech Line HTX+ that he is driving. "I was a little tentative when I started, but my left foot is really grateful. It climbs really smoothly and I am really enjoying the drive." And he is also surprised with the six-speed transmission that the Sonet comes with on the turbocharged T-GDI engine. This little powerhouse of an engine produces a class-leading 120PS of power, which is more than enough to enjoy the open roads and also delivers great fuel economy.

As for the seven-speaker BOSE audio system on the car, Chatterjee admits, "because I am hearing my own music, I know exactly how it is supposed to sound and, to be honest, when we played *Paheli* first it sounded almost exactly like it did back in the studio when I was mixing and mastering it." He even praised the sound system for being well-balanced. "If you tell a musician that a sound system has too much low end, they will scowl at you because that is not the way they want their music to be heard. But when you listen to the other track, *Kaam Dhaam*, you can hear just how well-balanced the audio system is. For a car of this size, at this price-point, the BOSE audio system works like magic."

Saptak, just 25, is working towards his future and we will almost certainly be hearing more of him soon. Maybe in Bollywood or on a television series or two. He is an incredibly talented young man who will certainly go places and one who loves the Kia Sonet which has reignited his love of motor-ing. And if you like driving as well as listening to music while on the move, the Kia Sonet is the best possible option for you as it combine great audio and great driving. ■

