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IN NEPAL

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AVENUES 10
WRAPPING
UP 2020

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PROTEAS
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12 SPORT

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Strain test for all +ve returnees

Genome sequencing confirms 6 cases; Govt says vaccine effective against all strains

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Caught off guard after six people tested positive for the super-infectious UK strain of the coronavirus on Tuesday, the Government has now decided to conduct genome sequencing on all international passengers who were symptomatic and tested positive for coronavirus in the last 14 days.

The Union Health Ministry has already decided to conduct genome sequencing on 5 per cent of the total Covid positive cases detected daily to check for new variants.

Experts feel that the response is too late as it will not be an easy task to trace the 33,000 flyers from the UK who had returned to India during the last one month.

"Many of them must have come into contact with their relatives and others. The contact tracing is going to be a difficult task," they said amid reports that many UK returnees in India have either switched off their phone numbers or are not available at their residences.

However, the Government assured that the vaccines under development would also work against the mutated pathogen first reported in the UK.

"No need to worry about vaccines. Vaccines will work against the variants detected in the UK and South Africa. There is no evidence that current vaccines will fail to protect



Principal Scientific Adviser K VijayRaghavan at a presser here.

against the new mutant strains," said Principal Scientific Adviser K VijayRaghavan at a presser here.

At the same time, he said, there is a need to reduce transmission through physical distancing, follow all public health measures scrupulously, wear masks, follow hand-washing, Covid appropriate behaviour, infection control, amplify test, track, isolate efforts."

The Ministry has so far carried out genome testing of 144 positive Covid samples of which six have been found to be carrying the new variant reported in the UK.

Three samples in NIMHANS of Bengaluru, 2 in CCMB, Hyderabad and 1 in NIV, Pune have been detected out of all the 144 samples tested.

The new variant of the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 that causes Covid-19 is believed to be 71 per cent more transmissible than the other variants, the Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) said on Tuesday when India confirmed six cases of the new strain.

The leading research institute has underlined the importance to launch an extensive genome surveillance of the virus to assess the extent of the spread of the new virus.

"We should also keep an eye on other variants that might emerge independently, as India houses the second largest population infected with this virus, at present," CCMB Director Dr Rakesh Mishra said as per a news agency. The presence of the new

UK flights suspension likely to be extended

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The temporary suspension of India-UK flights is likely to be extended beyond December 31. Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday said he expected a slight extension of temporary suspension of passenger flights between India and the UK where a new variant of coronavirus has been detected.

"I foresee a slight extension of temporary suspension of India-UK flights. In the next day or two, we will find out if any additional steps need to be taken, or when we can start easing the current temporary suspension," Puri said while addressing a Press conference.

UK variant of the coronavirus has already been reported by Denmark, the Netherlands, Australia, Italy, Sweden, France, Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, Japan, Lebanon and Singapore so far.

The Government was well aware of the mutated virus doing the rounds in several countries. It should have started genome testing of the flyers returning from these mutated affected countries as was being

done by other nations. But the Government was either apathetic or negligent towards this important measure which it has now decided," said a doctor from a Government hospital who refused to be named.

The Government said that all the persons with the new variant have been kept in single room isolation in designated healthcare facilities by respective State Governments.

India had last week suspended passenger flights to and from the UK between December 23 and 31, after a growing list of countries like Canada, Germany, France, Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Italy did the same due to a more infectious coronavirus variant there. The presence of the new UK variant has already been reported by Denmark, the Netherlands, Australia, Italy, Sweden, and other countries.

India, UK have 67 weekly flights operated by four airlines — Air India, Vistara, British Airways and Virgin Atlantic. Almost 2,000-2,500 passengers fly in daily on these flights.

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Farmers harden stand, set agenda for today's talks

Write to Centre saying discussion only on modalities to repeal farm laws

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A few hours ahead of the talks between farmers and Government scheduled for Wednesday, protesting farm unions on Tuesday wrote to the Centre, saying the discussion will only be on the modalities of repealing the three legislations, giving a legal guarantee on the MSP, and on two other issues they proposed earlier this week for a resumption of the dialogue.

The Government has invited the protesting farmers for the sixth round of talks on Wednesday.

In its letter on Tuesday, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, which represents 40 farm unions, said the modalities for repealing the three contentious laws and a legal guarantee on the minimum support price (MSP) must be part of the agenda for the talks.

The Morcha further said the agenda of the meeting should also include amendments to be made and notified in the Commission for the Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Ordinance, 2020 to exclude farmers from its penal provisions.



Farmers listen to BKU spokesperson Rakesh Tikait (unseen) during their protest against the new farm laws at Tikri border in New Delhi on Tuesday

Through the letter, the Morcha also formally accepted the Government's invitation for the dialogue.

The letter also stated that withdrawal of the Electricity Amendment Bill 2020 to protect the interests of farmers should also be part of the agenda for the dialogue.

The farmers had also written to the Government on December 26 listing the agenda for talks.

In the letter, the Morcha said that in its December 26 communication to the Government, it had mentioned "withdrawal" of the Electricity Amendment Bill. Meanwhile, also on Tuesday the unions deferred to

Thursday their proposed tractor march against the contentious agriculture laws, so that the rally does not clash with their talks with the Government.

Thousands of protesting farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, have been camping at three Delhi border points — Singhu, Ghazipur and Tikri — for the past 31 days, demanding a repeal of three farm laws and legal guarantee for minimum support price.

On Monday, farmer leaders agreed to the government proposal for holding the next round of talks on the new agricultural laws on December 30, but remained firm on their agenda of scrapping the laws.

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IMD's highest centre in Leh to come in handy for military

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) will now provide localised weather forecasts, issue warnings for adverse weather conditions for traffic movement on highways, agriculture, and defence personnel, from its meteorological centre, Leh in Ladakh, having extreme wide-ranging climate and topography.

The centre was virtually inaugurated by Minister for Earth Sciences (MoES) Dr Harsh Vardhan. After Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh, the Leh centre is the second meteorological centre located in the Himalayas.

This will also help the defence personnel which have been guarding the frontiers of the entire Ladakh region assiduously for the last 70 years, to get better prepared to cope with adverse weather conditions amid China standoff at the Line of Control on western sector.

Located at 3,500 metres above sea level in Leh, it will be the highest meteorological cen-



tre in India. It will forecast the weather conditions such as cloud bursts, flash floods, glacial lake outbursts (GLOFs), avalanche, pressure, humidity, temperature, snowfall of the Ladakh region.

"Ladakh remains vulnerable to erratic weather and changing climate that have adverse effects on the lives of the locals. The region is unique in terms of weather, climate, culture, topography with extreme temperatures, ranging from minus 40 degrees Celsius in Drass to scanty average precipitation of 10 centimetres annually, which makes the region a distinct cold desert."

According to the IMD, the decision to establish a meteorological centre in Ladakh was taken following the Union Government's decision to abrogate Article 370 in August 2019, whereby the Ladakh UT was constituted.

Continued on Page 2

PM inaugurates eastern freight corridor stretch

Lucknow: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday hit out at previous Governments for delaying the Dedicated Freight Corridor project and ignoring modernisation of railways, and said his Government engaged with stakeholders to speed up works and carried out reforms at all levels.

Inaugurating the New Bhaupur-New Khurja section of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) via video conferencing, Modi said the "vibration" and "roar" of Bharat and "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" were clearly heard as the first freight train ran on the Khurja-Bhaupur freight corridor.

Attacking previous Government, the Prime Minister said the project was given permission in 2006 but it was only on paper as the then Government lacked the seriousness and urgency with which it had to take it up with the states.

Till 2014 not a single km track of the project was laid and the funds sanctioned could not be spent properly.

PTI Detailed report on P5

Airbag for passenger in front seat to be must soon: Draft

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday said it has proposed to make airbag mandatory for the passenger in the front seat of a vehicle. The step is aimed at improving passenger safety in case of accidents.

The Road Transport Ministry has issued a draft notification. The proposed timelines for the implementation of the move is April 1, 2021, for new models and June 1, 2021, for existing models.

"In a significant measure to boost passenger safety, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) proposes to make it mandatory that an airbag be provided for the passenger seated on the front seat of a vehicle, next to the driver," the Ministry said in a statement.

The addition of a dual front airbags would spell an increase of roughly between ₹10,000 to ₹20,000 in the prices of entry-level versions of the car models.

The MoRTH has planned to implement this norm for all



new models of cars which are manufactured from April 1, 2021, onwards. For the existing units, the date for complying with the new rule is proposed to be June 1, 2021.

Previously, the Government had made having an airbag mandatory for the driver's seat in all cars which came into effect from July 1, 2019.

"Comments/ suggestions are solicited from all stakeholders within a month time," the draft notification by the MoRTH said.

The draft notification further reads, "Vehicles manufactured on and after 1st Day of

April 2021, in the case of new models, and 1st day of June 2021, in the case of existing models, shall be fitted with airbag for the person occupying the front seat, other than the driver. The requirement for such airbag shall be as per AIS 145...under the Bureau of Indian Standards act, 2016."

"As of now, only the driver's seat airbag is mandatory for all cars. However, this leaves the passenger in the front seat completely vulnerable to severe injury or even death in case of accidents as they are not protected by the airbag," said a senior MoRTH official.

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CAPSULE

MERCURY DROPS BELOW 3 DEGREES C IN DELHI

New Delhi: Delhi reeled under a cold wave on Tuesday as icy winds sweeping through the city brought the minimum temperature down to 3.6 degrees Celsius, the India Meteorological Department said. The Saffordjurg Observatory, which provides representative data for the city, recorded a minimum of 3.6 degrees Celsius and a maximum of 18.1 degrees Celsius, two notches below normal.

1,700 ROHINGYAS SENT TO ISOLATED ISLAND

Dhaka: Five Bangladesh navy ships carrying more than 1,700 Rohingya refugees left the southeastern port city of Chittagong on Tuesday for an isolated island where they will be relocated despite concerns among human rights groups about their safety.

TIBETAN GOVT-IN-EXILE LAUDS TRUMP'S POLICY

Dharamshala: The Tibetan Parliament in exile expressed gratitude to United States President Donald Trump for signing a new Tibet policy.

Didi storms Bolpur 10 days after Shah rally

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ BOLPUR

Poet Laureate Rabindranath Tagore's Shantiniketan (abode of peace) once again turned into a political theatre less than 10 days after the Union Home Minister Amit Shah held a massive parade at Bolpur in Birbhum district.

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday led an equally impressive roadshow attacking Shah and the BJP for importing "fake politics and hate politics" in the State.

Calling upon the people to "oust the Bargis (Maratha invaders of 18th century were called thus in Bengal) who have come here to generate fake politics, spread hatred and spark riots," Mamata said, adding, "they have not only smeared the Viswa Bharati campus which was scarcely politicised in the past but they have also not spared even a Nobel laureate and a son of the soil like

Amartya Sen." A time has come when the people of Bengal were tasked with a duty to "oust the Bargis who are soiling our culture and spoiling our lives by splurging money in order to buy not only the people's representatives but also the voters," Mamata said. She asked the people to accept the cash offered but not vote for their symbol (lotus) as they are masters of fake and hate politics whose duty is only to spread hatred and ignite riots.

Referring to Shah's rally Mamata said, "There are some parties that organise roadshows where you will find more banners and flags than the people." "Hours after the Chief Minister's roadshow TMC strongman and district party president Anubrata Mondal said at least three lakh people had gathered at the Bolpur rally."

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India get even with Oz



Indian players celebrate after winning the second cricket test in Melbourne on Tuesday

Legendary French designer Pierre Cardin dies at 98

AP ■ PARIS

Pierre Cardin, the French designer whose famous name embossed everything from wristwatches to bedsheets after his iconic Space Age styles shot him into the fashion stratosphere in the 1960s, has died, the French Academy of Fine Arts said on Tuesday. He was 98.

A licensing maverick, Cardin's name went on thousands of products and in the brands heyday in the 1970s and 80s, while goods bearing his fancy cursive signature were sold at some 100,000 outlets worldwide.

That number dwindled dramatically in later years, as his products were increasingly regarded as cheaply made and his clothing — which, decades later, remained virtually unchanged from its 60s-era styles — felt laughably dated.

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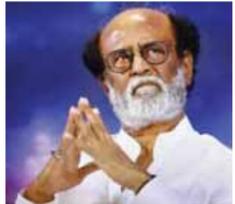
Wary of health, Rajini says no to pol plunge

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Actor Rajinikanth, who had declared early this month that he would announce the details of his political party on the New Year eve, made a quick volte-face on Tuesday by announcing through social media that he was not launching any political outfit.

This means that Tamil Nadu may have to wait for long to see an effective and viable third front to take on the DMK and the AIADMK, the traditional rivals of the State politics for the last 35 years. The State's thirst to see the emergence of a charismatic leader too remains unquenched.

"With a heavy heart, I announce this: Due to health reasons I am not able to enter politics by launching a political party. Only I know the pain with which I make this announcement," Rajinikanth



said in the statement. "I will continue to serve people without coming to electoral politics. I will never hesitate to speak the truth. I appeal to all my fans and people of Tamil Nadu to accept my decision. Rajini Makkal Mandram will continue to function," the actor said.

He stated that it would not be fair to campaign through social media. If I develop health complications during my campaign, it would severely affect those who accompany me in politics, he said.

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Delhi shivers, min temp dips to 3.6°C

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi recorded a minimum temperature of 3.6 degrees Celsius on Tuesday and is likely to witness severe cold wave on the New Year eve. From December 30 to January 1st, Delhi will witness cold wave as the minimum temperature will fluctuate between three degree Celsius and four degree Celsius, the weatherman says.

The National Capital will witness light rain on January 4th, 2021.

According to Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), the cold wave conditions in Delhi will persist for next two days. "From January 1, the temperature will rise in the national capital," Kuldeep Srivastava, Regional Head said.

According to MeT official, cold wave to severe cold wave conditions are likely in Delhi and northern region during December 28 to 30 and cold wave conditions are likely in pocket over north India on December 31 and January 1.

Delhi will witness dense to very dense fog with visibility under 50 meters is likely in north India on December 30 and New Year eve, as MeT said

in its bulletin. Meanwhile, on Tuesday, the minimum temperature was four degree Celsius and maximum temperature was 18 degree Celsius.



Delhi prepared to tackle new Covid strain: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday reassured city's residents by asserting that national Capital is prepared to deal with the new mutant strain of the novel coronavirus.

In a response to a question on preparedness for the new strain of Covid-19 that first emerged in the UK a few days ago, the chief minister said that Delhi has witnessed three waves of coronavirus and the



third wave was an intense one when cases went up to 8,500 (fresh cases reported daily) but we managed to control it. "We are fully prepared to deal with it," said Kejriwal.

Delhi recorded 564 fresh coronavirus cases, the lowest in seven months (on May 26, 412 fresh cases were reported), and 21 more fatalities due to the disease on Monday, even as the positivity rate stood at 0.98 per cent, according to the Health Department's data.

The city's caseload mounted to 6,23,415 and the death toll due to the coronavirus infection rose to 10,474, the authorities said, adding that over 57,463 Covid-19 tests were conducted on Sunday.

Strain test for all +ve returnees

From Page 1

"Their close contacts have also been put under quarantine. Comprehensive contact tracing has been initiated for co-travellers, family contacts, and others. Genome sequencing on other specimens is going on. The situation is under careful watch and regular advice is being provided to the States for enhanced surveillance, containment, testing & dispatch of samples to INSACOG labs," said a Government official.

The Health Ministry has established the Indian SARS-

CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) for laboratory and epidemiological surveillance and to expand the whole genome sequencing of the coronavirus in the country, aiding in the understanding of how the virus spreads and evolves.

The Government last week put temporary suspension of all flights coming from the UK with effect from the midnight of December 23 till December 31 and mandatory testing of all UK returnee air passengers through RT-PCR test.

that will remove the middlemen and allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in their country.

However, the protesting farmers have expressed apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of the MSP and do away with the "mandi" (wholesale market) system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

Airbag for passenger in front seat to be...

From Page 1

Low-cost inclusions such as speed alert, reverse parking sensors and seat-belt reminders have become standard features in most cars but life-saving airbags are still not mandatory, added the senior MoRTH official.

Vehicle safety in India received a major fillip in 2019, with a number of important safety features made mandatory for both two- and four-wheelers and one of the key changes was a driver-side airbag being made compulsory for all passenger vehicles, a life-saving essential that made its way into even the most

affordable cars on sale in the country.

However, because the list of mandatory safety equipment specified under the automotive industry standards (AIS) mentioned a driver-side airbag only, some carmakers - who operate in the price-sensitive budget hatchback segment - chose to give the front passenger airbag a skip, only offering it as an optional extra for an added cost. MoRTH's latest notification is an amendment to the AIS, and mandates the inclusion of a front passenger airbag for all passenger vehicles.

hold the next round of privatisation of airports in the first half of 2021. "As far as the next round of airports' privatisation is concerned, we are at the final stages of obtaining Government approvals. Once the approvals are received, I

UK flights...

From Page 1

Meanwhile, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) Chairman Arvind Singh told at the Press conference the Government is planning to

Wary of...

From Page 1

"I need to meet thousands of people during the campaign and through public meetings. Even now I am taking immunosuppressant medicines. If I develop health complications during my campaign, it would severely affect those who accompany me in politics and they have to face many problems politically and mentally," said Rajinikanth.

His announcement dampened the spirit of his fans and followers alike who were anxiously waiting to see the King of Styles in action in the political arena of Tamil Nadu. In a statement released through the social media, the actor said that his decision follows the requests and suggestions by his

close family members who were concerned about his health.

Rajinikanth, who was shooting for his new film at Hyderabad was admitted to a corporate hospital following high fluctuations in blood pressure. He was discharged from the hospital and reached his Poes Garden residence in Chennai late on Sunday night. Doctors had advised him complete bed rest till January 2, 2021.

think we will start the process of bidding in the first quarter of 2021," he said. The AAI had in September recommended the Centre now to privatise airports at Amritsar, Varanasi, Bhubaneswar, Indore, Raipur and Trichy.

Rajinikanth would not launch the political party or dabble in politics.

Tamilaruvi Manian, the actor's Man Friday remained incommunicado. He had told The Pioneer many times in the past that though Rajinikanth had many health issues, the actor could use the electronics and digital media to reach out to his fans across the State.

S Gurumurthy, editor, Tughlaq, who is a close friend of Rajinikanth and who had forecast that the actor's entry into politics would bring in a tectonic shift in the State's political landscape said he was pained by the decision. "It was inevitable. But read the penultimate para of his statement saying 'without directly in politics he will serve the people of Tamil Nadu'. In my assessment he will make a political impact on TN. Like in 1996," Gurumurthy tweeted.

But SV Badri, a prominent figure in Tamil Nadu's social world, said that Rajinikanth's decision would not make any impact in the State politics. "It is a blow to Gurumurthy who was pushing the actor into politics," said Badri.

Didi storms...

From Page 1

In a veiled reference to Shah who has on several occasions dined at common people's residences during his recent visits to Bengal, the Chief Minister said, "Some outsiders are frequently appearing at the people's durbar here in quest of votes just before the elections."

While such weekly appearances are punctuated by "five-star feasts they are making a false show of breaking bread with the tribal people at their houses," Mamata said, adding "no one has this right to insult the adivasi brothers and sisters and the poor people of Bengal."

In a circuitous reference to her once close aide, senior party leader and former Minister Suwendu Adhikari's switching sides to the BJP the Chief Minister said, "There are some rotten MLAs who are going to that party but just by buying a few rejected MLAs don't think you can buy the Trinamool Congress."

Incidentally, Adhikari on Tuesday held a mega rally at Nandigram his home turf from where he is known to have spearheaded the land movement for Mamata Banerjee in 2007 ultimately bringing down the Left Front Government in 2011. Referring to Shah's promise of converting Bengal into a Sonar Bangla the Chief Minister said, "Who are these outsiders to do so... Sonar Bangla had already been visualised by Rabindranath Tagore... these people are trying to take the credit for that too."

"Those who don't respect Tagore, Netaji and even Mahatma Gandhi are talking of building 'Sonar Bangla'. But Bengal is already golden and Rabindranath Tagore has already written that in his song (which is now the national anthem of Bangladesh). Our duty is to protect that legacy from the communal politics of the BJP," she said.

Attacking the saffron leadership for "smearing the Visva Bharati-Shantiniketan campus with dirty politics," she said even the authorities like the Central university's vice chancellors were acting like BJP rubber stamp. "This great university was never communally charged before... this is a shame for us," she said.

NOTICE

To be known to all that I, Manju Chadha W/o Late Shri Satish Kumar Chadha am the owner of DDA Flat No. 424, Block-A Sarita Vihar, New Delhi - 110076 Vide DDA's File No. 127/86/86/SFS/SV. My original documents viz. 1. Allotment Letter 2. Fifth and Final Demand Letter 3. Possession Letter 4. NOC for electric and water connection 5. All Bank Challans of the said property have been misplaced. An Information Report of this effect has been lodged in Police Station Crime Branch Delhi vide LR No. 852342/2020 on 22/12/2020. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest having any objection or found in possession of original documents may write/contact with above named person at phone no. 9868106229 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property can personally inform or write to Dy. Director (LAB) H or Director (H)-1 D-Block, 3rd floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi-110023

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IMD's highest...

From Page 1

As per rules, it was mandatory to have a separate MC in Ladakh, which till now was monitored by the MC Srinagar.

To begin with, the IMD established a surface observatory at Leh for reporting daily meteorological parameters like pressure, humidity, temperature, snowfall, etc. At present Ladakh has got four Automatic Weather Stations (AWS), two each in both districts of which one is at Drass, the coldest place in India.

"The IMD plans to augment its existing operations in the region so as to provide timely weather updates and warnings ahead of disasters like cloud bursts in this geographically unique region," said Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, director general, IMD.

According to the IMD, to improve the network of observations, IMD proposes to install more AWSs next year at the remotest of places like Nubra, Zaskar, Changthang, Parkachik, etc thus covering the whole of Ladakh. The IMD will install instruments for

monitoring of Radiation, Air Pollution, opening of Agrometeorological Unit, Hydro-meteorological unit, Upper Air Instruments, Doppler Weather Radar etc.

"The Government will make every effort to provide the best possible weather services to the administration and the people of Ladakh and make UT safe and secure from the vagaries of weather. With the availability of quality data from Ladakh, IMD will generate city specific forecasts based on numerical models," the Ministry said in a statement.

Legendary...

From Page 1

A savvy businessman, Cardin used the fabulous wealth that was the fruit of his empire to snap up top-notch properties in Paris, including the Belle Epoque restaurant Maxims, which he also frequented. He had been among its illustrious members since 1992. The academy did not give a cause of death or say where or when he had died.

Along with fellow Frenchman Andre Courreges and Spains Paco Rabanne, two other Paris-based designers known for their Space Age styles, Cardin revolutionized fashion starting in the early 1950s.

At a time when other Paris labels were obsessed with flattering the female form, Cardin designs cast the wearer as a sort of glorified hanger, there to showcase the clothes sharp shapes and graphic patterns.

Destined neither for pragmatists nor for wallflowers, his designs were all about making a big entrance — sometimes very literally.

Gowns and bodysuits in fluorescent spandex were fitted with plastic hoops that stood away from the body at the waist, elbows, wrists and knees. Cardin bubble dresses and capes enveloped their wearers in oversized spheres of fabric.

Toques were shaped like flying saucers; bucket hats sheathed models entire heads, with cutout windshields at the eyes.

"Fashion is always ridiculous, seen from before or after. But in the moment, its marvelous," Cardin said in a 1970 interview with French television.

Cardin was born on July 7, 1922, in a small town near Venice, Italy, to a modest, working-class family. When

he was a child, the family moved to Saint Etienne in central France, where Cardin was schooled and became an apprentice to a tailor at age 14.

Cardin would later embrace his status as a self-made man, saying in the same 1970 interview that going it alone "makes you see life in a much more real way and forces you to take decision and to be courageous."

"Its much more difficult to enter a dark woods alone than when you already know the way through," he said.

After moving to Paris, he worked as an assistant in the House of Paquin starting in 1945 and also helped design costumes for the likes of Jean Cocteau. He also was involved in creating the costumes for the directors 1946 hit, "Beauty and the Beast." After working briefly with Elsa Schiaparelli and Christian Dior, Cardin opened his own house in Paris' tony first district, starting with costumes and masks.

Cardin delivered his first real collection in 1953. Success quickly followed, with the 1954 launch of the celebrated "bubble" dress, which put the label on the map.

Cardin staged his first ready-to-wear show in 1959 at Paris Printemps department store, a bold initiative that got him temporarily kicked out of the Chambre Syndicale. Cardin's relationship with the organization — the governing body of French fashion — was rocky, and he later left of his own volition to stage shows on his own terms.

Cardin's high-profile relationship with French screen siren Jeanne Moreau, the smoky-voiced blond of "Jules and Jim" fame, also helped boost the brands profile. Described by both as a "true love," the relationship lasted about five years and they never

married.

Cardin saw the astronomical expense of producing haute couture collections as an investment. Even though the clothing pharaonic prices didn't cover the cost of crafting the made-to-measure garments, the media coverage generated by his couture shows helped sell lower sticker-price items, like hats, belts and hosiery.

As Cardin's fame and fortune spiked, so did his real estate portfolio. He long lived an austere, almost monastic existence with his sister in a sprawling apartment across from the Elysee presidential palace in Paris.

He bought up so much top-flight real estate in the neighborhood that fashion insiders joked he could have mounted a coup d'etat.

In addition to his womens and mens clothing boutiques, Cardin opened a childrens shop, a furniture store and the Espace Cardin, a sprawling hall in central Paris where the designer would later stage fashion shows, as well as plays, ballets and other cultural events.

Beyond clothes, Cardin put his stamp on perfumes, makeup, porcelain, chocolates, a resort in the south of France and even the velvet-walled watering hole Maxims — where he could often be seen at lunch.

The 1970s saw a huge Cardin expansion that brought his outlets to more than 100,000, with about as many workers producing under the Cardin label worldwide.

Cardin was in the vanguard of recognizing the importance of Asia to the fashion world, both as a manufacturing hub and for its consumer potential. He was present in Japan starting in the early 60s and in 1979 became the first Western designer to stage a fashion show in China.

Talks not possible: Kisan Sangharsh

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Hundreds of farmers have stayed put at National Capital's borders demanding the Centre to repeal the new farm laws. The farmers and Government are expected to meet at 2 pm on Wednesday for talks. However, All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) has refuted any possibility of any discussion in tomorrow's talks until the agenda of repeal of the three farm acts and EB 2020 is taken up first. Meanwhile, security remained tight at the Delhi borders with hundreds of personnel deployed at Singhu, Ghazipur and Tikri where the farmers have been camping.



farmer under contract will have to borrow and the Contract Acts provides for such borrowing by mortgaging and for recovery of dues from land. The farmer unions have deferred to Thursday their proposed tractor march against the contentious agriculture laws, so that the rally does not clash with their talks with the government on Wednesday. The unions have agreed to hold the next round of talks with the Central government on Wednesday, but insist the agenda of the meeting should include discussing modalities for repealing the three legislations. Earlier this week, Samyukt Kisan Morcha -- an umbrella

Govt waives fine on late submission of road taxes

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday said that his Government has passed orders to waive off penalty on late submission of road taxes.

Kejriwal said the Delhi government provided Rs 5000 each to construction workers for their livelihood and transferred Rs 5000 each to the bank accounts of taxi and auto drivers every month till the lockdown got opened, and all this work is reaching Goa.

"I passed orders to waive off penalty on late submission of road taxes and it happened because the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is of common people and is committed to finding solutions to their problems, CM said.

Kejriwal said that the lockdown was an extremely difficult phase because the incomes of the people, their shops, businesses, industries, taxis, autos, and markets, etc, were shut down. It was extremely difficult for a daily wage laborer to afford food. He said that it was a testing period for all the governments to show how responsible they are. "We tried our best to provide food to all during the lockdown. The Delhi government provided food to 10 lakh people every day, and all these arrangements were made in all the schools across Delhi including Central govt and MCD schools. Around 10 lakh people were provided lunch and dinner every day, and we used to serve them as we were serving langars since we had our religious sentiments. We continued the distribution till people stopped coming for food and till the time the queues were over.

The Delhi government provided dry ration, consisting of wheat, rice, pulses, oil, and spices, to 1 crore people, i.e., 50 percent of Delhi's population every day for 3 months. We doubled the pensions of elders and widows to Rs 5000.

"We provided Rs 5000 each to construction workers for their livelihood and transferred Rs 5000 each to the bank accounts taxi and auto drivers every month till the lockdown got opened," he added. He further said, "Recently, some taxi drivers from Goa were in Delhi and wanted to meet me. Whenever somebody comes to Delhi, they want to meet me and appreciate the works done in Delhi. "I told them that this was not only limited to Corona

lockdown. The taxi and auto drivers need the help of the governments. We have changed all rules and regulations, and so our drivers do not need to pay bribes to get their works done

because of an honest government in Delhi. A round 4-5 days back, I received a message from a taxi driver in Delhi, who said that he could not submit road tax

during Corona lockdown because of no income and wanted a penalty waive-off. We passed an order in 24 hours and waived off the penalty on late road tax", he added.

Govt to provide dry ration to students under mid-day meal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government will provide dry ration to students of its schools under the mid-day meal scheme for six months, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced it, on Tuesday during a dry ration distribution event at a government school in Mandawali area.

The move comes in view of continued closure of schools since March due to the Covid-19 pandemic. "When schools were closed, we decided to send the money for mid-day meals to parents' account, but now, it has been decided that we will give dry rations for six months," Kejriwal said. "This is a very difficult

phase especially for the children, please take care of them, ensure they attend all online classes, and please take care of their nutrition. I hope that the vaccine comes and ends our difficulty as soon as possible," he said.

Deputy CM Manish Sisodia said that even if the Covid-19 vaccine is available, it will be difficult to compensate for the learning loss due to Covid-19.

"Every day, we pray for the schools to reopen and get re-energized like pre-Covid times. God is testing our patience in these challenging times. But I am proud that despite these challenges our Team Education has been persistent with its efforts. Everyone has worked really hard to reach to 94 per cent of



the students through online and semi online teaching," said Sisodia.

Schools across the country were closed in March to contain the spread of Covid-19. They were partially reopened in some States from October 15.

However, the Delhi Government has announced that schools will not reopen in the national Capital till a vaccine for the coronavirus is available.

AAP Govt to set WiFi spots for protesting farmers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and MLA from Rajinder Nagar, Raghav Chadha on Tuesday said that free WiFi hotspots will be set up at Singhu border for the protesting farmers

"The decision has been taken by farmers' sevadar Arvind Kejriwal. We want the farmers to stay in touch with their family. We have identified a few spots to install the WiFi hotspots. This is an initiative of Arvind Kejriwal and the party," said Chadha, while addressing a press conference.

"We were apprised of the fact that due to poor reception at Singhu border, they were unable to speak with their family. Each WiFi hotspot will cover a radius of 100 metres, and a total area of over 31,000 sq mtr," said Chadha.

"Whether it's a soldier guarding our country at the international borders, or farmers who are at Delhi's borders, an individual's biggest strength is his family. Shri Arvind Kejriwal understands this strength. We, at the Aam Aadmi Party, understand this strength, and hope that the free WiFi hotspots at Singhu border will help a farmer see his old, aged parent; it will allow him to sing a lullaby to his child, he will be able to speak with his wife, his friends," said Chadha.

He further said, "Our farmer brothers have had to face immense pain, hurt and discomfort. Our only attempt is to help ease their pain a little, to make them feel a little comfortable. If we're able to do that, I would consider it to be a success."

Farmers from various parts of the country have been camping at different border points of Delhi for over a month.

BJP leadership has lost hope in MCDs: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and the Municipal Corporation Delhi (MCD) in-charge Durgesh Pathak on Tuesday alleged that the top brass of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has lost all hope on the BJP ruled MCD.

Hitting hard on BJP Pathak said that on October 19 the North MCD mayor Jai Prakash met Union Minister of State (Finance) Anurag Thakur; despite the request of the mayor, the Center has not provided any aid to the MCD.

He said that MCD had asked for Rs 2000 crores from the Center but they have not provided any money. Pathak said that the BJP has no moral right to stay in power of the MCD because not only the people of Delhi but also their own party leaders do not

believe the BJP ruled MCD. "All the permanent, as well as contractual sanitation workers, have not received their salary for the last 4 months. Class 4 employees and Health workers of group C have not received their salary in the last 5 months. DCB employees have not received their salary for the last 3 months," said Pathak.

"Nurses, Allopathy doctors, and surgeons have not received their salary for the last four months. Teachers who build our student's destiny have not received their salary for the last six months. Group A and B employees also have not received their salary for the last 6 months. It is an extremely unfortunate situation that BJP who is ruling the Delhi MCD for the last 14 years is unable to pay its employees," said Pathak.

BJP leaders attacking AAP functionaries, Ministers: Atishi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party leader (AAP) and MLA, Atishi on Tuesday alleged that Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders and supporters are continuously attacking their Ministers, functionaries and supporters.

Calling the BJP as Bharatiya Gunda Party, Atishi said that the BJP goons have assaulted contractor Sudhir Bidhuri over extortion in the parking of Okhla Phase I, the whole incident was captured in CCTV camera, yet police have not registered an FIR.

Atishi said that the nephew of BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri first threatened an AAP worker and then broke his hand for protesting outside MP Bidhuri's house.

She said that son and nephew of BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri are running massive extortions in the area but the police are working in the behest of the BJP and not taking any actions.

"AAP demands immediate removal of MP Ramesh Bidhuri while the Prime Minister and Home Minister must clarify whether they support such gunda gardi or not!" she said.

Man dupes homebuyers of ₹4 crore, arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police has arrested a man for allegedly inducing the people to invest in a real estate company on a huge return and duped them to the tune of Rs four crores.

The accused has been identified as Nikhil Mishra. Police

According to Dr O P Mishra, the Joint Commissioner of Police, EOW, a case was registered after a complaint was received from Mangat Ram and other victims against Priya Arora alias Priya Mishra and others regarding cheating

said that he along with his associates had cheated around 14 people to the tune of Rs four crores.

According to Dr O P Mishra, the Joint Commissioner of Police, EOW, a case was registered after a complaint was received from Mangat Ram and other victims against Priya Arora alias Priya Mishra and others regarding cheating.

"It has been alleged that Priya Mishra approached them and misrepresented on several counts including that she was working in a reputed company and induced for investment showing rosy pictures that her company was dealing in real estate and the company used to sale space for shops into an under construction Mall at Delhi," said the Joint CP.

"She alongwith her husband Harish Arora, her brother Nikhil Misra and others claimed themselves to be the Directors on the company. Similarly, some other persons have been cheated as well on false pretexts of doubling the invested amount in one year," said the Joint CP.

"During investigation, the accused Priya Arora was arrested last year while Harish Arora was also arrested this year. While during questioning Nikhil did not give justified answers. He stated that he has nothing to do with Priya and her acts. But when the statements of some complainants were recorded after the arrest of accused Priya they alleged that Priya in connivance with her brother Nikhil cheated the victims following which he was interrogated and subsequently arrested on December 28," said the Joint CP.

"Scheme of doubling the amount in short period of time was explained to them by Nikhil and cheated amount of nine lakhs had been transferred to the account of accused Nikhil Mishra. Further, Nikhil Mishra transferred the said amount to his trading account and misappropriated the same," said the Joint CP.

Retired electricity dept clerk commits suicide FIR filed against SDO

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

The deceased was identified as Devki Nandan (58), of Jacobpura in Gurugram. He used to be a clerk in the electricity corporation. He had retired on 31 August.

The victim's family told the police that Devki Nandan was under stress for almost five months before his retirement. Son of the victim, Dheeraj told the police that his father had given Rs 18.42 lakh of the Electricity Department to

Deepak, an employee of Radiant Cash Collection Agency. He had taken the receipt of this amount from Deepak and deposited it in the records of the office.

"It is alleged that even after the amount was deposited in the bank account of the office, SDO Gaurav Chaudhary and other staff were continuously pressurising Devki Nandan. They were threatening to file a case against him for not giving the money," Dheeraj told the police. The victim was in acute

pressure due to the harassment by SDO Gaurav Chaudhary and hanged himself, Dheeraj alleged.

Meanwhile, Chaudhary has denied the allegations.

The autopsy will be conducted on Tuesday, the police said.

"A case has been registered against the SDO under sections of the IPC at the city police station in Gurugram.

Further probe is underway," said Subhash Boken, spokesperson of the Gurugram police.

Haryana still discharging industrial pollutants into Yamuna: Chadha

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Jal Board (DJB) vice chairmen Raghav Chadha on Tuesday said Haryana has not stopped discharging industrial pollutants into the Yamuna despite repeated reminders. Chadha urged the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to take immediate remedial measures.

"Ammonia concentration in the river at the Wazirabad barrage has increased to 7 ppm (parts per million) against the permissible limit of 0.8 ppm which is likely to affect the water supply," said Chadha.

"Discharge of industrial pollutants in Yamuna through Rohtak X-Regulator and DD6 has not stopped despite repeat-

ed reminders to the Haryana govt," Chadha tweeted.

"Such irresponsible behaviour of Haryana govt adversely impacting the water supply in Delhi must be dealt with sternly," he added.

Chadha urged the CPCB and the Upper Yamuna River Board to take immediate cognisance of the "nonchalant" attitude of the Haryana government and take remedial measures.

The DJB on Monday said water supply from Wazirabad, Chandrawal and Okhla water treatment plants would remain affected till the ammonia level in the river reduces to a treatable limit.

These plants supply drinking water to Central, North,

West and South Delhi.

The CPCB had earlier this month raised concerns over pollution and frothing in the river and asked Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to ensure effective sewage treatment.

According to a CPCB statement, the monitoring of 22 drains in Delhi has found 14 drains "untapped and discharging sewage".

In the past, the CPCB had observed froth formation and increase in ammonia levels in the Yamuna because of discharge of untreated sewage, non-operation of existing STPs, improper functioning of effluent treatment plants installed by the industries and common effluent treatment plants located on the banks of the river.



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Desi Covid vaccine effective against new variants: Govt



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Soon after the detection of six new strains of Covid-19 in the country, the Government on Tuesday assured that the vaccines under development would also work against the mutated pathogen first reported in the UK.

"No need to worry about vaccines. Vaccines will work against the variants detected in the UK and South Africa. There is no evidence that current vaccines will fail to protect against the new mutant strains," said Principal Scientific Adviser K VijayRaghavan at a presser here.

However, he said that even as the vaccine will provide safety from the new variants, "there is a need to reduce transmission through physical distancing, follow all public health measures scrupulously, wear masks, follow hand-washing, COVID appropriate behaviour, infection control, amplify test, track, isolate efforts."

The scientific advisor's statement came hours after 6 samples of UK returnees tested positive for the new strain in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Pune.

"There is no evidence that

No need to worry about vaccines: Principal Scientific Adviser K VijayRaghavan

current vaccines will fail to protect against COVID-19 variants reported from the UK or South Africa. Most vaccines do target the Spike protein, in which there are changes in the variants, but vaccines stimulate our immune system to produce a wide range of protective antibodies. The changes in the variants are not sufficient to make the vaccines ineffective," the scientist explained through a presentation made at the press briefing here.

He further said, "The nature of the new variants: eight of the 17 important changes are in the part which codes for the Spike protein. One change (N501Y) increases affinity for the ACE2 receptor, used for viral entry into human cells. It has been linked earlier to increased infectivity and transmission in animal models. Another change (P681H) promotes entry into susceptible cells and increases transmission in animal models of infection. "The South Africa also

shares the N501Y mutation with the UK variants, in addition to other distinct changes." Regarding the variant detected in the UK, VijayRaghavan said, it was more transmissible and the variant is spreading very rapidly taking over the frequency of other variants.

"It is also reflected in a large increase in positivity rate in the UK. We must take extraordinary precautions to prevent these kinds of variants from dominating populations." The Scientific Advisor further added, "The Indian SARS-CoV2 Genomics Consortium is conducting testing and sequencing of samples from international travelers. Testing and sequencing of samples also being done from across the country and from those being admitted to hospitals."

However, he had a word of advice. "As vaccines become available, we should not be complacent. There is a need to reduce transmission through physical distancing, follow all public health measures scrupulously, wear masks, follow hand-washing, COVID appropriate behaviour, infection control, amplify test, track, isolate efforts," he added.

More youths getting Covid infected as they leave their homes in search of jobs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Compelled to move out from homes for jobs amid Covid crisis, more youths are getting infected with the virus, when compared to the old aged people who are usually in the confines of their homes.

But when infected, it is the patients over the age of 65 years, account for 55% of India's Covid-19 deaths while it is 43% for those in the age group of 26-60 years. Gender wise, the virus has found to be more virulent for males who accounted for 70 per cent of total deaths.

"About 45 per cent of all COVID-19 deaths in the country have been reported in those below 60 years of age while 70 per cent of total fatalities from the infection were registered in men," Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said on Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference, he said 63 per cent of the total cases were reported in males and 37 per cent cases in females.

"Eight per cent cases have been reported below the age of 17 years, 13 per cent in the 18-25 years age group, 39 per cent in 26-44 years group, 26 per cent in 45-60 years group and 14 per cent cases above 60 years," he said.

Bhushan further said 45 per cent of the COVID-19 deaths so far have been reported in those below 60 years of age and 70 per cent of total

fatalities from the infection were registered in men.

About 55 per cent COVID-19 deaths were reported in those aged 60 and above, 33 per cent in the age group of 45 to 60 years, 10 per cent in the age group of 26-44 years and one per cent each in those aged between 18-25 years and in those below 17 years, according to the data presented by Bhushan.

He said the number of active cases of COVID-19 has been registered at 2.7 lakhs, sliding to a low after six months. The cumulative positivity rate stands at 6.02 per cent while the positivity rate during last week was 2.25 per cent.

"Five States and UTs which account for 60 per cent of total active COVID-19 cases are Maharashtra, Kerala, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh," he said.

Bhushan further said India's rate of cases per million population — at 7,408 — is among the lowest in the world while the number of deaths per million population stood at 107.

In the last seven days, 110 new cases and two deaths per million population have been reported while the number of active cases per million has been registered at 194, he said adding in contrast, the maximum of 52 death was reported in Italy, followed by 49 in UK, 47 in US, 33 in France, 27 in Russia and 21 in Brazil.

Minister calls Modi's decision to increase post-matric scholarship to 4 crore SC students historic

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior BJP leader and Union Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawarchand Gehlot on Tuesday described as "historic" the Modi-Government's recent decision to increase post-matric scholarship to 'four crore' Scheduled caste students in the next five-year.

The Modi Government aims to provide post-matric scholarship to over four crore students belonging to the Scheduled Caste category over the next five years, raising the number from existing 60 lakh beneficiaries, said Gehlot here at a press conference.

He also told reporters the government's recent decision to raise the Centre's share in the scholarship amount to 60 per cent, and hike it progressively to 80 per cent, will result in a total expenditure of over ₹ 59,048 crore by 2025-26 and ensure monetary assistance to the underprivileged students in time.

The Union Cabinet had last week approved changes in the centrally sponsored Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme to benefit more than four crore Scheduled Caste students in the next five years and approved a total investment of over ₹59,000 crore for the purpose.

The Centre had spent only around ₹1,100 crore annually in the last two years under an earlier formula, now changed by the Modi Government, which had led to a rise in state's share, with almost half of the 36 states and Union Territories not

Money will now be directly transferred to the students' bank accounts and the Centre will contribute only after the State has done so

getting any contribution from the Union dispensation, the minister said.

Many States would not pay scholarship on time or use the fund for some other purposes resulting in increasing dropouts from SC students due to lack of scholarship, he said, adding this will change now.

"Money will be now directly transferred to the student's bank account and the Centre will contribute only after the State has done so," he said.

"This is a historic decision. It will boost educational standards. No State has opposed our announcement," Gehlot, a Dalit face of the ruling party, said.

The percentage of students benefiting from the post-metric scholarship has risen to 23 from 17 in 2014-15, and the government is working to augment the number of beneficiaries to 27 per cent, he said.

Also addressing the press conference, BJP general secretary Dushyant Kumar Gautam hit out at the previous Congress-led UPA Government at the Centre, saying over 50 lakh fake beneficiaries were getting scholarships at the cost of Dalit students.

CSC ties up with IIT-D for design and innovation lab

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-run Common Services Centers (CSC) on Tuesday said it has partnered with IIT-Delhi to establish a design and innovation lab which will conduct research on new products and services for village level entrepreneurs (VLE).

The labs will conduct research on design-led innovations related to leveraging livelihood and enhancing all-round entrepreneurial outlook, a statement said.

The project named 'Design and Innovation in VLE's

Indigenous Network Ecosystem' (Divine) Lab will promote design and innovation among the village level entrepreneurs (VLE), CSC said in a statement. CSC managing director Dinesh Tyagi said that CSCs and VLEs are driven by an entrepreneurial spirit.

"The Design Lab will benefit from IIT Delhi's unparalleled expertise and experiences of VLEs who will bring hyper-local realities and challenges of delivering services to the partnership," Tyagi said. The Divine Lab aims to provide continuous research into

the rural entrepreneurial ecosystem and design new products and services for VLEs.

IIT-Delhi Director Prof V Ramagopal Rao said that the collaboration with CSC will support IIT students to access CSC's network and identify problems in rural India. "World-class research infrastructure and expertise available at IIT-Delhi will support to design and innovate solutions for rural problems through the wide network of VLEs across the country," Ramagopal said.

More than 6.5L posts vacant in State police, Central forces



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than six and a half lakh posts are lying vacant in various State police and Central forces.

According to the data released by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) on Tuesday, 5.31 lakh posts in different state police forces and 1.27 lakh posts in Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) are lying vacant.

Releasing different aspects of policing in the country as on January 1, 2020, the BPR&D also said a total of 1,19,069 police men were recruited in 2019 in various police forces across India. These vacancies are expected to increase further due to the Covid-19 pandemic as many organisations have not conducted fresh recruitment in the entire 2020.

According to the data, the total sanctioned police forces in States and Union Territories is

26,23,225, while there are 20,91,488 police personnel actually in service. Therefore, 5,31,737 posts in police forces are lying vacant as on January 1, 2020.

The figures include civil police, district armed police, special armed police and India Reserve Battalions. The BPR&D, a wing of the Ministry of Home Affairs, said the strength of women in police forces is 2,15,504, which is 10.30 per cent of the total police force in India.

There has been a 16.05 per cent increase of women police over the previous year, it added. The data said the total sanctioned strength of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) is 11,09,511 but the actual strength of the CAPFs as on January 1, 2020, is 9,82,391. The total number of women police personnel in CAPF is 29,249, which is 2.98 per cent of the total strength. The

CAPFs are CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, SSB, NSG and Assam Rifles. According to the data, there are 800 police districts in the country and the number of sanctioned police stations is 16,955. The total State Armed Police Battalions is 318 and the total police commissionerates is 63. A total of 2,02,925 police vehicles are available with the states and UTs police, besides 4,60,220 CCTV cameras, the BPR&D said. The governments has spent Rs 1,566.85 crore in 2019-20 for expenditure and police training.

Plea in SC seeks direction for filling up vacant posts in consumer commissions across India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking directions to the Centre, states and Union Territories to fill up vacant posts of presidents and members of consumer commissions, saying "inaction" in making appointments was causing pendency of cases.

The petition, which has alleged that directions passed by various



high courts regarding filling up of vacancies in district and State consumer commissions have been "ignored" by the authorities concerned, said there is a lack of proper infrastructure to run these panels smoothly. It has also sought a direction to the authorities to provide proper infrastructure and staff to the consumer commissions as soon as possible and file a detailed report regarding this before the apex court.

The plea, filed by law student Saloni G a u t a m ,

claimed that inaction of the authorities in filling up the vacant posts has led to the "violation of the right to speedy disposal of cases".

"Petitioner is filing this PIL...Challenging inaction of governments in appointment of president, members and staff before district consumer dispute redressal commissions and state consumer disputes redressal commissions across India, which is causing pendency of consumer cases all over India and justice is getting delayed due to non-action of the governments across India and is antithesis to the Article 21 of the Constitution of India," said the plea, filed through advocate Om Prakash Parihar.

It said that in July, the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 came into force, and it changed the pecuniary jurisdiction for the district, state and national commissions respectively. The plea said that pecuniary limit for district commission has been increased to up to Rs one crore, for state commission, it has been increased to up to Rs 10 crores and for national commission, it

is now over and above Rs 10 crores. It said the petitioner has also got RTI replies about vacancies in consumer commissions in several states across the country.

"It is most respectfully submitted that all this clearly shows that the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 came into a force and the pecuniary jurisdictions of the consumer commissions has changed/increased, but the Governments have not made any arrangement in filing the post of president and members in these commissions," the plea claimed.

It said various high courts across the country have ordered the state governments to appoint president and members in district and state commission, but no action has been taken.

"It is also pertinent to note that various consumer commissions do not even have proper infrastructure to run consumer commission in a smooth manner which at the end leads to cause delay in delivering justice to the consumers," it added.

EXTENSION OF PERIODICITY OF FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that Railways have decided to extend the periodicity of the run of following Festival Special Trains as under:-

Train No. & Name	Already Notified Up to	Extended Up to
08237 Korba - Amritsar Jn. Express Special	30.12.2020	29.01.2021
08238 Amritsar Jn. - Bilaspur Express Special	01.01.2021	31.01.2021
08215 Durg - Udhampur Express	30.12.2020	27.01.2021
08216 Udhampur - Durg Express	31.12.2020	28.01.2021
02883 Durg - H. Nizamuddin Superfast Festival Spl.	31.12.2020	30.01.2021
02884 H. Nizamuddin - Durg Superfast Festival Spl.	01.01.2021	31.01.2021
02521 Barauni - Ernakulam Festival Special	30.12.2020	27.01.2021
02522 Ernakulam - Barauni Festival Special	03.01.2021	31.01.2021
02397 Gaya - New Delhi Festival Special	31.12.2020	30.01.2021
02398 New Delhi - Gaya Festival Special	01.01.2021	31.01.2021
05251 Darbhanga - Jalandhar City Festival Special	26.12.2020	30.01.2021
05252 Jalandhar City - Darbhanga Festival Special	27.12.2020	31.01.2021
05531 Saharsa - Amritsar Festival Special	27.12.2020	31.01.2021
05532 Amritsar - Saharsa Festival Special	28.12.2020	01.02.2021
05267 Raxaul - Lokmanya Tilak (T) Festival Special	26.12.2020	30.01.2021
05268 Lokmanya Tilak (T) - Raxaul Festival Special	28.12.2020	01.02.2021
05529 Saharsa - Anand Vihar (T) Festival Special	30.12.2020	27.01.2021
05530 Anand Vihar (T) - Saharsa Festival Special	31.12.2020	28.01.2021
02355 Patna - Jammu Tawi Festival Special	29.12.2020	30.01.2021
02356 Jammu Tawi - Patna Festival Special	30.12.2020	31.01.2021
03255 Patliputra - Chandigarh Festival Special	30.12.2020	31.01.2021
03256 Chandigarh - Patliputra Festival Special	31.12.2020	01.02.2021
05211 Darbhanga - Amritsar Festival Special	31.12.2020	29.01.2021
05212 Amritsar - Darbhanga Festival Special	02.01.2021	31.01.2021
05269 Muzaffarpur - Ahmedabad Festival Special	31.12.2020	28.01.2021
05270 Ahmedabad - Muzaffarpur Festival Special	02.01.2021	30.01.2021
02237 Varanasi Jn. - Jammu Tawi Express Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
02238 Jammu Tawi - Varanasi Jn. Express Special	01.01.2021	01.02.2021
04041 Delhi Jn. - Dehradun Mussoorie Express Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
04042 Dehradun - Delhi Jn. Mussoorie Express Special	01.01.2021	01.02.2021
02231 Lucknow - Chandigarh Express Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
02232 Chandigarh - Lucknow Express Special	01.01.2021	01.02.2021
02448 H. Nizamuddin - Manikpur Jn. Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
02447 Manikpur Jn. - H. Nizamuddin Special	01.01.2021	01.02.2021
04321 Bareilly - Bhuj Express Special	30.12.2020	31.01.2021
04322 Bhuj - Bareilly Express Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
04311 Bareilly - Bhuj Ala Hazrat Express Special	31.12.2020	30.01.2021
04312 Bhuj - Bareilly Ala Hazrat Express Special	30.12.2020	29.01.2021
02422 Jammu Tawi - Ajmer Superfast Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
02421 Ajmer - Jammu Tawi Superfast Special	01.01.2021	01.02.2021

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

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table of stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

Security Helpline No. **182**

Integrated Helpline No. **139**

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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER Saharanpur Circle, P.W.D., Saharanpur

NO 7244/104M-S/2020 **SHORT TERM TENDER NOTICE** Date: 22.12.2020
The S.E. Saharanpur Circle, U.P.P.W.D. Saharanpur on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites on SBD Basis online for the construction of work detailed in the table given below. The Bidder is advised to examine carefully all instructions including addendum/amendments to ITB, conditions of contract, contract data, forms, terms, technical specifications, bill of quantities etc. in the bid document.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Approximate Bid e value of work (Rs. in lakh)	Bid Security (Rs. in Lakh)	Cost of Document (In Rs.)	Period of completion
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Repair and surface improvement work of Nakur Shahjahanpur Chilkana Road (ODR)	880.00	17.60	2714.00	06 Months

The Rate taken in the BOQ including all Other taxes but excluding GST Taxes. Bids must be accompanied with the copy of UTR (Unique Transaction Receipt) bid security (EMD) and tender cost of the amount specified for the work in the table. Bid security and Tender Cost should be deposited online.

This Tender shall be submitted by Rahari Application as per Government Order 879(1)/23-7-2020-176 (III) / 06 नवंबर 2020-7 Dated 25.07.2020

Bids must be published/download online 11:00 AM on date 08.01.2021 and submitted online on or before 4:00 PM on date 15.01.2021 and the technical bids will be opened online date 16.01.2021 at 12:30 PM and Financial bids of the qualified bidders will be opened on date & time as notified. According to the provisions of Government Order no. 1/2018/3070/78-2-2018/42 17/2017 (22) Date 03-01-2018 after opening of the technical and financial bids, the bidder has to submit original documents personally in department/office. In the event of non submission of original documents by the bidder, the appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the provisions of G.O.

All terms & conditions can be seen on website <http://etender.up.nic.in>.
(R.K.Singh) Executive Engineer Construction Divd-3, P.W.D., Saharanpur email id - pwcdd3sre@gmail.com
(Sanjeev Bhardwaj) Superintending Engineer Saharanpur Circle, P.W.D., Saharanpur email id - sepwdsre@gmail.com
U.P.: 158214, Date: 28.12.2020, विज्ञापन वेबसाईट www.up.gov.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है।

PM inaugurates new stretch of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor

Lucknow: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday hit out at previous Governments for delaying the Dedicated Freight Corridor project and ignoring modernisation of railways, and said his Government engaged with stakeholders to speed up works and carried out reforms at all levels.

Inaugurating the New Bhaupur-New Khurja section of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) via video conferencing, he said the "vibration" and "roar" of Bharat and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' were clearly heard as the first freight train ran on the Khurja-Bhaupur freight corri-

dor. Attacking previous government, the prime minister said the project was given permission in 2006 but it was only on paper as the then government lacked the seriousness and urgency with which it had to take it up with the states.

"Till 2014 not a single km track of the project was laid and the funds sanctioned could not be spent properly. After 2014, it was restarted and officials asked to take it forward and by then the budget had gone up by 11 times", the prime minister said.

The 351-km section, which has been built at a cost of Rs 5,750 crore, will open new

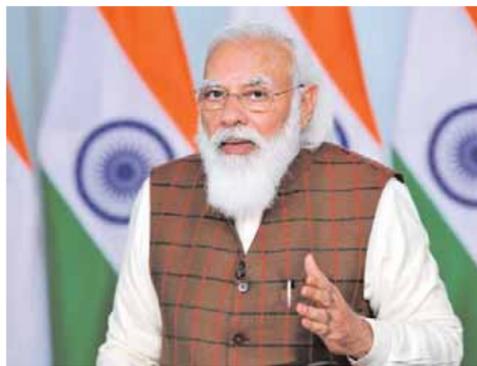
avenues for local industries in Uttar Pradesh.

The EDFC is 1,840-km-long and extends from Ludhiana in Punjab to Kolkata in West Bengal.

Modi also inaugurated the EDFC's operation centre at Prayagraj and flagged off the first 1.5 km long goods trains.

The prime minister said that on coming to power, he personally monitored the project and held a dialogue with the stakeholders and got new technology as a result of which about 1100 km work will be completed in the next few months.

Political apathy not just



hindered the freight corridor project but also had a bearing

on the entire Railways system, he said adding that earlier the focus was on increasing number of trains for political benefit in elections but not on the tracks on which the trains were run as there was no investment on it.

There was no seriousness towards modernisation of the rail network, trains were being run on slow speed and the entire network was full of dangerous unmanned crossings, he said.

"We changed this work culture and thinking after 2014 and ending the separate Railway budget, invested in rail tracks, ended unmanned

crossings, focussed on broadening and electrification of the network", he said.

The Vande Bharat express, the semi high speed train is now being run, he said, adding that now Indian rails are more secure than before. In the past few years reforms have been carried out at all levels and can be seen, he added.

The new freight section will open new vistas of opportunity for local industries such as aluminium industry in Pukhrayan region of Kanpur Dehat, dairy sector of Auraiya, textile production and block printing of Etawah, glassware industry of Firozabad, pottery

products of Khurja, asafotida or 'heeng' production of Hathras, and locks and hardware of Aligarh district, according to officials.

The section will also decongest the existing Kanpur-Delhi mainline and will enable the Indian Railways to run faster trains.

Noting that a state-of-the-art Operation Control Centre at Prayagraj will act as the command centre for the entire route length of the EDFC, they said this is one of the largest structures of its type globally with modern interiors, ergonomic design and best-in-class acoustics.

Agencies

Encounter underway in Srinagar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Braving bone chilling weather conditions the joint team of security forces were put on the job to neutralise a group of holed up terrorists in the Lawaypora area of Srinagar late Tuesday evening.

Till the time of filing the report, intense exchange of firing was going on in the thickly populated area. The additional reinforcements were also rushed to the spot to plug the exit routes and to contain public anger in the area following sporadic incidents of stone pelting from nearby areas where the gun fight was raging on. The traffic on the Srinagar-Baramulla highway was also disrupted after the gunfight broke out.

The twitter handle of the Kashmir Zone police posted a tweet claiming, "Encounter has started at Lawaypora area of Srinagar. Police and security forces are on the job. Further details shall follow".

Meanwhile, a CRPF officer and an Army jawan, injured in separate incidents of terrorist

violence last week, succumbed to their injuries in the last 24 hours in Kashmir valley.

Official sources said, Assistant sub-inspector of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Netrapal Singh, who got injured in a grenade attack at Ganderbal on December 23, died at a hospital here on Tuesday.

This has taken the death toll of CRPF personnel in the grenade attack to two as a jawan had succumbed to his injuries a day after the attack.

Army Havildar A K Tomar breathed his last at the Army's 92 base hospital here on Monday, the officials said.

They said Tomar had sustained grievous injuries during a gunfight with terrorists in the Kanigam area of Shopian on Friday. Two terrorists were killed in the operation.

The Army paid tributes to Tomar at a solemn ceremony at the Badamibagh cantonment.

Tomar (40) had joined the Indian Army in 2001. He belonged to Sisauli village in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut district. He is survived by his wife and two children.

Now, infants too test +ve

Kolkata: Now corona virus has started hitting the neo-natal arena with two cases appearing from East Midnapore.

According to sources in the State Health Department two infants have been identified with suffering from the deadly virus and had been undergoing treatment at a private hospital at Kolaghat 60 km off Kolkata. The incident came to light when the two patients showed corona like symptoms. "Anti-body was found in their body," doctors said adding both the patients were serious and were in neo-natal care unit.

The first victim is 6-day-old and the second one is 13-day-old, said the doctors treating them adding "while one is from Haldia the other is from Bhagbanpur both in East Midnapore."

Though the doctors could not confirm for sure how the patients contacted the disease they said the little ones might have got the virus from their mothers who were not tested before admission or during delivery.

Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board authorities gear up to welcome pilgrims

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ KATRA

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board authorities are fully geared up to welcome the pilgrims on the eve of the New Year 2021.

The Fresh spell of snowfall at the cave shrine has already become an attraction point and key motivating factor for pilgrims to pay a visit and offer special prayers before ushering in the New Year 2021. The Shrine board is also hoping to record substantial rise in the total offerings with the increase in the footfall of pilgrims. On Sunday the highest number of around 13,000 pilgrims were registered by the Shrine Board.

Local markets, which remained deserted for about nine months, are already brimming with a lot of activity.

Street food vendors are doing brisk business while the local tour operators, businessmen and hoteliers are also keeping their fingers crossed and looking forward to welcoming a large number of pilgrims on the eve of the New Year 2021.

For the last three days the registration counter at the Katra

base camp is recording a gradual increase in the pilgrim traffic.

The numbers are expected to rise in the run up to the New Year celebrations as a large number of pilgrims prefer ushering in the New Year at the cave shrine, located in the Trikuta hills. As of now an upper limit of 15,000 pilgrims per day has been fixed by the Union Territory administration in the wake of Covid-19 guidelines and protocols.

During Covid-19 pandemic when the pilgrims were not able to visit the shrine special arrangement was made to beam 'live' coverage of Aarti at the shrine via special mobile app and arrangements were also done to home deliver packets of 'prasad' at the doorsteps of a pilgrim in collaboration with India post.

Ramesh Kumar, CEO Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board said, "We have received a very healthy response from the pilgrims from all over the country". We have already delivered more than 15000 packets and pilgrims are still booking their orders via Mobile App and through the website as well.

Ramesh Kumar said, "keeping in view the prevailing Covid-19 restrictions, elaborate arrangements have been made to ensure strict adherence of the protocol and social distancing on the eve of the New Year".

Ramesh Kumar said, "We are ready to welcome pilgrims in the New Year ahead and have made elaborate arrangements to ensure their safety and security". He said besides offering their battery car facility, helicopter services and better accommodation facilities we have ensured adequate medical care facilities remain in place to look after the health needs of any patient during the yatra period.

The Shrine Board CEO said, "ambulances have been deployed along the yatra track to tackle any emergency".

Talking about future projects which are in the pipeline, Ramesh Kumar said, "in the year 2021 the Shrine Board is going to install 7 big screens at different locations to beam visuals of Atka Arti live for the benefit of pilgrims. We are also focusing on expanding the base of Today's darshan live via

Mobile App.

In addition, he said, construction work of Durga bhawan, with a capacity to accommodate 1700-1800 pilgrims during one shift is going to be launched and completed soon. In addition, 50 percent work on underground cabling has been completed while work is in progress on providing CCTV surveillance along the yatra track.

Rakesh Wazir, President of the Katra Hotel and Restaurant association said, recently we had appealed to the government to lift the upper sealing of permitting 15,000 pilgrims per day. Rakesh Wazir said, "we have been repeatedly urging the government to lift the sealing and allow interstate bus services to ply normally so that pilgrims from the neighboring states of Punjab, Himanchal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi and Rajasthan can smoothly visit the shrine".

Wazir said, "all over India the local governments have lifted restrictions and pilgrim traffic is moving smoothly. The UT administration must respond to their

demands to allow them to restart their businesses, which suffered huge losses on account of complete shutdown due to Covid-19 pandemic". Rakesh Wazir said, "majority of pilgrims visiting Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine are returning the same day and only a small fraction is staying back and looking for hotel accommodations".

Ramji Lal, a tourist from Bharatpur area of Rajasthan told this correspondent in Katra, we are a group of 103 pilgrims from Rajasthan who visited the cave shrine. We wanted to come earlier but due to restrictions we stayed back. He appreciated the facilities and other logistics support extended by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine board authorities to facilitate pilgrimage.

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Share Certificates for 45 Ordinary Shares bearing Distinctive Numbers 9535165-9535179, 19810502-19810531 covered by Certificate Numbers 75774, 160122 of M/s Birla Corporation Ltd., Kolkata are held in the name of Ranjit Sawhney (since deceased) under Folio No. 0064551 and an application for issue of duplicate share certificate/s & transmission thereof have been made by Deepak Sawhney legal heir of Ranjit Sawhney to the Company at their Registered Office at 9/1, R.N. Mukherjee Road, Kolkata - 700 001. Objections, if any, against such issuance of duplicate share certificates, should be made to the Registered Office of the Company within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

The Public are hereby cautioned against dealing in any manner with these shares.

Deepak Sawhney
Place: Delhi NCR Date: 30/12/2020

Sanjay Raut's wife defies ED summons, seeks more time

TI RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Varsha Raut, wife of Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut, on Tuesday sought and obtained four more days' time to appear before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the PMC Bank scam, even as her husband and Sena MP said that being a lawmaker himself, he respected law and would respond to the notice as per the stipulated timeline.

Talking to media persons here, Raut said: "We have asked for about four more days (to respond to notice)... I have still not seen the notice but will reply to it. Despite our political differences (with the ruling BJP at the Centre), we respect the central agencies. The ED action is nothing but

political vendetta and everybody knows it. I am a Rajya Sabha MP and will respond to the notice". Unconfirmed reports said that Varsha had sought time till January 5 to appear before the ED.

The ED is investigating alleged financial transactions between Varsha Raut and Pravin Raut, who is under arrest in the PMC Bank case.

The ED is understood to have laid hands on the details linking transactions between the accounts of Varsha and Pravin Raut. Meanwhile, former MP and BJP leader Kirit Somaiya demanded to know as to what is the relation between Varsha Raut and Pravin Raut. "This is the 3rd Summons of ED. Sanjay Raut Family not appearing before ED Why Sanjay

Raut Family running away? ED Investigating Crores of Rupees Transactions between PMC Bank, HDIL, Pravin Raut Family & Sanjay Raut Family What is Special Relations of Sanjay Raut Pravin Raut Family," Somaiya tweeted.

Along with his second tweet, Somaiya put out a copy of company master sheet of Siddhant Syscon Pvt Ltd, of which he alleged Varsha Sanjay Raut & Madhuri Pravin Raut were directors. "#SanjayRaut Sach Bolo. Raut Families are Partners. Varsha Sanjay Raut & Madhuri Pravin Raut were Directors in Siddhant Syscon Pvt Ltd #PravinRaut Director in HDIL's Subsidiary GuruAshish Construction Co Crores of Rupees transferred from #PMCBank to #HDIL to Raut's Companies," the BJP

leader tweeted. It may be recalled that on September 24 last year placed Punjab & Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank Ltd under regulatory restrictions, following the detection of the scam.

The ED registered a case of money laundering against HDIL promoter Rakesh Kumar Wadhawan, his son Sarang Wadhawan, Waryam Singh and Joy Thomas, the then Chairman and Managing Director of PMC Bank Ltd, respectively and others on the basis of an FIR registered by the Mumbai Police's Economic Offences Wing in September last year. The FIR was registered for causing wrongful loss to the tune of Rs 4,355 crore to PMC Bank and corresponding gain to themselves.

Hitting out at the BJP-led NDA

for "misusing" its investigating agencies against its political rivals, Raut had said at a news conference here on Monday: "Targetting the women of a household is an act of cowardice. We are not scared of anyone and will respond accordingly. The BJP's act reflects its frustration against him, owing to his role in the formation of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in the state last year and his refusal to yield to pressure to make it unstable".

Raut, it may be recalled, had played a key role in bringing the Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress, together to form a three-party alliance government in Maharashtra in November last year.

Asserting that the BJP should learn to face political battles

should be "fought face to face" instead of using its investigating agencies against political rivals, Raut said: "I have spoken to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray in this regard. The Shiv Sena will respond to the BJP in its own way. There's no need to panic".

Alluding to the "blatant misuse" of the Central investigating agencies against its political rivals, Raut had said: "During the past one year, our leaders like Sharad Pawar, Eknath Khadse and Pratap Sarnaik got notices from the ED. Now I am being discussed in connection with the summons issued to my wife... All those who played key roles in the formation of MVA government last year are being targeted by the BJP-led government through various agencies".

Dilip Chhabria, ace car designer, arrested in forgery case

TI RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Ace car designer and founder of DC design Dilip Chhabria, who runs a car modification studio, was arrested late on Monday night for his alleged involvement in a dubious car finance and fake registration racket involving high-end luxury cars.

Acting on a tip-off that a two-seater sports-car DC-Avanti designed by Chhabria allegedly bore a fake registration number, the Mumbai police crime branch sleuths kept a watch on the movement of the car, which was initially expected at Hotel Trident at Nariman Point in south Mumbai on December 17, but failed to turn up there.

On the following night, the Crime Intelligence Unit (CIU) laid a trap near the Hotel Taj Mahal at Colaba, intercepted the vehicle and seized it. During the questioning, the owner of the car Indermal Ramani produced the ownership documents of the vehicle as registered with Chennai RTO, which were found to be genuine.

However, during the investigations, the police found that there was another car with the same engine and chassis number registered with Haryana RTO. The investigations have revealed Chhabria's alleged involvement in the car finance and fake registration racket involving high-end luxury cars.

Acting on a complaint registered against him 10 days, Chhabria was nabbed from his garage at the MIDC area at Andheri's MIDC in north

Mumbai. His arrest has shocked car enthusiasts and those in the automobile finance industry.

Chhabria -- whose brand DC Design involved in modifying cars into luxury sports launched India's first supercar "the DC Avanti" and also showcased its second product -- the TCA at the Auto Expo ---has been booked under Sections 420, 465, 467, 468, 471, 120(B) and 34 of the Indian Penal Code or IPC.

The investigations have also revealed that Chhabria's firm Dilip Chhabria Designs Pvt. Ltd. (DCDPL) produced 127 DC-Avantis and sold them to customers in India and abroad. The Crime branch sleuths suspect that many of these vehicles might have been involved in the car finance and fake registration racket.

The police said that multiple loans, averaging to Rs. 42 lakh per vehicle, had been taken with respect to 90-odd cars by DCDPL, allegedly posing as customers for their own manufactured vehicles.

The modus operandi was to take loans, sometimes even multiple loans from financial institutions on cars and sell these hypothecated cars to other customers before or after availing the finance through the fraudulent means. The investigators are to quantify the exact losses suffered by the government by way of unpaid taxes, customs duties and GST.

The investigators estimated that the loss to the state exchequer could be around Rs 40 crore.

The investigators suspect

that the DCDPL, which was set up in 1993 but went bankrupt in 2018, might have cheated many automobile finance companies and banks.

Apart from designing the lounge for the Mahindra Marazzo, DC Design also released the lounge conversion of a slew of new car and it had several high-profile clients like Madhuri Dixit and Hrithik Roshan who reportedly had their vehicles customised from this brand. Some popular designs from DC Design include the lounge design kits of the Mahindra XUV500, Duster, Toyota Fortuner and Innova. Chhabria has also modified cars in the international market like Rolls Royce and Land Cruisers. His new brand DC2 has plans for launching electric cars in future.

Chhabria -- who came into limelight in the nineties after he produced some fancy modified private cars for celebrities and vanity vans of Bollywood personalities -- went onto design concept cars, luxury passenger buses, and even aircraft interiors.

DCDPL rolled out its first indigenously-made sports-car "the DC Avanti" in 2016, a year after securing approvals from the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI).

However, DCDPL ran into rough weather before the first sports car was launched, as cricketer Dinesh Karthik moved a Chennai-based Consumer Courts over the car dealer's failure to refund the booking amount of Rs.5 lakh for a car costing nearly Rs.35 lakh.

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Corporate Office: No.2, Dare House, 1st Floor, NSC Bose Road, Chennai - 600 001.
Branch Office: 1st & 2nd Floor, Plot No.6, Main Pusa Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110 005.
Contact No: Mr. GAURAV KUMAR DAHYIA- 9811747507 & Mr. SUDHIR TOMAR- 9818460101.

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR AUCTION CUM SALE

Pursuant to taking possession of the secured asset mentioned hereunder by the Authorized Officer of M/s Cholamandalam Investment & Finance Company Ltd under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 for the recovery of amount due from borrowers, offers are invited by the undersigned in sealed covers for purchase of immovable property, as described hereunder, which is in the physical possession, on 'AS IS WHERE IS BASIS', 'AS IS WHAT IS BASIS' and 'WHATSOEVER IS THERE IS BASIS'. Particulars of which are given below:-

Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Description of the Immovable property	Reserve Price	Earnest Money Deposit	Total Loan Outstanding as on 24.06.2019	Date & place of Auction
Loan Account No. X0HEDE00001896705 / X0HEDE00001896706 Mr./Mrs. RAJ KUMAR, (Borrower) Mr./Mrs. SANTOSH DEVI, (Co-Borrower) Address for communication at Plot No.43, Sanjay Colony, Sec-23, Faridabad, Delhi-121 005. No.1139, Sec.55, Urban Estate, Faridabad Delhi - 121 005.	26/06/2019 Rs. 1,10,15,448.50/- [Rupees One Crore Ten Lakhs Fifteen Thousand Four Hundred Forty Eight and paise Fifty Only] as on 24.06.2019	Property 1: Property No.1139 Admeasuring 135 sq.mts. Situated at Sector-55 Urban Estate Tehsil Ballabhgarh District Faridabad. Property 2: Plot No.43 area Admeasuring 175 sq.yds. Comprised in Kharsa No.30 Killa No.9/2,10, in Waka Mauja Gauchhi Sanjay Colony Sector-23 Tehsil Ballabhgarh District Faridabad Haryana bounded as East-Plot No.44, West- Plot No.42, North-Rasta 15ft, South-Rasta 15ft.	Property 1 : Rs.59,00,000/- (Rupees Fifty Nine Lakhs only) Property 2 : Rs.46,00,000/- (Rupees Forty Six Lakhs only)	Property 1 : Rs.5,90,000/- (Rupees Five Lakhs Ninety Thousand only) Property 2 : Rs.4,60,000/- (Rupees Four Lakhs Sixty Thousand only)	Rs. 1,10,15,448.50/- [Rupees One Crore Ten Lakhs Fifteen Thousand Four Hundred Forty Eight and paise Fifty Only] as on 24.06.2019 Interest thereafter	Date: 19.01.2021 Branch office at : 1st & 2nd Floor, Plot No.6, Main Pusa Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110005.
(Loan Account No. X0HEDE00001394733 & X0HEELD00001594134) Mr./Mrs. RAJENDER PRASAD, (Borrower) Mr./Mrs. GUDDO DEVI, (Co-Borrower) Mr./Mrs. MANOJ KUMAR, (Co-Borrower) Address for communication at K-3/29, Vihar, No.11A, K - Block, Gangotri Nagar, West Ghonda, New Delhi-110053.	27/09/2019 Rs. 1,03,19,652.04 [Rupees One Crore Three Lakhs Nineteen Thousand Six Hundred Fifty Two & Paise Four Only] as on 29.09.2019	Property: Portion Area 67 Out of Entire Area 150 Sq.Yds., of Property No.K-3/29, Out of Kharsa No.560, Situated At Village Ghonda Gurjan Khardar, in the Abadi Of K-Block. Gali No.-A West Ghonda, Shahdara, Delhi-110053.	Rs. 49,00,000/- [Rupees Forty Nine Lakhs Only]	Rs. 4,90,000/- [Rupees Four Lakhs Ninety Thousand Only]	Rs.1,27,90,695.05/- [Rupees One Crore Twenty Seven Lakhs Ninety Thousand Six Hundred Ninety Five & Paise Five Only] as on 29/12/2020 Interest thereafter	Date: 19.01.2021 Branch office at : 1st & 2nd Floor, Plot No.6, Main Pusa Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110005.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING AUCTION PROCESS

1. Date of Auction	19.01.2021	3. Date of Inspection of Property	14.01.2021 & 15.01.2021 (In business Hours)
2. Place of Submission of Bids and Place of Auction	1st & 2nd Floor, Plot No.6, Main Pusa Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110 005.	4. Last date for Submission of Bids	18.01.2021 before 5.00 pm

* A bidder may, on his own choice, avail the facility by making application in prescribed form which is available along with the offer/tender document on the given office address mentioned hereunder. Sale is strictly subject to terms and conditions incorporated in this advertisement and the prescribed Bid / Tender Document. This notice is also to be treated as a 15 days' notice under Rule 8(5)(c) and 9(1) of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF AUCTION

- The property is sold on 'As is where is basis' 'As Is What Is Basis' and 'Whatever Is There Is Basis'.
- The Bidder is obliged to exercise full due diligence in all respects, including to inspect each of the details of the property mentioned above on the scheduled date & time.
- Submission of bids to M/s Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited would be construed a deemed acceptance by the bidder that (i) he/she/it has exercised due diligence in all respects; (ii) is satisfied with all details/measurements of property; (iii) Acknowledges full knowledge of terms and conditions that govern the auction and (iv) Waives all his/her/its rights to make any contrary claims against company at any future date.
- The sale is subject to confirmation by the Authorised officer if the borrower/guarantor pays the entire outstanding amount in full before sale, no sale will be conducted.
- The Bidder shall remit Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) by Banker's Cheque / DD drawn in favour of Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited for the respective Loan A/c, along with the bid form in a Sealed Cover addressed to The Authorised Officer, Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited up to 5.00 P.M on 18.01.2021. Please note that, in reference to successful bidder(s), EMD is adjustable against the sale consideration receivable by M/s Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited. Also, EMD is refundable to the unsuccessful bidder(s).
- The successful bidder shall deposit 25% of the bid amount immediately on the sale being knocked down in his/her/its favour and the balance within 15 days by Banker's Cheque/DD drawn in favour of Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited for the respective Loan A/c Number.
- In case the successful bidder fails to deposit 25% of the bid amount immediately on sale being knocked down in his/her/its favour and/or the balance amount, within 15 days the deposit made by the bidder shall be forfeited without any prior intimation.
- The charges / fees payable for conveyance such as stamp duty, registration fee, maintenance charges electricity charges etc., shall be borne by the successful bidder. The Authorised Officer will not be held responsible for any charge, lien, property tax or any other dues to the Government or local body or any other authority in respect of the property under sale.
- The Authorised Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject, bid or adjourn / postpone/cancel the sale/modify any terms and conditions of the sale without any prior notice or assigning any reason therefor.
- The Sale will only be in favour of successful bidder and not his/her nominee.
- This Notice is also to the Borrower(s) Guarantor(s) in particular and the public in general. The borrower has absolute right for the redemption of property till the confirmation of the sale Process.

Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited are not responsible for any liabilities whatsoever pending upon the property as mentioned above. The Property shall be auctioned on 'As Is Where Is Basis', 'As Is What Is Basis' and 'Whatever Is There Is Basis'.

For further details, contact the Authorised Officer, at the abovementioned Office address.

Place: Delhi Date: 30.12.2020

Sd/-
Authorised Officer
Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited

CORRIGENDUM

Refer to the advertisement of the Sale Notice published on 29 December, 2020, under the Borrower's Name Jain Logistics and Ors. in Pioneer (Eng.) Delhi edition. Due to inadvertent mistake, Court Name Mentioned Debts Recovery Tribunal This is to be read as High Court, and O.A. No. 609 of 2020, O.A. No. 615 of 2020, O.A. No. 611 of 2020, O.A. No. 616 of 2020, O.A. No. 617 of 2020, O.A. No. 614 of 2020, O.A. No. 610 of 2020. This is to be read as High Court W.P. (C) 11236/2020, High Court W.P. (C) 11237/2020, High Court W.P. (C) 11238/2020, High Court W.P. (C) 11239/2020, High Court W.P. (C) 11240/2020, High Court W.P. (C) 11241/2020, High Court W.P. (C) 11242/2020. All other contents remain unchanged. Also please refer new sale notice published today in said cases.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles.

VEHICLES FOR SALE

- 1) SM_SAMRAT REG. NO. UP17AT7472-YOM -2019
- 2) CB_TATA LP 709 CAB CHASSIS REG. NO. DL1LAA1843-YOM -2017
- 3) VE1075FB EICHR_VECV REG. NO. DL1LX8051 YOM 2017
- 4) CB_TATA LPT 2518 CAB CHASSIS GOODS REG. NO. HR38S8046-YOM-2013
- 5) LPT709CHTP TATA MOTORS REG. NO. DL1LAA8287 YOM 2018
- 6) 1059_GOODS EICHR_VECV REG. NO. DL1LR6100 YOM 2012
- 7) VE1075FB EICHR_VECV REG. NO. DL1LAC3176 YOM 2019
- 8) AL2516FBM2 ASHOK LEYDL1GB7464 REG. NO. DL1GB7464-YOM -2011

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Resilience pays!

India's victory in Melbourne is a lesson in the power of commitment. A determination to bounce back



In the pantheon of India's top cricketing wins, Melbourne 2020 may not be at the top. In fact, it won't because until something truly remarkable happens, nothing will ever top Eden Gardens, 2001. But Melbourne will have a place near the very top; not because it was a great win, but because of what preceded it at Adelaide a week ago when India's vaunted batting line-up was bowled out for a truly embarrassing 36. India then lost two of its strike bowlers, Mohammed Shami and Ishant Sharma, to injury and its talismanic leader Virat Kohli took paternity leave in order to be next to his wife when she delivers their first child. With all this happening, Indian cricket fans feared the worst, a truly apocalyptic whitewash Down Under. Yet, powered on by a desire to redeem themselves, not only in the eyes of 1.3 billion fans but also their own, the Indian cricket team delivered a truly astonishing and comprehensive win at the Melbourne Cricket Ground which, like Eden Gardens, is one of those cathedrals to the sport. As we head into a new year, after living through the worst year in recent memory, and one where unfortunately many millions across the world who have lost their lives to a truly awful disease will not join us, this win should give every single one of us hope. Sport is, in essence, a distraction from life but nothing is as powerful as a story of redemption in sports. And more powerful still is a story of an unexpected redemption. Because such stories give us hope, false hope some might argue, because we do not know how the remaining two Tests in the series will go and India might still lose the series just like even with several vaccines being deployed, humanity might not win the battle against COVID-19 anytime soon; but hope is what is important.

Hope comes from leadership. Ajinkya Rahane was thrust into a leadership position he did not necessarily want but one where he conducted himself brilliantly. The debutants Mohammed Siraj and Shubman Gill calmed the fire of the crucible of Test cricket well. Ravichandran Ashwin and Jasprit Bumrah proved again that they are among the best bowlers in the sport, and India fell in love with Test cricket, a format pilloried by the attention-deficit generation as old, stodgy and way too long. Most importantly, India's players have dealt with the emotional deprivation of the "bubble" well, steering clear of breaking it no matter what the temptations, something many other Test teams such as Pakistan, the West Indies and even England at home have not managed. The pandemic has not been easy on anybody but trying to understand how top athletes can manage themselves in a bubble is beyond most of us. On this front, Lewis Hamilton, who recently won his record-equalling seventh F1 title, should be an inspiration to all. Of course, the Indian team has major questions ahead of it. Our top order, particularly our opening slots, is still up for debate. Injuries have ravaged the bowling unit, the latest victim being Umesh Yadav, and replacements can't just be flown in easily. The next two Test matches will be a challenge; Sydney has already been dropped as the host of the third Test match thanks to the Coronavirus running rampant in Australia's biggest city and it losing out on its traditional New Year's slot. Maybe familiarity with the conditions will help India but maybe the Australian players will want redemption themselves with talk of David Warner, an explosive batsman disgraced in a scandalous ball-tampering issue a couple of years ago, potentially making his return to the Test team as well. Who knows? But we should enjoy this win and hope that India, and the world, can learn from this and find it possible to bounce back as well in 2021. This is the best New Year's sports gift that India has ever received.

The year of loss

Can we convert 2020 from being a 'lost year' to a 'turnaround year' for the sake of humanity?



Many of us would want 2020 to be a blur of memory while history would record it with more clarity as a turning point in human civilisation; one where life as we knew it dissolved and liquefied and the COVID-19 outbreak showed that our species was definitely not sitting comfortably atop the evolutionary peak. And given its prolonged spell, the tiny microbe — foxing us by mutating itself and resisting all our efforts to tame it — has for the first time made us uncertain about the future, something that has been shaping our horizon, helping us plot the roadmap of our lives. Now, with our lives changing every moment, there's certainly nothing to work towards or a predictive compass to guide us. And

it is this absence of a future that is our greatest loss this year, making us look more fragile than the virus has made us feel, claiming millions of lives. And the losses have been on many fronts. First, the loss of people — from scientists, virologists, doctors, celebrities, the rich and the poor, to all the people we loved around us. We lost extraordinary talent, mourned those who still hadn't done their time, cried for those who had no reason to leave so early and left much work unfinished. Humanity has been hollowed out with a severity that has not left a single person unhurt. The second loss has been that of livelihood, be it through job and salary cuts, the closure of businesses and sunrise sectors of the economy shutting down. Never in our experienced history have we felt so economically disempowered, or helpless about continuing life without resources. The third obvious loss, therefore, has been that of a ritualised lifestyle that we had built up around ourselves on aspiration and which we fuelled with our ambitions. The forced break on travels, celebrations, gatherings and parties has meant the loss of social communion as we experienced and defined it. A year of denial has meant the loss of conspicuous consumption, something which we used to announce our self-worth with in society.

Perhaps these losses have confirmed our worst failures as human beings and provided an opportunity to not just improve ourselves but rebuild a more compassionate, shared and equitable future. Even reset the template with the best version of ourselves and making the right choices. That is how we will make good our losses and convert 2020 from being a "lost year" to a "turnaround year" for humanity. It might appear high-sounding but we have to go back to basic values and altruistic living and, given our uncertain life spans, fill the time we have now with meaningful pursuits. Of course, it is difficult to overturn the politics of convention and power play. There is too much focus on returning to our pre-pandemic ways by overtly depending on the vaccine to defeat the virus and reclaim our lives. But the emergence of a recent deadlier strain has shown that we need more and that old selfish mindsets and self-serving attitudes simply won't work anymore. We must become our own hope to silence the virus. For that is forcing us to look inward and value our families and the communities around us. Making us realise that an experiential indulgence of the senses is no substitute for the emotions of fulfilling relationships. Where a shared chore, a mundane task or running an errand seems exciting and less of a drudgery. Where the satisfaction of a job well done and moments well lived, no matter how small or insignificant, settles deep inside us. And where the honesty of what we really are can lift the haze around us. That would dissolve the fear of the virus. Yes, 2020 has been a great disruptor. The question is can we make 2021 a great creator of human gains?

Trouble in Nepal

Prime Minister KP Oli and contender Prachanda indulge in a power tussle as China has aimed its salvage operation at maintaining unity in the NCP



ASHOK K MEHTA

The vertical split in the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) was inevitable. After all, it was an artificial alliance of two ideological variants of Marxist-Leninist ideology and bitter rivalry between two unrelenting leaders — Prachanda, who led the Maoists in the civil war and set the stage for transformation in Nepal, and Prime Minister KP Oli (United Marxist-Leninist) who created the tsunami of nationalism to sweep the polls on a largely anti-India sentiment. The merger of the two parties and power-sharing on the basis of votes won was at the root of the "two-and-a-half years each" agreement between Oli and Prachanda becoming untenable. The attempt at gluing fractures following multiple crises was also bound to fail.

The key actors in Nepal's make-and-mend process are President BD Bhandari and Chinese Ambassador Hou Yanqi. For China, it is a no-holds-barred effort to maintain unity in the NCP which it had helped to forge and establish primacy in Nepal over India for the first time in nearly 200 years. Its ongoing salvage operation includes dispatch of a four-member Chinese Communist Party (CCP) delegation to Kathmandu over the weekend to patch up the Oli-Prachanda feud with whatever it takes. China wants Oli to remain the Prime Minister, with Prachanda and former Prime Minister Madhav Nepal as the party's co-chairs, no revival of Parliament and elections, whenever feasible. But the players are keeping their options open.

Global Times, though, has reported that China has no preference for any party; it just wants a stable Government. India's anodyne statement that "we have noted recent political developments in Nepal; these are internal matters for Nepal to decide as per its democratic process", does not mean that it is a bystander. The split has also destabilised six of the seven NCP provincial governments.

While both sides have appealed to the Election Commission for ownership of the party's name and symbol, the Supreme Court will decide whether the dissolution of the House was legal and whether its revival is possible, and start the hearings next week. The mid-term elections slated for



April/May 2021 are unlikely to be held on time. Oli has expanded his Cabinet, accommodating several of Prachanda's people. Conspicuous is the lack of support and empathy for Oli's unconstitutional and undemocratic actions with nearly all political parties and civil society condemning his move, the latter even calling it 'Oli-garchy'.

On the streets of Kathmandu, people are saying "India has done it", or that "There was a phone call from Delhi." Some reports are suggesting that Oli and/or Foreign Minister Pradip Gyawali would visit New Delhi shortly, the latter mentioned on Monday by Nepali Ambassador to India Nilambar Acharya. When India was the dominant power in that country, Nepal's crises were blamed on New Delhi's "micro-management". Now China is being accused of interfering in Nepal's internal affairs after Yanqi began her latest round of interventions. Last week's protest held outside the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu was an extremely rare event as the media and public angst is generally reserved against India.

The Nepalese are linking the "phone call" to the flying visit to Kathmandu in October by R&AW chief Samant Goel, who had a long conversation with Oli that extended beyond

midnight. If India is indeed behind the friendly persuasion of Oli in dissolving Parliament, it is a victory for the "agencies", the name by which R&AW is called in Nepal. For India, the breakup of the NCP is a triumph for NSA Ajit Doval.

In the past, the "agencies" have failed also spectacularly: Preventing the Dasehra alliance of the Left parties in October 2017 or Nepal's Constitution-making coup in 2015. On both occasions, India was stumped. Chinese intelligence saved the short-lived Oli-Prachanda coalition Government once in 2017 but not the second time when Prachanda split and joined the Nepali Congress-led coalition. China supported the Left Alliance in the 2017 elections and the merger of the Alliance into the NCP.

The CCP and the NCP enjoy fraternal relations and the Chinese party's ideologues have been teaching the NCP cadres the "Xi Jinping Thought". China is invested heavily in Nepal — politically, economically, militarily and people to people. They will not easily give up their recent pre-eminence in Nepal.

Two scenarios are being predicted. First, no revival of Parliament and no elections as scheduled, with Oli carrying on as the caretaker Prime Minister indefinitely. Informed observers say this is an Oli-

fixed match that India is supporting. The second scenario envisions restoration of Parliament, a coalition Government formed by Prachanda-NCP with support from the Nepali Congress and the Janata Samajwadi Party Nepal. This combination along with its variant — Deuba supporting Oli in forming the Government — has been doing the rounds for a long time. There is a third outcome which the Chinese are pursuing: Same as the first scenario but with the NCP reunited and Prachanda and Madhav Nepal as party co-chairs. No one has so far petitioned for a caretaker Government for elections like the one in 2012 headed by Chief Justice Khilraj Regmi.

In 1994, Prime Minister GP Koirala's dissolution of the House was upheld by the Supreme Court. In 1995, Prime Minister Manmohan Adhikari dissolved his minority Government but the House was revived. In 2002, King Gyanendra dismissed Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba for failure to hold elections, calling him "incompetent".

The same year, when the Deuba faction split from the NC under GP Koirala to form the NC (Democratic), the symbol and name of the party was retained by the Koirala faction. Consequent to the lessons from frequent turnover of Governments (11 Prime Ministers in 12 years), the

2015 republican Constitution made no provision for dissolution of the House.

Neither Oli nor Prachanda want to be seen as splitting the party. Currently, the deck is arrayed in favour of Prachanda retaining the party's name and symbol, the Sun. He has the support of 300 of the 441 Central Committee members and 100 of the 176 lawmakers. While the EC will take a call on the ownership of the party's name and symbol, the Supreme Court will determine the legality and wisdom of terminating Parliament after 31 months, with more than two years of its term remaining.

The Doval game plan appears to be to support both sides: Oli to keep Parliament in abeyance and hold elections later, and Prachanda to keep the party divided even if the House is restored. China is betting on both too, but to keep its flock together. Oli's Finance Minister Bishnu Poudel came up with this gem: "China should be happy. It has two NCPs — one in Government and the other trying to restore the old one." Best of both worlds is not a Happy 2021 for Nepal!

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

SOUNDBITE

I quit the Cabinet, I quit the Assembly which the people welcomed. I have now joined the BJP and the people of Nandigram supported me.

BJP leader
—Suvendu Adhikari



Right now, we just aren't getting all of the information that we need from the outgoing administration. It's nothing short, in my view, of irresponsibility.

US President-elect
—Joe Biden



The amount of hostility I faced for standing up for my beloved Mumbai baffled me. Today I went to Mumba Devi and Shri Siddhivinayak ji and got their blessings.

Actor
—Kangana Ranaut



David (Warner) looks really good. He has started training a bit and started running between the wickets. I think the early signs with him are very good for the third Test.

Australia skipper
—Tim Paine



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Need to restore faith

Sir — This refers to the article "The media must become the voice of people" (December 29). With the world "media" or the Fourth Estate comes to mind a sense of honesty, responsibility, transparency, truth and clarity of expression about all the important developments happening domestically and around the world.

The media's role assumes significance as it keeps people abreast of news and explains the nuances of complicated and intricate issues. The role of the media in disseminating information and spreading awareness against Government policies also keeps the ruling dispensation on its toes. The elected representatives often cite the issues raised by the media to attract the attention of the Government to people's concerns.

This is really a sorry state of affairs that the media seems to have lost track of important news and is focusing its energy and attention on several mundane and insignificant issues only to obfuscate the matters of public interests.

Azhar A Khan
Rampur

Good decision to shun politics, Thalaiva!

At last, citing health reasons, superstar Rajinikanth has announced that he is not floating any party. A deeply religious man, he has regarded his illness as a premonitory divine warning against taking risks. For all the occasional speeches he made, the superstar appeared to be disinclined and reluctant to join politics. It is widely believed that the pressure from the BJP made him say "yes" after a long period of indecision.

The fluctuations in his blood pressure, besides his family's love for him and his dedication towards his family, have eventually dissuaded him from making a political foray. His ill health would not have permitted him to undertake an extensive campaign without which he could not have fought the electoral battle. He would not have liked to reach the masses only through social media. His decision to not join politics seems to be wise considering his age, fragile health and public resentment against Right-wing politics of which he appears to be a representative. Rajinikanth's espousal of "spiritual politics" has come to be viewed as "saffron politics".

He has sought the forgiveness of his fans for dis-appointing them and assured the people of Tamil Nadu



that he will continue to serve them. Rajini Makkal Mandram will continue its welfare work.

There is no way to know whether Rajini, affectionately known as Thalaiva, has been cut out to be a politician. As a screen hero, Rajinikanth commands a lot of love and affection. But cinema and politics are worlds apart; it is difficult to be successful in both in equal measure. Whether he extends his support to any party in the run-up to the Assembly elections remains to be seen.

G David Milton
Kanyakumari

Powering ahead

Sir — The recent announcement by the Railway Board regarding the complete electrification of its railway network by 2023 is a welcome step. The Railways is much dependent on fossil fuel and the diesel-powered locos affect the environment badly. The electrification of its entire network will reduce carbon emission levels

and make it a highly sustainable and eco-friendly organisation.

The 2023 target should be achieved well in time by working in phases across all the railway zones, including the railway lines along the Konkan Railway route. The complete electrification move would bring immense opportunities to the Indian Railways, both in terms of pas-

senger commute and freight traffic, and may help identify ways to reduce the burden on the exchequer. The organisation should make all the efforts to inch closer towards achieving eco-friendly electrified lines by doing away with diesel-powered locos by 2023.

Varun Dambal
Bengaluru

New-age warriors

Sir — The plight of migrant workers after the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus will remain imprinted in our minds for a long time, perhaps as long as we live.

However, the scene around us wasn't all bleak all the time. Punctuating the poignant images we saw around us most of the time, were also stories of grit, determination and heroism.

The sheer dedication of doctors, healthcare staff, policemen, suppliers of daily needs, *safai karamcharis* et al stood out and we honoured them with a new name, Corona Warriors. Indeed, they helped millions of Indians by putting their own lives in danger.

While the pandemic showed us the positive side of humanity, poor public health-care infrastructure was once again exposed. Hopefully, the Government has learnt its lessons and will now pay swift attention to improving it on a war footing.

Bal Govind
Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A labour of love

A quick glance shows that more than 95 per cent members of US President-elect Joe Biden's transition team fall in the category of volunteers


RAM ACHARYA

As we all know, a relay race is a track-and-field sport consisting of a set number of stages. Each leg is run by a different member of a team. The runner finishing one leg is usually required to pass on the baton to the next one, while both are running in a marked exchange zone. This is done so that the momentum of the race is not lost. The American presidential system is quite like a relay race, with each successive President-elect not only selecting the key players of his administration but also setting up a Review Team during the transition period. The job of the Review Team is to help the President-elect in framing the policies of his administration. This enables him to hit the ground running once he is sworn in. This is a time-honoured tradition followed by the US since its inception. The time available to the leader, between his being declared the President-elect and taking over of the presidency, is meant for handing over of the proverbial baton. Of course he may choose to change the colour and shape of the baton or carry an entirely new one on the run. But then that's a different story!

Even as outgoing US President Donald Trump continues to put up roadblocks and the two leaders continue to spar on a daily basis, President-elect Joseph Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris are ploughing on, undeterred. They have set up a website displaying the names of the members of the advisory team which is helping them shape their policies and action plan. The website says the "review teams are responsible for understanding the operations of each agency, ensuring a smooth transfer of power and preparing for President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris and their Cabinet to hit the ground running on Day One."

In order to keep everything transparent and above board, the US Presidential Transition Act requires the President to disclose the all-important "source of funding" of all Review Team members. As per the details on the website, hundreds of volunteers have signed up to help the new administration. Then there are those who are full time transition employees paid by the Transition Fund and, lastly, there are individuals who will be funded through an appropriation administered by the General Services Administration.

However, a quick glance shows that more than 95 per cent of the Review Team members fall in the category of volunteers. In addition to their names, the list also provides their credentials such as area of expertise and employment details. The subjects on which the team is expected to advise the new administration are wide-ranging. They will examine the US Postal Services where the team would review the working of the Postal Regulatory Commission, the US Department of Agriculture where the team would review the Farm Credit Administration and Federal Agriculture Mortgage Corporation.

A team of 28 members, advising on the Department of Commerce which is responsible for steering the nation's economy, would also review the Export-Import Bank, while an even larger team of 38 would advise on matters pertaining to the all-powerful Department of Defence. The team would review the country's force posture worldwide and operations to deter enemies, as well as the budget planning underway at the Pentagon and other security agencies. The 26-strong team on the Department of Education will review the Corporation for National and Community Service and includes a couple of Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) like Ajita Menon of Calbright College and Shital Shah of the American Federation of Teachers.

Each team also has a nominated leader, who will organise meetings, collate views from various members and present an action plan for Biden and Harris to pursue. Interestingly, the crucial Department of Energy, which would review the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, is headed by a PIO, Arun Majumdar of the prestigious Stanford University.

A 32-strong team, mostly comprising volunteers, would be looking into the Department of Health and Human Services and reviewing the Consumer Safety Commission. The team with perhaps the largest number of tasks on its plate is the one reviewing the Department of Justice. It is required to examine the Federal Election Commission, the US Election Assistance Commission, the US Commission on Civil Rights, the National Council on Disabilities, the US Access Board, AbilityOne, the State Justice Institute and the Legal Services Corporation. During this transition period the President-elect also gets to make over 4,000 appointments in key portfolios, such as departmental heads, some of whom may have to be confirmed by a select committee. Compared to this, in the Indian system the all-powerful Prime Minister gets to choose just his Council of Ministers and the top bureaucrat manning his own office, while the majority of the officials in various Ministries and other Government departments and bodies continue as before, studiously following age-old systems and procedures.

How much of the inputs from various US transition teams will bear fruit is anybody's guess. But one thing is certain: It will serve to shake up things and bring about change. Only time will tell if these changes are for the better, or for worse.

(The writer is a former member of the Railway Board. The views expressed are personal.)

IT'S UNFORTUNATE FOR THE CONGRESS THAT THE PERSON BEING CONSIDERED FOR THE POST OF PARTY CHIEF IS ABSENT ON ITS FOUNDATION DAY.

—MADHYA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER
SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN

POINT COUNTERPOINT


I DON'T THINK THE BJP SHOULD HAVE ANY OBJECTIONS TO HIM (RAHUL GANDHI) VISITING AN AILING GRANDMOTHER.

—CONGRESS CHIEF SPOKESPERSON
RANDEEP SURJEWALA

A year of lost opportunities

In the new year, the judiciary needs to redefine its role in a democracy and it shouldn't be the part that it has chosen to play in 2020


ANURAG TIWARY

This was a unique year in many different ways and is bound to be remembered as one of the most eventful ones in living memory. However challenging it might have been for Governments, world leaders and the common man, for the Indian judiciary, 2020 was a year of major challenges and lost opportunities. It was unusual for the judiciary and particularly for the apex court, because the challenges posed before it were unprecedented and the expectations from it were extraordinarily high. This was a year of major constitutional changes, the consequences of which were exacerbated by the Coronavirus pandemic and the challenges posed by it. For the judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court of India, this could have been an opportunity that it might have wanted to grab on to and send out a strong message that it functions independently.

It should have sent out the message that it is not an executive court: An image that has been associated with it only recently. However, at the end of the year, the results are starkly different and suffice it to say that they don't seem to be in favour of the top court.

At the end of last year, the Centre had brought in the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The challenge to the constitutionality of the CAA and its supposedly deadly combination with the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and later the National Population Register (NPR) was brought before the Supreme Court.

The CAA is arguably one of the most controversial pieces of legislation in the recent past. The Act amends the Citizenship Act of 1955 and allows Indian citizenship for Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians who have fled from the neighbouring Muslim majority countries of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan due to religious persecution or fear of religious persecution. This is all well and good and a helpful move for the people fleeing persecution. However, the Act perpetuates the exclusion of many who have already sought and continue to take shelter in this country.

Reports have shown that State Governments in several parts of the country have started constructing detention centres for those who will now become illegal immigrants in the country they have considered to be their motherland and have contributed to as well. Those who have been a witness and part of its growth and development story.

In a democracy, when governments turn majoritarian the only option left before the people is to either protest or seek a remedy before the courts. There were widespread protests against the CAA across the country. The Shaheen Bagh protest in the Capital had acquired international fame because of its relentless effort to start a dialogue with the State. The State, on the other hand, had continuously termed the protest and the protesters "anti-national."

In extreme distress, several petitioners approached the court under Article 32 of the Constitution of India challenging the constitutionality of the CAA and the NRC. The respondents, in another petition, also approached the court challenging the right to protest of the protesters at Shaheen Bagh. In the Amit Sahni vs. Commissioner of Police case, it was argued that the protesters must not be allowed to protest at

WHILE 2020 WAS A YEAR OF MAJOR CHALLENGES AND LOST OPPORTUNITIES, 2021 WILL BE A YEAR OF ASPIRATIONS FROM THE JUDICIARY. PARTIES BEFORE THE COURTS WILL WANT TO SEE A DIFFERENT IMAGE OF THE JUDICIARY: ONE THAT IS MORE EMPATHETIC, STRONG, A PROTECTOR OF PEOPLE'S FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS, AUTHORITATIVE AND ONE THAT DOESN'T BACK DOWN BEFORE THE EXECUTIVE



public places for an indefinite period because such demonstrations cause extreme inconvenience to the public at large and would, therefore, fall within the ambit of the restrictions within Article 19(2). So, at this point, there were two petitions tabled before the court: One on the constitutionality of the CAA and the second on the protester's right to protest at public spaces. The court has until today not heard the CAA petition, whereas the judgment in the second petition has already been delivered, wherein the court has held that public places cannot be occupied for an indefinite period for the purpose of a protest and that the State must provide an alternative spot for the same. This, especially when the Government was arresting protesters from several parts of the country. Even until this day, members from the ruling party continue to make statements during election rallies with respect to throwing out illegal immigrants from the country and the Supreme Court has still not heard the matter to clear the air of confusion surrounding it. This has led to the ruling party gaining more and more ground electorally while the protest seems to seep down to irrelevancy with every passing day.

Similar is the fate of the petition that is pending before the court against the abrogation of Article 370 that took place on August 5, 2019. There were three kinds of pleas before the court post the abrogation. First were the *habeas corpus* petitions against the detention of several prominent political leaders in the Valley.

Former Chief Ministers and Union Ministers who have served not just the people of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)

but also the country were locked up and detained for more than a year and many continue to be detained even today. Many *habeas corpus* petitions are pending before the court and no judgment has been delivered to date. Many of these petitions have become infructuous after the executive branch of the State decided to release the detainees. But the court took no notice of it.

Second were the batch of petitions on media restrictions and communications blackout. To its credit, the court passed a pathbreaking judgment in the Anuradha Bhasin and Ghulam Nabi Azad vs. Union of India case this year, upholding the freedom of speech and expression through the internet. However, the judgment was not followed by the J&K Administration and a contempt petition is pending before the court for over eight months now. The challenge to the constitutionality of abrogation of Article 370 is also pending for more than a year.

The court faced flak also with respect to its selective outrage on the issue of arrest of citizens, social activists, politicians, free thinkers and writers. The stark dichotomy became a matter of contention and citizens went on to criticise the court on every social media platform. Many journalists and social activists are under arrest even today and the court has taken little to no notice of it, citing some technical ground on which the petitioners have failed to establish their case.

The last issue that I would like to briefly touch upon is the Electoral Bond Scheme. The Finance Bill, 2017, introduced electoral bonds, that are interest-free bearer bonds. It is an instrument that is used to donate money to

political parties. The parties involved will probably be a donor, a political party and the Reserve Bank of India — which acts as the intermediary. Such a scheme introduced in India is one that is first of its kind in a democracy. Political parties are being funded in a non-transparent way and such a scheme would only add to the wounds of Indian democracy. The scheme was challenged before the court as early as 2018; however, the top court has not heard the matter until today.

The fact that the judiciary was in the news this year for the way it has functioned in the recent past is troubling. Contempt petitions against those criticising its style of functioning were evidence of the fact that the judiciary has narrowed its understanding of the role it is supposed to play in a democracy. Citizens have either ways taken to the streets this year and have protested in solidarity with those who have been at the wrong end of the rope when it comes to the protection of their fundamental rights.

While 2020 was a year of major challenges and lost opportunities, 2021 will be a year of aspirations from the judiciary. Parties before the courts will want to see a different image of the judiciary: One that is more empathetic, strong, a protector of people's fundamental rights, authoritative and one that doesn't back down before the executive. Citizens would want their causes to be heard with more alacrity and more concern. In the new year the judiciary needs to redefine its role in a democracy and it cannot be the one that it has chosen to play in 2020.

(The writer is from the National Law University, Visakhapatnam. The views expressed are personal.)

Put environment conservation front and centre

As 2021 nears, one can only hope that the Govt will put its might behind fighting climate change and environmental degradation


KOTA SRIRAJ

As we approach 2021, we cannot help looking back at the trail of death and devastation left behind by the COVID-19 pandemic. The year 2020 was no less than a nightmare as governments worldwide grappled with the virus even as the global economy plummeted to a new low, leaving millions unemployed and at their wits' end.

During the fight against COVID-19 in India, environmental concerns and priorities took a back seat as the Government put all its weight behind fighting the deadly virus and its socio-economic impact

on the nation. As per the latest count, India had a total of 10,224,797 COVID cases and 1,48,190 casualties, while the number of cases worldwide touched 81,767,170 with 1,784,026 people succumbing to the infection.

The successive waves of infection and the lockdown necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic left India's economy shattered and ruined. Unemployment figures drastically rose from 6.7 per cent in March to 26 per cent in April, which translates to nearly 140 million people losing their jobs in a shockingly short span of time.

Further, during the same period, business activity fell sharply from 82 per cent to 44 per cent, followed by the largest ever Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contraction of minus 24 per cent in the First Quarter (Q1) of the Financial Year (FY) 2020-21. In fact, the Indian economy is estimated to have suffered a loss of ₹7-8 trillion during the first 21 days of the lockdown. The world has not fared well either. According to a study

conducted by the Asian Development Bank, the economic losses triggered by the pandemic are expected to hit nearly \$8 trillion, which is nearly nine per cent of the global GDP.

Among the adverse impacts of the pandemic, much less debated or talked about is the severe blow to women in the workforce. Many of the women, who lost their jobs or took time off during the pandemic in India and globally, are now finding it difficult to return to any gainful employment. Adding to their woes are a host of factors including unavailability of domestic help, the burden of household chores, care work and online schooling of children forced to stay at home during the pandemic.

Other factors, too, have dealt an unexpected blow to the economy which suddenly finds itself bereft of 30 per cent of its dedicated and skilled workforce. This has not only impacted household finances but also proved to be a setback to gender

equality at the workplace. According to the *Zinnov-Intel Gender Diversity* study only 11 per cent of the Indian working women make it to top leadership positions compared to the global average of above 20 per cent. This bleak scenario is set to get worse as women find it difficult to find jobs in the current environment.

Needless to say, these extraordinary circumstances have sent Government departments into a tizzy and the overburdened administrative machinery has been unable to pay attention to other pressing areas that were already in a critical stage before the outbreak.

Environmental deterioration in the wake of climate change spurred by rising greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions was a contentious issue, with feverish debates and deliberations happening both on the national and international forums. However, the contagion put an abrupt halt to all this. For a beleaguered environment, this is akin to a death knell.

Even before the pandemic hit the world, the deteriorating state of the environment and the impact of climate change were putting a huge strain on the economy. A report prepared by the United Nations titled '*Economic Losses, Poverty and Disasters 1998-2018*' pegged the losses suffered by the Indian economy due to climate change at \$79.5 billion in a period of two decades. This underlines the pitiable condition of the environment and the toll it is taking on our economy.

The pandemic has taught us many painful and expensive lessons besides revealing the vulnerabilities and the strengths of our nation. Amid this suffering, an optimistic India must discover the silver lining and chart the future course keeping the best interests of the environment in mind. The gravity of the pandemic forced us to evolve the best response mechanism that was able to mitigate the spread of the infection to a certain extent, which bought us some time to develop a vaccine. The

same determination now needs to be applied to climate change adaptation, environmental preservation and sustainable development.

More or less, the strategies adopted to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic should also be applied in handling the problem of environmental degradation. The very first stage in fighting the contagion involved accepting the problem. As the pandemic struck, the affected nations, especially India, rapidly acknowledged the problem and set about addressing it. The same strategy needs to be followed for handling environmental deterioration and exploitation. We need to actively understand and acknowledge the depth of the problem that pollution and climate change present.

Second, the COVID-19 outbreak has shown a superlative level of communication between the Government and the common man. This raised the level of public awareness regarding the pandemic and helped in ensuring that each and every member of the community

became aware of the infection and the safety protocols. This became one of the largest public awareness programmes ever conducted in India. A similar large-scale public awareness programme must be kick-started by the Government for the conservation of the environment.

Third, the Government showed exemplary will by strictly enforcing the rules pertaining to COVID-19 prevention and management. It ensured that people adhered to COVID protocols and procedures that helped slow the transmission of the infection. This kind of enforcement, if practised for preserving the environment and ensuring climate change adaptation, will go a long way in preserving the environment and protecting it. As we enter 2021, one can only hope that the Government will put its might behind fighting climate change and environmental degradation.

(The writer is an environmental journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

Will forget all if Oli admits mistakes: Madhav Nepal

Kathmandu: Chairman of the ruling Nepal Communist Party's rival faction Madhav Kumar Nepal said on Tuesday that the party could still be united if Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli was willing to accept his mistakes, as thousands of protesters marched through the streets of Kathmandu against the dissolution of Parliament.

Madhav Nepal made the comments while addressing a massive protest rally organised by his faction in Kathmandu, which was attended by former prime ministers Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Jhala Nath Khanal.

"We are ready to forget everything if Oli accepts his mistakes," Madhav Nepal, the former prime minister who has replaced Oli as chairman of the Prachanda-led faction, told the rally.

He also accused Prime Minister Oli of practicing anti-democratic activities by making decisions against the Constitution and the general public.

"All the political parties, intellectuals, teachers, students and public are on the streets against the unconstitutional move of the Oli-led government. The lower house will soon be revived," Madhav Nepal was



Nepalese supporters of the splinter group in the ruling Nepal Communist Party participate in a protest in Kathmandu on Tuesday

quoted as saying by My Republica newspaper.

Nepal plunged into a political crisis on December 20 after Prime Minister Oli, known for his pro-Beijing leanings, in a surprise move, recommended dissolving the 275-member House, amidst a tussle for power with Prachanda.

Acting on the prime minister's recommendation, President Bidya Devi Bhandari dissolved the House the same day and announced fresh elections on April 30 and May 10, sparking protests from a large section of the NCP led by Prachanda, also a co-chair of the ruling party.

Addressing the rally, Prachanda said that Prime Minister Oli's recent move to

dissolve the House of Representatives is aimed at killing federalism and republicanism which were achieved after decades of struggle by the people.

"The act of dissolving parliament is totally unconstitutional. It has taken the country toward another round of political instability."

"We did not even imagine that we would be forced to take to the streets against Oli's regressive move. Now, we have to fight collectively against this move," said Prachanda, who claims control over the ruling party after removing Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli from the posts of the party's parliamentary leader and chair.

Biden warns of Trump Administration's 'roadblocks' to transition

Wilmington: President-elect Joe Biden is warning of massive damage done to the national security apparatus by the Trump administration and "roadblocks" in communication between agency officials and his transition team that could undermine Americans' security.

During remarks on Monday in Wilmington, Delaware, Biden said his team has faced "obstruction" from the "political leadership" at the Defense Department and the Office of Management and Budget as they've sought to gather necessary information to continue the transition of power.

"Right now we just aren't getting all the information that we need from the outgoing administration in key national security areas. It's nothing short, in my view, of irresponsibility," Biden said.

He warned that his team needs "full visibility" into the budget process at the Defense Department "in order to avoid any window of confusion or catch-up that our adversaries may try to exploit."

Biden's remarks came after he was briefed by members of his national security and

defense teams and advisers, including his nominees for secretary of State, Defense and Homeland Security, as well as his incoming national security adviser.

The president-elect said his team found that agencies "critical to our security have incurred enormous damage" during President Donald Trump's time in office.

Several Reps sue Pence to overturn Joe Biden win

Washington: Several Republicans have sued US Vice President Mike Pence in an improbable bid to overturn President-elect Joe Biden's victory, according to media reports.

The last-ditch legal effort, filed on Sunday, came from Representative Louie Gohmert, an eight-term congressman from Texas, along with 11 Arizona residents who had been nominated by that state's Republican Party to serve as electors, The Hill reported.

Tibetan Govt-in-exile lauds Trump for new Tibet policy

Dharamshala: The Tibetan Parliament in exile has expressed gratitude to United States President Donald Trump for signing a new Tibet policy.

On Sunday, Trump signed the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020 to modify and re-authorise various programmes and provisions related to Tibet. The bill reaffirms the right of Tibetans to choose a successor to the Dalai Lama and calls for establishing an American consulate in the country.

In a statement issued by the Dharamshala-based Tibetan Parliament in exile, its Speaker Pema Jungney said, "This act officially endorses that recognition of the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama is the sole authority of the great XIV Dalai Lama, the Tibetan Buddhist leaders and the Tibetan people with no interference from the Chinese government (People's Republic of China)."

"This act also recognises the importance of the Tibetan

Plateau and the threat that climate change poses on Tibet," the statement said.

"Over the years, the presidents of the United States of America have consistently supported the Tibet cause and we are immensely grateful for your indefatigable support in taking strong measures against China, a government that is economically the most powerful yet having the record of worst human rights violations," it added.

EN ROUTE NEW HOME



Rohingya refugees travel in a naval ship to be transported to an isolated island in the Bay of Bengal, in Chittagong, Bangladesh on Tuesday

B'DESH NAVY SHIPS TAKE 1,700 ROHINGYAS TO ISOLATED ISLAND

Dhaka: Five Bangladesh navy ships carrying more than 1,700 Rohingya refugees left the southeastern port city of Chittagong on Tuesday for an isolated island where they will be relocated despite concerns among human rights groups about their safety.

The refugees were expected to reach Bhashan Char

island after a three-hour naval journey, a government official involved with the process said. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media, said the refugees were taken to Chittagong from their camps in Cox's Bazar by buses on Monday and stayed overnight

in a temporary camp. Authorities insist the refugees were selected for relocation based on their willingness, and that no pressure was applied on them. But several human rights and activist groups say some were forced to go to the island, located 21 miles (34 kilometers) from the mainland.

Around the Globe

Miami: Paying passengers were scheduled to board a Boeing 737 Max in Miami on Tuesday for the first time since safety regulators allowed the plane to fly again after two deadly crashes.

Lahore: A petition has been filed in a Pakistani court seeking a directive for the government to get the name of the minority Ahmadi community leader as a "caliph of Islam" removed from Google.

Islamabad: Pakistan on Tuesday confirmed its first case of the new coronavirus variant found in the UK after it identified the strain that spreads at a much faster pace in three samples taken from passengers who had returned from Britain.

Boston: A statue of Abraham Lincoln with a freed slave appearing to kneel at his feet — optics that drew objections amid a national reckoning with racial injustice — has been removed from its perch in downtown Boston.

Cairo: An Egyptian court Tuesday convicted a former student at an elite university on sexual misconduct charges and sentenced him to three years in prison, the first conviction in a case that has fueled the #MeToo movement in the Arab worlds most populous country.

Iran begins human trial of locally made virus vaccine

Tehran: The first study of the safety and effectiveness of a coronavirus vaccine in Iran began Tuesday, state TV reported, with dozens due to receive the domestically developed shot in the hardest-hit country in the Middle East.

The vaccine, produced by Shifa Pharm, part of a state-owned pharmaceutical conglomerate, is the first in the country to reach human trials. Rouhani has said Iran is cooperating with a "foreign country" to produce another vaccine expected to run in tests in volunteers in February, without offering further details.

Hong Kongers charged in China plead guilty, relatives told

Hong Kong: Relatives of the 10 Hong Kongers accused of fleeing the city by speedboat during a government crackdown on dissent say they've been informed that the group pleaded guilty and that the verdicts will be delivered by a court in mainland China on Wednesday.

The families were informed by court-appointed lawyers on Tuesday, according to the 12 Hongkongers Concern Group, which is assisting the families of the detainees.

The 10 defendants all faced charges of illegally crossing the border, while two of them

faced additional charges of organizing the attempt, according to an indictment issued in the southern city of Shenzhen.

The trials began on Monday afternoon, according to a statement issued by the Shenzhen Yantian District court.

Separate hearings were expected for two minors who were also aboard the boat that was apparently heading for Taiwan when it was stopped by the Chinese coast guard on Aug. 23.

The defendants are believed to have feared they would be prosecuted for their past activities in support of

Hong Kong's democratic opposition.

Hong Kong media reports said at least one may have had a warrant out for his arrest under a tough new national security law imposed on the semi-autonomous territory by Beijing in June.

Relatives of the defendants said that they have been prevented from hiring their own lawyers and that the accusations are politically motivated.

The defendants can be sentenced to up to a year in prison for crossing the border and seven years for organising the trip.

Magnitude 6.3 quake hits Croatia, 1 death reported

AP ■ ZAGREB

A strong earthquake hit Croatia on Tuesday, with some injuries reported as well as considerable damages to roofs and buildings southeast of the capital.

The European Mediterranean Seismological Centre said an earthquake of 6.3 magnitude hit 46 kilometers (17 miles) southeast of

Zagreb. Initial reports said the earthquake caused wide damage, collapsing roofs, building facades and even some entire buildings.

The same area was struck by a 5.2 quake on Monday.

The regional N1 television reported live Tuesday from the town of Petrinja, which was hard-hit in the Monday quake, that a collapsed building had fallen on

a car. The footage showed firefighters trying to remove the debris from the car, which was buried underneath. The report said a man apparently was in the car when the quake hit.

The earthquake was felt throughout the country and in neighboring Serbia and Bosnia.

The same area was struck with a 5.2 quake on Monday.

'Targeted killings of journalists surged in 2020'

Paris: More journalists are being killed outside of war zones, and the overwhelming majority of this year's grim total of at least 50 dead were deliberately targeted, many of them murdered while investigating organized crime, corruption and environmental degradation, Reporters Without Borders said Tuesday.

Its tally of journalists and media workers killed in connection with their work by mid-December was just slight-



ly lower than in 2019, when the press freedom group counted 53 dead, even though many

journalists reported less from the field in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The group said 68% were killed outside of war zones this year. That confirms a trend

noted by the group since 2016, when only four out of 10 deaths were in countries not at war. Targeted killings of journalists surged in 2020, accounting for 84% of deaths, sharply up from 63% in 2019, the group said.

It again listed Mexico as the deadliest country for media workers, counting at least eight journalists killed there in connection with their work in 2020. Among them was Julio Valdivia, a newspaper reporter whose decapitated body was found in September in an area ridden with organised crime.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(SECTION 82 Cr.Pc.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that the accused person (1) Banti, (2) Kamal S/o Ramesh R/o Jhuggi No. 190, Shri Ram Basti, Gandhi Vihar, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 243/20 u/s 307/34 IPC and 27A.Act P.S. Timarpur, Delhi and it has been returned to warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused person (1) Banti, (2) Kamal, cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused (1) Banti, (2) Kamal, have absconded (or is concealing themselves to avoid the service of said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said (1) Banti, (2) Kamal, FIR No. 243/20 u/s 307/34 IPC and 27A.Act, P.S. Timarpur, Delhi is required to appear before the court on or before 05.02.2021.

By order
Sh. Anurag Thakur Ld. MM
Room No. 26,
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

DP/804/N/2020

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General Public is hereby informed that an one lady was found in unconscious condition by MTS worker Near Gate No. 6, LHMC Hospital waiting area dated 15.12.2020. She was admitted MLC No. 3698/2020 in LHMC Hospital after treatment declared dead by doctor dated 15.12.2020. The dead body has been preserved for identification at LHMC Mortuary for 72 hrs. In this regard a DD No. 13A, dated 15.12.2020, has been registered at P.S. Mandir Marg, New Delhi. The description of the dead body is given as under Name: Pammil, W/o: Baldev Singh, R/o: Aman Biradari Shelter, Meena Bazar Road near Jama Masjid, Gate No 2, Urdu Park North Delhi-110006, Age: About 60 years, Height: 4'11", Face: Round, Built: Normal, Hair: White, Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: Pink Suit Salwar and bare footed. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the dead lady but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this dead lady please inform undersigned.



SHO
P.S. Mandir Marg, New Delhi
Ph.: 011-23364100, 26366730,
8750870522

DP/183/NDD/2020

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform that Kukreja Hospital and Heart Centre, C-1, Vishal Enclave, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-27 is going to discard all In-Patient Medical Records of year 2015, as per organizations document retention policy. If any patient of this period wants copy of his/her IP Medical Records, Please Call on 011-45675000 or visit hospital within 30 days of publishing of this advertisement.

AXIS BANK
Axis Bank Limited, Axis House, Tower-2, 2nd Floor, I-14, Sector-128, Noida Expressway, Jaypee Greens Wishtown, Noida (U.P.)-201301

Corrigendum to Advertisement
Notification No. 23/Dec.2020

This in reference to the Sale Notice Published in this newspaper the pioneer (Hindi & Eng) dated 23.12.2020. In respect to Sale of mortgaged property of Mr. Vijay Kumar Pal. There is the typographical error in respect to EMD deposit date and Auction Date which is inadvertently mentioned as 27.01.2020 & 28.01.2020. Kindly treat EMD date as 27.01.2021 and Auction Date as 28.01.2021. The rest of Terms & Condition of the Publication of Sale Notice dated 23.12.2020 will be same.

Place : Noida, UP
Date : 30-12-2020

INDIAN RAILWAYS GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (INDIAN RAILWAYS ORGANIZATION FOR ALTERNATE FUELS)

Corrigendum-1

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) In order to develop Technical specifications for development of fuel cell/battery based hybrid power train along with associated control and suitably designed Energy Management Strategy (EMS) and storage module for retrofitment on 700 HP Narrow Gauge ZDM3 Diesel-Hydraulic Locomotives running on Kalika- Shimla section, EOI (IROAF/CME/BD/FUEL CELL POWERED LOCO) is invited on 29.10.2020.

The date of submission of EOI in the prescribed Format is extended from 31.12.2020 to 21.01.2021

Please visit website IROAF <https://iroaf.indianrailways.gov.in/> → IROAF Tenders → Expression of Interest.

Contact person:
Chief Mechanical Engineer/BD,
Indian Railways Organization for Alternate Fuels (IROAF),
Government of India, Ministry of Railways
4th Floor, Railway Office Complex, Tilak Bridge, New Delhi-110002
Telephone no.:- 011-23379107, Fax no.:- 011-23379083
Email: cmebdiroaf@gmail.com

2882/2020
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT, JAMMU OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI (PHE), DIVISION REASI

Fax: 01991-244323 E-mail: phereasi001@gmail.com

Notice inviting e-Tender

e-NIT No.PHERSI/130 of 2020-21 Date: - 23/12/2020

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of UT of J&K e-tenders (Two cover System) Item Rate basis are invited from reputed and resourceful Contractors/Firms/Companies/Joint Venture of repute, which should be uploaded on the e-Procurement web portal <http://www.jktenders.gov.in> up to last bidding date:- 04/01/2021 up to 1300 hrs for the subject work referred below and as per the details mentioned in this e-tender notification and to whom all the terms and conditions of detailed NIT /Tender Documents/PWD Form No.- 25 double are applicable. The detailed tender document and Specifications etc. can be downloaded on the e-procurement Portal <http://www.jktenders.gov.in>. The cost of tender documents (Non-refundable/ Non-Transferable) should be in the shape of e-challan/Treasury Receipt to be deposited in MH-0215-WSS (Revenue Head) or through RTGS in J&K Bank Branch REASI in CD Bank Account No. 002901020000829, IFSC code JAKA0REASSI in favour of Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE), Division REASI and the proof of having made such payment shall have to be uploaded in Cover-I:- S.No. 1 Name of Work :- RETRO FITTING AND AUGMENTATION OF WATER SUPPLY SCHEME KANS KHASSAN UNDER JAL JEEVAN MISSION INCLUDING CIVIL, CONDUCTING COMPLETE NECESSARY SURVEY, SOIL TESTS & DESIGN AS REQUIRED AT SELECTED SITE, AS PER THE PARAMETERS/ SPECIFICATIONS AND DEFECT LIABILITY PERIOD AND FREE TRIAL RUN OF PUMPING MACHINERY FOR THREE YEARS

Adv. Cost of Work (s) in Lacs :- 136.71, Earnest Money In Rs. :- 273420/- Class of Contractor :- "A", Cost of Document :- 4000/-, Period of completion :- 03 months, MH of Account :- JJM

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti Division Reasi.

No. DI/JP-9295/20 Dated: 29-12-2020

UJVN LIMITED

H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006, Telephone:- 0135-2763808, Fax- 0135- 2763508, CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvn.com

TENDER NOTICE

पत्रांक सं. 861 दिनांक 29.12.2020

Office of the Executive Engineer, Project Distribution Division, Dakpathar (D.Dun), invites sealed tenders for following works:
Tender No. PDD-22/2020-21: Annual contract for operation of 33/11KV substation Haripur.
Estimated cost: Rs. 14,01,171/- + GST extra.
Date of availability of bid document on website: 30.12.2020 up to 17:00 Hrs

Last date for submission of tender : 20.01.2021 up to 13:00 Hrs

For eligibility criteria and full & further details, kindly visit our web site. Tenders can only be downloaded from our website "www.uttarakhandjalvidyut.com".

Executive Engineer(PDD)

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER (Re-Tender)

College of Agriculture, Tripura invites electronic Bids through e-Procurement Portal of Government of Tripura (<https://tripuratenders.gov.in>) from reputed organizations for SUPPLY OF HONEY BEE BOXES AND NUCLEUS HIVES under NBB funded project "Integrated Beekeeping Development Centre/ Centre of Excellence" at College of Agriculture, Tripura, Lembucherra, West Tripura. Detailed tender notice, schedules and tender documents can be obtained from <https://tripuratenders.gov.in>. Last Date of submission of the e-Tender: 15/01/2021, 2:30 PM.

Sd/-
(Dr. D. Sen)
Principal In-charge
College of Agriculture, Tripura

ICA/C-2581/2020-21 Lembucherra, West Tripura

M.P. MADHYA KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN CO. LTD. (Govt. of M.P. Undertaking)

NISHITHA PARISAR, BIJALEE NAGAR, GOVINDPURA, BHOPAL-462023

Phone No. : 0755-2602033-36, Fax : 2589821, 2586636

Ref :- MD/MK/04/Bygd.NIT/2862 Date : 29.12.2020

TENDER NOTICE

MPMKVCL, Bhopal, invites following bids from Service Provider through e-tendering.

Tender specification Number	Particulars	Tender Fee including GST (in Rs.)	Approximate Tender value (Rs. Cr)	Date of Opening of Tender
MD/MK/04/697	Outsourcing of Manpower required for Miscellaneous Works under the Jurisdiction of MPMKVCL, Bhopal	11800/-	418.62	23.01.21 03:30 PM

Other details are available on Company website <https://portal.mpcz.in> & "https://mptenders.gov.in"

M.P. Madhyam/99395/2020 CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (PROC.)

दो गज को दूरी, मास्क है जरूरी।

MARKETS ON A ROLL

Sensex, Nifty scale new peaks

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty scaled fresh record highs on Tuesday, extending their bull run for the fifth straight session on the back of gains in banking and IT stocks.

The BSE gauge Sensex settled with gains of 259.33 points or 0.55 per cent at a new closing high of 47,613.08.

Starting off on a bullish note, the 30-share index went on to hit its all-time intraday high of 47,714.55 before paring some gains.

Likewise, the NSE barometer Nifty ended higher by 59.40 points or 0.43 per cent at a fresh closing high of 13,932.60. Intraday, the 50-share Nifty marked its all-time



record at 13,967.60.

"Financials helped key indices to close the day well into positive territory with the broader markets seeing demand for gas stocks. The day also witnessed upmoves in names that are not usually seen frequently amongst gain-

ers as savvy investors were seen scouting for value in a Bull Market," S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities said.

On the Sensex chart, IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, Tech Mahindra, HDFC, ICICI Bank, HCL Tech, HDFC Bank, SBI and ITC were prominent gainers. On the other hand, Nestle, NTPC, PowerGrid, Dr Reddy, Reliance Industries, ONGC and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the losers.

Sectorally, banking index rallied 1.41 per cent, followed by finance (1.06 per cent) and IT (0.65 per cent).

Of the 19 sectoral indices, 12 ended in the red and seven in the green. Among the top losers, BSE metal, power and energy slid up to 1.32 per cent.

₹ logs fourth straight gains, rises 7 paise against \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rising for the fourth straight session, the rupee appreciated by 7 paise to close at 73.42 against the US dollar on Tuesday, amid heavy buying in domestic equities and unabated foreign fund inflows.

A weaker greenback in the overseas markets also supported the rupee, forex dealers said.

At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit opened at 73.42 against the US dollar and witnessed an intraday high of 73.34 and a low of 73.44.

The local unit finally settled at 73.42 against the American currency, registering a rise of 7 paise over its previous close.

On Monday, the rupee had settled at 73.49 against the US dollar.

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty scaled fresh record highs on Tuesday, extending their bull run for the fifth straight session on the back of gains in banking and IT stocks.

The BSE gauge Sensex settled with gains of 259.33 points or 0.55 per cent at a new closing high of 47,613.08.

Manufacturers should absorb cost increase on mandatory dual front airbags rule: FADA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government's proposal to make dual front airbags mandatory will lead to increase in price and vehicle manufacturers should absorb the major hike in costs to prevent impact on sales, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said on Tuesday.

In a draft notification, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) proposed to make it mandatory for automakers to provide an airbag for the front passenger, over and above the existing airbag for the driver of passenger vehicles.

The Ministry has proposed April 1, 2021 as the date for implementation of the move for new models, while it has set a deadline of June 1, 2021 for



existing models.

"FADA welcomes MoRTH's intention for mandating dual front airbags. This is a much needed safety norm which India should adopt and be at par with global standards," FADA president Vinkesh Gulati said in a statement.

He, however, added that while the Government's vision to make driving safer for its citizens is appreciated, it will definitely increase the price of vehicles.

The implementation of BS-

VI emission norms led to a big price increase, and this will also come with a price increase, he added.

"We hope OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) should absorb the major cost of input due to the second airbag as it will impact the sales in short-term which will be bad for the industry, which is able to show growth on MoM (month-on-month) basis, but still lags in YoY (year-on-year) basis after Covid hit us hard," Gulati said.

RBI: Banks need to prepare for challenges after unwinding of Covid-related measures

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Cautioning of imminent stress in the banking sector after unwinding of the measures taken to combat the impact of Covid-19, the Reserve Bank on Tuesday said banks will need to adapt and adjust themselves to meet the upcoming challenges.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in its report on 'Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2019-20', said that the central bank initiated timely measures to relieve stress on bank balance sheets, corporates and households following the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

Observing that banking soundness indicators are obscured under the asset qual-

ity standstill, it said, banks are raising capital in preparation of the imminent stress.

"With the moratorium coming to an end, the deadline for restructuring proposals is fast approaching and with the possible lifting of the asset quality standstill, banks' financials are likely to be impacted in terms of asset quality and future income.

"Going forward, banks will have to adapt and adjust to the rapidly evolving economic landscape due to these challenges and also the entry of niche players and emerging financial technologies," the report said. Improvement in the health of the banking sector henceforth hinges around the pace and shape of economic recovery, the RBI report said, adding, "The

challenge is to rewind various relaxations in a timely manner, reining in loan impairment and adequate capital infusion for a healthy banking sector."

The report further said that in the wake of a severe and unprecedented macroeconomic shock caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the RBI's actions veered towards providing a stimulus to the economy while ensuring financial stability.

The troika of policy rate cuts and liquidity infusion; regulatory forbearance; and time-bound resolution with additional provisions was employed to ease immediate concerns emanating from the pandemic as well as aid the economic revival going forward, it said.

Ex-Economic Affairs Secy likely to be next HDFC Bank chairperson

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Economic Affairs Secretary Anatu Chakraborty is likely to be the next Chairperson of the country's largest private sector lender HDFC Bank, sources said. He would replace Shyamala Gopinath, who is set to complete her term in January.

According to the sources, the bank has recommended the name of Chakraborty for appointment as the part-time Chairperson, subject to the Reserve Bank of India's approval.

Chakraborty, a 1985 batch IAS officer of Gujarat cadre, retired as Secretary of Department of Economic Affairs in April 2020. Prior to that, he was Secretary of Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM). Both departments come under the finance ministry.

The tenure of Gopinath, a former RBI Deputy Governor, is ending on January 1, 2021. She was appointed as the Chairperson in January 2015.

The bank's board, at its meeting held on Monday, decided to recommend the name of Chakraborty and submitted its recommendation to the RBI for approval under Section 35B of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, the sources said.

From the brink to recovery, India's retail sector pins hope on 2021

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With an epic battle of billionaires for supremacy in one of the world's most prolific markets and a pandemic-propelled surge in online shopping in the background, India's nearly trillion-dollar retail market is hoping to touch 85 per cent of the pre-Covid business in the first half of the year.

In a year when the Covid-19 carnage ripped apart the retail business, circa 2020 will best go down for the unraveling of the war between Jeff Bezos, the world's wealthiest man, and richest Indian Mukesh Ambani for pre-eminence in the booming market that is estimated to reach \$1.3 trillion by 2025.

It all started with Ambani's Reliance Industries agreeing in August to buy assets of the nation's second-largest retailer for ₹24,713 crore, just a year after Bezos' Amazon purchased an indirect stake in the indebted Future Retail. Amazon

opposed the deal, claiming it violates Future Group's investment agreement with it.

Since then, the story has been playing out in Singapore and Indian courts, and the outcome may shape India's retail landscape for years to come.

Amazon's success will slow Reliance's plans to expand its e-commerce business and the country's largest offline retail chain while a win for Ambani, who has already armed himself with ₹47,265 crore of funds raised through minority stake sales in his retail venture in a matter of 45 days during Covid-19 period, will put brakes on expansion plans of the US giant.

That apart, the \$854 billion (₹63 lakh crore) retail sector is hoping that the first half of 2021 would bring it close to normal levels of business although industry players feel that recovery will not be possible without 'unconventional solutions and Government support.'

Tata Sons to acquire 32.67% more in AirAsia India for \$37.66 m

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Tata Sons will increase its stake in budget carrier AirAsia India (AAI) to 83.67 per cent by acquiring an additional 32.67 per cent for \$37.66 million from AirAsia Investment Ltd (AAIL), according to a regulatory filing.

Currently, AAIL, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Malaysia-based AirAsia, holds 49 per cent stake in the Bengaluru-based AirAsia India.

In a regulatory filing to stock exchange Bursa Malaysia, AirAsia said, "The board of directors of AirAsia wishes to announce that its wholly-owned subsidiary AAIL and Tata Sons Pvt Ltd, India, on December 29, entered into a share purchase agreement." It added that the pact is

for disposing of AAIL's equity interest of 32.67 per cent in AirAsia India to Tata Sons "for a total consideration sum of \$37,660,000 (or MYR 152.58 million)".

AirAsia India started operations on domestic routes in June 2014 following the then UPA Government allowing foreign airlines to invest up to 49 per cent in the Indian carriers.

"The share of losses over the years has resulted in the carrying value of the investment at the date of transaction to be Nil," AAIL said in the filing.

It added that the proposed disposal will, therefore, result in a gain on disposal of \$37,660,000 (equivalent to about 152.58 million Malaysian ringgit) in the fourth quarter of 2020 at both AAIL and consolidated group level.

Railway Board Chairman VK Yadav inaugurates HIMS system

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an innovative idea to ease the documentation process and provide treatment to patients in seamless manner, Northern Railway Central Hospital, New Delhi has installed a HIMS System in the Hospital.

VK Yadav, chairman cum CEO Railway Board, inaugurated the HIMS System at



Northern Railway Central Hospital, New Delhi on Tuesday. Asutosh Gangal, General Manager Northern

Railway joined the event through video link while SC Khorwal, MD Central Hospital, Senior doctors and other senior railway officials also witnessed on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion Yadav said that the HIMS installed at Hospital will ease the system for patients and doctors being electronic documentation and proved to be very helpful in future.

GM Northern Railway reviews Kumbh Mela arrangements

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Asutosh Gangal, general manager Northern Railway held a review meeting with the departmental heads of Northern Railway through video conferencing.

The focus of the meeting was on safety, punctuality and Kumbh Mela arrangements. He said that, Northern Railways prime focus is on safety of passengers. He reviewed arrangements for upcoming Kumbh Mela to be held at Haridwar from January, 2021. He informed that, a disaster management committee consisting four junior scale officers has been constituted for weekly progress of arrangements.

CLW produces 250 electric locomotives



PNS ■ CHITTARANJAN

Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) has produced 250 electric locomotives (WAG-9 HC, 33071) in 188 working days upto 29th December of the current financial year 2020-21. Last 500 locos are manufactured in only 29 working days.

Satish Kr Kashyup, General Manager flagged off the 250th locomotive of WAG-9HC series bearing no. 33071 from CLW accompanied with senior officers.

Kashyup had congratulated the entire team of loco production and appreciated their effort in successful production of 250 locomotives. With this trend in production, it is expected that, CLW will be able to achieve yet another highest production figure in manufacturing of record numbers of latest technology electric locomotives in a financial year.

Govt. of Bihar

BIHAR STATE POWER TRANSMISSION CO. LTD., PATNA
(A subsidiary company of Bihar State Power (Holding) Company Ltd., Patna)
CIN- U40102BR2012SGC018889
Head Office, Viduyat Bhawan, Bailey Road, Patna- 800021

Email address- cetransom.bsptcl@gmail.com
Mob. No. 7763817721 Website- www.bsptcl.in
Tender Notice (NIT) NO.- 38/PR/BSPTCL/2020
(Through e-procurement mode only - www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

Online-Tenders are invited by Chief Engineer (Project-1) for the following:-

Description of work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	E.M.D. (Rs.)	Cost of B.O.Q. (Non-Refundable)(Rs.)	Bid Processing Fee(Rs.)	Completion period
Restoration of 132 KV Kishanganj (New)- Barsol DCSS T/L by involvement of 06 Nos Pile foundation and associated works.	11.94 Crore	11.94 Lakh	11,800	5,900	06 Months from NDA.

Bid submission Start Date and Time From 15:00 Hrs. of 07.01.2021
Date of Pre-bid meeting On 11:00 Hrs. of 18.01.2021
Bid submission End Date and Time Up to 15:00 Hrs. of 27.01.2021
Date of opening of Techno-Commercial Bid (Part-I): After 16:00 Hrs. of 29.01.2021
Date of opening of price part To be notified after Techno-Commercial Bid Evaluation (www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

- "Bid Processing Fee is mandatory to be paid through online mode i.e. Internet Payment Gateway (Credit/Debit Card), Net Banking, NEFT/RTGS".
- The Cost of EMD may be paid through either Online or Offline mode. In case, Cost of EMD is opted to be paid through Offline mode, Bank Guarantee/Demand Draft for EMD in favor of "Accounts Officer, BSPTCL, Patna" must be submitted to Chief Engineer, Project-1, BSPTCL, Viduyat Bhawan, Patna positively up to 16:00 Hrs. of 27.01.2021 failing which the tender shall be summarily rejected. For online submissions of Cost of EMD, bidder shall submit details of intimation to this Office by 16:00 Hrs. of 27.01.2021.
- "Bid along with necessary online payments must be submitted through e-payment portal <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in/> before the date & time specified in the NIT. The department doesn't take responsibility for the delay/ Non submission of Tender/ Non Reconciliation of online Payment caused due to Non-availability of Internet Connection, Network Traffic/Holidays or any other reason".
- Tender may be cancelled at any stage by the competent authority without refunding the Cost of B.O.Q.
- Bidder should have valid GST and all other applicable tax registration certificate and copies of the same duly attested shall be furnished.
- No separate transportation cost shall be paid and the bidder shall have to quote the rate inclusive of transportation cost and all taxes.
- Eligibility Criteria, tender documents along with General/Special condition, bids and any corrigendum/ addendum of the tender are available only at website www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in state.bihar.gov.in/prbihar पर देखा जा सकता है।

Chief Engineer (Project I)

E-tendering introduced in BSPTCL for tenders above Rs. 25 lacs. For registration log in to www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in and e-Procurement Help Desk Toll free No: 1800 572 6571, Email Id: eproc2support@bihar.gov.in
Working Hours: 8AM to 7PM [All days in week except few selected state holidays].
While participating in e-tendering process, the contractor shall have to get them registered to get user ID, Passwords and digital signature. This will enable them to access the Website: www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in only.

(Ratan Kumar)
Chief Engineer (Project I)
PR- 10242 (Ni Ni) 2020-21
चौदल कोटेना के संबन्ध में विस्तृत जानकारी एवं सहयोग हेतु Toll Free No.- 104 पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।

SALE NOTICE

The under mentioned Assets will be sold through auction on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" for recovery of dues as per High court orders. In the case of ICICI Bank Vs Jain Logistics and ors., case nos. W.P. (C) 11236/2020, W.P. (C) 11237/2020, W.P. (C) 11238/2020, W.P. (C) 11239/2020, W.P. (C) 11240/2020, W.P. (C) 11241/2020, W.P. (C) 11242/2020, Order Dated December 28, 2020.

Asset Details	Vehicle no-	Year
Vehicle no- NL01AC0746, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2018	NL01AA4312, TATA LPT 1615, Manufacture Year: 2017	2018
Vehicle no- NL01AA9634, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2017	Vehicle no- NL01AB1126, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2017	2018
Vehicle no- NL01AB7767, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2018	Vehicle no- NL01AA8146, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2017	2018
Vehicle no- NL01AA9631, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2018	Vehicle no- NL01AA4316, TATA LPT 1615, Manufacture Year: 2017	2018
Vehicle no- NL01AA8142, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2017	Vehicle no- NL01AC750, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2017	2018
Vehicle no- NL01AA9630, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2018	Vehicle no- NL01AB1127, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2017	2018
Vehicle no- NL01AA4311, TATA LPT 1615, Manufacture Year: 2017	Vehicle no- NL01AA8144, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2017	2018
Vehicle no- NL01AA8145, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2017	Vehicle no- NL01AB1128, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2017	2018
Vehicle no- NL01AA9632, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2017	Vehicle no- NL01AA8143, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2017	2018
Vehicle no- NL01AB7764, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2018	Vehicle no- NL01AA8144, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2017	2018
Vehicle no- NL01AB7766, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2018	Vehicle no- NL01AA9633, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2017	2018
Vehicle no- NL01AB7769, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2018	Vehicle no- NL01AA4314, TATA LPT 1615, Manufacture Year: 2017	2018
Vehicle no- NL01AB2278, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2017	Vehicle no- NL01AC0749, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2018	2018
	Vehicle no- NL01AB7762, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2018	2018
	Vehicle no- NL01AB7770, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2018	2018
	Vehicle no- NL01AC748, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2017	2018
	Vehicle no- NL01AB7768, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2018	2018
	Vehicle no- NL01AB7763, TATA LPS 3518, Manufacture Year: 2018	2018

Auction date: December 31, 2020, from 11 am to 3 pm
Reserve price: Rs 40000000 (Rupees four crore only) for all 34 vehicles as one lot.
EMD: Rs 40,00,000 (Rupees forty lacs only), DD/PO of EMD amount to be made in favour of ICICI Bank Limited, payable at Delhi.
Contact Person- Rajeew Ranjan (8584874809)/Jitendra Kumar (7304914763)
Place of auction: Godara Yarf, Khawat No 1302, 1300, 1298, Behind Power House, Opp- New DLF Road, Near KherkiDaula Toll plaza, Vill-Sikhohpur, Sec 77, Gurugram-122004
Terms of Sale
The particulars of the said asset specified herein above have been stated to the best of the information and knowledge of the undersigned, who shall however not be responsible for any error, misstatement or omission in the said particulars. The interested participants are therefore requested, in their own interest, to satisfy themselves/itself with regard to the said asset and other relevant details pertaining to it before submitting the bids. All bidders are required to come at site with original DD/PO of EMD amount as mentioned in above table along with original ID and address proofs to participate in the auction.
Successfully approved bidder shall have to deposit sale amount (Excluding EMD amount) within 5 days from the auction date by the way of pay order/demand draft/RTGS/NEFT. In case if Successfully approved bidder fails to make the remaining sale amount within 5 days, his/her EMD amount will be forfeited by the Bank.
The intending bidders may visit at ICICI Bank Ltd, 1st Floor, SD Tower, Community Center, Plot no-7, Rohini Sector-8, New Delhi-110085, for details and inspection of the said hypothecated vehicle.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that an unidentified deadbody of male Age : About 65 years, Height : 5'4", Complexion : Wheatish, Face: Oval, wearing grey colour lower and white colour shirt, was found dead on 16.12.2020 at Anand Pradhan Colony, Kanjhawala, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 34-A Dated 16.12.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone numbers.
SHO - P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi
Tel. No. 011-25951486
DP/574/RD/20

SEARCH FOR MISSING WOMAN



General public is here by informed that this woman namely Primila Gupta W/o Jagdamba Prasad Gupta R/o H.No. A-62, Gali No. 5, Indra Nagar, Near Panchwati, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi Age : 52 years, Height : 5'1", Face : Round, Complexion : Sallow, Build : Strong, wearing red & green colour printed saree and red colour blouse, has been missing since 18.12.2020. In this regard DD No. 04-A dated 19.12.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Adarsh Nagar, New Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing woman may kindly inform to the following:-
E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in SHO : P.S. Adarsh Nagar, New Delhi
Website: cbi.nic.in New Delhi
Fax: 24368639, Tel. No. : 011-27672452, 27674452
Tel.: 24368638/24368641

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 40 years, Height: 5' 5", Complexion: Wheatish, Build: Thin, Wearing: White colour pant, Black & White colour shirt, brown colour jacket and blue & white colour shoes in feet, who was found in sewer near Sharma Chhole Bhature, Krishna Nagar, Delhi. In this regard a case DD No. 31A Dated 23.12.2020 has been registered at P.S. Krishna Nagar, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.
Sd/- SHO
P.S. Krishna Nagar, Delhi
Tel.: 011-22093224
DP/321/SHD/2020

The pandemic has tested all aspects of education from delivery of classroom lectures to conduct of examination to internships and admissions. ASHWANI AWASTHI analyses how the year has been for the sector



QUOTE OF THE DAY

Education is the power to think clearly, the power to act well in the world's work, and the power to appreciate life.
— Brigham Young

EXPERTSAY

This year was an extremely challenging one for the education sector. Educational institutes closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and technology brought several 'firsts' for the sector. Disruptive changes in online education ensured maintaining continuity in education. Our teachers incorporated technology with élan and included augmented and virtual reality as part of their framework. The future will be about blended learning and education will undergo revolutionary changes that will make it acceptable, accessible, and affordable to students in the remotest corners of our globe. The coming decade is slated to redefine education as technological advancements will further strengthen our education system.

— Rustom Kerawalla, Chairman, Ampersand Group



Edtech moved from the category of a vitamin to a category of pain killer in 2020. We have witnessed the growth of platforms focused on teaching individual subjects, full curricula, hobby classes, professional qualifications, and even meditation. While 2020 was the year of acceptance for readily available Edtech tools, I believe that 2021 will be the year of innovation, consolidation and regulation. We will see significant consolidation of many Edtech systems as the currently accepted solutions become redundant with newer innovations. Consumers will realise their needs better and demand newer solutions. While Edtech has been around for almost two decades, it's the first time that it has been accepted at this scale. Such scale of traction will attract regulatory implementation from Governments. We are headed towards exciting times as Edtech has been able to deliver the promise and is ready for the next level of skill development.

— Rishabh Khanna, Cognitive Scientist & Founder of Suraasa

COVID-19 has benefitted education industry's digital adoption. In these times, it enhanced the learning process not just for the students but also the educators. The ed-tech space saw a lot of advancements such as learners were provided with digital first academic support and accessibility, smart assessment and novel types of curriculum in specialized areas such as science, coding and languages. This overall transformation has benefitted both investors and ed-tech start-ups. This year, we also saw that increasing number of people focused on up skilling which increased the need for online courses (both synchronous and asynchronous). The trend of online learning is seeing an upward graph from here on. To sum up, I can say that the year 2020 has been a blessing in disguise for the ed-tech sector and given us an opportunity to up skill and upgrade ourselves too to deliver the best product out there.

— Sumesh Nair, Founder & CEO, Board Infinity



IT'S A TOUGH DEAL

The year 2020 can be termed as a year of two major paradigm shifts for the education sector. While one forced the teachers and students to adopt and adapt to sudden change for the very continuance of education, the other is a welcome announcement of a change long overdue in the Indian educational system. The educational institutes barring the research levels continue to be in a veritable lockdown since March 2020 following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Almost overnight, the education institutions had to shift their delivery model from on-campus face-to-face to an online one. They had to quickly shift from a classroom setup to a virtual technology driven setup. The forward-looking institutions were better prepared with having some technological systems in place and could quickly adopt technology solutions such as Zoom, MS Teams or Google meet and onboarded their audience to the platform. However, many institutes which were already lagging in technological adoptions due to paucity of time, effort or budget constraints, struggled and their students suffered as well. Knowledge sharing at such places was severely limited and remained restricted to monologue/non-interactive modes limited to messaging, sharing scanned sheets and texted instructions.

The pandemic has tested all aspects of education from delivery of classroom lectures to conduct of examination to internships and admissions. New formats of conducting the student assessments like online Open Book Examination or Multiple Choice Question based examinations were tried out. However, a large section of the student population living in non-urban areas had internet bandwidth concerns and faced huge challenges while appearing in examinations. Similarly, industry internship is an important part of the professional degree in higher education. Visionary education institutions converted the site-based industry internships into desktop research-based internships but still could not completely fulfill the onsite practice-based learning requirement. The pandemic also had a huge impact on the student acquisition activity in the education sector. The admission processes changed from on-campus examinations and interviews to virtual campus walks, video interviews, online evaluations and selections. There is a growing feeling that the pandemic will continue to impact education and admissions are never going to be the same again. There has been a decrease in international student enrollment. Also, students are unsure about opting for technical programs which need on-campus practice-based learning. It is anticipated that in future the student preference on college admission would shift focus to college as an experience rather than as a brand.

This period has also provided us with the time to reflect upon where our limitations lie in terms of our personal digital skills and technology. Training faculty on technology usage, preparing content for online learning, internet connectivity, bandwidth, digital etiquette remained a challenge. Different types of health concerns related with screen time, body posture related health concerns, depression in isolation have surged amongst the students this year. But there has been a big welcome announcement for the education sector in India this year. The greatest gift for education sector in 2020 was the launch of the new National Education Policy (NEP 2020), which was launched on July 29 superseding the last policy that was released 34 years ago. The NEP 2020 is a visionary policy which aims to bring many relevant changes like universal access to schools for all children in the next decade and stresses on increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), putting a stop to the spiraling drop-out rate in India. The NEP also proposes sweeping changes including opening of Indian higher education to foreign universities and focuses on overhauling the curriculum, easier board exams, a reduction in the syllabus to retain core essen-

tials and thrust on experiential learning and critical thinking. However, a strong need for developing good number of trained quality teachers is needed to meet the challenges of the industry. Many believe that if the new policy could be implemented sincerely with a careful designing of syllabi and curricula, it has the potential to transform India into a self-reliant knowledge superpower. Finally, it is felt that future will witness phenomenal change and disruption in the field of higher education. Technology will take a lead in shaping the delivery, teaching methodology and the evaluation process. One clear area of evolution could be a shift of focus from marks based academic curriculum to life based overall development. Currently there is a huge gap between what the students study and what the industry requires. We are on the verge of breaking the barriers that exist between academia and industry. While there are few institutes which closely work with industry to customise their curriculum and prepare industry ready graduates, the need gap is huge. A closer industry-education engagement at the very grassroots stages can drive the development of curricula, teaching methodologies and applied learning experiences.

The writer is Managing Director, RICS School of Built Environment

Education is an essential and most important aspect of life. In this world of advancement and technology education is the only key to pass through the gate of success. Education is the safest means to achieve your dreams, goals and aims. Relevancy and importance of education is increasing day by day and so its expenses. To secure educational future of your child or your own, one should save money to harbor the message of smoothness and prosperity in one's life. To implement this task, Systematic Investment Plans (SIP) is here for your help. Don't take any pressure, whether you want to go over board or abroad, SIP is here for you to make you ride on the goal board. In the world of modern advancement, dearness and uncertainty, one has to be certain in their decision to have secure future. Investing in education, for education and by education is profitable in all terms. Inflation is spiking day by day to fulfill basic needs i.e., food, water, shelter and education one should not restrict on single income, make income through investment to create a second source. Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today. SIP gives an opportunity to you to invest as per your convenience. Being humans, we cannot predict future but being responsible for our family and future one can prepare oneself for future. All days are not same. Save for a rainy day. When you don't work, savings will work for you. It works as a helping hand to you. It is easy on pocket,

Invest smartly

To secure educational future of your child or your own, one should save money to harbor the message of smoothness and prosperity in one's life. JYOTI BHANDARI tells you how systematic investment plans can help



Starting with as low as ₹500 per month towards your first step to financial freedom. Depending on your current financial situation, risk appetite and the nature of your goal, you can choose a scheme from debt asset class to equity. The formula to create wealth is time invested not the timing. SIPs bring financial discipline in your both spending and investing behavior by making you save first before you spend. Buffet rule, helps one to lead the independent thought in right direction independently. It can help you to create your short term

reward, it teaches you discipline, patience and living in your means. It gives wings to your dream. If you dream big, experience the eighth wonder of the world. When money realises that it is in good hands, it wants to stay and multiply in those hands." It's your money, your goals, and your convenience. SIPs offer you convenience from choosing the date of investment, amount that you can afford and most importantly the liquidity to call for your money when you need it. Our life has ups and downs and so do our investments! The economy depends about as much on economists as the weather does on weather forecasters." Jean-Paul Kauffmann. SIPs give us an opportunity to spread our risk through fixed amounts and dates across the years, capturing the volatility and benefiting from the highs and lows by investing in the lowest NAVs to bring down the purchase costs. While you focus on your daily affairs, this technique of rupee cost averaging works for you to bring the maximum benefit to the portfolio.

The writer is Founder and CEO, Lovak Capital Pvt Ltd

Time to bridge the gap

It is important to understand that in order to provide access to education to the people with lack of facilities, some extra efforts need to be put in, says SUNIT GAJBHIYE

Accessibility of education has been one of the major problems prevalent in our country, which despite several efforts, is still a far-flung reality. The lockdown imposed due to Covid outbreak across the globe added more woes to the education sector. However, with the Government putting emphasis on online education and stakeholders of the ecosystem adopting it quickly, the accessibility of the education to the masses somehow improved and the ball kept rolling. Accessibility should be seen as equal opportunities, from education to employment, for all in every aspect of life. Providing accessibility to all helps in facilitating empowerment which is directly connected to inclusive and accessible education for all. Though a lot of people who don't have the facility of mobility are forced to choose between the right to education and an inclusive educational environment. Not only this, but access to education should be beyond transportation and infrastructural provisions. It is important to understand that in order to provide access to education to the people with lack of facilities, some extra efforts need to be put in and ensure their reach to intent people. Though a lot of initiatives have



been taken by the Government and the educational institutes have been smart enough to adapt to the new normal, there still remains a gap which needs to be filled. This would require involvement of many more sectors and a greater participation from the corporates as well as private firms. The new National Education Policy shows a lot of promise in terms of educational reforms but its actual implementation will take serious efforts. The policy provisions comprehensive use of resources so as to make quality education accessible to all. More importantly, the hybrid or the blended mode of education where classroom and online education needs to remain the focus. Going forward, blended mode of education seems to be the future and, in such a scenario, the measures to strengthen the basic infrastructure are pivotal. This, however, would require private players to jump into the fray and provide their expertise to fulfil the goal of education to all. As of now, internet connectivity is a major issue in a lot of schools/colleges and due to this online classes are a distant dream. Also, the online examinations are full of technical glitches and timely results are considered out of question. This calls for an urgent need of a fruitful partnership between private players and the Government agencies.

The writer is Chief Business Officer, CBO

Session on primary education

In continuum to the ongoing 'The Principal Round Table', the Education Leaders Confluence 2020 (ELC) saw yet another fruitful session on "Challenges for Primary School Kids in the Changing Education System", that was successfully conducted on December 21, 2020. Organised by Pratham Test prep, the confluence focuses on holistic development and has also restructured and re-engineered modules to cater to children right from middle school to help them understand the importance of aptitude building. The ELC 2020 constitutes a series of talks and discussions, conducted to hear out the experts and discuss various issues and

opportunities available in the education sector. Even though India has made significant progress on access to schooling and admissions in primary education, the on-going pandemic has brought new challenges in front of the education system especially in India where we are still in the process to learn and improve. "There is a paradigm shift witnessed in the education sector in India for the last few months due to the pandemic. The teachers had to adapt to e-learning leaving the traditional way of teaching. Many teachers were reluctant of this adaption, but there was no way out and the result was new innovative ways to teach to make the class engaging and interesting," said Ankit Kapoor, Managing Director, Pratham Test Prep.

Dr Sivan's motivational speech at SRMIST

Always keep in mind the challenges our country is facing. Each of these challenges offers an opportunity for innovation, said Dr K Sivan, Chairman of ISRO, Bangalore and Secretary, Department of Space, Government of India. Addressing students virtually at the 16th Annual Convocation of SRM Institute of Science & Technology (SRMIST), Kattankulathur, Dr Sivan said, "The job scenario is vibrant today and one must

definitely work more than others, know more than others and expect less than others." About 17,204 students belonging to the Faculties of Engineering and Technology, Faculty of Science and Humanities, Medicine & Health Sciences and Management studies including 129 PhD scholars received their degrees. Based on the restrictions imposed by the State Government only Rank Holders and PhD degree

awardees were given their degrees in person at Dr TP Ganesan Auditorium, main campus, Kattankulathur. The rest of the eligible graduates attended the event through virtual mode. In his convocation address, Dr Sivan said, "SRMIST has the honour of designing, developing, and building its own nano-satellite, SRMSAT, in collaboration with ISRO which was launched with the twin scientific objectives of monitoring and

estimating carbon dioxide and water vapour in the tropical atmosphere globally. Our Government has already announced space sector reforms for greater participation of non-Governmental entities in space activities. Our next PSLV launch will have satellites from start-up agencies as the first product of these reforms. I now invite SRMIST to join hands with ISRO to work on similar projects in future."

Healthcare conclave

The FORE School of Management has recently organised an online COVID-19 Healthcare Conclave 2020 in association with the Principal Directorate, Indian Defense Estates Service. The conclave gathered around 50 doctors, Chief Executive Officers of Cantonment Boards, and prominent industry experts who presented their papers

and participated in panel discussions from December 21 to December 23, 2020. The keynote address was delivered by Ajay Kumar Sharma, Principal Director, and Southern Command. The panel discussions were based on different themes. Day 1 marked a moderated panel discussion with CEOs of 'Ground-level Challenges and Drivers in Administering Healthcare entities during COVID-19 — the Role of Technology'



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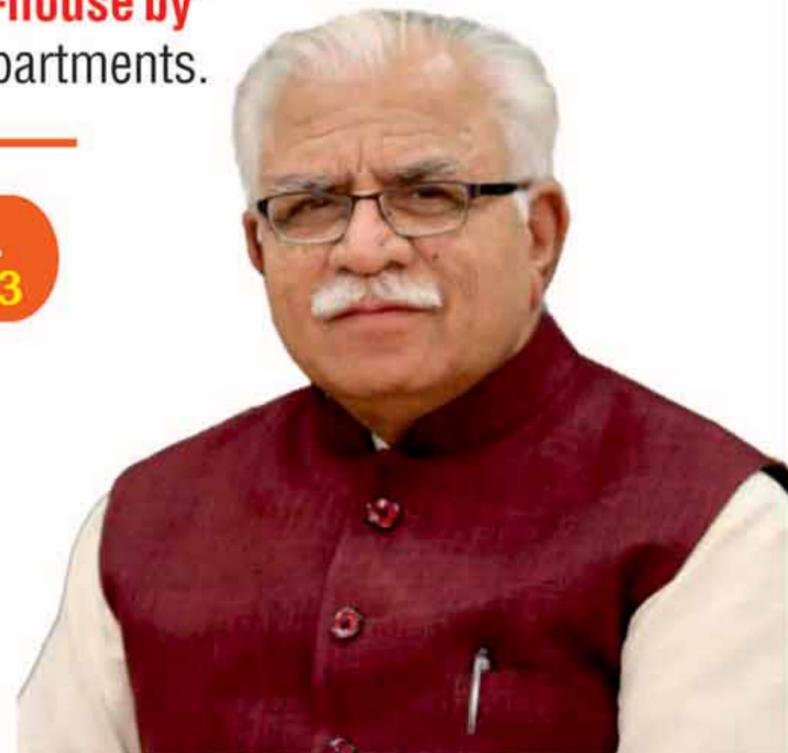
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In the Hands of God

Multiple legendary sporting personalities passed away in 2020. PIONEER SPORT looks at their legacy in individual sports

DIEGO MARADONA, 60
Maradona's death brought Argentina to a standstill and caused a wave of grief in his adopted home of Naples. He brought joy to the southern Italian city by leading unfashionable Napoli to two Serie A titles and the 1989 UEFA Cup. The passing of Maradona, who dragged Argentina to glory at the 1986 World Cup where he scored the 'Goal of the Century' against England — as well as the infamous 'Hand of God' goal, led to three days of national mourning in his home country.

Gold medallist, helping spark the US squad to titles in 2008 and 2012.

PAOLO ROSSI, 64



Rossi is a national hero in Italy for firing the Azzurri to World Cup triumph in 1982.

He finished the tournament as top scorer after scoring six goals, including a hat-trick in a 3-2 win over flamboyant Brazil, both goals against Poland in the semi-finals and the opener in the final win over

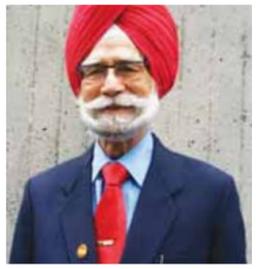
KOBE BRYANT, 41



Bryant was killed in January alongside his 13-year-old daughter in a helicopter crash outside Los Angeles that also took the lives of seven other people.

LA Lakers icon Bryant was a five-time NBA champion in a career that began in 1996 straight out of a high school.

He was a two-time Olympic



Diego Maradona kisses FIFA World Cup trophy after Argentina beat West Germany 3-2 in final of the 1986 World Cup in Mexico

West Germany.

Pablito only played in Spain after returning from a ban for his part in the betting scandal.

BALBIR SINGH SR, 96

Three-time Olympic Gold medal-winning hockey legend Balbir Singh Sr died on May 25 after battling multiple health issues. His world record for most goals scored by an individual in the men's hockey final of the Olympics still remains unbeaten. Balbir Singh, who captained India at the

1956 Olympic Games and was the manager of 1975 World Cup winning team.

CHUNI GOSWAMI, 82

Legendary Indian footballer Chuni Goswami, who captained the 1962 Asian Games Gold-winning team and finished runner-up at the Asian Cup in 1964, died after suffering a cardiac arrest. He was a striker during

the golden generation of Indian football. In a celebrated career, Goswami played 50 international matches for the national team from 1956 to 1964, and spent his entire career playing for Mohun Bagan in club football. The iconic sportsperson, who also played first-class cricket for Bengal.

PK BANERJEE, 83

Pradip Kumar Banerjee was among

those who put Indian football on an international stage through his feats, first as a record-breaking goalscorer and then as the most successful Indian coach. He was part of the 1962 Asian Games Gold medalist team and also led India in the 1960 Rome Olympics, in which he scored the equaliser against France to help his side secure a 1-1 draw against the European giants. He was awarded the FIFA Order of Merit in 2004. He was also the first Indian footballer to win the Arjuna Award — he won in 1961, the year the awards were instituted.

CHETAN CHAUHAN, 73



Former India cricketer and cabinet minister in Uttar Pradesh state Government Chetan Chauhan, passes away due to complications and multiple organ failure. He was Sunil Gavaskar's long-time opening partner, and despite scoring 16 fifty plu scores in Test cricket, he finished with a zero in the centuries' column in the format, despite coming close on many occasions: he got to 80 seven times, on two of those occasions getting to 93 and 97. He held a dubious record — most Test runs without scoring a century — for many years before being topped by Shane Warne.

DEAN JONES, 59



The Australian World Cup winner and prominent commentator died of a heart attack while in Mumbai to do IPL commentary. He collapsed, was rushed to the hospital and declared dead there.

TONY LEWIS, 78

Lewis was one of the men behind the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method used in weather-affected limited-overs cricket matches. He devised the method alongside fellow mathematician Frank Duckworth.

GÉRARD HOULLIER, 73



The Frenchman put Liverpool back on track to domestic and European glory as manager from 1998 to 2004, winning a treble of trophies in 2001 and paving the way for the long-term recovery of a club he cherished.

ANGELA BUXTON, 85

Two-time Grand Slam champion Buxton, who had Jewish heritage and was refused entry to tennis clubs her entire career, was a doubles partner and lifelong friend of Althea Gibson, whose 1956 French Open title was the first Grand Slam singles triumph by a black American player.

Buxton won the women's doubles alongside Gibson at both Roland Garros and Wimbledon in 1956, the latter of which was the first All England Club title to be won by a British-Jewish player.

RAJINDER GOEL, 77



Rajinder Goel was born at the time when there was no shortage of good spinners in the country but only one was selected to play for India. And despite not being able to represent India in the longest format of the game, he kept taking wickets in the domestic cricket and went on to become the record wicket taker in Ranji Trophy (637). A record that still stands.

RAY CLEMENCE, 72

Former England and Liverpool goalkeeper Clemence was one of the finest stoppers of his generation, winning three European Cups and five First Division titles during 14 years.



PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Hungry for redemption, India recorded a win for the ages under an inspirational Ajinkya Rahane, beating Australia by eight wickets in the second Test to level the four-match series 1-1 here on Tuesday.

The target of 70 was never a big one but for a team that was bowled out for its all-time lowest score of 36 only 10 days back, one can't fault them if that played at the back of their minds.

Shubman Gill (35 not out) and skipper Rahane (27 not out) knocked off the runs in 15.5 overs to complete the victory.

This was after the quartet comprising Jasprit Bumrah (2/54 in 27 overs), debutant Mohammed Siraj (3/37 in 21.3 overs), Ravichandran Ashwin (2/71 in 37.1 overs) and Ravindra Jadeja (2/28 in 14 overs) showed maniacal consistency over a period of 100 overs on the flattest of decks, where extra bounce became their go-to weapon.

"The talk was all about showing attitude, intent and character. One hour took

Boxing Day challenge conquered

Rahane steps forward in Kohli's absence to guide India to historic series-levelling win

the game away from us in Adelaide, but we still have a lot to learn," Rahane said.

Indian teams, since the turn of the new millennium, have had some memorable overseas victories but when the backdrop and context of this Test at the iconic MCG is recorded for posterity, Rahane and his magnificent bowling unit will find more than an honourable mention in the pages of history.

Really proud of all the players, credit to our debutants Gill and Siraj. The way they showed character was amazing," Rahane said.

The Indian teams of yore used to lose stomach for a good scrap after humiliating defeats but not this one. It stood out for the manner of its comeback in the absence of a genius called Virat Kohli and a magician in Mohammed Shami. Australia captain



Indian cricket team celebrate their victory against Australia during fourth day of the second test match

Tim Paine had nothing to offer as an explanation for why his side could not capitalise on the big absences.

"Very disappointed, played poor cricket, sloppy cricket. Let's not take anything away from India, they forced us to make mistakes," he said.

In the last three and half days, Rahane, first with his hundred and then with solid leadership, showed what Kohli meant when he spoke

about 'New India'. Along with skills, it was the mental fortitude that shone through as the team didn't take too much time to bury the ghosts of Adelaide and clear the cobwebs in their minds getting Australia all-out for 195 and 200 in two innings.

On the first day, it was about assessing the moisture on the surface and giving Ashwin a go before debutant Siraj in the first hour of the

match, all the while keeping that leg gully in business for Steve Smith.

It worked wonderfully well and then he understood pretty quickly that Siraj, with his hit-the-deck bowling, could work wonders with the semi-new or old kook-aborra when the seam would flatten.

While batting, he was like that bandmaster, who knew how to conduct his orchestra whether it was

young Gill or the seasoned Ravindra Jadeja.

Rahane rates his hundred in a winning cause at Lord's six years back as his best effort but for fans, the innings at Melbourne will always be way more precious.

On fourth morning, Rahane, after giving a three-over spell to Bumrah on the, understood instantly that the old ball is not doing anything and took him off the attack to keep him fresh for the second new ball.

It was another great tactical decision as Bumrah bounced Cummins to end the stand that consumed more than 36 overs.

The second new ball did the trick as Cameron Green (45 off 146 balls) and Cummins (22 off 103 balls) were dismissed after their frustrating 57-run stand for the seventh wicket.

Green's gutsy knock had five boundaries as he tried to get Australia out of the woods during a classical Test match session.

It was a well-directed bouncer aimed between the batsman's jaw and shoulder and the awkward fend was taken by Mayank Agarwal at second slip.

Green, who was starting to become a thorn in the flesh, tried to pull Siraj but the extra bounce did him in as Ravindra Jadeja, fielding at mid-wicket, timed his spot jump to perfection ending the batsman's vigil.

Siraj and Ashwin then mopped up the tail setting a total of 70 for their batsmen.

The victory was unquestionable but again it was Rahane, a former Karate 10th Dan black belt, decided to guide Gill, doing his apprentice in Test cricket.

The skipper first played a perfect Sunil Gavaskar-like forward defensive stroke where the ball lands on the feet of the batsmen like an obedient cocker spaniel.

The next ball, brought out an imperious pull-shot, showing the intent which let Gill blossom in that short period of time.

It was only fitting that he fought fire with fire during that brief knock and it was poetic justice that he was there till the end.

Kohli will be back in whites in about a month and half when he walks out at the Chepauk leading his band of men but one won't forget 'Captain Rahane' in a hurry.

SA win big over stricken SL in 1st Test

South Africa took little time in closing out an innings and 45-run victory over a depleted Sri Lanka in the first Test on Tuesday as the tourists' promising start to the match and the series was undone by a string of injuries.

Four of the five Sri Lankans to get hurt during the test still came out to bat in a vain effort to save their team, but it didn't matter.

South Africa's fast bowlers needed just over a session on the fourth day to finish off Sri Lanka's second innings. Sri Lanka, starting the day 65-2 and facing defeat, was bowled out for 180 in 46.1 overs.

Allrounder Dhananjaya de Silva was the one casualty who



South African cricket team celebrate their victory against Sri Lanka

wasn't able to bat at all because of his thigh injury, meaning South Africa needed just nine wickets in the end to win.

South Africa took five wick-

ets in the day's first session and finished Sri Lanka off with the last two wickets less than half-an-hour after lunch, despite some resistance from Kusal Perera (64) and

Wanindu Haranga (59).

South African pacers Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Wiaan Mulder and Lutho Sipamla all collected two wickets each in the innings.

Sri Lanka's heavy defeat was the result of a marked turnaround in the test after the Sri Lankans made a strong start, posting 396 in the first innings for their best test total in South Africa.

But Sri Lanka was depleted by the stream of players leaving the field injured: de Silva left on the first day while batting, fast bowler Kasun Rajitha was injured on Day 2 having bowled just 13 deliveries, and bowlers Lahiru Kumara and Haranga and batsman Dinesh Chandimal were hurt on Monday.

Black Caps on brink of victory

AP ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

Tim Southee claimed his 300th test wicket as New Zealand edged closer to a win over Pakistan Tuesday on the fourth day of the first cricket test.

New Zealand set Pakistan 373 to win after leading by 192 on the first innings and declaring its second innings at 180-5, shortly before tea.

At stumps Pakistan was 71-3, still 202 runs behind, with Azhar Ali 34 not out and Fawad Alam 21. The unbroken 34-run partnership between Azhar and Fawad which occupied 89 minutes before stumps helped the tourists recover from a dreadful start which saw them two wickets down without a run on the board.

Southee took the first Pakistan wicket to fall Tuesday and finished the day with 2-15 from nine overs.

Southee became the third Kiwi after



Tim Southee celebrates his 300th test wicket

Richard Hadlee (431) and Daniel Vettori (361), the 34th bowler from all nations and only the fourth active player to achieve the 300 wicket milestone.

His wickets have come in 76 tests at an average of 28.48 and a strike rate of 56.8.

Those statistics compare favorably with the England pair James Anderson and Stuart Broad who have 600 and 514 wickets respectively but have played twice as many tests as Southee. Anderson averages 26.7, Broad 27.6 and both have strike rates around 56.

Southee's regular new ball partner, Trent Boult, is also closing on the 300 wicket mark. He currently has 275 wickets at an average of 28.

New Zealand began its second innings at the start of play Tuesday after bowling out Pakistan for 239 in reply to its first innings of 431 late on the third day.

"I like test cricket and I want to play it as long as I can," he said. "I don't like to put a number on it but you look at the likes of James Anderson, still doing a hell of a job at the age of 38.